

A Quality Improvement Project in a Culturally Diverse Community: Easing Access to Early Childhood Learning with Micronesian Islanders

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Abstract

Background/Significance: The Micronesian Islander (MI) community experiences adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) at rates higher than other ethnic groups. Exposure to ACEs increases risk of negative outcomes, heart disease, cancer, and psychosocial problems into adulthood. Early childhood learning (ECL) provides resilience against ACEs. However, Pacific Islander/MI children in the United States reportedly have 53.8% not enrolled in ECL.

Objective/Purpose: A MI-based community organization-academia partnership was developed. Our mixed-methods project aim was to develop a culturally responsive, web-based, toolkit to facilitate Parent Leader Champions with assisting families with enrolling in ECL.

Methods: We used the early childhood education/care access framework and cognitive learning theory to guide our interventions. We used the ECL Toolkit Survey and field-notes to collect data. We improved the toolkit through four systematic Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles. This included interactive live virtual presentation, both text and videos.

Results: Nine trusted Leaders representing Chuukese, Kapingamarangi, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, and Chamorro communities reported, using a 7-point Likert scale, respects cultural values ($M=5.80;SD=0.40$), comprehend how to use the Toolkit ($M=6.20;SD=0.40$), easy navigation ($M=5.60;SD=1.36$), feasible to help enroll preschool MI students ($M=6.20;SD=0.40$), and will be helpful at expanding access to ECL programs ($M=6.20;SD=0.40$). Qualitative context included:

easy to understand, sharing information from the toolkit with others via social media, and using personal experiences to assist with educating others.

Discussion/Conclusions: We provide important evidence that engaging with a community-based organization, in partnership with Leaders, achieved development of a culturally responsive toolkit that was helpful in assisting families in ECL enrollment