

**Two-Generation Educational Approaches:  
Big Ideas for Action in Post-secondary Education**

**Importance of Two-Generation Approaches**

For students who are supporting young children, educational attainment is all the more critical to be able to support their families with a livable wage. Parents who complete a college degree can double their incomes,<sup>i</sup> and just a \$3,000 increase in income for parents with young children can translate to a 20 percent increase in their children’s future earnings.<sup>ii</sup> Yet for these students, access and completion of a college degree or certificate often requires a strong support system to help overcome significant challenges. Programming that provides educational and skills training while seeking to address family needs helps both children and parents reach positive educational and economic outcomes.

**Student-parents by the numbers:**

- 26%** of all undergraduate students are parents
- 15%** of all undergraduate students are unmarried parents
- 32%** of students at public community colleges are unmarried parents<sup>iii</sup>
- 27%** 6-year completion rate among all community college students<sup>iv</sup>
- 5%** 6-year completion rate among undergraduate unmarried student parents<sup>v</sup>
- 93%** increased odds of non-completion for students who have children or expecting a child in 12<sup>th</sup> grade<sup>vi</sup>

*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



## Big Ideas for Action

Ascend believes post-secondary education is a key component of two-generation approaches, complemented by access to economic supports, social capital and health and well-being. Below are four **Big Ideas** that leaders in post-secondary education can take to ensure their student parents are on a path to successful college completion.

- 1) **Partner with Head Start and other early learning organizations to ensure student parents have access to quality early childcare and education that is convenient and/or on-campus. In a recent study, the success rate of student parents who had access to campus childcare was a full 26 percent higher than in the general student population.<sup>vii</sup>**

### **Idea in Action: Examples from the Ascend Network:**

**Educational Alliance** has partnered with the Borough of Manhattan Community College (CUNY), and local service agencies for the **College Access and Success Program**. The program simultaneously engages low-income parents of children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start in adult education that leads to higher education opportunities and enhanced financial security while also providing quality early education programs for the children.

In partnership with the **Jeremiah Program**, **Endicott College's** new Boston center is implementing a pilot program with a cohort of 12-15 students, made up exclusively of low-income, single mothers and their children. The program provides postsecondary coursework for families currently served by Boston's robust network of Head Start and quality early learning programs. As the program expands, there are plans to leverage South Boston's public housing platform to reach residents that are also parenting students.

### **Policy Tool**

The **Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)** program administered by the US Department of Education – more than \$15 million in grants awarded to institutions of higher education in FY2014; and another \$15 million will be awarded in 2015. Grants support child care facilities for infants through school-aged children on college campuses and support parents' academic success through counseling and parent workshops.



## 2) Locate wrap-around services on campus to support students and their families.

### **Idea in Action: Examples from the Ascend Network:**

**The Los Angeles Valley College Foundation** is working to increase the educational, economic, and social outcomes for student-parents and young children by **replicating Family Resource Centers** across one of the largest and most diverse community college systems in the country. The centers provide support services to the more than 30% of students who have young children with their education and economic mobility goals, and provide quality early child care. The replication toolkit consists of four modules, which are being used on at least two affiliate campuses.

**Miami Dade College** is working to ensure student parents achieve educational success and create a legacy of economic security for their children through a unique partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families. This partnership improves and expands eligibility and access for students served by MDC's Single Stop service, which provides free screening for multiple government benefits and assistance in applying for the benefits. The service is provided to all students and their families across MDC's four campuses.

### **Policy Tools**

#### ***From Ascend's Top 10 for 2Gen Policy Ideas:***

**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.**

- 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.

*"My children have learned to focus on school because I am doing the same. They motivate me to create a better life for our family, and I want to show them what is possible when you work hard."*

*- Tameka Henry, mother; former Policy Committee chairperson, Acelero Learning Clark County; Board Member, National Head Start Association*



### 3) Partner with local employers and workforce development agencies to promote career pathways with individualized coaching.

#### **Idea in Action: Examples from the Ascend Network**

**United Way of Greater Cincinnati** has partnered with Gateway Community and Technical College to add a two-generation element to its Raise the Floor program. Using human-centered design, they worked with community partners to identify methods to recruit and retain more low-income women into the advanced manufacturing training program and engage their children through a special STEM-learning program.

The **Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham** collaborated with Jefferson State Community College, local childcare facilities, and area pharmacies and other employers to implement a two-generation pilot for low-income women and their children. The pilot, "Tech Support: Prescription for Success," provides a fast track for women to a workforce program that leads to higher wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement as pharmacy technicians and vision screening specialists, in-demand careers in Birmingham. At the same time, the program offers quality, customized early education programs for their children.

#### **Policy Tools**

The **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** presents a great opportunity for community colleges and human services agencies to coordinate in reaching low-income student parents and providing better integrated workforce training services and access to human services. WIOA provides expanded supported work training facilities, so students and low-income adults have greater access to subsidized employment, including internships and apprenticeships in high-demand fields.

#### ***From Ascend's Top 10 for 2Gen Policy Ideas:***

#### **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.



- 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.
- 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.

#### 4) Offer summer sessions for student parents to help accelerate credit attainment and provide quality child care and educational opportunities for their children.

##### **Idea in Action: Example from the Ascend Network**

To increase student retention and degree acceleration, **Hostos Community College** has implemented a two-generation summer pilot program. The college found that 32 percent of its student body was supporting children, compared to 15 percent across the CUNY system. The program began in the summer of 2014 as a pilot, and doubled student parent participation in 2015, offering accelerated programming, financial incentives and support, and coursework. Hostos also provided a high-quality education program for the children through an all-day, campus-based *College for Kids Summer Academy* for 7 weeks. All students in the pilot received a B or better in classes ranging from biochemistry and early childhood development to advanced math. Student parents reported that their participation in a two-generation program not only increased their credit attainment but indirectly mitigated some of the stress around financial challenges and the lack of quality activities for their children, to help prevent the “summer slide” of lost information and learning.

<sup>i</sup> Julian, T. & Kominski, R. (2011, September). *Education and Synthetic Work-Life Earnings Estimates: American community survey reports*. Retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau website: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acs-14.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Duncan, G. & Magnuson, K. (2011). The long reach of early childhood poverty, *Pathways Magazine (Winter 2011)*. Stanford, CA: The Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.

<sup>iii</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (2014, October). *Profile of Undergraduate Students: 2011-2012*.

<sup>iv</sup> American Association of Community Colleges

<sup>v</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S & Sorenson, K. (2011) *Fast Focus No. 9-2011*. Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

<sup>vi</sup> Princiotta, D. et al. (2014) *Social Indicators Predicting Postsecondary Success*. ChildTrends.

<sup>vii</sup> Miller, K. (2010, October 21). Child care at college campuses: A critical resource for student parents. Washington, DC: Institute for Women’s Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/access-to-higher-education/#publications>.

