



STATE OF GEORGIA
Children's Cabinet

Children's Cabinet

March 4, 2021

Zoom Meeting

8 a.m.-10 a.m.

Summary

Welcome

Joy Hawkins welcomed the Cabinet to the meeting. Joy explained that the work of the Literacy Council will focus on two goals this year:

1. COVID-19 Pandemic and extended learning
2. Sharing existing tools and resources in the state

Commissioner Amy Jacobs shared the agenda for the day:

- I. Workshop with Sarah Haight, 2-Generation Expert
 - a. Focus Groups Report
 - b. Policy Discussion
 - c. Question & Answer Discussion
- II. Update on 2-Generation Grants and Work in Georgia
- III. Agency Updates

2Gen Workshop

Commissioner Jacobs introduced an expert in 2-Generation (2Gen) work: Sarah Haight, Associate Director for Research and Outreach for Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

[Sarah Haight, Ascend at the Aspen Institute – 2Gen Workshop](#)

[to watch her presentation go to: https://kaltura.uga.edu/media/t/1_b6xhtraj]

A copy of the presentation materials was emailed out with the notes.

The Aspen Institute conducted focus groups and polling in November to hear what parents are experiencing and how what they are experiencing bolsters the case for 2Gen work. The Aspen Institute is a think tank investigating challenges in the United States.

Ascend, within the Aspen Institute, is a national hub for ideas and collaborations that move children and adults toward educational success, economic security, and health/well-being.

The Aspen Institute believes in a 2Gen approach and commitment to racial equity/gender lens and the power of bringing people together. The Aspen Institute's vision is intergenerational transmission of economic security and educational success.

What is the 2Gen Approach?

The Aspen Institute did not create the 2Gen approach. This approach goes back to settlement houses in early United States history. The 2Gen approach involves working for the well-being of **both** children and their families. An example of the 2Gen approach is a Head Start site where parents seek more social and economic supports like educational, economic, and workforce training.

What makes up a 2Gen approach?

There are 5 core components that form cogs in a wheel that helps families move to economic well-being. You can't give one balloon to a family and hope they survive; they need all of the balloons. These are:

- Early childhood education
- Postsecondary and employment pathways
- Economic assets
- Health and well-being

Social capital is a secret sauce of 2Gen. Peer and family networks help families thrive.

Why does the 2Gen approach work?

Research shows that when you support both children and caregivers, there is an impact for generations. Please note that there are many different terms used to describe 2Gen like multi-generational, intergenerational, whole family, etc. Some cultures call 2Gen approaches different, like immigrant families may refer to it as multi-generational.

The 2Gen field is in the process of gathering evidence and data to support 2Gen approaches.

What have we learned from 2Gen 1.0?

- Intentional service integration is critical
- Quality matters
- Intensity is important
- Who is targeted matters
- How you work with families matters
- There are some principles to put children and families at the center
- Measure and account for outcomes for both children and their parents
- Engage and amplify the voices of families
- Ensure equity
- Ensure cultural competency in staff
- Foster innovation and evidence together
- Align and link systems and funding streams

- Building organizations that serve whole families

There are 3 opportunities for an organization to use a 2Gen approach. These opportunities are on a continuum.

- Approach
 - This is a mindset for designing programs and policies that are 2Gen
- Strategy
 - This is where most organizations are; it involves aligning and coordinating services with other organizations to meet needs of family members.
- Organization
 - This involves providing services and support to the whole family simultaneously; we do not suggest that everyone become an organization.

The Strategy stage is the sweet spot.

The 2Gen systems continuum – the steps are the same as organizations:

- Approach
- Strategy
- Systems

Stages of 2Gen implementation

This is a guide for how to implement 2Gen programs and overlaps with the continuums discussed above.

The stages are:

- 2Gen Unaware
- 2Gen Awareness Raising
- 2Gen Approach
- 2Gen Strategy
- 2Gen Pilot/initiative
- 2Gen Integration
- 2Gen Accountability

Key challenges and Barriers for 2Gen Work

- Lack of clear collaboration partners and/or terms of agreement
- Some organizations didn't start with clear MOU and didn't have guide for where to go.
- Staff buy-in and capacity
- Staff is stretched thin
- We need to frame it as approaching 2Gen is not something to do, but something to strengthen families
- Parent recruitment and retention

- Knowledge of and access to blending funding streams
- Policy barriers: lack of aligned resources and policies

At a policy-level, we still make it hard for families to access services.

Advancing 2Gen in states and communities

The Aspen Institute has 430 Ascend Network partners in 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico.

They have 80 fellows and 6 states with formal 2Gen Coordinators that work at the state-level to implement 2Gen initiatives. These coordinators have been critical like connective tissues between the Department of Health and other agencies.

State Investments in 2Gen

There are examples in Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, Washington, Maryland, and Colorado of state-wide investment in 2Gen work. What is important for 2Gen programs is the diversity of the type of work happening in the country. While there are a set of principles and outcomes and measures, these programs and initiatives try not to be overly prescriptive about this because different states have different needs. This is about a vision and an approach that will take shape in different ways. In some instances it is about practices and pilots in others it's about community-based interactions. It is about how leadership matters. Leaders set a vision for partners and communities and it's important that leadership is not held by one person but is a collective held by many.

Parent Advisors Give Help to Ascend

Everything developed by Ascend has been reviewed by parents. This is important for their values. There are very real ways where families intersect with systems.

Parent Voices

The Aspen Institute conducted focus groups and an online bulletin board in November 2020. They usually do a national survey every two years in November around national mid-term and presidential elections

Methods

Lake Research Partners conducted online focused groups. Three virtual focus groups in Georgia. The survey was an existing sample of about 1400 voters on election night.

Key findings

- Parents are extremely frustrated and anxious
 - They were especially frustrated because they felt hopeful: "I wanted to start strong in 2020 but quickly felt overwhelmed."
 - Many felt judged for their parenting decisions and how the pandemic exacerbated that
 - Many see family time as a silver lining of the pandemic

- Many said that there is a sudden focus on race and social justice. All races and ethnicities showed that they are concerned, but race and ethnic minorities shared they had strategies
- Attitudes toward child care and existing programs
 - Need for quality affordable childcare
 - Frustration that childcare is hard to find, but this is not a new experience for parents
 - Liked that childcare is a place where they can find supports but some had hesitancy because they didn't know that childcare was a place that could provide more
 - Some were familiar and had experience with programs
 - Primary programs they were aware of: therapy, food pantries, rental assistance, utility assistance, summer programs, and increasing SNAP benefits (and in that order)
 - If parents were in charge, they would create affordable or no cost childcare.
- Others said they would have affordable housing, baby supply distribution, universal health care, financial literacy, maternity and paternity leave, and mental health support
- A lot of parents feel stressed, frustrated, and worried about things for their families especially during COVID
- They worried about how not having child care will impact their child
- Parents have somewhat different and more expansive view of government
- Stimulus check opened eyes to the possibility of government assistance

Ideas for policy changes

- Need to create more programs for fathers
- Tremendous appetite for increased access to emotional and mental health services.
 - There is a seed change in the way parents talk about mental health, the way they know about brain changes and stigmas about mental health. There is a window of opportunity where the access to these resources are even more important.
- Parents are mixed about direct cash deposits.
 - They said it could close gaps about economic insecurity and security.
 - Some were concerned that there could be a misuse of money.
 - Very mixed reactions about guaranteed cash or income.

Voter support for 2Gen approach

Both Trump and Biden voters supported 2Gen approaches when they were framed as an approach to help parents get the training they need.

Policies that are popular about both parties

- Programs that help parents get education and skills training
- Creating programs that support fathers

- Mental health screenings and services should be available to parents and children together even if only one is enrolled in health insurance.

Parents are deeply supportive of mental health services and recognize that to be good parents and workers, mental health is critical. As humans we recognize that, but it is not always explicitly and imbedded in our policies and practices

Discussion Time

Questions provided by Sarah Haight:

- How does the 2Gen framework resonate with the work of the Cabinet?
- What are things you are already doing that could benefit from this 2Gen framework?
- What questions do you have to deepen your understanding of how this approach might enhance or strengthen your work and benefit GA families?

The discussion below notes responses from Cabinet members regarding the questions above.

JOY HAWKINS: This 2Gen framework is ideal for this type of Cabinet work. We have already implemented some programs. Some examples include where students are being trained.

AMY JACOBS: I heard about including programs that support the fathers. We talk so much about mom in the 2Gen approach. I think that is something we should definitely think on in future meetings and discussions. The second thing is the need and desire for mental health services. That is one of the areas of focus in the Cabinet.

MINDY BINDERMAN: 10 years ago, it was almost forbidden in GA to talk about parents. We could talk about services for children, but not parents. We have come so far in talking that children are in a family unit and talk about multi-generational strategies and do the work around them. Just listening to how this has evolved is very exciting. A question I have is how have various systems worked together on 2Gen strategies? I have heard mostly on the childcare.

SARAH HAIGHT: At the state level the most agencies that do 2Gen approaches are Departments of Human Services. In Tennessee, they looked at ways that they could have a monthly meeting with staff from the agency that have never met but have the same families and caseloads and see how they could improve the services to the family. There are four housing authorities in the US that are applying 2Gen approaches and partnering with K-12 school systems and local workforce board. The goal is to demonstrate that housing authorities can be an anchor for 2Gen approaches given that the housing authorities are an important way to reach families. Where I think we have work to do is in child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The 2Gen approach needs to be clearer in that it is about reunification. Ascend has historically focused on human services and branched out from there but we are putting a need on child welfare and juvenile justice. Here is a brief I co-wrote on housing and 2Gen approaches with Urban Institute: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/place-matters-two-generation-approach-housing>.

CAITLIN DOOLEY: Do other states use Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funds for this purpose?

SARAH HAIGHT: I have not seen a lot of utility using those findings. A majority of 2Gen funding has been from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), particularly in Head Start to strengthen community and family services. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been used for 2Gen approaches. The Maternal and Children Health Bureau is undergoing changes that use a lot of 2Gen language. They are working on updating their home visiting programs so they focus on workforce development.

DAVID PETERSON: Are there findings or case studies for strong parental recruitment and engagement into 2Gen programs?

SARAH HAIGHT: The best examples are organizations that heard from families before they did anything. They host focus groups and paid parents for their expertise. Those programs have been more successful in parental recruitment and engagement than the programs that listened to parents once they were in the program. Some of that relates to the desires of parents (I want to be in healthcare not welding) but others relate to cohort. When parents move together as a cohort or group, they are more successful. They hold each other accountable. That feedback loop as well as having a strategy where parents are not going alone is important for successful engagement.

2Gen approach in mental health approach

SARAH HAIGHT: One big policy example from about 5 years ago: Ascend worked with the Center for Medicare Services (CMS) and sent a bulletin out to states. The bulletin said that if you are a pediatrician you can screen and refer a mother who is bringing in a child during their 1st year and screen them for mental health and use the billing code provided. We were hearing mothers that were not in home visiting programs were struggling with mental health challenges including depression. The way to support these was through home visiting programs but there was no support for mothers outside this. A lot of states didn't know this happened and providers didn't know they could screen the mothers. When it comes to program level treatment a lot of this starts with staff and leadership and knowing how to address trauma, knowing how toxic stress affects parents and children equally. We need to shift how we support providers and staff to understand how mental health affects families.

QUESTION: Are there typical players that are hosting 2Gen initiatives in their states?

SARAH HAIGHT: This is where our fellowship has been really critical. We have a point of view that leadership is important for change. If this approach is held by only one person, that is not very effective or long-lasting. Beyond the Department of Human Services (DHS) or Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD), we have seen platforms of scale. Non-profit organizations that have pretty significant resources or trust in the community (United Way, Goodwill, colleges/universities). Outside of the public sector it's a large non-profit that by doing this

internally they have the ability to affect the system. What we have learned is that the faith based organizations are often the ones with the greatest level of trust. The faith based organization often serves as the childcare for families. We don't have case study but in a lot of communities the faith based organization is the convener. It's really important to bring those folks to the table and learn what they are hearing from families.

CAITLIN DOOLEY: Are there philanthropic organizations working on funding 2Gen approaches?

SARAH HAIGHT: We have seen an uptick in national organizations working on this. We try to work in partnership with philanthropy. Some of the major national funders are the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Bezos Family Foundation. The parents of Jeff Bezos started the Bezos Family Foundation; they are now the largest supporter of 2Gen approaches and funders of Ascend. There are a lot of family foundations who fund 2Gen work.

JUDY FITZGERALD: We have a lot of success with APEX. The program is designed so community providers serve the school. This way when the child is served in school, the provider can also, if needed, serve the parents or family as well.

Updates on 2Gen Work in Georgia

DECAL 2Gen Grants

DECAL Commissioner Amy Jacobs gave an update on 2Gen work in Georgia that is being done within the agency. DECAL administers Innovation Grants on an annual basis and includes 2Gen innovation grants specifically. One of the grants is a capacity building grant where it requires development of a team and a community needs assessment. To apply for that you have to be a 501(c)3 or government entity. Those grants will be up to \$10,000. DECAL also has implementation grant funding. The intention of the grant is to build on the work that the teams may have learned in the innovation grant. One of the things DECAL want to focus on is how to measure children and adult outcomes. One thing that is not official is that DECAL has applied for a state-level grant with TCSG from Ascend.

Local and Regional Collaboratives in Georgia

Dr. Melinda Moore gave a report about her research documenting local and regional collaboratives in Georgia. The state wanted to get an idea or approximate baseline for those that we are serving. Her team identified collaboratives that were community-driven, state agency based, and those that were more informal or grassroots in origin. Grassroots started popping up near the end of the research. Researchers talked to someone in approximately 34 counties across Georgia. The dark red color on the heat map which indicates where researchers spoke to people about collaboratives denotes mainly urban areas. Researchers felt like they were able to talk to at least one collaborative in each region of the state. What they found is that Georgia has many thriving collaboratives in the state.

What was heard over and over again from those interviewed was collaboratives are all about the relationships. For some of the participants they emphasized their collaboratives wanting to form partnerships between many different kinds of organizations while some of the grassroots collaboratives wanted to build relationships with policymakers. This shows that Georgia has strong collaboratives across the state that could be used in the Cabinet work and goals.

What researchers learned about sustainability was that strong leadership, common vision, and a funding mechanism can help the collaborative be successful over time. They found that funding and staffing are different for each agency. Either way, funding is critical to the process of establishing a sustained collaboratives.

Interestingly, there were two things that came out of the research. In areas where it is known that state agency staff are serving multiple communities researchers found that they have created multi-county collaboratives. This helps members from attending multiple meetings and cut down on burnout. Researchers also asked questions about the COVID-19 pandemic. They heard that the use of the teleconferencing platform Zoom over the past year has led to greater participation and people who are not the 'usual players' show up. The platform has cut down on travel time, as well.

Questions & Comments

ERICA FENER-SITKOFF: One of the points Sarah made is that sectors are working together in ways that they may not traditionally. We have seen that happen at Voices for Georgia's Children. It's helpful to see that happening at the local level and more and more at the state level.

JOY HAWKINS: Are regional development commissioners part of the research?

MELINDA MOORE: It is a little bit mixed. It seemed to vary by community to community.

Collaboratives Inventory

Dr. Melinda Moore and David Tanner shared their findings from the inventory they conducted on existing collaboratives on the state-level in Georgia. They sent out a request in March 2020 to see what collaboratives the state agencies participate in regularly. Their research team identified 29 collaboratives that are currently meeting at the state level. They have information about who are convening the groups, contact information, and how the collaboratives came to exist. The findings give information on the different areas each of the collaboratives are working in that coincide with Cabinet priority areas. Dr. Moore and Mr. Tanner made the data available to Cabinet members and are offering the opportunity to add the research. The findings from the inventory will be shared on the Cabinet website. There is a lot of work going on and a lot of goal areas being met throughout the state. This list will help the Cabinet to leverage the work of the collaboratives.

Agency Updates

The updates below are from Cabinet members regarding the work being done in their agencies or organizations in 2Gen approaches.

ERICA FENER-SITKOFF: We just published our Child Abuse and Neglect Plan which discusses how to help children. I will send this link around afterword because it offers policy and system recommendations for how to strengthen this. I wanted to make that link between whole child and 2Gen.

MINDY BINDERMAN: We have worked with Metro Atlanta Chamber on Opportunities Lost which first quantified childcare challenges for parents and then different approaches for childcare challenges and workforce issues. The other is the Pact Initiative which is focused on the City of Atlanta which is a collective impact approach which is to ensure that young children and their families have services to close equity gaps. Those are some examples of 2Gen work. We are still working but both of those are really focused on 2Gen approaches.

MICHELLE SMITH LANK: On a smaller level what we are doing in Bulloch County is starting a Bulloch County literacy commission.

MILTON LITTLE, UNITED WAY GREATER ATLANTA: The child wellbeing work we've been doing through United Way of Greater Atlanta and Brighter Futures Clayton is built on a 2Gen framework.

TOM RAWLINGS: Not sure if it is 2Gen, but we have done a lot more work with the foodbanks to help with food insecurity.

RACHEL DAVIDSON: The Child Abuse Protocol was shared last week and encompasses the whole family. It touches on investigation and prosecution of child abuse as well as prevention.

CAITLIN DOOLEY: I am going to share about DOE literacy efforts. We are using some of our state funds from grants to share that money around to support 2Gen efforts. We have been helping out with TCSG programs. We have an initiative called Literacy for Learning and Leading in Georgia. It's an initiative that has been funded through several competitive grants and that work has continued to be pushed forward. I wanted to share our 5 year outcomes:

- Most of our regions have a shortage of teachers
- We conducted social network analysis to see how we grow community networks
- We have worked with Georgia Public Broadcasting to create resources for families, and we have worked with Family Connection Partnership to get those resources out
-

Joy and Amy closed out the meeting with a reminder that the materials shared in the meeting can be accessed on the Georgia Cabinet website: <http://www.gachildrencabinet.org/>