The Promise and Effects of Emerging Two-Generation Strategies

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Why 2-Generation?

Social mobility in the U.S. is significantly lower than most developed countries (Corak, 2013): about 8% of children born to U.S. families in bottom fifth of income distribution reach top fifth v. 12% in Denmark. (Chetty et al. 2014; Boserup et al. 2013)

Five factors associated with strong upward mobility:

• less segregation by income and race;

• lower income inequality;

• better schools;

• lower rates of violent crime; and

• larger shares of 2-parent households.
Two-Generation Pathways
(Haskins, Garkfinkel & McLanahan, 2014)

Six pathways by which parents and home setting affect child development:

- Stress
- Parental Education
- Health
- Employment
- Income
- Asset Development

...suggesting the need for comprehensive, multi-faceted antipoverty strategies.
Two-Generation Defined

Two-generation strategies intentionally and systematically connect adult/child investments for larger, longer lasting impacts on family economic success.
Ascend’s 2-Gen Framework

- **Social Capital**
  - Networks, friends, and neighbors

- **Health & Well-being**
  - Mental health
  - Addressing adverse childhood experiences

- **Economic Assets**
  - Asset building
  - Housing

- **Early Childhood Education**

- **Postsecondary & Employment Pathways**
Head Start (1965) clearly was the first. 2-Gen 1.0 (1980s & 1990s) added parenting and low-intensity services to early childhood education (ECE) and/or mostly served welfare mothers adding child care, producing only modest short-term effects.

2-Gen 2.0 (late 2000s) builds on much improved workforce and postsecondary ed (PSE), is substantively very different—

- Simultaneous human capital investment for a wide range of low-income parents and their children
- Intensive PSE and career pathway training in growth sectors with stackable credentials
- Contextualized adult education ‘bridge’ programs
- Strong employer engagement via workforce intermediaries
- High-quality ECE
CHILDREN
High-quality early childhood education has lasting cognitive and non-cognitive effects on children. (Gormley et al., 2005, 2011; Bartik, 2014; Yoshikawa et al., 2013; Gormley & Phillips, 2016)

ADULTS
High-quality sectoral training via career pathways has meaningful, significant, lasting impacts on adult participant employment, earnings and associated ROI. (Maguire et al., 2010; Elliott & Roder, 2011, 2014, 2017; Smith & King, 2011; Smith et al., 2012; King, 2014; King & Prince, 2015; MDRC, 2016)
Conceptual Framework

Tulsa CareerAdvance®

Early Childhood Program

- Career Coaches
- Peer Support
- Incentives
- Support Services

Local Colleges

Sectoral Training/CPs Employers

Elementary Schools

‘Bridge’: Adult Basic Education & ESL
CAP Family Life Study

- 3-year quasi-experimental study — kudos to the Northwestern U, UT Austin, NYU, Columbia, Oklahoma State U research team

- Surveys, child assessments, focus groups, administrative data

- Sample of 253 participants total: 141 in CareerAdvance® and 112 in the matched comparison group (propensity score matching)

- 98% female, 30% single parents, average age 29 years, avg. household income $15,372, only 30% white, 49% high school/GED or less

- 62% of participants still enrolled at one year
1-Year Impacts: Certification

Comparison Group

CareerAdvance Group

0.03

0.61

***
1-Year Impacts: Employment

Employed full-time
Comparison Group: 0.42
CareerAdvance Group: 0.34

Employed part-time
Comparison Group: 0.21
CareerAdvance Group: 0.33

** denotes statistical significance.
1-Year Impacts: Economic Well-Being

- Decreased earnings ($2,045) while in school, but no increase in perceptions of material hardship
- Average incentives and in-kind assistance in year one of $2,560
1-Year Impacts: Psychological Well-Being

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<th>Effect Size, SD units</th>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to work &amp; career</td>
<td>0.28 **</td>
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<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>0.27 **</td>
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<td>Optimism</td>
<td>0.31 **</td>
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1-Year Impacts: Stress & Psychological Well-Being

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<th>Effect Size, SD units</th>
<th>Perceived stress</th>
<th>Psychological distress</th>
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<td>0.00</td>
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1-Year Impacts: Children’s Head Start Attendance

School days attended (%)

- Comparison Group: 0.87
- CareerAdvance Group: 0.90

Chronically absent (y/n)

- Comparison Group: 0.65
- CareerAdvance Group: 0.48

**Significant differences**:

- School days attended: CareerAdvance Group vs. Comparison Group
- Chronically absent: CareerAdvance Group vs. Comparison Group
Qualitative Evidence

• Partner (e.g., Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Tech, Union Public Schools), CAP, CareerAdvance® and employer interviews are very encouraging.

• Participant focus groups and interviews since 2010 tell us CareerAdvance® and its components are largely on the right track.
Lessons Learned: Families

- Poor families are resilient and bring real assets to the table, including strong motivation to help their children.

- Families live chaotic lives and face large barriers to participation and labor market success—e.g., ‘bad paper’, criminal records, family violence.

- Parents’ basic skills vary widely. Most must address large deficits before progressing to skills training.

- Supports notwithstanding, intense human capital oriented programs aren’t for all low-income families.
Lessons Learned: Programs

- Simply referring parents to available education and workforce services does not—and probably will not—work. (Hsueh et al. 2012)

- Traditional adult/remedial ed and literacy services are often poorly designed and delivered and largely ineffective.

- Career coaches, peer supports, financial aid and training via cohort models are critical program components.

- Getting and keeping partners engaged effectively over time takes considerable energy and resources.
Lessons Learned: Overall

- 2-Gen programs entail high costs up front, but are likely to yield high returns over the long term. We should value and fund them as investments, not expenses.

- 2-Gen strategies can be initiated in various ways: either from quality ECE programs, from leading-edge workforce programs, or from the “marriage” of existing quality adult and child programs. They can also be developed systemically (e.g., Austin, Colorado, Connecticut, Utah).

- We haven’t yet figured out the best ways to sustain and scale effective 2-Gen strategies.
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