



TWO GENERATIONS. ONE FUTURE.

AN ANTHOLOGY FROM THE ASCEND FELLOWSHIP



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Working with the 2012-2013 Ascend Fellows, Ascend at the Aspen Institute leaders and staff, and our many colleagues to assemble this anthology of writings on two-generation strategies, programs, and research truly has been a labor of love. It's hard to imagine a smarter, more passionate, creative, and congenial group of individuals to have had the privilege to collaborate with since our Fellowship began in early 2012. This volume only partially represents the work of this wonderful group.

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Finally, having the resources of Ascend at the Aspen Institute is something that few people get to experience as we have. They dive headlong into every project with a level of passion and professionalism that would be hard to duplicate in any organization, anywhere, anytime.

Chris, Lindsay and Mario

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This Anthology incorporates photography from Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, Ascend events, two-generation programs, and stock photography. Unless otherwise noted, images do not represent specific people or organizations referenced in the essays.

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INTRODUCTION

The Aspen Institute has a long history of fostering leadership based on enduring values and providing space for leaders to confront the most pressing challenges facing our country. Poverty and inequality are the central issues of our times.

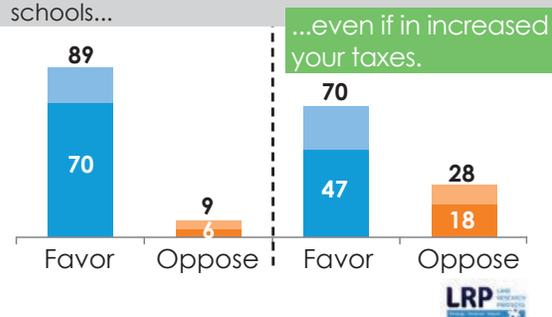
- Walter Isaacson, president and CEO, the Aspen Institute

Ascend at the Aspen Institute was created in 2010 with a vision of an America in which a legacy of educational success and economic security is passed from one generation to the next. Following the Great Recession – and the economic, social, and demographic shifts emerging at the turn of the 21st century – the landscape of opportunity for Americans is dire: nearly half of all children growing up in the United States today is low-income. And the number of low-income working families is rising, from 10.2 million in 2010 to 10.4 million in 2011, representing nearly one-third of all working families. At the same time, the income gap between low-income working families and the nation's wealthiest working families is widening every year.

And yet across the country there is powerful momentum for solutions that move children, parents, and families toward educational success and economic security. These two-generation approaches are advanced by leaders from across fields and sectors, from the local to the state to the federal levels, and build on decades of evidence as well as bold, innovative thinking. The **Aspen Institute Ascend Fellowship** has spurred this momentum, bringing together pioneering leaders who are piloting, replicating, and scaling two-generation approaches, enabling them to share knowledge, coordinate their efforts, and translate groundbreaking ideas into action.

Even in these tax sensitive times, Americans favor a two-generation approach to bring people out of poverty.

One program designed to help people who are living in poverty targets both parents and their children, so that parents get education and skills training to get a better job and at the same time their children get a good start with head start early education and quality schools...



Recognizing that breakthrough ideas come from different sectors and communities, the Ascend Fellowship targets diverse pioneers paving new pathways that break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. The Ascend Fellows are a network of leaders

from across the country who share knowledge, develop and test ideas, and coordinate their efforts. Ascend supports the Fellows with resources and a platform to accelerate the creation, amplification, and expansion of proven and promising two-generation strategies. The 18-month fellowship experience provides a space for innovation and collaboration, increases the impact of the Fellows' work, strengthens their leadership capacity and networks, fuels their passion, and, most importantly – inspires further action.

The Two Generations. One Future Anthology, featuring the inaugural Ascend Fellows, is the culmination of more than two years of collaboration and is a roadmap for organizations looking to infuse a new way of working on behalf of families into their work and their communities. It highlights the stories, perspectives, successes, and challenges of the 2012-2013 class of Ascend Fellows, 20 established leaders from 12 states and the District of Columbia who have embedded a two-generation lens in major systems, policies, research projects, or nonprofit organizations. These Fellows steward more than \$3 billion dollars in resources every year on behalf of families. Building on the best of leadership theory and the strong case for a two-generation focus on families, Ascend has worked closely with them to support collaborations across fields as varied as human services, early childhood, postsecondary education and workforce development, asset-building and economic supports, and health and well-being. From Colorado Department of Human Services Executive Director Reggie Bicha's effort to embed a two-generation lens throughout a \$2 billion system to Reverend Vivian Nixon's trailblazing approach to college access for justice-involved mothers, the initiatives shared in this anthology represent some of the best new ideas to ending income inequality today.

This anthology is not just a guide to partnership and leadership that will lead to better outcomes for families; it is a call to action. We invite you to visit the Ascend website and those of the Fellows included in this publication to learn more about their projects and the steps they took to implement these two-generation ideas. Income inequality and the widening opportunity gap are the defining issues of our time: our hope is that these leaders' voices will inspire action on behalf of the current and next generation of children, parents, and families.



Elliot Gerson
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2-GEN 2.0: AN OVERVIEW

Christopher T. King, P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, and Mario Small, Editors

A “two-generation strategy” to alleviate poverty provides programs to both parents and children simultaneously, rather than focusing exclusively on either children or their parents in separate silos. Although two-generation strategies are hardly new, interest in their latest iteration — now labeled “2-Gen 2.0” — has grown considerably over the last decade.¹ The new strategies acknowledge that the family is the most important driver in children’s life opportunities. Yet, two-generation programs and policies across the country are more the exception than the rule. It has proven very difficult in the past to transverse silos to combine and coordinate effective programs and policies for low-income parents and their children. Moreover, families are quite complex: Grandparents and aunts and uncles may be as central as parents, multiple-partner fertility is increasingly common, and current interventions have not managed to link programming across generations.

This anthology provides compelling illustrations of innovative approaches to two-generation strategies, ranging from the policy initiatives, programs, and practices to research and emerging evidence. The volume’s contributors come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Most are members of the inaugural class of Aspen Institute Ascend Fellows and were identified because of their pioneering work with two-generation approaches and perspectives. Some are policy makers and program leaders. Others are experienced researchers from different academic disciplines. Still others have experience in the philanthropic sector. Ascend staff members have also contributed.

The intended audience for the essays in this volume is policy makers and practitioners. The essays are meant to inform and encourage those interested in addressing multigenerational poverty to consider more holistic, family-centered approaches.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

A host of issues and concerns raised in a wide range of sectors provide the impetus for launching this latest round of two-generation strategies, which are receiving increasing attention not only in academic circles but also in ongoing policy discussions and in the media.²

First among these concerns is that inequality of both income and wealth in the United States has risen over the past three decades, despite some periods of relatively robust economic growth in the 1990s and mid-2000s^{3,4,5} and a recent attenuation of this trend during the Great Recession and its initial recovery period.

Policy researchers have shown that single-earner households, people with lower levels of education, and racial and ethnic minorities have borne the brunt of this problem.^{6,7,8} In addition, researchers have found that family income now predicts children's achievement nearly as well as parents' education.⁹

A second factor is the growing recognition that, despite our deep-seated belief in its importance as part of the American Dream, social and economic mobility in the United States is well below that of most of the countries we compare ourselves with — especially countries that are part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) — and may actually be declining in recent decades.¹⁰ Less than 8 percent of children born to U.S. families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution reach the top fifth, compared to 11.7 percent in Denmark.^{11,12} This is even the case in communities that have posted some of the highest economic and population growth rates in the nation. For example, mobility in Austin is a full percentage point below the U.S. rate despite consistent, robust growth that makes it the envy of many other communities. It has become increasingly clear that even a surging economic tide will leave plenty of boats in its wake.

A third factor is the growing recognition that our policy frameworks and their associated programs are woefully inadequate to address the issues that today's families are forced to contend with on a daily basis. Federal policy responses historically have tended to be crisis-oriented, responding to the immediate needs of particular populations (e.g., veterans, trade-affected workers, out-of-school youth), sectors (e.g., banking, manufacturing, health care) and geographical areas (e.g., pockets of poverty in Appalachia). Policies that address the nation's human capital needs, especially those of low-income and low-skilled groups, are particularly fragmented. We have an array of national programs that help adult and youth



jobseekers subsist while unemployed, train for and find work, and pursue additional academic and vocational education, but these policies are a patchwork that is all but impossible for a layperson to understand, much less navigate effectively.^{13,14,15} Such adult-oriented programs include Unemployment Insurance under the Social Security Act, new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, and Perkins Act education programs, while the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) both support poor parents in need of job search and training assistance. We also have policies to address the developmental and educational needs of young children, including Head Start and Early Head Start, the Child Care Development Fund, and the Child Care Tax Credits. These frameworks also vary widely in their scope, structure, and fragmentation by state and local community within our federal system.

Furthermore, as worthwhile as these policies and programs may be, they tend to address the needs of parents separately from, and at times even antithetically to, the needs of children and families as a whole.¹⁶ Many adult-focused workforce and education programs (e.g., WIA and now WIOA) aim to enhance participants' employability. Therefore, children — especially very young children — can be viewed as a significant barrier to successful participation, entailing a supportive service cost hurdle. In counterpart programs for children, such as Head Start, parents with low skills, low literacy, and poor employment preparation can be seen as an impediment to children's successful development. This is a systemic problem that cannot be solved by adult or children's programs acting alone. We should not expect them to do so.

Finally, while money may not be the root of all problems, the lack of resources for such programs for adults and children continues to be a serious problem. A few comparisons help make the point. If we broadly compare investments in labor market policies — both active policies that encompass skills training and work readiness as well as passive policies such as the provision of unemployment benefits — the U.S. ranks near the bottom of OECD countries. According to the most recent figures available, we invest the equivalent of just under 0.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in such policies, compared to almost 4 percent in Denmark.¹⁷ On this metric, we are near the bottom of the rankings, with Estonia, Poland, Japan, Korea, the Czech Republic, and Mexico. That said, the U.S. relies on private employers for workforce training and skills development to a much greater extent than other countries. Employers are estimated to account for as much as 90 percent of all investments in workforce development.¹⁸ Yet, these investments are more frequently made in workers who already possess higher levels of education and skills, further reinforcing inequities in the labor market.¹⁹ This is the case empirically, but it is also fully aligned with the human capital theory articulated by Becker,²⁰ Mincer,²¹ and others.

An examination of our investments in young children paints a picture that is no less dismaying. As Herman et al.²² conclude, "Among other OECD countries, the United States is behind in every category," including the rate of preschool enrollment of three- and four-year-olds (ranked 24th and 26th at 51 percent and 69 percent, respectively) and the share of GDP spent on preschool (ranked 21st at 0.4 percent). Moreover, most other countries, including China, Mexico, and India, have very

explicit goals for preschool enrollment and outcomes, while our goals tend to be vague and lacking commitment.

These and other factors have driven the recent movement to address intergenerational poverty through the pursuit of multiple-generation strategies. There are others as well, including our rapidly expanding knowledge and-awareness of neuroscience and the many forces that affect and mediate adverse effects on children's brain development.



In front (left to right), Ascend Fellows Lindsay Chase Lansdale, Mia Birdsong, and Henry Wilde

AN ANTHOLOGY 'ROAD MAP'

This volume covers a wide range of topics related to two-generation strategies in short order; it might be thought of as a complement to the Spring 2014 *Future of Children Journal's* "Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two-Generation Mechanisms" issue, which was edited by Ron Haskins, Irwin Garfinkel, and Sara McLanahan.²³ The volume opens with a brief introduction by Aspen Institute President and biographer Walter Isaacson and Aspen Institute Vice President and Ascend Executive Director Anne Mosle. It then segues to a personal reflection from Ascend Fellow and author Wes Moore, who directly experienced the contribution a strong and committed mother can make to a young child's growth and development despite living in low-income circumstances, as he described in his 2010 bestseller *The Other Wes Moore*.

The first major section provides two essays that examine in-depth what we have termed the **Underpinnings of Two-Generation Strategies**. Two-generation strategies can be approached from a number of perspectives: from high-quality adult workforce and education programs, from quality early childhood education, from comprehensive family services, from "marriages" of providers from all of these places, or even from other approaches. Former National Head Start Director Joan Lombardi along with Anne Mosle, Nisha Patel, Rachel Schumacher, and Jennifer Stedron present the Ascend two-generation framework. They focus particularly on the early childhood side of the equation and explore its main components: education, including both early childhood and postsecondary; economic supports; social capital; and health. For each component, they highlight several promising approaches as well as robust partnerships. With the active support of the Aspen Institute Ascend Fund and the work of private foundations (e.g., Annie E. Casey Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation), they now can choose from many promising programs around the nation to highlight. And, as Mosle and her colleagues conclude, "effective two-generation approaches are rarely achieved through a single organization's efforts."

In the second chapter in this section,²⁴ Ascend Fellow and Northwestern University professor Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and Columbia University professor Jeanne Brooks-Gunn present major theories that explain why two-generation strategies could be more effective than single-generation strategies. Briefly, these include the Continuity and Change Theory, which might be summarized as “early learning begets later learning, skills beget skills”; the Ecological Theory, which stresses the importance of “proximal environments” in children’s early years, especially school and home; the Risk and Resilience Theory, which emphasizes that children can bounce back and thrive in the face of adversity with internal and environmental “protective factors” and suggests that interventions must be multi-level, tailored, focused on multiple domains, and lasting; and the Human Capital Theory, which posits that education and skills investments lead to greater productivity and result in better jobs and earnings for the beneficiaries of these investments over time.

Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn also explain and discuss the evolution of Two-Generation 2.0, starting with preceding versions in the 1980s and 1990s that either involved adding low-intensity, parenting, and other services to early childhood education or augmenting activities for welfare recipients under various regimes of welfare reform. These earlier two-generation efforts produced modest impacts at best for participating families, whereas new program elements in 2.0 programs show strong promise. Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn conclude that evidence in support of two-generation impacts is only beginning to accrue and that the time is ripe for innovation, exploration, and evaluation.

The next major section, **Addressing and Empowering Families**, provides a wide-ranging series of chapters exploring different aspects of family poverty and empowerment. The section starts with Sarah Haight, a senior program manager at Ascend, writing about one of the three main pillars of Ascend at the Aspen Institute’s approach, which is to “spark and expand a new conversation” in part by “elevating parent voices.” Haight writes about the power of simple storytelling by families and the need for policy makers and program administrators to listen to the wisdom that emanates from their narratives. She describes the dual efforts that Ascend has made to ensure these voices are heard, both by conducting polling and focus groups and through its parent ambassadors, who are actively engaged parents from two-generation programs who tell their stories and help inform key stakeholders in various forums. The “feedback loops” engendered by these approaches are proving instrumental for Ascend’s efforts to foster two-generation strategies.

Then, in “The Ties that Bind,” Ascend Fellow and Harvard University sociology professor Mario Small examines how social networks develop and expand in child care centers and the effects they can have for families.²⁵ Small, who has specialized in research on social networks, reports on research that he and his team have conducted in New York City child care centers and through a representative nationwide survey of young mothers in U.S. cities. In his book *Unanticipated Gains*, he found that mothers tend to build strong relationships with others through their child’s early care and education center, often through routine functions in those same centers (e.g., volunteering for field trips, spring cleaning). “Many of these relations were strong, meaningful ties that significantly reduced mothers’ probability of depression and other forms of hardship,” he writes.²⁶ These outcomes, he notes, concur with decades of research by social psychologists about the formation of

positive bonds and with the arguments proposed by Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn that the social connectedness in early childhood education settings can serve as a foundation for successful two-generation approaches.

Mia Birdsong, Ascend Fellow and vice president of the San Francisco-based Family Independence Initiative (FII), describes a very different way of addressing the needs of low-income families: empowering and supporting the families to find and carry out their own solutions. Birdsong begins by citing a handful of examples of this empowerment approach drawn from communities across the country. She notes that we typically focus on what institutions can do to remedy a presented problem but “in so doing we are completely missing the answer that has been in front of us all along — the families and communities we want to impact.” She notes that FII has been testing new approaches to economic and social mobility since 2001, basing its work on three critical elements: connections, choice, and capital. She concludes that we need to “connect people with each other, let them make their own choices, and provide access to the financial resources they want to fuel their ideas and aspirations.”

The next chapter, by Ascend Fellow and Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) President Andrea Levere with her CFED colleagues Kate Griffin, Emily Hoagland, Ezra Levin and Leigh Tivol, focuses on the pivotal “Role of Asset Development in Intergenerational Success.” Innovative proponents of asset development in different forms for nearly two decades, they note that “asset building is fundamentally and deeply aligned with the growing movement for two-generation strategies as a means of poverty alleviation.” In part this effort stems from CFED’s path-breaking work demonstrating the prevalence of liquid-asset poverty, which means a family lacks sufficient financial resources to subsist at the poverty level for three months if their main source of income were disrupted. They explore four ways asset-building strategies and related products contribute to generational success for families, including building financial knowledge and capability among parents and caregivers; integrating service delivery in terms of both parent- and child-centered programs; building children’s savings accounts; and recommending policies that can expand asset-building opportunities across generations, for both children and their parents. Throughout the chapter, the authors provide examples of policies and programs that are fostering or may contribute to asset building in the future.

In the following piece, Reverend Vivian Nixon, an Ascend Fellow and College and Community Fellowship (CCF) executive director, describes the approach, services, and results of a two-generation program that serves ex-offender mothers who are actively pursuing higher education in New York City. Under Nixon’s direction, CCF also co-founded and is leading the Education from the Inside Out (EIO) Coalition, whose mission is to remove barriers to higher education for this population. Nixon explains that CCF’s primary goal is to enhance the well-being of women, and their families and their communities, through programs and advocacy fostering postsecondary education for incarcerated students and students with criminal histories. Having researched recidivism and listened carefully to its students, CCF supplements its postsecondary education activities with holistic services, serving some 200 women each year. The results have been remarkable. Since its founding in 2000, the women have collectively attained 286 degrees, including many master’s degrees, a J.D., and a Ph.D. Moreover, Nixon notes that while it is not a core program goal, CCF appears to have had a significant impact on recidivism: Fewer

than 2 percent of participants have returned to prison, compared to a three-year rate of around 60 percent for women offenders generally.

Families suffering from abuse present a particularly difficult set of problems, but they also have many strengths. Ascend Fellow Katie Albright, executive director of the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center, describes an intensive family-centered program that serves families of abuse and presents data on its array of services and initial results. Albright explains that over four decades, the Center has evolved to focus on two generations in addressing abuse and its correlates, which include low family income and single parenthood. In recent years, in part with support from Ascend, the Center has moved to an Integrated Family Services strategy, which is based on the proven Five Protective Factors Model developed by the D.C.-based Center for the Study of Social Policy. The strategy features an array of evidence-based tools to measure progress and ultimately success for the families the Center serves, relying on Efforts to Outcomes Software® to track clients. As Albright explains, while the Center isn't yet ready to launch an independent evaluation or conduct impact studies, it is becoming much more outcomes-oriented, documenting improvements for families and making program adjustments as the evidence continues to emerge.

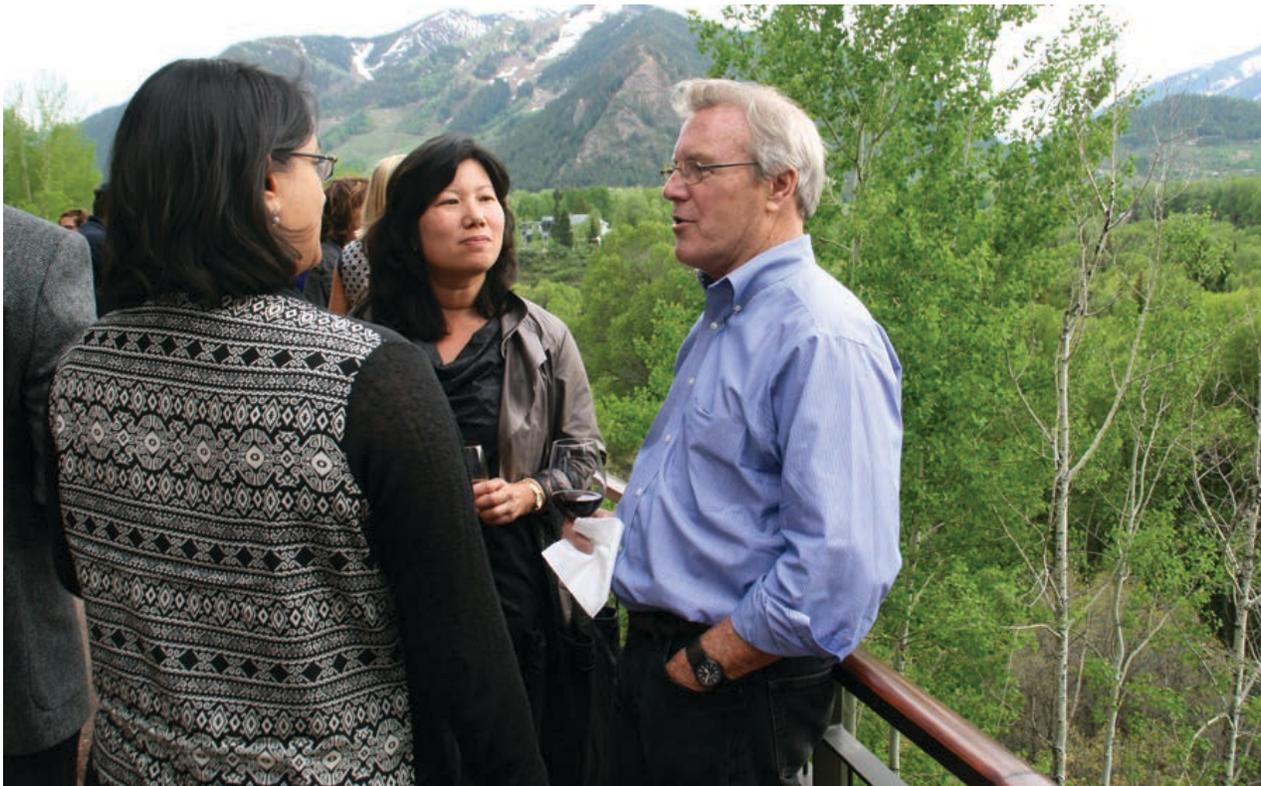
Ascend Fellow Cara Aley, founder and CEO of the experiment in social entrepreneurship American Mojo, then shares her experiences and lessons learned from starting up and operating a for-profit social enterprise (FPSE) with an explicit two-generation approach. After operating from 2010-2012, the enterprise was shuttered for lack of capital.²⁷ As Aley explains, she started the company with her brothers, all children raised by a single mother, "to provide mobility opportunities



to single mothers" in apparel manufacturing. Their intent was to offer these moms chances for upward economic mobility via career advancement outside the apparel field, simultaneously offering help to parents (e.g., living-wage jobs, postsecondary education and training, ESL classes) and their children (e.g., quality early childhood education). Mojo also partnered with Keys to Degrees, another two-generation program discussed in more detail in a subsequent chapter. Despite having to close its doors after a few short years, Aley points to early program successes, including lower employee turnover and higher attendance rates than in standard manufacturing, improved housing stability for its workers, skills acquisition and career advancement, and even a few entrepreneurial ventures begun by former Mojo employees. She closes by sharing some of the lessons learned from her experiences working at both American Mojo and another FPSE, in part because she believes the model could flourish in a future non-manufacturing setting. One of the lessons she shares is that the "founders' hearts should be in both sides of the business."

In this section's final chapter, Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, longtime documentary photographer and videographer for *Time* magazine and the founder and director of the American Poverty Project, approaches the issue from a very different vantage point. He writes about a unique two-generation project, the Student Leadership Project from AmericanPoverty.org.²⁸ Liss is motivated by a strong desire to confront poverty and worries about the fact that, despite continuing high rates of poverty among American children — about one in four currently — the topic and the term itself have been noticeably absent from policy discussions at all levels. Even recent bipartisan discussions tend to focus more on persistent income inequality and the plight of the middle class than on poverty, per se. Liss notes that in the Great Depression, "pictures helped mold the nation's collective memory and conscience. Seventy-five years later, the plight and potential of the least fortunate members of our communities is mostly unseen and ignored." His organization, a nonprofit alliance of photojournalists, writers, filmmakers, and academics, developed and launched the Student Leadership Project, which provides opportunities for young people to learn about poverty and injustice in the country and begin to act upon that knowledge. Participating students — members of the millennial generation — are empowered by and use "comprehensive action kits" created by the program's older generation. With these kits, they can engage in an array of activities using photographs and other materials to increase awareness and understanding of the effects of poverty and to advocate for its alleviation.

The third section, **Innovative Policies and Programs**, goes deeper into particular two-generation programs and models that have been developed or are that Ascend Fellows around the country are operating and evaluating. Ascend Fellow and Acelero Learning founder and CEO Henry Wilde leads off with a discussion of two-generation strategies as seen from the private sector point of view:²⁹ Acelero is the largest private operator of Head Start programs in the nation. Wilde writes that Acelero has had "a relentless focus on child and family outcomes to close the achievement gap" since it began delivering high-quality Head Start services in 2001. However, he notes, it is not enough to have a strong data system driving better outcomes for families — organizations like Acelero need to also recognize that "no single program or strategy" works for all parents. At Acelero, Wilde and his colleagues are working to develop plans that acknowledge different "hopes and dreams" among families. He also encourages program leaders and policy makers



Ascend Fellow Chris King with Liane Wong from the David & Lucile Packard Foundation

to “replicate what works,” directing them to Shine Early Learning, a social enterprise through which Acelero disseminates tools and strategies to programs seeking new ways of working with children and parents.

In the next chapter, Teresa Eckrich Sommer and colleagues — including Ascend Fellows Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, Christopher King, and Steven Dow, executive director of the Community Action Program of Tulsa County (CAP Tulsa) — team up to describe one of the first major two-generation 2.0 programs, Tulsa's CareerAdvance® Program. They note that only a handful of early learning centers explicitly target parents for postsecondary education and career training in systematic programming, despite the fact that increased parental education and family income are associated with better outcomes for children. The CareerAdvance® Program was designed, therefore, to pilot and test family economic security through the combination of early childhood education services with stackable career training for parents. At the forefront of innovation, CAP Tulsa received a large federal award from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in 2010 to bring its novel two-generation program to scale. Building from research at every level, the program is yielding important lessons for the field, including the challenges of sustainability, the importance of systems alignment, and how organizations can develop a two-generation identity and culture. The components of Tulsa's two-generation program are largely working as planned and have the potential to make real impacts over time that may be larger than if the services were delivered separately.

The critical role postsecondary education plays in preparing students of all ages, most especially parents, for good-paying jobs with career advancement opportunities in today's labor market is the focus of the chapter written by Ascend

Fellow and Miami Dade College (MDC) President Eduardo Padrón. An economist who immigrated to the United States from Cuba with his family almost six decades ago, Padrón leads one of the largest postsecondary institutions in the nation. Among the approximately 165,000 students, Padrón recognized that there was a large share of struggling low-income parents. So in 2011, he partnered with Single Stop USA, based on its record of success in other states, to provide a well-thought-out set of services — including benefits screening, legal and financial counseling, tax preparation, and assistance with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) — right on campus to help students parents succeed in college. He reports that MDC Single Stop has served some 17,000 students to date and is in the process of making its services available to every student at entry. Early results suggest the MDC Single Stop partnership has led to improved retention (persistence) rates.

Ascend Fellow Gloria Perez, executive director of the Jeremiah Program, describes another place-based two-generation strategy that is focused on helping single mothers access and complete postsecondary education. Jeremiah provides these mothers with safe, affordable housing on campuses located near college and university facilities, high-quality early childhood education (using the High Scope curriculum), personal empowerment and life skills training (based on the well-known Twin Cities RISE curriculum), and related supports (e.g., career coaching) for career-track education. Perez reports that recent cohorts of Jeremiah Program graduates have done very well, with 54 percent earning associate degrees, 40 percent earning bachelor's degrees, and 6 percent earning certificates, while 77 percent are employed and earning an average of \$16.25 per hour. Importantly, 90 percent of program graduates are now “maintaining consistent employment.” In addition, all of the children in Jeremiah have demonstrated “cognitive and physical growth consistent with national averages.” All of these successes, according to an April 2013 Wilder Research study, has produced a solid return on investment (ROI) to the community.

Ascend Fellow and Endicott College President Richard Wylie and Endicott's Director of Keys to Degrees Replication Autumn Green offer another place-based postsecondary education model that serves parents of both genders. The Keys to Degrees Program began at Endicott, a small, four-year college in Beverly, Massachusetts, but has expanded to other communities, including Ypsilanti and Big Rapids, Michigan, and St. Paul, Minnesota, among others. As Green and Wylie explain, Keys to Degrees is a campus-based program serving single parents and their young children (six years or younger at admission). Families share four-bedroom dormitory suites with one other family, and all parents are enrolled at Endicott in a “career-minded major,” full-time, year-round, while their children are enrolled in a vetted high-quality child development program or elementary school. They are “students first and Keys to Degrees participants second” and participate in the full range of campus activities, including extracurricular activities. Additional services for parents include scholarships; one-on-one tutoring; counseling; life-skills classes; and full-time, semester-long internships, which often lead to jobs. According to Green and Wylie, the results have been impressive, both in-program and out. Based on a decade of data, fully 71 percent of their students have completed college in just four years (versus 40 percent of parenting students nationally who complete degrees or certificates in six years). Their alumni surveys indicate that Keys to Degrees graduates have been quite successful upon graduation, with 100 percent employed (86 percent in jobs related to their career field of study), 57 percent earning an annual salary of \$40,000 or more,

and 100 percent not receiving any public support, among other outcomes. They report that the main challenges to replicating Keys to Degrees are raising the funds to support program staff and provide student scholarships, providing housing, and designing and using tailored curricula and programming.

Ascend Fellow Reggie Bicha, executive director of Colorado's Department of Human Services (CDHS), contributed the last chapter in this section, which describes the family-centered, multifaceted approach — involving financial literacy, asset building, and service coordination — that the State of Colorado is taking to address current and intergenerational poverty. Bicha explains that the “goal is to address the needs of vulnerable children and their parents *at the same time*.” Colorado has adopted three priorities in this work: “1) families achieve through meaningful work, 2) wealth is achieved through financial literacy, and 3) children achieve through early learning.” In the state's TANF program, CDHS has fashioned programs that serve both parents — the custodial parent through Colorado Reworks and the noncustodial parent through the Colorado Parent Employment Project — based on the notion that “children do best when both parents are actively involved in their lives.” Partnering with Ascend Fellow Andrea Levere, Colorado is piloting statewide child savings accounts (CSAs), based on CFED's Saving for Education, Entrepreneurship and Downpayment (SEED) initiative. In 2012, CDHS, under Bicha's leadership, also established the state's first Office of Early Childhood to help state child care become “both a work support *and* an educational strategy.” In this framework, children in state child care would become ready for kindergarten and beyond through early learning, family supports, emotional/social supports, and health care. Colorado's two-generation strategy encompasses a number of other features as well and is building public and private partnerships to help deliver on its promises.

The final section, **Evaluating and Fostering Two-Generation Strategies**, contains two chapters. In the first, Ascend Fellow Christopher King and Donald Hernandez, sociology professor at Hunter College at City University of New York, present a framework with suggested measures and indicators for gauging the success of emerging two-generation 2.0 strategies. In doing so, they draw upon research each of them has been conducting with colleagues both for the ongoing evaluation of Tulsa's CareerAdvance® Program and for ongoing work for the Foundation for Child Development. They first look at the variety of emerging two-generation strategies and provide a broad two-generation theory of change to illustrate mechanisms by which they are expected to work and point to the types of measures needed. They then categorize and describe major measurement domains — for parents and their children — and timeframes and offer examples of useful measures and indicators to consider. They conclude by describing ongoing research efforts that are expected to offer more insight into the measurement of two-generation effects, before concluding with some general observations.

In the volume's concluding chapter, former Ascend Program Manager Mekaelia Davis outlines Ascend's strategic approach to fostering two-generation strategy growth over the next few years, which relies heavily on developing “a Network that will generate innovation, influence, and impact for children and their parents across the country” through the auspices of the \$1.7 million Ascend Fund launched in 2013. To date, the Ascend Fund has provided financial and technical support to 58 organizations, spanning 24 states and the District of Columbia. Davis points out

that Ascend has strategically built upon existing platforms to “reach families and communities at scale” and has cultivated cross-system, cross-issue partnerships. The Fund has seeded efforts with cohorts of the United Way, Head Start providers, women’s funds, community foundations, community action and human service agencies, as well as community colleges, researchers, and policy centers. She indicates that over the next three years, the Ascend Network will “produce nearly 100 new program models, tool kits, webinars, research methods and policy briefs to help advance outcomes for children and parents together.”

NEXT STEPS

What lies on the immediate horizon for two-generation strategies? And what are some of the more important next steps we might envision for these initiatives? It is encouraging to see thoughtful proposals and activity on so many fronts and from groups from different fields, levels of government, sectors, and even political affiliations.

First, we need to continuously reflect and critique our own understanding of two-generation approaches. The term “two-generation” is an important corrective for longstanding perspectives in which poverty-alleviation programs either targeted parents through workforce development or children through early education models, ignoring that addressing the needs of one without the other was unlikely to yield success. The new approach has paved the way for greater focus on the family and household and the complex factors that affect the success of all its members. At the same time, today’s families are themselves complex — with multiple adults in different households responsible for a given child, children of multiple parents in a single household responding to a given adult, and parents and grandparents in a given household responsible for children and grandchildren. The implications for our understanding of poverty policy are important to keep in perspective.

Second, we need more research on both the implementation and impacts of two-generation programs. For example, Teresa Eckrich Sommer, Chase-Lansdale, Brooks-Gunn, and colleagues are writing a case study of how CAP Tulsa’s two-generation programming has evolved over time. Similarly, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has funded case studies on how various organizations have moved from focusing primarily on one generation to developing a two-generation organizational identity. How did this transition come about? What are the gains and challenges? In terms of program impacts, there is very little evaluation research on whether two-generation programs have stronger effects on parents and children than single-generation programs. Given the momentum across the country in two-generation programming, this is an opportune time to launch studies on the multiple impacts that different interventions may have.

Third, this is also an opportune time to explore variation in two-generation programming and policies, as illustrated in this volume. Different approaches are essential because families have varying challenges to exiting poverty. In the fall of 2014, Ascend at the Aspen Institute released *Top 10 for 2Gen*, which provides a roadmap of 10 policy opportunities and six principles to guide policy advancement among organizations serving families at the local, state, and federal levels. Given the recent funding made available through the Affordable Care Act and momentum around early childhood investments, important levers can be refined and aligned to produce two-generation outcomes. These include strengthening family and

parent supports in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs, increasing support for economic security outcomes in home visiting programs, reforming financial aid programs to better help enrolled student parents, and redesigning TANF for 21st century families. As Ascend and the Center for Law and Social Policy recently pointed out, taken together, the initiatives put forth by President Obama in his State of the Union address reflect two-generation policy opportunities for this administration.³⁰

Encouragingly, these policy ideas have broad public support across party lines and demographics, according to a 2014 bipartisan poll and analysis commissioned by Ascend and conducted by Lake Research Partners. In fact, a majority of Americans, both Democrats and Republicans, see Head Start and home visiting programs, among others, as core values and believe strongly that investing in parents' economic well-being will help their children succeed.

With the growing public and political will for two-generation approaches, it will be important to continue rigorous short- and long-term evidence-building for programs, which will inform policies that move children and their parents together toward economic security.

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**PART I:
UNDERPINNINGS OF A TWO-GENERATION APPROACH**



GATEWAYS TO TWO GENERATIONS: THE POTENTIAL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND PARENTS TOGETHER

Joan Lombardi, Anne Mosle, Nisha Patel, Rachel Schumacher, and Jennifer Stedron

Parent-child relationships are at the core of two-generation approaches. What young children learn from the adults who raise and care for them lays the foundation for future social, emotional, language, and cognitive growth.¹ When children do not have these protective relationships and experience deprivation and high stress levels that often come with poverty, their brains and bodies adapt in ways that can have long-term negative effects.²

Early childhood development programs — such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, prekindergarten through third grade — are well positioned to be gateways to two-generation approaches that support children and parents together. Nearly 12.5 million children under age five are in some type of regular child care — including classrooms (at centers, schools, or Head Start/Early Head Start); family child care homes; the home of a family member, friend, or neighbor; or in the child's own home.³ Almost two-thirds of children under age six have all available parents in the labor force.⁴ Almost 40 percent of children under age two with working mothers spend at least 35 hours per week in nonparental care.⁵

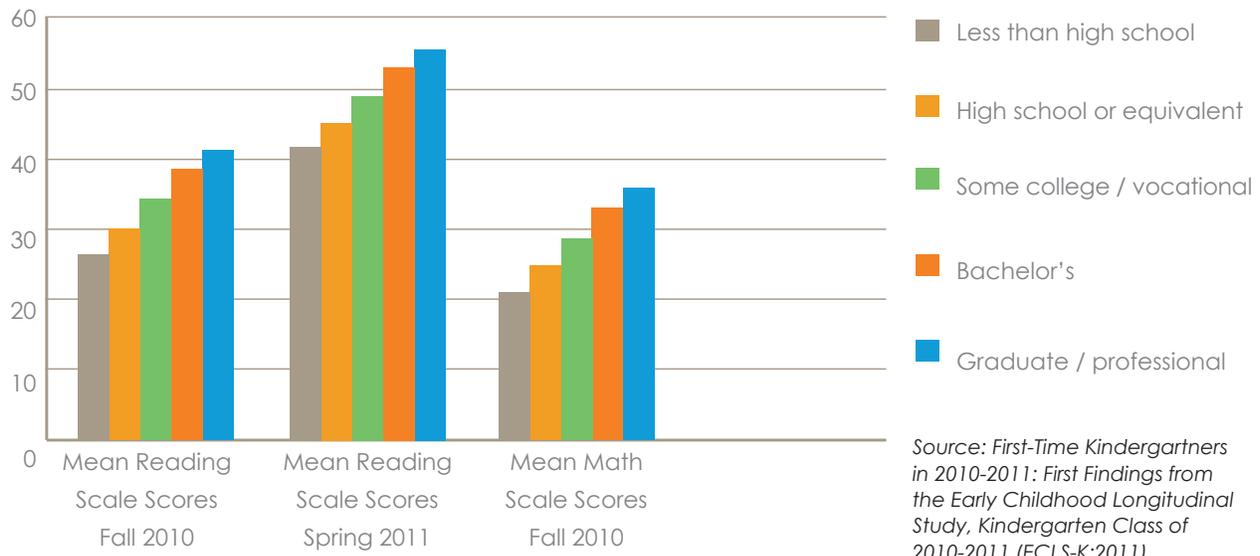
High-quality early childhood development programs provide more than care and education for children; they partner with parents and serve as a trusted resource. The emphasis on learning and development can provide an opening for parents to explore their own hopes for the future and increase their parenting skills and confidence, which can contribute to success in employment or continued education.

TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Ascend's two-generation framework consists of education (early childhood and postsecondary), economic supports, social capital, and health. Below we define and highlight promising approaches in early childhood development in each of the component areas.

The programs highlighted involve partnerships with other organizations; effective two-generation approaches are rarely achieved through a single organization's efforts.

Mean Reading and Math Scores for the 2010-2011 Kindergarten Class by Parents' Highest Level of Education



EDUCATION

Parents' level of educational attainment is a strong predictor of children's educational and economic outcomes in the United States.⁶ Maternal education in particular strongly predicts children's early developmental outcomes. For example, language skills of three-year-old children have been shown to increase as their mothers further their education.⁷

Meanwhile, quality early education has documented effects on later educational attainment and economic outcomes. For vulnerable children, quality early education can produce an annual rate of return in the range of 7 to 10 percent, based on reduced costs in areas like health and criminal justice and better academic and workforce outcomes.⁸

Promising Approaches

Increase literacy skills for both children and parents. In Springdale, Arkansas — where 44 percent of K-12 students are classified as English language learners — the National Center for Family Literacy provides literacy services at 13 sites for families with children in early childhood education through grade nine. In addition, adults can receive basic education tailored to students who are English language learners. Four days per week parents go to school for English as a second language classes, attend parent-directed information sessions, and spend time in the classroom with their child.⁹

Link early childhood development programs and higher education. CAP Tulsa's CareerAdvance® program, established by Ascend Fellow Steven Dow, is piloting a pathway for the parents of Early Head Start and Head Start children to earn a variety of credentials or degrees in the health care field (e.g., nursing, health information technology). CareerAdvance® partners provide education, starting with GED preparation, if needed. To promote peer support, the program enrolls students in cohorts; requires participation in weekly facilitated meetings; and purchases entire classes reserved for CareerAdvance® cohorts, which are scheduled for when the

participants' children are attending Head Start or Early Head Start. CareerAdvance® coaches provide a variety of assistance to participants, including career planning and help with family issues and emergencies. Importantly, a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Professional Opportunities Grant allows CAP Tulsa to provide services and supports at no cost to participants.¹⁰⁻¹¹

ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

A growing proportion of young children live in families stressed by food insecurity (22 percent) or household budgets disproportionately going to the cost of housing (40 percent).¹² Families who pay for child care and live in poverty spend 28 percent of their income, about four times as much as higher-income families, on that care. At the same time, increased family income during early childhood can have a profound and long-lasting impact on children's lives. For families with young children with an annual income of \$25,000 or less, a \$3,000 increase during the early childhood years yields a 17 percent increase in adult earnings for those children.¹⁴

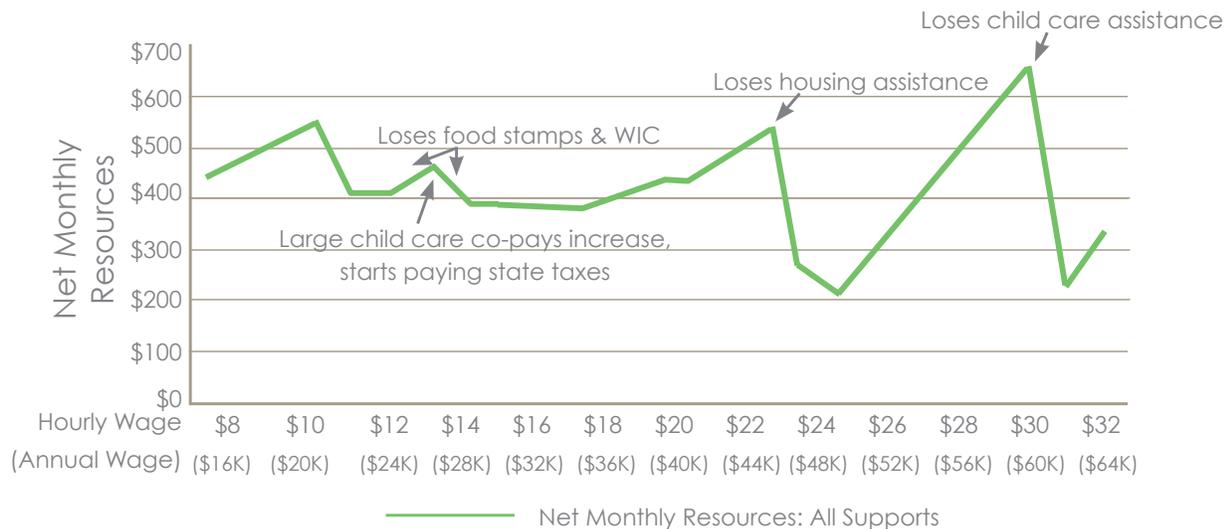
Promising Approaches

Build financial education and family assets. Savings, especially in low-income families, is a good predictor of upward economic mobility for future generations. Organizations such as CFED, led by Ascend Fellow Andrea Levere, are helping to launch children's savings account (CSA) programs across the nation. At age 18, the money in CSAs is used for any form of postsecondary education. In partnership with CFED, the Colorado Department of Human Services, under the leadership of Ascend Fellow Reggie Bicha, will soon prototype one of the first statewide CSA programs, demonstrating that large-scale, state-run systems — such as state prekindergarten and child care assistance programs — can integrate and deliver CSAs to improve outcomes for both children and parents. Nationally, The ASSET (Assets, Savings, Support, Education, and Training) Initiative is a collaborative effort within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) agencies to integrate financial education and other services — individual development accounts, debt management, and tax-filing assistance — into existing programs, including Head Start.¹⁵ CFED is working with ACF on the implementation of the Assets Initiative Partnership to help local grantees integrate asset-building products and services into their programs.

Protect family economic gains through continuity and bundling of supports. Families making financial progress often lose economic supports well before they can become financially stable. The cost of losing benefits like child care or other work supports often far exceeds wage increases. To combat this, several agencies can offer a “bundle” of services for vulnerable children and families. For example, the Atlanta Civic Site has created a seamless partnership with Sheltering Arms – Educare Atlanta, Dunbar Elementary School, and The Center for Working Families, Inc.¹⁶ The Center for Working Families provides education and workforce development services for parents and has a contract with the Georgia Department of Human Services to finance the child care slots at Sheltering Arms. Sheltering Arms is part of the Educare school network, which offers high-quality early childhood development and education for at-risk children from birth to five years.¹⁷ Sheltering Arms augments the state's child care funds with Early Head Start, Head Start, Georgia Pre-K, and other funding sources to offer full-day, year-round programming; provide comprehensive services (e.g., family support workers); and smooth over gaps in subsidy eligibility when possible.¹⁸

The Cliff Effect: Individuals who receive economic supports (e.g., housing assistance) may lose that assistance once they earn a wage increase that crosses an income threshold. This generates severe drops in total family resources for working families whose incomes rise just above the threshold for assistance – creating renewed struggles to pay monthly bills. The on-or-off nature of these supports can create strong incentives for families to keep earnings under the income threshold.

Income Growth and Impact on Available Economic Supports



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SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital — the network of people and institutions upon which a family can rely — is a critical contributor to the well-being of children and their parents. Social capital can be generated within family relationships and through family engagement in schools, religious institutions, and other community networks.

Higher levels of emotional support in mothers' lives are linked with positive child outcome measures, such as better social competence and engagement in schooling,¹⁹ whereas social isolation is associated with elevated rates of abuse and neglect.²⁰ Ascend Fellow Dr. Mario Small of the University of Chicago found that mothers using child care benefit from the advice of other mothers they encounter at sites. As a result, they can more effectively navigate hardships and more efficiently access resources, such as economic supports.²¹

Promising Approaches

Develop strong parent-child relationships early. Doulas provide intensive emotional support to vulnerable first-time mothers through weekly home visits. HealthConnect One provides a community-based doula model currently used or in development in more than 100 communities nationally. Local communities select respected members of their community to receive extensive training in health promotion to provide relationship-driven support for expectant families. Another initiative, in place in Wisconsin's Rock and Walworth counties, integrates doulas into the Early Head



Start program. They accompany mothers on prenatal visits, attend the birth, and continue to provide relationship-based support at least 12 months after the birth. They also encourage the involvement of family members and fathers in the pregnancy, birth, and lives of the mothers and children.²²

Support parent engagement in early childhood through social networks.

Abriendo Puertas is a parent training model designed by and for Latino parents with children ages 0-5. The curriculum, available in both Spanish and English, promotes school readiness, family well-being, and advocacy through best practices in areas such as early childhood development, civic engagement, and planning for family success. Many parents do not see themselves as important to their children's success in school, and

building relationships with other parents helps them see the connection.²³

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Physical health and mental health have a major impact on a family's ability to thrive. Childhood trauma, for instance, has lasting health and social consequences. Similarly, economic supports, such as housing, and social capital, such as connections to one's neighborhood and community, are important social determinants of health. The Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion, as well as delving further into brain science and the social determinants of health, offer opportunities for increasing the health and well-being of children and their parents.

Promising Approaches

Assess mental health and connect families to services. Ascend Fellow Katie Albright, executive director of the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center, is developing and implementing a framework to improve social capital and mental health outcomes for children and their parents together. This framework, part of the "Strengthening Families" approach, includes a pilot program assessing families' mental health needs and connecting families to other services, including partner organizations such as the Children's Advocacy Center.

TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES AT THE STATE LEVEL

Early childhood programs cannot be expected to address the needs of both children and families on their own. For many programs, the capacity to serve is out-matched by the needs of the families. These programs need a responsive infrastructure of support to provide quality services to children while partnering with adult-serving agencies. Partnerships can be encouraged through incentives at the state level, including the promotion of statewide community planning efforts. Two promising state-level examples are highlighted below.

Align and integrate child- and adult-serving agencies. Colorado leaders in the Department of Human Services (headed by Ascend Fellow Reggie Bicha), the Department of Education, and the Lieutenant Governor's Office produced a memorandum of understanding articulating shared goals and objectives for building "a purposefully connected and coordinated system of early childhood services and programs that includes: 1) early learning; 2) family support and parent education; 3) social, emotional, and mental health; and 4) healthcare for children and families in need." The state partners pledged to work in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders, including the state's 30 local Colorado Early Childhood Councils, which focus on building early childhood systems at the county level.

Leverage statewide networks. Vermont delivers teen parent support programs through an existing network of 15 Parent Child Centers. With a grant from the federal Office of Adolescent Health, Vermont's Learning Together programs provide quality child care for babies and toddlers while their teen mothers participate in counseling, education, job readiness training, and other services. All services are delivered in the Parent Child Center if possible. Child care is delivered on-site or in a nearby facility and is defined as high quality by the state quality rating system. Thirty-eight states have statewide child care resource and referral networks that can potentially be partners in this work.

CONCLUSION

It is time to explore and promote the potential of early childhood development programs as gateways for two-generation approaches that support children and parents together. Research findings motivate the approach, innovative practices are generating results, and, most important, parents believe two-generation approaches are needed to increase their chances for achieving family educational success and economic security.

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TWO-GENERATION PROGRAMS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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In principle, two-generation programs have a unifying form: they explicitly target low-income parents and children from the same family. However, their structure and content vary widely. For children, two-generation programs can include health and education services, such as home visiting, early childhood education, and programs for children who have been exposed to trauma. Services for parents can involve parenting, literacy, learning the English language, earning a GED, getting a postsecondary education, treating mental health problems, and preventing child abuse and domestic violence, as well as case management and workforce development.

In this article, we focus on a specific type of two-generation program: those that intentionally link education, job training, and career-building services for low-income parents simultaneously with early childhood education for their young children. These programs emphasize an investment strategy to build human capital for both children and parents, implying an intensive, extended approach.

In the past five years, the appeal of a human capital two-generation perspective has led to a number of initiatives. Evaluation evidence for these recent innovations lags behind policy and practice, but theoretical support for two-generation programs is compelling.

This article integrates theories from developmental science, economics, and education to evaluate the assumptions that underlie two-generation programs, to outline possible mechanisms through which these programs affect children, to synthesize and critique what has been tried to date, and to describe emerging programs across the nation. Our bottom line: The jury is out and will be for some time regarding whether new human capital two-generation programs can be successfully implemented, as pilot programs or at scale. Very little data are available on whether the impacts on children and families are stronger than those of single-generation programs. Yet new approaches to two-generation human capital programs are worth pursuing and testing.

BRIEF HISTORY

The idea that the needs of vulnerable parents and children can be tackled together is not new. The concept was explicitly introduced with the launch of Head Start in

1965.¹ In the early 1990s, the Foundation for Child Development coined the term “two-generation program” and sponsored a book on the subject.² At that time, innovation involved two strategies: embedding some self-sufficiency programs for parents in early childhood education programs, and adding child care to education and employment services for parents. We call these programs “Two-Generation 1.0.” In the first set of Two-Generation 1.0 programs, the self-sufficiency services that were linked to early childhood programs included adult basic education, GED attainment, and strategies to obtain entry-level jobs and leave welfare. In general, the adult programs in these child-oriented settings were not intensive, widely implemented, or extensively studied. Instead, most services for parents in early childhood education programs in the 1980s and '90s emphasized family support, parenting, literacy, mental health, and access to public benefits, all of which were seen as more closely aligned with early childhood programs' primary mission: achieving positive development for children.³

The second set of Two-Generation 1.0 programs in the 1980s and 1990s started with parents, primarily adolescent mothers on welfare. Their chief goal was to promote life skills, high school graduation or GED attainment, employment, and reductions in long-term welfare dependency.⁴ The elements of these programs that directly targeted children were undeveloped and underused, and they often involved child care of unknown quality. However, these large-scale, parent-oriented demonstration programs aimed to help in many areas of teenage mothers' lives, including parenting.⁵

Two-Generation 1.0 programs seemed to be a promising new direction in services to combat social inequality. Yet, by the late 1990s, the impetus to expand two-generation programs faded away, in part because findings from the large demonstration programs for adolescent mothers were disappointing (see below) and also because “work-first” policies had come to dominate the conversation.⁶ Welfare reform under the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) mandated that recipients work, gave them fewer education and training options, and set time limits and sanctions for not following the rules. This extraordinary legislation, combined with the booming economy in the late 1990s, resulted in the steepest decline in the welfare rolls in the history of the program—approximately 60 percent, exceeding even the highest hopes of most of the law's supporters.⁷ At the same time, federally funded job-training programs for low-income adults shrank significantly. For instance, the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) primarily supported job search and placement programs rather than training and education.⁸ The public policy focus on welfare dependency in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s has largely given way to concern about the United States' competitive position in the world economy and the fact that we lag behind so many other countries in educational attainment at a time when education beyond high school is essential for success.⁹ With advancing technology and globalization, many jobs in the U.S. require increasingly higher levels of education and training than in the past, and low-skilled jobs that pay enough to support a family have largely disappeared.¹⁰ Yet many members of our current and future workforce—especially low-income children and their parents—are unprepared for the demands of the twenty-first century.¹¹ In addition, childhood poverty remains persistently high at over 20 percent, and social inequality has increased substantially. In this context, policy makers, advocates, and scholars are seeking promising

new approaches to combat economic hardship and low education, and their deleterious consequences for families and society.¹²

Philanthropists have been key catalysts for a resurgence of interest in two-generation programs. For example, in 2008, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation launched an ambitious postsecondary education agenda with the goal of doubling, by 2025, the percentage of low-income students who earn a postsecondary degree or other credential with genuine value in the workplace. Similarly, the George Kaiser Family Foundation collaborated with the Community Action Project of Tulsa, Oklahoma (CAP Tulsa), to fund a pilot human capital two-generation program called CareerAdvance; the Foundation for Child Development added a two-generation component to its Pre-K–3rd initiative; the Annie E. Casey Foundation launched an initiative to expand and study implementation strategies for two-generation human capital interventions; and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation is fostering innovative family engagement programs. Finally, the Aspen Institute has established an initiative through its Ascend program, which represents significant investment in building a broad two-generation perspective in policy, practice, research, philanthropy, and the media.

Today, this second wave of programs—we call them “Two-Generation 2.0”—has a renewed and explicit focus on promoting the human capital of low-income parents and children in the same program. What is different about this new wave? First, it combines human capital programs for adults and children that have previously been kept in separate silos (see figure 1). For parents, education and training goes beyond adult basic education and getting a GED to include postsecondary education and certification. Similarly, second-wave two-generation programs capitalize on new directions in job training that go beyond search and placement to include workforce intermediaries, also called sectoral training (we discuss this and other innovations below).¹³ Two-Generation 2.0 programs recognize the compelling evidence that high-quality early childhood education centers can have significant short- and long-term benefits for children. Thus, such centers are an essential building block for new two-generation programs. The Two-Generation 2.0 approach also considers the full range of low-income families, not just those who are on welfare.

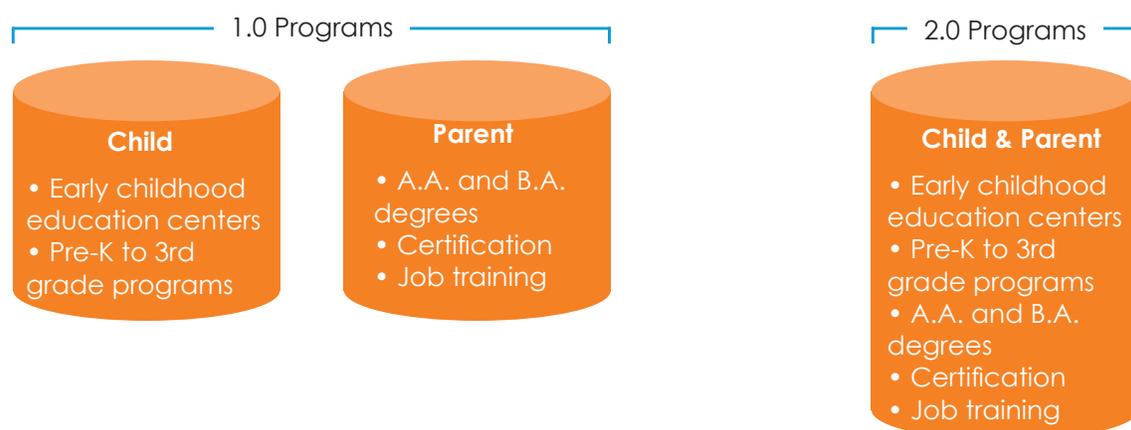
As programs unfold, their designers are giving considerable thought to which subgroups are most likely to succeed and how they should be targeted and approached. Most Two-Generation 2.0 programs are in the pilot stage, requiring innovation and experimentation. Advocates and leaders of these efforts across the nation are united in their belief that Two-Generation 2.0 programs will be more effective than single-generation programs in enhancing healthy development over the life course for young children in low-income families.

WHY WOULD TWO-GENERATION 2.0 PROGRAMS BE MORE EFFECTIVE?

By what scientific rationale might two-generation programs be more effective than single-generation programs? A number of theoretical frameworks from developmental science shed light on the assumptions underlying these programs. First, continuity and change theory suggests how much change is realistic or possible for low-income children whose development has gotten off to a difficult start. Widely substantiated empirically, this theory states that for most children, over time, significant continuity in the environment and within the child is the rule rather

than the exception.¹⁴ Once young children have started along a particular path of development (for example, heightened sensitivity to stress, delays in vocabulary and numeracy), they are likely to proceed in a similar fashion, unless they encounter new opportunities, resources, or interventions. Eric Knudsen and his colleagues, explaining why early childhood education is vital for low-income children, capture the notion of developmental continuity well: “Early learning begets later learning, and skills beget skills.”¹⁵ Likewise, most home environments are difficult to change. They are shaped by parents’ characteristics and experiences, such as their own education, employment, income, mental and physical health, ability to handle stress, and ways of relating to each other, their children, and their extended families. To more effectively redirect low-income children’s lives, programs should simultaneously target the child and the child’s home environment. Human capital two-generation programs go about changing the child by fostering learning and social competence through an early childhood education program, and changing the child’s home environment by promoting parents’ education, employment, and income.

Figure 1. Two-Generation Human Capital Programs

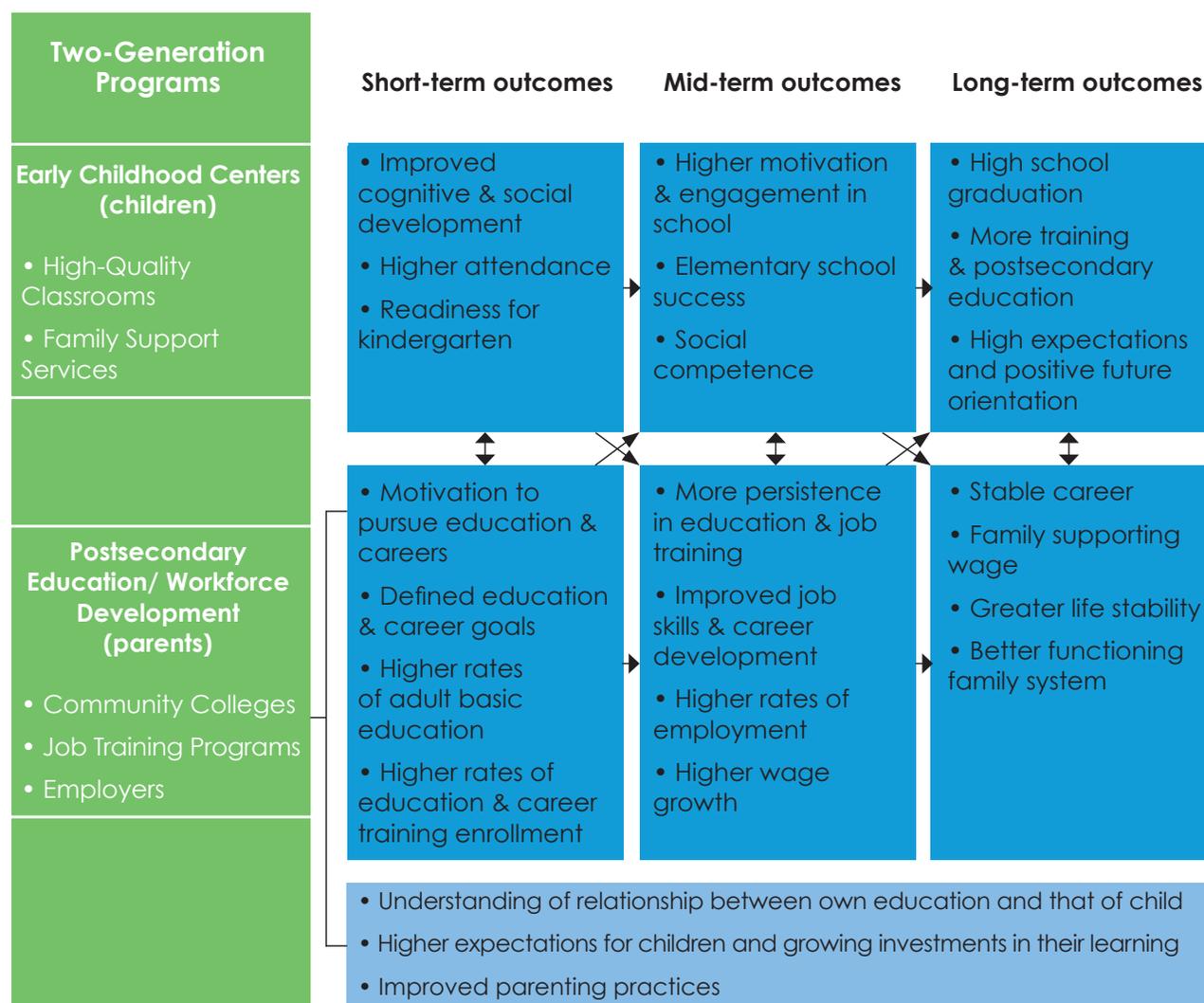


Second, the power of “proximal” environments is a central tenet of ecological theory.¹⁶ Numerous studies have shown that the quality of a child’s “close-in” environments is most influential for later development, especially during the early years when the child’s developing systems are exquisitely sensitive to environmental forces.¹⁷ Factors that affect the environment’s quality include cognitive stimulation, richness in literacy and numeracy, regular routines, warmth and responsiveness, setting appropriate limits, role modeling, and opportunities to develop emotional regulation, executive function, attention, and the like.¹⁸ Two-generation programs, then, are likely to be more effective than single-generation programs if they mean that low-income children experience the combination of two positive proximal environments, rather than just one. A child who returns home from a stimulating educational setting to a stressed family environment with few learning resources and parents who are worried about making ends meet is likely to do less well than a child who experiences enriching environments both in and outside the home.

The third relevant framework is risk and resilience theory, which examines how children adapt to environmental and biological challenges.¹⁹ Supported by numerous studies, this theory posits that children can bounce back and even thrive in the face of short-term adversity, but their development is likely to be seriously hampered by chronic and cumulative stress, such as the combination of

family economic hardship, low parental education, parents' poor mental health, problematic parenting, and limited access to enriched learning opportunities outside the home.²⁰ Empirical research has also documented protective factors in the child or the environment—such as a sunny personality, responsive and stimulating parenting, or high-quality early childhood education—that promote resilience or positive development in the face of adversity. The most significant implication of risk and resilience theory for two-generation programs is that intensive interventions in more than one area of a child's life are essential.²¹ “For young children facing cumulative and/or chronic risks,” write Ann Masten and Abigail Gewirtz, “interventions need to be multi-level, individually tailored in intensity, targeting multiple domains of competence, and of sufficient length to promote lasting change.”²²

Figure 2. Change Model for Two-Generation 2.0 Programs



A CHANGE MODEL FOR TWO-GENERATION 2.0 PROGRAMS

Here we present a change model that illustrates how two-generation programs may strengthen child development (see figure 2). In many respects, this model draws on other articles in the *Future of Children's Spring 2014* volume, in addition to the three theories we've just described. For example, human resource and investment theories propose that successful learning, social development, and earning power across the lifespan depend on monetary and nonmonetary resources in the environment,

an individual's inherent pre-dispositions, and the interplay between the two.²³ These theories suggest that adequate resources and positive interactions produce more human and social capital, more social interaction, more cognitive stimulation, and better life opportunities. And family stress theory argues that the stress of living in a low-income environment harms children's development and causes psychological distress for parents, which in turn leads to inadequate parenting.²⁴

As figure 2 shows, successful two-generation programs could influence parents to pursue more credentials, more education, and better jobs.²⁵ Better jobs mean increased income, improved financial stability, higher self-esteem, better mental health, less stress, and more effective parenting.²⁶ Improvements in children's development should follow, including school success and social competence.²⁷ Parents with more education and training may enrich the literacy and numeracy environments at home, and increase cognitive stimulation in other areas as well.²⁸ Better-educated parents may also serve as better academic role models, have higher educational expectations, and be better guides and advocates for their children's schooling, all of which may help children become more motivated, engaged, and successful.²⁹

Our model also shows that the two-generation approach works in complex ways. For example, children's advances in learning might form a feedback loop, stimulating parents both to expand opportunities for their children and to get more education themselves.³⁰ In our model, the bidirectional arrows between parents' and children's trajectories illustrate these synergistic effects. Negative outcomes are also possible. For example, the simultaneous demands of employment, school, and childrearing might increase parents' stress and force them to spend too much time apart from their children, both of which are risk factors for family functioning, parenting, and children's development, especially for infants and toddlers.³¹

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR TWO-GENERATION 2.0 PROGRAMS

The building blocks for Two-Generation 2.0 programs are early childhood education for preschoolers and postsecondary education and workforce training for parents. What evidence from these areas encourages us to establish and expand two-generation programs today?

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The design, implementation, and outcomes of early childhood education have been studied for more than 40 years, and we have compelling evidence that it can play a critical role in promoting positive life trajectories for low-income children.³² We also have extensive evidence of what defines a high-quality early childhood program.³³ For example, when early childhood education classrooms are characterized by emotionally supportive teacher-child interactions, effective behavior management strategies, and classroom activities that promote student engagement and higher-order thinking, they are consistently linked to gains in children's learning.³⁴ Structural features of early childhood education programs can provide a foundation for teachers to interact effectively with children in ways that are cognitively stimulating and supportive; these include smaller class sizes, as well as ensuring that teachers have experience, strong educational qualifications, and training.³⁵ Effective early education programs also acknowledge and embrace diversity.³⁶

The strongest, most rigorous short- and long-term findings about how early childhood education affects children come from two high-quality, pioneering model programs that were launched in the 1960s and 1970s: the Abecedarian Project and the Perry Preschool Project. Both programs offered enriched early childhood education to children (beginning in infancy and preschool, respectively), including well-developed curricula, experienced and trained teachers, and parent involvement.³⁷ Notably, both Abecedarian and Perry Preschool randomly assigned children to the experimental program or to a control group. The control group could access other early childhood programs that were available in nearby communities, but at that time in the U.S., such programs were rare.

In the short term, children in the two model programs showed higher levels of learning and social development than did children in the control group. In the long term—from elementary school through ages 21 to 27—children in the model programs were less likely to be placed in special education classes, to be held back a grade, to drop out of high school, to become pregnant as teen-agers, or to participate in criminal activity; they also earned more as adults.³⁸ By age 30, adults from the Abecedarian program were much more likely than adults from the control group to have completed college.³⁹ The Perry Preschool and Abecedarian programs were expensive and small, involving 104 and 123 families, respectively. They were also limited to African-American families in two small cities.

The architects of Two-Generation 2.0 programs can also turn to research evidence from three additional sets of programs: (1) the Child-Parent Centers (CPC) Program; (2) Head Start; and (3) Universal Prekindergarten. CPC was launched in 1967 by the Chicago Public Schools, with funding from the federal government. It offered a multiyear enriched educational program from preschool through second grade to about 1,000 low-income children and their parents; a control group of about 550 children and parents was drawn from randomly selected similar schools. For parents, the program emphasized significant engagement in activities at school or in field trips, and it offered a parent resource room staffed by a trained coordinator who was often another parent from the community. This parent resource room served as a space to make social connections and a site for workshops, speakers, and courses, including parenting, health, and GED courses.⁴⁰ A series of studies, which followed children from the program's end through age 28, shows that CPC participation was related to numerous positive outcomes. The CPC children were better prepared to enter school, and they performed better academically; they were more likely to complete high school and less likely to be involved with the criminal justice system; and they had better physical health.⁴¹ However, these effects were not as large as those related to Abecedarian and Perry Preschool. But CPC was a much larger program than either Abecedarian or Perry Preschool, and it was successfully implemented in a large metropolis. It was also less expensive. Overall, it provides a well-researched example of the possibilities for creating contemporary two-generation programs. However, CPC was evaluated through what researchers call a quasi-experimental design—schools were randomly chosen for a comparison group of children, rather than randomly assigning individual children to treatment versus control groups. In addition, there were no assessments of children's development before the intervention, so we don't know whether the two groups of children and families differed from one another from the beginning.⁴²

Head Start programs could also be a component of new two-generation programs. The nation's oldest and largest early childhood education program, Head Start was launched in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty. It provides comprehensive services that include early childhood education; medical, dental, and mental health care; nutrition counseling; and family support.⁴³ Although Head Start can be an important opportunity for low-income children and their families, its quality is uneven, and the program's intensity varies considerably around the country. For example, many centers are open only half a day during the school year and not at all in the summer.⁴⁴

In 1998, Congress commissioned a randomized controlled trial to evaluate Head Start's impact on children's development, and an ambitious study of 4,667 children from 383 centers was launched in 2002. A central question for the study involved developmental timing: Do outcomes differ if children enter Head Start at age three versus age four? Three-year-olds and four-year-olds on a waiting list for the program were randomly assigned to Head Start or to the control group. Parents of the three-year-olds who were assigned to the control group were told that their children could attend Head Start the following year at age four. Children were assessed after one year of Head Start, and in the spring of kindergarten, first grade, and third grade. The Head Start Impact Study (HSIS) found that, no matter whether children entered at age three or age four, one year of Head Start led to modest improvements in children's language, literacy, and math skills, but did not affect their social development. However, these cognitive improvements faded by the end of kindergarten and stayed that way through the end of third grade.⁴⁵

Head Start supporters were disappointed by these findings. However, it is important to recognize some problems in the evaluation design. First, a significant portion of the control group (40 percent) attended early childhood education centers in their communities, including Head Start. With widespread demand for early-childhood education in the twenty-first century, increasing requirements that preschool teachers be licensed, and the rapid expansion of state-funded and regulated prekindergarten programs, many early childhood programs in the United States have achieved at least a minimum level of quality. The question we should be asking, then, is whether we expect Head Start centers to be of higher quality than other centers and preschool programs. It follows that differences between children in Head Start and those in community or school-based early childhood programs might not be as large as they would be if the control group did not have access to early childhood programs at all.⁴⁶

A second problem involves the three-year-old cohort and what their families decided when these children turned four. About 47 percent of the three-year-olds in the control group switched to Head Start at age four, and about 33 percent of the children who were randomly assigned to Head Start at age three did not attend Head Start the following year. These crossover patterns may have diluted the randomized design, and thus the study may have underestimated Head Start's impact on child development.

In addition to the Head Start Impact Study, nonexperimental studies (that is, studies that analyze longitudinal data sets, using sophisticated designs and statistical techniques in an effort to account for unmeasured biases) have provided evidence

that Head Start has positive short- and long-term effects on a variety of child outcomes. These effects include higher levels of cognitive development and social competence, lower mortality later in childhood, higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance, better health, higher earnings, and less involvement with the criminal justice system.⁴⁷ This large body of research indicates that Head Start programs can indeed be part of a Two-Generation 2.0 strategy.

State-funded prekindergarten programs offer a third set of early childhood education opportunities for two-generation programs. At least 40 states now have their own pre-kindergarten programs, double the number in 1980.⁴⁸ These prekindergarten programs present the best evidence to date that early childhood education centers can be widely implemented, but like Head Start programs, their quality varies.⁴⁹ The results of research on how prekindergarten affects child outcomes are just emerging. Using sophisticated statistical techniques, two rigorous recent studies of prekindergarten programs—one of them conducted in Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia, and the other conducted in Boston—reported some promising findings, although child outcomes varied significantly. In some cases, prekindergarten participation was linked to increases in prereading skills, early math skills, vocabulary, and executive functioning.⁵⁰ But these positive findings occurred in some states and not others, and variation in levels of state funding did not explain the pattern. The most promising findings for prekindergarten come from a series of studies of the universal prekindergarten program in the greater Tulsa, Oklahoma, metro area. Using a rigorous statistical approach similar to that of the five-state study, these investigations found that children in prekindergarten had significantly more short-term positive developmental outcomes than did children who had not experienced prekindergarten. The largest differences occurred in prereading skills, followed by spelling and math skills; at the end of the program, prekindergarten children were performing five to nine months ahead of their same-aged peers who just missed the cutoff and started prekindergarten a year later.⁵¹ Moreover, a later study found that participating in prekindergarten was linked to improved socioemotional development.⁵² It is important to note that Oklahoma boasts one of the oldest and highest-quality pre-kindergarten programs in the country. Classes are small, and student-teacher ratios are low. All teachers have a B.A. and have been certified in early childhood education, and their salaries and benefits are commensurate with those of expert teachers in the Oklahoma K–12 system.

Clearly, a central feature of Two-Generation 2.0 human capital programs must be high-quality early childhood education. The studies we've described provide ample guidance for how to choose or design the early childhood education component. These early childhood programs also reflect tenets of the key theories we outlined above: (a) an intensive focus on enriching proximal environments for children; (b) timing during the early years; (c) promoting protective factors, such as social competence and positive relationships; and (d) sustained duration.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS

In contrast to early childhood education, the 35-year history of education and workforce training programs for low-income parents has not been as encouraging.⁵³ However, many programs were developed and evaluated in the 1980s and '90s, and they offer key lessons for new two-generation programs. These ambitious

education and job training programs began in response to concerns that too many teenagers were becoming parents and then relying on welfare. The first such program was Project Redirection, a complex, multisite program launched in 1980 by the Manpower Demonstration and Research Corporation (MDRC) and targeted toward socioeconomically disadvantaged teenage mothers. Participants had to be 17 or younger, pregnant or parenting, without a GED or high school degree, and on or eligible for welfare.⁵⁴ They received services for one year, including individual counseling; training in life management, parenting, and employability skills; referrals to health, education, and employment services in the community; and monthly stipends of \$30 per month (\$83 in 2013 dollars). They were also offered child care, though they largely relied on family members instead.⁵⁵ The program also included three significant innovations: individual participant plans, peer group sessions, and mentoring by older women in the community. Its goal was to increase adolescent mothers' human capital in a highly supportive environment. Although Project Redirection recognized the challenges and joys of early parenthood, it did not target children directly.

The quasi-experimental evaluation of Project Redirection compared about 300 participants with a control group of about 370 adolescent mothers from similar communities at four time points: before the program began, when the program ended one year later, and two and five years after participants enrolled. At the end of the program, Project Redirection participants were more likely to be enrolled in school and have job experience, and less likely to have become pregnant again. However, by two and five years after they joined the program, most of these advantages had disappeared. Mothers who had been through the program were somewhat less likely to be on welfare than mothers in the comparison group (49 percent versus 59 percent). But they were more likely to have had another child, and there were no significant differences between the two groups in education, job training, and employment. In general, Project Redirection mothers were still quite disadvantaged at age 22.⁵⁶

On the other hand, children of program mothers were faring better at the five-year assessment than were children of comparison-group mothers. Project Redirection mothers reported better parenting skills and more breastfeeding, and they were more likely to have enrolled their children in Head Start. Children of program mothers also had larger vocabularies and fewer behavior problems, and the quality of their home environments was higher.⁵⁷ These findings represent the first indication that education and training programs for low-income teenage mothers, combined with intensive support services, can lead to long-term positive outcomes for children, even without evidence of continuing human capital improvements for parents.⁵⁸ However, the quasi-experimental nature of the study suggests that these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Project Redirection marked the beginning of a wave of similar large programs with randomized evaluation designs. Yet virtually none of them produced sizable, systematic effects on mothers' education and employment, and some had unintended negative effects. Three multisite programs operated in the late 1980s through the mid-1990s: the New Chance Demonstration and Ohio's Learning and Earning Program (LEAP) (both evaluated by MDRC), and the Teen Parent Demonstration (TPD), evaluated by Mathematica Policy Research. New Chance

and TPD involved a wide range of services, including case management, life skills counseling, parenting classes, and education and workforce training, while LEAP required participants only to attend school. The programs' eligibility criteria were similar to those for Project Redirection, except that all participants were currently on welfare, and mothers in all three programs were 17 to 19 years old. New Chance was a voluntary program, while TPD and LEAP were mandatory for welfare recipients, linking school and work requirements to cash payments.⁵⁹

The samples for the three randomized evaluations were sizable: 2,000 for New Chance, 4,000 for LEAP, and 5,000 for TPD. Program impacts were studied over time, and the final data were collected 3.5 years after the program began for New Chance, three and four years afterward for LEAP, and five and 6.5 years afterward for TPD.⁶⁰ Across the three programs, the impacts on young mothers' human capital were minimal. New Chance appeared to help some mothers earn a GED (possibly at the expense of earning a high school diploma), but the other programs did not produce such clear-cut educational advances. None of the programs consistently helped in other areas of the mothers' lives, such as earnings, employment, or welfare participation.

Rather than taking a two-generation approach, these three programs viewed child care as a support for mothers' education and work activities. TPD and LEAP offered several kinds of child care assistance, including referrals, subsidies, and free on-site child care. Yet most TPD and New Chance participants relied on relatives for child care, there are no data on the quality of the on-site child care programs, and we have no information about LEAP families' child care participation.⁶¹

New Chance and TPD also measured parenting and child outcomes. Neither program affected children's school readiness, vocabulary, or prosocial behavior. These findings are not surprising, given the programs' weak effects on mothers' education, employment, and income. Notably, New Chance mothers reported higher levels of parenting stress and more child behavior problems than did control-group mothers.⁶² The program's evaluators speculated that because New Chance raised the hopes and expectations of its participants while urging them to engage in activities such as school or work that could increase stress, young mothers may have found these roles difficult to juggle, especially in the face of little clear personal progress.⁶³

One more human capital initiative from the 1980s and '90s offers lessons for the new wave of two-generation programs. The Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program was created through welfare reform legislation, the Family Support Act of 1988.⁶⁴ (We do not review the most recent set of welfare-to-work programs, often referred to as Next Generation, because most did not involve education and training.) JOBS was implemented from 1988 to 1996, with 11 programs at seven sites, and it was evaluated by MDRC in a study called the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS).⁶⁵ The initiative tested two types of programs, in addition to one hybrid program. One set of JOBS programs was called Human Capital Development (HCD); it focused on "education first" before fostering labor force participation. The second set, Labor Force Attachment (LFA), took a "work first" approach that emphasized searching for and quickly taking any type of job.

The HCD programs primarily involved basic adult education (for example, remedial classes) and GED courses, and specifically did not promote postsecondary training.

The hybrid program, in Portland, Oregon, combined a focus on employment with more advanced education and training, and it also counseled participants to seek higher-paying jobs even if that meant turning down a job offer with low wages.⁶⁶ Like the programs discussed above, JOBS focused only on welfare participants, but the mothers' average age was 30. The full NEWWS study of JOBS involved about 40,000 mothers across all 11 sites, but many central findings of differences between the HCD and LFA programs come from just three sites—Atlanta, Georgia; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Riverside, California. At each of those sites, mothers were randomly assigned to the HCD or LFA programs or to a control group. Mothers randomly assigned to the HCD programs were significantly more likely than control group mothers to graduate from high school or earn a GED, though the proportion of mothers who achieved these things remained low (16.5 percent for participants versus 7.3 percent for the control group). This increase in education did not translate to higher levels of employment, and neither did participation in the LFA programs. A recent reanalysis of the HCD programs, using a different statistical strategy, found that when mothers in the HCD programs increased their own education, their young children were likely to score higher on a school readiness test than children of control group mothers.⁶⁷ This association did not occur for the children whose parents were in the LFA group.

The hybrid program in Portland, Oregon, was an interesting outlier. Participants at this site achieved significantly higher levels of earnings over five years than control group mothers did, and they held on to jobs longer. The characteristics of Portland's program may have important implications for today's two-generation program designers. The program set employment in higher-paying jobs as its goal, and successfully conveyed this message to participants. Many participants were directed to the most appropriate mix of training programs, including GED classes and those that would lead to a certificate or trade license. The Portland site also collaborated with local community colleges from the outset; as a result, it was the only site where participants took postsecondary courses.⁶⁸

IMPLICATIONS FOR TWO-GENERATION 2.0 PROGRAMS

Although past experimental education and training programs for low-income mothers have generally had minimal effects, they offer a number of lessons for current two-generation programs. The first lesson involves the promise of comprehensive education and employment services, combined with extensive guidance and social support. Project Redirection pioneered these ideas, and other programs that target adults have moved these innovations forward. Program components such as peer support, mentors, coaches, and counselors have been shown to be effective for low-income students in general, although only a few studies have focused on low-income student parents.⁶⁹ Similarly, there are hints from the NEWWS evaluation that programs can increase mothers' education and that this in turn is linked to improvements in children's learning. There are also hints from Project Redirection that when young mothers develop human capital, there may be long-term positive outcomes for children. However, the Project Redirection study did little to measure how parental behaviors changed at home, and we still have much to learn in this area.⁷⁰ Similarly, these programs presaged the central role of

postsecondary education and credentialing to help low-income mothers succeed in the labor market; certainly, there is now extensive evidence for this in the broader population.⁷¹

The large-scale demonstration studies we've discussed also offer some cautionary lessons. In hindsight, targeting only adolescent mothers for education and workforce development seems very risky, given their immaturity.⁷² Also, Two-Generation 1.0 programs set minimal goals for employment, and participants' monthly earnings were not sufficient to support a family. Today's emerging two-generation programs place a high priority on preparing parents for jobs that will lead to family-supporting wages. The studies also show how hard it is to combine multiple roles (worker, student, parent), and Two-Generation 2.0 programs should keep in mind the potential for too much stress, especially among young parents with infants and toddlers.

TWO-GENERATION 2.0 PROGRAMS EMERGE

In general, Two-Generation 1.0 programs were missing key elements, whether they were based in early childhood education or adult education and training. For instance, virtually no parent-oriented Two-Generation 1.0 program was consistently able to enroll participants' children in high-quality, on-site early childhood education. Similarly, the Two-Generation 1.0 programs based in early childhood education settings had little engagement with experts in adult learning, postsecondary education, and workforce development. This not only shows the extent to which parent-oriented and child-oriented programs have developed in separate silos, but also highlights the challenges to making two-generation programs work smoothly, seamlessly, and effectively. Based on the theories and evidence to date, we suggest that, in Two-Generation 2.0 programs, services for adults and children should be of equal intensity and quality. Research should examine how programs are implemented, how they balance adult and child elements, and the quality and intensity of their services.

These issues are reflected in the findings of the one Two-Generation 2.0 program that has been implemented and experimentally evaluated—Enhanced Early Head Start, which operated from 2004 to 2007 as part of MDRC's multisite Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation Project. Enhanced Early Head Start added education and workforce components to Early Head Start programs (targeted to children from infancy to age three) in Kansas and Missouri.⁷³ An on-site staff specialist assessed parents' needs, gave them information and guidance about education and job-training programs in the community, and trained Early Head Start staff about these resources. About 600 families were randomly assigned to Enhanced Early Head Start or to a control group whose members could seek other local services.

A study of the outcomes three and a half years after random assignment revealed minimal impacts, with virtually no significant differences between the experimental and control groups for adults' employment, earnings, income, and parenting, or for their children's social and cognitive development. Moreover, parents in the experimental group reported higher levels of psychological distress.⁷⁴

The evaluators offer a number of interpretations that have implications for Two-Generation 2.0 programs. First, the parent-focused services were difficult to

implement in part because the front-line Early Head Start staff varied considerably in their expertise in, comfort with, and delivery of these services. Second, especially in rural areas where child care and transportation were not readily available, some parents expressed a strong interest in staying home with their young children rather than pursuing education and employment.⁷⁵ Another likely reason that Enhanced Early Head Start had little impact is that it offered referrals rather than education and job training itself, so the parental programming was not intensive.

Table 1. Characteristics of Current Two-Generation 2.0 Programs					
Program	People served	Platform	Services	Background of group leaders	Assessment / evaluation
Adding adult programs to child programs					
Career-Advance Community Action Project (CAP) Tulsa, OK	Low-income parents and their children	Early Head Start and Head Start	Stackable training in nursing and health information technology at community colleges; incentives; career coaches; life skill training; peer support; center-based and home-based early childhood education	University faculty; antipoverty agency; workforce intermediary	Implementation and outcomes study
College Access and Success Program (CAASP); Educational Alliance	Low-income parents and their children	Early Head Start and Head Start programs	College and GED prep classes; ESL courses; case management; mental health counseling; financial supports; center-based and home-based early childhood education	Nonprofit organization; university and college faculty	Implementation and outcomes study
Adding child programs to adult programs					
Dual-Generation and Green Jobs; Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)	Low-income parents and their children	Job training program and apprenticeships for existing jobs	Employment training in public utility for power and water; relevant courses in community colleges; online learning; peer supports; coaches; early childhood education	Antipoverty advocacy organization; coalitions of community organizers; labor union; government leaders; workforce intermediary	None

WHY BE OPTIMISTIC?

If past programs have had little effect on children's development and parents' human capital, why are we optimistic about a second wave of innovation, implementation, and evaluation of two-generation programs? First, designers of intensive education and training programs for parents have only just started to explore the positive repercussions of basing their programs in organizations "where the children are." It is a new idea to view high-quality early childhood education centers and prekindergarten programs as platforms for attracting parents into education and training.⁷⁶ Early childhood education centers promote social capital as parents and children participate regularly and get to know one another, program leaders, family support staff, and children's teachers.⁷⁷ These programs are likely to foster trusted, connected communities for parents and to be strong allies that share the hopes, expectations, and efforts to promote children's healthy development. Moreover, with the right combination of staff expertise, early childhood education centers could contribute strategically to helping parents stay in job training programs and enhancing their success. For example, as parents experience their young children thriving and learning at the center, they may be more motivated to improve their own education and economic standing.⁷⁸ Indeed, new findings from the Head Start Impact Study reveal that parents whose children were randomly assigned to Head Start were more likely to increase their own educational attainment (particularly at the postsecondary level) as well as employment over time than were parents of control group children.⁷⁹ Formalizing an education and job training program in an early childhood education organization could build upon this naturally occurring momentum. In other words, education and training programs for parents that emanate from their children's early childhood education centers may be more effective than those in separate silos.

Second, the fields of education and workforce development have made considerable progress since the large-scale interventions for teenage mothers on welfare during the 1980s and '90s. One of the most significant advances is the emergence of workforce intermediaries, also called sectoral training, throughout the United States. Robert Giloth, a key leader in this area, writes that workforce intermediaries are "local partnerships that bring together employers and workers, private and public funding streams, and relevant partners to fashion and implement pathways to career advancement and family-supporting employment for low-skilled workers."⁸⁰ Giloth emphasizes that workforce intermediaries are effective with low-income adults because their central mission is to be "a trusted, valued partner serving the needs of both employers and less-skilled individuals."⁸¹ Thus early childhood education centers have an untapped role—they can become key partners as workforce intermediaries. In several randomized trials, workforce intermediaries have had strong positive effects on the employment and earnings of low-income youth and adults, but these studies haven't focused on parents per se.⁸² However, the principles of workforce intermediary programs offer considerable promise for new two-generation programs. These principles include more direct links with employers and partnerships with community colleges, where effective program innovation involves peer support, coaching, and other enhanced student services.⁸³

Table 1 continued. Characteristics of Current Two-Generation 2.0 Programs					
Program	People served	Platform	Services	Background of group leaders	Assessment / evaluation
Adult and child programs merged within existing organizations or agencies					
Avance Parent-Child Education Program	Low-income families and their children ages 0-3	Early education programs and elementary schools	Classes on parenting, toy making, and community resources; volunteer opportunities in early childhood classrooms; home visits, ESL courses; GED prep and postsecondary education; early childhood education	Nonprofit organization; university graduate students and faculty; early education teachers	Outcomes study
The Annie E. Casey Foundation Atlanta Partnership	Low-income parents and their children	Early education programs and elementary schools	Workforce development; entrepreneurship opportunities; subsidized housing opportunities; asset-building programs; subsidized child care	Private foundation; elementary schools; neighborhood development agencies	Implementation and outcomes study
Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC)	Low-income parents and their children	Head Start and child care services	Employment training in public utility for power and water; relevant courses in community colleges; online learning; peer supports; coaches; early childhood education	Nonprofit agency	Implementation and outcomes study
Adult and child programs as residential programs					
Keys to Degrees Program at Endicott College	Single parents and their children	Residential college	Housing in dorms; scholarships and financial support; courses towards a bachelor's degree; mentoring partnerships; life skills; Montessori early education	College president, faculty, and staff	None
Housing Opportunity and Services Together (HOST) at the Urban Institute	Head of household and their children	Housing authorities	Public or mixed-income housing; financial literacy; case management; self-sufficiency workshops; incentives; youth support groups and service projects; after-school programs	Housing authorities; research think tank	Implementation and outcomes study

Table 1 continued. Characteristics of Current Two-Generation 2.0 Programs

Jeremiah Program in Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN	Single mothers and their children	Housing near community colleges	Housing in apartments; education and workforce training; lifeskills training; partnerships with employers; peer meetings; early childhood education	Community leaders and professionals	Designing a pilot study
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WHAT EXISTS NOW?

Table 1 summarizes some of the emerging Two-Generation 2.0 programs in the United States. We identified nine active human capital two-generation programs, with four types of structure: (1) adding education and job training programs for parents to early childhood education programs; (2) integrating early childhood education programs into education and workforce training programs; (3) merging parent and child programs that exist separately in umbrella organizations or agencies; and (4) establishing residentially based parent and child educational programming on or near college campuses or in public or mixed-income housing. Below, we present an example of each category.

ADDING ADULT PROGRAMS TO CHILD PROGRAMS

CareerAdvance is a program of the Community Action Project (CAP) of Tulsa, a model antipoverty agency, directed by Ascend Fellow Steven Dow, that has received national recognition for innovation. The design of CareerAdvance was highly influenced by advances in the field of workforce development, and it is the first fully operating sectoral two-generation program in the United States.⁸⁴ CareerAdvance has taken a conservative approach—starting small with an intensive pilot and gradually expanding. Ascend Fellow Christopher King and Hirokazu Yoshikawa developed CareerAdvance as an education and training program in the health care sector (nursing and medical technology) for parents of young children enrolled in CAP Tulsa's early childhood education centers. The program was piloted in 2009 after a market analysis identified the health care profession as a source of family-supporting wages in Tulsa. CareerAdvance offers a sequence of programs in partnership with community colleges so that participants can make concrete progress, exit at various points with certificates, but then return for further advancement. CAP Tulsa and King have developed and maintained partnerships with all the organizations that are essential components of a workforce intermediary, including community colleges, employers, public schools, GED and ESL programs, and the Tulsa Workforce Board. The program's innovations to enhance parents' success in school include contextualized GED preparation (that is, GED courses where reading and math lessons use health care terms and concepts), and a number of effective support components—career coaches, financial incentives, and peer group meetings.⁸⁵ The CareerAdvance program is expanding to include approximately 200 participants by 2015. It is tuition-free and covers all expenses (such as uniforms, stethoscopes, and textbooks) for participants, who also receive an in-kind incentive of \$300 for gas per semester for completing their coursework. Notably, family support staff in CAP Tulsa's early childhood education centers encourage parents to apply to the CareerAdvance program, and family support staff and

CareerAdvance coaches work together to help families make progress. Thus this two-generation program at CAP Tulsa meets both of our guidelines for innovation: (1) the early childhood education component consists of Head Start centers with strong levels of quality, and (2) the education and workforce components are career-oriented, intensive, linked with employers and other partners, and offered in a highly supportive context.⁸⁶

With other colleagues, we are conducting a quasi-experimental evaluation of CareerAdvance, called the CAP Family Life Study. It is a mixed-method, longitudinal study of participants in CareerAdvance and a matched comparison group of families where the children are enrolled in CAP Tulsa's early childhood education centers but the parents did not enroll in CareerAdvance. The study began in 2010 and will continue until 2015; it comprises about 400 parents and their children. King and colleagues are studying the program's implementation, and we are collecting data on parents, children, teachers, and schools at the start of the program and again each year for up to three years, using quantitative and qualitative methods. The variety of measurements in the CAP Family Life Study provides an unusual opportunity to understand the program's strengths and weaknesses, to test the hypothesis that parents' educational and career advances could lead to improved child development, and to examine a variety of mechanisms that might underlie the outcomes we observe.

ADDING CHILD PROGRAMS TO ADULT PROGRAMS

The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) uses job creation and employment-based training as its two-generation platform. LAANE is an antipoverty advocacy organization whose mission is to promote strong jobs, successful communities, and a healthy environment. LAANE has developed sustainable projects that foster employment among low-income families of color in low-income neighborhoods, while also improving the environment. LAANE's core activities involve community organizing, coalition building, policy advocacy, and communications. It has worked effectively with others in Los Angeles to convince the L.A. Department of Water and Power to offer many new jobs that involve energy conservation with built-in training. This successful initiative is called the Utility Pre-Craft Trainee Program (UPCT), and most trainees are men. Ellen Avis and Carol Zabin write that "the UPCT Program is a model of an entry-level training program that serves the needs of the utility employer and the worker-trainees, as well as furthering the goals of labor, community, and environmental stakeholders."⁸⁷ Its partners include the Department of Water and Power, the Los Angeles Trade Technical College, the Mayor's Office, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the Southeast Los Angeles County WorkSource Center. The new two-generation program will promote a partnership between UPCT and two high-quality, mixed-income early childhood education centers to recruit cohorts of parents into the UPCT together. LAANE is also seeking to increase the number of women employees (currently 3 percent) in the Department of Water and Power. The Dual-Generation and Training for Green Jobs Program will include support services such as peer cohorts and career coaches. Because the starting wage for UPCT trainee/workers is \$16 per hour, LAANE is not seeking partnerships with Head Start centers, because parents who earn that much would be ineligible for Head Start. A pilot program for 50 parents and their children began in 2013; no research study has yet been outlined.

MERGING ADULT AND CHILD PROGRAMS

The Atlanta Partnership comprises the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site, Sheltering Arms Early Learning and Resource Center, an elementary school, and the Center for Working Families. These individual programs have achieved national recognition and are located on the same campus in Atlanta. One of the closest links is that between Sheltering Arms and the adjacent Dunbar Elementary School, which ensures that children receive aligned, coordinated, high-quality education from infancy through age 10. The Center for Working Families has a longstanding record of promoting economic success for Atlanta's vulnerable children and families. The center provides a combination of comprehensive education and workforce development services, as well as coaching and leadership training, in one location so that residents can compete in the workforce. The two-generation program specifically targets parents of children in Sheltering Arms. In 2014, the program hopes to serve about 180 parents and children, combining early childhood education, workforce development, and other support services. An implementation study and a short-term outcomes study are in the works.

RESIDENTIAL ADULT AND CHILD PROGRAMS

The Jeremiah Program was established in Minneapolis, then expanded to St. Paul, in response to local civic and religious leaders' determination to reduce poverty for single mothers and their children. Although the founder is a priest and the program is named after a Bible passage, the Jeremiah Program does not have a religious affiliation and is funded by a wide range of philanthropies. The core program provides safe housing for low-income mothers and their children near community colleges, with on-site, high-quality early childhood education, beginning at six weeks through the preschool years. The Jeremiah Program's mission is to build mothers' and children's human capital in a supportive, goal-oriented context. Services include life-skills and personal empowerment training, as well as guidance and coaching for success in postsecondary education followed by employment in a career. Jeremiah's Minneapolis and St. Paul sites have served more than 300 mothers and children, and the project plans to expand to Austin, Texas, and Fargo, North Dakota. The program's measured outcomes have been quite positive; mothers have achieved very high rates of associate's and bachelor's degrees, as well as stable employment with a family-supportive wage above \$17 per hour, and their children frequently perform at or above grade level. However, no experimental evaluation has been conducted.

ANNIE E. CASEY PROGRAMS

In addition to the programs listed in Table 1, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has launched an initiative to strengthen programs that link family economic success with high-quality early childhood education for children.⁸⁸ The foundation's strategy is to identify barriers to the implementation of Two-Generation 2.0 programs, to work with promising programs to combine parent and child services, and to develop creative ways to improve implementation. The foundation has selected four sites (the Atlanta Partnership, CAP Tulsa, the Educational Alliance, and the Garrett County Community Action Committee) for funding to implement programs. A national evaluator will study challenges to and best practices in two-generation program implementation, as well as short-term parent and child indicators.

CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES

Though Two-Generation 2.0 programs are in their infancy, they hold promise for increasing the human capital of low-income parents and children. They draw on lessons from the first wave of such programs in the 1980s and '90s, and they are building on numerous advances in programming for children and adults. We propose several considerations. Ideally, the Two-Generation 2.0 programs we have identified and others that emerge will undergo formal evaluation in the coming years. We need implementation studies that can tell program designers how best to serve parents and children together. Similarly, we need evaluation studies if we are to learn whether Two-Generation 2.0 programs are more effective than single-generation programs.

Second, we have yet to explore the question of how long programs for each generation should last. Moving undereducated mothers to a postsecondary track with appropriate workforce training takes many years. If an early childhood education center is the point of entry for adult programs as well, services for the child will end in a few years, and if the mother is in a cohort originating at the early childhood center, her daily interactions at that center will end as well. One solution has been to start the mothers' programming earlier, when their children are infants or toddlers. However, balancing employment, schooling, and parenting is difficult when children are so young. Another solution might be to coordinate parents' education and workforce programs with children's prekindergarten programs. If mothers' education and training programs start when children enroll in prekindergarten, then mothers and children could be integrated into a prekindergarten-to-third grade system, which could coordinate services for both generations over time.

Third, Two-Generation 2.0 programs should consider their target audience, and not just the age of the child. Which subgroups of mothers will benefit the most? Mothers with more education when they enter the program? Older mothers? Mothers with more experience in the workforce? Clearly, we must consider barriers to education and employment such as mental and physical health, substance use, family violence, and housing and transportation.

Finally, programs should be offered to fathers as well as mothers. CareerAdvance is serving a few fathers, and they may be an important subgroup in the LAANE program. We don't yet know how and why fathers might be similar to or different from mothers in their levels of participation and degree of success.

In sum, the dual goal of Two-Generation 2.0 human capital programs in the twenty-first century is to help parents advance their own education and achieve economic stability while their children become more prepared for school and more socially competent, thus expanding life opportunities for both generations over time. The time is ripe for innovation, experimentation, and further study.

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REFLECTIONS

Wes Moore, BridgeEdu

In our data-driven world, facts and figures seem like the currency of power. Since our culture sees “truth” in results that can be quantified, it is only natural that we preach from atop a mountain of stats. But when everyone does this, the flood of numbers can become an indistinguishable mess, and we soon grow desensitized and weary of the “shockingly high rates” of this epidemic or that social ill. I consider myself a quantitative thinker, but at times I have a love/hate relationship with stats. While they are important, they are often used to numb. Often used to discourage. Often used to make people think there is nothing we can do to address the horrific issue that the stats have exposed.

When discussing the socioeconomic factors that lead a family to poverty or prevent it from escaping its confines, it is not always easy to quantify why parents are forced into difficulty in the first place. It is also not easy to explain the effects of poverty or describe a poor family’s life conditions through numbers and charts. Statistics can tell you a family’s income level and how it compares to other households, but these numbers can’t always explain the connections that augment a problem beyond its expected size and impact. They can’t paint a picture of what it’s like to be in someone else’s shoes.

I grew up in a single-parent home that was affected by the socioeconomic distresses that surround many of our poor urban neighborhoods. People try to use statistics to describe my background, but none of those numbers comes close to the full picture. When I was three years old, my father died from a rare disease. My family and I saw that he was sick, but we had no idea the extent of his illness. His death came as a huge shock to us all, especially my mother, who was now faced with supporting three children. My mother was a fantastic parent, but raising three children on your own is never simple. My mother’s troubles and fears were not helped by the fact that we lived in a dangerous neighborhood, where drugs and guns were as common as newspaper stands and bus stops.

My mother did all that she possibly could to keep us in school and on the path to success. Unfortunately, our environment and the people I surrounded myself with did not have the impact my mother had hoped for. Despite her best efforts, I started staying out later. I started having scuffles with the law. I started to feel the cold metal of handcuffs around my wrists before I was even old enough to drive a car. I was headed down a dangerous path, and my mother could see it. My mother knew something had to change, and she went to great lengths to ensure that I would not become another adolescent in prison. She chose to enroll me in military



Ascend Fellow Wes Moore

school. At first, I absolutely hated every minute of it. I hated waking up way too early. I hated marching everywhere I went. I hated cleaning every millimeter of my living quarters. But after a few days, I began to see values like leadership and responsibility manifested in the people around me. I came to honor and respect those values. Soon enough, I became more focused on my education and developing my moral guide than I had ever been on scoring the latest pair of Air Jordans.

My mother was able to help me avoid a dangerous path, but it wasn't easy and it was not cheap. My mother had to make immense sacrifices to afford military school tuition. She managed to scrape by, but only because of the generosity and help of dozens of friends and neighbors. Numbers can tell you the cost of tuition, but they can't tell you about my mother's sacrifice and the kindness of those around her. She was fortunate to have this support network

because not every family does. Not every family can instill responsibility in their children at a faraway school.

Most families in poverty cannot do what my mother did. Most will need help from programs designed to overcome the obstacles that prevent parents from creating successful lives for themselves and their children. These programs will need to address the hurdles that both parents and children face — be it job-readiness training for parents, while students participate in after-school programs or affordable housing that comes with a nationally recognized day-care center. Thousands of other families need the access to these programs that my mother never had. To set these families up for success, we need to give the parents the resources they need while providing a strong foundation from which their children can grow.

Statistics are highly effective for exploring single problems and the effects of singular solutions. However, as we look farther into the sources of socioeconomic distress in our society, we see that many of the problems we face require more than singular solutions. The solutions we need will have to address many facets of poverty at once. This is why the two-generation approach is so crucial. Because this approach is equally focused on placing children and parents on the path to success, the programs and policies it supports will have the unique ability to halt poverty at its source as well as the factors that exacerbate it.

Statistics certainly have a role in this process. They will help policy makers and leaders understand the breadth of an issue as they craft responses that match the problem. They will also add context and benchmarks to our work. However, it has become too easy to forget that behind all the polling and studying, the truth can be found in

witnessing real-life stories that awaken our empathy and motivate us to action. There is no stronger reminder for why we have chosen our path than the experience that moved us in that direction.

Experiences, be they rooted in our personal narratives or shared with us in a moment of connection, are the impetus to action. My personal experiences and the stories and narratives of others' experiences have been the motivation for much of my actions over the past years. One story in particular pushed me to action in a way that statistics and numbers never could. That is the story of a man whose name I share and whose fate I very well could have also shared.

Shortly after I had been accepted as a Rhodes scholar and had started packing my belongings for England, *The Baltimore Sun* newspaper ran an article that celebrated my achievements as a local Baltimore boy headed off to Oxford. I had chosen a new path for myself and was about to continue my education at one of the world's most prestigious institutions. In that same edition of the *Sun*, there was a separate story about a man who had recently been convicted of armed robbery and the murder of a policeman. This man was also named Wes Moore. Not only did we share a name, but we had grown up in the same neighborhoods, among the same people. Our mothers faced the same difficult choices as single parents trying to raise young boys in dangerous communities. For the first decade of our lives, we were on essentially the same trajectory. Yet, 10 years later, I was now on my way to Oxford, and he was on his way to prison.

What caused this difference? Why did I escape the ubiquitous trap of socioeconomic factors that cause so many of our low-income youth to fall down a path of incarceration and poverty? Some said, "You went to military school. That made all the difference." But I knew there had to be something more than that. Military school helped me, but it was not the miracle-fix people made it out to be. I needed to hear Wes's story. I needed to understand how our paths diverged. One day I wrote Wes a letter, and this letter turned into dozens of letters. Dozens of letters turned into visits, and eventually, Wes and I had shared our stories and knew as much about the other as we did about ourselves. In all honesty, I still can't give you a specific reason why our lives ended up the way they did. But that is not the important piece of this puzzle.

The most important aspect of this experience is the stories that were shared. Hearing Wes's story, the ways in which his life was shaped by factors that he could not always control, pushed me to realize the power in story-telling. It pushed me to take action and do something about the confluence of factors that diverted Wes's path so far from mine. I chose to write about this experience because of the power of the story. Facts and numbers could not have motivated me to act on what I saw. I needed the truth behind the story; I needed the reality told to me by one who witnessed it.

Stories are the starting point of finding out what matters. Stories have real people with names and faces we remember. Stories are how we teach our children right from wrong. We learn our values and develop our goals from the experiences we have and the true life moments we witness.

Stories are how we connect with one another on a human level. When we empathize, we are seeing ourselves in each other. It makes us ask ourselves, “What would I do?” This is where true changes are born.

When people from all walks of life and all stations of society ask themselves this same question, they answer it with the knowledge they have acquired in their own lives and thus offer unique solutions. When we come together as a community and ask, “What would I do in X situation?” we not only feel for our fellow neighbors, we also open discussions on how our pooled resources and skills can resolve these dilemmas.

This anthology is an important collection of not simply ideas but actions — momentum-building and awe-inspiring actions by my friends and those I admire, who choose to work in their respective communities. I ask that as you read these stories that you not forget who we are supposed to be fighting for — who needs and deserves a champion.

All of us focus on different aspects of the problem: Some deal with financial security, some deal with child abuse, some deal with housing. But all deal with the core issue of how we can use this two-generation approach to lift families out of poverty and make sure our citizens know and don't forget their names.

**PART II:
ADDRESSING AND EMPOWERING FAMILIES**



SEEKING STABLE FUTURES: PARENT VOICES

Sarah Haight

“Every single one of [parents’] stories is important. They’ll likely say, ‘Without the program I was in, I could never be here.’ The truth is that without them, our programs could never be. Statistics can provide context and baseline, but stories promote action.” – Ascend Fellow and Author Wes Moore, 2012 Aspen ThinkXChange

At Ascend at the Aspen Institute, the power of storytelling — the voices and experiences of families, the histories that shape how mothers and fathers lead and parent — is a central value of the two-generation approach. Parents, after all, are the experts on their own lives. Listening to their stories — both the struggles and the successes — is critical to ensuring that the practices and policies the field develops are in sync with the true needs of families. Stories have the power to move us, to inspire action, and to spark change in how services are developed and delivered. But in order for these things to happen, organizational leaders must be prepared to listen — and to hear feedback that may challenge assumptions and long-practiced approaches.

Creating feedback loops for families means being prepared to adjust systems that are intended to empower and support parents. It also means being ready to communicate why or how an organization has decided not to change based on feedback. For example, in one study of 100 mothers in a home-visiting program, researchers captured what mothers said they wanted and needed as part of the rendered clinical services, which include access to health and mental health services. To the researchers’ surprise, the top request from enrolled mothers was access to living-wage jobs and skills-training.¹ While the model was not designed to provide workforce training, this feedback informed curriculum development for future interventions.

At Ascend, listening to families has taken two distinct forms: We have commissioned annual, bipartisan polling and focus groups with adults — married and single, across race, ethnicity, and gender — and we have worked closely with parents from two-generation programs. With both efforts, we have sought more than just a qualitative snapshot of experiences to reinforce a two-generation practice and policy agenda for the field. Indeed, we have partnered with the team at Lake Research Partners, which has conducted the polls and focus groups that inform “Voices for Two-Generation Success,” and with seven parents from diverse backgrounds and six states who speak frequently at Ascend events. With their help, we have tested policy ideas related to Head Start reauthorization; revised messaging that does

not resonate with families, such as eliminating words like “security,” which feels out of reach for many parents; and refined and supported concepts such as “mutual motivation,” that cycle of learning that occurs when children and their parents are engaged in their own educations simultaneously.

For the first time in history, people do not believe the next generation will be better off than the one that came before. However, over three and a half years, our commissioned research and the parents we work with have taught us that single mothers, more than any other group, have a deep reserve of hope and optimism for their children’s potential.² We have learned that two-generation program innovations, such as Keys to Degrees, a housing-based program started at Endicott College in Boston, and Head Start Policy Councils, have helped shape the leadership of and spur postsecondary completion for young single parents.³ We have learned that while parents may often do for their children what they won’t do for themselves, they are also resilient and driven in spite of big odds. And we have learned that parents themselves are a valuable resource for ideas and recommendations on how to advance policies that will improve their lives and the lives of their children. Parents themselves have told us these things.

Monique Rizer, Chief of Staff at Be the Change; 2000 Gates Millennium Scholar:

“I wish leaders and policy makers understood first that an investment in parents and children struggling to achieve economic security is just that – an investment. As a country, we need to think long term. I also believe that that investment is not enough. Families struggling to achieve economic security need basic assistance, but they also need an advocate by their side: mentors, people to whom they can turn for advice and perspective. I have found that decisions I made for my family over time had less to do with seeking basic assistance and more to do with learning how to manage the resources I was given and make good lifelong decisions. I have seen people in my immediate family growing up (six siblings) make critical decisions with little information or guidance. Our parents didn’t know how to guide us, so we were also on our own; it is a vicious cycle. It took me 10 years to really get to a place of economic security even with my education. It doesn’t happen overnight, and it takes patience, commitment, and the ability to delay gratification to see the bigger picture.”

Leslie Campbell, Access Care System Case Manager at FACES, NY, Inc.; alumna of College and Community Fellowship:

“I was released from prison in July 2000 and went to participate at Project Greenhope Services for Women, where I was mandated to complete a parenting course in order to get my daughter back. She lived with my mother for the two years I was away. I realized that she was the most important reason in my world to change my life. Greenhope was and is still focused on family reunification. I learned so much about how my actions and choices affect my daughter’s future.

I eventually went to college as a result of the staff encouraging me to believe in myself. I worked, went to school, and participated in programs like College and Community Fellowship's Theater for Social Change. Every day that I leave my house to enter the workforce, I do so with the goal of doing my very best so that I can make it home to my two beautiful children, who I try to shield from the true ugliness of the world. I want [policy leaders] to be more mindful of a parent's needs, including child care, affordable housing, education, and flexible work schedules, which would allow for a woman (or man) to take care of her family."

What does it look like for Ascend to listen to these insights and adapt our work? Monique's story underscores the importance of looking beyond assistance, such as SNAP and housing vouchers, as scaffolding for a family's success and identifying mentoring and relationship-building opportunities for parents. Leslie's feedback reflects the importance of engaging justice-involved families in postsecondary education, while providing consistency and stability for their children. Ascend has included mentoring programs as a key element of social capital, a component of the two-generation approach, and has also invested in the Center for Institutional Social Change at Columbia University Law School, which is developing a two-generation pilot in partnership with the New York Re-Entry Network to provide postsecondary pathways for justice-involved parents. These are just two examples, but there are other ways Ascend, as the national hub, can grow alongside families. This is in part why, in 2015, Ascend is seeking to include the voices from a broader range of parents from two-generation organizations across the country. It is also why Ascend is expanding the definition of two-generation to include other members of the family — from grandparents to aunts or uncles — since parents have told us that advancing toward opportunity is often a multigenerational effort.

Forward-thinking feedback loops are also being developed by two-generation organizations. LIFT, a Washington, DC-based organization that helps community members in six cities achieve economic stability and well-being, uses what Chief Strategy Officer Maria Peña calls "constituent voice." "The question is 'What data will help us better serve our customers?'"

Peña asked at the 2014 Aspen ThinkXChange. "This is new territory in the social change space but is common in the private sector." LIFT surveys families and adapts services based on what it hears. The top two lessons for LIFT thus far: Those with higher feedback scores are twice as likely to achieve economic progress, and five of the six top indicators of success are personal and relationship factors, such as confidence, aspiration, and efficacy.

Creating the space, time, and resources to listen to families — and



Maria Eloisa Duarte, Valley Settlement Project

make programmatic adjustments based on what is heard — can be challenging. At the Manaus Fund's Valley Settlement Project in Pitkin County, Colorado, program leaders revised their parent literacy training strategy when they learned from their parent mentor coordinator that immigrant families would have more confidence and proficiency in English only *after* they improved literacy skills in their native language. "I had to figure out a way to make myself understood, as they did not seem to hear me, although they were listening," says Parent Mentor Coordinator Maria Eloisa Duarte, referencing how staff reacted to her recommendation to provide Spanish literacy training prior to ESL courses. "I decided to ask my supervisor for her support and funds to address the education needs of the mentors in a way that was very different from what she thought was needed." A year later, at the close of 2014, enrollment in the classes had significantly increased, and Valley Settlement Project is making Spanish-speaking literacy classes a key element of its two-generation strategy.

Elaine Grossman, director of strategic partnerships at Valley Settlement Project, notes that it is critical for program leaders, funders, and policy makers to create opportunities to not simply listen to families but *hear them*. That may be through one-on-one meetings with families, digital surveys or polls, events, or focus groups. "I thought that we were listening to the voice of the community, but we need to keep listening and adapting," explains Grossman. "Listening has to be part of the culture of the organization. Listening is not just an aggregated response to 300 voices; it is just a start."

¹ Dr. Darius Tandon, *Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University*, remarks given at early childhood forum co-hosted by Ascend and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Los Altos, California, 25 September 2013.

² *Voices for Two-Generation Success*, commissioned by Ascend at the Aspen Institute with Lake Research Partners and Chesapeake Beach Consulting, 2012.

³ Jessica Rockowitz, *Keys to Degrees*, and Tameka Henry, *Acelero Learning*, remarks given at the Aspen ThinkXChange. Aspen, Colorado, 6 October 2012.



THE TIES THAT BIND: HOW CHILD CARE CENTERS BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

Mario Small, Harvard University

For several years now, commentators have been sounding the alarm that the Internet is making us more isolated, replacing real friendships with meaningless online followers, and contributing to a long-term decline in social capital. However, many of the tools for avoiding isolation have not changed in at least a generation. They are, in fact, being used routinely by a major segment of the population: mothers of young children.

For many years, I studied the experiences of mothers whose children were enrolled in New York City child care centers. My team and I interviewed rich and poor mothers — blacks, whites, Asians, and Latinas; extroverts and introverts and everything in between. We visited centers, participated in parent-teacher events, and fielded large-scale surveys. We found that, because of the way the centers were structured, many mothers built strong, meaningful social connections that challenged the notion that we are doomed to social isolation.

However, the mothers avoided isolation not because they were committed to building social networks — though many of them were — but because their centers organized parental responsibilities and commitments in ways necessary for the centers to function. These commitments were also useful, in often unintended ways, in forming meaningful social ties. For example, many of the centers had pedagogical commitments to expose children to nature and culture through field trips. But the adult-to-child ratio that works in a closed room is too low for public spaces, where children may trip over museum artifacts or stick their hands in monkey cages. To run field trips, centers needed parent volunteers. And since even the busiest parents would do for their children what they would not do for themselves, a larger number of field trips resulted in a greater number of repeated activities where parents met and built social networks.

In a representative survey of mothers in U.S. cities, 60 percent of those whose children were enrolled in child care centers formed at least one new friendship through their child's center. Many of these relationships were strong, meaningful ties that significantly reduced mothers' probability of depression and other forms of hardship. For example, low-income mothers who enrolled their children in child care centers experienced 40 percent lower odds of depression than comparable mothers who did not enroll their children in centers — even after taking into account their

depression scores before enrollment was possible. For non-poor mothers, the odds were more than 55 percent lower than those of non-enrolled mothers.

Field trips, however, were only one of many activities through which centers, to meet operational and pedagogical needs, were forced to pool the resources of the group to help the organization function. Centers organized fundraisers, volunteered for spring cleanings, and repaired and repainted underused playgrounds. In so doing, centers unwittingly supported years of laboratory evidence by social psychologists, suggesting that when strangers are forced to complete joint but manageable tasks, they tend to form positive bonds.

In that sense, centers exemplify a much broader pattern: When everyday organizations such as schools, churches, neighborhood associations, sports clubs, and others are forced to pool group resources for their survival, stronger social networks are likely to ensue. Our society has worked this way for many generations. Therefore, as long as people continue to find the need to attend church, to sign up for sports teams, or to enroll their kids in child care, they will obtain what they need to keep the Internet from making them lonely. After all, Facebook cannot take one's kid to the zoo.





MOVING UP TOGETHER: LESSONS FROM THE FAMILY INTERDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE

Mia Birdsong, Family Independence Initiative

Ramona Shewl is a mother and grandmother who lives in San Francisco. With the support of family and friends and access to a scholarship, Ramona earned her master's in counseling psychology and recently passed her qualifying exam. Ramona is also putting her son through college. Education is clearly something she's prioritized for her family, and she sees it as a path forward.

In New Orleans, a vibrant community of artists, cultural workers, entrepreneurs, teachers, and others are working together to create economic opportunity and a deep sense of community for themselves and their children. Community members pool their financial and social capital to strengthen their collective capacity. Adults and young people in this community turned an empty lot into a neighborhood playground. Last year, they held a festival showcasing local musicians, dancers, other artists, and lecturers on a stage made of milk crates. These endeavors, among many others, relied heavily on connections, sweat equity, and money from their own pockets. They see connection to their history and traditions as the foundation on which they can build a strong future for their community — and they know they are the ones to do it.

Friends encouraged Francia, a mother in Boston, to follow her dream of becoming a first-time homeowner. By saving money, she was able to access additional funding to buy a duplex. She and her children live in one unit, and she rents out the other to help pay the mortgage. Francia chose homeownership as a way to secure a future for herself and her kids.

In East Oakland, the Lu Mien refugees from the Vietnam War had countless programs dropped into their community to address the gang problem that plagued their youth. Community elders decided to take matters into their own hands by pulling together youth from opposing gangs, reintroducing young people to their cultural traditions, and engaging community members in focusing on youth. The community ended the gang problem, succeeding where outside interventions failed. They've since built a community center and a temple, and they support a scholarship fund. Now, instead of their young people entering gangs, they're going to college.

In each of the stories above, individuals, families, and communities design and implement their own two-generation solutions in the context of family, friends, and neighbors. These examples are not exceptions. Across the country — in Oakland,

Detroit, Fresno, Chicago, DC, Boston, Albuquerque, Milwaukee — low-income families and communities are working together to address the issues we all care about: job creation, youth employment, physical health, and adult and children's education.

But when we talk about two-generation solutions, the conversation almost exclusively focuses on what institutions can be doing — better nonprofit programs, wrap-around government services, strategic alignment in philanthropic giving, and evidence-based policies. We think we have to figure it all out. And in taking on that burden, we are completely missing the answer that has been in front of us all along — the families and communities we want to impact.

Since the 1964 declaration of a War on Poverty by President Lyndon B. Johnson, the federal government and local communities have created institutions and systems to address poverty. But we forgot ourselves along the way. We forgot that the people we want to help are the same people who built the nation: the African-Americans who created townships both before and after slavery; the Polish, Irish, and Italian immigrants who came to work on our docks and in our factories; the Chinese immigrants who built Chinatowns across the country. That history of tenacious and innovative regular people who worked hard and worked together holds the key to more people realizing the American Dream.

But somewhere along the way we decided that the people we wanted to help were the problem, that they were either too lazy or too helpless to come up with their own solutions. We conflated stereotypes about people of color and women to create an intersectionality of assumptions that tell us poor people are broken. But in reality, they never stopped working hard. In a three-year period, 96 percent of the people who are living below the poverty line get above it.¹ The vast majority of poor people work their way out of poverty. But in another three years, 30 percent fall back into poverty. After five years, 50 percent find themselves back where they started.² The constant churn of families moving in and out of poverty shows the fragility of economic progress at the lowest income levels. But that is not because people are in crisis and in need of saving. They are struggling for sure, but they are not without direction, inspiration, grit, or a work ethic. The problem isn't them.

Since 2001, Family Independence Initiative (FII) has been listening, learning, and sharing what is working within families, social circles, and communities as they work to improve their economic and social standing. Rather than providing services and top-down direction, FII partners with low-income families to co-create an environment where families can come together and improve their lives in their own way. FII leverages technology to access and analyze longitudinal, participant-collected data to create a marketplace of social and financial capital (such as lending circles, savings matches, grants, and investments) that repositions philanthropy, government, and people themselves as co-investors in community-led change. As a result, people start businesses and create jobs, build assets, further their children's educations, improve their health, and strengthen their communities.



Photo: Family Independence Initiative

The families with whom FII partners demonstrate consistent advances in their overall well-being over the course of one to two years. Our data indicates that on average:

- Families increase savings by 120 percent.
- Families increase earnings between 20 percent and 30 percent.
- 25 percent of families start or expand a small business.
- 70 percent of children improve grades or attendance.
- 75 percent of families report improvements in, or taking steps to improve, their health.

FII's work shows that uncovering and fueling the solutions and strategies that families and communities develop for themselves produces strong, cost-effective, sustainable results. An ounce of self-determination is worth a pound of external guidance.

FII has learned from families that the following three elements are critical to creating social and economic mobility:

- **CONNECTIONS.** Despite the persistent myth of the self-made man, no one makes it alone. Family, friends, and colleagues who provide support, information, advice, resources, and a sense of accountability are both a safety net and a springboard forward. From our peers, we find role models who shape our expectations of what is possible — and what is not. Social-sector professionals

cannot replace the value and power of mutual support within a community. Peer-to-peer supportive relationships can do more to provide relevant information, advice, and inspiration to move people forward.

- **CHOICE.** Everyone needs to have a range of options and the ability to exercise those options, whether they are related to finances, housing, health, education, or other opportunities for well-being. Choice means having an array of self-directed options for moving ahead. Rather than having someone else determine their priorities and path, families must have control over their own choices to succeed.
- **CAPITAL.** The biggest difference between low-income families and upper-income families is money — not intelligence or resourcefulness. Access to financial capital that allows families to leverage their initiative then accelerates their mobility. The well-off use financial capital to assure they have the choices they need. Access to capital allows low-income families to exercise choice and gain some control over their lives.

Research supports what so many low-income people and families already know: Community is our most vital source of support,³ self-determination is the energy that drives people forward,⁴ and working capital is essential.⁵ It's time to build systems for social and economic mobility based on everything we've learned and observed about how humans actually work. Connect people with each other, let them make their own choices, and provide access to the financial resources they want to fuel their ideas and aspirations.

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THE ROLE OF ASSET BUILDING IN GENERATIONAL SUCCESS

Andrea Levere, Kate Griffin, Emily Hoagland, Ezra Levin and Leigh Tivol, CFED

AN INTRODUCTION TO ASSET BUILDING

Less than two decades old, the asset-building field aims to broaden low-income Americans' ownership of assets to help move them toward financial stability and ultimately to wealth creation. This approach complements the invaluable work of antipoverty advocates who have focused on increasing the income sources available to the poor through safety net programs and wage subsidies. The asset-building approach concentrates on strengthening the household balance sheet in the belief that people move out of poverty only if they have the opportunity to build both short- and long-term assets.¹

It is from this household perspective that asset building is fundamentally and deeply aligned with the growing movement for two-generation strategies to alleviate poverty. The two-generation approach provides both children and their parents with an array of services, supports, and learning and empowerment opportunities — all geared toward helping families envision and achieve brighter futures. In particular, evidence suggests that a two-generation approach focused on education, economic supports, and social capital has the potential to generate significant financial stability for low-income families.

Similarly, over the past decade, the long-established field of asset building — which promotes strategies, policies, and programs to help low-income families climb the economic ladder sustainably and permanently — has seen an increased focus on reaching children as well as adults. A growing body of research illustrates that even modest asset ownership — something as simple as a savings account — can both increase financial security and, perhaps even more importantly, raise the hopes and aspirations of both children and adults. These findings have led to a rapidly growing set of efforts to promote asset building for children as well as their parents.

The need to address the asset side of the balance sheet responds to the latest data from *CFED's 2015 Assets and Opportunity Scorecard*, which finds that 44 percent of U.S. households are liquid-asset poor, meaning they lack the financial resources to subsist at the poverty level for three months if their main source of income were disrupted.² Equally disturbing is the finding that 25 percent of households earning between \$56,000 and \$91,000 — solid members of the middle class — are also in liquid-asset poverty.³ While much of this financial insecurity is the result of the Great Recession, not all of it is. The insecurity is also a direct result of federal and state policies and a lack of financial products that meet the needs of lower-income families, which leave more than 30 percent of the population without a savings account.⁴

The journey to asset building usually starts with financial education and inclusion; As low-income families open bank accounts, they can save up to \$1,000 a year — the average amount that an individual spends in interest and fees charged by alternative financial service providers.⁵ Individuals build financial capability by learning and applying basic rules of positive financial behavior in their daily lives. As a household's financial security increases, so does the opportunity to save, whether in an emergency savings account or for longer-term goals, such as homeownership, education and training, or entrepreneurship.

Tens of thousands of low-income people have defied the misperception that “poor people can’t save” once they have access to fair and affordable financial products and services and incentives that middle- and upper-class people regularly use to build wealth. Fundamentally and practically, saving is about managing risk and creating hope for the future. It changes the objective financial conditions of families, increases economic resiliency, and builds aspirations — a combination that can change the trajectory of children's lives as well. If the financial crisis of the past five years has taught us anything, it is that the road to financial security and wealth creation is not built on debt alone.

IT ALL BEGINS AT HOME: BUILDING FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE AND CAPABILITY

Most children and youth do not oversee their household's finances. They are, however, apprenticing — acquiring the knowledge, habits, attitudes, and personality traits that will play an instrumental role in their long-term financial well-being. The academic literature refers to this process as financial socialization. Parents are usually the primary agents of financial socialization in their children's lives — whether or not they are aware of their singular influence in this area.

Parents affect children's financial socialization by speaking with them directly about money-related matters, by establishing and enforcing rules around money, and by modeling financial behaviors.⁶ What does this mean if parents want to raise financially capable children? At the most basic level, it means parents need to talk to their kids about managing money. Research shows that youth whose parents talked to them about their household finances were more likely to report saving rather than spending extra money⁷ and were less likely to accrue debt in college.⁸

Parents also need to model for their children the financial behaviors they would like to instill in them, and they should start while their children are young. Children make the most progress in financial understanding between the ages of six and 12.⁹ The financial values and behaviors they observe in their parents during this period are crucial. For example, research has shown that positive parental norms and examples reduce the likelihood of children engaging in risky credit behavior later in their lives.¹⁰ Parents can also build their children's financial capability by monitoring their children's spending habits; these children had more positive attitudes toward their own finances and tended to mimic their parents' financial behaviors.¹¹

Children benefit from practice in managing money. Parents can provide children with this opportunity by giving them an allowance. However, just giving children an allowance is not enough to increase the likelihood of saving in adulthood.¹² Research indicates that an allowance only really improves financial capability if parents use the allowance as an opportunity to talk to children about money and

teach them financial skills.¹³ Specifically, one study found that giving children an allowance between the ages of eight and 12 — while also influencing how it was spent and providing advice on how and why to save — increased the likelihood of saving in adulthood by 16 percent and increased the amount saved by 29.6 percent.¹⁴

How can parents help ensure that conversations around money take place and that children have an opportunity to build savings skills under their guidance? As we will describe later in this chapter, one of the most powerful approaches is opening a savings account in the child's name. Opening a savings account, teaching a child to make regular deposits into that account, and having conversations about the importance of saving can greatly improve a child's financial well-being in adulthood. Having a savings account as a child leads to a better understanding of concepts like saving and investing¹⁵ and is associated with later ownership of financial assets.¹⁶ Thus, the lessons of childhood can become a foundation for building financial security and opportunity over a lifetime.

INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY: THE ULTIMATE TWO-GENERATION PLATFORM

Over the last few years, social service providers have increasingly recognized that by addressing the financial security of their clients, they can better achieve their own long-term objectives and increase their impact. Interest from workforce development, housing, child welfare, child support, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other human services sectors has blossomed as these agencies have demonstrated their ability to serve as effective platforms for building the financial capability of low-income families. Many of these social service providers are working with entire households, addressing both the current financial security of the family members (adults and children) and influencing the financial behaviors of future generations. This encouraging trend has been at the heart of the growth of both asset-building and two-generation programs.



Powerful examples of this evolving practice are already underway among affordable housing providers, Head Start agencies, and youth employment agencies. CFED is currently working with several affordable housing providers to strengthen resident services in DC, Chicago, and Atlanta. These organizations provide financial education sessions on-site, sometimes coupled with access to one-on-one financial coaching. Co-locating banks or credit unions, or teaming up to provide unique savings incentives such as those offered under HUD's Family Self-Sufficiency program, ensure that residents can practice their new financial skills, strengthening the financial condition of low-income households.

Head Start programs are also pioneering integrated approaches, often building on their mandate to engage entire families in their programming. Many Head Start programs around the country already

offer financial education classes for parents. Head Start sites in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania have successfully trained Head Start case management staff (called family development specialists) to provide initial financial counseling and refer families to other community services, including signing up for bank accounts and Individual Development Accounts (matched savings accounts). These sites are also conducting financial education in the preschool classroom, using specially designed curriculum, such as PNC and Sesame Workshop's "For Me, For You, For Later" curriculum. In Mississippi, some Head Start children are not only receiving classroom-based financial education but are also saving through children's savings accounts, further reinforcing what both parents and children are learning.

Programs focused on helping youth find employment — in the summer or otherwise — have seized the opportunity they have to influence financial management behaviors at a crucial point in a young person's life: when they earn their first paycheck. Programs, such as MY Path in San Francisco, provide financial products, financial education, and social support to participants in the city's Youth Employment and Education Program. In Washington, DC, the Summer Youth Employment Program partners with BankOn DC to offer financial education (using technological innovations provided by EverFi) and access to a savings account to participating young people. The Philadelphia Youth Network coordinates a youth workforce development initiative that pays youth through a payroll card tied to a young person's savings account and provides additional financial education programming.

All of these programs acknowledge that they often have greatest impact when engaging across generations. Youth employment programs encourage participating youth to take the lessons they are learning back to their families to open up a dialogue about the family's financial management practices. Affordable housing communities make the delivery of financial and social services not just a family affair, but also a community-building effort. Finally, given the central role of high-quality preschool in virtually every two-generation strategy, the role of Head Start centers in building financial capability and inclusion is perhaps the most powerful example of the alignment between these approaches.

CHILDREN'S SAVINGS ACCOUNTS: THE ULTIMATE TWO-GENERATION PRODUCT

A growing number of communities are focusing on children's savings accounts (CSAs) — long-term, incentivized savings accounts for children that are generally used for higher education — as a vehicle to engage low-income parents and their children in fostering household financial security. By involving parents and children alike in financial education and savings activities, CSAs can connect families to financial management and asset-building tools and products.

CSAs are long-term accounts, established for children as early as at birth, and are allowed to grow until children reach adulthood. Accounts are seeded with an initial deposit and built by contributions from family, friends, and the children themselves. Often, savers' deposits are augmented by savings matches and/or other incentives. At age 18, the savings in CSAs are used for an asset-building purpose — typically financing postsecondary education.

Researchers have found that such asset-building accounts may have significant impacts on children and youth, particularly in the realm of educational attainment.

One particularly notable study documents that low- and moderate-income children with dedicated college savings of between \$1 and \$499 are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate from college than those without savings.¹⁷

Practical experience nationally has shown that in addition to improving educational outcomes for children, CSAs can effectively serve parents as well. Because parents are often willing to do for their children what they won't do for themselves, CSA initiatives can act as a two-generation "gateway" that simultaneously builds children's savings while growing parents' financial capacity by:

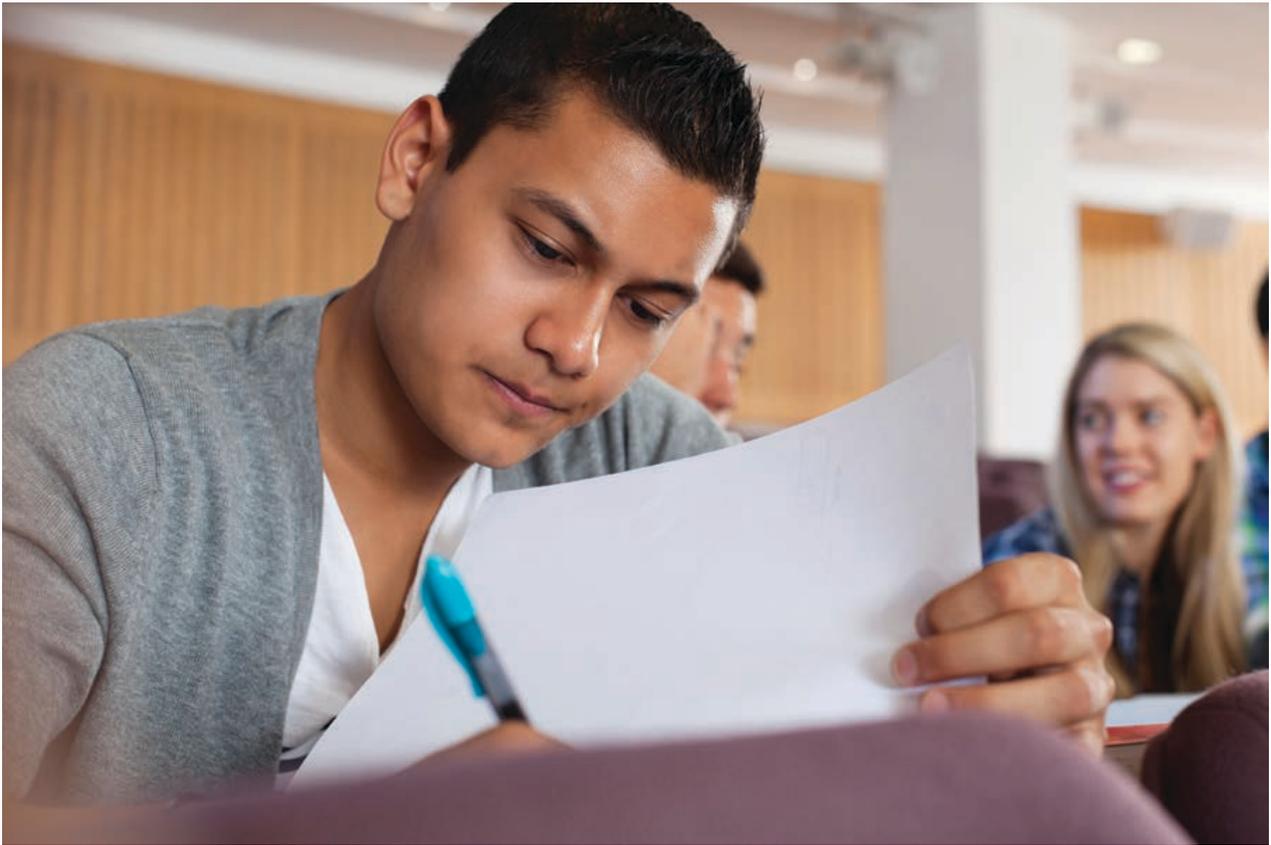
- **Building financial knowledge.** Many CSA programs engage both children and their parents in culturally and age-appropriate financial education.
- **Developing savings habits.** CSAs encourage the whole family to participate in savings and help develop lifelong savings habits for adults and children alike.
- **Encouraging parents to become banked.** For unbanked or underbanked parents,¹⁸ CSAs can create an initial connection to mainstream banking that may encourage parents to open checking or savings accounts for themselves, with the added benefit of no longer paying predatory fees to alternative financial service providers.
- **Connecting parents to asset-building services.** CSA programs can serve as a conduit for families to access other services that build household financial security, such as adult matched savings accounts (known as Individual Development Accounts or IDAs), free tax preparation, job training, and credit counseling.

The potential of CSAs to improve students' educational attainment and to increase the financial capacity of low- and moderate-income (LMI) families has fostered growing support for CSAs among policy makers, educators, financial institutions, and nonprofit organizations. In Colorado, a proposed effort via the state's Department of Human Services (CDHS) would open accounts for preschool-age children who already receive services through either CDHS's child care assistance program or the Colorado Department of Education's preschool program. As the field grows, CSAs are increasingly being designed not as a stand-alone product, but rather as piece of a multi-generation "toolkit" to help inform, empower, and engage both children and adults in the financial and asset-building realms.

POLICIES THAT BUILD ASSETS FOR TWO GENERATIONS

Public policy significantly affects the distribution of assets among households in the United States and has an enormous impact on financial security and income and wealth inequality. The federal government alone spends more than \$500 billion annually to encourage Americans to save, invest, and build wealth.¹⁹ Given the strong connection between savings and economic mobility,²⁰ this might seem like a wise choice, but the vast majority of this support accrues to high-income households in the form of tax expenditures.

Analyzing this public spending as a whole, we see that LMI families tend to receive income-based subsidies, while high-income households tend to receive asset-



based subsidies.²¹ A simple review of the existing prominent programs reveals that low-income households receive income support for everyday expenses — to pay for food (SNAP), rent (Section 8 vouchers), and medical insurance (Medicaid), while high-income households get subsidies to buy a house (mortgage interest and property tax deduction), invest in stocks (reduced rates on capital gains), and save for retirement (tax exclusion for 401k and IRA contributions). In other words, government funding helps low-income families get by, but its funding for high-income families helps them get further ahead. Needless to say, this is a recipe for growing inequality. Research shows that we need more equitable asset-based policies to ensure that all families can save and invest for themselves, for their children, and for the future.

Tax expenditures themselves need not be the enemy in this fight — not all tax expenditures are created equal. “Refundable” tax credits can be claimed regardless of tax liability. The Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and American Opportunity Tax Credit are each refundable or partially refundable and thus more likely to provide support to LMI families than other tax expenditures. In short, these are examples of more equitable tax expenditures that new public policies can build on and improve with asset building in mind.

Ideas for new asset-based policies abound at the local, state, and federal level. Local and statewide universal CSA programs have launched or are launching in San Francisco, Ohio's Cuyahoga County, Nevada, Colorado, and Maine. At the federal level, congressional leaders on the House and Senate tax-writing committees have committed to support large-scale CSA legislation to provide every child born in the United States with a savings account.

Other asset-based proposals would expand the Saver's Credit — a rare LMI-targeted retirement savings tax expenditure — and make it refundable to benefit more families. Policy makers are also working to remove asset limits from public benefit programs so that families do not have to choose between building wealth and receiving essential benefits that allow them to make ends meet.

All the incentives in the world will not help if families lack access to a savings product. To tackle this issue, California and Illinois are exploring a policy called Automatic-IRA to guarantee that families without an employer-sponsored retirement plan can save for the future. And President Obama recently announced myRA, a U.S. Treasury-sponsored account aimed at removing barriers to retirement savings by creating a simple, safe, and affordable retirement-savings product for working families.

To ensure that families can escape the perpetual financial insecurity of low-wage work, our public policies must do more than support incrementally higher wages — they must also help families save for college, buy a home, and start a business, which are investments in our nation's economic growth. While no policy is a silver bullet, we have the power to increase asset building and generational success through the budget and tax code. The asset-based reforms above will help accomplish this by turning our upside-down asset-based policies right-side up.

CONCLUSION

The daunting statistics that show the growing levels of income and wealth inequality, along with the high rates of financial insecurity documented by the rates of liquid-asset poverty, challenge us to design policies and practice innovations that are suited to the realities of the 21st century economy. Asset-building and two-generation strategies both rise to this challenge, and the growing alignment between these movements needs to be supported and expanded. We all know that there is no silver bullet to address poverty; it is only through sharing knowledge, integrating interventions, and investing in all Americans that we can achieve generational success.

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SERVING JUSTICE-INVOLVED MOMS IN A TWO-GENERATION PROGRAM

Vivian D. Nixon, College and Community Fellowship

“Today We Learn, Tomorrow We Lead.” This is the title of a stage play collaboratively written by 10 women who are alumna of College and Community Fellowship (CCF). They call themselves the Theater for Social Change Ensemble. The title of their recent script reflects both the values that drive the organization and the aspirations that being part of CCF ignite in the heart and mind of each and every woman who comes through its doors.

CCF is a small community-based organization in New York City. It was founded in 2000 with a mission to eliminate individual, social, and systemic barriers to higher education, civic participation, and economic stability for criminal justice-involved women and their families.

CCF, and organizations like it, emerged to address justice policies and practices that have several disparate impacts on poor communities and communities of color, starting with an explosion in the U.S. prison population beginning in 1970. Our prison population has risen by some 700 percent, far outpacing rates of population growth and crime.¹ Moreover, even though white Americans comprise the majority of the population and commit crimes at comparable rates to people of color, African-Americans and Latinos are incarcerated at overwhelmingly higher rates.² The overuse of criminal conviction as a method of addressing social problems extends beyond the prison and into the community. There are more than 65 million individual criminal history records on file in various repositories throughout the country.

Equally astonishing is the rise in the imprisonment of women, one of the criminal justice system’s fastest growing populations. In the past decade, the number of women incarcerated in federal and state prisons has increased by 22 percent. In New York State alone, the number of incarcerated women rose nearly 635 percent from 1973 to 2008. About 70 percent of these women are poor and African-American or Latina, and the vast majority were primary caretakers of minor children at the time of arrest. The disproportionate rate at which these women are incarcerated compounds the social and economic hardship in impoverished communities. Although women comprise only about 17 percent of the criminal justice population, the implications of their criminal justice involvement are devastating. Their children, family members, and neighborhoods experience their absence intensely.



A FOCUS ON REENTRY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Since 2004, the national trend has shifted from incarceration toward reforms aimed at decarceration and the reversal of the collateral consequences of criminal conviction that have led to limited opportunities for employment, education, licensing, housing, and other essentials required for successful reentry into the community. Historically, the rate of successful reentry for women has been remarkably low. There is a growing body of research that shows a difference between men and women with regard to pathways to crime, risk of recidivating, and social support needs.

CCF uses gender-responsive strategies to develop direct-service programs and a policy/advocacy agenda that specifically meets the needs of women. The long-term impact of these efforts will undoubtedly include increased public safety outcomes. However, CCF's primary goal is the well-being of women, their families, and their communities.

To achieve the desired outcome, CCF focuses its programs and policy/advocacy efforts on postsecondary education for incarcerated students and students with criminal history records. However, based on information received directly from women impacted by incarceration, CCF supplements its academic programming with holistic services that address additional high-level needs. In a 2009 national research study, soon-to-be-released incarcerated women most commonly reported needing education (95 percent), employment (83 percent), a mentor (83 percent), mental health treatment (55 percent), substance abuse treatment (75 percent), child-related services (90 percent), and parenting skills (70 percent).³ With its holistic programming, CCF is able to provide both academic and nonacademic support to help women stabilize their lives and earn college degrees.

CCF offers fully integrated services to 200 women each year. These include: college readiness counseling, academic support programming; case management and referral; theater for social change; advocacy training; and life skills workshops. These programs are designed to help women build social networks; learn self-advocacy, self-empowerment, and self-expression; learn to navigate systems; develop healthy relationships; and persevere through setbacks to reach the goal of getting a college degree. Many will be the first in their families to do so. By encouraging and helping women with criminal convictions get into and complete college, CCF enables them to build a strong future for themselves and their families. Many of the women who come to CCF have a history of physical/sexual abuse, domestic violence, depression, and poverty, which have deeply affected their mental and physical health. Additionally, most are low-income adult women of color between the ages of 25 and 50, who are juggling attending college, working, raising children, caring for aging parents, and maintaining sobriety.

LOSING FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PRISON-BASED HIGHER EDUCATION

Government-sponsored research has consistently concluded that postsecondary education is the most successful and least costly method of preventing crime and that prison-based education is the single most effective tool for lowering recidivism. Title IV of the 1965 Higher Education Act allowed incarcerated students to apply for low-income tuition assistance. As a result, college programs in prisons were funded through federal Pell Grants from the 1970s through 1994. By 1982, there were 350 college programs in prisons across 40 states. However, in the 1990s tough-on-crime debates, higher education in prison was attacked using the faulty assumption that educating people in prison came at a high cost. In fact, crime rates were going down, and the amount of Pell money spent on higher education in prison equaled *only one-tenth of 1 percent* of the Pell budget.

In the end, Congress passed the 1993 crime bill, which included a provision that made prisoners ineligible for federal student financial aid. This was reinforced by the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1994, and most in-prison college programs closed their doors. Thousands of students, a disparate number of them African-American and Latino, were stripped of the hope that access to higher education offered. These are the same people whose opportunities have historically been limited by failed educational policies that have had disparate impact on marginalized communities.

After incarceration, individuals who apply for college continue to face discrimination due colleges and universities haphazardly and unfairly screening people with criminal convictions. These institutions engage in screening despite research that shows no correlation between screening and campus safety. This practice, because of the disproportionate number of poor people and people of color who have criminal records, also has a disparate impact on marginalized communities.

Decreasing college access in prison is more significant for women because there are considerably fewer opportunities for women to pursue higher education in prison than for men. Furthermore, the data show that while earning a GED in prison reduces the rate of recidivism for men, it does not do the same for women. Only college-level courses have a proven correlation to significant reductions in recidivism for women.

For these reasons and more, CCF co-founded the Education from the Inside Out (EIO) Coalition, which seeks to remove barriers to higher education facing individuals with criminal justice involvement, including currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. The EIO Coalition addresses the systemic barriers that prevent criminal justice-involved individuals from accessing higher education opportunities during and after incarceration. As described earlier, legal barriers to education persist in many areas. CCF's commitment to eliminating those barriers is demonstrated in its leadership of the EIO Coalition.

SUCCESS OF CCF STUDENTS

One of CCF's strengths is its deep understanding of its constituents — a third of CCF's staff has been involved in the criminal justice system, and two of them, including myself, were CCF students before becoming staff members. This commitment to leadership by those directly impacted fosters a deep connection between CCF's programs and advocacy. The EIO Coalition offers free advocacy training to CCF students and encourages them to be active members and leaders in all of the policy and advocacy work. CCF encourages its constituents to bring their voices into the national conversation and onto the public stage through the EIO Coalition and through CCF's Theater for Social Change Ensemble. They do this because, as former CCF intern Christine Murnane says, “before popular Netflix series *Orange is the New Black* dramatized a woman's process through the penal system, they [CCF students] lived it in real life.” The tens of thousands of women who are under the control of the U.S. justice system will never get the chance to share their painful back stories on-screen, and the adversity these women and their families face will not disappear once they've shed their prison garb, steel-toed boots, and inmate identification numbers. But, through the leadership opportunities offered at CCF, they can still be heard.

Since 2000, CCF students have earned 286 degrees: 61 associate's, 142 bachelor's, 81 master's, one JD, and one PhD. Some say that only extraordinary people can achieve this level of success after criminal conviction — that those who manage to do this well post-conviction are the exceptions to the rule. But research shows that most people desire to do well upon release. What separates those who do well from those who fail is not extraordinary skill, but extraordinary opportunity.

The seeds of extraordinary opportunity are planted by the hands of individuals like Anne Mosle and watered by investment in innovative programs like Ascend at the Aspen Institute. When Mosle approached me to be one of the inaugural Ascend Fellows, it forced CCF to think more strategically about the needs of its students' children and family members. We know, anecdotally and from collected demographic data, that the composition of our constituents' families may not be a single mother and her children but rather a variety of combinations, including a mother whose children reside with another family member, a mother whose children are in foster care, and a mother who is caring for her grandchildren.

Through the Ascend Network, CCF partnered with the Columbia University Law School Center for Institutional and Social Change to identify pathways for justice-involved families to reach educational success. The objectives are to learn: 1) the current family compositions of CCF students; 2) how CCF is currently addressing multi-generational needs; and 3) how CCF could enhance or create programs to

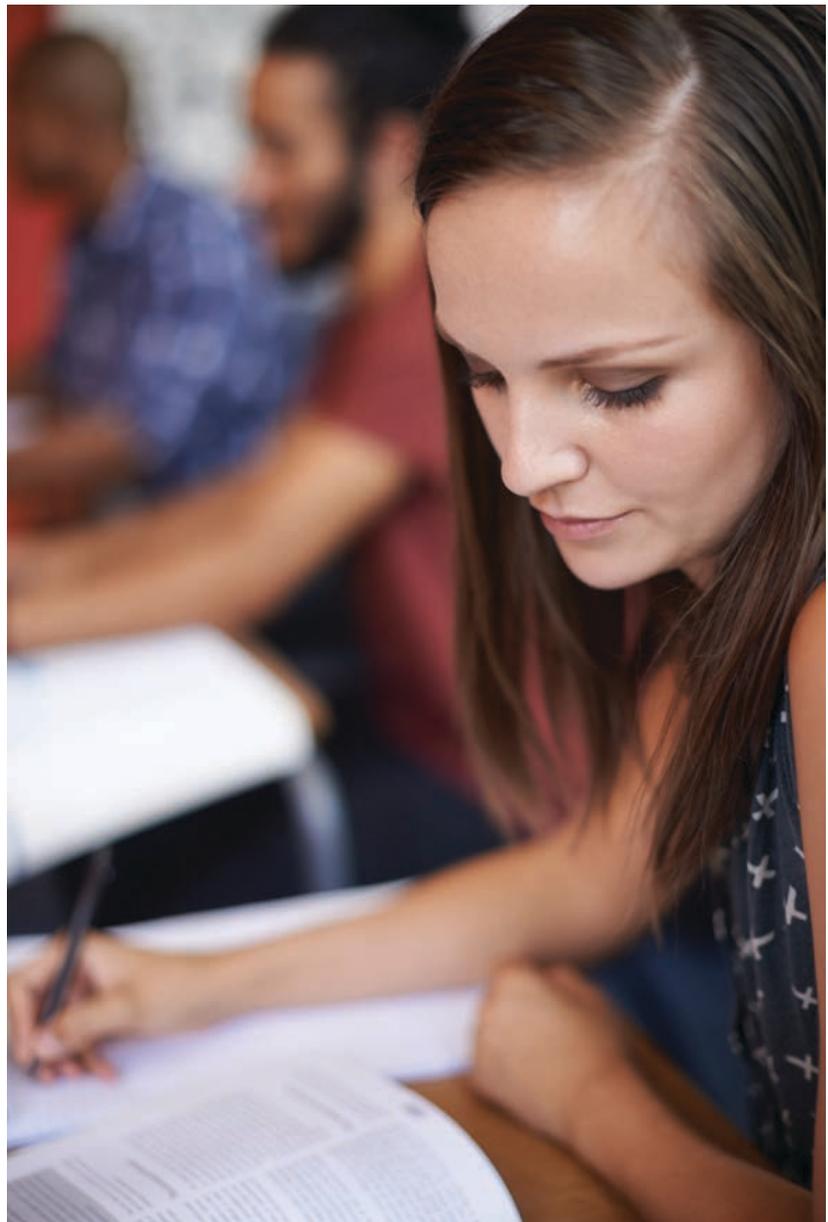
better address multiple generations. The initial data confirm that the students are knowledgeable and resourceful about what they need, and they can recommend solutions for gaps in CCF's programming related to a multi-generational strategy. CCF will roll out its multi-generational plans in three stages: 1) release a practitioner-focused white paper documenting initial findings; 2) release an academic research paper; and 3) develop a list of program development recommendations based on the data.

The individual and public benefits of education are too many to list here and are well known to most. Briefly, we know that higher education increases employability, reduces recidivism, and has a positive correlation with good health, overall quality of life, and deep social integration. Public benefits include increased tax revenues, greater workplace productivity, increased consumption, increased workforce flexibility, and decreased reliance on government financial support. It would be very easy to articulate CCF's success in terms of these measures; CCF graduation data are documented above. While the national recidivism rate for women within three years of release from prison is around 60 percent, in the 14 years that CCF has been in operation, less than 2 percent of the women we have served in the academic program have returned to prison.

CCF's greatest achievement has been the internal transformation of the program's graduates. As one student puts it, "Education changed me forever. I see my place in the world differently. I see my relationship to the world's problems differently. I see the world's relationship to my problems differently."

Says another, "I would say that being able to go back to school and further my education has been the single biggest factor, other than my sobriety, that will enable me to give back and to help other people."

These women, from whom so many expect so little, are learning to support one another and to expect great things



from themselves and from each other. The Theater for Social Change Ensemble will perform at our 2014 celebration of graduates. Each one of the performers will have once walked across the same stage to celebrate having earned their own college degree — some of them went on to graduate school. They will tell their stories in their own voices. Before an audience of new and aspiring graduates, friends and family, community leaders and elected officials, donors and educators, Yolanda will speak of the trauma of giving birth in shackles, Edna will share the pain of being abandoned on the steps of an orphanage at the age of 6, Smyrna will dramatize the downward spiral of domestic violence and addiction, and Sally will recount losing her teaching job because of her criminal record.

But they will also tell tales of overcoming their struggles with English grammar and statistics to graduate from college, and they will extol the confidence that comes with self-advocacy and self-sufficiency. Most important of all, they will know that with their words they speak truth to power: Today We Learn, Tomorrow We Lead!

¹ Public Safety Performance. (2007, February 14). *Public Safety, Public Spending: Forecasting America's Prison Population 2007-2011*. Washington, DC: Pew Charitable Trusts. Retrieved from www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/state-based_policy/PSPPrisonprojections0207pdf.pdf.

² Wagner, P. (2012, August 28). "Incarceration is not an equal opportunity punishment." *Prison Policy Initiative*. Retrieved from www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/raceinc.html.

³ Lindquist, C., Lattimore, P., Barrick, K., & Visher, C. A., (2009, December). *Prison Reentry Experiences of Adult Females*. Rockville: National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Retrieved from www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/230420.pdf.



THE CASE FOR PREVENTION: A TWO-GENERATION APPROACH TO ENDING CHILD ABUSE

Katie Albright, Genanne Walsh, Larry Yip, and Malcolm Gaines, San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center

Bella Peterson, age five,¹ had missed her first eight days of kindergarten. Her mother, Alana, and grandmother, Judy, couldn't agree on what school she should attend. The house was a wreck, and everyone was fighting. Bella spent most evenings alone in her room listening to her mother and grandmother arguing.

Alana was 28 years old, and Judy was in her mid-40s, having had Alana when she was a teenager. Both Alana and Judy received SSI disability benefits. They lived together in a one-bedroom flat, shared expenses, and co-parented Bella. In those close quarters, Judy and Alana fought frequently, most often about how to choose a school for Bella and how to discipline her.

Bella's pediatrician referred them to the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center for help learning how to reduce family conflict between generations. As we worked to support and stabilize the family, a generational cycle of abuse became apparent.

The Petersons are not alone. Child abuse devastates individuals and families and comes at a great cost to society. Approximately one in seven children in our country are victims of child abuse.² The United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations — with approximately four children dying every day from maltreatment.³

The long-term impact of child abuse continues through adulthood and includes higher rates of unemployment and poverty.⁴ Adults who were victims of child abuse and traumatic childhood experiences are at increased risk for major adverse health effects, including heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, liver disease, obesity, and high blood pressure, as well as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and suicide.⁵

The good news is that ample evidence shows that with the right support — for children and their parents — we can prevent and alleviate the devastating impact of abuse. For more than 40 years, the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center has worked to protect children and strengthen families.

In 1974, the Prevention Center launched the TALK Line program to provide round-the-clock telephone crisis counseling to parents coping with a range of stresses. Over the years, our programs have grown to serve both parents and kids. When the Prevention Center opened its Family Support Center in 1987, we launched both

a Parent Drop-In and a Therapeutic Children's Playroom. This had a two-fold, two-generation benefit: (1) the availability of free care in the Playroom made it possible for parents who could not easily afford child care to access stabilizing services such as counseling and case management; and (2) it provided our staff the opportunity to assess and address children's developmental needs and then offer interventions and support to parents as needed.

Since that time, we have launched additional programs, including a school-based child safety curriculum that teaches personal safety skills to K-5 kids and their parents and school personnel; counseling and mental health services for children and parents; and the new Children's Advocacy Center of San Francisco, which provides multidisciplinary care to children who have experienced physical and sexual abuse.⁶ Our community needs innovative solutions. The city and county of San Francisco have one of the highest rates of child abuse in the Bay Area.⁷ Every year, 6,000 cases of suspected child abuse are reported,⁸ and 10,000 children witness, or are victims of, violence in their homes and neighborhoods.⁹

The Prevention Center serves children and families from diverse ethnic backgrounds and from all areas of San Francisco. Our intensive services are targeted to high-needs families with children ages 0-12. The overwhelming majority of our clients — 89 percent — are low-income. The majority of the parents we serve — more than 80 percent — are mothers, and more than half are single parents. A typical parent we serve is:

- A 26- to 45-year-old single mother.
- She rents in the Haight-Ashbury or Bayview Hunter's Point neighborhood and qualifies as extremely low-income according to federal poverty guidelines.
- She works or participates in CalWORKs, graduated from high school, and has some college credits. She is an English speaker and her ethnicity is African-American, Caucasian, or Latina. Her child is between 0-6 years old, often multiethnic.
- She comes to the Prevention Center for a scheduled individual counseling appointment. She also receives crisis intervention services and participates in some parenting groups. There is a strong likelihood — a 25 percent chance — that she uses our TALK Line, a parental stress telephone counseling line, for ongoing support.

INCORPORATING A TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

With the growth of the Prevention Center, we have implemented a two-generation strategy to prevent abuse and support children and their parents. This approach helped us develop a targeted family support plan for the Peterson family and hundreds of others. From our four decades of experience, we knew anecdotally that serving both parents and kids made sense — but how could we both hold ourselves more accountable to our clients and ensure that our programs were truly making a positive impact? We needed to move from a subjective “gut-feeling” approach to a more data-driven and outcomes-based framework. Now, we are taking our services to the next level and developing a model to produce measurable, positive outcomes for children and parents — with the ultimate goal of providing even better service to our client families.

In 2013, with the support of Ascend at the Aspen Institute, we launched a pilot program to provide intensive services to some of the most at-risk children and families. In 2014 and beyond, we are rolling out our intensive services model — **Integrated Family Services** — to serve almost four times more families, increasing from 12 to 40, with the ultimate goal of reducing incidents of child abuse in San Francisco.

This work aligns with the Aspen Institute's focus on ending poverty. Research shows that income inequality, as well as child poverty rates, correlates to increases in child maltreatment.¹⁰ The Children's Defense Fund reported that "children who live in families with an annual income less than \$15,000 are 22 times more likely to be abused or neglected than children living in families with an annual income of \$30,000 or more."¹¹

Unfortunately, San Francisco's high cost of living places a heavy burden on struggling families. In spite of our Golden State's many advantages, children here continue to face significant obstacles. Overall, 25.1 percent of California's children live in poverty. San Francisco's rate of child poverty is nearly as high as the statewide average, at 23.4 percent. Children under age six have the highest rate of poverty across all age groups, at 26.3 percent. And children from immigrant families and families of color are living in poverty at disproportionate rates.¹² Nobody wants to see San Francisco become a city only for the wealthy. To keep our community welcoming and safe for low- and moderate-income children, we *must* provide safety net services and interventions.

Our Integrated Family Services (IFS) model takes an innovative approach, using the Five Protective Factors framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The Five Protective Factors provides communities with a systems-level tool to prevent child abuse. We have applied this framework to improve outcomes for families and children on an individual level. Specifically, the framework allows us to assess both parents' and children's needs:

Protective Factor	Definition
Parental Resilience	Parent has the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in their family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships, including relationships with their own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.
Social Connection	The family has healthy interactions with family friends, family members, neighbors and community members who provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and concrete assistance.
Concrete Support in Times of Need	When the family encounters a crisis, similar to but not limited to, the following: domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, the family knows how to access adequate services to provide stability, treatment and help for family members in order to get through the crisis.
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	Parents have accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age to help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development.
Social and Emotional Competence of Children	The child has the ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings with their family, other adults, and peers.



Source: Center for the Study of Social Policy

These factors serve as our framework for assessing program outcomes and goals and are at the core of our work to track progress and evaluate goals for each family we serve.¹³

The Prevention Center’s theory of change outlines a two-generation approach with targeted short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes that will help families achieve stability and well-being. The chart below illustrates our targeted outcomes, including our long-term target that client families will have no child abuse reports after exiting services.

The mission of the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center is to prevent child abuse and reducing its devastating impact. Our integrated Family Services model promotes social and emotional strengths of children and their families through short, intermediate and long-term outcomes.	
Long-Term Outcomes	Families have no child abuse reports post service (measured 6 months after graduating from program).
Intermediate Outcomes	Families achieve adequate Protective Factors: parent resilience, social connections, concrete support, knowledge of parenting and child development, and children’s social and emotional competency (measured ever 3 months).
Short-Term Outcomes	Families improve on 19 short-term outcomes, such as coping skills and emotional self-regulation (measured weekly).

MEASURING OUTCOMES TO SUPPORT HIGH-NEEDS FAMILIES

Child abuse doesn't happen in a vacuum. Abuse is relational, based on a complex mix of risk factors for both parents and children. To address the generational cycle of abuse, we must support both the child and his/her caregivers. To do this effectively, we need to truly understand their needs and measure their outcomes. We target outcomes to help clients gain social-emotional learning, parent resilience, access to basic needs, and parent-child attachment.

When the Peterson family arrived for services, our team assessed their needs and delivered targeted support. Their case illustrates the program’s strong potential as well as the magnitude of challenges struggling families face.

It quickly became apparent that the small family — Judy (grandmother), Alana (mother), and Bella (daughter) — had experienced a great deal of generational trauma. Judy came to San Francisco more than 20 years ago as a teenage runaway fleeing physical and sexual abuse by her father; she had Alana very young and lived on the streets for a time. When Judy did find housing, it was chaotic — for years, she and her young daughter lived in a house with a large number of transient roommates, many of whom were heavy drug and alcohol users.

Initially, our clinical staff focused on connecting Judy and Alana with resources to help them find a good school for Bella and improve their capacity to meet the family’s concrete needs. All three began seeing counselors. Soon after entering services, Alana suffered a psychotic break — a breakup with her boyfriend set off a downward spiral, and she stopped taking her antidepressants. In therapy, the scale of Alana’s challenges quickly became apparent. She was struggling with extreme anger at her mother and fragmented memories of physical and sexual abuse that

she experienced as a child living in shared housing with numerous adults coming and going. Alana's counselor was alarmed at a spike in her levels of distress and paranoia and was concerned that Alana might be suicidal. Clinical staff intervened, and Alana was hospitalized. Below, we'll share how our services have helped the Petersons gain stability and weather this crisis.

The core of IFS is our focus on assessing protective factors and measuring clients' progress and challenges. Well-supervised clinical staff contact families and coordinate all services, ensuring a holistic approach; and we provide ongoing clinical education and case conferences for staff. Our clinical care coordinators are integral to this work, serving as the main point of contact for families and ensuring they receive care and services tailored to their needs. Here is an example of how our programming aligns with the Five Protective Factors to offer relevant and meaningful support for the Petersons and our other client families:

- **Intensive Care Management.** The heart of our IFS services, clinical care coordinators work with families to create an Individual Service Plan that helps them identify challenges, work toward stability, and access needed resources. This directly targets **parental resilience and concrete needs**, helping parents manage and bounce back from life's challenges. This work, along with psychotherapy, is also central to building and sustaining trusted relationships.
- **Psychotherapy & Counseling.** Targeting **parental resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, and children's social/emotional competence**, our counselors employ psychotherapy and psycho-education to help child and adult clients effectively understand and communicate emotions, mitigate stress, begin to heal from past traumas, and promote social and emotional growth.
- **TALK Line 24/7 Parental Stress Telephone Support.** Our 24/7 parental stress counseling line offers round-the-clock support and referrals for parents during moments of crisis and over the long term. Staffed by well-trained and supervised volunteer counselors, this service targets **parental resilience, knowledge of parenting, and social connections**.
- **Parenting Education & Support.** We offer a range of evidenced-based and innovative parenting groups, workshops, and one-on-one support to address a range of parenting challenges and questions. We know that when parents have a solid **knowledge of parenting**, including accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for their children's behavior at each developmental stage, they are better able to nurture their children's healthy development.
- **Basic Needs Support.** Our clinical care coordinators and other IFS staff provide **concrete support** to families so that they can access stabilizing services and treatment, and get help for family members, to weather the crisis. This includes everything from help with affordable housing and job searches to emergency needs funds for groceries, children's clothing, and other basic needs.
- **Family Events & Community Connections.** At our Family Support Center, we foster **social connections** through a range of weekly and seasonal activities and events that engage families, reduce isolation, and provide fun, safe opportunities for building community. We know that families are stronger when they have a

healthy network that can provide emotional support, help solve problems, and offer solidarity and connection.

- **Therapeutic Children's Playroom.** This service, along with children's psychotherapy, targets **children's social and emotional learning.** Our welcoming Therapeutic Playroom offers a place for children to interact positively with others, learn to regulate their behavior, and effectively engage with their parents, other trusted adults, and their peers.

While this IFS programming keeps families — with all their individual hopes, dreams, strengths, and challenges — at the heart of our work, it also relies on data to clearly understand and support their needs. As part of our 2013 pilot program and increased focus on evaluation, staff identified new assessment tools that will help measure and track clients' outcomes and protective factors. The chart below outlines the indicators and protective factors that we measure to assess needs and challenges. The assessment tools used include:

- The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-SE), which provides developmental and social/emotional screening for children.¹⁴
- The North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS), which measures family functioning in a holistic way that includes parent-child interaction.¹⁵ Our clinical team has mapped the domain areas within the NCFAS to each of the Five Protective Factors.
- The Protective Factors Survey (PFS).¹⁶

Additionally, these tools provide data regarding parental functioning and the parent-child relationship:

- Parenting Stress Index, Fourth Edition Short Form (PSI-4-SF).¹⁷
- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21).¹⁸

The Prevention Center's client database, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO Software™), a platform built by Social Solutions, is a powerful tool that tracks outcomes and supports ongoing assessments and outcome measurements throughout each family's engagement with services. This coordinated system of care allows clinical staff to use both quantitative and qualitative data to adapt services and ensure follow-through.

TARGET AUDIENCE

For our intensive services pilot, we identified families' risk factors for abuse, with a targeted focus on families with higher risk factors. This risk screening tool is informed by the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, which has progressively uncovered how adverse experiences in childhood are strongly related to the development and prevalence of risk factors that impact disease, health, and social well-being throughout an individual's lifespan.¹⁹

Highest Risk/Highest Priority:

- A prior incident or substantiated report of child abuse within the immediate family.
- Violence within a family, whether or not the child is a direct witness/victim.

Risk Factors Correlated to Five Protective Factors:

- Poor parent-child relationships and consistently negative interactions.
- Social isolation.
- Parent's mental health includes significant clinical impairment or distress.
- Parent's active substance abuse.
- Lack of understanding of children's needs, child development, and parenting skills.
- Children younger than five years.

Risk Factors Frequently Correlated to Increased Risk of Abuse:

- Poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage, including unemployment or lack of education.
- History of child abuse in family of origin.
- Stress and distress.
- Young, single parents and non-biological caregivers (e.g., mother's male partner).
- The presence of violence in family's immediate community/neighborhood.
- Concentrated neighborhood disadvantage (e.g., high poverty, residential instability, high unemployment rates).
- Special needs in child that may increase caregiver burden (e.g., disabilities, mental retardation, mental health issues, and chronic physical illness).
- Family disorganization or dissolution.
- Thoughts and emotions supporting maltreatment behaviors.

We created a standardized intake and assessment screening process and, as noted above, increased the use of outcome measures throughout the service delivery process. Families with high risk factors are placed on a fast track for more intensive services. Participating families receive:

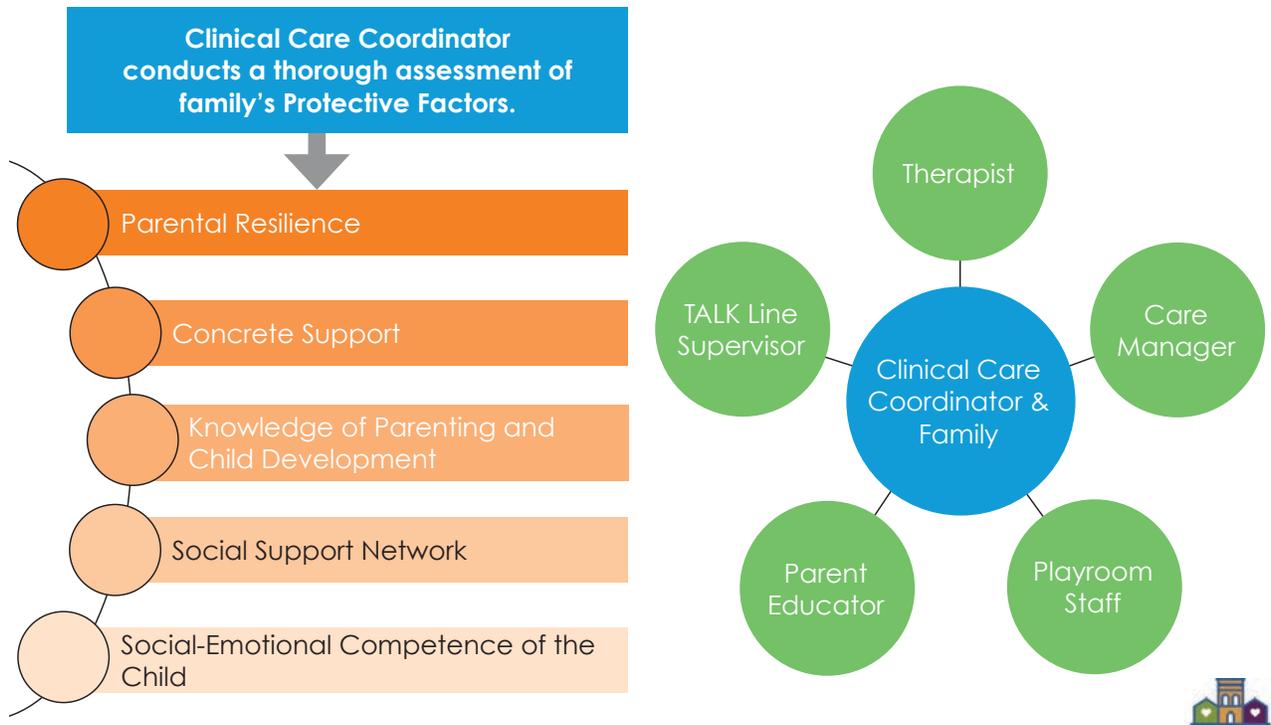
- A coordinated Service Delivery Team (clinical care coordinator, therapist, care manager, and other service providers) that provides targeted support as described above;
- A tailored service plan to meet the needs of each family;
- Parenting education and child development support;
- Regular assessments to track well-being and adjust the service plan when needed; and
- Data collection and analysis to inform best practices for every family.

Families are assessed at regular intervals throughout the delivery of services, so that staff can track outcomes and assess when they reach adequate levels related to the protective factors. Our Service Delivery Team frequently measures how clients feel about their treatment progress, and we hold ourselves accountable through

regularly scheduled assessments. By conducting regular assessments, we are able to adjust the service plan to meet each family's evolving needs and support them in increasing protective factors. The chart below illustrates how our integrated approach supports families.

For the Petersons, this work has helped. While Alana was hospitalized, the Prevention Center's Service Delivery Team provided targeted and holistic support to all three family members, providing daily phone support during the crisis as well as face-to-

THE SERVICE DELIVERY TEAM



face meetings two to three times per week. Assessment data showed that Judy improved in many indicators, while Alana's results rose and fell sharply. Clinical staff used these assessments to pinpoint areas of concern and provide targeted support. For Judy, the team provided intensive case management support to help her maintain a stable and functioning environment for her granddaughter. The family received numerous home visits and school site visits to facilitate Bella's transition to her new school. Bella is now attending school regularly and doing fairly well academically; our staff provides services as needed to support her social and emotional development. Throughout the process, the Petersons' service plan was adjusted to focus on stabilizing Alana and helping Judy step into the role of primary caregiver for Bella. Now, Alana is back on her medications and in no immediate danger of hurting herself.

This work not only mitigates the impact of trauma and crisis, it will help Bella and our other child clients succeed over the long term. While Bella was not physically or sexually abused, the toxic stress in her life — a direct result of the abuse her mother and grandmother had suffered — was impeding her capacity to learn and

function well in school. Research shows that children who have been abused are 25 percent more likely to have trouble in school, including low academic achievement and lower IQs.²⁰ Child maltreatment during infancy can cause impaired brain development that leads to decreased cognitive and language development.²¹ Victims are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be truant, drop out, become teen parents, or be arrested as juveniles.²²

EVALUATING SUCCESS

We are in the early research and development phase of this work, and it is too early to conduct independent evaluation and impact studies. Our intent is that these practices and their implementation will ultimately provide important lessons for the two-generation field. Preliminary findings from our intensive services pilot include these early lessons:

- 53 percent of our total number of families (n=88) scored below baseline on one or more protective factors, with **parental resilience being the greatest need.**
- **73 percent** of pilot families (n=12) have demonstrated improvement in their protective factors, with an average improvement of three points as measured by the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale.

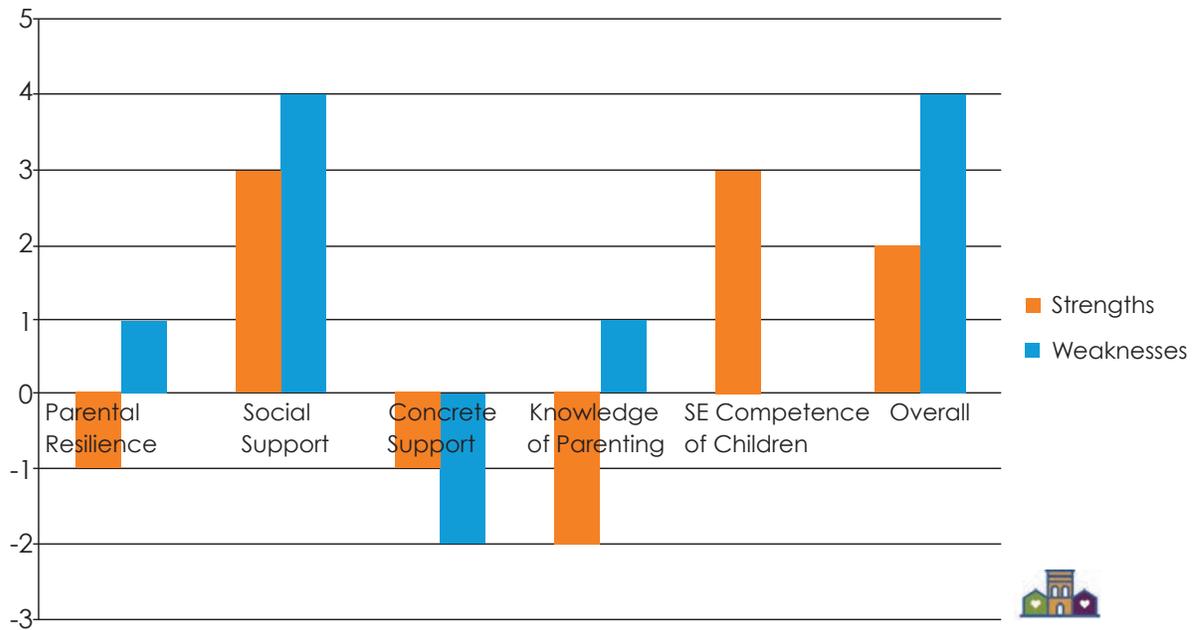
Early lessons have led to several program adjustments. Based on pilot feedback and analysis, we added a simple monthly client self-evaluation. Now, client families complete a seven-question monthly self-assessment to reflect on progress with their clinical care coordinators, which allows for continuous communication and feedback. Additionally, we streamlined our follow-up assessment process. Every three months, the clinical care coordinator completes a NCFAS assessment, and the client completes a protective factors survey; this allows for more thorough quarterly adjustments and check-ins.

We will assess further results in 2015 and will consider conducting a formal evaluation and program expansion. We will also reassess our evaluation tools to ensure that we are capturing the most holistic and relevant data for our client families. In the coming years, we will enhance our parent-child education offerings to reach families with a broad range of needs, challenges, and schedules — including modular, flexible, web-based, and short-term curricula. We will further determine which short-term interventions help our clients make progress and look forward to reporting on results.

Clearly, the Peterson family — and most of our IFS client families — still faces major challenges. Yet, the Prevention Center's multigenerational approach and capacity to provide intensive and holistic care helped them weather the crisis. Most importantly, our continued work with the Petersons will help both Judy and Alana create a healthier, happier environment in which Bella can reach her full potential — and end the cycle of abuse and poverty.

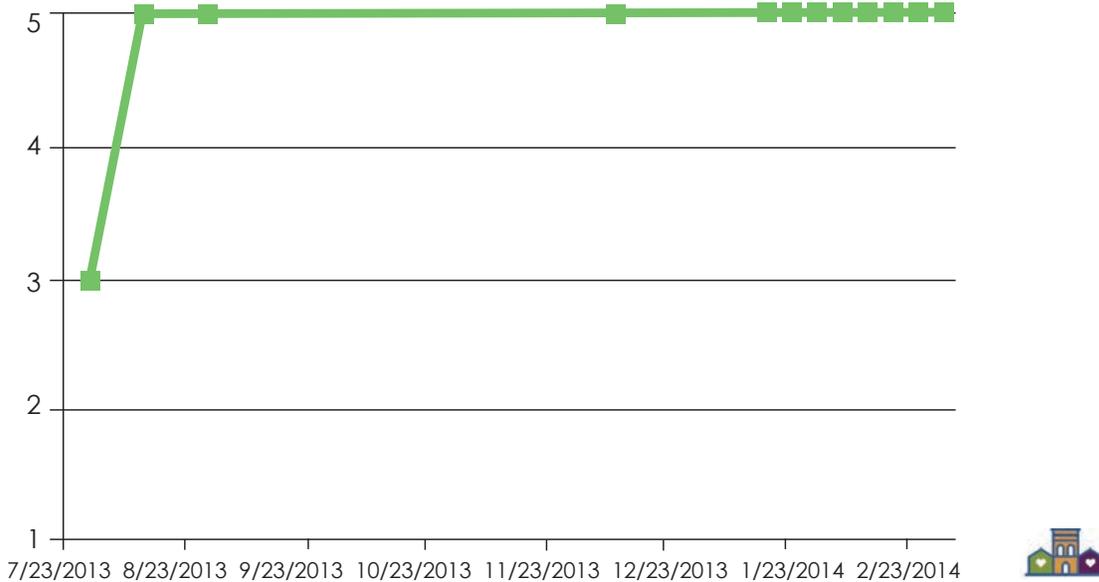
The charts on these pages outline the Petersons' progress toward protective factors as well as Judy and Alana's individual short-term outcome indicators. The family made progress in three of five protective factors, remained stable in the child's social/emotional factor, and struggled with improving their ability to meet concrete needs.

TRACKING THE PETERSON FAMILY'S PROGRESS: AVERAGE CHANGE BY PROTECTIVE FACTOR



GRANDMOTHER'S PROGRESS

Goal: Caregiver's psychological well-being allows prioritizing children's needs

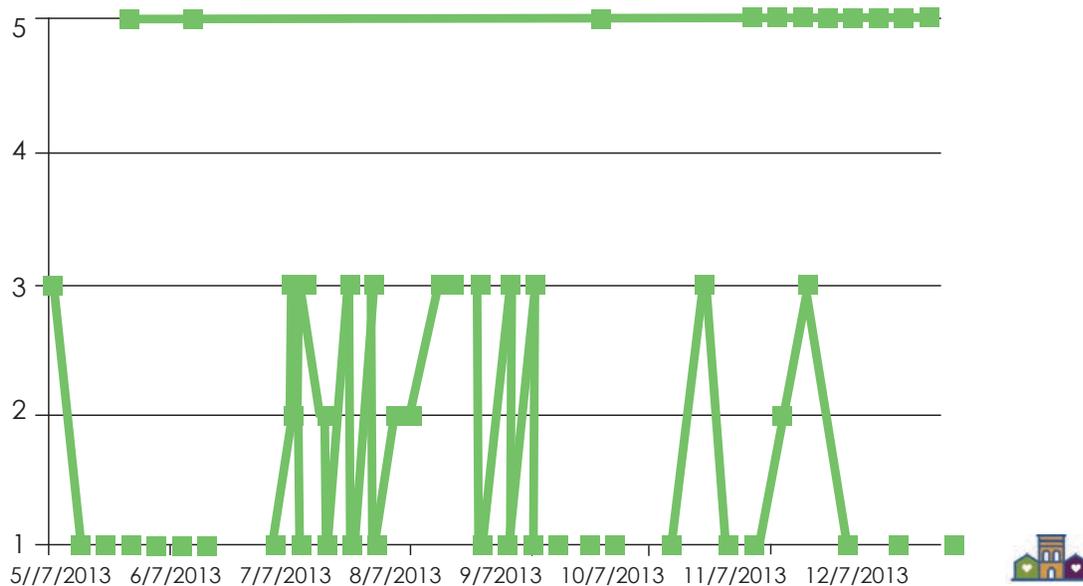


POTENTIAL FOR SCALE

The Prevention Center will continue to share methods, lessons learned, and data with our local, regional, and national colleagues to increase knowledge and promote the two-generation approach. We are collaborating with the Center for the Study

MOTHER'S STRUGGLE TO FIND STABILITY

Goal: Parent's psychological well-being supports meeting individual/family needs



of Social Policy on how to best assess the Five Protective Factors, are developing crosswalks for the NCFAS tool, and have provided feedback on the existing version of the Family Development Matrix (FDM) that is aligned with the protective factors. We have also worked with First 5 San Francisco and the UCSF Child Trauma Research Program to draft a supplement to the FDM that is currently in use by case managers in the citywide, collaborative SafeStart program to support families with young children exposed to violence. This work has implications across the state (the FDM is California DSS's current assessment of choice), as well as nationally, because finding an accurate assessment tool for two-generation protective factors will strengthen the entire social- and family-service field.

Providing these services is a very intensive way of working with families. The agency's current capacity is approximately 40-50 families annually. There is exciting potential for scale, provided sustainable resources are raised for this outcomes-based intervention. We are working with our partners and stakeholders to develop innovative new ways to make this promising two-generation model accessible to more families in need.

And we will continue to work with the Petersons to help them achieve stability, connection, and essential resources — and end the cycle of abuse.

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- ¹ Names have been changed to protect client confidentiality.
- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, January 14). *Child Maltreatment: Consequences*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/consequences.html.
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AMERICAN MOJO: BUILDING A FOR-PROFIT SOCIAL ENTERPRISE THAT TRULY DRIVES IMPACT

Cara Aley, Lionbridge

Increasingly in the private sector, businesses are aligning with a mission. Whether this comes in the form of a CSR (corporate social responsibility) role or the mission is inherent in the business model, both are intended to do good. Who says only nonprofits can deliver meaningful impact?

At a time when government and nonprofits alike are having difficulty addressing the growing needs of our economically troubled country, the private sector has an opportunity (and in my opinion, an obligation) to help move families toward economic security. Unfortunately, often this comes across as a marketing ploy (and is in reality often done to serve marketing purposes); in many cases, the delivery of the mission produces little impact. The apparel company American MoJo sought to prove that you really can drive social impact in a for-profit vehicle.

From 2010 to 2012, I was president and chief operating officer of American MoJo, a for-profit social enterprise (FPSE) formerly based in Lowell, Massachusetts. My brothers and I co-founded the business to provide mobility opportunities to single mothers in the U.S. We were raised by a single mother and were very familiar with the pitfalls and struggles that a family with one parent faces. As a result, I spent three years at American MoJo honing stitching, education, and life-skills-training programs to better enable American MoJo personnel to ultimately pursue their dream career paths outside of apparel manufacturing. It was critical that American MoJo be a stepping stone for its employees — not just a job, but a new start and a new career path with a 360-degree support network.

Sadly, American MoJo had to shut down due to difficulty raising the capital necessary to keep it going. While the business model was sound and the margins were strong, investors were concerned about putting money into apparel manufacturing in the U.S.; there is still no financial incentive for brands to manufacture products in this country. But because the model was both strong and sustainable (and the business was at a \$1 million revenue run rate upon closure), we are currently working on the approach so that it can again be applied either in manufacturing or another industry.

THE TWO-GENERATION APPROACH AT AMERICAN MOJO

For nonprofits and mission-driven for-profits alike, assessing how to create the most sustainable impact is critical. At American MoJo, we took a two-generation



approach to breaking the cycle of poverty in low-income families by offering the following services.

For the parents: They received paid training in apparel manufacturing, a living wage, life-skills classes (stress management, budget management, 401k planning, parenting), and career coaching. By partnering with programs like Keys to Degrees at Endicott College, the intent was also to provide access to education opportunities at local community colleges as we scaled the business.

For the children: Children of MoJo employees received high-quality early childhood education free of charge. Studies show that high school dropout rates, drug use, and teen pregnancy rates all decrease significantly when a child has had early childhood education. Head Start remains a key program in setting a baseline for quality early childhood education and has conducted over 30 years of research on the subject. One of the better known studies, the Perry Preschool Study,¹ found that "one dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education programs by policymakers results in a return of seven dollars in preventative costs associated with incarceration, truancy, school dropout, and teen pregnancy."²

As American MoJo ran out of funding in its third year, we couldn't continue the business and build the two-generation program, but the goal was to get parents actively involved in both their own educations and those of their children. This would allow a continuous support network between parent and child. This two-generation approach and the American MoJo mission prioritizes self-sufficiency, which sustains the mission. As education is prioritized from one generation to the next, both generations can inspire one another to strive to be the best they can be.

When an organization considers the impact of its mission, helping people is a noble goal. But an organization first needs to consider the type of help being offered. Recall this Chinese proverb: “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” As Ascend looks at opportunities to adopt two-generation approaches through impact investing, there are lessons to be learned from American MoJo. In particular, companies that employ minimum-wage workers without a career path can apply workforce development strategies and provide education opportunities to their employees and their children. This ultimately can reduce attrition rates (that are now higher than 50 percent annually in an industry like food services ³), offset recruitment and training costs, and improve employee productivity and morale. The goal is to help those minimum wage workers get on the path to earning a family-sustaining salary in a real career.

RESULTS

American MoJo needed more years of operation to provide measurable results of its success. But there was evidence of success in the business' short journey (names have been changed for privacy):

- Employee attrition rates were far lower than the manufacturing industry standard.
- Employee attendance rates were far higher than the manufacturing industry standard.
- Tanya and her children no longer had to live in a shelter once she started working for American MoJo. Though she had had no training or real job experience when she started, she is still working in apparel manufacturing and continues to rent an apartment with her two children.
- Somal was promoted to floor supervisor within the first six months.
- A Congolese mother and her daughter who both worked for American MoJo didn't speak English very well when they first arrived. With access to free ESL courses through American MoJo, both spoke English well when American MoJo shut its doors. The daughter had learned Microsoft Excel and was promoted to running fulfillment, shipping, and receiving by her eighth month. Both went on to jobs with other local manufacturing companies when American MoJo shut down.
- Two employees went on to start their own businesses with some of American MoJo's smaller clients, and one is still in business.

SCALING THE MODEL

American MoJo was well-poised to scale its model, with one exception. The selection of manufacturing as the core business was suboptimal because it is difficult to become highly skilled at stitching. American MoJo's goal was not to create career stitchers, and because the cost to train employees was high, losing a competent stitcher would have hurt the business (a perspective that ran counter to our mission). When I attempt to apply this mission-based model again, I will do so in an industry in which it is far easier to train employees. That will lower training costs and ensure that losing employees is not detrimental to the business.

LESSONS LEARNED IN RUNNING AN FPSE

After my brothers and I closed American MoJo, I ran operations for a food company FPSE. When one of the company's food products was purchased, a meal was donated to a hungry child through a partner like Feeding America or Partners in Health. Thanks to the valuable experience I gained working for two different FPSEs, I came away with some conclusions on how to build the most impactful and sustainable FPSE.

Your mission needs to be fully integrated into your business model. You are taking profits and reinvesting them in both the business side and the mission side of your business.

The delivery of your mission needs to be as clearly thought out and executed as that of your business. When my brothers and I started American MoJo, we knew a lot about business but little about the mission side of our work. After attempting to run the mission side ourselves, we quickly realized we needed to hire and partner with experts to reach our social impact goals. We owed this to our employees and to the integrity of our business.

Your mission must provide sustainable impact. Again, it's wonderful to try to "help" people, but very carefully consider the type of help you are offering. To me, the one-for-one model offers a hand-out and no sustainable assistance. When working for the food company that offered a meal to a hungry child for every product purchased, we visited a partner site where meals had been donated to starving children. Their mothers thanked us for the donations but said their children were once again sick and likely to die because they were starving again. We had offered a Band Aid instead of sustainable assistance.

The founders' hearts should be in both sides of the business. It will quickly be transparent to investors, employees, and customers alike if the founders' intent is simply to make money.

The founders should have experience running a business. More often than you think, people starting FPSEs don't have experience running a business. They might be moving from a different field entirely with the intention of helping in a new way. Everyone has something to offer when you are running a business, but make sure someone at the helm has operating experience (ideally in your industry). Otherwise, a great deal of time and money might be wasted at the expense of learning.

Through my experiences at both FPSEs, I've had an inside look at the factors that can make an FPSE truly successful and those that can inhibit its success. The two-generation approach clearly has the opportunity to achieve great success in the private sector. I am eager to apply this approach in another FPSE and further prove its long-term positive impacts.

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³ See www.nobscot.com/survey/.



OUT OF SYNC? ENGAGING YOUTH IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND POVERTY

For decades, powerful stereotypes have stigmatized people living in poverty. Negative portrayals have cut across all races and regions, with a particularly corrosive impact on the public's support for efforts to reduce poverty.

In his study *Framing the Poor: Media Coverage and US Poverty Policy, 1960–2008*, University of North Carolina political science professor Frank R. Baumgartner correlates the tone of society's collective conversation about poverty with public policy toward the poor. Specifically, Dr. Baumgartner creates a statistical parallel between the decrease in media coverage of poverty (and the increasingly pejorative character of the coverage that does exist) and a significant reduction in public support for government programs to alleviate poverty. Furthermore, he argues, the perceived failure of anti-poverty programs has led to public cynicism, and that cynicism has led to indifference.

Older Americans, from baby boomers to Generation X'ers, are tired, frustrated, and disillusioned with the topic of poverty alleviation, and they have largely given up on it. And in the absence of a mandate to reduce poverty, political leaders have as well.

ENTER THE MILLENNIALS

Generations, like people, have personalities. The Pew Research Center's 2014 study on the millennial generation describes this demographic as "confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat, open to change and receptive to new ideas and ways of living." Characterized by a nascent interest in social justice and a desire to create innovative solutions to age-old problems, these young people are poised to reenergize the movement to eradicate poverty in the United States. But their engagement in issues of justice and human rights is predicated on their ability to see a role for themselves in the context of their times. I believe we can help them do it.

The teenage years, in particular, are a critical time when young people form deep and potentially long-term beliefs about their ability to affect real change in society. However, many of the formal institutions in public life, including our nation's schools, continue to marginalize young people, failing to provide them with meaningful opportunities to participate in collective problem solving.

Civil rights advocate Julian Bond once wrote that schools are "our most important democratic institution, pathways to class mobility and generational progress." Yet, despite the fact that nearly one out of every four American children lives below the

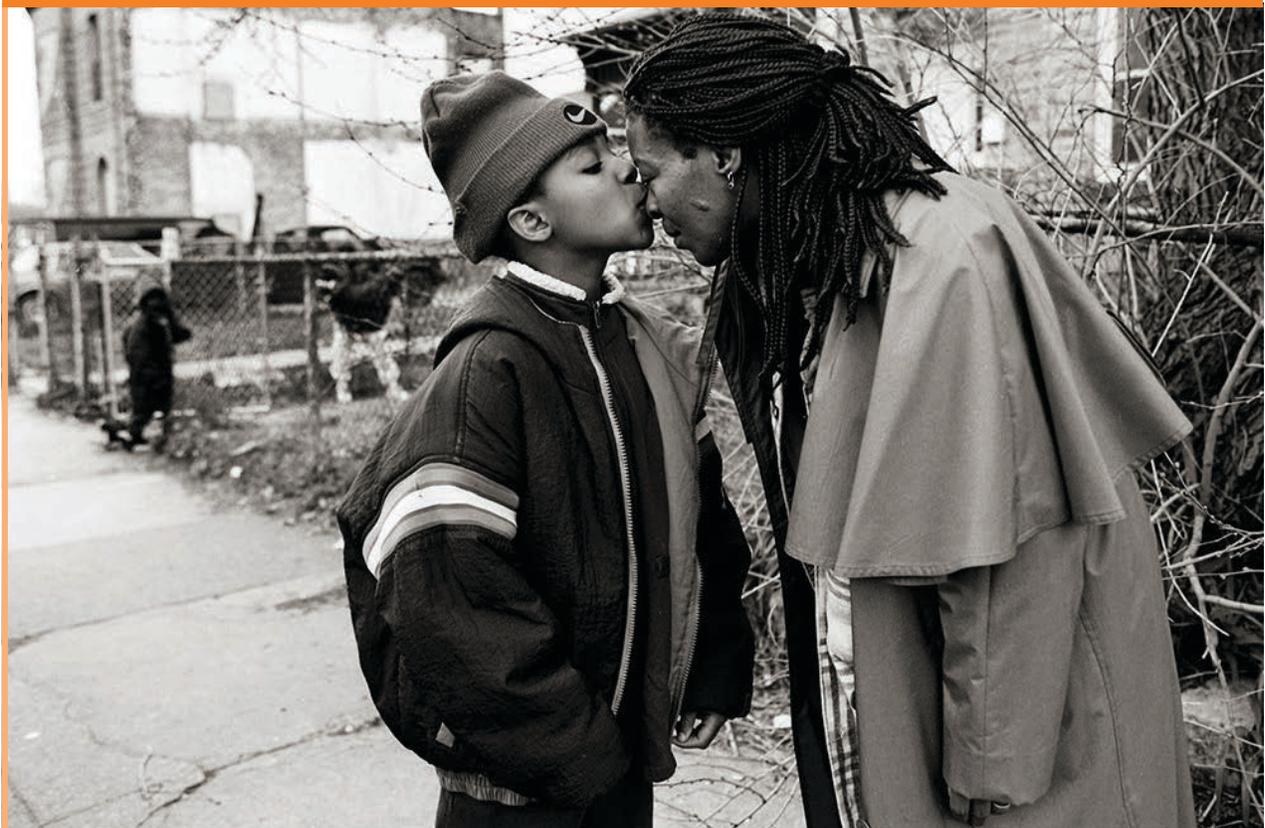


Photo: Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

poverty line, conversations about poverty rarely happen in our nation's schools. In fact, an analysis of state content standards by AmericanPoverty.org concluded that the word "poverty" doesn't appear in most state standards, and a comprehensive curriculum on the topic does not exist.

This widespread inattention has its own troubling ramification: A generation of activists, who would presumably be passionate about tackling this enormous economic injustice, remains unengaged. Young people surely cannot attempt to fix what they cannot see. This presents both a challenge and, conversely, an opportunity.

The Student Leadership Program was conceived by AmericanPoverty.org as one answer to that challenge and an antidote for that inattention. It is a means for engaging idealistic young people, empowering them to be agents of change in the fight for economic justice in the United States.

ABOUT AMERICANPOVERTY.ORG

During the Great Depression, photographers created riveting images chronicling the desperation of those times. Pictures helped mold the nation's collective memory and conscience. More than 75 years later, the plight and potential of the least fortunate members of our communities is mostly unseen and ignored, and photographers are once again poised to jumpstart a national movement to fight poverty.

AmericanPoverty.org is a nonprofit alliance of photojournalists who use visual storytelling to advocate on behalf of the millions of Americans suffering the injustice of poverty in this richest of lands. Joining us are renowned American writers, filmmakers, and academics, all of whom seek to make eradicating poverty a national priority.

NUTS AND BOLTS: A BRIEF PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The AmericanPoverty.org Student Leadership Program provides opportunities for young people to learn about poverty and injustice in the United States and empowers them to act on what they've learned. Inspired by advocates, filmmakers, photojournalists, and writers, these young activists assume responsibility for educating and mobilizing peers, younger students, and the general public as they learn how individual and collective action can make a difference in society.

Our strategy is predicated on three core beliefs:

1. Young people's intellectual and emotional response is greatly enhanced when they learn from motivated peers.
2. Storytelling is a matchless tool for building understanding about the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of others — in this case, those living in poverty.
3. AmericanPoverty.org's powerful multimedia approach will be uniquely effective in energizing today's idealistic and media-savvy students.

Here's how it works:

Collaborating with educators and public policy experts, AmericanPoverty.org is creating comprehensive action kits for Student Leaders — primarily high school juniors and seniors — which will be available both online and in print. The kits will provide powerful exhibit photographs, multimedia films, press kits, and step-by-step instructions that enable students to:

- Lead assemblies featuring films and photographs produced by some of the world's finest social documentary photographers and filmmakers;
- Generate awareness and media coverage using their own pictures, empowering them as media producers rather than simply media consumers;
- Teach classes about poverty and its systemic causes to peers and younger students;
- Create community outreach and political action campaigns around local, regional, and national issues of their choice;
- Arrange presentations and meetings with guests from communities impacted by poverty as well as from social justice related-fields: activists, social workers, service providers, elected officials, journalists, and filmmakers;
- Curate, mount, and promote public exhibits featuring the work of world-renowned photographers; and
- Coordinate with local nonprofits to host Volunteer Fairs that provide service opportunities.

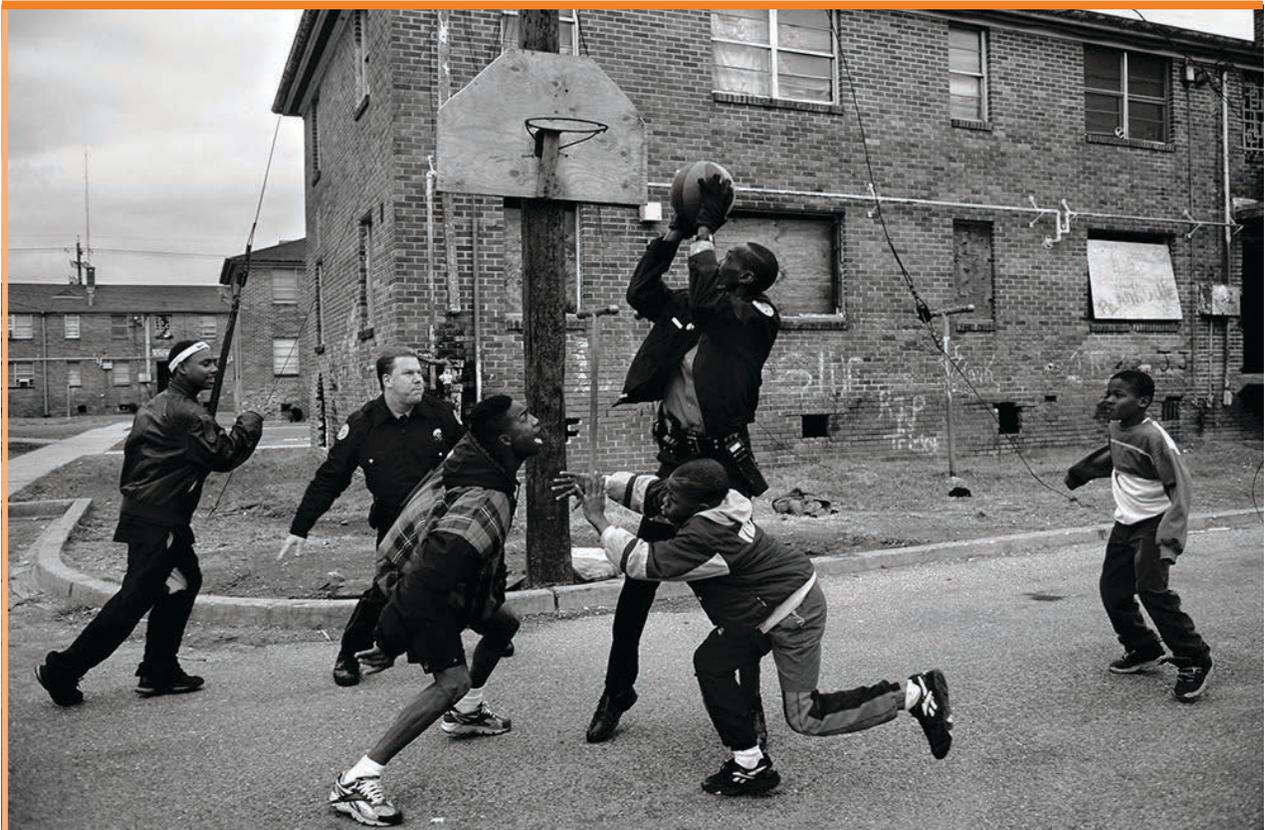


Photo: Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

IN PRACTICE

AmericanPoverty.org tested the Student Leadership Program through a full-scale pilot event held at Wootton High School, a suburban public school of approximately 2,000 students located in Rockville, Maryland.

Three months prior to the event, the Wootton Student Leaders, with guidance from AmericanPoverty.org staff, began meeting to discuss ideas and make plans. They formed committees responsible for each aspect of the program: classroom teaching, guest speakers, media, displays, and community outreach.

The weeklong event featured an exhibit of 60 24-inch-by-36-inch photographic prints, and dozens of posters and banners hung in hallways and common areas throughout the school, addressing the root causes of poverty and destroying the most common and corrosive myths about people who are poor. English classes in each grade were taught by Student Leaders, who used lesson plans and multimedia developed by the students themselves, with help from our education director, Will Diehl, Ph.D., chair of the Education Department at the University of New England.

The week concluded with an assembly held by Bobby Bailey, U.S. director for The Global Poverty Project, and a Volunteer Fair, at which 24 local service organizations invited by the Student Leaders set up tables so that students could ask questions, pick up literature, and volunteer for service opportunities.

Surveys administered to 9th and 10th grade students by AmericanPoverty.org, both prior to and after the week, showed both a deeper understanding of the systemic causes of poverty and a significant attitudinal shift in terms of support for providing

assistance. At the week's conclusion, over 400 Wootton students signed up to volunteer at local poverty-related organizations, and the Student Leaders were invited to the White House to meet with Terrell McSweeney, the senior domestic policy adviser to Vice President Joe Biden.

A brief video of our pilot event at Wootton High School can be viewed at: vimeo.com/28254822.

A second successful prototype event was held at the Elisabeth Irwin High School, a private academy in New York City.

OUT OF SYNC?

The Student Leadership Program was conceived to help build and galvanize support for policy change among the next generation of social justice advocates — today's high school and middle school students. We believe that it can be done and that it's critically important that we undertake that cause. But we find ourselves, at least temporarily, alone in this effort. In the words of one prominent program officer, our program is “out of sync with the current thinking in social justice circles.” Among the reasons: Foundation boards today demand instant, measurable, quantifiable “results”; we offer long-term constituency building, which is notoriously difficult to evaluate. And — of greater concern — program officers tell us that the current orthodoxy in social justice circles is biased against any effort to change perceptions among the middle and upper classes. Yet influencing that powerful demographic is, in our view, the missing link to making genuine progress in transforming public policy.

And so, like many worthwhile initiatives, we will continue to struggle to find financial support.

We are not concerned about foundations' indifference to any one program. Rather, we are concerned about the ongoing disconnect between funders who talk of pursuing bold new ideas, yet, by their own admission, are often defined and caged by the current vogue in social justice circles. The resulting “echo chamber” is troubling on

many levels, but particularly in its inability to connect the dots between building broad public support and enacting meaningful policy change. Perhaps, for some unfathomable reason, elected officials will do the right thing in the absence of public pressure. But history suggests otherwise. Change happens

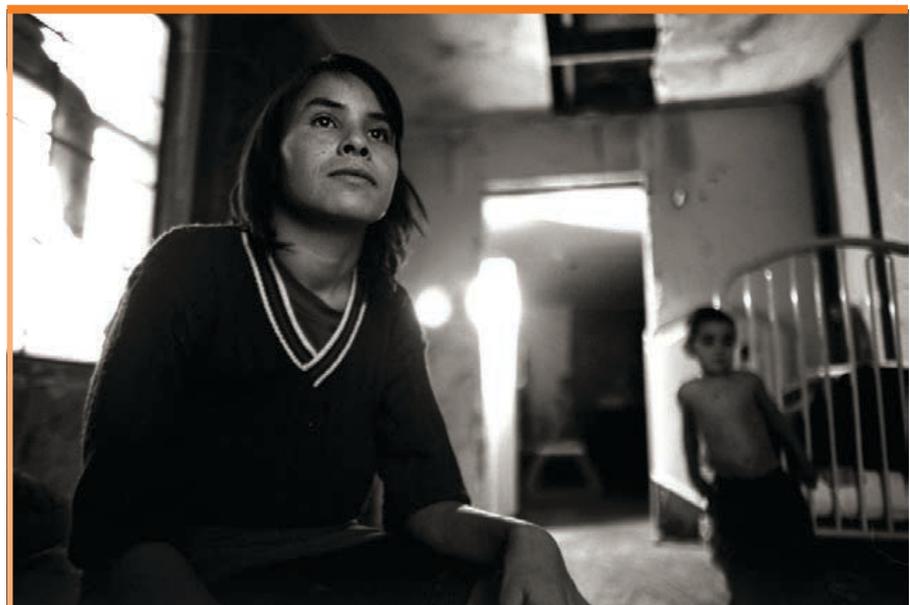


Photo: Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

when the time is right, but equally as important, it happens when the ground has been prepared.

To those who discount the value of preparing that ground, I would ask: Are you satisfied with the results of our poverty-alleviation efforts over the last four decades? Do the numbers suggest we're making real progress? Are our elected officials leading the fight? Have we passed bold legislative initiatives? And do you think this issue is gaining traction with the general public? If the answer to those questions is yes, then perhaps building a constituency is superfluous. But if the answer to those questions suggests another narrative, then consider that the ongoing lack of public interest is a large part of the reason.

It would be presumptuous to suggest that we, at AmericanPoverty.org, are visionaries or that we hold the definitive answer — though I personally believe that we can and will make a significant contribution. But we do share a common belief that this generation of young people can become powerful agents of social change. And we reject the idea that the future belongs to the incrementalists and the technocrats, or even to those foundations that do good but march in lockstep with an orthodoxy that is frequently unimaginative and short-sighted. At AmericanPoverty.org, we remain steadfast in our commitment to help create sea change in how Americans, especially young people, see poverty and to work with them to lead a national movement to eradicate it.

**PART III:
INNOVATIVE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**



CLOSING THE SCHOOL READINESS GAP THROUGH TWO GENERATIONS

Henry Wilde, Acelero Learning

At Acelero Learning, we manage Head Start and Early Head Start programs and serve 5,000 children from birth to age five in preschools around the country. Our mission is to bring a relentless focus on child and family outcomes to close the achievement gap and build a better future for the children, families, and communities served by the Head Start program. We started Acelero 14 years ago with the belief that if we did what good preschool and Head Start programs were already doing — but did it better by using data to drive every decision we made — we would get better outcomes for children.

Now we know that it is nowhere near that simple. We sometimes talk about the Michael Lewis book *Moneyball* and the analogy between baseball and early childhood education. For years, the conventional wisdom about what gets great outcomes has been the same, and we often talk about the financial returns on every dollar invested in early childhood education. What people do not talk about are providers that have never shown that they can replicate the results of Perry Preschool at scale — including us. To do so would require an extraordinary focus and a willingness to acknowledge that the emperor in your own program has no clothes. You will rarely find that candor in our world. I am hopeful that at Acelero, we have the team to get us there.

When I sit in rooms with other providers, I am always inspired by stories about children or families that paint the picture of what our programs look like when a child's life has been positively transformed. But every time I hear those stories, my immediate thought is, "What about the other 4,999 families?" I am always conflicted when I tell a parent's story because I am afraid to default to painting a perfect picture, or a nightmarish one, and that I am exploiting a parent's narrative for my own purposes. So I am going to tell you a story that does not yet have an ending wrapped in a bow. I hope that with this story, I can illuminate why two-generation solutions — and the work that Ascend and Acelero are doing — are so absolutely crucial if we are serious about addressing intergenerational poverty.

Serena is a parent in our Wisconsin Head Start program, which is our newest program and where I have spent much of my time in the past year. Serena has two children — Sam is four and attends our program, and Maya is almost two. A few months into Sam's time in the program, I met Serena; she was elected to serve on our Parent Policy Council, which is the parent-led governing body in our program. She shared

with me, "I have seen with my own eyes the growth in my son that has happened in just his brief time here. He is learning every day, and every day he comes home excited to share new things with me."

In December, a few months after she was elected, we held a parent meeting at our headquarters in Harlem, where we brought our Parent Policy Council members from around the country. Serena is 22 years old, and it was her first time ever leaving Milwaukee. She and I flew together, so she was not alone during her first time on an airplane. I have become jaded by work travel, but experiencing those three days with her was like walking through the chocolate factory with Charlie or stepping through the wardrobe into Narnia. When she saw clouds outside the window of the plane, she was transfixed. When we got to New York, she talked to every person she met and introduced herself as Serena from Milwaukee. She told people that she was in New York with Acelero, because she assumed everyone in New York knew who we were. In every single one of those interactions, everyone she met could see that her energy and personality are absolutely magnetic. She and I shared our love of McDonald's. When we walked past the location near our offices in Harlem, she saw a sign that they delivered and said to me, "In New York City, MCDONALD'S DELIVERS!" and immediately posted a picture to Facebook. The whole time, she talked about Sam and Maya. She used her per diem to buy them gifts and grabbed every trinket she could to bring back to them. I imagined her dreams for *them* getting bigger and bigger. And as she participated in daylong meetings with other parent leaders about the future of our program, I could feel her confidence and her dreams for *herself* getting bigger.

During that trip, Serena and I got to know each other and, over the course of three days, to share our stories. When she was six years old, her mother, in a fit of depression, confined Serena and her sister to chairs and began destroying objects in their home. Her brother physically removed them from the situation, and from that



Acelero Learning student and teacher. Photo: Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

point forward, Serena lived on couches of friends and relatives until she was 17, when she went to live by herself. She went to five different high schools. A few weeks before our New York trip, she had kicked out her mother — the same mother she had escaped from — who had been living on the couch in her apartment. Her whole life now revolved around being the best mother she possibly could to Sam and Maya. When I heard this story and spent this time with her, my instinct was to protect her, as I would my own kids, to shoehorn her and her children into our spare bedroom and to shelter them from anything like what she had experienced. But obviously that is not the right answer.

I wish that our trip to New York was like Cinderella going to the ball and that when Serena returned, her experience as a parent leader transformed her life. That she went back to school, as she aspired to do. That she resolved her current living situation, which was in flux.

In the last six months, Serena has been evicted; she lost her job, because her car broke down; her partner lost his job and has only found piecework. When he does have work and the car is working, he needs it, so she has to take multiple buses to get Sam to school. When she lost her job, she also lost her child care authorization, so she does not have reliable care for Maya. For an extended period, Sam was only coming to school two days each week.

But she also fought back. She found a new place to live. She found part-time work over the holidays. And her dedication to ensuring that her children succeed never waned.

So why do I write this incomplete story instead of the one that ends in a college graduation ceremony?

We need effective two-generation programs and a national hub like Ascend because if we are serious about closing the achievement gap, we cannot just give Serena a bus pass or a referral or think that I or any of my colleagues are going to “save” her. Serena is a devoted and loving mother to her children and has a steady partner. She aspires to higher education and better work opportunities. But her love for Sam and Maya and talent alone do not make her car run or build her a stable economic support system or create a social network that can help her find better opportunities — and even more central to our work, they do not get Sam to school, which he needs and deserves. Every day he misses, he falls further behind. How can we close the achievement gap if we do not recognize Sam’s reality?

We can’t pick and choose the data that tells the story we want to believe. At Acelero Learning, we are not trying to change the trajectory of one child. We are trying to change the trajectory of 5,000 children.

So what should we do?

1. Differentiate between parents. We need to recognize that no single program or strategy is the answer for all families. For too long, we have operated under the paradigm that we will assign a family a case worker and that worker can help a family “solve its problems.” That is certainly not how parents think about us, nor should it be how we operate. When parents do not want to work with their family advocates, we have literally measured success by counting how many times we



Acelero Learning student with mother. Photo: Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

were able to make contact with them. We need a plan that acknowledges that parents have different hopes and dreams for their families and that we should not assume every family needs or wants the same thing.

2. Invest in innovation. We need philanthropists and government agencies that are willing to offer organizations some flexibility to innovate to get breakthrough outcomes. We still need lots of answers about what works in trying to serve parents and children together.

3. But also replicate what works. For replication to happen, we need markets and government regulation that point the way. At Acelero, we have built and spun out a business called Shine Early Learning,¹ through which we disseminate the tools and practices we have developed in our programs to others around the country. What we have found is that there is a robust market — programs are thirsting to find practices that work — but if we had not had investors willing to invest in a social enterprise with modest financial returns, we could never have expanded beyond our own walls.

4. Support national platforms for learning. We need advocates and resources like Ascend — hubs creating a platform and a microphone and asking questions about what two-generation solutions can and should look like when they succeed. I don't know how Serena's story is going to turn out. I know there is not just one Serena or 10 or 100 Serenas in our programs. But I also know that we will not stop trying to figure out what our role is in helping Maya and Sam be successful. And when we are successful, it will be because we have figured out how we can serve both generations in their family.

Note: This essay is adapted from remarks Henry Wilde gave at the 2014 Aspen Ideas Festival in Aspen, Colorado.

¹ Shine Early Learning is a data system that provides early childhood providers with tools, insights, documents, and webinars to become more successful at improving outcomes for children. More on Shine Early Learning is available here: <http://www.shineearly.com/>



PROMOTING EDUCATION: THE TWO-GENERATION APPROACH OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT OF TULSA, OK

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OVERVIEW

Two-generation programs — which provide workforce development, skills training, and social capital development to parents while their children attend quality early childhood education programs — are a promising anti-poverty strategy and are gaining interest across the country.¹ Early childhood education programs, like Head Start and Early Head Start, are central resources for improving the life opportunities of low-income children.² Yet, few early learning centers explicitly target parents for postsecondary education and career training, despite the fact that increased parental education and family income are associated with better outcomes for children.³

Over the past 20 years, parents have demonstrated an increased interest in pursuing postsecondary education, with the proportion of college students who are single parents rising from 7 to 13 percent. Yet, among unmarried parents who started postsecondary education in 1995-1996, fewer than 17 percent attained an associate's or bachelor's degree within six years.⁴ One explanation for the low rates of completion among low-income parents is that most postsecondary education programs are not specifically targeted to parents, provide few supports to assist them, and are often offered in silos that are separate from programs for children.⁵ Early childhood education programs may serve as the ideal context for offering high-quality, intensive education and career services for parents and for promoting educational success.⁶

The Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Oklahoma (CAP Tulsa) is at the forefront of innovation, implementation, and evaluation of two-generation programming. CAP Tulsa is a large, comprehensive antipoverty agency that focuses on early childhood education and economic security for families; it also serves as the Head Start and Early Head Start grantee for Tulsa County. It is one of the only fully operational, two-generation human capital programs that combine early childhood education services with stackable career training for parents. In 2010, CAP Tulsa was the recipient of a large federal award from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to bring its novel two-generation program to scale. CAP Tulsa's two-generation strategy builds from and employs research at every level. The agency has partnered with Northwestern University and the University of Texas at Austin, which are leading three federally funded studies to assess the implementation and

the impact of CAP Tulsa's two-generation programming on parents and children compared to Head Start alone.

PROGRAM ORIGINS

Under the leadership of Executive Director Steven Dow, CAP Tulsa developed a major interest in high-quality early learning services. It became the Head Start program grantee for the majority of Tulsa County in 1998 and for Early Head Start two years later. In 2008, CAP Tulsa expanded its interests in the Head Start parents by asking itself, "What type and level of investment in adult-focused programming is required to produce sizeable gains in children's school readiness and family well-being in the context of early childhood education?"

CAP Tulsa's two-generation human capital approach took root in 2009, with the implementation of an education and training program for parents in the health care field. Despite early implementation success,⁷ the health care training program serves only a small percentage of families in CAP Tulsa's early childhood education programs, including Head Start and Early Head Start (10 percent of its approximately 2,000 families). In response, the organization developed a pipeline of in-house educational services and community partnerships to meet parents at their current ability level. This includes four levels of programming: 1) English as Second Language; 2) Skill Ready (6th-8th grade education level); 3) College Bound (9th -12th grade level); and 4) Career Bound (acceptance into college-level certificate or education program). CAP Tulsa has combined its health care training programming with a new continuum of educational services to produce the two-generation model known as CareerAdvance®.

CareerAdvance® aims to prepare and support CAP Tulsa's parents with children enrolled in its early childhood education programs for careers in growth sectors of the local economy. It does so by moving away from a traditional referral



approach, in which education and training services are provided outside early childhood education programs, toward a two-generation model simultaneously offering intensive, high-quality services for parents and children within an early learning context. Founding philanthropist George Kaiser set out to create a program for parents that protected the agency's current investment in its children. CareerAdvance® supports the economic development and self-sufficiency of families by developing the education and careers of its parents while nurturing the learning and development of their children.

Early Childhood Education. CAP Tulsa is a recognized national leader in providing high-quality, intensive early childhood education services and home visiting programs. It provides these services in 13 centers containing 140 classrooms that are located across three school districts. CAP Tulsa's early childhood education teachers have bachelor's degrees, and the toddler and preschool programs are characterized by high-quality teacher-child interactions, as measured by the assessment system CLASS.⁸ Moreover, CAP Tulsa's centers have demonstrated significant, positive outcomes for children over time.⁹

Through collaborative partnerships with local school districts, social service agencies, and health care practitioners, CAP Tulsa provides a range of services designed to address the educational, nutritional, health, social, and emotional needs of children aged 0-5 from low-income families. Services include early learning, family support, parenting training, crisis intervention, medical, dental, mental health care, nutrition assistance, and instruction to children with special needs and developmental delays.

CareerAdvance®. CareerAdvance® meets CAP Tulsa's goal of combining all adult education courses and training services into one program with defined



pathways to help parents move toward self-sufficiency and economic security. It is designed to provide parents with targeted, individualized, and intensive services, in concert with classroom-based curricula, across a range of skills. Parents are recruited into CareerAdvance® by family support services staff as well as through CareerAdvance® career coaches.

Parents who are interested in the CareerAdvance® program attend a scheduled orientation and complete the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); the ACT Compass, a test of reading, writing, and math; and an English as a second language test, as applicable. They also fill out an application and participate in an interview with a career coach. Parents are then placed into one of the four pathways. Placement is based on test results as well as the individual's goals and interests, as discussed in the interview.

Current Innovations in CareerAdvance®. CAP Tulsa designed CareerAdvance® by working directly with nationally recognized leaders in workforce education programs: Dr. Christopher King, a labor economist, and Dr. Hirokazu Yoshikawa, a developmental psychologist. Together, they drew upon evidence and recommendations from workforce education and related literature to apply the best innovations to the education career pathways.¹⁰ These include: 1) mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational institutions and employers; 2) sector-based and employer-driven career training with potential for stackable credentials; 3) individualized, career-centered coaching; 4) peer supports (i.e., partner meetings) in a cohort-based education and training model; 5) family support services (e.g., emergency food and financial assistance, referrals to mental health and other supportive services); and 6) incentives for attendance and performance.¹¹ CareerAdvance® integrates these key components into each of its four pathways.

Community Partnerships. CAP Tulsa has developed strong community partnerships with local providers of adult basic education and occupational training, including Tulsa Technology Center (Tulsa Tech), Tulsa Community College (TCC), and Union Public Schools (UPS). CAP Tulsa has worked extensively with each of these partners to ensure the success of the program and to provide services beyond GED and non-credit college classes, offering a full range of education and career training services to meet parents where they are at that point in time.

Sector-based and employer-driven career training. As an anti-poverty program, CareerAdvance® explicitly focuses on promoting family economic security through education and training in growing sectors of the local economy. It began in the health care field and has broadened to include manufacturing. The program is supported by sector-based intermediaries who help employers meet their training and hiring needs while also connecting individuals with employment and learning opportunities.

Individualized Coaching. Career coaches provide individualized sessions to address challenges and barriers, offer problem-solving strategies and social support, and develop a career advancement plan. The individual advancement plan also helps parents learn goal setting, planning, and accountability skills, which may promote executive functioning and other social skills that are central to labor market and family success.¹²

Peer Supports. Peer supports for CareerAdvance® parents are developed through regular partner meetings, typically weekly, that allow for frequent exposure and interaction among parents. These meetings are led by career coaches employed by CAP Tulsa, and topics range from strengthening soft skills (e.g., job interview skills, business etiquette, and study skills) to advising on college readiness, course selection, and career counseling, including career and family values and decision making. Groups also discuss stress management, empowerment and self-advocacy, and nutrition. The partner meetings provide critical opportunities for personal and professional skill development and for social capital building among parents and career coaches — a key component of the way that early childhood education can be a base for supporting parent education.¹³

Family Support. Parents can receive further individualized support through family support services, a required component of Head Start and Early Head services, offered to all CAP Tulsa families served by its early childhood education programs. A subset of family support workers are designated and trained to work with CareerAdvance® families and in partnership with career coaches, providing a unified system of support. Family support staff members assist career coaches, attend peer partner meetings, and provide information on CAP Tulsa's resources, such as mental health counseling, and a range of temporary financial supports, such as child care assistance, bus passes, or gas cards.

Incentives for Participation and Performance. Parents receive monthly incentives based on participation in cohort meetings and coursework attendance. These incentives range from \$75 to \$200 per month, depending on the pathway. Incentives have been shown to promote persistence and course credit attainment among low-income adults.¹⁴

CareerAdvance® serves parents through these six supportive components in all but the very lowest levels of education. Parents with less

A Family's Experience of CareerAdvance®

The following description of one CAP Tulsa family in CareerAdvance® — a composite of the experiences of several program participants and their families (all names are pseudonyms) — suggests the potential impacts of the program on children and parents.

Sienna, a 30-year-old single mother of 4- and 10-year-old girls, Taylor and Briana, has a warm, friendly smile and talks openly and positively about her experiences with CAP Tulsa's early childhood education program. She describes how her younger daughter, Taylor, is learning and thriving; she feels like her daughter is "in school, not just some day care." She regrets that her older daughter, Briana, who was cared for by various relatives while Sienna tried college, did not have the same experience.

Sienna gave birth to her first child, Briana, at age 20, and during Briana's second year of life, she enrolled in a public university a few hundred miles from home. The struggle to attend classes and care for her toddler alone was too great; Sienna dropped out of college. She returned home, where her boyfriend's mother and as well as her own mother cared for Briana while Sienna worked and enrolled in classes at the local community college. Sienna found employment as a home health aide for her boyfriend's great uncle, earning \$11 an hour with

a flexible schedule that allowed her more time with Briana. This arrangement worked well until Sienna separated from her boyfriend and tensions among relatives grew. Sienna quickly found alternative employment working in customer service at Walgreens, earning \$3 less per hour (\$8) and with rigid scheduling. Sienna no longer had the time or money to attend classes at Tulsa Community College. For the second time, she dropped out, and no one seemed to notice.

Four years ago, Sienna gave birth to a second daughter, Taylor, taking only two weeks off work to adjust to life alone with an infant and six-year-old. She continued to work as a Walgreens cashier, and financial security eluded her. Across the years, Sienna experienced nagging anxiety and concern about the \$15,000 in school loans she accrued, especially with no certificate or degree to show for her efforts and expenses. She wondered if she could ever fully repay this continually mounting loan debt.

Two years ago, Sienna learned about CAP Tulsa from a friend and, after a six-month wait, enrolled Taylor in CAP's Head Start program. With both children safe and learning, Sienna considered returning to college. Although she liked school, she worried that she might be both too old and too broke. Sienna's CAP family support specialist, Joanne, discussed with Sienna her goals for herself and her child. Joanne encouraged Sienna to consider the

than a sixth grade education are referred to educational programs outside the agency. The aim of CareerAdvance® is for parents across all ability levels to set career goals and advance through one or more pathways while their children are enrolled in quality early learning services. Over time, the program has increased the alignment of parent and children programming by incorporating topics and components of children's learning and curricula into adult education components. For example, parent ESL courses include subjects such as understanding your child's school, preparing for your child's academic success, and questions to ask about your child's performance at parent-teacher conferences.

ANTICIPATED TWO-GENERATION PROGRAM IMPACTS

Two-generation programming may improve parents' educational attainment and career trajectories, given the powerful connections among poverty, parents' human capital, and children's development.¹⁵ Successful two-generation programs could enable parents to increase their educational attainment, credentialing, earnings, and eventual wage growth.¹⁶ In turn, positive education and career outcomes can result in increased family income, greater financial stability, higher self-efficacy, improved executive functioning, better mental health, lower levels of stress, and more effective parenting practices over time.¹⁷

We hypothesize that improvements in children's development would follow in both the short and long term, including school success and social competence.¹⁸ Parents with more education and training may also boost the literacy and numeracy environments at home along with other domains of cognitive stimulation.¹⁹ They may also serve as better academic role models, hold higher educational expectations, and become better guides and advocates for their children's schooling, all of which may promote children's cognitive and social skills, executive functioning, engagement and motivation in school, and later school success.²⁰ We expect that, if delivered effectively and with quality, parent and child services provided in the same

community and simultaneously while children are young should lead to larger, more lasting impacts for both groups over time.

However, negative outcomes are also possible. For example, the multiple demands of employment, school, and childrearing may lead to elevated levels of parental stress and too much time apart from children — all of which are risk factors for healthy family functioning, parenting, and children's development, especially for infants and toddlers.²¹

Preliminary results from focus groups with CareerAdvance® participants suggest similar positive associations between improved parent education and training and children's development. Although systematic studies of the CareerAdvance® program's impacts are still needed and will be forthcoming, these associations include increased confidence among CareerAdvance® participants:

It's been so long since I've been in school. I spent almost the last five years at home being a mom, and you start doubting yourself and you don't think you can do it. Once you're back in the routine of it, and you're like, "Yeah, it's still in there. Just clean off the cobwebs."

Parents seem to develop a belief in their own competencies which, combined with a coordinated schedule of parent and child activities not usually present in adult-centered programming, may improve their ability to manage school, family, and work and persist in educational programming.

So, in a traditional college setting, that's not always possible. So ... it doesn't seem to be as stressful because you're not having to juggle who's picking up who and when — feeling that you're not giving your all to your little ones.

Increased social networks through individualized coaching and weekly peer

CareerAdvance® program. Sienna felt overwhelmed at the orientation session and almost did not apply. With Joanne's support and guidance, Sienna completed her application in May, was accepted into the program in June, and began classes in August. By January, she had received her CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) certification and was working as a CNA at a local senior care facility earning \$3 more per hour, this time with benefits. She was relieved that CAP Tulsa paid for her training costs, since her substantial loan debt disallowed her from receiving financial aid. The monthly incentives also helped pay off some credit card debt, although not as much as she would have liked.

While in school, Sienna's confidence grew, and she was surprised to find that math was not as challenging as she remembered it was in high school. She was able to calculate prescription doses and blood pressure ranges quickly and even helped some struggling classmates. To her surprise, she began to feel comfortable helping her 10-year-old, Brianna, with multiplication tables. She found it easy to explain math concepts that she had struggled over just a few months ago, and, after some initial resistance, Brianna seemed to enjoy her mother's help. Sometimes they even raced to see who could arrive at the answer to a math problem first. Both relaxed a bit more in the evening and subtly their relationship improved. Sienna felt less stressed and

laughed more with her girls. Brianna admired her mother more and enjoyed knowing that they were both students.

Now the three regularly have “homework time” together. Today, Taylor created a backpack for herself while Briana finished her schoolwork and then flipped through her mother’s anatomy textbook, asking curious questions about body parts. Both daughters enjoy helping their mother study for tests by quizzing her with flashcards. Taylor even colors the cards to make them “more beautiful,” as she says.

Recently, Taylor, who experienced some developmental delays at birth, has been having outbursts at bedtime. Sienna sensed these incidents were challenging for everyone in the family, especially Taylor. Sienna, who learned about the negative effects of stress on health in one of her nursing classes, believed she could help Taylor learn to calm herself. After some consideration, Sienna made an appointment to speak with Brianna’s Head Start teacher, who has been open and supportive of her. The two met and created a positive behavior plan for Taylor that the teacher would carry out in the classroom and that Sienna would reinforce at home. They decided that Sienna should reward Taylor’s efforts with special outings to the park or even a trip to the aquarium to observe the dolphins, Taylor’s favorite. Sienna used some of the bonus she received for achieving her CNA certification to pay for the trip.

group meetings may also expand parents’ resources and skills and increase their likelihood of educational success.

I know if I tried to leave this program, I would have some people on my phone. And that’s the good thing about us being, that’s the one good thing about us being a small group of people. If one of us tried to leave it, oh, we gonna be on that phone quick, “Wait a minute what are you doing?”

My favorite part is so much support we’re getting. We can pretty much call [the coach] anytime and be like, you know We constantly have the support not only from our classmates but also from our teachers and our coach. ... When I was in college before, it was just me against the world basically, you know. So if I dropped out, nobody cared. It was just, I was only just disappointing myself. Now if anybody is missing too much class, we’d call them and are like, you know, “Where are you at? Come to class.”

These expanded social networks may improve parents’ ability to stay in the program and succeed. Likewise, the skills parents develop as a result of education or training may improve the knowledge resources they bring to their children, which may in turn improve relations between them.

I have found, on a positive note, what school has done in our house is ... like my 9-year old has always struggled in math. And I have always struggled in math. It’s never been a strong suit. I’ve always told her that, you know, sorry I can’t really help you. And she’s relied on that, “Well mommy can’t help me. She doesn’t get numbers. ...” Well when I got put in this math tutoring class, I felt like I could then relate to her more, and I felt like

it was empowering me because it was giving me those skills that I left behind somewhere in high school and junior high. And so when I would get home, for the first couple of weeks, I'd be like, "I can help you." She's like, "No you can't, you don't know how to do this," and I was like, "No, really, I know how to do it now." So I feel like, I wasn't getting so upset with her because now I know the material and understand it and I'm getting it. So it's helping her to feel better about herself, and I feel better about myself because for all those years, it was embarrassing to tell your 9-year old, "Sorry I can't help you with this because I don't know it myself. ... So I feel like that's been a positive – that I can guide them better now, that I have the information, I can help them better.

In addition to increased engagement in their children's learning, parents may serve as academic role models, further reinforcing children's learning and success later on.

I'm the first person to even go to school. So it feels good to me to just know that I'm gonna make a better, like pave a better path for my son. The chances of him going to school if I complete school are so much higher. And that's, you know, not only will I create a better life for him as a child, but it'll give him some encouragement and motivation, and I can be a better role model for him to go to school when he's older. So it makes me feel a lot better, I think.

Parents who become better role models may improve their children's educational aspirations and achievements. Greater success for their children may inspire parents to sustain and further improve their own education. Increased educational achievement among parents is likely to result in increased family income. Success is likely to beget more success

When Sienna's mother became sick and needed her help, Sienna did not believe she could manage work and school, and she decided for the third time that she would drop out. Before that happened, Sienna's career coach interceded and worked with Sienna to develop a plan. Given her long-term employment, Sienna negotiated a change in her work hours so she could spend Fridays with her mother. The new schedule made it possible for Sienna to drop her daughters off at school in the morning while another parent, Maria, took Sienna's children home with her child on Friday afternoons. Sienna felt better having a day a week devoted to her mother to help with medical appointments, pick up groceries for the week, and help manage her mother's budget. Sienna also repaid her friend's support by bringing Maria's children to school on days when Maria had to start work early. Maria also encouraged Sienna to remain in the CareerAdvance® program, and Sienna listened. Sienna had not found such a loyal friend over the 10 years she was a single, working mother with little time for others. She appreciates Maria's support and loyalty and feels like Maria wants her success almost as much as Sienna does.

It's been six months since Sienna began CareerAdvance® and already she feels calmer, her daily routine is smoother, and her children are happier and doing well in school and at home. Taylor's Head Start teacher at CAP Tulsa regularly updates Sienna and shares anecdotes

about her daughter's progress. Sienna plans to remain in her senior care job, gaining experience and maintaining her current income. In August, she plans to enter the LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) program, after she has prepared for and passed the entrance exam. Her career coach is confident that Sienna can reach her next goals, and Sienna begins to believe so herself.

across and between both generations. These collective synergies could produce significantly greater benefits than those accrued in separate generational silos.

EVALUATING CAREERADVANCE®'S EFFECTIVENESS

Rigorous research on program impacts for parents and children is the next critical development in the emerging two-generation field. Northwestern University, in conjunction with the University of Texas at Austin, Columbia University, New York University, and Oklahoma State University, is leading two longitudinal, mixed-method studies of CAP Tulsa's two-generation programming. One is a quasi-experimental examination of its health care

training program for Head Start parents; the other is an experimental study of CareerAdvance®, including the full range of newly expanded and strengthened educational and career pathways designed for Head Start parents.

Both studies involve extensive parent and child measures of the impact of CAP Tulsa's two-generation programming. Parent measures obtained through annual surveys include: a) cognitive and executive functioning; b) mental and physical health; c) parenting skills, practices, and involvement in school; d) self-confidence and self-efficacy; e) education, employment, and income; and f) academic expectations for self and child. In-depth interviews complement parent surveys and include a focus on parents' personal and life circumstances, past and present experiences in advancing their human capital, and their social networks and supports. Child measures involve: a) basic numeracy and literacy; b) applied math skills; c) language skills; d) executive functioning; and e) children's internal representations of family and school, including beliefs about their own school engagement and connectedness as well as beliefs about parents' work, school, and family dynamics stability.

In both studies, CAP Tulsa has proven an effective and supportive research partner. It has created an "evidence-oriented culture"²² and is supportive of innovation. CAP Tulsa's Innovation Lab is dedicated to adapting research evidence and testing and incubating new program ideas. Innovation Lab staff piloted and strengthened CareerAdvance® before expanding it agency-wide. CAP Tulsa's leadership has invested the resources necessary to support the implementation of rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental research studies and is willing to wait for the results.

Initial results of program persistence in the first two years of CAP Tulsa's health care training program are promising.²³ Over half of the participants in the first four longitudinal cohorts of CareerAdvance® were still in the program after 16 months (59 percent; 54 out of 92) and three-quarters attained at least one new certificate (76 percent; 70 out of 92). Of those who exited the program, a little over two-thirds (68 percent; 26 out of 38) attained at least one certificate before exiting. The possibility of stopping out with a valuable labor market credential, so-called stackable credentials, was part of the program design from the outset. These results



are remarkable given the relatively low levels of persistence and completion in many existing workforce development and postsecondary education programs. Preliminary findings also suggest that parents' financial circumstances and psychological well-being at baseline are related to their educational success in CareerAdvance®. Parents who demonstrated high material hardship (i.e., could not pay a bill or go to a doctor due to financial reasons) were almost twice as likely to be enrolled in CareerAdvance® at 16 months, compared to parents with low material hardship. Parents with high material hardship but low levels of psychological distress (which includes mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety) were more likely to attain at least one certificate at 16 months, compared to those with low hardship. We hypothesize that difficult financial circumstances may act as a prime motivator for parents to achieve their educational goals, while high levels of psychological distress may interfere with parents' ability to meet those goals.²⁴

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

High-quality, intensive services for one generation are difficult to deliver under the best of circumstances. Aligning such services simultaneously for two generations clearly is more complex and challenging. Although evidence on impacts is not yet available, this paper suggests that effective implementation of two-generation programming in early childhood education is possible and desirable. Interview and focus group results suggest that the components of Tulsa's two-generation program are largely working as intended and planned and have the potential for real impacts over time that may be larger than if they were delivered separately. An in-depth case study of the successes and challenges of implementing CAP Tulsa's two-generation programming is forthcoming. Figuring out how to sustain and scale such a two-generation strategy is currently a priority for CAP Tulsa and its research and community partners.

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BUILDING A LEGACY OF FAMILY SUCCESS AT MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

Eduardo J. Padrón, Miami Dade College

It's 4:30 in the morning, and Ashley Cooks' day is in high gear. So begins the whirlwind day of this single working mom, who holds fast to a dream of one day becoming a doctor. Fifteen hours will pass before she returns home, but right now, she's focused on dressing and feeding a nine-month-old child and delivering her to child care on time. Then, she can beat the morning traffic and punch in at Home Depot by 7:30. Several hours in the home and garden department later, she's on the road again to Miami Dade College's (MDC) Medical Campus, where the early outlines of her dream are coming into focus. She will likely be a little bleary-eyed, however, when she picks up her baby girl and finally brings to a close one more resolute day in the life.

Ashley's unfolding journey is nothing short of exceptional, but in today's America, she is hardly the exception. According to research published by the Princeton-Brookings Institution partnership, *The Future of Children*, 17 percent of all female undergraduates are single mothers, while the overall number of single parents in college doubled between 1990 and 2010. Overall, moms and dads now account for more than one-fifth of all undergraduates. Seventy-five percent of them work, with more than half logging over 35 hours per week.

Two-generation approaches provide crucial support for these college-going moms and dads and their children. The challenges of completing a college education while supporting young children are complex for low-income parents. The data show that three out of five unmarried parents earn less than \$10,000 annually.¹ Most of these students are attending community colleges, where tuition is reliably among the lowest in higher education. Regardless, a single unexpected financial emergency, as mundane as an ailing automobile or an overdue electric bill, can force the Ashley Cooks of higher education into an untenable choice; as one student-parent phrased it, "Sometimes it's groceries or graduation."

But make no mistake, graduation is imperative. With each passing year, fewer jobs with salaries that can support a family are available for those without a college education. The respected Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce projects that 63 percent of jobs will require college-level learning by 2018, and that percentage is on the rise. Other studies demonstrate that a four-year college degree earns \$1.2 million more in lifetime earnings than a high school diploma.

Access to college — with the necessary two-generation supports that ensure that healthy child development, college completion, and good jobs are the outcomes — remains a national challenge. With state support for higher education in constant decline over the past 20 years (26 percent less in spending per student), institutions continue to raise tuition (113 percent increase). The soaring cost of college particularly affects those in the bottom half of the income spectrum.²

In her recent book, *Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream*, Suzanne Mettler, a professor at Cornell, cites the annual costs at a public four-year institution as equivalent to 114 percent of a low-income families annual earnings, up from 42 percent in 1971. Thus, for the overwhelming number of low-income and poverty-level students and families, community colleges have become the saving grace of their college aspirations. Today, 45 percent of undergraduates attend the nation's community colleges. Many attend because the local community college presents the only affordable, quality steppingstone to further study or entry into the workforce. Other students have struggled in high school and have basic skill deficits that community colleges are willing and able to address. Many of these colleges are also attuned to the two-generation challenges of these students, and they provide a range of support mechanisms. Still other students, years removed from the world of higher education, return to acquire new skills or begin anew after raising a family. The importance of community colleges in all of these students' lives cannot be overestimated. With a college education, they will become contributing members of their communities; without, they will very likely struggle to support families and inevitably, tax the community's resources to support their basic needs.



HOLISTIC SUPPORT SYSTEM HELPS STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The myriad of challenges — academic, economic, and personal — that these students confront poses the greatest test to community colleges. But at the core, the problem begins with poverty and expands into nearly every aspect of a person's day-to-day life. We are acutely aware that the primary reason that students fail to continue their studies is financial.³ MDC's approach to student success places a high value not only on effective financial aid whenever possible, but also on holistic support services that address each person's needs.

In this context, the college welcomed the leadership of Single Stop USA to Miami in the summer of 2011. In the ensuing months, with a start-up grant from the Kresge Foundation, a partnership formed that allowed us to introduce a range of support services to our students via the Single Stop platform. At two of our largest campuses, and at a third at the beginning of the second year of the partnership, our MDC Single Stop campus coordinators, along with a handful of AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, rolled out the following benefits and services to MDC students and their families:

- **Benefits screening:** The technology platform BEN (Benefits Enrollment Network) assesses eligibility for a range of 40 federal and state benefits, including SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, LIHEAP (energy assistance), support for pregnant mothers, and several other programs. Campus coordinators guide students through a brief interview process, leading to an estimate of monthly financial benefits. Under one roof and in one 15-30 minute conversation, students learn of their eligibility and avoid the often fruitless journey to multiple offices.
- **Legal counseling:** Single Stop coordinators have arranged a weekly visit from Legal Services of Greater Miami, offering students advice on housing, immigration, domestic violence, and other matters.
- **Financial counseling:** In partnership with a local agency, Single Stop provides workshops and individual counseling, covering financial literacy, budgeting, and credit card and debt management.
- **Tax preparation:** Under the guidance of MDC faculty, MDC accounting and finance students who have completed certification, prepare tax returns for students and family members. In the most recent tax season, nearly 2,500 students and their families filed returns through the MDC Single Stop offices.
- **FAFSA applications:** The Single Stop office helps students complete the necessary application for federal financial aid, better known as the Pell Grant, with the added advantage of a completed tax return, required for the FAFSA.

Nearly three years later, the MDC Single-Stop partnership has yielded extraordinary results. The Single Stop offices have served more than 17,000 students and their family members, amassing close to \$25 million in benefits and services. Impressive results by any measure, these services have helped low-income students and families move toward their ultimate goal of college completion and self-sufficiency. That point cannot be emphasized strongly enough and highlights the Single Stop strategy of partnering with community colleges. The Single Stop package of benefits and supports creates the necessary buffer between students and the effects of poverty,

allowing them to remain in school and build the educational and skills foundation for future prosperity.

Beyond what sounds like a perfect plan, the emerging data on the Single Stop impact on graduation is beginning to prove the theory. At two of the earliest adopters, Kingsborough and LaGuardia community colleges in New York, the retention rates of Single Stop recipients were as high as 18 percent above low-income students who did not participate in Single Stop. At MDC, a preliminary study showed similar positive results. The benefits to students, many of whom already are supporting families, is obvious; the financial benefits to the institutions, based on elevated retention and tuition payments, can effectively pay for the operation of the project. Everyone wins and the project can continue to grow, affecting student success in ever greater numbers.

THE FUTURE OF THE MDC SINGLE STOP

The challenge of every successful project, however, is to bring it to maximum scale, serving everyone who is eligible for the available benefits. MDC is the largest institution of higher education in the country, with 165,000 students. Forty-seven percent live beneath the federal poverty standard, and 67 percent are classified as low-income. While the 17,000 students and families the MDC-Single Stop partnership has served to date is exceptional, it falls far short of the actual need.

“Why not every student?” continues to drive this initiative forward. The pilot project currently in development would integrate the Single Stop eligibility assessment into MDC’s online orientation. Each entering student would have the opportunity to supply basic personal data and discover benefits eligibility through the online screener. While the possibility of personal interaction with Single Stop personnel will remain, this technology holds immense potential to expand the model and help countless students complete their college journey.

As these possibilities unfold, no doubt Ashley Cooks will still be rising at 4:30 am, just like so many other moms and dads juggling the daily agenda. But community colleges across the land and programs like Single Stop are providing a foothold, steep as it may be, in the terrain of upward mobility. These students live in a country that was born from a rare strain of hope, a hint of possibility that has compelled millions to reach for something more, regardless of the obstacles. They bring their aspiration, day-in and day-out, and our institutions are compelled to honor their efforts.

¹ Goldrick-Rab, S. & Sorensen, K. (2010). *Unmarried parents in college. The Future of Children, 20(2), 179-203.*

² Mettler, S. (2014, March 11). *Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream.* New York: Basic Books.

³ Johnson, J., Rochkind, J., Ott, A.N., & DuPont, S. (2009). *With Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them: Myths & Realities About Why So Many Students Fail to Finish College.* New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved from www.publicagenda.org/media/with-their-whole-life-ahead-of-them#sthash.NGipjrAA.dpuf.



JEREMIAH PROGRAM: TRANSFORMING LIVES TWO GENERATIONS AT A TIME

Gloria Perez, Jeremiah Program

PROGRAM ORIGINS

More than 18 million children in the U.S. are living in poverty with single mothers. Many are living in unstable environments and lack access to affordable, quality early childhood education. Children in poverty start school behind their peers and, despite their innate cognitive ability, find it virtually impossible to ever catch up.¹ Many young, single mothers, even those with strong determination to attend college, must defer their dreams to deal with harsh economic realities. These mothers then face higher unemployment rates and often are dependent upon public assistance.

In the early 1990s, city leaders in Minneapolis, Minnesota, were witnessing significant growth in this population of low-income single mothers. The Rector of the Basilica of Saint Mary in downtown Minneapolis, Reverend Michael J. O'Connell, was able to engage the community in breaking the cycle of poverty for the growing number of single mothers and their children. Having worked extensively with this population, O'Connell understood that a holistic approach involving the business, education, government, faith communities, and philanthropy sectors would be required to truly make a difference.

With donation of land in Minneapolis by Northern States Power (now Xcel Energy), Jeremiah Program launched a \$5 million capital campaign and broke ground on its first campus in 1997. In 1998, 18 families moved into this campus residence. In 1999, Jeremiah opened a temporary Child Development Center (CDC) onsite and began construction on 21 units and a permanent CDC. In 2002, this expanded Minneapolis campus opened with 39 affordable units and space for 66 children in the CDC. With this success in Minneapolis, community leaders in St. Paul approached Jeremiah leaders about expanding to a second site. After extensive input from citizens and a campaign that raised \$14 million, a second 38-unit campus opened in 2007.

In fall 2013, phase one of an Austin, Texas, campus opened its doors to four families; plans call for breaking ground on a permanent campus in 2015. Furthermore, leaders in Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota, are making progress in establishing a campus in their community, pilot programs with Endicott College are underway in Boston, and conversations with several other communities are in progress.

A HOLISTIC, TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

Jeremiah Program's proven, holistic approach to moving families from poverty to prosperity two generations at a time is based on four key program components:

- Support for career-track education
- Quality early childhood education
- Safe and affordable housing
- Empowerment and life skills training

Over the past 16 years, Jeremiah Program has employed this approach to prepare determined single mothers to excel in the workforce, ready their children to succeed in school, and reduce generational dependence on public assistance.

Jeremiah understands that a career-track college education is the pathway that leads a single mother and her children to self-reliance. But to obtain this education, these mothers need significant support — the holistic support that Jeremiah Program provides.

To ensure that applicants are truly interested in a life-changing, rigorous program, mothers are required to complete a 16-session empowerment class before becoming residents. Empowerment training lays the foundation for accountability, with young women coming to understand how their actions impact their outcomes. The course is a catalyst for them to take responsibility for changing the direction of their lives. The women then participate in weekly life skills training in career development, healthy relationships, positive parenting, economic independence, and more. Each woman is assigned a coach for one-to-one support.

Jeremiah's fully furnished, campus-style housing requires residents pay no more than 30 percent of their income for rent. Campuses are strategically located near



Photo: Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

educational institutions, employment opportunities, and public transportation. For many young women, this is the first secure, safe and supportive environment in which they have ever lived. The stability this housing provides cannot be overstated.

Jeremiah Program's CDCs provide the high-quality education and care that is crucial for laying a foundation for later academic success, economic productivity, improved physical health, and avoidance of criminal behavior. Investments in high-quality early childhood education yield a 7-10 percent per year return on investment based on increased school and career achievement as well as reduced social costs.² Further, ensuring that quality early childhood education is easily accessible plays an enormous role in stabilizing young families. Teachers and coaches work collaboratively with moms to help them balance the demands of single parenting. Jeremiah's CDCs have the highest possible quality rating from Minnesota Parent Aware and employ the High Scope curriculum for children ages six weeks through preschool. All children receive individualized education plans, and mothers receive parenting support to ensure they are preparing their children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

A Jeremiah resident must be enrolled in a two- or four-year college program when she moves onto a Jeremiah Program campus. The educational institution must offer her the opportunity to improve her economic prospects commensurate with the cost of tuition. The institution also must be financially healthy, offer career counseling and be willing to provide appropriate services for single mothers on its campus. Jeremiah Works!, the organization's employment readiness program, directly links women to employment advocates from local corporations to create career pathways and build social capital. Volunteers provide coaching on critical competencies such as resume writing and interviewing skills and offer information on career options, internships, and job shadowing.

JEREMIAH WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The typical woman who applies to be a Jeremiah Program participant is:

- A young, low-income single parent
- A high school graduate who wants to pursue postsecondary education
- Living in unstable housing, often with relatives or friends
- Isolated, lacking a support system and dependent on multiple forms of public assistance
- Often dealing with issues of abuse, addiction, and lack of self-confidence

A typical length of stay at Jeremiah Program is two-and-a-half to three years.

RESULTS

In 2012, Jeremiah Program commissioned Wilder Research, a St. Paul-based nonprofit social services and research organization, to conduct an objective, in-depth social return on investment (ROI) analysis to compare the economic value of the program's multigenerational outcomes to the actual investment.³ This type of research is rare among organizations with complex programming and services, such

as those that Jeremiah Program delivers. The findings from this research, released in April 2013, are driving program improvements and the design of new initiatives to collect substantive post-graduate data on earnings, job retention, pursuit of additional education, housing, and progress of children.

The key findings of the Wilder Research study:

- Every \$1 invested in a Jeremiah family can return up to \$4 to society. This compares favorably to supportive housing ROI studies that show a return of \$1.32 per \$1 invested.
- For every 100 Jeremiah Program graduates, society is estimated to receive net benefits of at least \$16 million over the course of the graduates' lifetimes.
- Jeremiah's approach registers benefits for both first and second generations:

First-generation benefits:

- Increased lifetime earnings as a result of additional postsecondary education
- Increased taxes paid by participants
- Savings to taxpayers due to reduced use of public assistance

Second-generation benefits:

- Increased lifetime earnings
- Increased taxes paid
- Savings to taxpayers from reduced costs associated with special education and crime

Data from the 2014 graduates show:

- 53 percent earned a bachelor's degree; 47 percent earned an associate's degree or completed a certificate program.
- 40 percent entered unemployed; the average wage of the other 60 percent was \$10.35/hour. After graduating from Jeremiah, 75 percent were employed with an average salary of \$16.32/hour, and 25 percent were continuing their education.

Data from the 2012 and 2013 graduates show:

- 90 percent of graduates are maintaining consistent employment.
- 100 percent of Jeremiah children demonstrate cognitive and physical growth consistent with national averages.

The children of our first graduates are living proof that the Jeremiah model works. A Case Study: "I wanted to be the first woman in my family to graduate from college, but I also really wanted to be an example to my children, to show them that no matter what challenges come your way, you never give up on pursuing your goals," says Tiffany Meeks, a 2003 graduate. "Jeremiah Program believed in me. The program did exactly what it said it would do: It filled me with hope, and it transformed two generations—me and my children—at the same time. It made me a parent able to raise children who are focused on success."



Jeremiah Program mother and son graduates. Photo: Ascend Fellow Steve Liss, AmericanPoverty.org

Tiffany graduated from the University of St. Thomas and now is employed as an executive education administrator at the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management. Her daughter Natalie is a sophomore at Robert Morris University in Chicago, where she made the dean's list the first two quarters! Her son Nate is an eighth-grader, who is excelling in both academics and athletics.

Tiffany is applying to graduate school to earn her MBA, which she says will provide her with an opportunity to “refocus, challenge myself, learn to manage others, and build a broader network. It’s an investment in myself and an example for my children to keep pushing themselves.”

POTENTIAL FOR SCALING

The population of single mothers living in poverty in the U.S. continues to grow. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 6 in 10 women who give birth in their early 20s are unmarried, and women who are low-income and have no college education are far more likely to be these single mothers. These young women face nearly insurmountable barriers to moving out of poverty without the support of a program like Jeremiah. This growing need is driving Jeremiah Program's expansion into new communities.

The organization's national expansion plan has several phases, which ensure that a location's environment and economic climate are appropriate. While the desired outcomes and program components will be consistent in all expansion sites, the model may look different from community to community. For example, in one community, Jeremiah may partner with a developer to build, own, and manage a campus, while in another, Jeremiah may partner with an existing housing organization to provide services. Jeremiah only expands into communities where members of the local community express a strong desire for a two-generation approach to address the needs of low-income single mothers and their children.

Cultivation. Jeremiah responds to sparks of interest from a community, asking whether there is influence within the education, government, or philanthropy sectors; businesses; or congregations.

Exploration. Jeremiah assesses the feasibility of a program in a specific community, including if there is adequate leadership and an organizational partner.

Pre-Development. A community begins planning for a campus when there is critical mass of leadership and funding to launch the project.

Pilot. Some communities may prefer to replicate Jeremiah's outcomes by linking Jeremiah with other organizations to deliver the core elements of the model.

Development. A community begins building a Jeremiah model and putting staff and programming into place. With local leadership, decisions are made regarding a campus facility.

Operational. Jeremiah Program becomes fully operational in a community.

With the support of Ascend at the Aspen Institute and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Jeremiah Program is building its capacity to respond to communities across the country that are searching for effective two-generation approaches to ending poverty. Kellogg funding is helping the organization build a nimble, streamlined system that employs technology, improved community assessments, new partnerships, and stronger shared office systems to significantly expand the number of low-income mothers and children served through Jeremiah's two-generation model.

¹ Reardon, S.F. (2013, May). *The widening income achievement gap*. *Educational Leadership*, 70(8), 10-16. Retrieved from www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may13/vol70/num08/The-Widening-Income-Achievement-Gap.aspx.

² Heckman, J. *Presenting the Heckman Equation: Schools, skills, and synapses* [Powerpoint slides]. Retrieved from the Heckman Equation website: <http://www.heckmanequation.org./content/resource/presenting-heckman-equation>

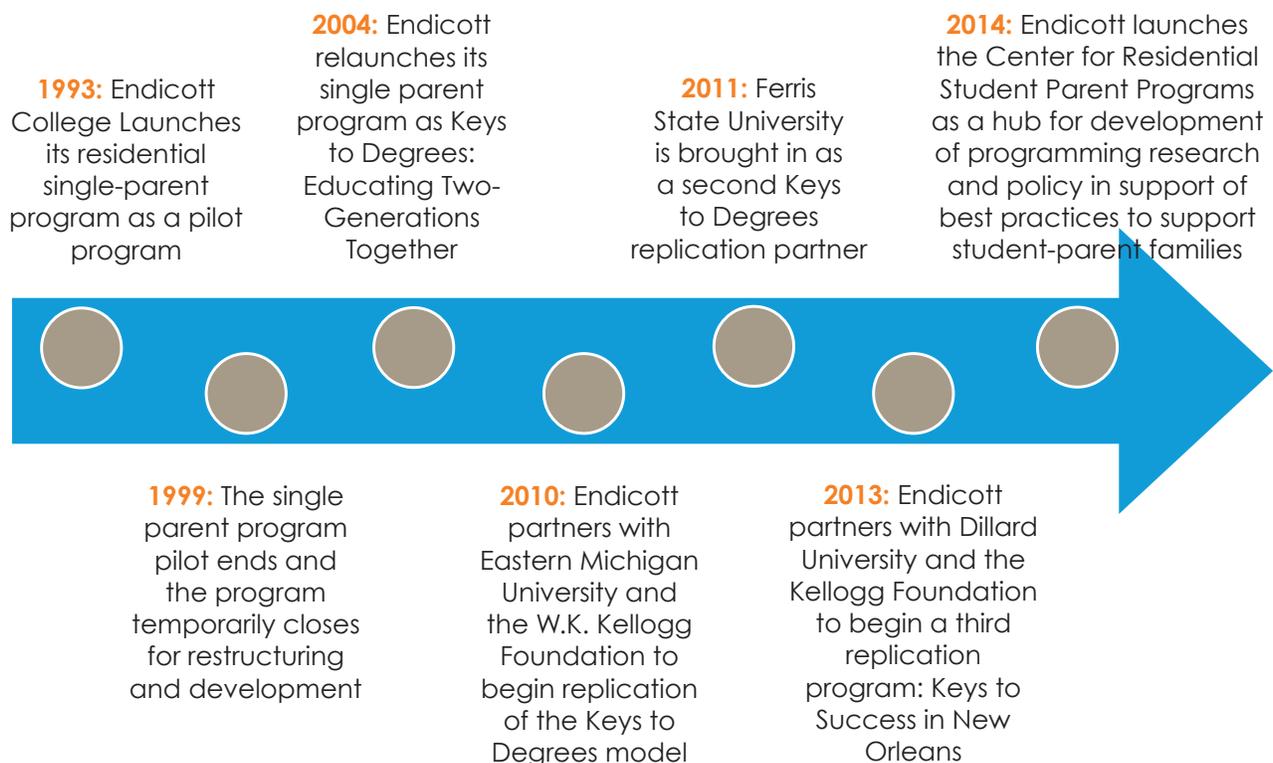
³ See www.jeremiahprogram.org/about-us/.



KEYS TO DEGREES: EDUCATING TWO GENERATIONS TOGETHER — AN INNOVATIVE POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM SUPPORTING TWO-GENERATION MOBILITY

Autumn Green and Richard Wylie, Endicott College

The story about how Endicott College began its successful single-parent program, Keys to Degrees, has become a bit of a legend at the college: In the early 1990s, a young woman carrying an infant ran into Endicott President Richard Wylie (co-author of this chapter) while she was touring the campus as a prospective student. The young woman was accompanied by her grumbling father. When Dr. Wylie welcomed them, the father replied, "I don't even know why we're here. This is a complete waste of time. My daughter cannot go to college here; she's a mother and needs to take care of her baby." At that point Dr. Wylie began to think about what he would do as a father if his own child had become a parent before she had the chance to complete college, given how important it is for young parents to have access to higher education to succeed. Thus, he decided to start a program that gives young single parents a place to both raise their children and obtain a college education in a supportive approximation of a traditional college experience.



Today the Keys to Degrees program at Endicott College houses 10 single parents and their young children (age six or younger at time of admission), with plans to increase the program's capacity to 20 students by 2017. Each student and child share a four-bedroom suite housed in a traditional college dormitory with another student and child. Each parent and each child has a private bedroom, with the bathroom, kitchen, living room, and dressing areas shared by the two families. New housing being built on campus will allow students to live in a building with other underclassman during their first two years and then move with their classmates to housing designated for upperclassman in their final two years in the program.

When families come into the program, we immediately see a sense of community. Our young adult students (age 18-24 at the time of admission) learn to co-parent with a suite-mate who they never would have imagined living and co-parenting with before they came to Endicott. The families in the program often sit together in the dining hall to share meals, carpool together to run errands, form study groups, and watch each other's children. The children develop family-like relationships too; the ones who live together often interact like siblings. While the program provides a package of resources to the students, including multiple supports and advantages, the sense of community among the families is one of the greatest program benefits.

The official motto of Keys to Degrees is *Educating Two Generations Together*, and all participants in the Keys to Degrees program are students. Parents are enrolled in traditional four-year, full-time baccalaureate degree programs, while children are enrolled in high-quality early childhood education programs or in local public schools.

While the Keys students may choose from any of Endicott College's baccalaureate degree programs, all enroll in career-minded majors. Current students have a diversity of majors, including education, nursing, social and human services, hospitality, art therapy, psychology, business and finance, applied mathematics, and biotechnology.

Students in the program receive a scholarship that allows them access to a personal tutor in the college's Student Support Center. Students meet with tutors one-on-one several times a week to receive assistance with individual academic topics and general academic study skills as well as help strategizing their balance of school, work, and family. Students also have full use of the college's other student resources, including counseling services and an on-campus health care center that accepts both adults and children as patients and accepts Medicaid insurance.

Career development is supported through Endicott's internship program. As part of the required course of study for all undergraduate programs at the college, students participate in three separate internships in their chosen field to gain real-world experience. During their senior year, students complete a full-time, semester-long internship and are often hired permanently at their internship site or with another employer in their chosen field immediately upon graduation.

Central to the two-generation approach of the Keys to Degrees Program, the child participants are also students. The Keys to Degrees program prescreens local community-based early child development programs and partners with these programs to ensure that children are not just being babysat while their parents are



in school, but rather being exposed to a high-quality early childhood education. Kindergarten-age children transition to local public schools.

Keys programming includes parent education covering various models and approaches of early childhood curricula. Students are then able to decide what model is most appropriate for their family and for their child. Elementary-age children receive similar support in finding quality local afterschool programs.

Some families opt for Montessori programs, while others choose Creative Curriculum or centers using blended philosophies. This allows the program participants to make choices about their child, empowering them as young parents in a way that they see as supportive. This addresses a key challenge of providing parent education to young parents: providing support for parental empowerment and skills development in ways that do not feel condescending. The program also pays a majority of the child's tuition through the Keys to Degrees child care scholarship program while the family is on the waiting list for a state-issued income-eligible child care assistance voucher.

We sometimes say participation in the Keys to Degrees program is similar to participation in varsity athletics. Students in the program are Endicott students first and Keys to Degrees participants second. Keys to Degrees staff serve as resources for participants, helping them navigate their daily balance of school, single parenting, and part-time employment. Keys to Degrees staff also serve as ambassadors, helping students connect with and navigate various on-campus offices, speaking to such offices on their behalf or to monitor their academic and personal successes and setbacks. Staff members also help students research and obtain community services and strategize with them on ways to address challenges that arise.

Just as being on an athletic team might include some additional requirements, Keys to Degrees also requires students to commit to participating in programming that is specific to Keys students. Through the mentoring component of the Keys to Degrees program, participants also receive the support of a volunteer mentor who is an established professional. These mentors provide advice and support on navigating college and career transitions based on their own experiences.

As college students, many of whom had their children while in high school or even middle school, all program participants are role models to younger parents who hope to complete college in the future. Program staff partner with local high schools and service providers that work with young parents to facilitate one-to-one and group encounters between the Keys students and other young parents.

Each summer, Keys to Degrees hosts an annual retreat in which young single parents from throughout New England (and beyond) come to Endicott College to learn more about the program, preview what college might be like, and hear from current students, alumni, and successful career professionals who completed college as student parents. At the retreat, participants receive support and encouragement for their college aspirations. Whether or not they ultimately choose Endicott for their education is irrelevant. The purpose of the retreat is not recruitment but rather to share the message that despite becoming parents early in life, they can still complete their education and pursue a professional career. The Keys to Degrees retreat is organized through collaborations between staff and students and provides an opportunity for leadership development for current program students and an alternative message about the future that young parents rarely hear in their daily lives.

Through the years, Keys to Degrees has experimented with various models of group learning and discussion for students in the program and has developed its current programming and curricula through a homegrown process. The program began



by holding weekly meetings of the students and program director. However, these meetings gradually evolved into weekly venting sessions that seemed to lack a clear purpose. Working with the dean of education, the program developed the weekly meeting into a one-credit service learning course taught by the program director, through which students would plan and conduct community service and mentoring activities and projects.

As this course evolved, it became clear that many of the young parent students in the program needed additional life skills curricula in addition to the service and mentoring curricula. Through in-class observations and findings from her previous research with student parents at other colleges, Dr. Green began to develop a new course curriculum that blends life skills with service and mentoring. During this time, Dr. Green was also partnering with the Jeremiah Program to launch a pilot single-parent program in Boston and learned that the life skills topics she had developed substantially overlapped with parts of the Jeremiah Program's life skills curriculum. These topics include:

- 1) Time management
- 2) Financial management and resources for student parents
- 3) Family, parenting, and life skills
- 4) Social networking and professional/career development
- 5) Personal empowerment/leadership development
- 6) Community service and mentoring

As Endicott continues to partner with Jeremiah on the launch of a single-parent program in Boston, we envision continuing to learn from each other on the life skills and mentoring components that each group uses. The curricula for both Keys to Degrees and the Jeremiah-Endicott partnership will be dynamically adapted based on these lessons.

In addition, during the first two years of the program, students are encouraged to register for a "cluster course," which is a course that meets a general education requirement that is open to all Endicott students. Keys students then have the opportunity to attend one class together with other students from the program. This helps them build a sense of academic camaraderie while also allowing them to be study partners and complete group work together.

These programming and curricular supports help ensure that program participants graduate both with the credentials and experience they need for an entry-level position in their chosen field — or a competitive portfolio for application to graduate school — and the skills to successfully balance work and family.

Keys to Degrees students are also supported in becoming fully engaged members of the campus community. Like traditional residential students, all Keys to Degrees students must sign up for a meal plan, and they regularly eat in the campus dining hall with their children (highchairs and booster seats can be found throughout the campus dining facility). While many use their kitchens to cook meals, maintaining at least the minimum meal plan helps augment the families' grocery budgets and safeguards against the risk of food insecurity. Children always eat for free with their parents in the dining hall.

Like traditional residential students, participants engage in a wide array of extra-curricular programming through the college. Keys to Degrees students are encouraged to fully integrate as members of the campus community, which includes studying in the library, working as research assistants or in on-campus offices, attending residence life-sponsored social events or activities in the dormitory, cheering on the team at the Friday night football game, and even starring in the school musical.

Keys to Degrees students also often connect and build friendships with traditional students who may help them with practical challenges or just lend an ear for emotional support. Furthermore, like many friendships that begin in college, the relationships students in the program develop at Endicott with one another, traditional students, faculty, and staff can become lasting connections that can help them build their social network and improve their future career connections and opportunities. Many students in the program are from disadvantaged communities and may be the first in their family to go to college; they may not otherwise have career professionals in their personal networks. Thus, the connections these low-income, first generation, and/or nontraditional students make in college are even more important.

PROGRAM RESULTS

Many who are familiar with the data on nontraditional students and student parents are often surprised that the students enrolled in the program complete their baccalaureate degrees in just four years. Nationally, student parents are an extremely high-risk population in terms of retention and degree completion. The national graduation rate within six years among students with children is only 3.9 percent for a baccalaureate degree; only 40 percent of parenting students complete any postsecondary degree or certificate within the same amount of time.¹

Given these comparisons, Keys to Degrees has been highly successful. Using data on Keys to Degrees program participants who graduated or otherwise left Endicott College from 2004-2014, 68 percent of participants who entered the program graduated with bachelor's degrees.² This is very close to Endicott College's average graduation rate, which is 71 percent. Among the same group of Keys to Degrees alumni, both median and mode average degree completion time for first-year freshman is four years; students who enter the program as transfer students average three years to complete their bachelor's degree.

Endicott ensures this graduation success by offering Keys to Degrees students the opportunity to live and study on campus year round. Recent federal policy changes ended the summer Pell grant program, and many low-income and single-parent students around the nation have since been unable to attend summer courses. However, at Endicott, institutional scholarships cover tuition, fees, and housing so that Keys to Degrees students may take courses during the winter and summer intersessions.

Students often use the opportunity to attend year round to reduce their course loads to 12 rather than 15 credits per term. This can help them improve their academic success while also raising and supporting a child. Interestingly, this allows them to accelerate their academic progress by up to a full semester per academic year

(12 credits), while still reducing their course load to the minimum full-time enrollment threshold in the fall, spring, and summer semesters; winter intersession enrollment is limited to six credits because of the condensed nature of the courses offered.

REPLICATION AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

In some ways, the complex array of supports offered to students in the Keys to Degrees program is difficult to replicate. Yet three universities have currently stepped up to the challenge. The program continues to share information and work with other institutions and partners to replicate and adapt the Keys to Degrees model through the Keys to Degrees National Replication Program, which is presently supported through grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education.

At Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, the first cohort of students in its Keys to Degrees program is getting close to graduation. Modeling its program on Endicott's founding program, Eastern Michigan University's Keys to Degrees program also offers housing, child care, and programming and support to single parents attending the university. Keys to Degrees has also been replicated at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan, and Keys to Success at Dillard University in New Orleans is just getting off the ground.

Among the greatest challenges to replication is raising the funds to staff the program and provide scholarships and supports to the students who enroll. While federal student aid generally supports tuition, fees, textbooks, and some living expenses, these funds are often exhausted before taking into account child care expenses and the general day-to-day costs of raising a family. At Eastern Michigan University and Dillard University, program staff members work with county and state agencies to help students secure child care assistance vouchers or find Head Start placements. Families at Ferris State University have access to the university's on-campus early child development center, Tot's Place, which also houses a full-time Head Start classroom primarily utilized by student families. Because Ferris State University was awarded a Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools (CCAMPIS) grant this year through the U.S. Department of Education, students with children enrolled at Tot's Place receive a tuition discount between 50 to 100 percent, based on their financial situation and maintenance of a minimum GPA. When space in Tot's Place is unavailable, Ferris State's Keys to



Degrees staff work with community partners to connect families with high-quality early childhood education programs in the community.

Housing is another challenge to replication. Endicott College built the dormitory that houses the Keys to Degree suites with the program in mind, but capital construction projects are significant barriers to replication at other institutions. Fortunately, at each of the replication sites, the institutions have been able to adapt existing housing units to meet the programs' needs. At Eastern Michigan and Dillard universities, the students live in dedicated on-campus apartment communities. At Ferris State University, students are incorporated into the university's family housing complex or granted program waivers to live in off-campus housing, if they find a more affordable option in the community immediately surrounding the campus.

Curricula and programming poses another challenge to replication. With diverse families from diverse corners of the country, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. In the replication process, programming may be adapted to meet the needs of the specific students in the program. Varying factors can include age of students/children, racial/ethnic diversity, regional differences, and other demographic variables. Consistent across programs are both a regular, formal interaction that brings together students and program staff and staff members who help students connect with and navigate program offerings on campus and in the greater community. Students in all four Keys to Degrees programs have direct access to every student service they qualify for on campus, such as tutoring and academic support, as well as a person who can help students advocate for themselves with professors and administrative offices.

To promote the success and sustainability of each Keys to Degrees program, the Office of Institutional Advancement at Endicott College offers to mentor the fundraising teams at other institutions as part of the replication process. While each program is responsible for developing its own fundraising and program sustainability strategy, providing advice and support in the development of this strategy is important to successful replication. In many ways, building and sustaining a program requires commitment and support from all levels of the institution.

Funding for the program is supported through local and community donations and grants as well as through blending state and federal government funding and private grant opportunities. Events-based fundraising, such as Endicott's annual Keys to Degrees Golf Tournament, also helps raise money for the programs and provides an opportunity for Keys to Degrees students to share their stories and experiences with donors. To complete evaluation research on the program outcomes and replication process, the Keys to Degrees National Replication Program, housed at Endicott College, continues to provide financial support to each of the three replication programs through a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; this research and evaluation is currently ongoing. Reports from this research can be found at www.endicott.edu/studentparentprograms.

KEYS TO DEGREES AS A POSTSECONDARY STRATEGY FOR TWO-GENERATION MOBILITY

Programs like Keys to Degrees meet a critical need for students with children and make an important contribution to anti-poverty agendas. Changing technologies and an increasingly global economy have largely shifted U.S. work and opportunity

structures. The job market today requires entry-level applicants to demonstrate more highly specialized training and experience in their chosen field. Bachelor's degrees are often used as the floor for prescreening career applicants.

Many young people who become parents before completing a college degree must turn to the alternative of low-wage work. This also mandates juggling public assistance programs to meet needs they are unable to sustain with their wages, such as child care, housing, food and nutrition, and emergency assistance. This also means raising their children within the many uncertainties of poverty and the inability to create what many of our students describe as "a better life" in which to raise their children.

While completing a bachelor's degree is an important mechanism for upward mobility for low-income families, nontraditional students (including first-generation, older, and/or parenting students) are a high-risk population with respect to postsecondary retention.³ Parenting students specifically face significant challenges in successfully balancing college with the responsibilities of raising and financially supporting a family.⁴ While the Keys to Degrees program does not ameliorate all of the causes of hardship faced by the students in the program, it reduces some of the challenges. The program prevents students from falling through the cracks, catching them when they experience challenges and keeping them engaged and supported through the completion of their baccalaureate degree and transition to life after college.

Importantly, Keys to Degrees is a two-generation program that simultaneously benefits both parents and children. In preliminary evaluation research conducted with the cohort in residence in 2010, 71 percent of parent participants reported that they believed that they would not be successful in college or were unsure if they would be successful in college without the program. Among the same group, 100 percent of participants reported that they believed they would complete their bachelor's degree through the program. Furthermore, alumni surveys sent the same year found that 100 percent of program graduates were employed full-time, 86 percent were employed in a career that directly related to their field of study in college, 57 percent earned an annual salary of \$40,000 or more, 71 percent described themselves as economically self-sufficient, and 100 percent did not receive support from the federal/state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

Participants surveyed in 2010 also reported that since they came to the program, they felt supported as parents and were able to set clear boundaries and rules with their children. Additionally, 100 percent of respondents reported utilizing structured daily routines with their child at least several times per week, if not every day. Furthermore, all participants reported regularly reading to their children and understood and set age-appropriate limits for their child. While longitudinal research on the secondary outcomes for children involved in the program has not yet been conducted, these preliminary findings on parents' self-reflections demonstrate the programs' two-generation approach.

In addition, education has ripple effects within low-income families and communities. Just as the students in the Keys to Degrees program become mentors

and resources for other young parents, as first-generation college students, many similarly become resources and role models in their families and communities. By serving as an example and information source, Keys to Degrees students encourage others to follow in their footsteps. Things that may seem trivial to the seasoned student, like completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or deciding what classes to take, can present complete blockades to those without the knowledge or resources to handle the process. The mission is not that Keys to Degrees students will draw their family members into the program, but rather that through the program, students and staff reinforce the message that college is a possibility, even for those who have been told it is not.

TAKING OUR WORK TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The national situation of single-parent-headed families is marked by a day-to-day struggle to survive, while striving for the most basic promise of the American dream: a future for their children in which they are safe and well nourished, have access to meaningful opportunities for education and extracurricular enrichment, and can one day provide similar opportunities for their own children. Keys to Degrees is making an impact on these lives by supporting higher education access and career development strategies that help move families out of poverty. We are currently beginning a new phase of our efforts to support these families by bringing our work to a national level.

Working with the Program Evaluation & Research Group at Endicott College, we are currently conducting evaluation research on the Keys to Degrees programs. We are also developing research partnerships with other colleges and universities across the country that are working to support postsecondary education through offerings that include providing student parents with opportunities for housing, child care, and student-parent-specific supports and programming. This research will document the replication process and identify both the challenges to replication and the essential components to program success. Data is also being gathered on the types of programs and program offerings at higher education institutions across the country. This will help in the development of tools to guide prospective students to available programs and in the creation of a best-practices toolkit to support postsecondary institutions seeking to build two-generation programs on their campuses.

Our research and national replication efforts with the Keys to Degrees program moved Endicott College to launch the Center for Residential Student Parent Programs in the spring of 2014. Through this newly established research center, Endicott College will support programming, evidence-based research, and policy around postsecondary strategies for two-generation mobility.

Key to this work is building partnerships to develop new and innovative ways to support higher education access and success among student parents from a two-generation perspective. Higher education institutions need to share best practices for supporting low-income parents in using college as a means out of poverty. This requires a commitment from the entire institution, from the executive administration down. These students are willing to work hard for the opportunity to provide a better future for their children, but they need a hand up. If we want to see the promise of the American dream fulfilled, we all need to work together to help them climb.

A critical piece of the Keys to Degrees Program is building community. This happens through supporting the development of relationships and support networks between student parents in the Keys to Degrees program, incorporating these students and their children as fully engaged members of the residential campus, returning to their communities to encourage and serve as role-models to others, or engaging in partnerships with community organizations and service providers. From these communities, students in the Keys to Degrees program can draw support for their own postsecondary success, but they also become engaged as full members of those communities: building relationships, developing their skills, and eventually positioning themselves to pay it forward to the next group of students.

Extending beyond the Keys to Degrees program, we are seeking to build a national community through which we can support postsecondary strategies for two-generation mobility. We will do this by building effective programs that are guided by the needs and experiences of the families they serve, raising awareness of the challenges these families experience in their quest to leave poverty behind, and creating a national dialogue on how we can better support them in moving from poverty to the middle class.

¹ Miller, K., Gault, B., & Thorman, A. (2011). *Improving Childcare Access to Promote Postsecondary Success Among Low-Income Parents*. Student Parent Success Initiative Research Report. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

² This rate is calculated based on the percentage of students who entered the program at any point between 2004 and 2010 and have left the program with a bachelor's degree. This statistic is not technically comparable to graduation rates, which are based on incoming cohorts of students, because each incoming cohort of Keys to Degrees students is too small to establish statistical significance under these parameters. However, this alternate statistic uses a commonly accepted calculation used by most other two-generation programs and reflects high rates of success among program participants.

³ Medved, C. E., & Heisler, J. (2010). A negotiated order exploration of critical student-faculty interactions: Student-parents manage multiple roles. *Communication Education*, 51(2), 105-120.

⁴ Green, A. R. (2013). *Babies, Books & Bootstraps: Low-Income Mothers, Material Hardship, Role Strain and the Quest for Higher Education*. Dissertation. Boston, MA: Boston College. See also Home, A. M. (1998). Learning the hard way: Role strain, stress, role demands, and support in multiple-role women students. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(2), 335-346.



CREATING BOLD HUMAN SERVICES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Reggie Bicha, Colorado Department of Human Services

When Governor John Hickenlooper took office in 2011, millions of families across the United States were suffering the effects of the Great Recession. In Colorado, a state not historically associated with high rates of poverty, the child poverty rate was growing faster than in any other state in the country. About 18 percent, or 217,000, of Colorado's children lived in poverty in 2011, an increase of 4 percent since 2005.¹ In 2011, 29 percent of Colorado children were living in a family where no parent had full-time, year-round employment.² During 2010-2012, on average, 19 percent of Colorado children were living in households that were food insecure at some point during the year.³ Such indicators suggest that the physical and educational development of Colorado children was, and continues to be, at risk.

In the context of a 21st century economy, Colorado needed to find ways to help families move out of poverty. The growing child poverty rate inspired Colorado Department of Human Services' (CDHS) efforts to pursue a new course. Under the governor's leadership, and in partnership with local stakeholders, CDHS is cultivating strategies that have the potential to transform the way families are supported to move beyond poverty now and to end intergenerational poverty. The goal is to address the needs of vulnerable children and their parents *at the same time*.

This two-generation approach might seem like common sense, but many traditional anti-poverty interventions continue to address the symptoms of poverty in isolation from the circumstances that generate poverty. Further, services to families continue to be delivered in a fragmented and disconnected manner not only for an individual family member, but between family members as well.

Under the comprehensive two-generation approach being developed in Colorado, the specific approaches are designed to address the three following priorities: **1) families achieve through meaningful work, 2) wealth is achieved through financial literacy, and 3) children achieve through early learning.** While many states have developed individual efforts to address childhood poverty, few states, if any, have identified and focused on a coordinated effort to align programs and to build new innovations in a strategic way that engages the whole family system and is relevant to a 21st century economy.

FAMILIES ACHIEVE THROUGH MEANINGFUL WORK

To address the priority of families achieving through work, CDHS has implemented an innovative “dual” approach to employment for *both* parents — the custodial parent through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, Colorado

Works, and the non-custodial parent through the Colorado Parent Employment Project (CO-PEP). CDHS aims to demonstrate that children will have better outcomes if both parents are supported to achieve meaningful work. These efforts recognize that children do best when both parents are actively involved in their lives.⁴

Colorado Works was created in the mid-1990s, following the passage of TANF by Congress. TANF holds states, and program participants, accountable for “work activities” but not employment outcomes. To better emphasize employment outcomes, CDHS is refocusing its Colorado Works program around three new goals: 1) entering employment, 2) job retention, and 3) earned wages. This new approach is built on the value that participants in Colorado Works should expect to get a job, one that they can keep or advance in and that helps their family achieve economic security.

Meanwhile, CDHS is shifting away from unnecessary bureaucratic requirements that get in the way of families seeking work and employers seeking to hire hard-working Coloradans. This new effort is referred to as Colorado ReWorks.

In America, social welfare policy historically has been centered on a 19th century value of caring for women and children. Even TANF was built on the premise that we needed to help parents (primarily “welfare moms”) receive cash assistance until they obtained employment. More recently, this value has begun to shift to recognize that children do best when both parents (custodial and non-custodial) are involved in their lives. Joint custody and shared parenting arrangements have grown across the country, yet social welfare policy has not kept pace. While children are spending time with both parents, frequently one parent is obtaining work training and employment supports through TANF, while the other parent is paying child support and receiving no employment services at all. Colorado aims to demonstrate that children will do better if both parents are supported to achieve work.

CO-PEP serves non-custodial parents who are unable to meet their child support obligations due to being either unemployed or underemployed. The primary goal of CO-PEP is to create a fatherhood presence, as the majority of non-custodial parents are fathers, for children being raised in one-parent households. Participants must have a current child support order, be able to work, and want to support and be a part of their child's life. The program is funded through a five-year demonstration grant provided by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. The demonstration is designed to compare a group of 750 non-custodial parents from five county child support services offices who receive traditional services to 750 non-custodial parents from those same offices who receive enhanced services through CO-PEP. The enhanced group receives an array of services, including intensive case management, enhanced child support services (such as arrears forgiveness for timely child support payments, pro-active

While many states have developed individual efforts to address childhood poverty, few states, if any, have identified and focused a coordinated effort to align programs and build new innovations in a strategic way that engages the whole family system and is relevant to a 21st century economy.

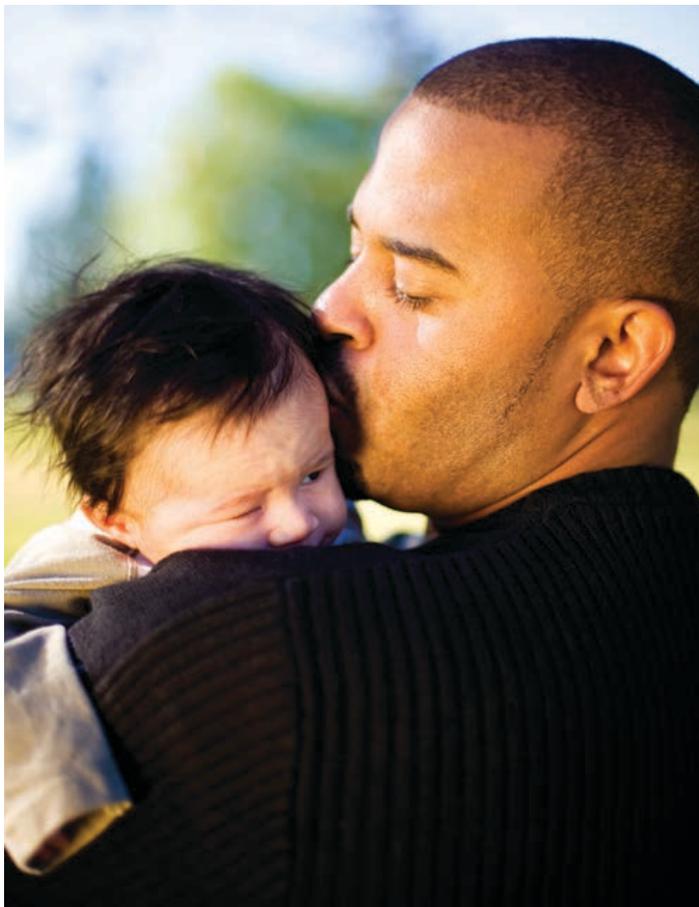
The State of Colorado is working to refocus, repurpose and retool its service structures and priorities to create real opportunities to help families rise out of poverty.

modification of orders, and a lifting of enforcement activities), a 16-hour nurturing parent and peer support curriculum, and intensive employment services.

The hypothesis is that these enhanced services will result in improved child support payments, which will increase the child's standard of living, reduce the non-custodial parent's dependency on public assistance, and reduce involvement with the criminal justice system. The program is really about helping families help themselves. If this project proves successful, it has the potential to change how child support programs interact with non-custodial parents, engaging fathers with their children and providing hope to a population that historically has never been served in such a manner.

Another outgrowth of CDHS's improved focus on employment is the transitional jobs program ReHire Colorado. Created through state legislation, transitional employment is a strategy to help individuals with barriers to employment access wage-paying work while concurrently developing the necessary skills and experience to transition successfully to regular, unsubsidized work. Eligibility for this program, as defined in the legislation, is family income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, combined with demonstration of recent unemployment or under-employment. The legislation gives priority to individuals who are over 50, veterans, and non-custodial parents. Direct-service providers each have a somewhat unique program design, but all are providing training and case management concurrent with transitional employment in an individualized manner.

In other states, transitional employment has demonstrated a high return on investment and improved the lives of participants and their families. In the first two months of program service, 10 percent of individuals in subsidized employment had already moved to unsubsidized employment at their employer host site, at an average wage of over \$11 per hour. With such promising early successes and a focus on serving non-custodial parents, ReHire Colorado is another natural environment for the implementation of two-generation strategies.



ACHIEVING WEALTH THROUGH FINANCIAL LITERACY

Children who have the means to attend college are more likely to do so than those who do not have the means. In cities across the country, college savings accounts (CSAs) with a match component have provided real dollars for students — particularly for low-income children — to use to attend higher education. CSAs have further

demonstrated to children that college can be affordable, which creates pathways to a future otherwise not visible to them, and have laid the groundwork for financial habits around saving that may last a lifetime. In addition, research shows that a low- to middle-income student with an account dedicated to college savings is more likely to get better grades and to graduate from high school, three times more likely to attend college, and four times more likely to graduate from college, even with only \$1-\$499 in the account.⁵



The Corporation for Enterprise Development's (CFED) Saving for Education, Entrepreneurship and Downpayment (SEED) Policy and Practice Initiative was the first national demonstration of CSAs. This initiative was launched in 2003 and included 1,250 account holders, of which more than 90 percent were low-income, in 12 sites nationwide (including Colorado). Results demonstrated that 57 percent of savers made contributions compared with 41 percent of all U.S. households with children that have college savings. The total SEED accumulation was \$1.8 million, with an average accumulation per participant of \$1,518. The number and variety of CSA programs have grown since SEED and include Kindergarten to College (K2C) in San Francisco, the KIPP College Account Program (KCA), and the Mississippi College Savings Account Program. CDHS hopes to contribute to these efforts by demonstrating that the implementation of such a system on a statewide level can have similar results for children on a larger scale.

In the summer of 2013, Andrea Levere, an Ascend Fellow and the executive director of the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED), partnered with Reggie Bicha, also an Ascend Fellow and the executive director of CDHS, to conduct a feasibility study of the nation's first statewide children's savings account program. The study was funded through a grant from Ascend at the Aspen Institute. CDHS envisions a Colorado children's savings account program that serves low-income, preschool-age children and is supported by a public-private partnership that 1) increases low-income children's college aspirations and enrollment, 2) creates a more educated, competitive workforce for the state, and 3) builds economic opportunities for low-income families. A pilot program, along with a plan for sustainability, is currently being developed in Colorado.

CHILDREN ACHIEVE THROUGH EARLY LEARNING

Historically, child care has been viewed as a work support strategy alone. This is particularly true as it relates to low-income parents entering the workplace. Meanwhile, decades of research has demonstrated that children who attend high-quality child care are more prepared for kindergarten and achieve better lifelong

outcomes. Middle class and wealthy parents have known this and have, in much greater numbers, selected higher-quality early learning environments for their children while they work. CDHS wishes to shift the culture and viewpoint of policy makers to recognize that child care for all children is both a work support AND an educational strategy for Colorado families.

In 2012, Colorado established a new Office of Early Childhood, which seeks to help parents help their children get ready for kindergarten and beyond. “Ready for Kindergarten” is focused on four distinct areas that compose the Colorado Framework. The Framework includes:

- Early Learning
- Family Supports
- Emotional/Social Supports
- Health

More than 40 years of research validates that children, particularly children living in low-income households, who attend high-quality child care are more prepared for kindergarten and achieve better lifelong outcomes than do children from low-income families who do not attend high-quality childcare. Therefore, CDHS believes the time has come to help parents help their children get access to high-quality care while they are at work or school. Colorado’s goal is to increase the percentage of children in low-income families participating in high-quality child care. Currently, only 10 percent of licensed child care programs in Colorado participate in the state’s quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). And, of this group of child care providers, many do not accept children whose parents participate in the state’s subsidized child care assistance program (CCCAP). Furthermore, because not all child care providers who accept children in the child care subsidy program have a quality rating, families who benefit from child care assistance only have access to 3 percent of the providers statewide. CDHS has developed a strategy that will 1) improve the safety of child care, 2) invest in child care providers who want to achieve quality, and 3) help parents choose and afford high-quality child care for their children.

To address these issues, CDHS, with funding from the Obama administration’s Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant, is prioritizing child care providers that utilize the child care subsidy program. CDHS will provide quality incentive funds, coaching, and professional development opportunities to help these providers pursue higher levels of quality in the “Next Generation Quality Rating and Improvement System.” The system will rate child care providers using five levels of quality standards as well as an Environmental Rating Score. In addition, this system will be linked to child care licensing. Every licensed child care program will be expected to have a quality rating by 2016.

In addition, CDHS’s Office of Early Childhood and the Office of Children, Youth and Families together, are aligning programmatic efforts to focus on children’s health, safety, and development and on supporting young mothers to be good parents. The median age of first-time mothers served by the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is 19, and many of these mothers are unmarried and still in high school. NFP is a voluntary, evidence-based community health nursing program that aims to transform the lives

of vulnerable first-time mothers living in poverty. Program goals include improving pregnancy outcomes, improving child health and development, and improving parents' economic self-sufficiency. To meet these goals, services take a whole-family approach, equally and intentionally focusing on the parent and the child. Through this approach, the Nurse-Family Partnership program has improved women's prenatal health improvements, reduced children's injuries, decreased subsequent pregnancies, increased intervals between births, increased employment, reduced welfare and food assistance, and improved school readiness. CDHS is partnering with the University of Colorado and NFP founder Dr. David Olds to demonstrate an enhanced approach to NFP for families at very high risk of child maltreatment. This new endeavor, NFP Enhanced, combines NFP with child welfare professionals who work together to keep children safe while supporting parents.

The Community Response Program is another innovative approach being piloted in Colorado. It aims to prevent child maltreatment by engaging whole families in proactively alleviating stressors or other factors that could jeopardize child safety, while also promoting individual, family, and community strengths and building family stability. The Community Response Program targets families who have been reported to the child welfare system but have not been served because their case was "screened out" as not presenting a current safety risk. The program aims to provide a comprehensive, community-based service continuum for families at risk for child maltreatment through case management; home visits; collaborative goal setting and family engagement; and direct services and resource referrals, both economic and otherwise. Both the NFP Enhanced and the Community Response pilot are promising approaches being created under a two-generation framework to more effectively help families move beyond poverty in this generation ... and stay out of poverty in the next generation.

The most recent Kids Count Report in Colorado highlights the enduring impact that poverty and lack of opportunity have on children. In the long term, CDHS and its partners — legislators, community stakeholders, counties, and philanthropic organizations, to name a few — believe the two-generation effort will be a smarter, more effective strategy that will guide policy and spending choices and produce a greater return on taxpayer investment. By enriching the lives of children and parents together, this simple yet powerful approach has the potential to revitalize communities and build a stronger Colorado.

¹ Kids Count (2013). *2013 Data Book, State Trends in Child Well-Being*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Carlson, M. J. (2006). *Family structure, father involvement, and adolescent behavioral outcomes*. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68(1), 137-154. Retrieved from onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00239.x/abstract.

⁵ Elliott, W., Song, H-a, & Nam, I. (2013). *Small-dollar children's savings accounts, income, and college outcomes*, CSD Working Paper 13-06. St. Louis, MO: Washington University, Center for Social Development.

**PART IV:
EVALUATING AND FOSTERING TWO-GENERATION STRATEGIES**



MEASURING THE RESULTS OF TWO-GENERATION ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGIES

Christopher T. King, University of Texas at Austin, and Donald J. Hernandez, City University of New York

In this chapter, we present a framework with suggested measures and indicators for gauging the success of two-generation strategies emerging under what is now being referred to as “Two-Generation 2.0” (Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014). We build on research in the emerging two-generation field, including important work supported by Ascend at the Aspen Institute, the Foundation for Child Development, the Annie E. Casey and W.K. Kellogg foundations, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (USHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), among others. Happily, a great deal of related work is underway in this area, and it is being carried out by some of the world’s leading researchers, who hail from multiple disciplines, ranging from early childhood development and family health to education and workforce development. This is as it should be. Accurately measuring the effects of such interventions crosses many domains and entails both highly complex measures and very practical indicators for possible use in programs on the ground.

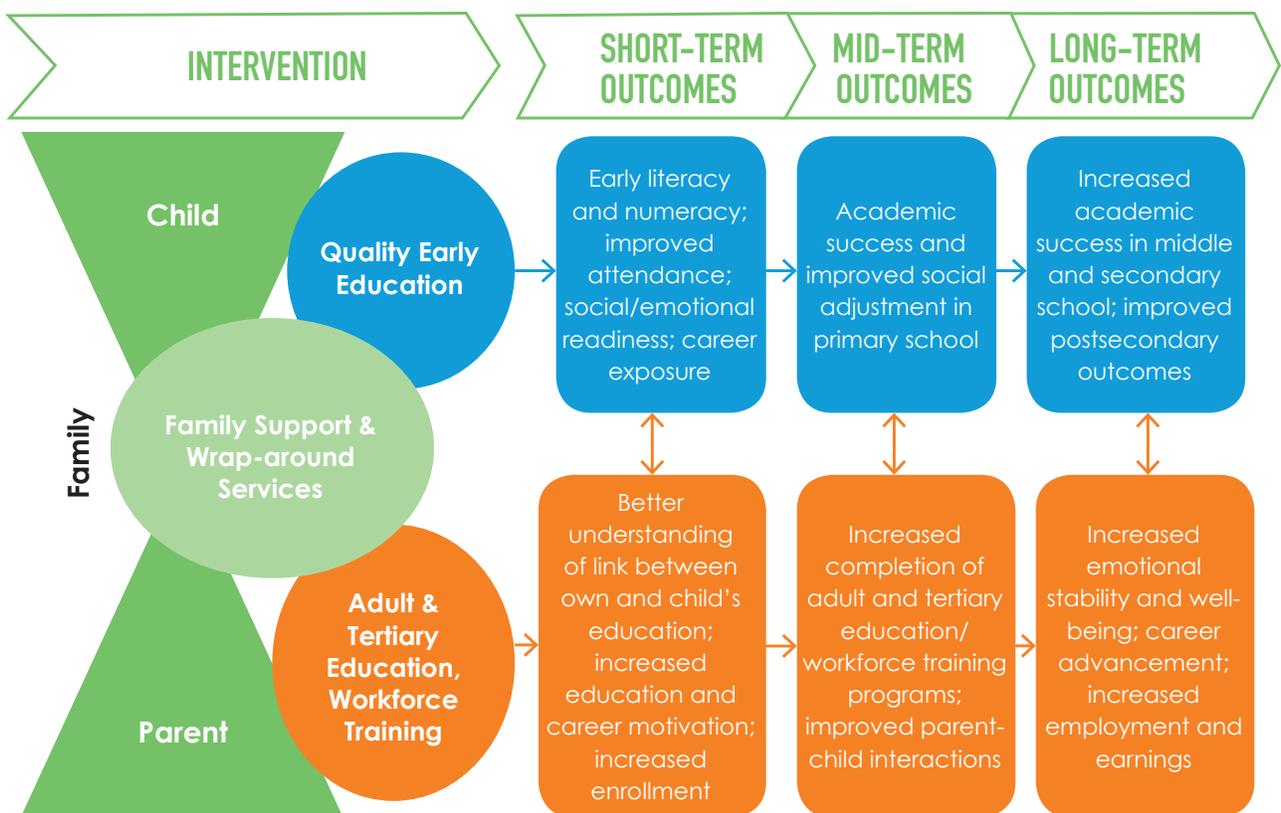
We start with a brief look at the variety of emerging two-generation strategies and provide a broad theory of change for such strategies. We illustrate the mechanisms by which the strategies are expected to work and point to the types of measures needed. We then categorize and describe major measurement domains and timeframes and offer examples of measures and indicators, which might prove useful. We describe ongoing research efforts that are expected to offer more insight into the measurement of two-generation effects, before concluding with some general observations. This chapter is hardly the definitive word on the subject. Given the relative youth of the two-generation “movement” and the amount of research now underway, we can expect new developments along these lines on a regular basis.

TWO-GENERATION STRATEGIES VARY WIDELY

Two-generation strategies come in many shapes and sizes, offer different activities and services, and focus on an array of goals and objectives, as evidenced by the programs touched on throughout this volume. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn (2014) discuss the emergence of two-generation strategies and survey the landscape of such strategies. Ascend at the Aspen Institute also promotes two-generation strategies that include education, economic supports, and social capital.¹

The range of two-generation strategies is wide, and measures must vary accordingly. Examples of current two-generation strategies include those focusing on:

- **Whole Family Counseling for Families Who Have Experienced Child Abuse**, e.g., San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center.²
- **Asset Development for Young Children**, e.g., Colorado's pilot program to build assets for families served by its Department of Human Services.³
- **Postsecondary Education with Quality Child Care**, e.g., Miami Dade College's Single-Stop Program;⁴ Endicott College's Keys to Degrees Program, which recently expanded to Minnesota's Twin Cities;⁵ the Jeremiah Program, which began in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, and has also launched programs in Austin, Texas, and Fargo, North Dakota.⁶
- **Postsecondary Education/Sectoral Skills Training with Quality Early Childhood Education**, e.g., Tulsa's CareerAdvance® Program⁷ and Crittendon Women's Union in Boston.⁸
- **Parental Empowerment for Families**, e.g., Family Independence Initiative, with efforts in Boston, Massachusetts; New Orleans, Louisiana; Oakland, California; and other communities,⁹ and the Harlem Ex-Offender Program.¹⁰



Source: Smith and Coffey, 2014.

Taking a page from the ongoing Tulsa effort, the following Theory of Change illustrates the breadth and depth of these efforts and their expected outcomes over the short, medium and longer term:

These parent and child outcomes over time suggest a host of measures and indicators across multiple domains, which we discuss in more detail below. The arrows connecting parent and child outcomes also point to the need to devise measures for gauging the *interplay* of parent and child outcomes and ones that reflect the progress of families as a whole.

MEASUREMENT APPROACHES

We can approach measuring the success of two-generation strategies and programs in a number of different ways. One approach is to rely on existing data from various sources to assess parental status in terms of education, health, employment, earnings, and other dimensions and the status of their children on these same and related dimensions. We would expect indicators of well-being both for parents and for children to be impacted by a successful two-generation strategy or program. In a recent study published by the Foundation for Child Development, Hernandez and Napierala (2014), with support from the Foundation for Child Development and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, used a variety of such indicators to highlight the need for and potential value of two-generation approaches by assessing the connections linking a key measure of parental human capital to 13 measures of child well-being. Focusing on the mother's education level — less than high school, high school, some college, and college graduate,¹¹ Hernandez and Napierala examined child indicators for three domains — economic, education, and health — relying on publicly available national population data sources (Table 1).

Not surprisingly, they found striking differences by mother's education level among these indicators of child well-being. The starkest differences were between mothers with less than a high school education and those with a bachelor's degree, although for many indicators, substantial differences remained even between mothers with some college and those with a college degree. A few examples illustrate the importance of a mother's education for her children.

Economic Indicators	Education Indicators	Health Indicators
Poverty Rate	Rate of 8th Grade Reading Proficiency	Rate of Low Birth Weight
Low-Income Rate	Rate of 8th Grade Mathematics Proficiency	Rate of Infant Mortality
Rate of Not Having a Securely Employed Parent in the Home	Rate of Not Being Enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten	Rate of Obesity
Median Family Income	Rate of Not Graduating from High School on Time (by Age 19)	Very Good or Excellent Health
		Rate of Non-Coverage for Health Insurance

Source: Hernandez and Napierala (2014).

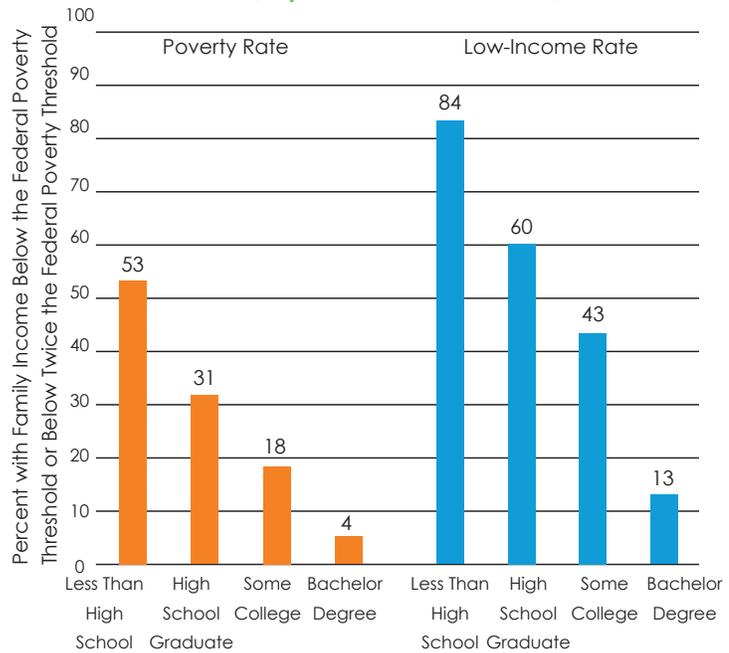
- **Economic.** As Figure 2 shows, more than half of children lived in poverty if their mothers had not graduated from high school, while almost no children (4 percent) whose mothers had a bachelor's degree were poor. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of children lived in low-income families if their mothers

had not graduated from high school, while very few children (13 percent) lived in low-income families if their mothers had a bachelor's degree.

- Education.** As Figures 3 and 4 indicate, not only are reading and mathematics proficiency rates in 8th grade far lower for the children of less-educated mothers — about one-third the rate of the children whose mothers have a college degree — but they are also 1.75 times as likely not to be enrolled in preK and 20 times more likely to not graduate from high school on time.
- Health.** Children whose mothers had not graduated from high school were 2.1 times more likely than children whose mothers had a bachelor's degree to die before their first birthday.

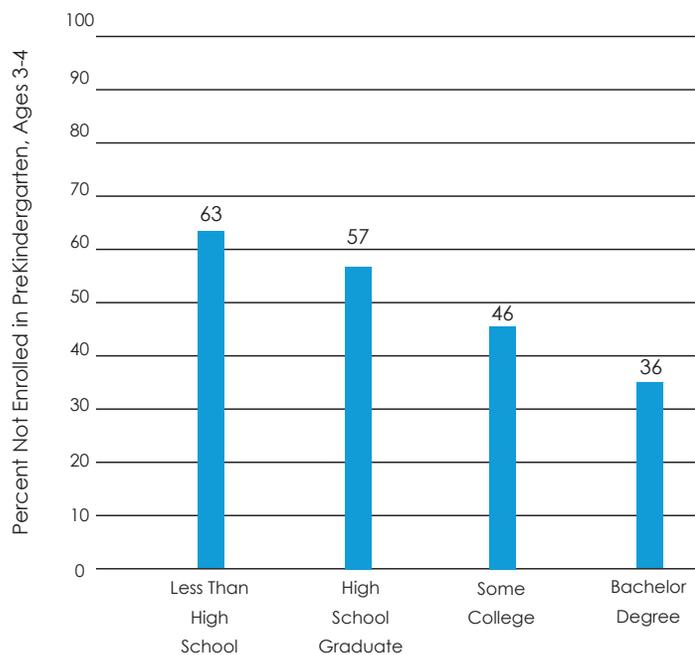
Clearly, a mother's education is strongly related to diverse measures of her children's well-being. For families who experience multiple disadvantages, two-generation strategies that seek simultaneously to improve parental education and to enhance children's economic well-being, educational opportunities, and/or health have the potential to enhance family well-being along numerous dimensions that cannot be addressed by programs that focus only on a single generation or a single domain. But, highly focused federal, state, and local policies and program interventions can achieve this more pervasive impact ... *if* they can be reoriented to serve parents and children simultaneously.

Figure 2. Poverty Rate and Low-Income Rate for Children, by Mother's Education, 2012



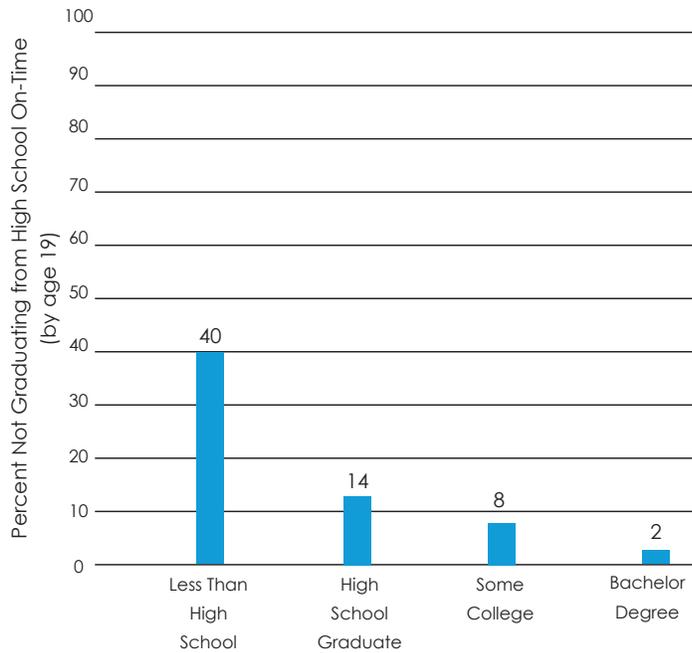
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2013. Calculated by the authors from data file prepared by King, et al (2010).

Figure 3. Children Not Enrolled in PreKindergarten, by Mother's Education, 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October, 2012. Calculated by the authors from data file prepared by CPS Utilities, Unicon Research Corporation.

Figure 4. Youth Not Graduating from High School On-Time, by Mother's Education, 1993-2008



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79).
 Calculated by the authors from National Longitudinal Surveys (2011).

Another, complementary approach focuses on measuring the *specific parent, child, and family effects expected from a particular strategy, program, or intervention*. This is being done in the multiyear evaluation of the Community Action Project of Tulsa's CareerAdvance® Program, with support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation under its Health Professions Opportunity Grant-University Partnership (HPOG-UP) program and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale at Northwestern University and Christopher King at the University of Texas at Austin are co-directors of the Tulsa evaluation, which includes an implementation study and a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental impact evaluation.¹² The impact

evaluation necessarily encompasses a wide range of outcomes of interest across multiple domains for both parents and children. These are presented in more detail in the following discussion.

DOMAINS, MEASURES, AND INDICATORS

Two-generation strategies have effects immediately as a result of program participation (e.g., role modeling, increased use of more complex/appropriate language, stress). They also have effects on parents and children in the near, intermediate, and longer term as a result of program participation. Measures being examined in Tulsa's two-generation program evaluation, the *Tulsa CAP Family Life Study*, are presented below, with the data sources for each in parentheses. These should be viewed as *examples* of the types of measures and indicators that can be applied to two-generation strategies. In many, if not most, cases, multiple measures and indicators are possible for any given domain. The ones presented here are a blend of what the research team felt was appropriate and feasible in the context of the Tulsa effort.

Parents		
Measure	Possible Indicators	Source/Collection Method
Adults education progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment • GED receipt 	Program records, state/local education agencies
Postsecondary education progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment • Persistence • Certification • Degree receipt 	Program records, state/local education agencies
Psychological status	Psychological distress ¹³	Parent surveys

Parents		
Measure	Possible Indicators	Source/Collection Method
Economic status	• Material hardship indicators ¹⁴	Parent surveys
Parental confidence, stress, strain, role modeling, peer relationships, goals, and other aspects	Various measures	Parent surveys, focus groups
Labor market status	• Employed • Earnings • Receipt of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits	State UI records
Reliance on public aid	• Receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits • Receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits • Medicaid receipt • Receipt of child care assistance • Receipt of state supplemental assistance • Receipt of Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) aid	State human services program records, parent surveys
Children		
Measure	Possible Indicators	Source/Collection Method
Social skills	Various measures	Teacher surveys
Executive functioning ¹⁵	• Pencil Tap Test • Gift Test	Teacher surveys, direct child assessments
Temperament	Various measures	Teacher surveys
Basic academic skills	• Bracken School Readiness Assessment Scale ¹⁶	Direct child assessments
Math skills	• Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test-Applied Problems ¹⁷	Direct child assessments
Language skills	• Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III ¹⁸	Direct child assessments
Internal representations	• Berkeley Puppet Interview ¹⁹	Direct child assessments

It is also possible to go beyond parent and child measures to examine family well-being, economic self-sufficiency, and stability over time as well as to capture the return-on-investment (ROI) from multiple perspectives: families, taxpayers, and society as a whole.²⁰ By now, Nobel Laureate James Heckman's equation for capturing the returns from early childhood education investments has become a household phrase in many circles (www.heckmanequation.org). Arthur Reynolds and his colleagues have computed the benefit and costs of the Parent-Child Center early education programs in Minnesota rigorously as well (see Reynolds et al., 2011). In addition, the Ray Marshall Center has computed ROI for leading-edge sectoral training programs (e.g., Capital IDEA) and workforce development programs more generally, as have researchers at the Upjohn Institute, and found substantial returns.²¹

This approach to computing the ROI for early childhood investments and workforce training can easily be extended to investments for *both* generations. It is likely the returns would be even greater for simultaneous investments.

ONGOING RESEARCH

In addition to the studies described above, a number of important evaluation research efforts now underway are expected to inform our understanding of two-generation measures and metrics over the next several years. Following are a few of the efforts:

- The Head Start Partnerships Evaluations funded by USHHS/OPRE.
- The recently launched, multiyear evaluation of two-generation programs the Annie E. Casey Foundation is supporting in four sites around the country: Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Garrett County, Western Maryland; and Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- The Pathways for Advancing Career and Education (PACE) Evaluation conducted for USHHS/ASPE by Abt Associates, which is focused on an array of programs, several of which feature two-generation strategies.
- Additional ongoing research supported by the Foundation for Child Development, which gave birth to the notion of “dual-generation” strategies in the 1990s and, importantly, was instrumental in expanding the concept of early childhood from birth to 3rd grade.
- The Frontiers of Innovation Project at Harvard’s Center for the Developing Child in partnership with the National Governors Association, the Center for Social Policy, and states including Georgia and Washington.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This chapter offers one possible framework for measuring the effects of two-generation strategies and suggests possible measures and indicators that could be used, based on research supported to date by the Foundation for Child Development, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Ascend Program at the Aspen Institute, and the ongoing evaluation of Tulsa’s CareerAdvance® Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Much more remains to be done in this area. Along with others, we look forward to continuing to pursue this important work over the next few years.

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¹ See the chapters in this volume and the Ascend website for more information: ascend.aspeninstitute.org/pages/the-two-generation-approach.

² For more, see Katie Albright's chapter in this volume.

³ For more, see Reggie Bicha's and Andrea Levere's chapters.

⁴ See Eduardo Padron's chapter.

⁵ For more, see Autumn Green and Dick Wiley's chapter.

⁶ See Gloria Perez's chapter.

⁷ See the Sommer et al. chapter.

⁸ For more on the Crittendon Women's Union programs in Boston, see www.liveworkthrive.org/ways_we_help/family_support_services.

⁹ See Mia Birdsong's chapter in this volume.

¹⁰ See Vivian Nixon's chapter for more information.

¹¹ Hernandez and Napierala use mother's education "because, among children with a parent in the home, the vast majority lives in mother-only or two-parent families; only four percent live in father-only families with no mother present. This approach provides a consistent measure of parental education for most children who live with at least one parent, that is, for the 96 percent of these children who have a mother in the home" (p. 3).

¹² Reports from the implementation study can be found on the Ray Marshall Center's website at www.utexas.edu/research/cshr/rmc1/. Outcome and (in the future) impact reports can be found on the Institute for Poverty Research website at www.ipr.northwestern.edu.

¹³ Based on Kessler et al. (2002).

¹⁴ Adapted from the instrument used in Milwaukee's New Hope Project; for more information, see Mayer and Jencks (1989), the original source reference, as well as Duncan et al. (2005) and Bos et al. (1999).

¹⁵ See Luria (1966).

¹⁶ More information about the Bracken School Readiness Assessment can be found at www.pearsonclinical.com/psychology/products/100000165/bracken-school-readiness-assessment-third-edition-bsra-3.html.

¹⁷ Using the Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test-Applied Problems; see Woodcock, et al. (2001).

¹⁸ Using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III; see Dunn and Dunn (1997).

¹⁹ Adapted from the Berkeley Puppet Interview; see Measelle, et al. (1998).

²⁰ This is the conventional framework from benefit/cost analysis; for example, see Boardman et al. (2010). Also, see Heckman et al. (2010) for a practical application.

²¹ See King et al. (2010) and Smith and King (2011) for the Ray Marshall Center, and Hollenbeck (2012) and Bartik (2011, 2014) for the Upjohn Institute.



CONNECTING, ALIGNING, AND PRODUCING INTERGENERATIONAL SUCCESS: THE ASCEND NETWORK

Mekaelia Davis

Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.

- Helen Keller

Passing on a legacy of generational success and stability is an American dream that is out of reach for millions of families. Over the last 50 years, the country has fought poverty — a challenge comprised of interconnected, interdependent issues — by attacking singular, individual challenges facing low-income poor families, and some of our approaches have worked. Research from the Columbia University Population Research Center shows that in 1967, about 26 percent of Americans were poor compared to 16 percent in 2012.¹ Yet, families across the country are rapidly changing, and our systems are struggling to keep up with these changes. The proportion of children in working families who are low-income increased from 33 percent in 2007 to 37 percent in 2011.²

Ascend at the Aspen Institute was created to identify and elevate solutions that shift mindsets, behaviors, practices, and policies to address what has been a seemingly intractable challenge: the intergenerational cycle of poverty in the U.S. In 2014, Ascend launched the Aspen Institute Ascend Network to mobilize two-generation organizations and leaders to create a portfolio of two-generation solutions through improved practice, revamped policy, evidence building, and political will. Since the Great Recession of 2008, nonprofit and government leaders have faced numerous pressures, addressing increased challenges with fewer resources. Research suggests that networks offer advantages not present in other forms (i.e., coalitions, initiatives): novel and flexible combinations of human talent, rapid growth, diffusion and collection of information, and the ability to form a critical mass of power.³ By carefully cultivating these advantages, Ascend has developed a Network that will generate innovation, influence, and impact for children and their parents across the country.

Leveraging grant making as a strategy to make change, Ascend launched the \$1.7 million Aspen Institute Ascend Fund to help identify and select partners for the Ascend Network. We quickly found a growing number of diverse organizations around the country that were interested in working differently. More than 254 organizations in 39 states and the District of Columbia demonstrated emerging two-generation efforts. National foundations like the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Bezos Family Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation have invested in two-generation approaches — testing new interventions and program strategies. At

least two states have introduced legislation that includes a two-generation agenda, and the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services included two-generation strategies in its 2014 strategic plan.⁴ The increasing momentum around two-generation approaches signals a national appetite for a new way of working across a range of stakeholders — community-based organizations, philanthropic leaders, and policy makers alike.

The Ascend Network was informed and shaped by conversations with nearly 200 program leaders, researchers, policy makers/advocates, and families across the country. Despite the diversity in thought, practice, and education levels, all of these groups shared a common narrative: The belief that our systems and programs do not align with how families live their lives. The Ascend Network seeks to address this challenge by working with partners who demonstrate a commitment to collaboration and partnership — partners who recognize the power of a network.

A NETWORKED WAY OF WORKING: INNOVATION, INFLUENCE, AND IMPACT

American history is full of examples of people who have organized and harnessed their collective intelligence to generate ideas and develop new products. In 2007, mobile technology was changed forever by the release of the iPhone — a creation that involved organized teams of talented professionals. The Ascend Network taps into this spirit by assembling a curated group of 58 innovative organizations to share insights, compare data and tools, and work on tough problems that no one organization could solve on its own.

Building on existing platforms that reach families and communities at scale, Ascend Network partners include a cohort of United Way organizations, Head Start providers, women's funds, community foundations, and community action and human services



Participants at the 2014 Aspen ThinkXChange organized by Ascend in Aspen, CO.

agencies that collectively serve over 1 million families across the country. With well-established infrastructure, deep community partnerships, and trusted relationships, these organizations act as effective platforms for generating impact and sustaining change.

Representing 24 states and the District of Columbia, partners in the Ascend Network are developing a host of new approaches to working with families. A group of practitioners are generating engagement strategies that capitalize on the role parents play in producing better outcomes for their children. A cohort of leading researchers and practitioners are testing new methods of evaluation and evidence building that captures the full impact of its interventions beyond the program outputs or activity. By cultivating cross-system, cross-issue partnerships, a group of partners are fully utilizing the prevailing strengths of community-centered, place-based approaches.

The Ascend Network presents a multitude of opportunities to test new concepts and generate answers to persistent questions facing the anti-poverty field — a few examples are described below.

THE POWER OF EDUCATION IN CREATING STABLE FAMILIES

When we consider that more than 60 percent of jobs in the next six years will require some postsecondary training or credential⁵ and recognize that 86 percent of children with parents who had less than a high school degree lived in low-income families in 2011,⁶ the need for strategies that support students with children becomes clear. Ascend Network partner Los Angeles Valley College is working to replicate its Family Resource Center (the first on a community college campus) across the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles. This model provides a high-quality learning environment for children while simultaneously supporting parents who are pursuing their postsecondary degree with a range of resources, including peer-to-peer strategies that foster social capital among parents. By partnering with local early childhood education providers, human service agencies, and support organizations, postsecondary institutions within the Ascend Network are designing interventions that address the needs of students with children — improving the ability of the parents to stay in school and increasing the social and emotional health and academic preparedness of their children.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN PROGRAMS, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

The demographics of America are rapidly changing. By 2018, analysts project that the majority of U.S. residents under the age of 18 will be children of color.⁷ How can organizations and systems best work with communities if they are unable to integrate strategies that are responsive and reflective of the community's culture and customs? A group of Ascend Network partners are explicitly focusing on how systems can adopt and implement culturally competent programs, research, and policy. As the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, Ascend Network partner National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is bringing together the early childhood education and adult workforce providers within its network of over 300 affiliates⁸ to identify quality standards for two-generation programs serving immigrant Latino parents and their children. Along with First Alaskans Institute and AVANCE, NCLR is developing culturally sensitive strategies that leverage the diversity of strengths represented in communities of color across the country.



Participants at the Forum on Early Childhood, Health, and Beyond, organized by Ascend in Aspen, CO.

THE POWER OF INVESTING IN WOMEN

The return on investment in supporting the educational success of women and mothers has been documented globally. A large percentage of low-income children in the United States live in homes headed by single women. The World Bank found that closing the joblessness gap between women and their male counterparts would increase gross domestic product up to 1.2 percent in a single year.⁹ A leading group of Ascend Network Partners is examining the best approaches to creating workforce development and education programs that account for gender differences in parenting and caring for children. The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham has partnered with Walgreen's, for example, to train mothers of children in Head Start throughout the community — providing living-wage job training while filling a market need.

TWO-GENERATION POLICY OPPORTUNITIES

Thanks to the efforts of Network partner Bell Policy Center, Colorado ties higher education funding to the extent to which institutions serve underserved students — including working-adult and part-time students, who comprise a bulk of the student parent population.¹⁰ Policy efforts like these help increase postsecondary education access and completion through institutional financial aid reform and policies that more accurately reflect the needs of enrolled student parents — one of Ascend's Top 10 policies to advance two-generation approaches. Across the country, a select group of policy advocates and experts are working with state and national legislators to address the systemic challenges in implementing two-generation approaches. Nearly a dozen Ascend Network partners are advancing reforms that improve the capacity of family-serving social policies, such as TANF and the Child Care Development Block Grant, to support both children and their parents simultaneously.

THE NETWORK DIFFERENCE: TWO-GENERATION IMPACT

In 2014, the Foundation Center reported estimated giving from U.S. foundations at \$52 billion, with total assets of \$715 billion. The areas receiving the most funding included health, education, human services, and public affairs/society benefit

(economic and community development, etc.).¹¹ The impact of these investments could increase exponentially if they were coordinated to address the systemic and cultural barriers created by silos that impede lasting change and fail to take advantage of the strength and potential of children and parents in America.

Working across issue areas to answer tough questions, the partners of the Ascend Network are incubating new ideas and strategies that will support a legacy of generational success. Over the next three years, the Ascend Network will produce nearly 100 new program models, tool kits, webinars, research methods, and policy briefs to help advance outcomes for children and parents together. From increasing practitioners' capacity to address the intergenerational effects of toxic stress to identifying the best ways to use existing funding streams to support two-generation approaches for young parents age 16-24 who are not in school or working, Network partners are employing a collaborative approach to problem solving that amplifies their individual strengths.

By learning from each other, addressing common challenges, and driving new policies, the Ascend Network is maximizing the potential and collective intellect of nearly 200 leaders across the country. U.S. track and field Olympian Wilma Rudolph, who was born premature and wore leg braces as a child, reminds us to "never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit. We are all the same in this notion: The potential for greatness lives within each of us." The Ascend Network is developing an American legacy full of potential.

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ASCEND FELLOWS

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Reggie Bicha is the executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services for Governor John Hickenlooper. Bicha is a social worker, educator, and national leader in human services. He served as the president of the American Public Human Services Association from 2012-2015, and he was selected as one of 20 leaders for The Aspen Institute's inaugural class of Ascend Fellows in 2012. He served as the inaugural secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families from 2008-2011.

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Mia Birdsong is vice president at Family Independence Initiative (FII). A central tenet of FII is the value of individuals and families in propelling communities forward and the power of social capital — trusted networks and connections — to move families toward educational success and economic security. Under her leadership, the organization has expanded and achieved national recognition for its innovative, strength-based approach to catalyzing economic and social mobility. She brings to her work at FII a wide range of experiences from her time in the publishing world, her ongoing practice in prenatal health and folk medicine, and a decade as a volunteer and organizer for the prison abolition movement builder Critical Resistance.

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Steven Dow has served as executive director of Community Action Project of Tulsa (CAP) since 1992. CAP's antipoverty strategy focuses on providing high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive family economic support through both direct services and public policy efforts. In the 20 years he has been leading the agency, it has grown from a staff of two and a budget of \$165,000 to a staff of nearly 600 and an annual operating budget of \$53 million. A graduate of Yale College and Yale Law School, Dow worked as an investment banker for Goldman Sachs and practiced law prior to joining CAP. In addition to his work at CAP, he serves on numerous national boards, including Reach Out and Read, the Center for Financial Services Innovation, and Avodah: The Jewish Service Corps.

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Andrea Levere is the president of CFED (Corporation for Enterprise Development), a national nonprofit with a mission of building assets to create financial security and wealth for low-income families. She has been engaged in the design and implementation of children's savings accounts as a two-generation approach to increasing the aspirations of children to attend postsecondary education and the ability of their parents to access the necessary financial resources. She has a BA from Brown University and an MBA from Yale University.

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Wes Moore is the founder and CEO of BridgeEdU. Moore founded BridgeEdU to provide a better onramp to higher education and career preparedness. By providing an innovative path to higher education excellence, BridgeEdU aims to engage scholars in a new way while democratizing the pathway to college completion. Moore is the New York Times bestselling author of two books, *The Other Wes Moore*, and *The Work*. He has been featured by *USA Today*, *TIME Magazine*, *Meet the Press*, *The Colbert Report*, and appears regularly on MSNBC, and NPR, among many others. Moore graduated Phi Theta Kappa from Valley Forge Military College and Phi Beta Kappa from Johns Hopkins University. He completed an MLitt in international relations from Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. Afterward, Moore served as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division in the United States Army and participated in a combat tour of duty in Afghanistan. Currently, Moore lives in Baltimore with his wife and two children.

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Eduardo J. Padrón, PhD, is president of Miami Dade College. An American by choice, Dr. Padrón arrived in the United States as a refugee at age 15. Since 1995, he has served as president of Miami Dade College, a national model of student achievement and the largest institution of higher education in America, with more than 174,000 students. An economist by training, Dr. Padrón earned his PhD from the University of Florida. In 2009, Time magazine included him among the "10 Best College Presidents" in the U.S. He is a past board chair of the Association of American Colleges and Universities and is the current board chair of the American Council on Education. He has been selected to serve on posts of national prominence by six U.S. presidents. Most

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Gloria Perez is the president and chief executive officer of Jeremiah Program, a leading nonprofit organization proven to help single mothers and their children break the cycle of generational poverty. Perez joined Jeremiah Program in 1998 following her role as executive director of Casa de Esperanza, a domestic violence agency in St. Paul, Minnesota. She brings more than 25 years of management, supervision, and leadership experience to her position. She serves on the board of directors for Allina Health, Hazelden and Irwin Andrew Porter Foundation, and on the board of trustees for The Minneapolis Foundation and the F.R. Bigelow Foundation.

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Mario L. Small, PhD, is the Grafstein Family Professor of Sociology at Harvard University and the former dean of the Social Sciences Division at the University of Chicago. A recipient of the C. Wright Mills Best Book Award (2005 and 2010), the Robert Park Best Book Award (2005), the Jane Addams Best Article Award (2004), and numerous other honors, he has published books and articles on urban poverty, inequality and culture, social capital, interpersonal networks, case studies, mixed methods, community organization, social isolation, college education, the formation of new disciplines, and a host of other topics. Small's research interests include urban poverty, inequality, culture, networks, case study methods, and higher education. He is currently working on several projects dealing with urban conditions, organizations, and networks.

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Richard E. Wylie, PhD, is the president of Endicott College and the founder of the Keys to Degrees Program. For his leadership on promoting postsecondary two-generation strategies that help move families from poverty to the middle-class, Wylie was selected among the first cohort of 2012 Ascend Fellows. Wylie continues his efforts by maintaining the college's institutional priority to help support the success of all students, including those who come to college with children, both on campus and at the national level.

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Kate Griffin is CFED's vice president for programs. She has spent her entire career focused on financial inclusion and helping low-income families build and manage wealth. She worked internationally in the microfinance field, providing technical assistance to organizations in a dozen countries in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe before joining CFED in 2012 to advance the goals of asset building and economic security in the United States. Currently, Griffin oversees CFED's work in the area of savings and financial security, including matched savings accounts that enable low-income children, adults, and families to build assets. She has been leading CFED's work to scale asset-building strategies within other large systems, such as TANF, Head Start, child welfare, child support, public health, and other social services.

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THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also maintains offices in New York City and has an international network of partners.

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