

# EMPOWERING FAMILIES, UNLOCKING POTENTIAL: AN INTRODUCTION TO 2GEN APPROACHES

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# ABOUT ASCEND AT THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

**WE ARE A CATALYST AND A CONVENER FOR DIVERSE LEADERS WORKING TO BUILD INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILY PROSPERITY AND WELL-BEING**

We co-create and elevate innovative two-generation (2Gen) approaches with families and partners to forge pathways to family prosperity and intergenerational well-being for both children and the adults in their lives.



We invest in leadership to advance systems, policy, and narrative change.



We elevate and scale ideas and innovations that show early traction in communities.



We leverage the power of convening and foster radical collaboration.

# MANY NAMES, ONE APPROACH.

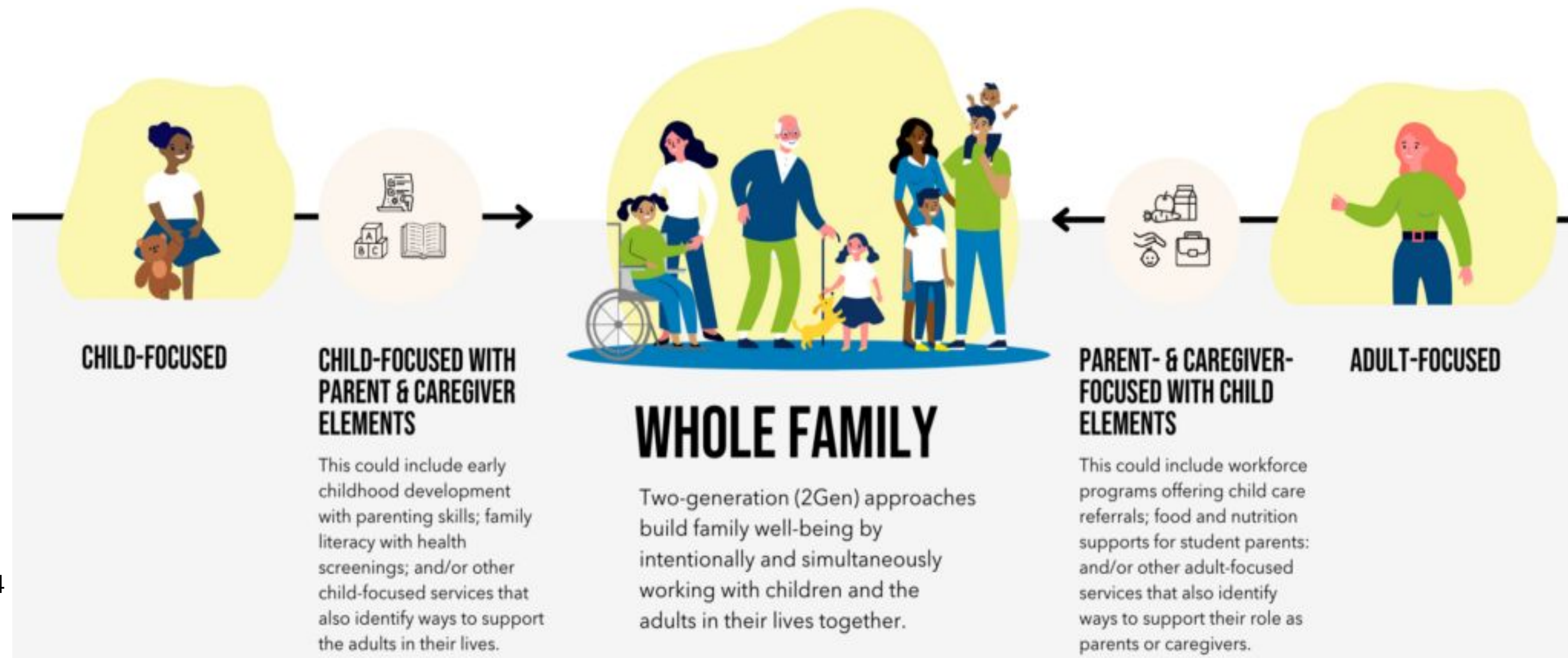
2Gen approaches reflect and embrace the diverse shapes, sizes, and structures of families to ensure all family members can reach their full potential.

# 2GEN



# ABOUT THE TWO-GENERATION (2GEN) APPROACH

2Gen builds family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives *together*.



# THE ORIGINS & EVOLUTION OF 2GEN IN THE US



## FOR CENTURIES

- The intuitive link between individual and collective success has long been recognized by Indigenous communities in the U.S. and around the globe.



## 1965

- As part of 'The War on Poverty,' President LBJ launched Head Start to provide comprehensive early childhood education and parent involvement services to families.



## 2012

- Ascend published the "Two Generations, One Future" report, laying the groundwork for the launch of the Ascend Network to foster development of the 2Gen field.



## 2024 –

- Ascend continues to advance the 2Gen field through its 500+ Network Partners, 160 Fellows, and multiple county and state policy partners



## LATE 1800 s

- The Settlement House movement supported the entire family unit of those immigrating to the US by intentionally creating diverse, interconnected neighborhood of social support.



## 1988

- The term 'Two-Generation' was coined by the Foundation for Child Development to reflect programs that were emerging across the country.



## 2021

- Ascend released the "State of the Field: Two-Generation Approaches to Family Well-Being" report outlining a vision for expansion and implementation

# COMPONENTS OF WHOLE FAMILY WELL-BEING

The 2Gen field recognizes that well-being is a multifaceted process and as such 2Gen approaches include key components that work together to improve families' financial stability, social capital, health care, and quality education.



# HOW DO FAMILIES INTERACT WITH THE COMPONENTS?



A family of three (single parent with two children) live in subsidized housing with limited economic assets, limiting their ability to move to a space that better meets their needs

One child is two-years-old and is enrolled in Head Start while one child is seven and enrolled in First Grade.

The parent has limited job prospects because they last completed their GED and are considering a postsecondary path but are overwhelmed with balancing this with children's needs.

The youngest child needs close monitoring for asthma, exacerbated by allergies. The parent has been inconsistent in addressing their mental health due to limited resources.

The family feels isolated from their community and is eager to be more connected socially and across the systems they interact with.

# COMPONENTS OF WHOLE FAMILY WELL-BEING AS INTERACTING SYSTEMS

At city, state, county, federal level policies are enacted that drive funding opportunities across this interactive system that families rely on.





# 5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF 2GEN



## ACCOUNT FOR OUTCOMES FOR BOTH CHILDREN & ADULTS

Programs and policies need to measure how well they serve the whole family. Working collaboratively with families, programs should both articulate and track outcomes for both children and adults.



## LISTEN TO THE VOICES & RECOMMENDATIONS OF FAMILIES

People closest to the problem are often closest to the solution. Families' expertise and experiences should inform program and policy design to create pathways leading to their goals.



## ENSURE RACIAL, GENDER, & ECONOMIC EQUITY

Policies and strategies should evaluate and fix structural problems that create and exacerbate gender, ethnic, and racial disparities.



## FOSTER EVIDENCE & INNOVATION TOGETHER

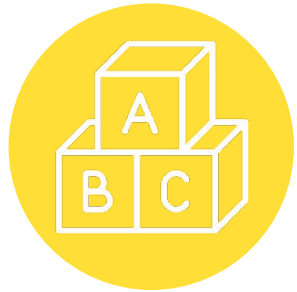
Insights from existing evidence-based research can ensure efficacy, and organizational cultures that encourage innovation can create emerging solutions.



## ALIGN & LINK SYSTEMS & FUNDING STREAMS

Programs need to access multiple funding streams and align systems at the state and community levels to fully meet the needs of children, parents, and families.

# RESEARCH PROVES 2GEN HAS AN OUTSIZE IMPACT



Head Start childhood education **increases educational attainment** and decreases criminal engagement



Medicare expansion to Oregon adults **increased children's coverage by 5 percent**



Students enrolled in a 2Gen college scholarship had **higher GPAs and SAT scores** than peers



A \$10,000 increase in annual parental income, **increases the quality of children's health in adulthood by 3.7%**



Higher levels of parental education are associated with **better school achievement for children**



Children who grow up in communities with more cross-class interactions have significantly **better chances of rising out of poverty**

“

Don't just meet families where they are. Meet us where we dream.”



**JANINE MCMAHON**

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Ascend Parent Advisor