



## Voices from the Field: Chaw Chaw

### Q1: What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is working with families who have come to this country as a refugee like me. We need a lot of support. We need a lot of people who will love and care for us. Who will teach us and understand us. Because we are not educated sometimes it is hard to adapt to the culture, language, food, and social life here in United States.

### Q2: What is the most challenging part of being a bilingual home visitor?

Being a bilingual home visitor, the most challenging part for me is when I have to be a culture broker for some families. When the family is not engaged with other services such as their children need special needs, and the family cancel the service and decline the service. For example, I have a family who are referred from health department. They need the service for speech therapy for the child and she need therapy for herself for mental health, but she cancels all the services that she gets, and she just said, "I just want you alone to come and visit me and I don't want other service." Then I feel like oh, I cannot do you by yourself. I need to come with a specialist and refer her to other service. But she still declined that. She doesn't want anybody to come to see her except me.

### Q3: What would you like professionals in the field of early childhood education and early childhood special education to know about working with refugee families?

First of all, I want them to be patient and give the refugee families some time to learn and trust because they have been through a lot of trauma in their own country. And I would like professionals in the early childhood education special education to know about working with refugee family is that when you learn their culture, working alongside with their own community and their own community leader because they trust their own community leader.

### Q4: Can you share some of your knowledge about how professionals should attend or tune in to cultural differences in order to be an effective service provider?

Yes, I want to share some of my knowledge about professionals should tune in to culture different in order to be an effective service coordinator or to be trust by the family so that they can be a good partner and to be patient. The family are in learning process and be a part of them. Participate in their events. Learn from them as they learn from you. Point out their needs and let them get help, especially family with mental health and children with delay in developmental. When I said especially our family with mental health, in our culture, they think they can cope with it, mental problem. They are ashamed when people know that they have mental issue, or they are shy to talk about it. And

when I say about the children with delay in development, they think child development is not important for them. They don't know what kind of delay, even when they know they want to wait and see till the child turn five or seven years old.

And to be an effective service coordinator, try to understand their culture and learn how they practice. Be a part of them so they will build up trust with you and work with you better. Some of their culture are unacceptable here in the United States such as punishing their children by hitting or beating them, threaten their children, it's like empty threat, when the children misbehave. You will have to redirect them how to do in this country at school or at home. And let them know they are not alone. There are resources around our community who can help them. It takes a whole village to raise a child. We the professionals are here to help them to a successful family, healthy, happy children and live a better life. So, they believe that every family love their children, but they believe that if you don't punish your children you don't love them. So, kind of like, part of their culture they use to raise like their parent do to them.