

**2015 CCPRC Annual Meeting
Session Summary: Workshop D-5**

1. Descriptive Information

<p>Workshop D-5 9:45-11:00am (Lafayette Park/Farragut Square)</p> <p>Title <i>Exploring Two-Gen Initiatives: Research, Policy, and Practice</i></p> <p>Description This workshop will provide an overview of “two-gen” initiatives, some of the efforts that are going on around the country, the policy context that is affecting this work, emerging findings and challenges in evaluating these initiatives, and the implications for the child care field.</p>	<p>Facilitator • Kathleen Dwyer, OPRE</p> <p>Presenters • Anne Mosle, Ascend at Aspen Institute • Gina Adams, Urban Institute • Cynthia Guy, Annie E. Casey Foundation</p> <p>Scribe • Meg Soli, Child Trends</p>
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2. Documents in Session Folder (Please list any electronic documents or web links used during the session.)

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Panel:**

Question 1: What does it mean to be a “two-gen” initiative or approach? How would we know one when we see one? What is unique? In terms of practice, what are the biggest challenges to successfully implementing two-gen models?

Anne Mosle (AM):

- Two-gen approaches look at the strengths and needs of children and their parents (or adults in their lives) simultaneously. There is a continuum and researchers typically work at different places on this spectrum.
- What are the core components of two-gen programs?
 - Education across the spectrum—from early childhood to formal education/workforce preparation
 - Economic supports and assets
 - Health and well-being—what are we learning about brain science, trauma informed care, mental health
 - Social capital
- An approach is a mindset, and then there are strategies and programs. The approach is at the macro level and involves changing mindsets of leaders and funders. Strategies are about alignment and intentionality of action. The programmatic level is thinking about the supports offered and how they can be integrated and making collaboration happen.

Gina Adams (GA):

- Two-gen approaches are adding new life to our work—new language, intensity, and energy to the work we have all been doing for a long time.
- A lot of the challenge of two-gen programs is related to changing mindsets and pulling siloed systems together.

Cynthia Guy (CG):

- Two-gen programs have an amplifier effect by integrating services for children and their adults, creating synergy. For example, child care is not just a work support. It’s a platform for engaging parents in workforce training, building social capital, and inspiring furthering education.

- We do not have enough funding and power to focus on one-gen programs.
- Time is challenging with two-gen programs. Children are only in child care centers for a couple of years, which is not enough time for change at the parent level.

Question 2: At the policy level, what linkages are needed across the child care and early education world and the adult workforce development world? What are the biggest challenges?

GA:

- This is tough work because it requires the intersection of big, messy systems. It's all over the map in ECE—we have Head Start, Pre-K, community-based child care, etc. For workforce, there are three federal agencies, and there are many players in higher education, workforce investments, community training providers, etc.
- How do we match these and overcome the challenges? For example, varied work schedules, children of different ages, high ECE costs, etc. These are questions we need to ask...
 - What are the systemic barriers?
 - What leverage points can be used in each system?
 - How can we identify and evaluate policies and practices to better coordinate service and reduce costs?

CG:

- Data sharing policies are particularly important for two-gen programs and it can be really challenging. To do this work, creating family records is very important.
- OMB Federal agencies have encouraged sharing administrative data, but there are enormous barriers. There are aggressive privacy activists and risk adverse groups that do not support data sharing.

AM:

- There needs to be a flip from focusing on compliance to focusing on outcomes. We need to lift child and parent outcomes above the compliance activities. Flipping the paradigm and always considering measuring child outcomes, even if they aren't the primary outcomes.
- If you map out the systems, there are three tiers. We need to ask ourselves three questions: What can you stop doing, where to do you have the discretion to change what you are doing, and where do you need more money?

Question 3: In terms of research and evaluation, what are the key issues that need to be addressed and challenges that need to be considered?

CG:

- The key research question is impact in two-gen programs. Positive impacts at child, parent, and family levels.
- A concern is scaling up programs. We need to know how to deliver them in a variety of settings so they can become a mainstream option. In order to do this, we need to work with institutions that are historically not doing this work.
- We need to build and pilot these projects. Then, we need to take the promising ones and test them for impact. There is a lot of innovation happening. The role of evaluation in emerging efforts is different than evaluation of a well-established program. In a developmental phase, evaluation feeds into the model development process and requires working closely with program operators. Evaluators are not just TA providers; they need to add their value to data collection efforts and always be thinking about the long-term. Here are the steps developmental evaluations should follow:
 - Defining the logic model for the project—an operational logic that outlines the activities, inputs, and outcomes
 - Answering basic implementation questions about service delivery, integration, and participation
 - Answering cost questions to inform replication efforts

- Looking at participant outcomes, and asking if the program is working as intended and continue refinement
- Picking the right short-term outcomes that are indicative of the important long-term outcomes

AM:

- The historical orientation of the platform and providers in this conversation is fundamental. How are we bringing a 21st century approach while considering poverty, technology advancements, and more?
- I always tell programs, you need to fall in love with your problem, not your solution.
- Conversations around evidence are challenging. Programs want to know how to become an ordained evidence-based program. How are we pipelining programs so they are on a path to contributing to the evidence base?
- How are we thinking about the tools available around evidence? Obviously RCTs are the gold standard, but how can we be more explicit about the other tools we have? We need to embed evaluation and learning in our designs, strategies, and cultures.

GA:

- Some challenges are simple. For example, figuring out who we are targeting—which kids are we talking about? Are we talking about the whole family?
- What is our intervention? How long should an intervention do something and for whom?
- Data challenges—merging different data sets and the data quality
- Integration is thinking about the needs collectively

Question 4: What is the major takeaway you want everyone in this room to leave with?

AM:

- With two-gen approaches there is a tension between the intervention and the approach. This is fundamentally a different commitment, and there is no silver bullet. How do have both a big picture and a specific picture?
- For example, child care folks might not be thinking about community colleges as potential partners. However, single and low-income parents are huge populations in community colleges. New partners and leaders need to make systems work for families rather than fit families into their systems.
- There are hard choices to make about dosage. Limited funding may mean serving less people and targeting a core population.
- There is a robust desire and need for evaluations to be aware of the two-gen approach and work in a learning community way. We need to build the outcome lens into our systems and we need experts need to help us.

CG:

- The importance of matching evaluation methods to the stage and objectives of the program you're working with. We need developmental evaluation with emerging models and we need to save RCTs for mature programs.
- I'd also like to flag the data dimensions of the service integration work. To guide these programs to do their best work and evaluate what they are achieving, it's necessary to have the data. School, workforce, and secondary education data, and more are all needed.

GA:

- There are many people who are very excited to have this conversation. If this interests you, talk about it! This has been the elephant in the room—caring about both child and parent outcomes. We know they are both so important but it is so complex and we are already doing so much.
- What can we do that doesn't cost money? There are so many policies that exist just because of history and they don't do what people want them to do. Some changes will have to be passed by legislation and some are just conversations. There are unintentional policy barriers that we can change.

- Everyone in this room, I challenge you to use this two-gen lens in every research question you have, thinking about both the child and parent. Add a question to your survey about that other component. A lot of people in the world are parents—this resonates and it’s appealing.

- **Summary of Discussion:**

- *I think there is a need three-gen programs that include grandparents, especially considering the prevalence of family, friend, and neighbor care. If this is such an important need, how do we even think about that?*

AM: This is why we say child and “parent/adult in their life”. Who’s in and who’s out is a false trap. We drafted 6 core principals that are helpful. It’s being intentional with the whole family.

GA: We are using this language of two, but that is defined by the community and who you are working with. It’s not the same thing from place to place. It’s very organic and messy.

CG: Like grandparents, non-custodial fathers are a big piece of this too. I’m grateful that you are thinking about the complexities of the real world. This is why I’m enamored with mindsets and strategies.

I’m thinking about the professional development for people delivering the two-gen programs. How is the two-gen approach being taught and addressed in education and training? Where do you find the people to do this work? Do you have a list of competencies?

AM: There are people doing this work unknowingly and people doing it deliberately. There is a growing movement, and we need a clearing house of models and tools. We also need a hiring pipeline and to make more deliberate connections with formal education/secondary education. There is a national learning group and a professional platform. It’s an early conversation. It’s really the “how” of what you are doing.

CG: In my experience, there are no two-gen professionals. There’s an emphasis on learning as you go. Bringing lessons from other fields, bringing together people with different backgrounds and education. We don’t have a list of competencies, but we need to develop that.

GA: In my experience there are some people in silos who think across and some that don’t. This is creating marriages and connections across worlds. Starting the conversation is the first thing.

- *Thinking about developmental evaluation, do you have any recommendations for researchers in terms of how to gather outcomes at such an early stage? You mentioned that we need to select the measurable short-term outcomes that link with the most important long-term outcomes. Do you have any examples?*

CG: We rely on the researchers to answer that very question. They need to start by looking at the literature and the evidence base. We really need their expertise to guide this work.

- *What does a successful two-gen program look like and what features do they have?*

AM: I think it comes down to the mindset piece, staying positive about the long-term impact that can happen when you tackle the complexities of the parent level too. It’s not easy. In Colorado, they are bringing a two-gen approach with their Office of Early Childhood and TANF, asking important questions about how are they are tracking services? In Tennessee, they launched a two-gen consortium bringing together workforce and child care. It’s all about convening people and getting buy-in. An important group is non-custodial parents, which cross multiple systems for employment, child support, and child outcomes. There are some fatherhood programs out there that are doing this very well.

GA: The question is who it’s for, and then what a successful model depends on the context. We need to think about career pathways. It’s long-term—it may start with education, then a job, then another job. Child care is one piece of this puzzle but then their child ages and their needs change. It’s not a single intervention; it’s a trajectory.

CG: With workforce, you have to assess the local labor market and where there are opportunities.

4. Brief Summary of Discussion

The audience members raised questions about the role of grandparents, professional development, short-term outcomes, and features of successful programs as they relate to two-gen approaches. The panel members voiced the importance of using inclusive language (e.g., “adults in children’s lives” or “caregivers” versus “parents”). They cited that two-gen approaches are new to the field and that more needs to be developed in terms of training and competencies. They also explained the importance of having expert opinions and existing literature help guide decisions about which outcomes are most appropriate to examine and when. Lastly, two-gen approaches are flexible and vary depending on who is involved in the trajectory. There are many examples of successful programs and a number of states doing innovative work in this area.

5. Summary of Key issues raised (facilitators are encouraged to spend the last 3-5 minutes of workshops summarizing the key issues raised during the session; bullets below are prompts for capturing the kinds of issues we’re looking for)

This session included a panel discussion with three experts in two-gen approaches representing program, policy, and research perspectives. Two-gen approaches examine the strengths and needs of children and their parents (or adults in their lives) simultaneously. These approaches have the greatest potential for long-term impacts by layering interventions with families; for example, providing early care and education to children while providing workforce development supports to their parents. There are several challenges with two-gen approaches and many of them stem from the need to change mindsets and bridge siloed systems. Other challenges involve the complexities of scaling up programs, sharing data across systems, and having enough time for impacts to occur. Evaluators of two-gen programs should carefully match their methods with the stage of the program: emerging programs should begin with developmental evaluations and more mature programs should be tested with randomized control trials. Overall, the panel members challenged the audience to add secondary outcomes to their research questions (e.g., child outcomes-focused evaluations should also examine parent outcomes, and vice versa). They also encouraged the audience to talk about two-gen programs and use this language to excite and amplify their current work.