

Two-Generation Strategies for Expanding the Middle Class¹

Tara Smith
Research Associate
The University of Texas at Austin

and

Rheagan Coffey
Consultant
The University of Texas at Austin

Abstract

Countries around the world are recognizing the need to revamp policies and programs in order to expand opportunities for building a strong middle class. Public investments typically focus on one generation at a time—serving adults or children but not both—resulting in fragmented programs that often do not meet targeted goals for youth or adult outcomes. In response to growing evidence that comprehensive approaches targeting whole families can be more effective, two-generation strategies built around core investments in early childhood education, job training, and social support services are being explored. Two-generation strategies combine workforce development training and early childhood education to provide families with pathways out of poverty and into the middle class. Recognizing that families face challenges and take advantage of opportunities together, these programs expand middle class opportunities by helping both parents and children build the human and social capital they need to succeed in the modern economy.

In this paper, the authors first define a two-generation framework and detail the growing two-generation research base and evidence on key framework components. Using the two-generation framework, the authors then examine the current policy and economic environments in the United States and the European Union, focusing particularly on Ireland, and highlight innovative and promising two-generation strategies. While the research and evaluation evidence for many of these efforts is just beginning to develop, the authors conclude with recommendations for testing and expanding promising two-generation strategies that address multiple overlapping needs of families across the world and better promote academic and economic achievement for parents and children.

¹ This paper was prepared with generous support from the Foundation for Child Development through a grant to the LBJ School of Public Affairs' Ray Marshall Center at The University of Texas at Austin. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not represent those of the Foundation for Child Development or The University of Texas at Austin.

Policy and program approaches that treat multiple generations of a family as the unit of service, also known as two-generation strategies, are a growing interest in the United States and other countries around the world. These efforts are intended to move whole families ahead on the path to middle-class economic security. By serving children and parents in the same family, two-generation programs are able to reinforce and expand on the value of individual educational achievements as a pathway for obtaining family economic security and stability over time. Given the lingering effects on families of the Great Recession, there is an opportunity to rethink traditional investments in adult- or child-only programs and develop two-generation approaches that recognize that families face challenges, grow, and prosper together.

This paper is intended to promote discussion of opportunities for developing two-generation strategies that help families around the world contribute to their own financial stability and their country's economic well-being. In the sections that follow, the authors describe the evidence base for two-generation strategies and related components, compare policy environments and economic factors in the United States to that of selected member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and highlight model programs and innovative initiatives in the US and Ireland. The authors conclude with a set of recommendations for developing opportunities to build and test two-generation strategies across a range of economic, political, and cultural contexts.

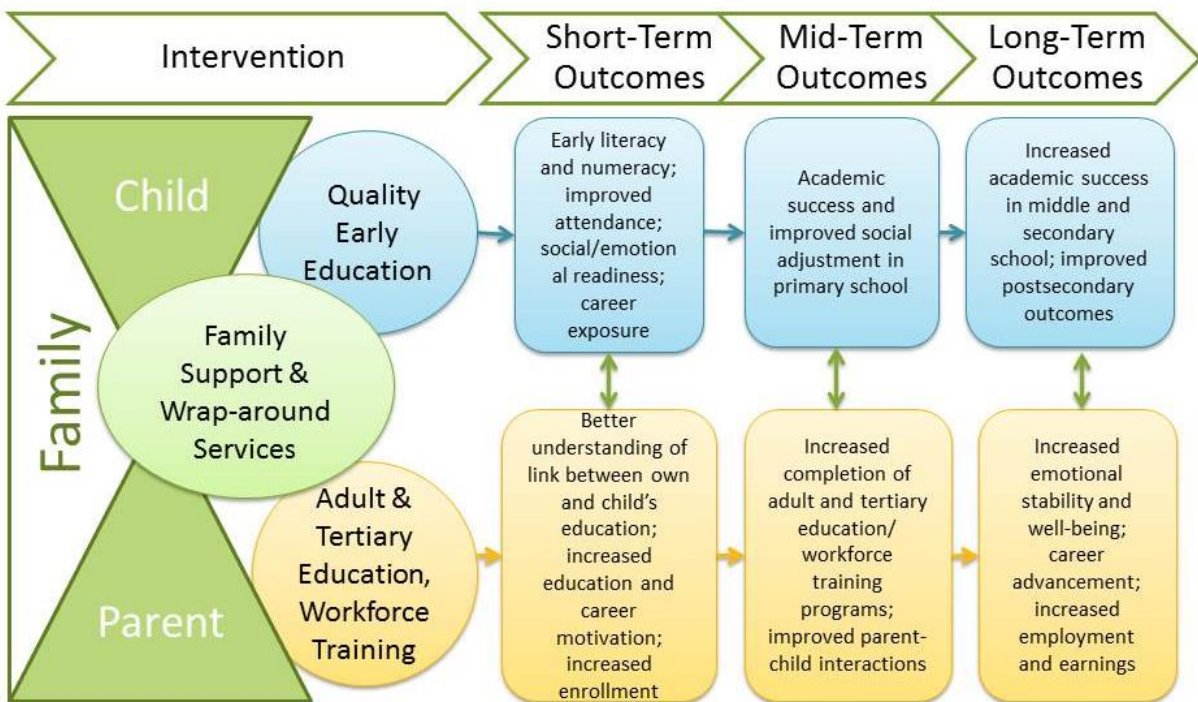
The Case for Two-Generation Strategies

Historically, education, workforce development, and social welfare policies have been established for a specific population (for example, low-income children, low-skilled adults, disconnected youth). There is often no expectation, support, or encouragement for programs to provide services to, or consider the needs of, other family members that may be affected by a

family member’s participation. In contrast, two-generation strategies share an explicit focus on families, bridging the needs of children and their parents with a combination of supports and an emphasis on human capital development to improve family economic security.

Two-generation approaches encompass a wide range of coordinated education, human, health, and other services. The conceptual framework for the type of two-generation model presented here was developed by Chase-Lansdale (2011) and further supported in a paper for the November 2011 APPAM conference by King, Smith, & Glover. As shown in figure 1 below, the conceptual framework behind two-generation approaches posits that the thoughtful combination of services for multiple generations within a family leads to improved, even synergistic, outcomes over time.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Two-Generation Strategies



Core Components of Two-Generation Approaches

The research literature at the foundation of each of the framework’s inputs—early childhood education, family and wrap-around support services, and adult/postsecondary (or tertiary) education/second-language literacy services—is reasonably well-established (Haskins et al., 2014; King, 2014; Smith et al., 2011; King et al., 2009). As researchers and policymakers have explored ways to improve long-term outcomes and impacts, interest has grown in understanding the way these components interact and what works for families. The following section highlights current research on what works for parents and children and details why this matters for two-generation approaches.

Adult/Post-Secondary Education Components. Many parents in two-generation programs lack the educational and/or language requirements to succeed in the modern economy. Educational attainment has been demonstrated to have a significant association with family economic status and family outcomes overtime. For parents, the goal of two-generation programs is to help them build credentials for the high-demand, middle-skill labor market, which provides family-supporting wages and benefits (in the United States, health insurance and paid sick leave are particularly important).

The educational attainment of mothers in particular is highly correlated to child outcomes. In a recent study for the Foundation for Child Development, Hernandez & Napierala (2014) examine thirteen economic, education and health indicators for children in the United States based on their mother’s level of educational attainment. In the US, 12% of children have mothers who have not earned a high school credential while one-third of children have mothers who earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. Hernandez & Napierala found that children whose mothers had not completed high school were significantly more likely to live in poverty and

suffer from less than very good health, and they were significantly less likely to perform at grade level in reading or mathematics, to be enrolled in preschool education, to graduate from high school on time, or to be covered by health insurance as compared to children whose mothers had a bachelor's degree.

Given the importance of adult education, the Vice President of the US, Joe Biden, recently led a government-wide review of federally-funded workforce development and training programs to identify “what works” for adults and youth and develop recommendations for further investments and research. A synthesis of findings across the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Education, and Health & Human Services, along with other input, identified six key features of effective adult programs:

- Postsecondary education leading to industry-recognized credentials;
- Flexible and innovative skill building strategies;
- Work-based training and educational opportunities;
- Active employer and industry engagement;
- Guidance based on current, local labor market information; and
- Cross-system coordination and integrated support services.

The review outlines a plan for building additional evidence for what works in job training by expanding labor market information and research investments, investing in pilot and demonstration programs, and improving dissemination strategies.

Beyond the characteristics listed above, a review of the literature by Coffey & Smith (2011) found that programs with coordinated and team-teaching approaches and those that invested in staff professional development showed better outcomes for adult learners. Higher program intensity (more hours per day and/or more days per week) was also shown to be associated with better outcomes for adult and English language learners.

Early Childhood Education Components. As Abbie Lieberman with the New America Foundation recently wrote, “Increased access to child care is an especially promising anti-

poverty policy because it is intergenerational: it gives parents the time to work, and kids the educational opportunities they need to succeed... For parents to take advantage of other anti-poverty programs, like apprenticeship schools and vocational programs, and eventually lift themselves out of poverty by participating in the labor market, they first need access to childcare” (Lieberman, 2014, p. 2-3). Research shows that parents are more engaged and committed to training and employment when they are not worried about the quality of their childcare arrangement, leading to stronger outcomes for both generations.

For children, the benefits of high-quality early childhood education are well-established in the research literature. A 2013 report released by the Society for Research in Child Development and the Foundation for Child Development, *Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base for Preschool Education*, synthesizes current research and finds that “higher-quality preschool programs have larger impacts in children’s development while children are enrolled in the program and are more likely to create gains that are sustained after the child leaves preschool” (Yoshikawa et. al., p. 6). Among these benefits, a recent study found that children who participated in quality early education programs went on to have better adult health outcomes (Campbell et al., 2014). A meta-analysis by Camilli et al. (2010) found significant long-term benefits from participation in early childhood education programs for the development of children’s socio-emotional and non-cognitive skills. These interpersonal and life skills are important assets that help individuals at all ages reach their academic, career, and personal goals.

Family and Wrap-Around Support Services. Two-generation models share a common operating principle as identified in a survey of current US frameworks by Gruendel (2014):

Support and services are delivered simultaneously to the child *and* parent (as well as individually when needed) and are integrated across service domains and sectors to decrease cognitive load on the consumer, increase service effectiveness, and maximize resource efficiency and effectiveness (p. 25).

Wrap-around support services are the benefits that remove barriers to participation and completion and provide important resources for family stability. These benefits include transportation assistance, out-of-school care, housing, schedule coordination, counseling, case management, financial supports and performance-based incentives.

Job search assistance and developing the skills necessary to navigate the labor market are especially important for improving employment outcomes. Wendi Copeland, a vice president with Goodwill Industries International, has stated the following about these support services:

It's multigenerational. Once someone in that household knows how to navigate a career, how to access resources, how to make connections, everybody in that household learns, and then you start hearing from the neighbors and the people down the street and the people in their faith community. [The information] is viral when someone learns the secret rules of how to get a job and how to move up (*Making*, p. 29).

Other support services in two-generation models might include financial incentives, subsidized employment, individual development accounts, and other strategies aimed at encouraging and helping families afford to participate in education and training opportunities. Research has shown that improving family incomes by as little as \$3,000 (USD) per year can make an important difference for child outcomes (Duncan et al., 2014; Chase-Lansdale & Brooks Gunn, 2014; Kaushal, 2014). Financial incentives can also smooth the transition from benefit income (i.e. unemployment) to earned income, thus helping families avoid the “benefit trap” where they are financially penalized for returning to work (Richardson & Bradshaw, 2014).

Two-generation strategies may have other important benefits for consideration. From a provider or funder's perspective, co-locating family services can reduce the service delivery cost, and “facilitate the best possible outcomes for families” (Richardson & Bradshaw, p. 33). Given

the need for services documented in the next section, such effective efficiencies should be an important consideration.

Shifting Focus from Adults and Children to Families

The conceptual framework presented in figure 1 shares its emphasis on the combination and coordination of services for families with other two-generation models. As identified by Gruendel (2014), a second common operating principle in two-generation models is that:

Community supports and services are wrapped around the family as a whole. They encourage and are supportive of family decision-making, and are committed to family engagement over a period that may extend for one or two years, or longer (p. 24).

Despite differences in goals for education, economic, health, or other outcomes, two-generation models are firmly focused on helping families prosper and thrive. The relationship between parents and children, therefore, is an important factor to consider when developing new two-generation strategies.

The Spring 2014 issue of the *Future of Children*, Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two-Generation Mechanisms, features analyses by leading researchers on the current state of two-generation programs by examining key developmental influences in families, such as stress, education, health, income, employment, and assets. In the article “Intergenerational Payoffs of Education,” Kaushal finds that “education influences not only economic and noneconomic opportunities, but also lifestyle choices, for example, decisions about marriage, sex, and fertility” (p. 62). Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to invest in their child’s development across a range of health, wellness, enrichment, and tutoring activities.

In “Parent’s Employment and Children’s Wellbeing,” Heinrich (2014) cautions that the conditions around a parent’s employment can greatly alter the impact on children. While income from employment can have a significantly positive impact on a child’s basic wellbeing, there can

be a downside to parental employment. Parents in employment arrangements with access to benefits, such as paid time off and flexible schedules, may face less stress than parents who work in inflexible positions with no access to paid time off or nonstandard hours.

The impact of stress on child development is further documented in the article by Duncan et al., “Boosting Family Income to Promote Child Development.” The authors find that “environmental conditions create physiological and emotional stress in the lives of low-income children that may impair their socio-emotional, physical, cognitive, and academic development (p. 103). Similarly, Chase-Lansdale & Brooks Gunn highlight the risk and resilience theory that “posits that children can bounce back and even thrive in the face of short-term adversity, but their development is likely to be seriously hampered by chronic and cumulative stress” (p. 17).

The third core operating principle identified by Gruendel (2014) addresses the importance of building resilience in families:

In two-generation models, supports and services quickly focus on individual and family strengths and assets, including within the extended family, and seek to build on family and community protective factors with the goal of helping children and families become resilient, that is, strong in the face of adversity and chronic challenges (p. 25)

Family-Oriented Policies and Practices

Family-oriented policies already exist in most developed countries around the world to address a range of social, cultural, and economic values. In the Fall 2011 volume of the *Future of Children*, Ruhm’s article, “Policies to Assist Parents with Young Children,” examines international policy approaches focused on supporting families. Ruhm’s comparison identifies common elements of family-supporting policies, which include parental leave and early childhood education and care, and highlights key differences between the policy environments of select OECD nations. The following brief summary draws directly from Ruhm’s chapter.

Parental Leave. The amount of time that individuals may take off of work to care for newborns and children is often referenced as parental leave. Parental leave policies vary considerably across and within countries on everything from eligibility criteria, conditions of return, length of time, and the level of pay associated with leave. Ireland provides a total of 16 months guaranteed parental leave, including 3.5 months available specifically for fathers, and a total of six months of paid leave - all of which must be at a high wage-replacement level (defined as 2/3 or more of wages). In Canada, parents are entitled to 12 months of leave total, 11.5 months of which is paid - though none of it must be at a high-level. The UK provides a total of 18.5 months of parental leave (3.75 months exclusively for fathers) of which 9.5 months is paid (though only 1.5 months is at a high-level).

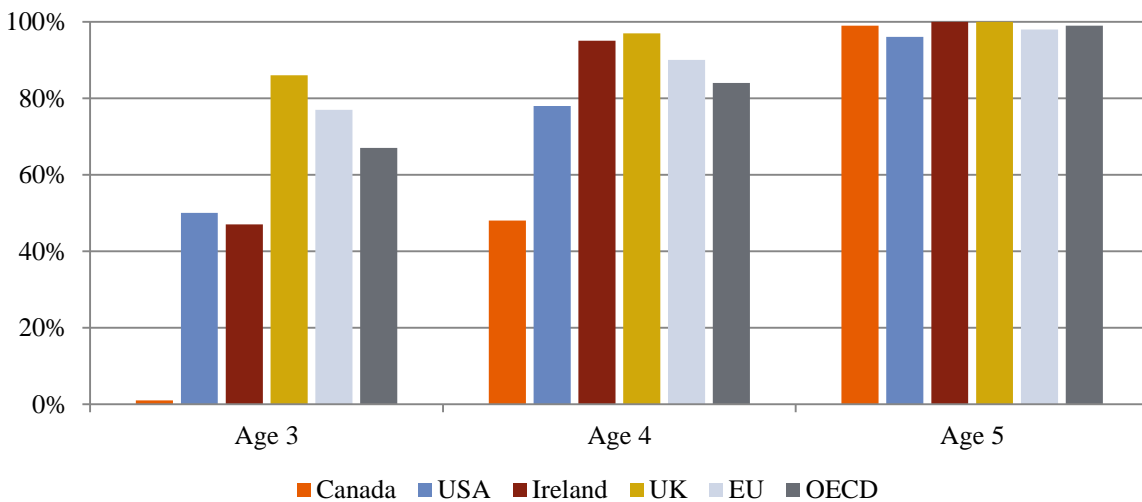
In the United States, approximately 60% of workers are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act, which guarantees 12 weeks of unpaid leave for workers meeting eligibility criteria while employed at a firm with 50 or more employees. Fifteen states (including the District of Columbia) provide additional parental leave benefits, primarily through expanded eligibility definitions that extend benefits to employees of smaller firms and/or those that have had a shorter tenure or worked fewer hours with their current employer. Some of those states also enacted additional parental leave policies, including partial paid leave up to 5 or 6 weeks (in a total of six states, including five that allow short-term disability insurance for pregnancy/post-partum periods and three that directly require employers to provide paid leave based on certain threshold standards) and policies that provide an additional 1-5 weeks of unpaid leave (in five states).

Early Childhood Education and Care. Ruhm's analysis of 2008 OECD Family Database data shows that early care and education arrangements differ widely across OECD

countries, with significant variation based on the age of the child. Approximately half of infants and toddlers in America receive non-parental care; with one-third in formal care for an average of 31 hours per week. By comparison, 24% of Canadian infants and toddlers are in care for an average 32 hours per week. A little more than half of infants and toddlers in the UK are in non-parental care, with 40% in formal care for an average of 18 hours per week. In Ireland, 41% of infants and toddlers receive non-parental care; 25% are in formal care for an average 25 hours per week.

The 2013 *Education at a Glance* found that approximately two-thirds of three year-olds in OECD countries were enrolled in an early education program in 2011. By comparison, approximately half of American and Irish three year olds were enrolled. The share enrolled in early education rises with age: by age four, 78% of American children, an average of 85% of children across the OECD, and 95% of Irish children participate in an early education program (Lalancette, p.5). Figure 2 summarizes enrollment rates in early education programs.

Figure 2. Enrollment Rates in Early Childhood, Preschool, or Primary Education



Source: *Education at a Glance 2013*. OECD.

Note: Rates for Canada based on 2010 data; all others based on 2011 data.

Equal Pay for Men and Women. A 2014 report by President Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers, *Nine Facts about American Families and Work*, provides an important context for understanding two-generation strategies in the United States. “The US increasingly lags behind other developed countries in providing flexible work and paid leave arrangements that enable all workers to be a part of the workforce and to build long-term careers, while also providing care for their families” (p. 8). Labor force participation rates for women, and particularly mothers, has grown significantly in the United States, with women now accounting for approximately 47% of the workforce. Four in ten American women are the sole or primary earner in their households, and a significantly greater share of American women have earned a college degree in the last twenty years than men of a similar age. Despite their educational attainment and labor market experience, American women earn far less than their male counterparts. The president’s advisers recognize that “closing the gender wage gap is important for improving family outcomes, such as reducing the number of individuals, and especially children, in poverty” (p. 5).

As in the United States, women in Ireland are generally more educated than men, with 46% of women aged 25-49 having a third level qualification (college degree or higher) as compared to 35% of men ages 25-49 (Central Statistics Office, 2012). Across the EU, women account for 60% of university graduates (European Commission, 2014, p. 2). As of June 2014, women account for 46% of the workforce in Ireland, and almost half of these women work between 35 and 44 hours per week, or “full-time” (CSO, 2014). Households where women are the primary wage earners make up approximately 11% of households in Ireland (Watson, et al, 2012, p. 44). These numbers include a 5% increase that occurred since the beginning of the recession in 2007. Despite these figures, the gender wage gap still exists. According to the EU,

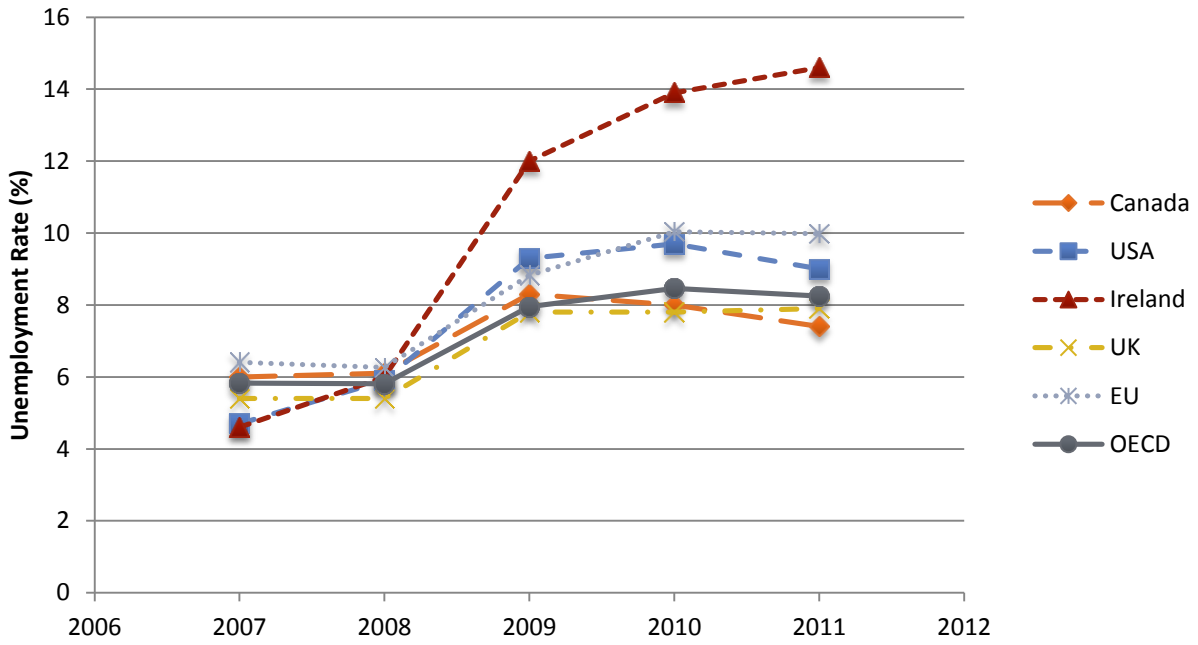
women in Ireland make approximately 14.4% less than men. In comparison, the EU average gender pay gap is approximately 16.2% (European Commission, 2014).

Addressing Current Economic Challenges

The lingering impacts of the Great Recession continue to affect employment and family incomes adversely worldwide. The recessionary period began in late 2007 (Ireland was one of the first countries to enter the recession) and spread through 2009; the number of months of official national recession varied by country from a few months to three years. A large number of countries, particularly in Europe, experienced a second national recession between 2010 and 2013. Despite investments and policy measures aimed at improving economic conditions, persistent unemployment and decreased opportunity continue to characterize economies around the world and the daily reality of many families. Two-generation strategies could be an important tool for helping families, and nations, overcome the current economic challenges detailed below.

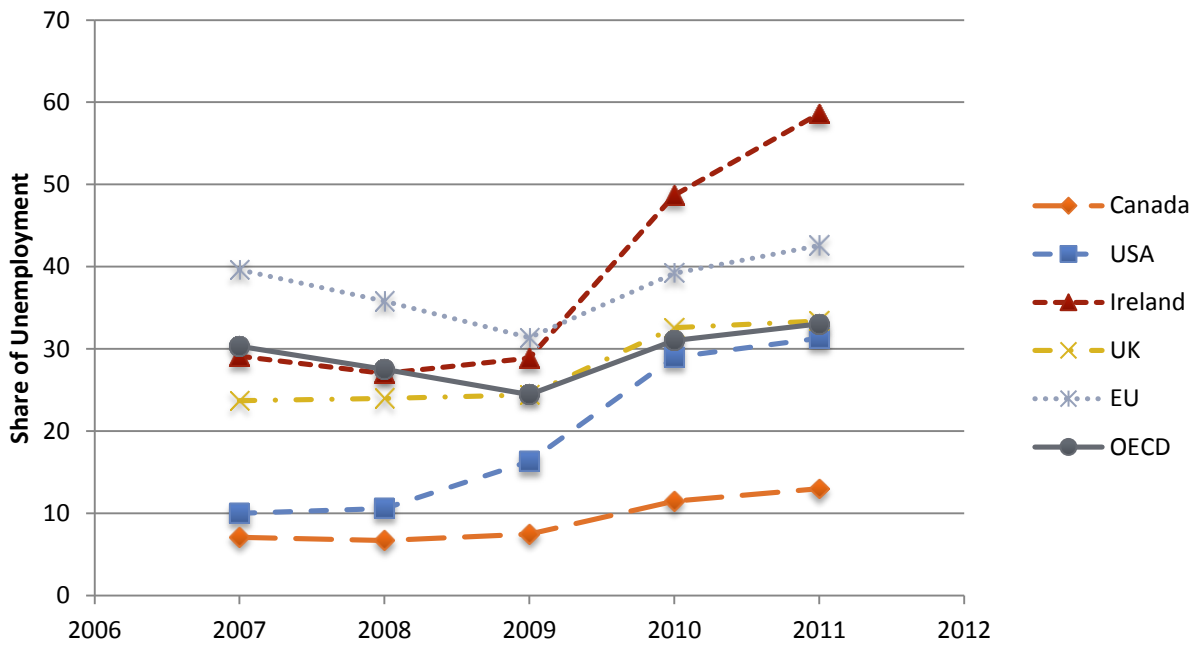
Using World Bank data, figures 3 and 4 below show that unemployment rates continue to be above 2007 levels in the US, Ireland, and across the EU. Part of the issue appears to be long-term unemployment, which represents substantial shares of the unemployed in many countries (figure 4). In 2012, the unemployment rate in Ireland was above 14%, and 60% of all unemployed had been out of work for 12 months or longer. By comparison, the unemployment rate in the US in 2012 was above 8%, and just under 30% were classified as long-term unemployed. Canada fared better than the other countries examined, with unemployment in 2012 at 7.2%, and the share of long-term unemployed at approximately 12%.

Figure 3. Unemployment Rates, 2007-2011



Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, 2014.

Figure 4. Long-Term Unemployment (> 1 year) as a Share of All Unemployed, 2007-2011



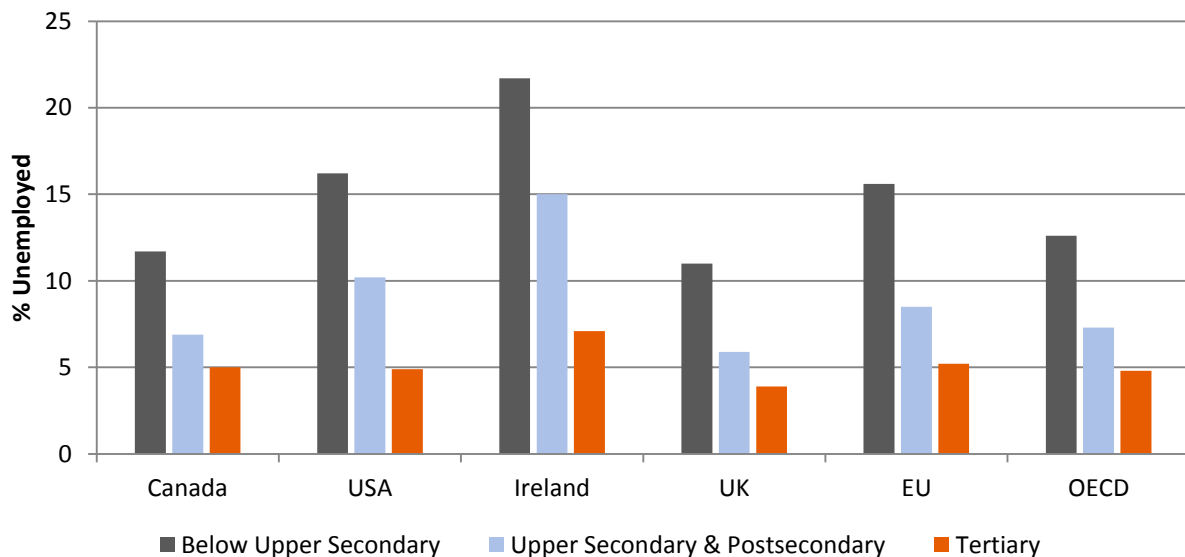
Source: TheGlobalEconomy.Com, 2014.

Educational Attainment and Unemployment

The OECD's *Education at a Glance 2013* "offers a snapshot of how education – and the people who participate in and benefit from it – fared during the first years of the worst economic crisis in decades" (Lalancette, p.1). While the share of younger workers (age 25-34) with a tertiary degree is significant across the OECD, in most countries the majority of adults have lower levels of educational attainment. The share of 25-64 year olds with less than a secondary education ranged from 11% in Canada and the United States to an average 25% in the European Union and 27% in Ireland (Lalancette, p. 2).

A closer look at the unemployment numbers shows that those with the least education experienced significantly higher unemployment than those with a tertiary degree (figure 5).

Figure 5. Share of 25-64 Year Olds Unemployed in 2011, By Educational Attainment



Source: Table 45.4A, Data at a Glance 2013, OECD.

In the United States, unemployment for those without a high school credential reached 16.2% compared to 4.9% for those with a college degree. Across the European Union (EU21), the unemployment rate for those with the least education climbed to an average 15.6% compared

to average 5.2% for those with a tertiary degree (Heckmann, 2013, p.1). In Ireland, unemployment reached 21.7% for those without an upper secondary education compared with 7.1% for those with a tertiary education. Ireland is one of five countries where the average earnings of those with tertiary degrees are more than double the earnings of those with a secondary or sub-baccalaureate credential (Castaneda Valle & Heckmann, 2013, p.2).

Young Adults Not Employed and Not in Education or Training

Of particular concern to policymakers worldwide is the growing share of young adults (age 15 to 29) who are neither employed nor participating in education or training (often referred to as NEETs or disconnected youth). “During recessionary periods, high general unemployment makes the transition from school to work substantially more difficult for young people, as those with more work experience are favored over new entrants into the labor market” (Lalancette, p. 1). Between 2008 and 2011 the share of youth age 15-29 who were classified as NEETs grew in most OECD countries. In 2011, more than one-fifth (22%) of 15-29 year olds in Ireland were classified as NEETs compared with 13.3% in Canada, 15.3% in the EU21, 15.8% across the OECD, and 15.9% in the US (OECDa, 2013). “On average, young people in Ireland will spend more than three years either unemployed or out of the labor force altogether” (Castaneda Valle & Heckmann, pp.1-2). Given that a significant portion of the NEET population group around the world is also parenting, this lack of connection with education or the labor market is particularly troubling.

Consequences of Economic Insecurity

The economic challenges documented above underscore the need for action. Research has shown that economic insecurity can have long-term negative impacts on human development. In a study to identify lessons for antipoverty policy development, Stevens (2014)

examined the consequences of prior recessions on family outcomes. She found that income is a critical determinant of outcomes:

The evidence that job loss affects the income, health, and achievement of current and future generations speaks to the key role of income in helping or hurting poor families. The simple conclusion here: the loss of income and material resources does cause harm and suggests that income support and stability can play a role in reducing the long-term consequences of poverty (p. 22).

At their core, two-generation approaches are antipoverty strategies with investments in multiple members of the family unit. It is the multiple, coordinated investments that offer families the best opportunity for gaining and holding on to middle-class economic strategies. The next section highlights innovated and promising two-generation/family practices in the United States and Ireland.

Innovative Programs and Promising Two-Generation Strategies

Two-generation strategies provide an opportunity for policymakers and program developers to address current economic challenges and the potential for negative long-term consequences for families. By building onto existing policies and programs that are family-oriented and that support high-quality, evidence-based components for parents and children, with wrap-around services, communities around the world have made the shift towards a two-generation perspective. A review of recent reports from the United Nations, the OECD, the Ascend Program at the Aspen Institute, and others confirms that policies and programs targeting a range of human and social capital development needs have been implemented worldwide in the last decade to address growing inequality, often framed as antipoverty initiatives.

The following examples are intended to spur conversation about similar efforts and opportunities for collaboration and extension that may lead to additional evidence on the effectiveness of two-generation approaches. While the evidence base on most of these efforts is

still emerging, their connections to the two-generation conceptual framework and early findings suggest that these approaches may make a positive difference for families.

Two-Generation Strategies in the United States

In the *Two-Generation Playbook*, Ascend at the Aspen Institute identifies several basic factors favoring a two-generation approach for addressing societal and economic conditions in the United States. These components are built around findings that: almost half of US children live in low-income families; every \$1 invested in high-quality early education saves at least \$7 in societal costs (criminal justice, welfare, etc.) and increases children's economic and education outcomes; and adults who earn a college degree earn about twice the income of those with just a high school credential or less (Ascend, pp. 3-5). The core components of Ascend's framework for two-generation programs include: social capital, early childhood education, postsecondary and employment pathways, economic supports, and health and wellbeing.

In *Making Economic Security a Family Tradition*, Ascend summarizes the 2012 Aspen ThinkXChange, which brought together leaders from multiple domains "to discuss and debate opportunities and solutions for moving children and their parents toward economic mobility and opportunity" (p. 1). The ThinkXChange highlighted a number of programs and policies across the United States that exemplify the core tenets of its "Two-Generations, One Future" vision and demonstrate the variety of approaches that have been developed to meet the needs of specific political and economic contexts.

Colorado's Two-Generation Perspective. The state of Colorado has made a deliberate shift towards coordinated two-generation approaches to address poverty and build family economic security. Lieutenant Governor Joseph Garcia describes how Colorado policymakers first expanded their unit of focus from individual adults or children to families: "In Colorado,

we started by asking how we could improve third grade literacy. Teachers told us that it's...about those critical first three years. We can't talk about early literacy without talking about adult and family literacy...It's a shared issue at the local, state, and national level" (p. 5).

Reggie Bicha, the executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services and an Ascend (Two-Generation) Fellow, describes an important distinction in the state's new approach. "At the state level, we already were doing the two-generation work, but we weren't thinking of it from a two-generation lens. We weren't connecting state agencies with different levels of support to help families be more independent. So now we're asking, how can we better realign and connect supports and services and eliminate the silo approach?" (p. 13). Key policy changes in Colorado have helped to emphasize the two-generation perspective. "Low-income parents need help finding not only a job, but a job that pays well, provides advancement, and provides stability for families. Changing the focus from work participation rates to outcomes has been critical, as has delving into untraditional areas of support like assisting, rather than penalizing, noncustodial parents" (p. 41). One change has been an increased collaboration across state and local agencies to improve kindergarten readiness, partly through a new emphasis on quality early childhood education programs over childcare as simply a work support. Other changes in Colorado include "streamlined services through better technology, simplified application processes, and the elimination of over 800 rules that hamper the process of aiding families" (p. 41).

At the local level, Jefferson County, Colorado, has embraced the new two-generation policy approach, emphasizing wrap-around family support services for families in the Head Start program and building accountability for children's educational attainment from early childhood on through to a high school diploma.

Tulsa, Oklahoma’s CareerAdvance® Program. CareerAdvance® is a sectoral workforce development program targeting jobs in the healthcare industry with a ladder of education, training, and certifications in selected occupations offering opportunities for advancement and family-supporting earnings with fringe benefits.² Training is structured through a career pathways approach and provided at Tulsa Community College and the Tulsa Technology Center. The program began in mid-2009 as a pilot for the parents of children in Head Start/Early Head Start programs operated by the Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP-Tulsa). The program design initially featured a stackable series of training courses in nursing, from Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) through Registered Nurse (RN). In 2011, a career path in health information technology (HIT) was added, and later stand-alone programs for Medical Assistant (MA) and Pharmacy Technician training were added. Participants may “stop-out” (either temporarily or permanently) at each level with an industry-recognized credential that provides participants with opportunities for higher wages and advancement opportunities.

CareerAdvance® is designed to support and motivate participation through several key elements: a cohort training model; peer mentoring and support through facilitated weekly meetings of participants; tuition payments and other education/training expenses; incentive bonuses for good performance; adult basic education and tutoring services; and wraparound services such as before and aftercare for children, and transportation assistance.

CareerAdvance® is currently the subject of a multi-modal evaluation including implementation, outcomes, and impacts studies. The implementation study conducted by the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas at Austin has documented the project at multiple phases from design and testing to implementation and expansion (King et al., 2009; Glover et al.,

² The authors, along with Dr. Christopher King, a senior researcher at the Ray Marshall Center and an Ascend Fellow, worked with CAP-Tulsa to design the program and have been carrying out the implementation and outcomes analysis of it.

2010; Smith et al., 2013). Throughout this process, focus groups of CAP-Tulsa parents and CareerAdvance® participants have provided critical perspective and context to the administrative data collected by the program for measuring outcomes and informing continuous improvement efforts. Challenges and opportunities identified by parents have been incorporated into successive program modifications targeted at helping more parents reach their career and family goals (Smith, 2014). Recent analysis on program persistence led by researchers at Northwestern University found that two-thirds of participants were still enrolled at the one-year mark, with approximately three-fourths earning a credential in that time. Of those who had exited the program within 12 months of enrollment, almost half had earned a credential (Sabol et al., 2014).

The ASPIRE program with Communities in Schools? – Central Texas. ASPIRE (Achieving Success through Parental Involvement, Reading, and Education) is an intensive family literacy program that has been operated by Communities in Schools in Austin, Texas for two decades. The program is built around evidence-based practices in family development and adult and early childhood education.

ASPIRE parents participate in adult education, early childhood education, parenting education, and their children's classrooms. ASPIRE pre-school children attend literacy rich, developmentally appropriate early childhood education classes. ASPIRE parent educators visit with the families in their homes once a month (Third Coast, 2007, p. 1).

Using a matched comparison group evaluation, researchers found that ASPIRE students passed school-administered assessments and exams at higher rates than comparison students in each year examined from kindergarten through fourth grade. Importantly, evaluators found that for ASPIRE students, “any amount of home improvement, any parent involvement in children's classrooms, and any participation in adult education resulted in school performance higher than that of comparison children” (p. 10).

The Jeremiah Program. Launched in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota and currently expanding to sites across the nation including in Massachusetts, North Dakota, and Texas, the Jeremiah Program is a place-based “approach to transform families from poverty to prosperity two generations at a time” (Jeremiah, 2014).³ The program provides single-parent families with stable, subsidized housing and other on-site services, including: a high-quality child development center; access to a library, computer labs, classrooms, and life coaches; and job placement assistance. Participants attend Personal Empowerment Training to develop important personal characteristics that contribute to their success in workplace settings as well as participating in life skills education classes during their time as residents. The average family spends approximately 2.5 years with the Jeremiah Program.

A recent return on investment (ROI) study (Diaz & Piñá, 2013) calculates both first- and second-generation outcomes in estimating benefits and costs for the mothers and children who participate in the Jeremiah Program. Second-generation benefits include projected increased lifetime earnings and tax revenues for child participants, as well as societal savings realized through reduced spending on special education services and future savings from crime reduction. With total costs at \$112,057, the ROI for the Jeremiah Program was estimated at \$2.47 per dollar invested for society as a whole, \$1.66 per dollar invested by taxpayers, and \$34.16 per dollar invested by participants. Because the contributions of private funders are critical to supporting the Jeremiah Program, costs to funders are included in the total cost calculations for society as a whole but funder benefits are not included in societal ROI calculations. Diaz & Piñá calculated philanthropic (non-material) benefits for private funders separately and estimated an ROI of \$3.93 per private dollar invested (p. 15).

³ Jeremiah’s executive director, Gloria Perez, is also an Ascend Fellow.

The MOMS Partnership in New Haven, Connecticut. This program was designed in 2010 to serve the needs of mothers with young children living in poor urban neighborhoods. After identifying multiple factors related with poor family outcomes, including poverty, unstable housing, social isolation, and maternal stress (including depression, addiction, and anxiety disorders), a collaboration of Yale University, New Haven community partners, and other stakeholders developed the partnership. The program model includes neighborhood hub locations where mothers and their children obtain services and participate in a variety of interventions. Another component of the MOMS Partnership trains mothers in the community to serve as Community Mental Health Ambassadors at the neighborhood hub, providing “brief mental health intervention and intergenerational health promotion” (Gruendel, 2014, p. 20).

The mental health intervention is intended to help mothers develop executive function skills and is further supported by an individualized smart-phone application that allows mothers to earn rewards in a token economy to reinforce targeted behaviors. The program helps mothers prepare for the workforce by linking executive functioning skills with tiered skill development. Researchers gather data from the smart-phone application and track outcomes overtime for both mothers and children. Early findings show that participating families have demonstrated increased executive functioning skills and reduced stress on the part of parent and child, improved parenting quality, and improved health, academic, and developmental outcomes for children (Gruendel, 2014).

Family and Related Programs in Ireland

Workforce development and social welfare programs in Ireland traditionally have operated quite separately, with different funding streams, personnel and chains of command. The tremendous economic challenges that Ireland has faced since 2007 have prompted a review

and subsequent reform of the employment, vocational education, and training services. Ireland is moving to a system of “One Stop” centers to coordinate delivery of services, to align needs of the labor market with the training programs being offered (OECD, 2014, pp. 51-52). Although these reforms do not address the needs of the entire family unit, they are a step in the right direction, towards more coordinated, employment-focused, workforce development.

Ireland is beginning to recognize the need for anti-poverty strategies that encompass more than just the unemployed. The report, *Work and Poverty in Ireland*, states:

Addressing household joblessness through labor market activation [workforce development] policies is likely to be more complex and require a broader range of responses than addressing unemployment [alone]... Training and assistance in job search, childcare and services or supports specific to people with a disability will need to be included (Watson et al., 2012, p. v).

The examples listed below incorporate several of the ideals embodied in two-generation programs, such as focusing on supporting the family unit, or providing programs targeted to one area or need.

Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership, Dublin. The Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership was established to support children, families, and address social exclusion in Ballymun, an economically distressed area in Dublin, Ireland. Funded primarily by the Irish government, the partnership was established in 1991 as a Local Community Development Programme that addresses the following issues within the Ballymun area (*Ballymun*, 2014):

- Education
- Employment
- Childcare
- Enterprise and community development

The partnership runs both the North West Dublin Childcare Resource Centre and the Local Employment Services, and provides a variety of wrap-around services. Due to the

reorganization of the workforce development and training department, the partnership is currently in a state of flux. It is actively involved with the Innovate Ballymun organization, and with the Dublin City University Social Enterprise organization. Together, these programs are designed to facilitate jobs growth and economic stability within the Ballymun area.

youngballymun, Dublin. *youngballymun* is a 10-year strategy targeting prevention and early intervention services for children, young people, and families in the Ballymun area. The program started in 2007 with an aim to reduce child poverty and promote better outcomes for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. *youngballymun* is jointly funded through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and the Atlantic Philanthropies. At the core of *youngballymun*'s mission is the desire for systems change around how services for disadvantaged children and families are organized and delivered.

For too long the development of services to children and families in Ireland's most disadvantaged communities has relied on available funding lines, together with local knowledge, and available energy, interests and skills to develop services. They have often been developed in response to crises such as early school leaving, anti-social behaviour and child risk and protection and most frequently without access or reference to the national and international evidence of what works. They are usually developed piecemeal without the cohesion of an overarching vision and an integrated cross-sectoral community service strategy (Real, 2014).

youngballymun is designed to be evidence based, focusing on what works rather than what has been done in the past, with a focus on what can be translated into success at the national policy level. *youngballymun* follows a life cycle strategy, including:

- Ready, Steady Grow: Encompasses 0-3 year olds, their parents, and services associated with this age group.
- 3>4>5 Learning Years: Aimed at children ages 3-5, their parents, and early childhood education providers.
- The Incredible Years: Primary-school children, their parents, and teachers.
- Write Minded: Literacy program for all parents, students, and community workers.

Through these programs, *youngballymun* delivers coordinated services to parents and children. Services are provided through the Health Service Executive (similar to the US Department of Health and Human Services), schools, and community workers (*youngballymun*, 2014). The program has served over 1,300 infants, 400 preschoolers, and over 400 primary school students, in addition to parents, teachers, and other individuals working with children and families in the Ballymun area. In the 2012 report, *An Economic Appraisal of youngballymun*, the return on investment was calculated to be €4.5 of savings for every euro invested in *youngballymun* (Lawlor & Gilloway, 2012, p 8.).

Solas Project, Dublin. Solas is a non-profit organization that helps young people overcome social and educational disadvantages (Solas, 2014). Solas works in an area of Dublin that is affected by high crime, high rates of intergenerational poverty, and low educational attainment. They have several different programs aimed at providing supporting children from primary school through university:

School-based Programs:

- Y Not? College Awareness for 6th class children (12-13 year olds)
- Dragon's Den – Business development/Entrepreneurship program for 5th class children. (11-12 year olds) This is modeled after a very popular Irish television program by the same name.
- School sports program

Targeted Programs:

- Primary after school program – provides a safe, home-like environment afterschool for children living in “challenging circumstances”
- Step Up – Teen mentoring program for young people in secondary school.
- Compass – Prison program aimed at reducing recidivism/re-offending. Inmates are mentored, and participate in group activities to build motivation, self-worth, and self discipline.
- The Yard – Skills development program with the ultimate goal of increasing opportunity for employment for young people. The program is currently in the pilot stage, with three different activities: Bike repair, woodworking, and car valeting (cleaning).

Although Solas is not specifically designed as a two-generation program, their targeted programs have many of the same attributes. The after school program for primary school children aims to replicate a “home away from home” environment, where children are supported and cared for. The Yard is a pilot program to help young people develop the skills they need for employment. By providing a safe, reliable place for young people to go after school, their parents can focus on employment or furthering their education.

St. Andrews Resource Centre, Dublin. The St. Andrews Resource Centre provides support services and development activities to both individuals and families, with a particular focus in serving the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. St. Andrews is unique in that it provides resources and wrap-around services for the entire life-cycle needs of its clients (St. Andrews, 2014), specifically:

- Childcare
- Youth programs – academic/homework programs, after school clubs, and outreach programs
- Adult education – Basic English course, Irish language course, individual literacy training, and arts and crafts courses
- Employment preparation and placement services
- Training opportunities for the long-term unemployed
- Elderly services – home help, day centre, meals on wheels
- Welfare rights and advice services

The centre encompasses the needs of a full age range, from infants to elderly, thus strengthening the family unit. In addition to traditional employment assistance, St. Andrews Resource Centre provides direct employment assistance in the form of the Community Employment program. The program is designed for the long-term unemployed (in other words, those out of the labor market for 1+ years), this program provides both basic adult education, and job training in specific areas including: Catering Skills, Bus Driving, and Receptionist, among others. The centre currently has a capacity for 95 participants in this program.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Economically secure families are the foundation of a strong middle class. By helping parents build the educational and occupational credentials they need to obtain employment with family sustaining wages and benefits, two-generation strategies help to increase family economic stability. This paper has defined a two-generation framework based on high-quality educational opportunities for parents and children, coordinated with wrap-around and family support services that remove barriers to participation and completion.

Examining economic and policy environments in the US, Ireland, and the EU, the authors identified ongoing need as well as opportunities for helping families escape poverty. The two-generation programs and initiatives from the US and Ireland highlight the breadth of two-generation interventions and underscore the common issues facing families all over the world.

As two-generation strategies gain traction, more research is needed to understand the long-term effectiveness of the programs. Evidence is needed to establish that two-generation strategies do, in fact, lead to multiplicative, lasting impacts for families. By definition, it will take years to build the database needed for that assessment. In the meantime, there is much work to be done.

Summary Recommendations

Policymakers at all levels should identify opportunities to improve services and supports to families, particularly through improved coordination and collaboration across systems.

- ❖ Invest in programs that provide career ladders with modularized programs and support services for adult participants. The European Union is studying several pilot programs in its Sector Skills Alliances (SSA). The goals of the SSAs are to align the vocational education system with the needs of the labor market, and to increase portability of labor qualifications throughout the EU (SSA, 2014). Similarly, in the United States, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants are a \$2 billion investment over four years through the US Department of Labor's

Employment & Training Administration to improve coordination between growth sectors in the economy and workforce training programs (TAACCCT, 2014). The recently passed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) provides new encouragement for states and localities to develop sector-based and career pathway training programs, as well as bridge programs to help low-skilled adults. Importantly, the law provides state governors with a reserve of 15% of the state's allocation to test new and innovative strategies, such as more explicit two-generation approaches.

- ❖ Two-generation initiatives can begin as small pilot programs or large-scale state-wide programs, or at any point in-between. Colorado began with a whole-scale shift in priority from serving individuals to serving families throughout their human services system at the state and local level. This new priority has resonated at the local level and helped to spread two-generation approaches across the state. Another option is to begin with a pilot project before launching a full-scale change. Many successful two-generation programs began as small pilot projects before expanding. The Career *Advance*® program in Tulsa is one example of a small program that has grown over time. Greater flexibility should be granted for employment, education, and family services to adapt programs to changing social, economic, and labor market conditions. This recommendation was also highlighted in the OECD report, *Employment and Skills Strategies in Ireland*, which recommended utilizing pilot programs to test new organizational models, similar to *youngballymun*, before implementing systems change throughout a large organization.
- ❖ Even in countries with the strongest social welfare policies, programs tend to serve one population (young children, adults, or the unemployed) without considering the larger family unit. Effective two-generation programs shift the focus from individuals to families in order to address barriers and maximize the benefits of participation. While programs like the SSA and TAACCCT provide an opportunity to help unemployed parents reconnect with the labor market, this connection could be counter-productive if the labor market opportunities or work schedule do not coincide with a child's early childhood care or school schedule. Both matter.
- ❖ Establish a tapered or “step-down” policy for social welfare programs to help families avoid the “benefits trap”, where individuals and families incur an economic cost of returning to training and employment, rather than remaining on social welfare subsidies. Income supports should be offered during training, to encourage families to seek out sustainable forms of employment (Richardson & Bradshaw, 2014, p 33). As earnings increase and families become stronger financially, benefits can slowly be tapered off. Given the growing share of women in the workforce around the world, efforts to close the gender pay gap are also important to helping families build middle-class economic security.

- ❖ Communities, policymakers, and other stakeholders interested in testing a two-generation strategy need to bring a broad lens to their development efforts and consider how families are affected by a combination of investments including economic and workforce development, education across the lifespan, health and social services, and public benefits. Gathering data along the way from idea through implementation and from family enrollment through completion and beyond is essential to understanding how two-generation strategies work. As Shonkoff & Fisher (2013) state:

[There] is a critical need to expand the definition of evidence to include broadly accepted scientific principles from the biological and social sciences rather than restrict the definition to results of experimental evaluations and benefit-cost studies... The most important question is not whether randomized control trials are important, but rather how can we strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice by including other sources of knowledge (p. 1646-47).

For example, periodic focus groups with participants and program staff, as well as interviews with partner organizations, local employers, and other stakeholders provide key data for the ongoing implementation evaluation of the *CareerAdvance*® program. These early indicators are essential for understanding how it works in order to inform program development and sustainability over time. This early evidence is particularly important for assessing short- and mid-term outcomes, given that it will take years to measure the real long-term outcomes and impacts of a two-generation approach.

Around the world families face a similar economic challenge: security. Two-generation strategies expand the middle class by helping families earn economic and related benefits from investments in education and training. Through coordinated schedules, wrap-around support services, and a new perspective on the family as the unit of service, two-generation approaches currently in use are showing promise in the US, Ireland, and other countries. These efforts should inform the next wave of pilot and demonstration projects and policy initiatives needed to understand issues with scaling, replicability, and expansion of two-generation strategies across a range of economic, political, social, and cultural contexts. Based on current evidence, it will be worth the effort.

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