
Two-Generation Strategies: Evidence, Lessons & Possible Roles for TANF and Related Programs

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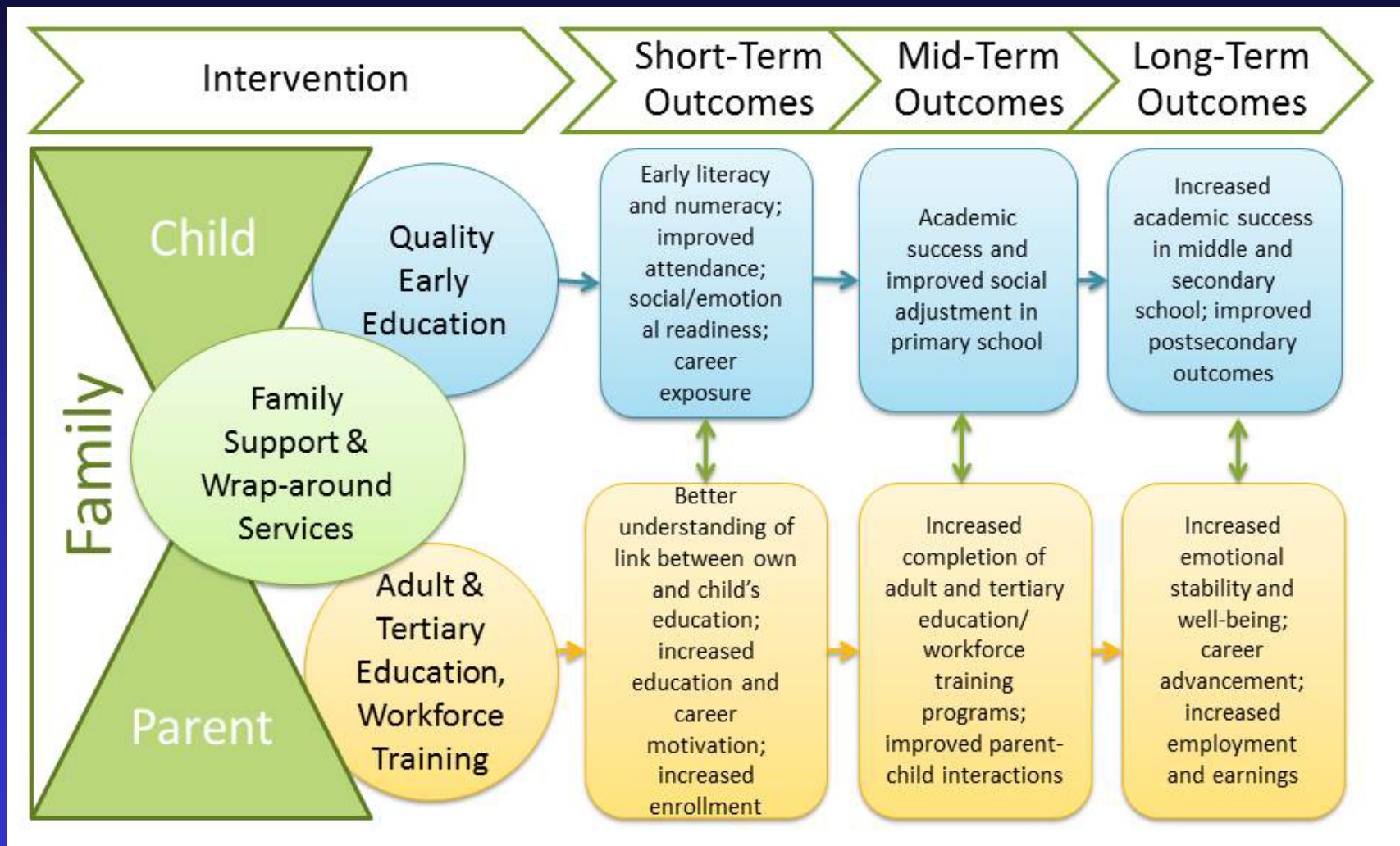
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Two-Generation Strategies

- *Wide variation in strategies*, from basic parent engagement, parents-as-first-teachers, parenting programs, parent referrals to services, and so on. *Quality and intensity are very uneven.*
- “Two-Gen 2.0” emphasizes substantive human capital investments, i.e., programs *intentionally* and *simultaneously* connecting:
 - High-quality education and job training for parents, and
 - High-quality early education for their young children
 - With requisite supports and wrap-around services to ensure their effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework*



*Building on Chase-Lansdale et al. (April 2011), Smith & Coffey (2014).

Two-Generation Pathways

In the 2-Gen issue of *The Future of Children* (Spring 2014) Haskins et al. describe six (6) pathways by which parents and home setting affect child development:

1. *Stress*
2. *Parental Education (including skills training)*
3. *Health*
4. *Income*
5. *Employment*
6. *Asset Development*

Suggesting the need for comprehensive, multi-faceted strategies.



Stress & Child Development

Thompson (2014) building on brain (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2001) and child development research finds—

- Marital conflict, domestic violence, child abuse, depression, poverty lead to stress, sometimes extraordinary and unavoidable (“chronic” or “toxic”) stress.
- Biological effects of stress undermine children’s ability to concentrate, remember, control and focus their thinking.
- Developmental plasticity can help ... or *hurt*.
- Parent/caregiver support can offset or buffer stress effects.
- Better preventive and ameliorative interventions can improve child/parent/caregiver relations via “integrated biological-behavioral approaches.”

Parental Education

Kaushal (2014) finds—

- “Better educated parents have better educated kids.”
- Increased parent education has *positive causal effects* on children’s test scores, health, behavior and development, as well as on mothers’ own behavior (e.g., teen childbearing, substance abuse) as it affects their children.
- Conventional measures of returns to parental education (e.g., income, productivity) *understate* real returns.
- U.S. spends more on education (as % of GDP) than other OECD nations, but disproportionately on richer children, perpetuating inequality. NOTE: U.S. ranks almost last in spending on labor market programs.

Family Health

Glied & Oellerich (2014) find—

- Healthier parents have healthier children as result of genetics, as well as environment and behavior.
- Key issues include healthcare access, insurance and benefits.
- Problematic that physicians typically treat parents *or* children, *not* the family as a whole.
- Health components (e.g., ‘health home’) not very common in 2-Gen programs.

Family Income

Duncan et al. (2014) find—

- Poverty harms child development through family & environmental stress; family resources & investment; and cultural practices.
- Causal effects of low income are “moderate,” but *timing is key*: poverty in early childhood has strongest adverse impacts.
- Note: MDRC research on income supplements and their effects.
- Cash and in-kind income supplements likely have positive effects on child development.

Parental Employment

Heinrich (2014) finds—

- Mixed effects of employment:

Pluses: increased income, better role modeling

Minuses: less parenting time, greater stress

- Children whose parents have unstable, low-wage, low-quality jobs without autonomy or benefits are at much greater risk of adverse effects.
- Note: Yoshikawa et al. (2006) qualitative research on New Hope Project families in Milwaukee.

Family Assets

Grinstein-Weiss et al. (2014) find—

- While poverty/child development links are well researched, connections between parental savings, wealth and child well-being not yet clear.
- Low- and moderate-income parents save, if funds are matched by 3rd parties.
- Greater assets lead to increased parent education (and increased college-going for kids).
- Note: Experiments and initiatives are ongoing (e.g., CFED, Colorado DHS).

The Promise of 2-Gen 2.0

Major theories per Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn (2014) :

- Continuity & Change: “Early learning begets later learning, skills beget skills.”
- Ecological, “proximal environment”: Import of “close-in” environments in kids’ early years, school *and* home.
- Risk & Resilience: Kids can bounce back, thrive in face of adversity with internal and environmental “protective factors”. Interventions must be multi-level, tailored, focused on multiple competence domains, and lasting.
- Human Capital: education and skills investments lead to greater productivity, jobs, earnings over time.

Promise of 2-Gen 2.0 ...

2-Gen 1.0 (1980s, 1990s). Produced *modest effects* but mainly added parenting and low-intensity services to ECE programs or mostly served welfare mothers adding child care components.

2-Gen 2.0 (late 2000s). Starting with Tulsa's CareerAdvance[®], build on much improved workforce and postsecondary approaches. Substantively very different:

- *Simultaneous human capital investment* for wide range of low-income parents and children in same program.
- *Intensive postsecondary education and training in growth sectors with stackable credentials*
- *Workforce intermediaries with employer engagement*
- *High-quality ECE centers*



Innovative Local Initiatives

Annie E. Casey Foundation sites in Atlanta, Baltimore, Tulsa & W. Maryland feature varying mix of 2-Gen strategies.

Jeremiah Project, a place-based postsecondary effort in Minneapolis/St. Paul (MN), Austin (TX) and Fargo (ND) for single mothers and their children.

2-Gen Austin, an emerging effort that is engaging a broad array of policymakers, funders and thought leaders.

Tulsa's CareerAdvance® Initiative, providing sectoral job training/career pathways (nursing, healthcare IT), career coaching, peer supports, conditional cash transfers and other supports for the parents of Head Start children.



CareerAdvance[®]

Local
Colleges

Sectoral
Training/CPs
Employers

Early Childhood
Program

Career Coaches

Peer Support

Incentives

Support Services

Elementary
Schools

'Bridge':
Adult Basic
Education &
ESL



CareerAdvance®

Target Population:

Parents of children in Tulsa's early education programs.

Mainly single mothers, though some fathers as well.

All low-income, mostly minority.



Tulsa CareerAdvance[®] Timeline

- 2008-09 Project planning w/GKFF funds
- Aug. 2009 1st CNA cohort enrolled
- Aug. 2010 2nd CNA cohort enrolled
- Sep. 2010 5-yr \$10M. HPOG USHHS grant
- Jan. 2011 3rd CNA cohort enrolled
- Aug. 2011 4th CNA/PCT, **HIT** cohort enrolled
- Sep. 2011 3-yr \$2.8M HPOG-UP, \$300K WK Kellogg evaluation
- Jan. 2012 5th Nursing, HIT cohort enrolled
- Aug. 2012 6th Nursing, HIT & MA cohort enrolled



CareerAdvance[®] Timeline ...

Jan. 2013 Educational Pathways Program launched building CAP parents' basic skills for future program entry

Feb. 2013 7th Nursing, HIT, Pharm Tech cohort enrolled

Aug. 2013 8th Nursing, MA, Pharm Tech, Allied Health cohort enrolled

Fall 2013 *Family Advancement Program* launched with USHHS/ACF funding

Feb. 2014 9th cohort enrolled

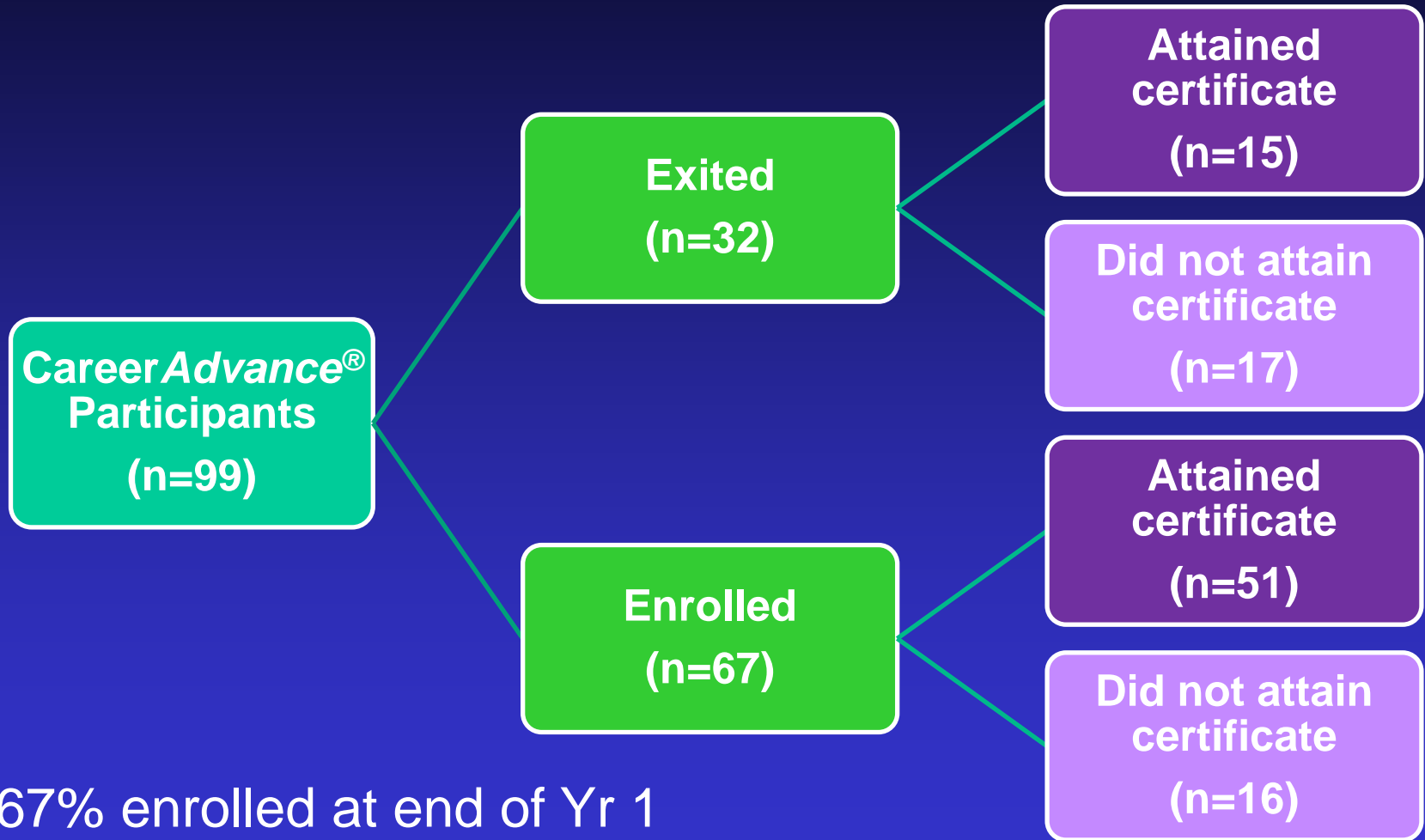
Aug. 2014 10th cohort enrolled

Sept. 2015 HPOG funding ends.

THEN WHAT...?



Enrollment & Certification at One Year, Cohorts 4-7



67% enrolled at end of Yr 1

66% attained certificate by end of Yr 1

Qualitative Evidence

- Too soon to capture measurable full *impacts* from 2-Gen 2.0 efforts. Early *outcomes* just emerging from Tulsa's CareerAdvance[®].
- Partner (e.g., Tulsa Community College, Union Public Schools), CAP, CareerAdvance[®] and employer *interviews are very encouraging*.
- Participant focus groups and interviews since 2010 tell us the *program and its components are largely on the right track*. A few examples ...

Prior Experiences

“I tried school before joining CareerAdvance® but couldn’t manage everything.”

“When I tried college before, I got burned out. I took too many classes to do well in any of them. No one told me I was taking too much.”

“I tried school before, but had no direction. There were too many choices and I didn’t know what classes to take or what was required. This time, having the choices narrowed down, having a goal, is helping me go forward.”



Coordinated Parent-Child Schedules

“I like how they’ve made the program fit around the youngest child’s schedule... how they’ve tailored it to fit around those hours, which really would tailor around all school-age children’s hours. So only during clinical times do you have to really worry about before and after care. But for the most part, all of us can still take the kids, kiss them goodbye, do our thing, and then be there to pick them up.”

Cohorts & Peer Support

“I mean, it’s just that we’re not the typical college student. Like, we have kids and I have doctors’ appointments and different things, but we’re all, um We all have kids, we all have the same kind of appointments and obligations, and...so we understand when one of us has to miss, and we go, ‘Can you take notes for me because I have to take the kids to the pediatrician?’”

Cohorts & Peer Support ...

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

“My cohort showed me that there are women out there just like me. We all had the same story. I was so scared and nervous at first. Now I know that you just have to put in the work and keep motivated.”

Career Coaching

“She is always there; she keeps motivating us. We aren’t alone.”

“[The coaches] help you recognize that you have to do something for yourself, not just your kids.”

“She is like your mom. You don’t want to listen, but you know she has your best interest at heart.”

“I was going to give up but the coaches wouldn’t let me.”



Peers, Coaches & Staff Support

“We constantly have the support not only from our classmates but also from our teachers and our coach. You know, and when I was in college before, it was just me against the world basically you know. So if I dropped out, nobody cared. It was just, I was only just disappointing myself. Now if anybody is missing too much class we’d call them and are like, you know ‘Where are you at? Come to class.’”

Role Modeling

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

Financial Incentives

“I strive to get to class so that I can earn my reward for doing good.”

“It helps keep us accountable for every day.”

“[When I tried school before] there was nothing to motivate you to show up. Here there is the incentive and the gas card to encourage us.”

“Don’t plan on the incentive; don’t spend it before you get it.”

Less Time with Children

“I almost feel like I’m neglecting my son, like I know he’s taken care of ... but as far as spending time with him, and he’s taking a hit, when it comes to like mommy and baby time. Because I don’t have that extra time to spend with him anymore now that I am in this program... But I always just have to tell myself that in the long run, it’s actually more beneficial.”

Lessons Learned: Families

- Poor families are resilient and bring real assets to the table, including strong motivation to help their children lead more stable, secure lives.
- These families often live chaotic lives (e.g., housing instability, food insecurity) and face large barriers to program participation—e.g., ‘bad paper’, criminal records, family violence—much less parenting or succeeding in the labor market.
- Basic skills vary widely *within* cohorts and *between* pathways, some testing at 1st & 2nd grade, others at 12th grade or above. Most must address large deficits before progressing to skills training.



Lessons Learned: Families

- Supports notwithstanding, intense, human capital oriented programs aren't for all low-income families. Many of them are not at a place in their lives where they can participate effectively. Nor is participating necessarily appropriate for those with very young children.

Lessons Learned: Programs

- Simply referring parents to education and workforce services available in the community will not work (see MDRC report by Hsueh et al.).
- Traditional adult education/family literacy services are poorly designed and delivered, largely ineffective.
- Career coaches and peer supports in cohort models are key components for parents.
- Keeping partners engaged effectively over time takes considerable energy and resources.
- It really does take a village ...

Lessons Learned: Programs ...

- Program funding—for adults and for children—is woefully inadequate.
- Program services are highly fragmented in most, but not all, communities; typically need some sort of intermediary to “glue the pieces together.”
- Many barriers to 2-Gen program success are policy- and program-, not family-related, e.g., goals, funding, eligibility, participation/performance metrics.
- Given these barriers and constraints, it takes far longer to achieve success than most policymakers and program officials tend to be comfortable with.

Lessons Learned: Programs ...

- We know a great deal about what works for parents (e.g., sectoral/career pathway approaches, contextualized adult ed/ESL, stackable credentials) and for young children (e.g., Tulsa-style early ed), but we don't know much about what works for them *together...yet.*
- Simultaneous parent and child program participation with fully connected and reinforcing components has yet to be done well.
- Simultaneous parent/child participation definitely comes with its own stresses.

Lessons Learned: Overall

- Two-generation programs entail high costs up front, but are *likely* to yield high returns over the long term. We should view them as investments, not expenses, and value and fund them accordingly.
- Two-generation strategies can be initiated in various ways: either from quality early childhood education programs, from leading-edge sectoral/career pathway programs, or from the “marriage” of existing quality adult and child programs.
- We haven’t yet figured out the best ways to sustain and scale effective two-generation strategies.

TANF Challenges

- *Declining value of TANF benefits: 2013 benefits are 20% below 1996 levels, after inflation.*
- *Diversion of TANF funds to child welfare, etc.*
- *End of the TANF Emergency [Jobs] Fund.*
- *Declining TANF participation: only 25% of poor families received TANF in 2012 v. 68% in 1996.*
- *TANF time limits and work participation 'metrics'.*
- *State policy and program fragmentation.*
- *Work-first 'hangover' from 1990s welfare reforms.*

TANF Opportunities

- *State policy and program integration (e.g., FL, TX, UT), encompassing adult education, TANF and SNAP work programs, publicly funded child care, etc.*
- *State 2-Generation initiatives linking publicly funded child care and Head Start (e.g., UT), asset development (e.g. CO) and other programs and funding streams.*
- *Local initiatives, including those in Austin, Boston, Evanston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Tulsa, and other communities.*



Concluding Observations

Passive, market-based models simply will not help families become economically self-sufficient or break the cycle of inter-generational poverty.

Social mobility in the U.S. is significantly lower than in most developed countries and has been declining. Roughly 8% of children born to U.S. families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution reach the top fifth v. 11.7% in Denmark (Chetty et al., 2014; Boserup et al., 2013).

Some state policy and program frameworks—and their local institutions—are better structured to help families get the services they need to succeed. States not so well structured can still take action to improve their capacity, *without* federal legislation.



Observations...

The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act enacted in July 2014 may be more supportive of 2-Gen strategies and their evidence-based components, e.g., sector-based, career pathway approaches for parents. Largely up to states and local areas.

Food Stamp E&T Demonstrations are concrete opportunities for developing 2-Generation strategies.

TANF, Head Start, and CCDF reauthorizations may offer opportunities as well ... *if* only Congress can be moved to action.

Greater investment is needed at all levels.



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