



ASCEND

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

Public Support for Two-Generation Programs

Findings from a national survey commissioned by Ascend at the Aspen Institute

November 7, 2014

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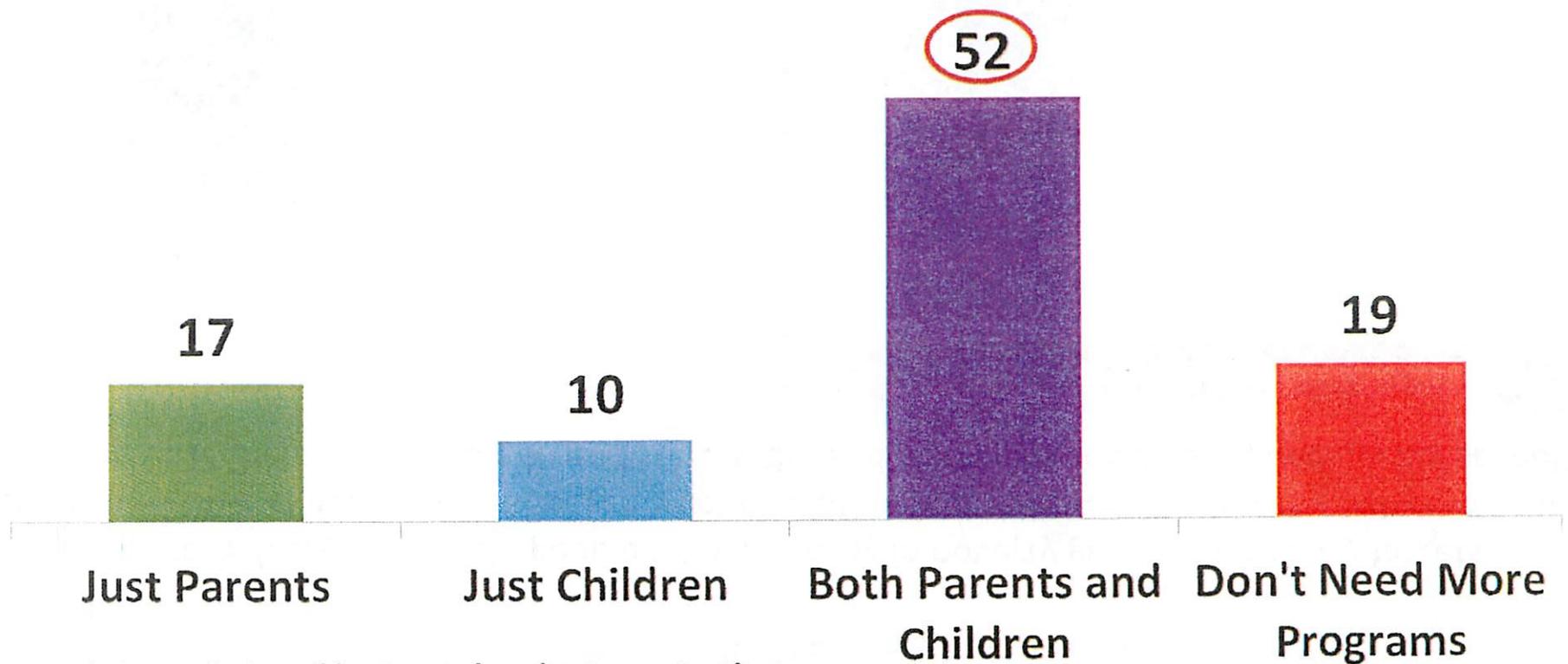
Methodology

Ascend at the Aspen Institute commissioned Lake Research Partners to conduct this national omnibus survey of 1,005 adults over the age of 18 nationwide in the continental United States. The survey was conducted from September 18-21, 2014, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.1% at the 95% confidence interval. The margin of error is higher among subgroups.

Americans overwhelmingly believe a two-generation approach is most effective.

Federal/State Programs to Help People Get Out of Poverty: Which is Most Effective?

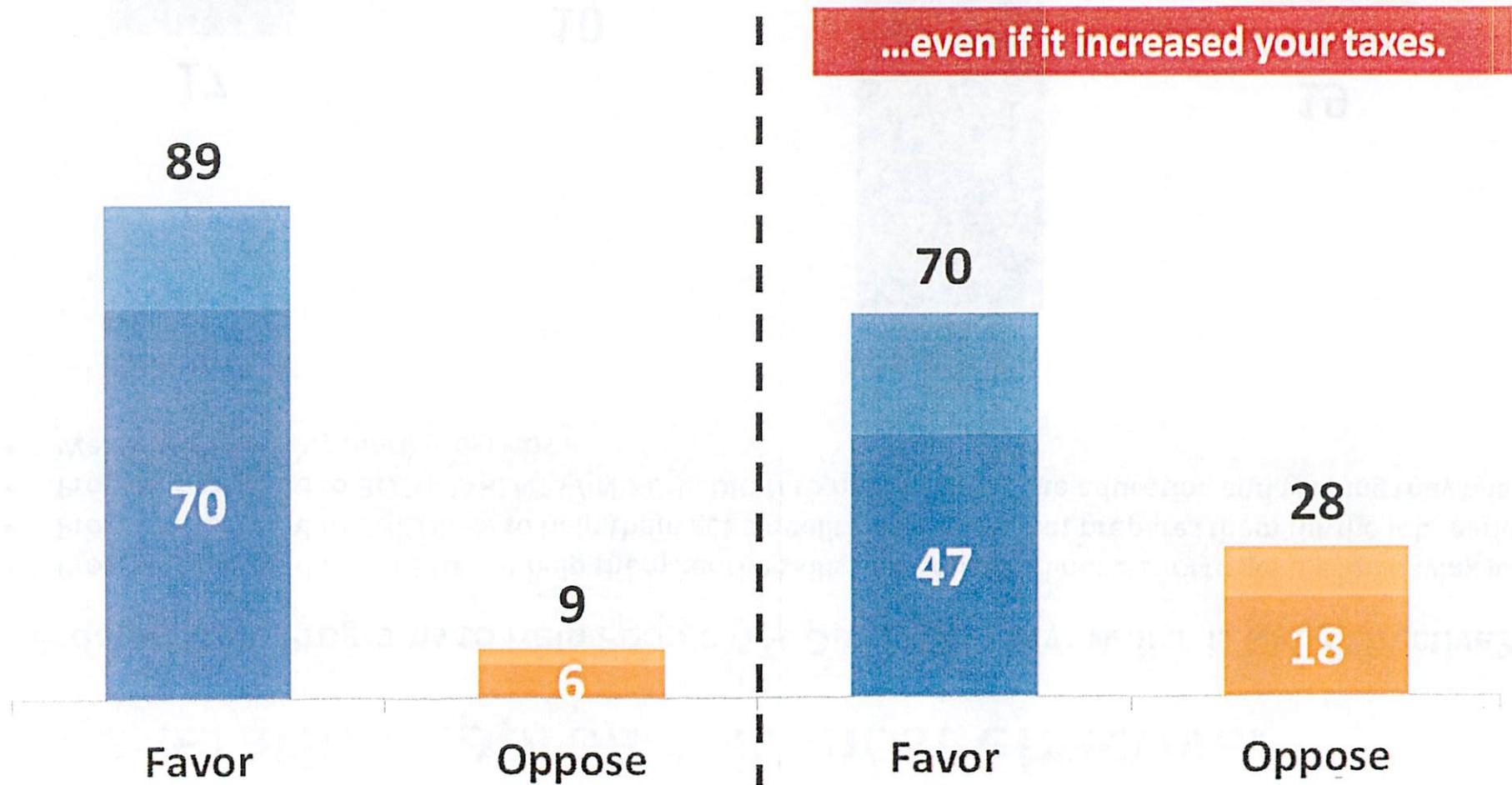
- Programs targeted to **PARENTS** to help them get the skills and education necessary to get a good paying job
- Programs targeted to **CHILDREN** to help them get a quality education that prepares them for the job market
- Programs targeted to **BOTH PARENTS AND CHILDREN** to help each get the education and training they need
- We **do not need any more programs**



Research Commissioned by Ascend at the Aspen Institute

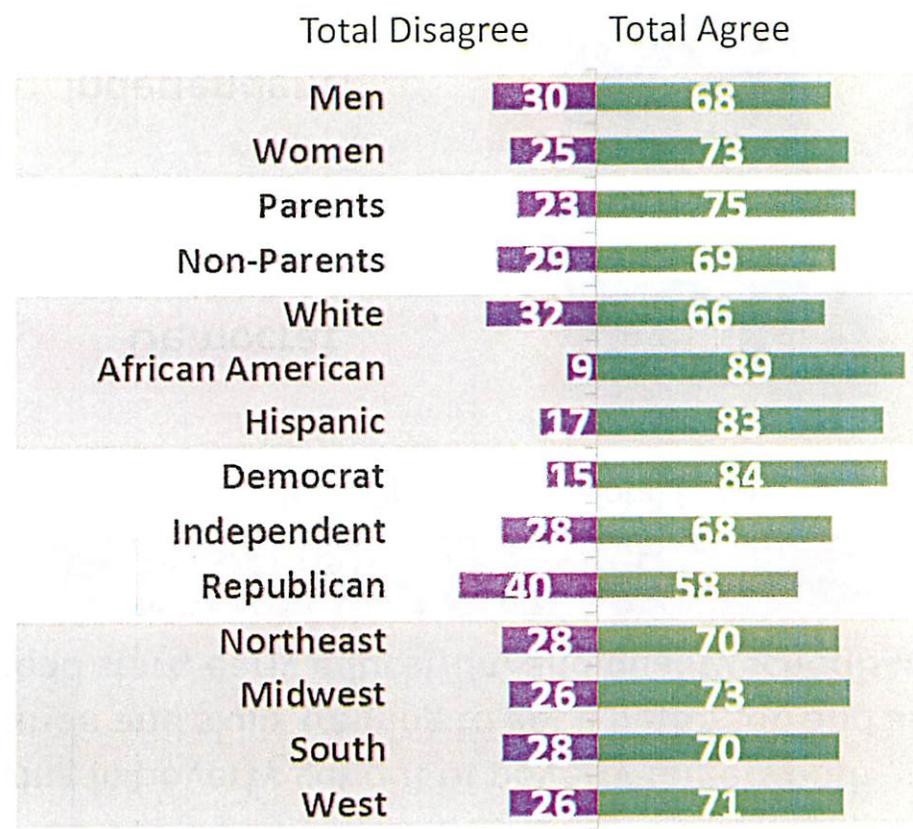
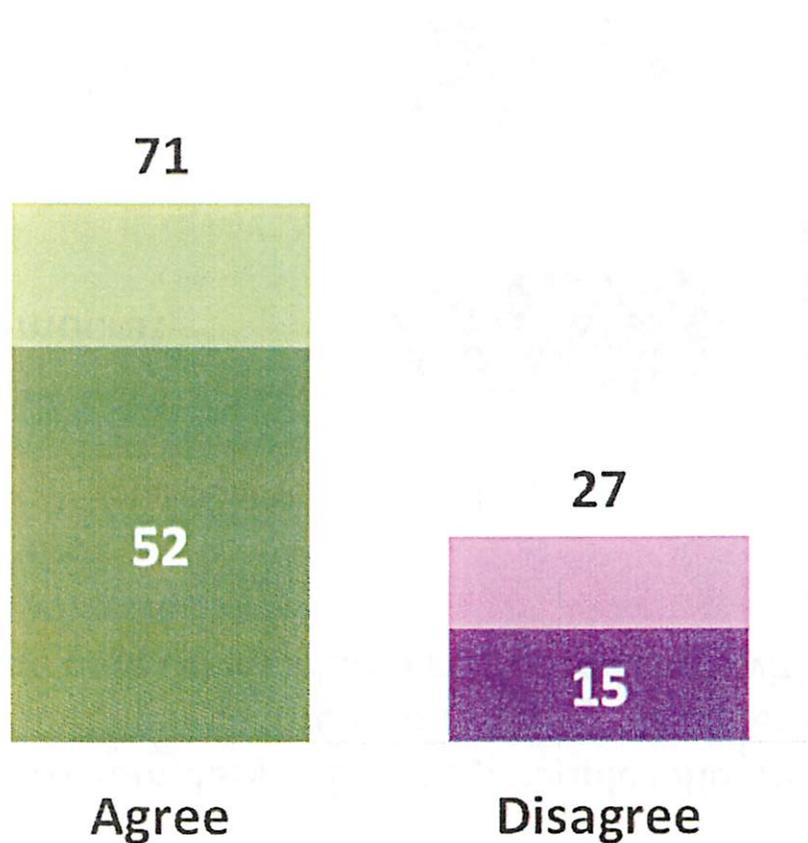
Even in these tax sensitive times, Americans favor a two generation approach to bring people out of poverty.

One program designed to help people who are living in poverty get out of poverty targets both parents and their children, so that parents get education and skills training to get a better job and at the same time their children get a good start with head start, early education, and quality schools...



Americans across demographics believe investing in a parent's economic well-being will help their children succeed.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: If we want to make sure low income children are successful in their early learning, then we have to also invest in their parent's economic well-being.

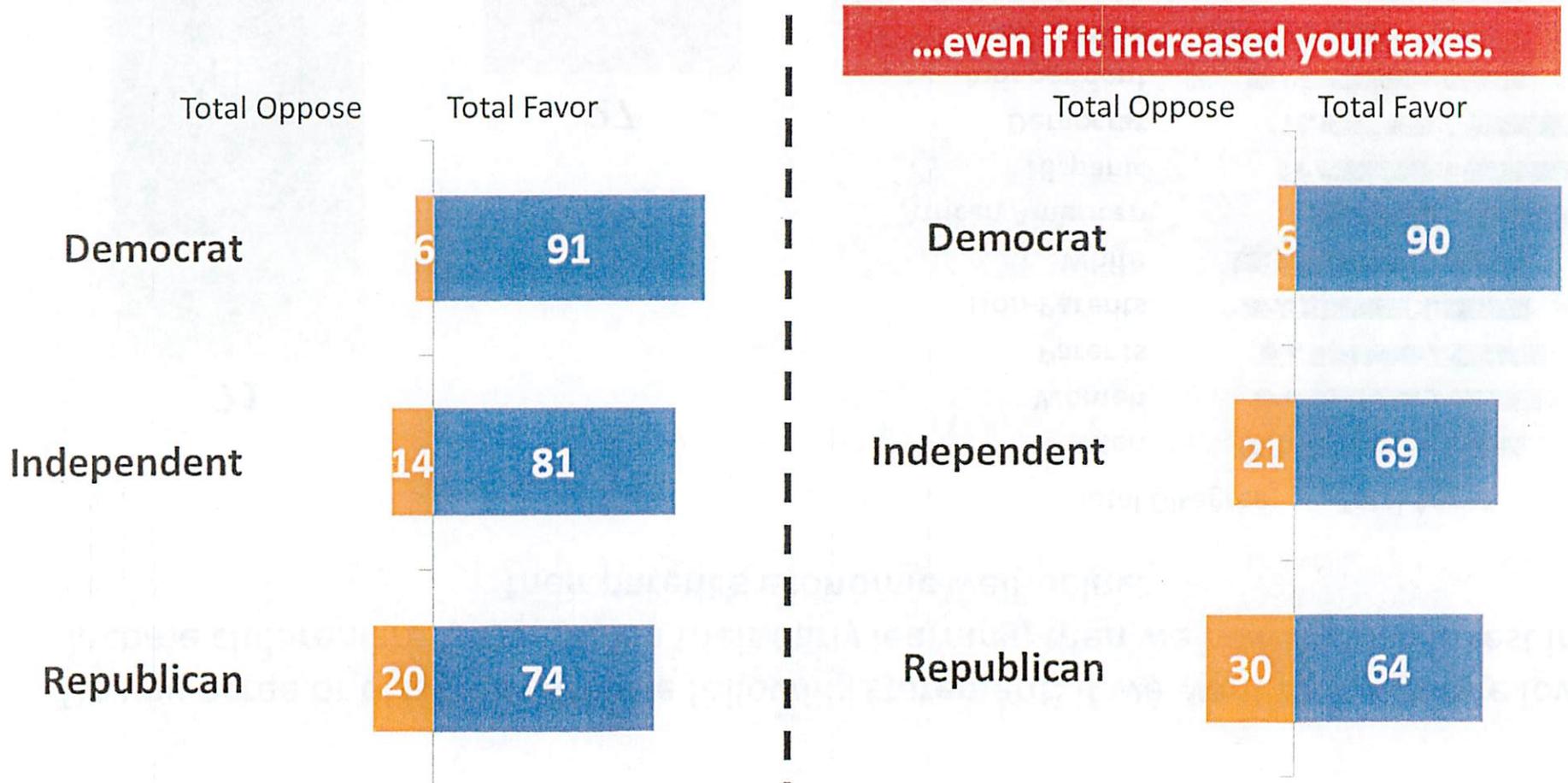


Darker Colors Indicate Intensity

Research Commissioned by Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Majorities across party lines favor a two-generation approach even if it would raise their taxes. Republicans are more tax sensitive but favor by more than 2:1.

One program designed to help people who are living in poverty get out of poverty targets both parents and their children, so that parents get education and skills training to get a better job and at the same time their children get a good start with head start, early education, and quality schools...



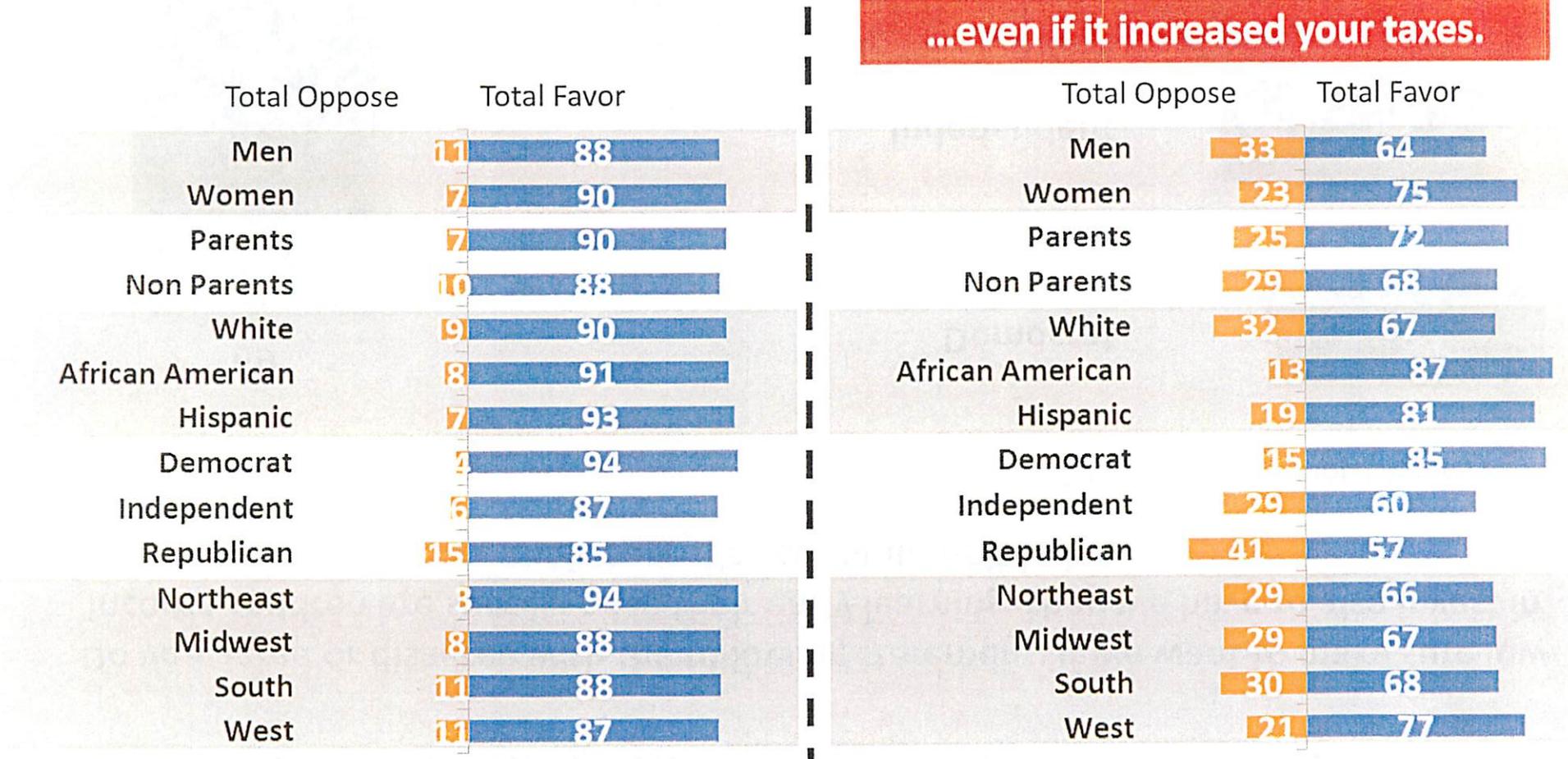
Research Commissioned by Ascend at the Aspen Institute

2014 LRP Election Eve/Night Omnibus

Strong support for a two-generation approach exists across demographics.

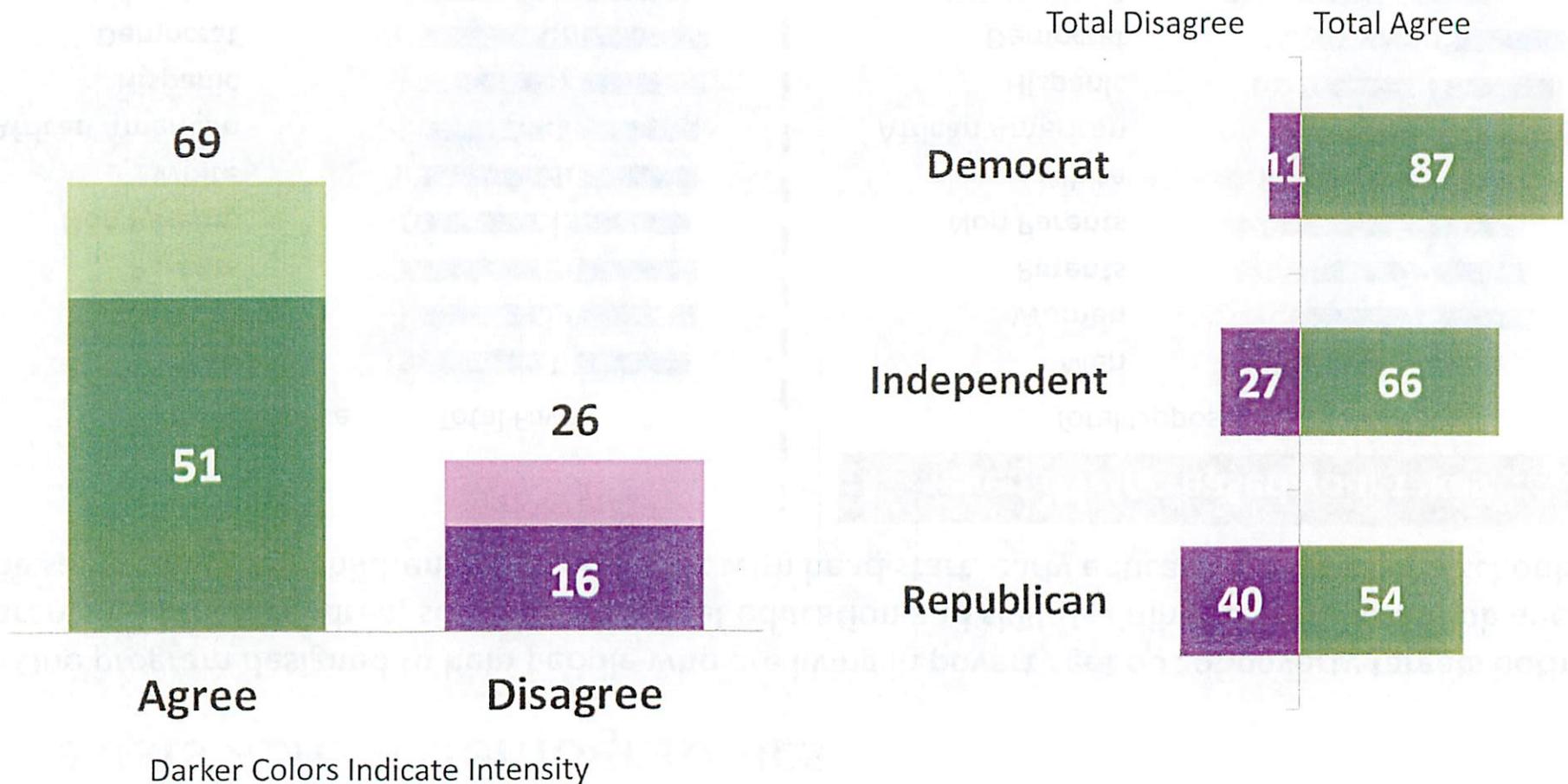
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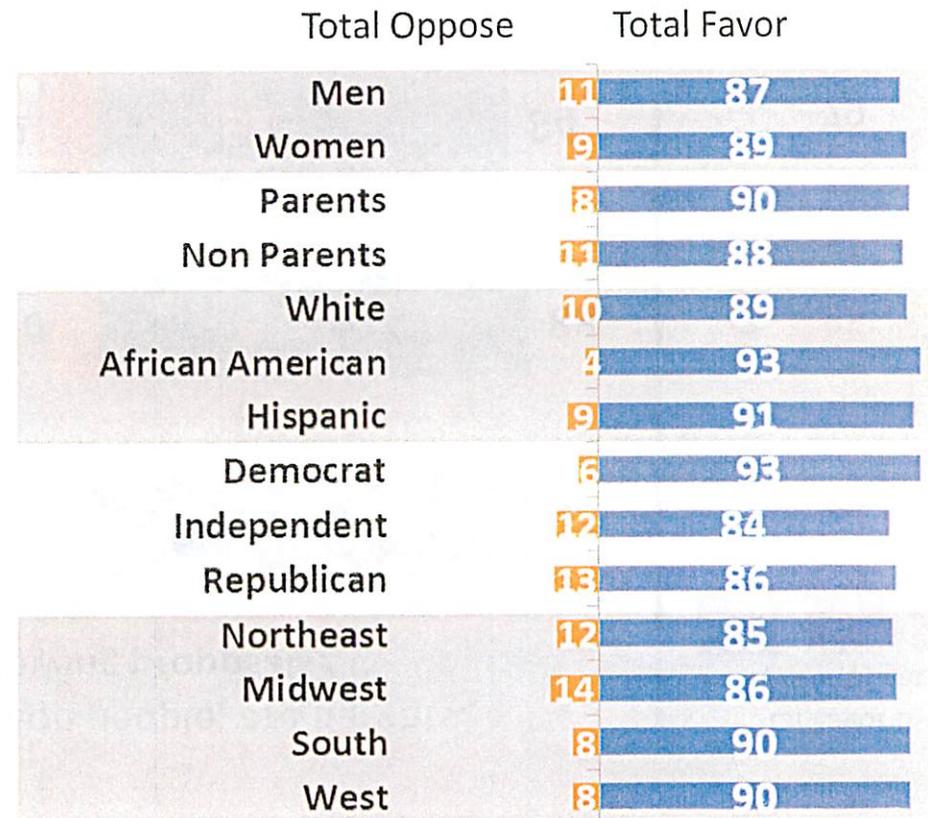
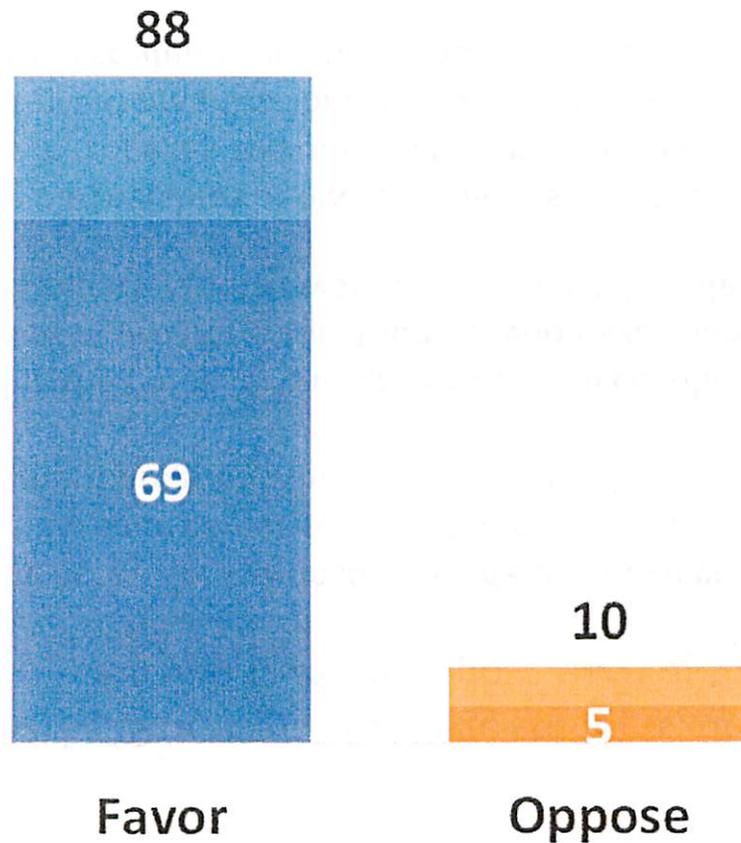
Voters across party lines believe investing in a parent's economic well-being will help their children succeed.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: If we want to make sure low income children are successful in their early learning, then we have to also invest in their parent's economic well-being.



Overwhelming majorities strongly favor home visiting programs offering parents information on education and employment.

Currently states run home visiting programs that provide services to low-income pregnant women and parents of young children in their home to encourage child health and development. Do you favor or oppose these programs offering parents information on education, workforce training, and employment opportunities?



Darker Colors Indicate Intensity

Research Commissioned by Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Americans favor policies that would help students enrolled in colleges who have young children.

Nearly 25 percent of college students, or 4 million people, are parents.
Do you favor or oppose each of the following proposals?

Providing access for low-income students who have young children to career services and childhood development programs through their school.



Extending the hours for career services and childhood development programs for students who have young children to better match working-parent's schedules.



Creating partnerships between private, state, and community colleges and universities with government and non-profit organizations to provide services for low-income students who have young children.



Including childcare expenses in determining financial aid eligibility for low-income students with young children.



Providing low-income students who have young children year-round access to financial aid plans for certificate programs so that they can maintain full-time student status.



Total Favor By Party Identification

Dem Ind Rep

92 84 85

92 85 86

93 79 82

90 74 83

89 75 77

Oppose Favor

Darker Colors Indicate Intensity

Bipartisan Analysis: Clusters of Support

•Two-Gen Embracers

- Strongly supportive of all 13 questions which touch on serving children and parents as a unit.
- Bipartisan but more democrats
- Younger with more men and women under age 50 than other audiences
- More support among African Americans and Hispanics

•Subdued Supporters

- Somewhat less enthusiastic in their intensity of support but still generally supportive of this policy with a couple of exceptions.
- More Republicans than Democrats
- More college graduates

•Questioning Opposition

- Not supportive of two-gen policies but not yet solidly opposed either.
- More Republicans than Democrats



policy
report

KIDS COUNT

**CREATING OPPORTUNITY
FOR FAMILIES**

a two-generation approach

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

**ABOUT THE
ANNIE E. CASEY
FOUNDATION
AND KIDS COUNT**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow.

KIDS COUNT®, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children.

At the national level, the initiative develops and distributes reports on key areas of well-being, including the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. The initiative also maintains the KIDS COUNT Data Center (datacenter.kidscount.org), which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic and physical well-being of children. Additionally, the Foundation funds a nationwide network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed, community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

Additional data and information
on ordering this report can be
found at www.kidscount.org.

CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILIES

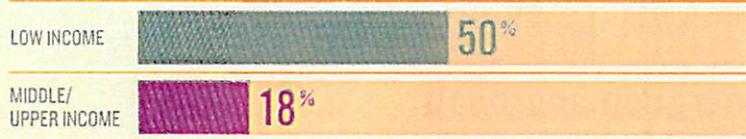
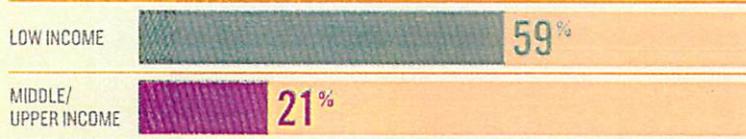
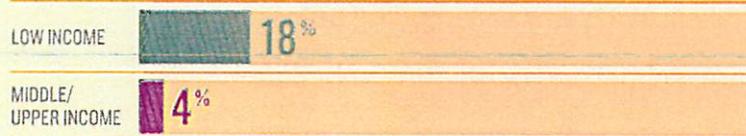
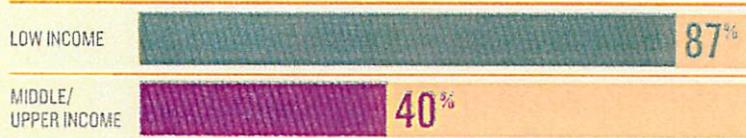
a two-generation approach

For many American families, every day is a juggling act involving work, child care, school and conflicting schedules. But for low-income families, the balls are more likely to fall, and the consequences can be dire when they do. A lack of reliable child care can mean fewer work hours or even a lost job. Weekly or daily shift changes require repeatedly stitching together a patchwork of care. Just getting to work is tough without dependable transportation. And for children in these families, early educational opportunities and extracurricular activities tend to be unaffordable luxuries as parents stretch pennies to keep the lights on.

FIGURE 1

Low-Income Families Face Greater Barriers for Children in the Early Years

Low-income families with children under age 8 face extra barriers that can affect the early years of a child's development. Parents in these families are more likely than their higher-income peers to be young, to lack higher education and employment and to have difficulty speaking English.

PERCENTAGE WITH PARENTS UNDER AGE 25:**PERCENTAGE HEADED BY A SINGLE PARENT:****PERCENTAGE WITH PARENTS WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY SPEAKING ENGLISH:****PERCENTAGE IN WHICH NO PARENT HAS AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR HIGHER:****PERCENTAGE IN WHICH NO PARENT HAS FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORK:**

SOURCE Child Trends' analysis of data from the 2011/2012 National Survey of Children's Health and Population Reference Bureau's analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey.

NOTES "Low income" refers to families with incomes less than 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. In 2012, this figure was about \$47,000 for a family of four (two adults and two children). "Middle/upper income" refers to families with incomes greater than or equal to 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. Unless otherwise noted, "young children" refers to children from birth to age 8.

In short, the 10 million low-income U.S. families with young children¹ face considerable daily obstacles that can threaten the entire family's stability and lead to lifelong difficulties for their kids.

For 25 years, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has documented how America's children are faring to spur action that lifts more kids out of poverty and opens doors to greater opportunities. Despite the efforts of many, however, the cycle of poverty persists. More kids grow up poor today than a quarter century ago — a fact that we cannot solely attribute to the lingering aftereffects of the recession.² Yet we cannot give up: The future prospects of our children, our economy and our nation are at stake.

While the Casey Foundation continually seeks to improve child well-being through investments and reliable research to inform good policies for kids, we also have spent the past two decades promoting strategies to increase the financial stability of low-income families. A family-supporting job that provides a steady source of parental income and opportunities for advancement is critical to moving children out of poverty.

Furthermore, a child's success is strongly tied to his or her family's stability and well-being. An asthmatic child living in unsafe housing can become chronically absent from school, unable to focus on learning and, perhaps ultimately, unable to succeed academically. At the same time, poverty can undermine family stability.

FIGURE 2

What It Takes to Raise a Family

Many low-income families are headed by a single parent with no more than a high school diploma whose median monthly earnings cover just over half the basic costs of raising children.

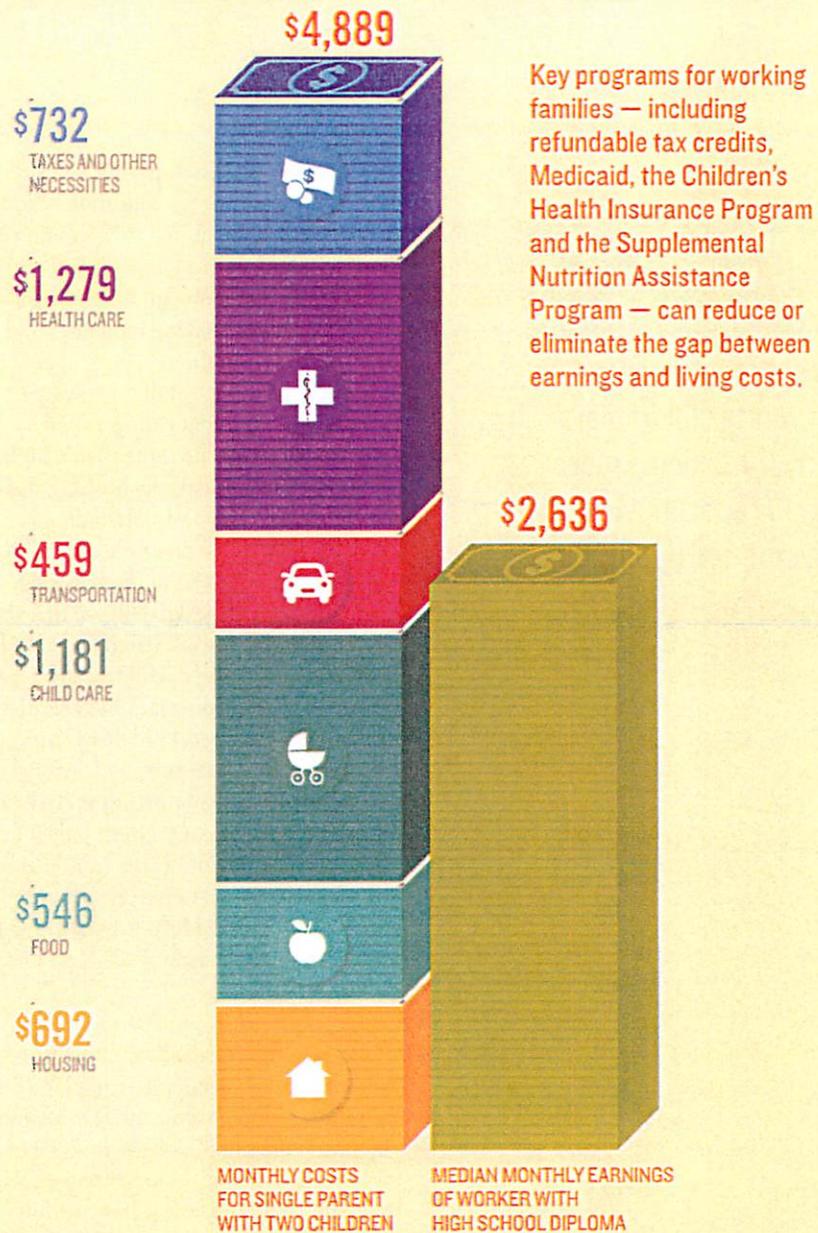
A parent working multiple jobs to make ends meet without paid time off struggles to foster his or her child's healthy growth on meager resources and bandwidth. A child raised in poverty is more likely to become an adult living in poverty — less likely to graduate from high school or remain consistently employed.³ Forty-two percent of children born to parents at the bottom of the income ladder stay there.⁴

Recognizing this connection between child and family well-being and future success, we and others in the public, non-profit and private sectors are exploring ways to address the needs of families as a whole.⁵ This two-generation approach aims to create opportunities for families by simultaneously equipping parents and kids with the tools they need to thrive while removing the obstacles in their way.

CHALLENGES FACING AMERICA'S LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

Today's low-income parents contend with a complex web of challenges — at work, in their child's care and education and at home — that exacerbate the inherent difficulties of raising a family.

Inflexible, unpredictable jobs that do not pay enough to support a family. The changes in our economy during the past few decades have compounded the strain of supporting a family. Gone are the manufacturing jobs that offered a reliable, decent income, plus benefits and a path to a career. The



Key programs for working families — including refundable tax credits, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — can reduce or eliminate the gap between earnings and living costs.

SOURCES: Annie E. Casey Foundation analysis of Economic Policy Institute, Family Budget Calculator, Topeka, Kansas (median). Retrieved from www.epi.org/resources/budget. And, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release, Nov. 1, 2013. Retrieved from www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/wkyeng_11012013.htm



Low-income parents with young children are nearly three times more likely to report having poor or fair mental health than higher-income parents.

majority of today's well-paying jobs call for some level of higher education.⁶ Now two incomes are required to maintain the same standard of living one manufacturing worker provided for a family years ago, which also means paying more for child care and transportation.⁷

In nearly 90 percent of low-income families with children younger than age 8, parents have no more than a high school diploma, drastically limiting their job prospects.⁸ Their jobs often do not allow for time off to care for a sick child. Their schedules can be so unpredictable — fluctuating weekly, even daily — that they constantly must rework tenuous child care arrangements.⁹ Indeed, children age 5 or younger in low-income families are more likely than their peers in higher-income families to have parents who identify child care problems as the impetus for changing, quitting or simply not taking a job.¹⁰ Varying schedules and rising tuition costs also create obstacles to pursuing higher education that could help parents compete for better-paying jobs.¹¹

Lack of access to high-quality,¹² flexible and reliable early child care and education.

Working parents regularly struggle to find the safest, most convenient and enriching child care, preschool or babysitter. Choices for low-income families are automatically limited by cost and erratic job schedules, as few child care centers accommodate last-minute changes or evening and weekend hours. Many parents rely on family,

friends or neighbors to watch their kids.¹³ Although some do find safe and stable care, the affordable, flexible options in low-income communities often fall below standards of quality, to the detriment of their children's development. Children age 5 or younger in low-income families are more likely to have parents who report concerns about their child's learning, development or behavior than their peers in higher-income families.¹⁴

The ramifications are stark when children start elementary school. Less than half of kids from low-income families are ready for kindergarten, compared with 75 percent of those from moderate- or high-income families.¹⁵ In later years, they continue to lag behind their peers academically and developmentally.¹⁶

Stress at home, for parents and kids. Parents play a central role in their children's lives and development, setting an example and providing emotional support, as well as fulfilling their basic needs. This is a tall order for anyone, and low-income parents must do so while constantly trying to make ends meet. If child care arrangements, public transportation, housing or steady income fall through, other elements can easily follow, throwing the family into a tailspin.

The strain is even greater for single parents, who shoulder all of the responsibility alone. Almost 60 percent of low-income families with young children are single-parent households.¹⁷ Families

TABLE 1

Financial Stability of Low-Income Families With Young Children by State: 2012

Nearly half—45 percent—of American families with children under age 8 are low income, and many are missing the essential tools to achieve financial stability. Additionally, in half of these families, no parent has full-time, year-round employment. This lack of parental employment varied among states. Alaska, at 64 percent, had the highest rate, while North Dakota had the lowest, at 30 percent. In nearly 90 percent of those families, parents do not have the higher education required for well-paying jobs.

Location	Population of Low-Income Families With Children Age 8 or Under	Percentage in Which No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment	Percentage in Which No Parent Has an Associate Degree or Higher	Location	Population of Low-Income Families With Children Age 8 or Under	Percentage in Which No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment	Percentage in Which No Parent Has an Associate Degree or Higher
	Number	Percent	Percent		Number	Percent	Percent
United States	9,976,000	50	87	Missouri	195,000	49	87
Alabama	172,000	52	83	Montana	29,000	44	77
Alaska	19,000	64	94	Nebraska	58,000	33	80
Arizona	236,000	48	87	Nevada	100,000	47	91
Arkansas	119,000	44	83	New Hampshire	26,000	52	84
California	1,277,000	51	89	New Jersey	203,000	51	85
Colorado	154,000	46	82	New Mexico	83,000	47	88
Connecticut	80,000	60	87	New York	559,000	53	86
Delaware	24,000	46	84	North Carolina	358,000	50	87
District of Columbia	13,000	58	89	North Dakota	16,000	30	71
Florida	588,000	49	84	Ohio	366,000	53	86
Georgia	383,000	49	88	Oklahoma	149,000	42	86
Hawaii	33,000	49	83	Oregon	126,000	50	86
Idaho	64,000	41	79	Pennsylvania	324,000	54	86
Illinois	378,000	48	87	Rhode Island	25,000	60	91
Indiana	228,000	49	85	South Carolina	174,000	54	89
Iowa	85,000	45	85	South Dakota	23,000	43	85
Kansas	95,000	37	85	Tennessee	226,000	48	89
Kentucky	162,000	52	91	Texas	1,035,000	43	90
Louisiana	171,000	52	92	Utah	103,000	37	67
Maine	40,000	54	84	Vermont	16,000	45	85
Maryland	128,000	54	87	Virginia	208,000	48	86
Massachusetts	139,000	60	85	Washington	196,000	54	84
Michigan	306,000	56	87	West Virginia	56,000	56	87
Minnesota	129,000	53	85	Wisconsin	147,000	46	86
Mississippi	137,000	55	89	Wyoming	16,000	37	73
				Puerto Rico	185,000	57	78

SOURCE: Population Reference Bureau's analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey.

TABLE 2

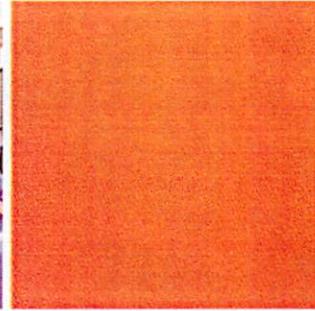
Early Development and Child Care Concerns of Low-Income Families: 2011/2012

Children age 5 and under in low-income families are more likely to have parents who report concerns about their child's learning, development or behavior. They also are more likely to have parents who say child care problems led to changing, quitting or simply not taking a job.

Location	Population of Children Age 5 and Under in Low-Income Families	Percentage at Risk for Developmental Delays	Percentage Whose Parents Report That Child Care Issues Affected Their Employment
	Number	Percent	Percent
United States	11,606,000	31	17
Alabama	202,000	30	15
Alaska	26,000	24	17
Arizona	294,000	31	24
Arkansas	134,000	31	18
California	1,475,000	33	16
Colorado	169,000	31	17
Connecticut	80,000	33	24
Delaware	29,000	28	19
District of Columbia	19,000	36	23
Florida	707,000	29	23
Georgia	450,000	30	16
Hawaii	40,000	32	18
Idaho	77,000	23	11
Illinois	433,000	39	16
Indiana	261,000	31	21
Iowa	96,000	32	14
Kansas	117,000	37	14
Kentucky	175,000	29	18
Louisiana	202,000	40	16
Maine	40,000	25	18
Maryland	153,000	24	N.A.
Massachusetts	143,000	37	26
Michigan	346,000	25	13
Minnesota	155,000	25	19
Mississippi	156,000	33	15

Location	Population of Children Age 5 and Under in Low-Income Families	Percentage at Risk for Developmental Delays	Percentage Whose Parents Report That Child Care Issues Affected Their Employment
	Number	Percent	Percent
Missouri	225,000	25	18
Montana	37,000	25	19
Nebraska	70,000	22	11
Nevada	123,000	28	13
New Hampshire	29,000	27	16
New Jersey	226,000	28	17
New Mexico	103,000	26	17
New York	629,000	42	18
North Carolina	409,000	29	18
North Dakota	18,000	23	19
Ohio	425,000	21	17
Oklahoma	168,000	31	12
Oregon	145,000	24	10
Pennsylvania	374,000	28	16
Rhode Island	28,000	27	14
South Carolina	197,000	31	15
South Dakota	34,000	26	15
Tennessee	263,000	21	20
Texas	1,247,000	35	14
Utah	142,000	22	9
Vermont	16,000	30	14
Virginia	231,000	31	18
Washington	227,000	32	20
West Virginia	66,000	24	16
Wisconsin	180,000	29	16
Wyoming	19,000	27	16

SOURCES: Child Trends' analyses of data from the 2011/2012 National Survey of Children's Health and from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey. N.A. Data not available.



of color or those with dual-language learners or children with disabilities also face significant challenges. Furthermore, low-income families tend to live in neighborhoods with high crime, poor-quality housing and low-performing schools, as well as a dearth of child care or enriching after-school activities for kids.¹⁸ These factors make creating a safe, nurturing home environment even more difficult.

In trying to keep all of the pieces together, low-income families experience more daily stress than their higher-income counterparts. That stress inevitably touches their children.¹⁹ Stress resulting from insufficient income and financial uncertainty can cause depression, anxiety and a greater risk of substance abuse or domestic violence — all of which can compromise good parenting.²⁰ Some parents lack strong support networks of family or friends to help lighten the load.²¹ Low-income parents with young children are nearly three times more likely to report having poor or fair mental health than higher-income parents.²²

ANOTHER HURDLE: PROGRAMS AND AGENCIES WORKING IN ISOLATION

While providing critical help to many, some of the federal and state programs designed to help low-income families overcome their daily challenges operate in isolation from one another. These programs, which include child care assistance and job training, among others,

tend to focus on either children or parents — but generally not both.

Moreover, many of these programs were not designed for interagency collaboration. This rigidity filters down to the nonprofit, faith- and community-based organizations working with low-income families. Different funding sources, distinct definitions of success and narrow guidelines impede these organizations' ability to respond to the needs of children and parents in tandem.

Such limitations impact families in several ways. Many parents have no knowledge of the full range of programs that could benefit them and their kids. Even when they do, applying for and accessing different programs can be a full-time job.²³

The programs themselves put parents' and children's needs at odds. Employment and job-training programs are designed for adults and don't necessarily factor in the child care required so that parents can be at work or in training, or the paid time off needed to care for a sick child or newborn. In addition, colleges often fail to acknowledge the reality of today's students: Nearly 25 percent of U.S. college students are parents — and the majority of them are single — yet child care options are in short supply.²⁴

Similarly, early childhood education programs and elementary schools generally do not address parents' financial and educational challenges or the broader family dynamics that affect a child's well-being. A parent who cannot attend a parent-teacher

While providing critical help to many, some of the federal and state programs designed to help low-income families operate in isolation from one another.



To give families more opportunities to succeed, we must bring together programs for children and adults and take an intentional, coordinated approach.

conference or school events may be dismissed as uninterested, rather than being seen as a parent struggling to work enough hours to make it through the month.

When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability.²⁵ Government programs that provide food and child care assistance, for example, base eligibility on family income. One study found that a mere \$0.50 uptick in hourly pay could result in the loss of a valuable child care subsidy — or a 25 percent drop in annual income.²⁶ That sudden loss could put families back where they started, potentially threatening their children's health and development.

AN APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE WHOLE FAMILY

To give families more opportunities to succeed, we must bring together programs for children and adults and take an intentional, coordinated approach. In this section, we detail the three key components of this two-generation strategy.

1. Provide parents with multiple pathways to get family-supporting jobs and achieve financial stability. Having more family income, especially during a child's earliest years, can make a lifelong difference.²⁷ Research suggests that even modest increases in

income can result in improved child outcomes, particularly for young kids.²⁸ One study found that children whose family income was below the federal poverty level — which today is about \$24,000 for a family of four — completed fewer years of school, worked and earned less as adults, relied more on food assistance and suffered from poorer health than kids whose family income was at least twice that level. But an extra \$3,000 annually for these families during a child's earliest years could translate into an increase of more than 15 percent in what that same child earns as an adult.²⁹

We therefore must create opportunities for parents to develop the skills necessary to increase their income and achieve financial stability by providing access to education and training programs that prepare them for today's jobs. Financial coaching can help families design strategies to manage income, plan and save for the future and build their assets — habits that create a crucial cushion to fall back on when the unexpected happens.³⁰ We also must make sure families can access state and federal programs that boost income, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Research shows such income supplements can also improve child achievement.³¹

2. Ensure access to high-quality early childhood education and enriching elementary school experiences. The evidence is clear: A solid

foundation in children's early years sets them up for success in school and beyond, paving the way for higher test scores, fewer behavioral problems, better job opportunities and greater income.³² High-quality child care and early education that intentionally foster healthy growth and development are essential to that foundation.³³ Families need access to schools that provide effective instruction, address absenteeism and develop strong connections to parents. Greater coordination among early learning centers, schools and other programs for kids can further support healthy development from birth through the early elementary years.³⁴

3. Equip parents to better support their children socially and emotionally and to advocate for their kids' education. A loving, nurturing parent can make a world of difference in any child's life — and can soften the negative impact of living in poverty. One cannot overestimate the significance of positive parent-child relationships as an anchor in the midst of uncertainty.³⁵ Such relationships give kids a much better chance of reaching their full potential.³⁶

When parents are able to reduce their stress and anxiety, they can better respond to their children's emotional needs and help them weather substantial difficulties.³⁷ Parents therefore must have opportunities to take care of their own health — emotional, mental and physical. They also need to build connections with other parents, their community and people

Building Paths to Opportunity for Parents and Children on New York's Lower East Side

Lourdes, a New York mother of two, had been working on her associate degree before her first son was born. But after his premature birth, her education took a backseat to doctor's appointments, specialist home visits and trips to the hospital. Instead, Lourdes focused on providing for her kids; going back to school was not an option.

Yet her job search kept hitting walls. She could not afford the child care she would need for her younger son, nor did she know anyone in her neighborhood to ask for help. Even after enrolling her youngest in the Educational Alliance's Head Start at the school her firstborn attended, she couldn't find a job that worked with their schedules.

Then her Head Start family advocate at the Educational Alliance asked if she would consider returning to school with the help of the nonprofit's College Access and Success Program, which helps Early Head Start and Head Start parents realize their own educational goals.

With some guidance from a staff advisor, Lourdes completed the necessary forms for her local community college and went on a campus tour. She also eagerly pursued all of the opportunities the nonprofit had to offer. These included classes on saving, spending and investing; a family book fair; and parenting workshops to deepen her insight into her kids' young minds. Through these activities, Lourdes met fellow parents who shared some of the same struggles.

This year, Lourdes is returning to community college to finish her associate degree in business management, with plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in psychology next. Her long-term goal is to open her own child care center.

"Without [Educational Alliance] and all these workshops I've been to, I don't think I would have gotten as far on my own," she said. "It's not just school based. It really has helped me overall."



A Focus on Mental Wellness for New Haven Moms

The New Haven Mental Health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership in Connecticut meets low-income mothers where they are — at grocery stores, parks and other places in their neighborhoods. The partnership, a collaboration of agencies throughout New Haven, aims to help mothers overcome what they themselves have identified as major challenges in their lives. At the top of that list are getting necessities such as food and diapers, being socially isolated and dealing with stress.

Guided by the principle that family wellness starts with mothers, MOMS helps these parents reduce their stress. An eight-week stress management class teaches

coping strategies. About 90 percent of the mothers who participated in the class this year have seen a decrease in their symptoms of depression.

Community ambassadors, who are mothers themselves, reach out to those who are more isolated and make referrals for assistance. Among the partnership's plans is to open one-stop centers in neighborhood businesses or organizations to address basic needs, as well as mental health and employment challenges.

By reducing mothers' stress, the MOMS Partnership aims to improve their ability to nurture their children's development and to get — and keep — a job to support their families.

who can support them in their journey, and to be actively involved in their children's education from birth.³⁸ Programs such as the Nurse-Family Partnership[®] and Parents as Teachers, which include home visits with nurses or other trained staff, can help parents take care of themselves while fostering their children's development, particularly in the earliest years.³⁹

Virginia's Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP) offers a practical example of taking a whole-family approach. This successful program — which uses the Parents as Teachers curriculum in home visits with new parents — goes beyond the usual focus on maternal and infant health. Along with quarterly visits from a registered nurse, a parent educator works with participants to develop important skills, such as creating routines, managing their families and bolstering their children's health — all of which smooth parents' path to employment. Educators also assist families with achieving self-sufficiency goals, such as getting a driver's license, earning a GED or certification or pursuing higher education. In 2013 alone, CHIP saw a nearly 40 percent increase in the number of families with one or both parents working at least part time after a year in the program.⁴⁰

Addressing child and parent challenges simultaneously strengthens families and places them on firmer ground. This gives their children a more solid footing from the start, greatly improving their chances of charting a better course.

FIGURE 3

Creating Partnerships to Build Two-Generation Approaches

Schools and early-education, home-visiting and job-training programs are just some of the existing platforms that offer opportunities to factor in the needs of parents and children at the same time.

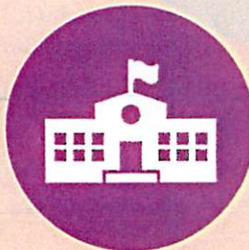
HOME VISITING

Home-visiting programs can help families move toward financial stability by building relationships with community organizations focused on employment and financial coaching.



JOB TRAINING

Job-training programs and community colleges can help parents access high-quality child care and financial coaching to plan for now and the future.



SCHOOLS AND EARLY-EDUCATION

An elementary school or early-education program can create avenues for regular communication and parent involvement, recognizing parents' critical role in their child's development.

TOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Each of these platforms can partner with one another and community organizations to equip families with:

- Financial coaching
- Transportation
- Parent networks
- Primary health care for kids
- High-quality child care
- Postsecondary assistance
- Safe and affordable housing

RECOMMENDATIONS

creating paths to opportunity for parents and children

Beyond a moral imperative to reduce family poverty, there are practical reasons for adopting a two-generation approach. The workforce of today and tomorrow must have the skills and education to meet employers' needs and compete in the global economy. Investing in children and their families at key points in a child's development will place the next generation on a steadier path. We simply cannot afford to continue doing business as usual.

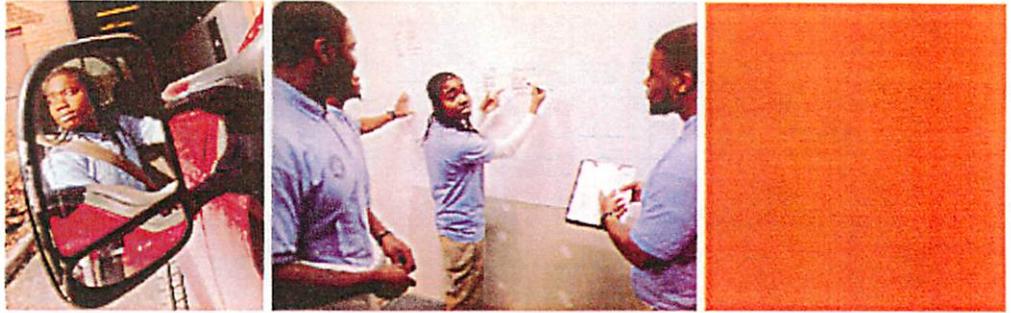
A great deal of evidence underscores the importance of increased income, early childhood education and parents' ability to nurture and advocate for their children, but none of these factors alone has been able to break the cycle of poverty in America. Although research is emerging on the effectiveness of approaches that simultaneously account for all three elements, several programs show great promise and provide an opportunity to further test and refine two-generation strategies to help families move out of poverty.

Here, we suggest changes that policymakers, businesses and community leaders can make to help whole families access the tools and develop the skills they need to thrive. Aside from identifying specific policies to increase income and opportunities for parents to support child development, we intentionally focus on linking systems and programs. These recommendations aim to achieve a greater return on our public-sector investments. While some proposals require new investments, others call for different ways of thinking and acting that can make us more efficient and effective in what we already do.

Three key principles undergird our recommendations. First, any policy discussion on what low-income families need must include their voices. Policymakers should create authentic opportunities to involve these families and recognize parents as experts on their kids and communities. Second, poverty and its host of negative consequences disproportionately affect children of color,⁴¹ and any policies aimed at reaching their families must address the obstacles that have impeded their chances to succeed. Communities of color long disconnected from economic opportunity must be a priority. Finally, government cannot accomplish this alone. Businesses, communities and faith-based institutions also can play vital roles.

RECOMMENDATION 1 Create policies that equip parents and children with the income, tools and skills they need to succeed — as a family and individually.

- Increasing and making refundable the Child Tax Credit for low-income parents of very young children is a critical step toward easing the burden of poverty. In addition, expanding the EITC for workers without dependents would increase the income of noncustodial parents, enabling them to maintain child support and devote additional resources to their children.
- We must strengthen policies that allow parents who have limited education and job skills to earn a family-supporting income. The new Workforce Investment



and Opportunity Act and the Higher Education Act, as well as other career pathways and apprenticeship efforts, should build bridges to affordable, quality child care and early education and other tools that enable working parents to play their dual roles. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) has the same potential. Policies should pay particular attention to the role of fathers in supporting their families and fostering their children's development. Pilot child-support programs, for example, are creating incentives for fathers to access training and increase their work hours while bolstering their parenting skills.

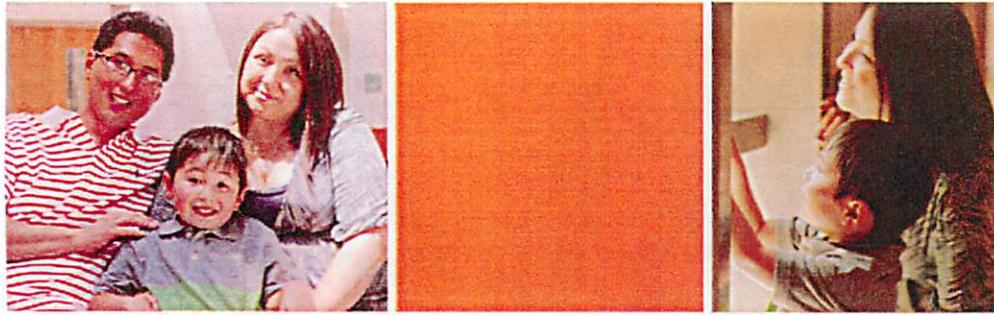
- States and businesses should adopt policies that give parents needed flexibility at work, such as paid time off (family and sick leave). California, New Jersey and Rhode Island have passed paid family leave laws. Businesses also can adopt family-friendly scheduling policies. For example, Costco — known in the retail industry for its high rate of productivity and low employee turnover — notifies employees of work schedules in advance to help them balance family commitments.⁴²
- Policies and programs should connect families with health care and newly expanded mental health programs now available to adults.
- Programs should recognize parents' strengths and help them take an active role in their child's education and development. They can incorporate ways for parents

to interact with fellow parents and build peer-support systems. Programs also should move beyond traditional parent involvement to offer leadership development and support over time.

RECOMMENDATION 2
Put common sense into common practice by structuring public systems to respond to the realities facing today's families.

- State and federal governments should use interagency commissions and innovation funds to promote public/private collaboration, align policies and programs and ensure that public-benefit policies help families move toward financial stability, rather than raising unintended obstacles.
- Federal leaders should incentivize child- and adult-focused state agencies to bring their data together to look at the whole family and develop a common set of outcomes, which could streamline their programs and processes. South Carolina, for instance, has long had an integrated data system that pulls participant information across multiple programs to assess effectiveness and inform policy improvements.
- States should adopt a no-wrong-door approach that encourages agencies to connect families with needed programs. Louisiana has embraced this concept, recently using SNAP eligibility data to automatically enroll kids in its Children's Health Insurance Program. State and

Investing in children and their families at key points in a child's development will place the next generation on a steadier path.



To ensure that kids thrive and succeed from birth onward, we must simultaneously address the obstacles facing their parents.

federal governments also should use online tools and other innovative methods for accessing benefits to streamline the process of applying and qualifying for programs.

- Federal policymakers should take advantage of new legislation and reauthorization periods for policies such as the Higher Education Act (HEA) and programs such as Head Start and TANF to bring together adult- and child-focused programs. The HEA, for example, could expand federal tuition assistance programs to better accommodate part-time students. Head Start could pilot programs that connect parents with education and job training. Another Head Start pilot could have family support staff work with some children and families through the third grade to ensure that parents continue accessing medical and dental care for their kids, transportation and child care, among other necessities.

RECOMMENDATION 3
Use existing child, adult and neighborhood programs and platforms to build evidence for practical pathways out of poverty for entire families.

- Early childhood and K–12 settings should partner with educational, employment and job-training programs that foster family financial stability.⁴⁵ In California, United Way of the Bay Area is working with several community public schools to embed programs that link parents with financial coaching, job-readiness assistance and other tools.

- Policymakers should support further expansion of home-visiting programs. They could offer incentives for these programs to work with employment and training organizations to ensure that parents have what they need to foster their children's healthy development. Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, for example, has teamed up with the Nurse-Family Partnership to connect parents receiving home visits with educational and job opportunities, as well as other programs geared toward breaking the cycle of family poverty.

- Policymakers should incentivize community colleges and employment and job-training agencies to partner with organizations focused on early childhood, benefit access and child care to design programs that help parents who are trying to further their education juggle work, school and family.

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Family Self-Sufficiency, Moving to Work and other supportive housing programs should connect families with early care and education, as well as tools to build financial stability. Initiatives such as the federal Choice Neighborhoods and Promise Neighborhoods, among others, could focus on creating opportunities for children and parents to succeed together within a community.

One successful model is the Siemer Institute for Family Stability, which helps families at risk of homelessness stabilize their housing and increase their income so that their children can remain in the same

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school. Coaches help families with job training, child care and health care.

► Policymakers should take advantage of state financing options to pay for new two-generation models. States could use SNAP Employment and Training funding to provide job-training programs tied to specific sectors in local economies, along with quality early care and education, after-school care and transportation.

CONCLUSION

For too long, public agencies and programs have focused on either kids or adults, without taking the entire family into account. Although these programs certainly have enabled some low-income families to improve their situations over the past several decades, millions have yet to realize, or even glimpse, the hope of a better future. We can, and must, do better.

To ensure that kids thrive and succeed from birth onward, we must simultaneously address the obstacles facing their parents. The ability of our children to enter and navigate paths to success has implications for all of us. The 17 million young children in low-income families today⁶⁴ will become tomorrow's parents, employees and leaders. Given opportunities to reach their full potential, they can become greater contributors to our society, building their own strong, stable families and communities and bolstering our economy. Their success translates into ours as a nation, making our future, along with theirs, that much brighter.

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TOP TEN FOR 2GEN

POLICY IDEAS & PRINCIPLES TO ADVANCE TWO-GENERATION EFFORTS

By: Anne Mosle, Nisha Patel, and Jennifer Stedron, PhD

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October 2014

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we release *Top Ten for 2Gen: Policies and Principles to Advance Two-Generation Efforts*. This publication is the culmination of three years of work with experts in the field, through research, roundtables, and other convenings.

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Sincerely,



Anne Mosle
Vice President
The Aspen Institute

TOP
10
for
2gen

INTRODUCTION

The War on Poverty began 50 years — two generations — ago, and while it has achieved much, poverty is still being passed down from generation to generation. One reason is that we have been trying to help low-income parents and children in separate ways.

In the United States today, nearly 45 percent of all children — more than 32 million — live in low-income families.ⁱ Almost three-fourths of single-mother families are low income.ⁱⁱ About 65 percent of African-American, American Indian, and Hispanic children live in low-income families, as do 32 percent of white and Asian-American children.ⁱⁱⁱ

The demographics of families in poverty may be diverse, but parents' dreams for their children are similar everywhere: a good education, economic stability and a better future. A mom from Detroit describes what she wants for her children: "A secure life, like for my children to have something that they can start with, but I think a lot of times we don't have anything to start with."

I am going to make it better. ... I am going to make her life better. I will do whatever I can.

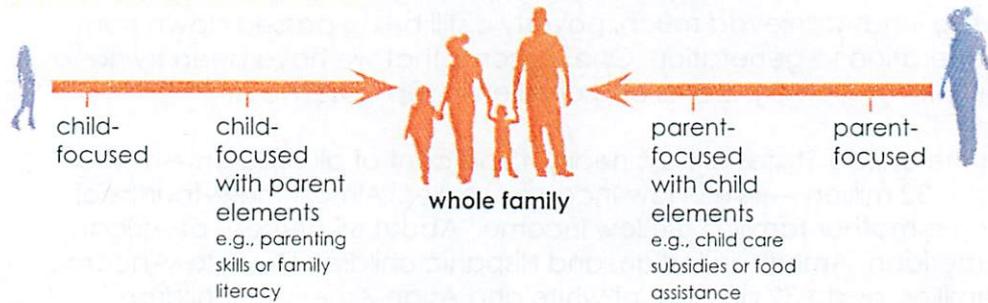
— From focus group with low-income, Latina mothers, Denver, Colorado, 2013

American parents are painfully aware that their children's dreams and economic future are at risk unless all sectors of society can work together to offer a new path forward. This is the promise of what we call two-generation approaches, which address two generations at the same time. Research has documented the impact of a parent's education, economic stability, and overall health on a child's trajectory. Similarly children's education and healthy development are powerful catalysts for parents. Two-generation approaches provide opportunities for and meet the needs of low-income children and their parents simultaneously, helping the two generations make progress together.

Policymakers can take steps now to move two-generation strategies forward and measurably improve outcomes for both children and their parents. Unless they rise to this challenge, the next generation will be at further risk — for developmental delays, academic struggles, and, ultimately, the same challenges facing their parents for economic stability. Our long-term economic prosperity will also be at risk as children and parents struggle to achieve educational and economic success. Two-generation policies offer policymakers the chance to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and replace it with opportunity.

The reality is that many policies created in the War on Poverty era have yet to catch up with the diverse 21st century family or scientific advances that deepen our understanding of the ways that both

The Two-Generation Continuum



children and adults learn. Recent findings in brain science underscore this fact: *the development of children and parents is inextricably linked*. Parents gain motivation to succeed from their children and vice versa; their efforts are mutually reinforcing.

Support for 2Gen Is Strong

The political will is there. According to a new 2014 survey from Lake Research, 70 percent of Americans believe that if we want to make sure low-income children are successful in their early learning, then we also have to invest in their parent's economic well-being. They support programs with a two-generation approach, and that support is gaining strength. Today 89 percent favor such a program as a means to raise families out of poverty. Moreover, 70 percent favor the approach, even if their own taxes were increased to introduce such programs, including majorities of voters across partisan lines. Support for the specific policies that comprise a two-generation approach is both broad and deep. Americans support creating partnerships that build upon existing policies as well as new policy innovations.^{iv}

We all want to see families thrive, but fragmented approaches that address the needs of children and their parents separately often leave either the child or parent behind and dim the family's chance at success. Placing

My personal obsession right now is how disconnected we are from what we really need to be talking about with poverty. We talk about work or training for parents, or we talk about early childhood for kids. But I don't see how we can help the children without trying to help their parents as well. We have to have a serious national discussion about helping families together.

— Paul Krugman, Nobel Prize Winner and Columnist, *New York Times*

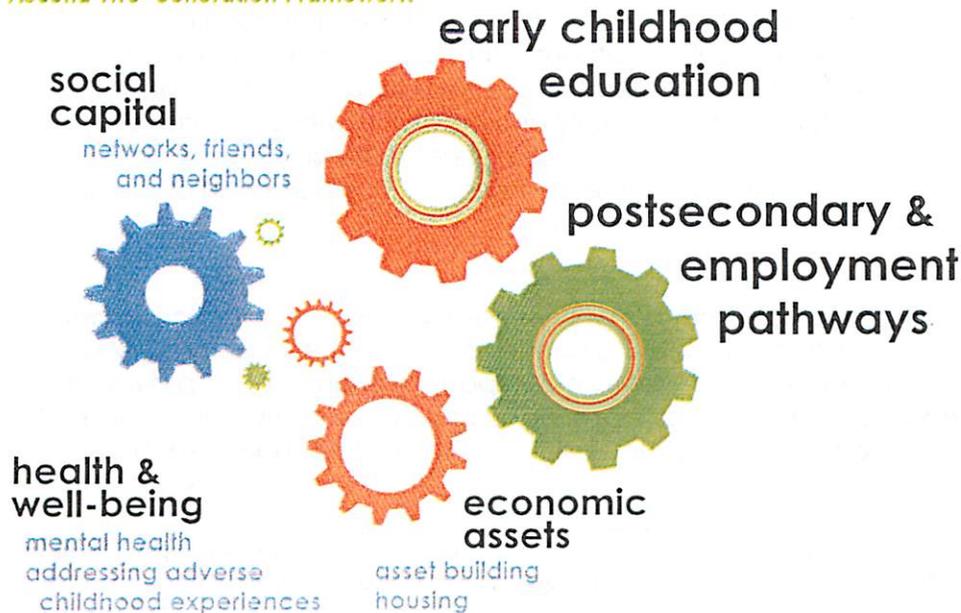
parents and children in silos ignores parents' daily challenges of working or studying while raising a child, challenges that are even more pronounced for those with low wages. Two-generation approaches work with children and their parents simultaneously to harness the family's full potential and put the whole family on a path to permanent economic security.

Early childhood education, postsecondary and employment pathways, economic assets, health and well-being, and social capital are the core components that create an intergenerational cycle of opportunity.⁹ Human services policies can cut across these components of the two-generation approach, particularly the two critical components of quality early education for children and workforce training and post-secondary education for parents. At their heart, two-generation approaches are about a commitment to better outcomes for children and parents at the same time, outcomes that must be measured together. If this commitment is met, using a two-generation lens to view policy can offer practical solutions for programs, communities and states that lead to greater support and higher impacts for children, parents, and families.

In the report *Two Generations, One Future*, Ascend made the case for pursuing two-generation policies now. In *The Playbook*, we offered a clear framework and examples to guide programs and practitioners in considering the needs of children and their parents together.

Today we release *Top Ten for 2Gen*, six principles and 10 specific policies to guide the design and implementation of effective two-generation strategies. Informed by an ever-growing field of pioneering practitioners and innovative policymakers, these recommendations

Ascend Two-Generation Framework



span important areas of the two-generation framework and build upon current funding streams and programs.

Most important, they are attainable today. While changes in state and federal legislation and regulation are sometimes necessary, many positive impacts for families can be achieved with current resources and within current programs and funding streams. For example, human service agencies at the state and federal level invest billions of dollars annually to improve the lives of families. Putting even a fraction of those resources to more effective use would represent a major win for the millions of families struggling for economic stability.

New national policies, from the recent passage of a new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to provisions of the Affordable Care Act, also add to the fertile policy climate for allowing two generations to achieve one bright future.

Principles to Guide Two-Generation Policies

Top Ten for 2Gen observes six principles* that can guide policy and system change at the federal, state, tribal, and local level. While we outline 10 specific policy areas for action in the pages that follow, the six principles below are designed to enable more effective and equitable use of resources in any policy to improve outcomes for families. These principles differentiate two-generation policies from other policies that serve parents or children separately.

Ascend uses these principles to guide its work. They build on several years of conversations within the field and offer a commitment to building policy agendas with tangible outcomes for families.

1. Measure and account for outcomes for both children and their parents.

Dual outcomes are at the heart of true two-generation programs. Whether explicit or implicit, outcomes for children and their parents must be embedded in policies that use two-generation approaches to improve family economic security and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Assessing how well a policy meets a family's needs should include indicators that measure the impact on both children and parents.

2. Engage and listen to the voices of families.

Undergirding all of Ascend's work — from principles to practice to policy — is a commitment to listen to families and ensure their perspectives and experience inform program and policy design. Policies provide the scaffolding and structures that support parents; parents themselves fuel and create their family's successful path toward economic security.

* Principles are fundamental norms, rules, or values that can help determine the right or wrong course of action. They are more basic than policies or objectives and are meant to govern both.

You don't know what a parent is going through, so respect each parent as an individual and let them tell their own story.

— Tameka Henry, mother and board member of the National Head Start Association, at the Aspen ThinkXChange, 2012

As one mother from Nevada said to a group of policymakers and practitioners, “You don't know what a parent is going through. So respect each parent as an individual and let them tell their own story.”

3. Foster innovation and evidence together.

Tap insights from prior evidence-based research and work at both policy and program levels to build upon what has worked for families. Recognize that programs that meet evidence-based thresholds serve only a fraction of children and parents, so we must innovate to develop better ways to meet families' needs. A deliberate pipeline must be developed to ensure innovation and promising efforts can build evidence where appropriate. Policies should strongly encourage the integration of innovative approaches into emerging evidence, evaluations of effectiveness, and best practice.

4. Align and link systems and funding streams.

Resources exist to serve children and families, but they must be used more efficiently. Rarely will single funding streams fully address all the needs of children, parents, and families. Programs will need to blend and coordinate funds to deliver two-generation services. Aligning and linking systems at the state and community level — eligibility standards, performance benchmarks, and coordinated administrative structures — while simultaneously pursuing improved outcomes for both parents and children will lead to two-generation success.

5. Prioritize intentional implementation.

Evaluations and analyses of past initiatives that attempted to address the needs of both children and parents yield an important lesson: Being intentional about policy implementation details is essential. Support for the direct-service workforce, careful consideration of program outcomes, attention to the level and intensity of services, and the use of data are all critical details that will ensure that child and parent outcomes match a policy's intent.

6. Ensure equity.

Two-generation strategies should evaluate and fix structural problems that create gender and/or racial and ethnic disparities in the ways that programs provide services and assistance. Many current funding



streams and policies do not reflect the demographic realities of 21st century American families, where one in four U.S. children is growing up in a single-parent family, many headed by women, and where children and parents of color are disproportionately low-income.

FUELING NATIONAL MOMENTUM

Ascend at the Aspen Institute is the backbone organization for a national network of partners working to make family economic security and educational success a reality. The 58 organizations that make up the Aspen Institute Ascend Network come from 24 states and the District of Columbia. Together we are creating innovative policy and changing systems for impact on families across generations.

Top Ten Policies for 2Gen

Our work in the field and the best thinking of experts, practitioners, and families have yielded the policies below, which we believe have strong potential to advance two-generation work and put more families on a path to permanent economic security.

While we focus primarily on federal initiatives, we provide examples of ways that states, tribes, and communities may leverage federal resources and use flexibility to enact additional reform. These policies are not detailed legislative models. Rather they are policy areas in which the federal government, states, and communities can play a role in building opportunities for families.

In the coming months, in partnership with the field, Ascend will deepen its work in these policy areas, sharing models, identifying trends, and linking leaders and ideas.

The *Top Ten* span the core areas of the Ascend two-generation framework: early childhood and postsecondary education, economic assets, and health and well-being. Joining these four, is social capital – or the trusted networks of friends, family, and institutions – the fifth core component of the framework. Social capital does not lend itself to legislation, but it should be integrated throughout program design and implementation because it is also a crucial contributor to the well-being of children and their parents.

Moving Forward

Top Ten for 2-Gen is more than a counting exercise: It is a significant “to do” list for achieving better outcomes. And the policy principles can guide comprehensive policy analysis and development at the local, state, tribal, and national levels.

Central in all of this are the voices of families. Heeding those voices will ensure that policies support programs that generate real opportunities for family economic success.

TOP 10 POLICIES

Low-income families have shown strong resilience despite great odds. This resilience should be encouraged in any new vision for effective approaches to education, economic assets, human services, and health and well-being that are based on strengths and assets rather than deficits.

The top 10 policies to promote two-generation strategies:

1. Help Head Start and Early Head Start fulfill their two-generation missions by strengthening family supports and increasing the emphasis on parents, not only in their role as mothers and fathers but also as breadwinners.
2. Reform the Child Care Development Block Grant to increase access to and quality of early childhood settings for children and to ensure greater access to job training and education for parents.
3. Increase efforts to support economic security outcomes in home visiting programs.
4. Promote cross-system collaboration and partnership among human services agencies and institutions of higher education, especially community colleges, to increase bundled services and access to benefits for low-income students, many of whom are parents.
5. Increase postsecondary education access and completion through institutional financial aid reform and policies that more accurately reflect the needs of enrolled student parents, a growing national demographic.
6. Use the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to allow for state and local changes that enable two-generation support.
7. Redesign Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for 21st century families — mothers or fathers, married or single.
8. Strengthen family connections through support and promotion of work opportunities for noncustodial parents.
9. Leverage provisions of the Affordable Care Act to improve economic security and family health and well-being.
10. Maximize opportunities for whole-family diagnosis and treatment for mental health.

Here are specific recommendations for federal, state, local, and tribal policy on how to implement the Top Ten for 2-Gen policy ideas.

Early Childhood

1 Help Head Start and Early Head Start fulfill their two-generation missions by strengthening family supports and increasing emphasis on parents, not only in their role as mothers and fathers but also as breadwinners.

- Provide incentives for programs to formally partner with education and workforce programs.
- Highlight best and next practices,** especially around early childhood workforce training and competencies, and share learning across formal and informal care and early learning settings.
- Encourage new approaches, especially through partnerships, to support family economic security through the new Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships funding opportunity

84 percent of Americans agree that Head Start and Early Start should also partner with organizations that help the parents of low-income children further their education and receive job training, including 67 percent who strongly agree.

— Lake Research Partners, September 2014 National Survey

2 Reform the Child Care Development Block Grant to increase access to and quality of early childhood settings for children and to ensure greater access to job training and education for parents.

- States should allow job seekers and those enrolled in postsecondary education or workforce training to be eligible for child care subsidies, so child care concerns do not become a barrier to pursuing economic security.
- Align application and eligibility requirements (such as income verification) across different programs to expand access.

** "Organizations become winners by spotting big opportunities and inventing next practices ... Next practices are all about innovation: imagining what the future will look like; identifying the mega-opportunities that will arise; and building capabilities to capitalize on them." Prahalad, C.K. (2010). *Best practices only get you so far*. *Harvard Business Review Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://hbr.org/2010/04/column-best-practices-get-you-only-so-far/ar/1>.

■ Ease the "cliff effect" by ratcheting up income eligibility criteria, so working families will not lose child care support due to small wage increases.^{vi}

■ Provide incentives to increase the quality of a child's early learning and development through tiered reimbursement that pays more for higher-quality programs.

60 percent of Americans oppose reducing or eliminating child care subsidies when a working low-income parent receives a raise in wages that does not equal the amount of the subsidy.

— Lake Research Partners, September 2014 National Survey

COLORADO: CHILD CARE REFORM BILL HB1317 - In May 2014, the Colorado legislature approved landmark legislation to increase access to the state child care assistance program (CCCAP), decrease red tape, and promote higher-quality services. With a two-generation focus, the law:

- Allows job seekers and those enrolled in postsecondary education or workforce training to be eligible for CCCAP.
- Removes application barriers by allowing presumptive eligibility and aligning income verification with other programs, for instance.
- Adjusts co-payment requirements and tiered co-pay increases to mitigate the "cliff effect."

Highlights for small businesses include:

- Higher floors for provider reimbursement rates.
- Holiday and absence policies tied to program quality ratings.
- Tiered reimbursement so providers can provide higher-quality care.

[HB14-1317, 69th Gen. Assem., Reg. Sess. [CO. 2014]]

When I look at my son, he's eight now, I see my mom, and I think of what she said: America is a place where a nobody can be a somebody. I just want to show my son, don't give up on your dreams.

— Lubens St. Fleur, father, student at Miami Dade College

3 Increase efforts to support economic security outcomes in home visiting programs. Funding streams, such as Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) require that programs demonstrate not just improved child outcomes (e.g., school readiness) but also adult outcomes (e.g., economic self-sufficiency).^{vii} Parents in these programs often cite increased education and employment opportunities as significant personal goals.^{viii}

- Explore options in home visiting programs to include an additional focus on education and employment opportunities for parents while maintaining the integrity of current evidence-based models.

- Provide professional development to front-line home visiting staff to enhance their knowledge and ability to connect interested parents with opportunities to increase economic security.

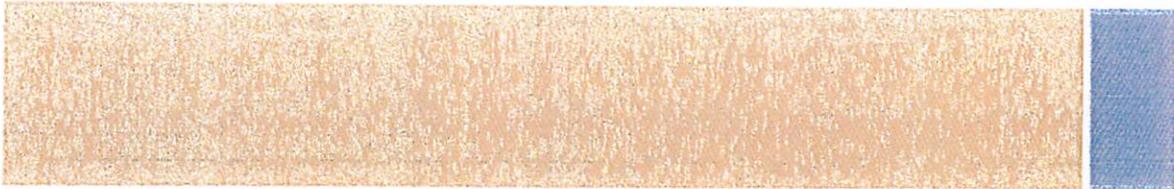
- Support the use of MIECHV's flexible funds for training and community partnerships to create innovative models that include meaningful pathways to adult education, postsecondary, and workforce training opportunities.

88 percent of Americans favor home visiting programs that provide services to low-income pregnant women and parents of young children in their homes, offering parents information on education, workforce training, and employment opportunities.

— Lake Research Partners, September 2014 National Survey

INDIANA: HOME VISITING AND WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP - Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana serves 29 counties and employs almost 3,000 individuals. In 2001, Goodwill partnered with the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) home visiting model to implement the program in the state. NFP currently reaches more than 600 families in Marion County, Indiana. Beyond just home visiting, Goodwill links parents in NFP to education and employment opportunities and assists with additional support as needed. A Guide Consultant with strong community connections helps with employment and education goals and other resources needed for financial security and stability. Goodwill has committed to maintain contact with the families for several years after the termination of home visiting services, until the children are at least age five.

[Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc. (2014). White paper. Indianapolis, IN.]



Postsecondary Education

As nearly a quarter of postsecondary students are parents, program design and implementation should take into account the needs of student parents and their children and ensure that this important population receives equitable access.^{ix}

4 Promote cross-system collaboration and partnership among human services agencies and institutions of higher education, especially community colleges and public regional colleges and universities, to increase bundled services and access to benefits for low-income students, many of whom are parents.

- Pilot the provision of more systemic, comprehensive, and high impact support to low-income student parents who attend community colleges and other regional or open access institutions that receive funds from the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program. Offer bundled services and access to benefits to support both children and their parents to stabilize households and increase graduation rates for student parents.
- Use demonstrated strategies for student success, including career coaches, mentors, navigators, and access to child development programs, and offer programs during hours that match working parents' schedules.
- Provide incentives for cross-system collaboration with state and county human services agencies and local institutions of higher education to increase service uptake, ease loan burdens, and improve graduation rates.

86 percent of Americans favor creating partnerships between private, state, and community colleges and universities with government and non-profit organizations to provide services for low-income students who have young children.

—Lake Research Partners, September 2014 National Survey

5 Increase postsecondary education access and completion through institutional financial aid reform and policies that more accurately reflect the needs of enrolled student parents.

- Allow 12-month (i.e., year-round) financial aid plans for certificate and other programs.
- Take a broad two-generation approach to financial aid need calculations: Include transportation needs; cover child



care as an allowable expense, not just for class time but also for critical study time; and offer the other broader supports that low-income student parents need.

- Use a 12-month funding calendar for Pell Grants and state financial aid to increase opportunities for student parents to maintain full-time status and use summer semesters to complete required coursework.
- Increase both work-study and educational opportunities for student parents that are meaningfully connected to career pathways. For example, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program provides community colleges with funds to expand delivery of education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less and prepare students for employment in high-wage, high-skills occupations.
- Ensure that financial aid is available for part-time, adult students, many of whom are parents.
- Prioritize need over merit aid, and create aid programs that target students seeking credentials for high-demand fields.

84 percent of Americans favor including childcare expenses in determining financial aid eligibility for low-income students with young children.

— Lake Research Partners, September 2014 National Survey

Economic Assets and Human Services

6 Use the recently passed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to allow state and local changes that enable two-generation support.

- Implement more flexible support for the education needs of adults – from contextualized adult education to integrated education and training opportunities, including bridge programs.***
- Streamline multi-agency plans and reports to create a state job training strategy that better supports a two-generation approach.
- Evaluate progress with a common set of performance metrics that span employment, earnings, and education

*** Bridge programs help adult students with low levels of initial skills acquire the skills they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment.

to encourage partnership among programs more narrowly focused on either education or employment.

- Increase workforce and training opportunities for populations with greater barriers to employment, including young parents and homeless families with children.
- Encourage states and local workforce boards to provide much-needed support services (e.g., child care, career coaching) to support parents as they participate in training.
- Provide technical assistance to states and local workforce boards in developing and operating career pathway programming for parents consistent with the new legislation.

CONNECTICUT: TWO-GENERATION PLAN - In 2014, Connecticut's General Assembly passed the SB340, creating the two-generation school readiness plan. The bill directs the Office of Early Childhood to establish a plan that promotes both school readiness for children and long-term learning and economic success for low-income families. The plan will promote both preschool as well as adult education and workforce training. The development of the plan, to be completed by December 1, 2014, will be funded by private dollars. [S.B. 340, Gen. Assem., Reg. Sess. [CT 2014]]

7 Redesign Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for 21st century families — mothers or fathers, married or single.

- Count postsecondary education, adult basic education, English as a second language, and training linked to high-wage jobs and employer demand as work activities. Likewise, include school activities like class time, homework, and work-study hours in individual employment plans.
- Revise reporting outcomes to include family economic security indicators such as credential attainment, employment, earnings, and job retention.
- Allow common outcome measures across workforce development policies such as TANF and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Ensure that sanctions do not counteract other two-generation reforms. Consider reducing the severity of sanctions, ending full-family sanctions, and allowing families enrolled in TANF to keep more child support money.

71 percent of Americans favor allowing workforce training and education programs beyond high school to count as part of the 20-hour weekly work requirement for government programs.

— Lake Research Partners, September 2014 National Survey

8 Strengthen family connections through support and promotion of work opportunities for noncustodial parents.

- Support and provide incentives for employment opportunities for noncustodial/nonresident parents across federal programs.
- Monitor the results of the multistate National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration project and create flexibility to expand the use of effective practices.**** Intriguing program elements include participation in peer-supported parenting activities and programs to reduce child support debt.

Health and Well-Being

Health coverage and access and quality of care are major factors in family well-being and economic stability.^x

9 Leverage opportunities in the Affordable Care Act to improve economic security and family health and well-being.

- Identify and enroll parents and children who are eligible individuals into expanded Medicaid coverage to ensure the health and well-being of both.
- Streamline the enrollment process: Increase efforts to identify the uninsured and keep those who do enroll covered as their life circumstances change.
- Increase the focus on education and employment opportunities for parents in home visiting programs, while supporting young children's school readiness and health and well-being.
- Minimize the financial burden on families by ensuring that subsidies allow access to care and a safety net of care for those who do not have it.

**** The National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration is an initiative of the Office of Child Support Enforcement in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. A total of \$6.2 million was awarded to child support agencies in eight states: California, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

MAINE: PARENTS AS SCHOLARS PROGRAM - In 1997, the Maine legislature passed the Parents as Scholars (PaS) program to help low-income parents obtain two-year and four-year postsecondary degrees. Parents who are eligible for but not necessarily receiving TANF are eligible for the PaS program. Parents receive monetary support equivalent to what they would be eligible for under TANF. Additionally, a family contract determines additional supports and services the parent needs to achieve postsecondary goals. Possible supports include child care, transportation, eye and dental care, and school supplies. Student parents may participate in this program for up to 60 months.

[Maine Equal Justice Partners, Inc. (2012). Parents as Scholars (PaS) Program Guide. Retrieved from <http://www.mejp.org/content/parents-scholars-pas-program-guide-pdf>.]

- Support coordination and integration within the system, building on progress made by patient-centered medical homes and community health centers.
- Promote links between the health care, education, and human services systems, using community health teams, a focused use of resources in geographic areas with high costs and high-need families, and other approaches.
- Focus on eliminating health disparities through care accountability processes that emphasize equity.

10 Maximize opportunities for whole-family diagnosis and treatment for mental health. Parental, especially maternal, depression is a two-generation issue, harming the quality of parenting and sometimes inhibiting child development.^{xi}

- Parity in coverage between mental and physical health for those newly enrolled in Medicaid can further de-stigmatize mental health issues and allow both families and providers to cooperate around the importance of screening, diagnosis, and treatment of major issues like depression.
- Diagnosis, screening, and treatment of mental health issues can be encouraged for both parents and children using the new coverage of preventive services coverage.
- Home visiting programs can be expanded to support two-generation treatment for parents who are not Medicaid-eligible.



86 percent of Americans agree that mental health screenings and services would significantly benefit the whole family if offered to both parents and children at the same time.

— Lake Research Partners, September 2014 National Survey

Moving Toward a Two-Generation Future

These policy recommendations come at a seminal time as the path to economic and social mobility in the U.S. is being fundamentally challenged. Yet, families possess a profound resilience, and communities offer us hope anchored in experience and evidence. Communities and the families they serve are hungry for policies like these that can provide guidance on effective and powerful uses of limited resources.

Strong public support for the elements of the two-generation approach is evident. We must now build the political will and advance the policy solutions that can lift children and their families. The Aspen Institute stands ready to work with policymakers, so together we can move two generations toward one future that creates new opportunities for families to break out of poverty.

I'm going to make sure that she is more ambitious than me. I'm going to make sure she hangs around the right kids and gets a network going in school and college.

— From focus group with low-income, Latina mothers, Los Angeles, California, 2011



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