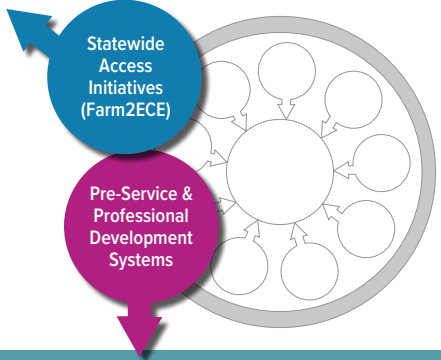


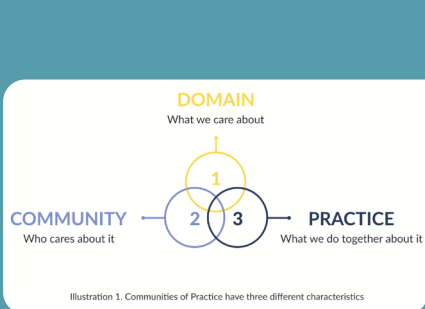
Planting the Profession Community of Practice (CoP)



Purpose

The purpose of this project is to facilitate an in-person community of practice (CoP) for center-based ECE providers on Oahu focused on wellness, Farm to ECE, and professionalizing the workforce. A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. The CoP sessions focused on reflective practice, growth mindset, child development, epigenetics, and more.

- ### Goals
- Support young children's development and wellness
 - Provide opportunity for teacher preparation
 - Provide technical assistance to childcare programs to increase integration of physical activity and nutrition best practices into their curriculum
 - Facilitate a learning community to strengthen ECE provider level networks



- ### Key Activities / Timeline
- **October 2022 - Dec 2022:** Saturday COP Group Sessions
 - Focused on one area per session:
 - 1) Reflective Practice and Growth Mindset
 - 2) Power to the Profession
 - 3) Child Development (cognitive, physical, social-emotional)
 - 4) Epigenetics, and childhood obesity prevention strategies.
 - Within each session facilitators:
 - » Shared a variety of resources, with emphasis on resources developed locally such as the early childhood wellness guidelines and farm to early childhood curriculum;
 - » Provided opportunity for hands-on learning; and
 - » Facilitated participant-led discussion
 - **Jan 2023:** Incentive payments were provided
 - » Up to \$300 total per participant for those who completed each session.
 - » Participants also had the opportunity to apply for funding to implement projects within their programs.

- ### Project Highlights
- There were a total of 10 participants that started, completed and implemented things within their programs. 3 were directors and 7 were teaching staff. These 10 participants also received incentive payments to compensate them for their time.
 - Participants increased family engagement activities in their programs by providing more workshops for families and sharing out information related to physical activity and nutrition for young children.
 - Some participants were able to implement gardening activities in their curriculum to promote healthy eating and habits in their ECE program.

- ### Desired Impacts
- **Relationship Building between ECE providers:** Trust built between participants to share with each other challenges, ideas, and work which can lead to confidence in their daily work and a more collaborative curriculum, classroom dynamics, and family engagement activities.
 - **Professional Recognition and Empowerment of ECE Providers:** Increases the use of their professional voice and allows participants to be more comfortable and outspoken with families, and communities to support their needs. a part of a national movement and being an advocate for the ECE field along with other professionals.
 - **Skill and Knowledge Growth for ECE Providers:** Participants were more confident to bring wellness and nutrition into their curriculum that support children's development and wellness.

Key Takeaways

Shared experiences and building community amongst program participants is very important. It was healing and therapeutic for participants to have support to overcome the mental stresses that come along with this kind of job. Oftentimes, many early care and education staff members feel isolated in the field and don't feel connections and a COP is really important to build support to combat this.



"I was encouraged by the sharing and exchanging of ideas and thoughts in this group of professionals."
COP Participant

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