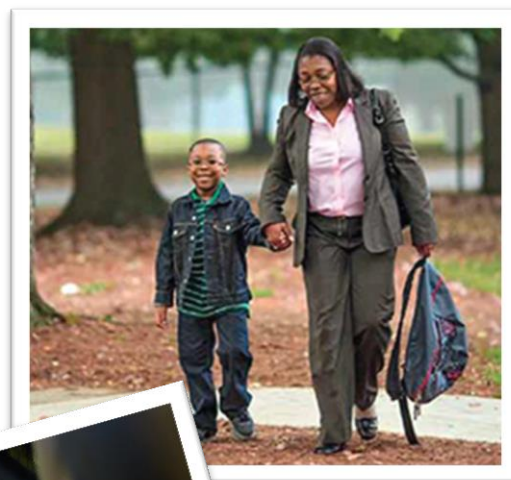


A Two-Generational Approach

Helping Parents Work and Children Thrive



**Report of the Executive Director of the Commission on Children, submitted to
the Connecticut General Assembly as required by
Section 198 of Public Act 14-297.**

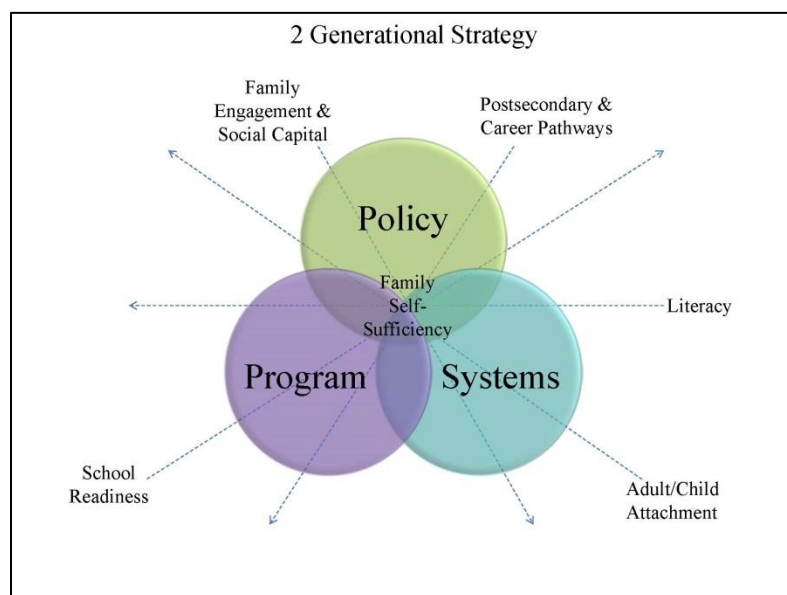
December 2014



Background and Authority: Connecticut Leading the States for Families

The State of Connecticut is one of two states taking the first steps toward adopting statewide two-generational policies. Along with Colorado, Connecticut's legislature recognized the potential for improvement in child and family outcomes, particularly for low-income families, if two-generational policies were embedded across policy domains.¹

The goal of two-generational policy is family economic stability through quality learning for the child, pathways to work for the parent, and related support services. Under an optimal two-generational structure, bureaucracy is scaled back and the parent and child receive direct services and support as a family. As such, where families often feel the pressure of state budget



cuts first, a two-for-one asset building strategy strikes a chord.

When the family is served “as a unit,” resources are optimized and the likelihood of improved coordination and synchronous activity for the benefit of the family increases. In one design, for example, effective workforce development services are tied with quality childhood education to assure that both children and their adult caregivers are served.

In 2014, the Connecticut General Assembly approved the development of a two-generational plan to promote long-term learning and economic success for low-income families. Notably, Connecticut's two-generational approach aims to foster school success and workforce readiness to improve outcomes for low-income families. In implementing the plan, the state may access Federal TANF funds as permitted. The text of the bill, included as part of the state budget authority, received significant bi-partisan and bi-cameral support:

Sec. 198 (a) The Commission on Children shall, within available appropriations, establish a two-generational school readiness plan to promote long-term learning and economic

¹ Colorado increased early care with a two-generation focus. HB1217 allows job seekers and those enrolled in postsecondary education or workforce training to be eligible for childcare. They reduced barriers by allowing presumptive eligibility and aligning income verification with other programs. The state adjusted co-payment requirements and increased tiered co-payments to mitigate the “cliff effect” that may occur where a small increase in income makes families ineligible for child care assistance, yet income is insufficient to cover the full cost of care. See more at: <http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/codcblog/entry/colorado-lawmakers-get-savvy-on-two-gen1#sthash.RY3qVZkw.dpuf>.

success for low-income families by addressing intergenerational barriers to school readiness and workforce readiness with high-quality preschool, intensified workforce training and targeted education, coupled with related support services. Such plan shall include recommendations for:

(1) Promoting and prioritizing access to high-quality early childhood programs for children ages birth to five years who are living at or below one hundred eighty-five per cent of the federal poverty level;

(2) providing the parents of such children with (A) the opportunity to acquire their high school diplomas, (B) adult education, and (C) technical skills to increase their employability and sustainable employment; and

(3) funding for implementation of the plan, including, but not limited to, use of the temporary assistance for needy families program and other federal, state and private funding.

(b) On or before December 1, 2014, the executive director of the Commission on Children shall report to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, education, workforce development and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the plan.

The Facts: Why is Two-Generation Policy and Programming Needed?

The answer to this question has two parts. First, low-income families in Connecticut continue to face substantial obstacles to economic self-sufficiency; Second, many current interventions are structured to “treat” parents apart from their children. Our human service systems have offered largely separate doors to a maze of programs confusing to the consumer. Each one of these challenges is described below.

Many Low Income Families Continue to Face Challenges

Continued Employment and Earnings Challenges. Many low-income families in Connecticut continue to feel the effects of the Great Recession. Eighty thousand children under the age of five live in low-income households.² In these households, 60 percent have no parent working full-time, year-round.³ Eight in ten of the parents in these

In Connecticut:

- 4,100 babies are born each year to a mother who has not yet completed high school.

- 7,750 babies are born to a mother who does not have any type of education past high school.

² Presentation of KIDS COUNT data by Annie E. Casey Foundation consultant Sarah Griffen, at the Nov. 12, 2014 meeting of the Work Group. Video and PowerPoint slides available at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/COC/two-generation.htm>.

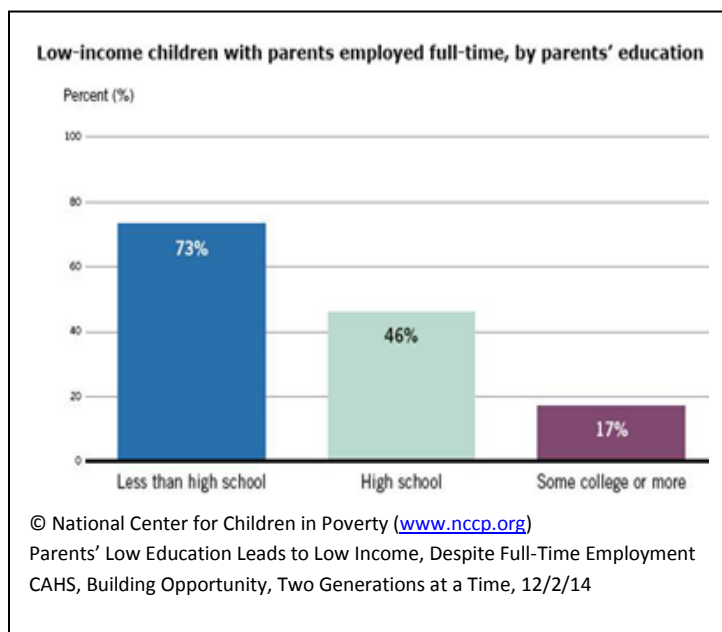
³ Ibid.

households have no post-high school diploma.⁴ Fifteen percent of Connecticut families with children have a head of household without a high school diploma.⁵ Importantly, children's readiness for school (or the lack thereof) can be predicted from these parental circumstances.

Adults with these educational limits do not fare well in the global economy, where education and high-level problem-solving skills are critical for today's workforce,⁶ and about 70 percent of today's job openings require post-secondary degrees or certifications.⁷ Employers also suffer as more than \$60 billion is lost in productivity each year by American businesses due to employees' lack of basic skills.⁸

Child Care, Housing and Other Challenges. For parents with younger children, access to child care adds further challenge. One of the most significant barriers to full-time work facing parents with small children is the high cost of quality child care in Connecticut.⁹ These costs are

especially large for quality infant and toddler care.¹⁰ Low-wage parents who *can* scrape together enough money for proper day care often find that they have few resources remaining for transportation and other family expenses. Furthermore, because many low-wage jobs involve 2nd or 3rd shift work, or have unpredictable hours, families must rely on older children or relatives to step into the child care breach. Otherwise, they must work fewer hours than they otherwise might, putting further strain on their finances and adding stress to their family life.



⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Cornerstones of Economic Security for Resilient Workers: A Policy Framework for Shared Action. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, April 2013. Online at --
www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1304CornerstonesEconSecurityResilientWorkers.pdf

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dr. Robert Wedgworth, president of ProLiteracy Worldwide, *Literacy is Good Business*,
<http://www.literacyabc.org/files/LiteracyisGoodBusiness.pdf>.

⁹ The Status of Women in Connecticut's Workforce, <https://ctpcsw.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/status-of-women-in-connecticuts-workforce-2014-11.pdf>.

¹⁰ "Among the different age groups, the average cost of infant care in Connecticut is \$12,046, the average cost of toddler care is \$11,707 and the cost of pre-school care is \$10,631." *Sparing No Expense: A Look at Child Care Costs in Connecticut A Year Later*, a report Prepared by the Office of Senator Chris Murphy, November 1, 2013,
<http://www.murphy.senate.gov/download/2013-child-care-report>.

Housing costs also add to family stress and instability. Forty percent of Connecticut children live in households with a high housing cost burden.¹¹ Of great concern are the ~1300 children ages 0 to 5 who lived with their families in emergency shelters or transitional housing this past year.

Challenges to Parenting. The transfer of informal knowledge, formal education, culture and social values is the hallmark of family life. Additionally, from the moment of birth, the “serve and return” relationship parents need to have with their very young children provides the interactive care from which the child’s brain literally responds and grows.¹² Parents who have experienced adversity or who are living with chronically high levels of stress can unintentionally become less responsive parents.¹³ Frustrated in their own opportunities to be secure and affirmed, parents are less likely to transfer these skills and expectations on to their children. Children also suffer when their primary adult caregivers are not afforded treatment for illness or disease that impacts the amount of time and quality of their relationship with their children.¹⁴ This is especially important for very young children whose mothers or fathers suffer from depression.¹⁵

Program and System Challenges

For many years, largely due to isolated thinking and separate funding streams for children and adult programs, policies affecting children and their parents have been funded as discrete and separate from each other. In part this is because it was believed that addressing the needs of children in isolation of adult family members (who also had needs) could achieve desired results faster, therefore justifying the practice of separate service and treatment.

With few exceptions, childhood programs served children exclusively, requiring little engagement of adult parents and not including adults as critical contributors to the “service outcomes” for children. Similar programs serving adults, such as adult education, job training and civic engagement, seldom considered the family needs that enabled adult participation. This was often true even for programs which expected a benefit or impact to occur beyond the participant.

¹¹ Kids Count data center, a Project of The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2015), “Children living in households with a high housing cost burden,” <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7244-children-living-in-households-with-a-high-housing-cost-burden#detailed/2/2-52/false/36,868,867,133,38/any/14287,14288>.

¹² Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2007). A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

¹³ Ibid.

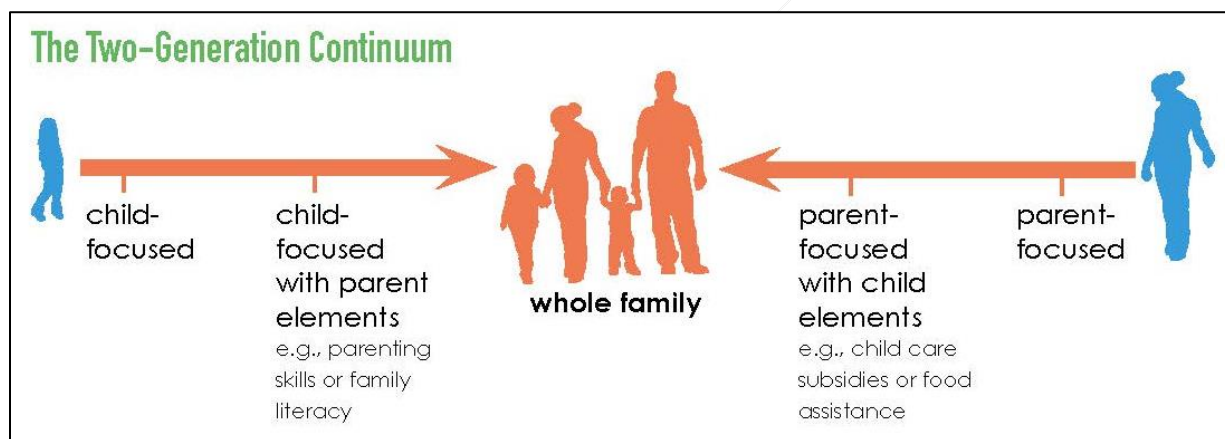
¹⁴ [Maternal Depression Can Undermine the Development of Young Children: Working Paper #8. Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#), See also: [Paternal Mental Health and Child Development](#), Father Involvement Research Alliance, undated. Retrieved on January 19, 2015. Online at <http://fira.ca/article.php?id=139>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Similarly, the infrastructure of many of our programs is not set up to plan for, train for, deliver and monitor services for the parent-child as a dyad or for the family as a whole. Data for parents and children are not collected nor analyzed together. Service priorities also vary, based on funding stream, accountability and program focus. And, sometimes shifting attitudes play a role, where the child receives support, but the parent is excluded, or the parent receives support, but the child is perceived as an obstacle or impediment to employment. Finally, parents enter an array of different doors for services, characterized by varying regulations, forms, locations and, even, case practice.

Two-Generational Policy: A Framework with the Family as Center

The Emergence of Two-Generation Approaches. New family support and intervention literature encourages policies and program design that assess the parent-child together, plans with family members as a single unit and addresses the needs of all of its members as a unit. Current national thinking about how to address these kinds of pervasive, chronic challenges for so many American families is grounded in the belief that a two-generational approach can help the family by working to increase opportunities for parents and school success for their children, simultaneously.¹⁶



The national philanthropic community has been very active over the past three years in advancing attention to the potential power of taking a two-generation approach. Leaders in this work include the Annie E. Casey Foundation,¹⁷ Ascend at the Aspen Institute,¹⁸ and the

¹⁶ Gruendel, J. Two (or More) Generation Frameworks: A Look Across and Within, March 2014. Available at -- www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Two-or-More-Generation-Frameworks_A-Look-Across-and-Within.pdf

¹⁷ Learn More: A Collection of Resources on Two-Generation Approaches, Annie E. Casey Foundation, November 2014. Online at -- www.aecf.org/blog/learn-more-a-collection-of-resources-on-two-generation-approaches/

¹⁸ The Two-Generation Approach, Ascend at the Aspen Institute, undated. Retrieved January 19, 2015. Online at -- ascend.aspeninstitute.org/pages/the-two-generation-approach

Foundation for Child Development.¹⁹ The graphic that follows is provided by Ascend at the Aspen Institute²⁰ and illustrates how program designs originally focused on either (or only) the child or the parent are coming together to seek more positive outcomes for both in the context of the whole family.

Two-generational policy provides parents with multiple pathways to economic-sufficiency and positive parenting. These pathways include literacy, adult education, workforce development, family-supports, and mental health interventions while ensuring children access to quality infant-toddler care, preschool programs and enriching elementary school experiences.

Current Resources, Local Fit. A two-generational approach to policy utilizes existing services, coordinates with the private sector and is often designed for a local fit, suited to community and regional fiscal conditions and needs. This does not necessitate extensive new funding, but does require an assessment of how funds are being used, with redesign for improved program and policy alignments that support “family outcomes.”

Serving the Parent-Child Dyad. Two-generation services may be different for each element of the service dyad – parent or child. Often a service delivered to the adult enables progress for the child and vice-versa. Better housing or mental health care for adult family members can reduce isolation for the child, enable better access to pro-social peer models, improve childhood health outcomes, and support positive parenting so essential to early brain development.

While the goal in two-generational policy and programming is to balance both the child and parent needs concurrently, if only the child or only the parent can be served within the agency’s program, the other is referred to high quality, appropriate services so that efforts are intentional, targeted and coordinated.

Components of a Two-Generation Approach

1. Quality early childhood education
 - a. Infant-toddler care
 - b. Preschool
2. Sectoral job training
 - a. Postsecondary education
 - b. Workforce intermediaries
3. Wrap-around family support services, including:
 - a. Adult education and ESL
 - b. Career coaching
 - c. Peer community-building
 - d. Financial education
 - e. Transportation assistance
 - f. Adult Health and Mental Health Services

Adapted from “Promoting Two-Generation Strategies: A Getting-Started Guide for State and Local Policy Makers,” by Christopher T. King, Rheagan Coffey, and Tara C. Smith, published in 2013 by the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources.

¹⁹ King, C., Coffey, R. & Smith, T. Promoting Two-Generation Strategies: A Getting Started Guide for State and Local Policy Makers, Foundation for Child Development and the Ray Marshall Center, University of Texas at Austin, November 2013. Online at -- fcd-us.org/resources/promoting-two-generation-strategies-getting-started-guide-state-and-local-policy-makers

²⁰ The Aspen Institute, “Top Ten for 2Gen: Policy Ideas & Principles to Advance Two-Generation

Changing the Way the System Works. Two-generational policy and programs inherently change how the service “system” works. They are customer-driven, cross issue areas and funding streams. They bundle together what a family needs, rather than expecting the family to go from one service to another. They work to align eligibility timelines and criteria. From a policy maker’s perspective, it is not difficult to see that when two-generation is embed across service domains, it will inevitably reduce bureaucracy, braid together necessary services and policies, improve a coherent data collection system, advance accountability, and bolster creativity with research and evidence.

Building a Two-Generation Strategy for Change. To be successful, however, a two-generation approach to policy requires more than legislative or executive branch authorization. A recent report published jointly by the Foundation for Child Development and the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas provides a “getting started guide” for state and local policy makers.²¹ Actions that can and need to be taken at the state agency level include:

- ☑ Creating a supportive policy framework;
- ☑ Establishing leadership;
- ☑ Engaging program administration;
- ☑ Securing integrated and flexible funding; and
- ☑ Building an evidence-based culture.

“Leveraging the knowledge developed by someone else can enable a new site to increase the speed of implementation and the odds of obtaining the desired outcomes.”

From Bradach, “Going to Scale: The Challenge of Replicating Social Programs,” Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2003

Effective Designs for Two-Generational Approaches

A two-generational model approach does not seek to create something new and costly. Rather, the goal is to simplify service delivery, prune unnecessary practices and braid together resources for intentional impact. Nothing is accidental or haphazard in two-generational planning, which promotes clearer attention to goals and efficacy *for both the family and the service system*. These changes can be accomplished by combining programming in several interesting ways.²²

1. Add adult programming to child services. This might include bringing an ELL adult program to a preschool setting so that both parent and child alike are learning English.

²¹ King, Coffey & Smith, op cit.

²² Chase-Lansdale, L. & Brooks-Gunn, J. Two-Generation Programs in the 21st Century, in Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two-Generation Mechanisms, The Future of Children, Spring 2014. Online at -- futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/journal_details/index.xml?journalid=81

Utah combines workforce and family policy in One-Stop Career Centers which are structured by function, rather than by funds. Functions include workforce development, educational aid, child care and social supports.

2. Add child programming to adult services. This might include bringing quality early child care to adult education so that young parents have a place for their children to play and learn, while they are also learning.

The Keys to Degrees Program at Endicott College in Massachusetts provides single parent housing, child care in the community, and parent support services for parents who attending college. This model has now been replicated at Eastern Michigan University.

3. Merge adult and child programs within existing organizations. This might include bringing workforce development, subsidized housing information and quality infant care together within a community program that is highly respected and capable of partnering on a large scale, with a growth model.

Atlanta Civic Site bundles workforce development and family supports together for low-income families. Children in infancy to 10 years old receive quality early care and after school. Parents have a family coach, work supports and an asset-building program.

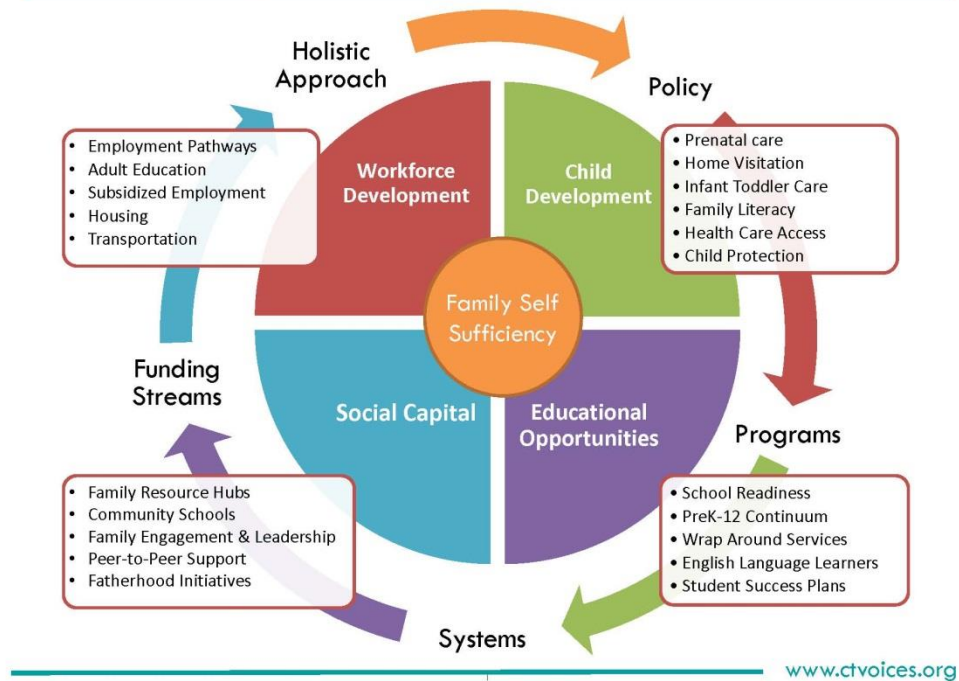
4. Offer adult and child programming in intentional hub sites. This might include a program at a college, a housing program or a family resource center. Housing, educational courses, mentors, workforce training for adults, afterschool programing and youth support groups are examples of what could be co-located and bundled.

The **Jeremiah Program in Minneapolis, Minnesota**, recently visited by legislators during the 2014 NCSL convention, offers stable housing and bundles services to single parent families. The program couples quality early care and education for the child, while providing access to employment assistance, classrooms, life coaches and Personal Empowerment Training to adults. Of note, 40 percent of its graduates obtain a four-year degree, 60 percent receive an Associate's Degree, and 90 percent of their children perform at or above grade level.

5. Build upon existing two generational models. This approach can utilize the core contents and principles of a program that can be replicated in other locales.

Whichever of these two-generation program configurations are employed in Connecticut, the Two-Generation Working Group envisions a “systems redesign” that includes elements of service as shown below.

Two Gen Strategy



Planning to Date

To respond to requirements set forth in legislation, the Commission on Children established a working group that met every two weeks, beginning in September 2014. The working sessions, held at the Legislative Office Building, included both Workgroup members and invited experts. Members include policy analysts, philanthropic leaders, parents, community agencies, outreach workers, and state agencies. The list of active participants is attached. Participants included experts in housing, family centers, early care, poverty reduction, adult learning, workforce development, K-12 education, and adult and early childhood literacy. All the documents collected by the Work Group, including PowerPoint presentations, are posted on a dedicated page of the Commission on Children website, at www.cga.ct.gov/COC/two-generation.htm.

The Two-Generational Plan Workgroup shared literature, national and state research, and created a targeted website for study and sharing information. Presentations and discussion focused on the issues of housing, transportation, early care, adult education, workforce pathways, TANF reauthorization, health, mental health and literacy. Attention was also given to both place-based and non-place based strategies.

Christian Seliberty, an 18-year-old father, spoke to the Work Group about his struggle to attend high school, look for employment and care for his daughter. As a second-generation teenage parent, Christian lives in Section 8 housing and is dependent on his mother's disability benefits for her multiple health challenges. He shared his difficulty in learning about available supports and how helpful it would be to go to one agency that could connect him to a variety of resources. His experience highlights the need for a "no-wrong-door" entry point approach.



At each meeting, at least one expert presented and a group discussion followed. Resulting from the discourse, the group decided to focus on: a) programs, b) model policy, c) culture change, d) funding streams, and e) federal and state initiatives with two-generational opportunities. In each of these areas the group determined that the family itself was the band crossing all funding and policy silos.

What the Public Thinks and Values

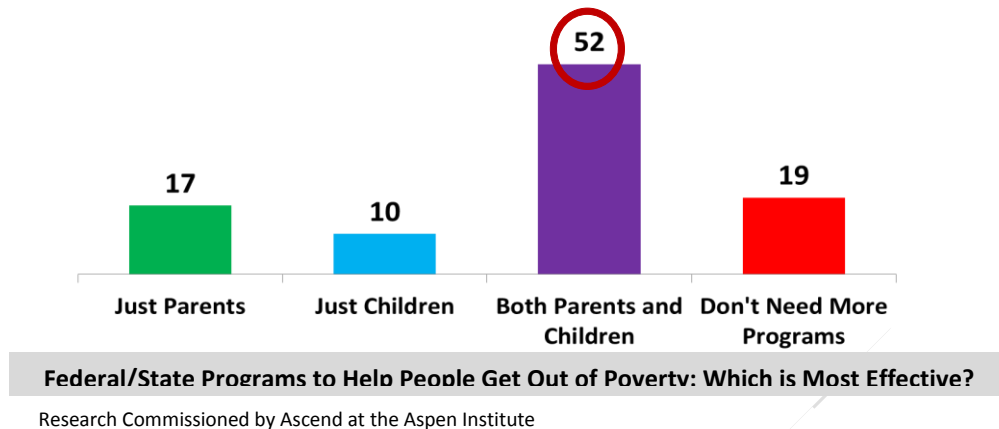
Public polling reveals that two-generational programming is seen as a common sense approach by the American public. There is a strong call for simplification by bundling resources and policies to make access easier for the family. A recent poll performed by Lake Research Partners²³ revealed:

- Eighty-nine percent favor a two-generation approach to bring people out of poverty.
- Across gender, race and political party, as well as regions of the country, there is strong support for a two-generation approach with a focus on parents' work skills training and education, and an early start for children with quality schools.
- Voters across party lines believe investing in a parent's economic well-being will help their children succeed.
- Americans favor simplifying the application process to determine eligibility across programs.
- Majorities, across demographic lines, favor extending child care subsidies to parents in college or training programs.

²³ Public Support for Two-Generation Programs, Findings from a national survey commissioned by Ascend at the Aspen Institute, November 7, 2014, Lake Research Partners.

- Americans favor policies that would help students enrolled in colleges who have young children.

Americans believe a two-generation approach is most effective.



Does a Two-Generational Approach Work?

Examining Reviews of the Literature

A review of two-generation programs supported by the federal government in the 1980s and 1990s, conducted by ABT Associates,²⁴ found that, in general, pairing poor child programs with poor adult programs did not result in desired outcomes for either.²⁵ Looking more recently, a noted group of researchers examined outcomes for education, family assets, parental employment, and health care programs through a two-generation lens. The report, entitled *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two-Generation Mechanisms*, was published in the spring of 2014 by The Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University and the Brookings Institution.²⁶

In his overview chapter, noted neuroscientist Ross Thompson, observes:

“There is solid evidence that parental education, parental health, family income, employment and assets are linked to children’s development. Programs that raise the level of parents’ education, health, and income can have a causal impact on children’s development.”

²⁴ St. Pierre, R., Layzer, J. & Barnes, H. Regenerating Two-Generation Programs, Abt Associates, June 1996. Online at -- www.abtassoc.us/reports/D19960039.pdf

²⁵ St. Pierre and his colleagues examined evaluation studies for the following programs: Avance; Child and Family Resource Program (DHHS); Comprehensive Child Development Program (DHHS); Even Start (DOE); Head Start Family Service Centers (DHHS), and New Chance.

²⁶ Helping Parents, Helping Children, op cit.

A careful review of each chapter offers more specific research findings relevant to many of the desired elements of a two-generation policy framework. Across all of the chapters, researchers note what has worked, what hasn't worked, and what additional research we will all need in building Connecticut's two-generational approach.

Intergenerational Payoffs of Education. Columbia University Associate Professor of Sociology Neeraj Kaushal reports that while there is a correlation between parental education and child outcomes (i.e., in educational success, health, and income), evidence does not prove "that the relationship is causal."²⁷ The author notes that the correlation is strongest (in countries) where there is more inequality and a lower investment in public education.

The implications for our work in Connecticut are clear: We must focus our two-generational approach in the state's most distressed communities where the greatest gaps exist in parental education levels and children's outcomes.

Parental Employment and Children's Wellbeing. Carolyn Heinrich, University of Texas Professor of Public Affairs, reports that, "On the one hand, working parents can be positive role models for their children and, of course, the income that they earn can improve their children's lives in many ways. On the other hand work can impair the developing bond between parents and young children, especially when parents work long hours or evening and night shifts. The stress that parents bring home from their jobs can detract from their parenting skills, undermine the atmosphere in the home, and thereby introduce stress into the lives of their children."²⁸ Heinrich also notes that "...it is low-income parents who are most likely to work in stressful, low-quality jobs that feature low pay, little autonomy, inflexible hours, and few or no benefits. And low-income children whose parents are working are more likely to be placed in inadequate child care or to go unsupervised." (p. 121)²⁹

The implications for our work in Connecticut are clear: We must assure that our two-generation approach provides access to sector-specific jobs that are in demand (where pay is likely to improve as demand increased), and we must assure that work supports including time-sensitive, high quality child care is available and affordable to low-income working families.

Boosting Family Income. Three academicians contributed to the chapter on family income: University of California (Irvine) Professor of Education Greg Duncan; University of Wisconsin Associate Professor of Social Work Katherine Magnuson; and University of Pittsburg Associated

²⁷ Kaushal, N., *Intergenerational Payoffs of Education*. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children*, op cit, pp. 61-78

²⁸ Heinrich, C.J., *Parents' Employment and Children's Wellbeing*. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children*, op cit., pp.121-148

²⁹ Glied, S. & Oellerich, D. *Two-Generation Programs and Health*. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children*, op cit., pp. 79-97

Professor of Psychology Elizabeth Votruba-Drzal.³⁰ They reviewed program designed to increase family income and their impact on children's outcomes. They report, "The weight of the evidence indicates that increased income does indeed give children a better chance to develop successfully," and that "...income changes have larger effects for low-income children than for children from wealthier families." (p. 101). The authors also note that early poverty "...may matter most" because of the impact of poverty and its chronic levels of toxic stress on parental caregiving in the early years of life when brain development is most rapid.

The implications for our work in Connecticut are clear: Improving parents' basic skills levels in such critical areas as literacy, coupled with improved levels of educational attainment plus a sectoral approach to workforce preparation that includes certification in high need occupations is likely to improve family income. Additionally, assuring access to such family income supports as EITC is essential.

Two Generation-Programs and Health. New York University Professor of Public Service Sherry Glied and US Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Chief Economist Don Oellerich report that "Parents' health and children's health are closely intertwined—healthier parents have healthier children, and vice-versa. Genetics account for some of this relationship, but much of it can be traced to environment and behavior, and the environmental and behavioral risk factors for poor health disproportionately affect families living in poverty. Unhealthy children are likely to become unhealthy adults, and poor health drags down both their educational attainment and their income." (p. 79)³¹ The authors report that "...we have every reason to believe that programs to improve parents' health will improve their children's health as well. Yet few programs aim to work in this way, except for a narrow category of programs that target pregnancy, newborns, and very young children." (p. 79)

The implications for our work in Connecticut are clear: Our two-generational approach must include time-appropriate access to health and mental interventions known to provide cost-effective early screening and timely intervention, for both children and their parents.

³⁰ Duncan, G., Magnuson, K. & Votruba-Drzal, E. Boosting Family Income to Promote Child Development. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children*, op cit., pp. 99-120

³¹ Glied & Oellerich, op cit.

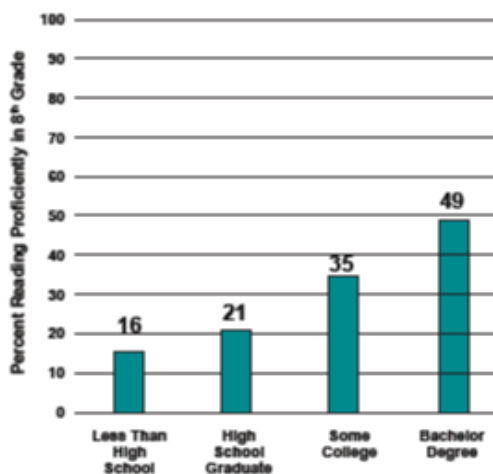
Family Literacy and Achievement: A Case Example

With the help of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes, parent engagement programs, and other community support, Enfield mother Lorena Cisneros earned a four-year college degree, graduating with high honors. But as she explained at a Two-Generational Policy Work Group forum on November 12, 2014, it wasn't easy: "To be a mom, wife, employee, student – at the same time, and full time –was difficult. I did it for my kids."³²



Literacy is a good example of where two-generational strategy has had a proven impact. The number one predictor of a child's eventual literacy level is the mother's literacy level. In fact, children's CMT scores show direct correlation to mother's level of educational attainment.

Children's Reading Proficiency, by Parental Education, 2013



Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress. Downloaded by the authors from "Custom Data Tables" from National Center for Education Statistics (2013a). Results are by "parental education" which is the highest level of education reported for either parent (National Center for Education Statistics (2013b)).

Also, vocabulary development during the early years is highly correlated to school success in general. Low-income children are exposed to only half as many words as middle-income children.³³ Yet, data on adult literacy in Connecticut reveals a staggering number of adults with limited literacy skills.

A recent National Center for Families Learning Study revealed that coordinated two-generational learning increases student achievement, expands parent engagement, improves adult reading

³² Testimony: Lorena Cisneros, Two-Generational Policy Work Group forum on November 12, 2014.

³³ Reach Out and Read, <http://www.reachoutandread.org/why-we-work/importance-of-reading-aloud/>.

behaviors and prepares parents to help their children with school.³⁴

Some Connecticut Two-Generational Models

Connecticut has models of two-generational practice with strong outcomes. The following are a few examples of programs that strengthen families by bolstering child development and employment, thus improving the state's competitiveness, safety and overall quality of life.

All Our Kin

Mission: All Our Kin trains, supports and sustains family child care providers to ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life.

How It's Multi-Generational: Through All Our Kin's programs, working parents find flexible, high-quality care for their children so that they can find and maintain steady employment, and children receive important early learning experiences that lay the foundations for achievement in school and beyond. Furthermore, family child care providers – many of whom are low-income parents themselves– build successful businesses and achieve financial stability for themselves and their own children.



Outcomes and Fiscal Savings: The University of Connecticut found that All Our Kin's Family Child Care Tool Kit Licensing Program delivers \$15-20 of economic benefits for every \$1 spent by enabling parents to enter the workforce, increasing the availability and quality of care and increasing providers' earnings and standards of living. In addition, investing in early childhood education has been shown to save money on special education and remedial services once children enter school.

Head Start/ Early Head Start

Mission: Head Start has provided comprehensive child development services to preschool children and family support and empowerment opportunities to parents for 50 years; and Early Head Start has provided these same services for pregnant women, infants and toddlers and their families for 20 years. Designed to focus on families with incomes at or below federal poverty, additional enrollment criteria include homelessness, TANF, disability, child welfare, etc.

³⁴ Meta Analysis of the Studies of High Performing Family Literacy Programs, 2013. National Center for Families Learning, Toyota Family Literacy Program Research Project , www.familieslearning.org.

How it's Multi-Generational: In addition to serving children, programs employ family service staff who engage with parents and other adult family members, encouraging them to participate in a wide variety of program and community activities. Parent, family and community partnerships connect parents with social, education and employment services. Parents engage in program governance through membership on the Policy Council and program committees that help parents support each other, their children and their communities. Programs target activities to specifically engage fathers and other male family members. Each family maintains a Child Development Plan and a Family Partnership Agreement, which set forth individualized goals. Further, on average, over 20 percent of Head Start staff are current or former Head Start parents.



Outcomes and Fiscal Savings: Head Start has been evaluated extensively. Long term outcomes for children have included increased employment and high-school graduation rates, and lower rates of incarceration and foster-care placement, all of which lead to increased family health and stability along with public savings.

Child FIRST

Mission: Child First is an evidence-based, two-generation model that works with vulnerable young children and families, providing intensive, home-based, parent-child intervention and wrap-around services and supports. The goal is to identify children at the earliest



possible time and intervene to prevent serious mental health and learning problems and child abuse and neglect. Child First works with families facing multiple challenges, including poverty, maternal depression, domestic violence, substance abuse and homelessness.

How It's Multi-Generational: Child First always works with the parent(s) and child together. Based upon the research on the impact of trauma and adversity on the developing brain, Child First has three areas of focus: (1) Establish a responsive, nurturing relationship through parent-child psychotherapeutic intervention and provide parent guidance to enhance child development aimed at healing the devastating effects of adversity on both the child and parent, (2) Develop executive functioning and self-regulation capacity, resulting in parents who are ready to enter training or workforce able to focus their attention, plan and problem solve, and a child who is able to be attentive and ready to learn in the classroom, (3) Develop a comprehensive Child and Family Plan of Care and connect parents and children with wrap-around services and supports that both decrease stress and enhance parent capacity and child development.

Outcomes and Fiscal savings: Child First has proven to be effective with a randomized, controlled trial and has been designated as an evidence-based, home visiting model by Health and Human Services. Proven outcomes include decreased child emotional and behavioral problems, increased child language development, decreased parental mental health problems

and decreased child abuse and neglect. All of these outcomes lead to significant short and long-term cost savings. In the words of Jack Shonkoff, MD, Director of Harvard Center on the Developing Child, “Child First integrates cutting edge understanding of brain science within a therapeutic intervention targeted towards the needs of the most vulnerable young children and families.” Our parents put it more simply, “You are amazing...Even though you are here for my daughter, you have impacted me in such a positive way” and “To me personally, you are a blessing. Angels in disguise.”

Even Start

Mission: Even Start is a state funded program that gives families access to the training and support they need to create a literate home environment and to enhance the academic achievement of their children.

How It’s Multi-Generational: Even Start is a comprehensive, family-centered program with five interconnected components: adult education, early childhood education, parent time with facilitators, parent time with children in early-education classrooms and literacy home visits. The program is free. To remain in the [program, each participating family member must maintain good attendance and make progress toward educational goals.

Outcomes and Fiscal Savings: Results-based accountability (RBA) measures show that Even Start parents make progress at higher rates than typical adult-education students. A longitudinal study done by the University of Connecticut’s Center for Economic Analysis also showed some strong results:



- ☑ Overall average annual household income increased by 40 percent for all families, with average earnings increasing \$12,000 per family;
- ☑ There was a 63 percent increase in home ownership, a 29 percent decrease in housing rental assistance, and an 81 percent increase in voting; and
- ☑ Fully 95 percent of parents had regular contact with their child's teacher and engaged children in discussions about school daily.

The New Haven MOMS Partnership

Mission: A collaboration of government, nonprofit and academic agencies, the New Haven Mental Health Outreach for Mothers (MOMS) Partnership seeks to transform the delivery of services to mothers and children in the



city via community- and neighborhood-based resources that are dedicated to family wellness and strength. It connects new mothers not only to their infants, but also to other mothers and local health services.

How It's Multi-Generational: In promoting mothers' mental health, the organization also helps them to pass healthy outlooks and practices along to their children. In addition, it addresses the link between family mental health and family earning power.

Outcomes and Fiscal Savings: Statistically significant reductions in parenting stress, depressive symptoms and increases in parent-child attachment and quality of interaction. Over 90 percent adherence to interventions among overburdened, under resourced families. In December 2014, the State of Connecticut announced the allocation of \$3.4 million to the Partnership for the creation of 'MOMS Zones' in 12 New Haven neighborhoods. Each zone will feature a 'MOMS hub' to deliver centralized mental-health and family economic security services. The White House lauded the initiative, saying, "By using and developing evidence of what works to keep families with their children, the Connecticut efforts aim to create better life outcomes for kids while saving resources for safety net-programs."

Core Two-Generational Strategies

Most two-generational models share a common set of principles and structural components:

- **Focus on low-income families.** There is a high cost of poverty for children. Children who are poor are more likely to lack secure housing, family transportation, adequate food and overall good health. When low-income children begin formal schooling, the majority lag behind their more affluent peers, academically, socially and physically.
- **Create a common portal for entry that is open to both parent and child.** Whether services are available for both the parent and child in one location, or the parent or child is referred elsewhere, the strategy is intentional, welcoming and coordinated across generations. Sometimes services are co-located, braided together or part of a focused referral process in partnership with other agencies.
- **See the family as the unit.** Child and parent outcomes are considered together and are inextricably intertwined for success in policy, program and practice. Data is collected on both the child and the parent to see how the whole family is thriving.
- **Address learning, work and family strength.** Components often include family support, access to quality infant and preschool settings, research-based English

Language Learner programs and hybrid models of work and education, leading to an employment path with a reasonable wage.

- **Operate on a principle of service effectiveness and resource efficiency for the family.** Supports and services are delivered simultaneously and are integrated across service domains and sectors.
- **Offer dignity and authentic commitment to diversity.** When parents experience diversity as a value and see parents recognized as chief informants for their children and their needs, social networks grow, and attendance is strong and sustainable.
- **Provide ample context for peer to peer learning.** When families convene and share resources and needs and are treated with value, dignity and a strengths-based context with other families from the community, as peers, greater learning and sustainable support systems are created and fostered.
- **Support both fathers and mothers.** Fathers are often left out of family programs for young children. Whether the father is at home, or is the non-custodial father, his input often helps children meaningfully connect to adults, nurtures cognition, offers structure and supports the family emotionally and financially. By having more than one parent deeply engaged and attached to the child's emotional and cognitive development, the child usually gains in attachment and family stressors decrease.
- **Value the family over standard protocols.** Work to waive or alter rules and regulations, on the state, county and town level, that fragment services and family outcomes. Work to change fragmented service, practice and policy towards more integrated, family-centered approaches.

Obstacles to Two-Generational Planning

Polling data tell us that the public is clearly in support of the family as the unit for policy direction and program depth. The state and agency challenges to this model are modest, but they may be deeply embedded in agency operational and belief systems.

Funding Challenges. Funds and behaviors, as one important example, operate as if they are the end point, rather than the means to an end. This makes programs resistant to change. Different funding streams, rules and protocols apply to different departments and correspondingly, to the parent and the child or they have been implemented in ways that reflect limitations and restrictions that do not actually exist, aka "urban legends."

Accountability and indicators are based on funding requirements, not systems or coordinated outcomes.

Inefficiencies. Inefficiencies are plentiful in family policy as, often, the child is tended in one arena while the parent's needs are addressed elsewhere. Rarely are the efforts coordinated, or do they address a shared family plan or goal.

Routines become Values. Doing business a particular way becomes a routine and routines turn into values and beliefs. Attitudes can also play a role, where the child is seen as interference to employment, or the adult with limited structure or parenting skills is seen as not worthy. Perceptions regarding the causes of poverty, coupled with race and culture bias, can taint motivation and teamwork. Support for integrated planning and policy design, at the state and neighborhood level, is paramount.

Leadership. A shift from shard to whole takes strong leadership. A leader needs to cue program administrators that they are to challenge organizational culture, policy and planning that is performed in isolation. Leadership is vital to a strategy that helps parents to work and children to thrive. Using outcome measures that look at long-term gains and reviewing ineffective approaches to work pathways, adult education and early care, are essential. Similarly, assuring all workers are trained in a two-generational strategy is necessary. Training provides the framework, values, data points and necessary team work for accountability.

A New Belief System: Parents as Partners for Change

Engagement of families together is its own force. Parents feel a strength and bond with one another, whether they are single dads, single moms or teen parents. Shared stories help one feel less isolated and more of an intentional community. When a parent learns that another parent in the neighborhood is also asking for information or assistance in literacy or work pathways, other parents feel less self-conscious and come on board. Resources and opportunities are shared. Each step forward is celebrated.

Solsiree Vega felt “lost, embarrassed, and insecure” when she first moved to New London with two small children. During these early years, Vega attended ESL classes at the Even Start Family Literacy Project, where she not only acquired literacy skills but also the ability to network and connect with other families and resources in the community. With this support, Vega gained employment and later enrolled in school to attain her Master’s Degree in Social Work. “I am able to give back what I once received,” she told the Task Force. Vega now has one child attending college and the youngest successfully completing his junior year in high school.



Parent to parent, word of mouth and sharing of opportunity, creates a horizontal band of support among families. Cultural and neighborhood support is palpable. The paradigm shifts from agency with parent, to community with families. The social capital of networks, friends and neighbors grows incrementally. The potential for services and community building are not only critical to the success of the parent, but also to the family as a whole.

At a recent Washington, DC convening of national funders through Grantmakers for Children Youth and Families, in partnership with the Aspen Institute, the role of parent leadership and family engagement in two-generation strategies was discussed. Recommended steps included:

1. Ensure that parents help lead the two-generational planning as they are both the strength behind this model and the primary customers.
2. Study the multiple assets that low-income parents bring to this model, for peer to peer growth, to maximize family networks and to change the culture and biases of community agencies providing services.
3. Use parents as core informants on what is and is not working for families in policy and programming.

4. Tap parents as the strongest community messengers who can reach those most vulnerable and those least likely to use available services for families and employment opportunity.
5. Bring in fathers, not just mothers, as critical stakeholders in all two-generational work.
6. Honor young teen parents in partnership and ask for their input and planning together for child care, high school degree acquisition, ELL as needed and next pathways to work. Ask what they need and want for their children to flourish.

A Connecticut Strategy and Policy Framework

Connecticut's two-generational strategy and policy paradigm includes policy, program and systems change. Two-generational work is *not* a program alone, but an approach that builds efficacy and capacity for child, parent and community, *together*. It changes how policy and systems are assembled to better influence the most important outcomes for Connecticut's vulnerable families -- *a reduction in chronic, multi-generational family poverty*.

Building an Evidence-Oriented Culture

An evidence oriented culture exists when policy leaders use data to maximize their investment impact. Quality two-generational work requires strong study of current context and condition, and parent and child outcomes.

Identifying preformance measures for two-generation programs and policies will help determine inherently readiness and school success as well as workforce development gains. It will be important to garner the comparative return on investment if the state views the family as the unit or if the state continues to view the child and the parent as separate units.

Utilization of two-generational indicators in Results Based Accountability and in the Children's Report Card will help embed the concept across agencies. Similarly, asking questions in policy hearings about both the child and the parent will begin to shift the culture of fragmentation.

Questions to consider might include:

- Are there fiscal savings and organizational efficiencies to be had in addressing the family as one, rather than parent and child separately?
- Does family satisfaction with service delivery increase (including extended family members caring for young children) when we employ a two-generation service and practice model?

- Does unemployment decrease with pathways to work referrals for parents at an early care or home visitation setting? For both the father and mother?
- Do ELL skills increase for both parent and child when family members are concurrently learning English in the same setting?
- How could a two-generation approach, anchored in the science of early brain development and adversity, improve child welfare practice with regard to reported cases of child neglect?
- What are the implications for the expansion of Mental Health Systems of Care when a two-generation approach is required by state policy?
- Does multi-generational practice have an impact on community safety and collective community impact?
- How can Connecticut expand the relationships between state agencies and the higher education research sector to better understand the impacts of a two-generation approach to policy and practice?

Suggested Systems Change for Two-Generational Strategy

The following policy recommendations are anchored in national and state research, as well as expert presentations to the Two-Generational Policy Workgroup on proven policy, program, culture change and practice.

- 1. Create two-generational demonstration models to test approaches that blend service provision with neighborhood and systems change.** Incentivize coordination, co-location, professional development, braided program linkages for child and parent, communication and shared outcome analysis. Offer best practices and technical assistance in advance of the formal application. Create a learning community among recipients. Select pilots with collective impact strategies, a cradle to career policy and readiness for systems reform.
- 2. Create one or more public-private partnerships with philanthropy in the design, implementation plan and evaluation** of the two-generational pilots. Utilize low-, mid- and high-level strategies. Identify best practice models for replication through an intentional, coordinated, phase-in strategy.
- 3. Support a workforce liaison to administer and guide two-generation strategy and build connections between partner programs** and employers who are essential to its success. A workforce intermediary would have contacts between the various workforce development programs and early childhood initiatives and would get feedback from the private sector to assure the program meets local economic needs.
- 4. Develop two-generational co-training opportunities for leadership and staff members** across agencies in workforce, human services and early childhood. Across sectors, service providers need increased training and education about both the target population and whole-family expertise; programmatic and managerial support for strength-based two-generation approaches. Assure case practice in each agency to support a family decision making process, including a family economic stability plan, rather than a separate plan for each child and adult.
- 5. Build two-generational state programing over four years.** Establish a four-year state target for a percentage of existing programs to reflect significant two-generational programming, with cross-agency support. Direct specific state partner agencies to: a) provide incentives for RFPs reflecting two-generation approaches; b) set aside a percentage in currents grants, serving children and adults, to begin offering incentives for two-generational transition; c) set aside a percentage in current and future grants to foster cross-agency two-generational initiatives; d) Identify health; housing; transportation; labor; infant-toddler care, pre-k through elementary education,

including special education; adult education and social services as priority agencies for two-generational initial development and engagement.

6. **Create a no-wrong door approach** that encourages agencies to connect families with needed programs. Strengthen two-generational strategy and outcomes by developing and implementing a simplified, single eligibility determination process that helps the family across areas of need and learning.
7. **Incentivize adult education to develop a cross-generation strategy in the 10 towns with the greatest low-literacy adults.** Supply additional adult-education funding to support this added support. This could include literacy assessments of young adult students to facilitate classes with best practice adult literacy models as well as preschool center/adult-education center collaboration for care and coordinated programming; writing for children, storytelling skill/arts; monitoring student progress e.g. Watch Me Grow.
8. **Create a state inter-agency workgroup to** a) align policies for low-income children and their parents, b) address barriers to two-generation service provision, c) find opportunities to bring child and adult service programs together through strategic financing (e.g. blending and braiding funding) and incentives for coordination; d) arrange for development of a service manual for two-generational policy and program development and conversion; e) design and implement a state and community learning collaborative of programs that braid two-generational intent in early care, adult learning, literacy, housing, pathways to work, ELL, transportation, health and mental health.
9. **Contemporize TANF for the New Economic Context.** Current welfare law limits access to learning and reasonable employment. Time limits on training and on learning experiences obstruct economic self-sufficiency. Connecticut should consider a) time limit extension from 21 to 60 months, b) access and enhancement of community college and workforce employment and training programs, c) removal of cliff falls that destabilize child care access, d) adult education, workforce training and other career pathways as eligible work participation activities, e) priority on mix of learning and relevant work practice, f) access to quality infant toddler program and pre-k and g) a social work model that helps parents in workforce success.
10. **Partner, through NCSL and NGA,** with the other three states developing two-generational policies and programs for technical assistance, foundation support, a multi-state learning community and assistance with evaluation. The states may include Colorado, Minnesota, Utah and Connecticut.

Two-Generational Policy Suggestions by Topic Area

The following offers a sampler of policy choices, by issue area, to build towards a two-generational model:

- ☑ Housing
 - ☑ Welfare Reform
 - ☑ Adult Education and Post-Secondary Education
 - ☑ Employment
 - ☑ Early Childhood
 - ☑ Health & Mental Health
 - ☑ Evaluation, Accountability and Financing in Partnership
 - ☑ Utilize Existing Federal and State Policy Opportunities
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Housing

- Place quality child care and after school programs at or near any new affordable housing development to address the needs of working families. Similarly, construct early care satellites at existing low-income housing programs.
- Amend the state's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plan to:
 - 1) establish homelessness as an eligibility category for receiving child care subsidies;
 - 2) consider homeless children as a priority population for child care enrollment wait lists;
 - 3) provide child care while a family searches for housing;
 - 4) reimburse providers at higher rates for offering child care during non-traditional hours;
 - 5) re-determine children's eligibility every 12 months; and
 - 6) extend child care eligibility for children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start.
- Prioritize families at risk of or exiting homelessness, through rapid rehousing, which provides short term financial assistance and housing stabilizations supports, to help families quickly exit homelessness.

- Use two-generational lens when assessing the rapid rehousing needs of families and include the needs of young children in planning and location of housing.
- Provide employment services and supports, including access to childcare, for parents who receive housing assistance, with a targeting strategy for starting with those at imminent risk, currently experiencing or exiting homelessness.
- Expand access to public transportation to help ease housing burdens, with a targeting strategy for starting with those at imminent risk, currently experiencing or exiting homelessness.
- Increase access for low-income families to affordable housing and rapid re-housing supports, with a targeting strategy for starting with those at imminent risk, currently experiencing or exiting homelessness.
- Promote housing choice, coupled with mobility counseling, to improve access to opportunity areas.

Welfare Reform

- Create a “place- and person-based” welfare system that addresses the need of the adult and the child within the community for both learning and workforce preparedness.
- Allow young parents in TANF to have an evidence-based parenting program that helps develop adult capabilities count as a work requirement.
- Count postsecondary education and training, linked to decent-wage jobs to meet employer demand, as work activities.
- Advance a more comprehensive set of quality early childhood supports for children of parents in training or education programs.
- Utilize mixed methods of targeted job placement with both education and work, such as in Integrated Basic Education and Training (IBEST), Career Contextualized Programs and Career Pathways.

- Expand a TANF subsidized employment program. This has strong opportunity for a public- private partnership and will support young parents into pathways to work. ARRA was utilized in Connecticut, during the recession, to maximize subsidized employment and the outcomes showed successful job creation with improved family stability.
- Include family economic security indicators including credential attainment, employment, earnings and job retention.
- Reform state welfare policy to include two-generational plans and bolster parents' workforce strength. Actions to include: a) opportunity for education, b) subsidized employment opportunity, c) extended time to 60 months, d) reduction in cliff responses that take away from child development when the parent succeeds and e) access to quality early care.

Adult Education and Postsecondary Education

- Increase postsecondary education access and completion through policies that more accurately reflect the needs of enrolled student parents, a growing state demographic. Ensure that financial aid is available for part-time, adult students; many of whom are parents.
 - Support adult education, community colleges and job-training programs to partner with organizations providing early childhood, after school and summer school programs to help parents balance their education, work, and family.
 - Promote cross-system collaboration and partnership between human service agencies and institutions of higher education, especially community colleges, to increase bundled services and benefits access for low-income parents who are students.
 - Train adult education faculty in how to work with parents who are not fully literate to further assist their literacy development and that of their children.
 - Create aid programs that target students seeking credentials for high demand fields in Connecticut.
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Employment and Workforce Development

- Create a special set aside in WIA, targeted to young families with young children. Develop a pilot demonstration around career pathways that delivers two-generational services.
 - Allow common outcome measures, across workforce development policies, such as TANF and the Workforce Investment Act.
 - Support workforce development and adult education career pathways work to align and strengthen education-skills training-support services to CT's high growth job need and leading to family economic self-sufficiency. This needs to be tied to the P-20 WIN data RBA strategies.
 - Support and incentivize employment opportunities for noncustodial/nonresident parents across state programs.
 - Increase efforts to support economic security outcomes in home visiting programs. Provide professional development to front-line home visiting staff to enhance their knowledge of and ability to connect interested parents with opportunities to increase economic security.
 - Support summer and year-round youth employment programs through the Regional Workforce Development Boards.
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Early Childhood

- Ensure a two-generational referral plan in all early care, after school and summer programs for parents who might wish to attend adult education, ELL and/or pathways to work programs.
- Place satellite early care settings in selected adult education and community college settings.
- Systematically and intentionally train early care providers in the needs of students and parents who are low-income, including ELL parents. Address structural and cultural barriers that prevent family engagement.

- Ensure child care is connected to public transportation routes. Correlate transportation lines with workforce trends and child care need.
- Use a two-generational lens in child welfare family teaming for families with young children.
- Coordinate with Workforce Investment Boards and provide evening presentations for unemployed parents, whether they are custodial or noncustodial parents.
- Facilitate home visitation focus on adult employment and literacy, as well as a focus on optimal and safe child development. Ensure professional development and oversight in working with ELL families with economic self-sufficiency and family supports.
- Bolster informal care models such as All Our Kin, where provider, parents and child can concurrently grow in skills and pathways. Assure best standards for the children and opportunities for professional training and wages for the providers.
- Utilize a Two-Generational Family Economic Success Center Model. Incentivize existing family hub sites, when possible, for parents and their children to maximize opportunity for both generations. This might include early childhood development, family services, adult education, workforce skills development and other services in one location.
- Bolster and support efforts to provide employment and education linkages to parents in Head Start and Early Head Start as part of the federal mandate.

Primary Health and Mental Health

- Support family leave policies that allow new families adequate time to attend to child-parent attachment needs and medical check-ups, as well as a variety of other physical and relational health benefits.
- Enhance home visitation programs to do two-generational work in order to maximize adult and child's capacities at home, work or school by streamlining their access to existing resources, including: prenatal care, parenting and health information, ELL services, child developmental screenings, adult education, and provision of primary

health and mental health care. Promote the importance of including early childhood mental health (ECMH) screening and interventions, as well as providing culturally and linguistically competent services for parents and children.

- Identify and facilitate the enrolling of parents and children who are eligible for expanded Medicaid coverage in order to gain full access to physical and mental health early screenings and interventions (e.g. adult depression screenings, children behavioral assessments). Where appropriate, support the treatment through home visitation of parents who are not Medicaid eligible.
- Encourage interagency collaboration to build an infrastructure provides strengths-based, preventative health care that is bundled together. Restructure public and private sector provider system to ensure a “no wrong door” entry system for publically or privately insured families to access a coordinated system of wraparound care.
- Bolster efforts which integrate health into non-traditional health settings or HUBs, including laundromats, supermarkets, community centers, etc. in order to reach families who otherwise might not seek or receive services.
- Utilize programs that train a diverse range of professionals to screen children and families for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and facilitate their connection to services aimed at reducing psychosocial and traumatic stress on the family and child before mental health symptoms, behavioral problems or academic difficulties are exacerbated. Encourage pediatricians to screen for ACEs and provide them with appropriate referrals and local resources to provide further support to families.
- Support and enhance sustainable school based health centers (SBHCs) to increase children’s access to primary health, mental health and dental care, while reducing barriers to treatment, including: transportation, parents needing to take time off of work for appointments, stigma, and childcare.
- Foster partnerships between DSS and local agencies to promote easy access and processing of food stamp applications. Leverage state purchasing power to impact the supply of healthy and affordable food for families.

Evaluation, Accountability and Financing in Partnership

- Measure both child and parent outcomes, not just one and the other.

- Evaluate data for both generations, with clearly articulated goals such as ELL for both parent and child, income for the family to include job training and child support payments, etc.
- Include two-generational metrics in the state Results Based Accountability process.
- Coordinate with OPM and Appropriations Committee to innovate and waive barriers, wherever possible, that impede two-generational planning. Link funding streams across state departments, state and community. Work toward a Medicaid waiver, as needed, to accomplish components above.
- Partner with Connecticut philanthropy to study the impact of two-generational works. Does it improve outcomes and save the state on efficiencies? What are the cashable savings? How are we measuring “success”?
- Utilize a portion of the TANF dollars currently under the “other” category that do not explicitly support the needs of poor or low-income families, to be repurposed to assist low-income families in school and workforce readiness.
- Request national and state technical assistance support from philanthropy and/or national organizations working on two-generational policy, in blending dollars and resources across silos. Find opportunities to bring child and adult service agencies and programs together through strategic financing (e.g. blending and braiding funding) and incentives for coordination.

Utilize Existing Federal and State Policy Opportunities

Federal policies to include:

- **2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act** to allow the state and local changes that enable two-generation support.
- **Child Care Development Block Grant** to increase access to and quality of early childhood settings for children and to ensure greater access to job training and education for their parents.

- **Head Start Act** to connect federal Head Start/Early Head Start and state two-generational resources and maximize supports for families.
- **Affordable Care Act** to improve economic security and family health and well-being.
- **MIECHV's home visitation** flexible funds for training and community partnerships that include pathways to adult education, postsecondary and workforce training.
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program** provide community colleges with funds to expand delivery of education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less and prepare students of employment in high wage, high skills occupations.
- Monitor results of **National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration Project** and use effective practices to reduce child support debt, create flexibility and expand peer supported parenting activities.

State Policies to Include:

- **Connecticut's Preschool through entry and Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN)**, the mechanism through which participating Connecticut agencies and policy makers can obtain longitudinal data that crosses agency borders to better understand educational programs and student outcomes and their relationships to employment outcomes.
- **Connecticut Career Pathways**, which lay out a roadmap to career success by identifying the education, training, and career experience needed for groups of professions requiring similar talents, knowledge and skills.
- **SNAP Employment and Training** – state financing options to pay for new two-generational models to provide job training programs tied to specific sectors in local economies, along with quality early care and education, after school, and transportation.
- **Early Childhood Cabinet** – support the Cabinet in taking on two-generational policy as a primary focus area for the year.
- **Utilize the Student Success Plan** for goal setting, career planning and academic growth.

- **Support Opportunity Youth Programs Young Parent initiatives** through the State participating in the Performance Partnership Program.
- **CTETC, State-wide plan** - CT Employment and Training Commission developed, with the Regional Workforce Development Boards, a statewide plan and funding proposal to implement, expand or improve upon 1) contextualized learning programs, 2) career certificate programs, 3) middle college programs, and 4) early college high school programs. Targets underrepresented colleges and university students, including low-income youth, first generation, ELL learners and minority students.
- **ALICE Report** - Partner with the United Ways and their findings, which show increased family instability. The ALICE Report indicates employment and workforce challenges cross all towns in CT, demonstrating the necessity to address comprehensively the systemic poverty impacting both generations.
- **Next Generation Connecticut** - Link to initiatives that expand educational opportunities, research, and innovation in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines.

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³⁵ The Commission on Children organized an informal working group to provide data and informational support and testimony on two-generational best practices. The working group, which included agency staff, is advisory to the Commission on Children on these matters.

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Special thanks to the support editors who include: Maggie Adair, Jim Boucher, George Coleman, Elizabeth Fraser, Janice Gruendel, Steven Hernández, and Ellen Shemitz