Building Opportunity, Two Generations at a Time

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www.cahs.org
CT Association for Human Services

- Statewide policy and program nonprofit working to reduce poverty and build “Family Economic Success”
- Kids Count and Working Poor Families Project networks
- Policy focus on early care & education, post-secondary education, tax credits, and adequate state funding
- Financial capability programs: tax prep, access to benefits, financial education
Why Two Generations?

• Children live in families

• Parents are crucial to a family’s ability to move out of poverty, but for many of the most-in-need parents, lack of education and illiteracy obstruct their personal and economic success, limit the literacy skills of their children, and contribute to the cycle of poverty

• Need a new approach to reduce child and family poverty
Why Two Generations?

• “Two Generation” refers to approaches to family learning, well-being and economic success that serve children and their parents at the same time, and support parent-child bonds.

• CAHS is excited about this approach, because it brings together the strands of our “Family Economic Success” work, focusing simultaneously on children and their parents, and recognizing the critical importance of family.
Two Gen in Connecticut

Connecticut Programs

- All Our Kin
- Child First
- Early Head Start
- Even Start
- Family Resource Centers
- Head Start
- MOMS Partnership
- Parents as Teachers
- Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Connecticut Policy

2014 legislation created Two Gen Policy Work Group (section 198)
Today’s low-income parents face challenges at work and home — and with their child care and education:

- inflexible, unpredictable jobs and insufficient income
- lack of access to high-quality early child care and education
- parent and child stress at home
The Problem

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
In Connecticut:

• There are 80,000 low-income families with children under 8

• In 60% of these families, no parent has full-time, year-round employment

• In 80% of these families no parent has an associates degree or higher
Generational poverty has a strong educational component.

Investing in parents’ education has a clear impact on their kids.
The Problem

Education level of parents affects school achievement (8th grade data)

Figure 5. Children’s Reading Proficiently, by Parental Education, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percent Reading Proficiently in 8th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than High School</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).

Additional barriers: the high cost of child care

Full-day care in Connecticut costs for two children: $1,750 per month (3rd most expensive in the country)

$1,750 is more than current minimum wage in the state: equivalent to full time at $10.10/hour

Care for Kids maximum copay is $200 per child, and huge benefit cliff
And let’s not forget: racial disparities are huge
The Problem
The Problem

Many federal and state programs operate in isolation

• Adult programs treat children as barriers to employment
• Child programs often do not help address whole family challenges or build on family strengths
What We Need

Systems and policies that align programs around families
Strengthening the Whole Family

**Financial Stability**
- Education and job training
- Access to income and work support benefits
- Financial coaching
- Access to affordable financial products

**Parent Involvement**
- Treating parents as assets and experts on their kids
- Having culturally competent staff
- Addressing family stress
- Enhancing social networks

**Quality Early Care and Elementary Education**
- Access to high-quality early education programs
- Successful transition to elementary school
- Quality elementary school experiences
- Effective teaching
Two Gen Strategies: Connecticut

- Emerging area with great interest, but limited results nationally
- Some state experience and results with Even Start programs

Even Start Adults' Gains Compared to All Adult Education Students

FY 04: 64% Even Start, 41% All Adult Ed Students
FY 05: 67% Even Start, 42% All Adult Ed Students
FY 06: 75% Even Start, 43% All Adult Ed Students
FY 07: 69% Even Start, 43% All Adult Ed Students
• Employment and Income:
  – Full-time workers increased from 9% to 24%
  – Part-time increased from 21% to 30%
  – Income increased by average of 40%, $12,000

• Engaging with children and their children’s school:
  – 96% of parents talked to their child about school daily
  – 94% had routine contact with their child’s teacher
Parents do more than spend money on children’s development.

The “parenting divide” between economically advantaged and disadvantaged children is large and appears to be growing over time along these dimensions.

(Altintas 2012; Hurst 2010; Reeves and Howard 2013)
Two-generation approaches put the WHOLE FAMILY on a path to economic security.

- social capital
  - networks, friends, and neighbors

- early childhood education

- postsecondary & employment pathways

- health & well-being
  - mental health
  - addressing adverse childhood experiences
  - asset building
  - housing

- economic supports

= legacy of opportunity
Connecticut Commission on Children successfully pushed legislation in 2014 to create a two-gen plan for school readiness and workforce readiness.

- Commission invited advocates and practitioners to participate in a Policy Work Group.
- Looking at early childhood programs for kids birth to 5 and adult programs, including HS diplomas, adult ed, and employment skills.
What’s Happening Now

• November 12, 2014 forum on two-gen approaches at Capitol, presenting Casey Foundation report
• Policy Work Group report to legislature, prior to January, 2015 start of session
• Appropriations Committee co-chairs engaged
• Proposed legislation for 2015 not yet known
A Frame that Works

- Two-gen is a *lens*, not a specific program
- Intuitive appeal: helps *children* do better by also helping *parents*
- Can have bi-partisan appeal:
  - Effective: more outcome- and data-driven than many social service approaches
  - Efficient: can re-orient existing programs
Two-Generation Programs in the Twenty-First Century

“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”.

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Questions and Discussion
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