

Maria arrived from the Dominican Republic for a shot at a better life, but until now, she eked out a living using her “survival” English- just the basics. But with her four children now grown and more time on her hands, she finally has a chance, and true purpose, for improving her English: an ESOL course custom-tailored to meet her needs as a business owner.

Maria built her own home-based childcare business, combining her love for children and her innate entrepreneurial drive. “Maria’s Child Care Center” currently has 7 children enrolled, aged from just a few months old to 5 years. And she is not short on ambition: **“I see a big future. I want to take care of 100, and open my own big new center.”**

But until Maria started at the ENB-funded ESOL for Entrepreneurs class at Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, taught by Jamaica Plain Community Centers Adult Learning Program, that dream seemed plain out of reach. Maria’s problem was one that thousands of hardworking Bostonians face: limited English skills were hampering her ability to realize her vision for the future.

In the class, Maria is increasing not only her speaking and writing skills, but also her confidence, specific vocabulary and technical skills for running a child care business. **“The English we practice helps me in my job. All of my parents speak English, and now I can talk to them about their kids in English. I couldn’t before.”**

Topics like marketing, budgeting, and attaining proper licensure are essential for Maria to know inside and out when she expands her business. And make no mistake-she’s determined to do so. **“I will be ready for that,”** she confirms with a smile.

ESOL classes are the key for dreamers like Maria.