Our Vision

We envision an America in which a legacy of economic security and educational success passes from one generation to the next.
Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Nonpartisan national hub

Solutions, leaders, and resources

Fueling cross-sector collaboration

Investing in a bold, networked way of working
Breaking through the silos

The Need

Fragmented policies and programs that address the needs of children and parents separately leave either the child or parent behind and dim each family’s chance at success.

The Solution

Policies and programs that address the needs of *children and their parents together* can harness the family’s full potential and put the *entire family* on a path to permanent economic security.
Two-generation approaches provide opportunities for and meet the needs of children and their parents together.
Core components

- asset building
- housing
- economic supports
- networks, friends, and neighbors
- mental health
- addressing adverse childhood experiences
- early childhood education
- social capital
- social capital relationships
- networks, friends, and neighbors
- health & well-being
- mental health
- addressing adverse childhood experiences
- economic supports
- asset building
- housing
- postsecondary & employment pathways
Emerging 2Gen Theory of Change

Two-Generation Theory of Change for Whole Family Success

Early Childhood Education
Social Capital
Economic Assets
Postsecondary / Workforce
Health & Well-being

Core components + Child and parents together = Family success
Mobilize empowered two-generation organizations and leaders to influence policy and practice changes that increase economic security, educational success, social capital, and health and well-being for children, parents and their families.
2Gen Leaders at Local, State, National Levels

ASPIN INSTITUTE ASCEND FELLOWS 2015

1. STEWARD $4.2 BILLION in public services for families in 4 states
2. SERVE 348,000 STUDENTS in community college and 4-year institutions
3. PROVIDE 78,000 FAMILIES with direct services
4. RESEARCH BRAIN SCIENCE early childhood education, and health

CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN, & PARENTS TOGETHER

THROUGH TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES

OUTSTANDING LEADERS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
HUMAN SERVICES
ECONOMIC ASSETS
WORKFORCE

ASCEND THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
@aspenascend #2gen

52% PEOPLE OF COLOR

18 STATES
Fueling 2Gen Change in Place

[Map showing states with stars indicating Ascend Network, Inaugural Ascend Fellows, and 2015-2016 Ascend Fellows]
Family norms and structures are very **diverse** across the U.S.

Families are **resilient** in spite of the widening opportunity gap

Single mothers are the only group that **believe their children will be better off**

Access to **quality healthcare is a worry and priority**

Families **feel more socially isolated** and less likely to connect with neighbors and institutions
What are we learning from the Network?

- **Digital tools**: broadband access in Head Start sites and schools impacts efficacy of apps
- **Employer engagement**: tapping local employer interest in building women’s economic security is important
- **Promise Neighborhoods**: shared funding streams incentivize shared data
- **Head Start**: postsecondary partnerships are not one-size-fits all
- **State policy centers**: successful policy proposals are bipartisan and focus on efficient investment of resources
Policy informed by practice and experience

- Family experience and voice
- Best and next practice
- Data

= Smart policy
Top 10 for 2Gen

10 policies federal and state policymakers can pursue immediately to help parents and children break out of the cycle of poverty. *Top Ten for 2Gen* also outlines six principles to guide the design and use of two-generation approaches in any sector.

These policies were co-designed with the Ascend Network and the field and have both stakeholder and public support.

Key Principles Include:

1. Measure and account for outcomes for both children and their parents.
2. Engage and listen to the voices of families.
3. Foster innovation and evidence together.
4. Align and link systems and funding streams.
5. Prioritize intentional implementation.
Advancing Top Ten for 2Gen

• National momentum for two-generation policy
  • Growing commitment to programs that support children and their parents together
  • In a Lake Research Partners bipartisan poll commissioned by Ascend, 89 percent of Americans support a two-generation approach to lifting families out of poverty...
    • And a solid 70 percent of those polled supported two-generation programs even if implementing those programs meant increasing taxes

• Federal and state level opportunities to advance the Top Ten for 2Gen
  • National proposals to improve support for families by increasing access to affordable and high-quality child care and postsecondary education programs
  • Presidential commitment to invest $1.5 billion in an innovative, community-based upward mobility project
  • Ascend partners in states from Colorado to Connecticut are advancing a ground-breaking two-generation legislative agenda
Place-Based Momentum

Deepening Practice and Policy in Key Communities:
Denver, Colorado
Washington Metro Region
Sarasota, Florida
New York, New York
Stay Connected – and Questions

Check out our website:
www.ascendprogram.org

QUESTIONS?