

Your Question:

You requested information on dual-generation programs. Specifically, you requested an overview of dual-generation programs, their implication on state education governance practices, and their impact on student outcomes.

Our Response:

Dual-generation, or two-generation, programs are an approach to poverty reduction that seek to break cycles of intergenerational poverty. Two-generation approaches are multidimensional and address different policy areas.

Below, we provide an overview of two-generation approaches, with a specific focus on the education policy elements. Additionally, we provide some context on the impact of two-generation approaches on education governing structures, and conclude with an overview of research evaluating associated student outcomes.

Overview of Two-Generation Approaches

The two-generation model is an approach to social policy. [Research](#) describes two-generation models as a holistic approach to addressing issues faced by disenfranchised populations. Accordingly, the “two-generation model is based on the assumption that serving parents and children simultaneously with high-quality intervention programs would be more effective (p. 5).” Two-generation models seek to target [sources of inequities](#) as they relate to key policy areas such as social capital, health and well-being, economic assets, early childhood education, and postsecondary and employment pathways.

Two-generation initiatives are generally developed and executed at the local level. Resources created by the Aspen Institute to support two-generation initiatives outline the importance of [early childhood development programs](#) as well as key program [design elements](#) for early childhood supports. The organization also reinforces the importance of [postsecondary attainment](#) to the continued success of early childhood programs. State support for two-generation initiatives requires [program coordination and technical assistance](#). Thus, states do not develop two-generation models, but provide a supportive policy framework with appropriate incentives for local program creation and leadership. This [2014 policy brief](#) provides a list of possible state system policies that could support two-generation approaches:

- Postsecondary Education
- Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Housing
- Childcare
- Income and Tax Enhancements
- Adult Education
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Sector and Unemployment Insurance Skills Training, and Other Workforce Training
- Economic Development
- Health care
- Child Support (Non-Custodial Parents)
- Employment Law and Work Supports

- Corrections
- Community-based Development

Importantly, two-generation approaches seek to achieve broader social policy goals. As analysis from the [Urban Institute](#) points out, “the hope is that a two-generation approach will have a multiplier effect that will lead to better outcomes for whole families (p. 4).” Concurrently addressing issues facing children as well as parents requires a series of interventions that are well-aligned and effectively administered by both state and local government.

Governance

Two-generation approaches require coordination between state and local government, as well as interagency cooperation at both state and local levels. Therefore, state policy leaders wishing to implement two-generation approaches need to consider not only meaningful policy solutions to intergenerational poverty, but also whether state agencies can work in concert to administer those policies.

For two-generation models, states may need to consider consolidating aspects of their education system to improve program coordination. However, governance consolidation can also be problematic and, at times, controversial. In May 2017, ECS staff responded to a request for information on [consolidated governance practices](#) that includes a list of states with consolidated education governance, examples of state legislation, and an overview of research relating to education governance. The following analysis, excerpted from the response, may prove useful in the context of coordinating policies for two-generation approaches:

Connecting Early Learning Governance and K-12

Coordinating early childhood systems is often spread throughout various agencies. In 2016, Education Commission of the States released the [K-3 Policymakers’ Guide to Action](#), which focuses on six key policy levers that can strengthen the K-3 continuum and better connect it to pre-K. It suggests that states take the follow steps to best align early learning and the K-3 continuums:

- Create a dedicated office in the state department of education to focus on K-3 quality improvements and supports, including coordination with early learning providers and 4th-12th grade programs.
- Encourage districts to dedicate a position to support K-3 leadership and innovation to align standards, curriculum and instruction, as well as adoption of teacher and leader competencies.
- Determine if there are multiple entities working simultaneously towards support and improvement of a quality K-3 or P-3 system – the state board of education, early childhood advisory council, state board for the department of human services, legislative committees, etc. – and consider ways to streamline efforts by, for example, creating an office within a department that oversees pre-K through third grade.

Governance and State Education Goals

How states govern education is, in part, related to the overarching goals state leaders have for their education system. The question of centralized or decentralized governance may be a key part of discussion of state education system goals. Below, we summarize research that highlights the process to determine state education goals as well as analysis on how centralization impacts student outcomes:

- [ESSA Thinkers Meeting Insights](#): Although primarily focused on ESSA state plan development, this ECS resource highlights the importance of developing a vision for education that can guide states in developing education goals and priorities. Discussion around vision and goals that includes key stakeholders may help clarify the role of governance in state education. While abstract, the process of determining the goal of state education and clarifying stakeholder roles is critical for creating structures capable of addressing policy issues and producing sustainable results.
- [Centralized Governance and Student Outcomes: Excellence, Equity, and Academic Achievement in the U.S. States](#): Published in 2013, this article scrutinizes the relationship between fiscal and administrative centralization and the effects on student learning. Although data presented present a very general picture of the relationship between administrative and fiscal governance and student achievement, there are several key findings that may be helpful for state leaders debating this question:
 - The debate on centralization/decentralization is multidimensional. Different states making the same changes to similar governance structures could see very different outcomes from those changes. Policymakers should have a clear picture of the problem they are seeking to address, as well as some insight into the broader impact changes will have.
 - Centralization is beneficial in helping improve some outcomes, but not others. Being intentional in setting specific goals may help improve student outcomes regardless of whether policymakers opt for more or less centralization.

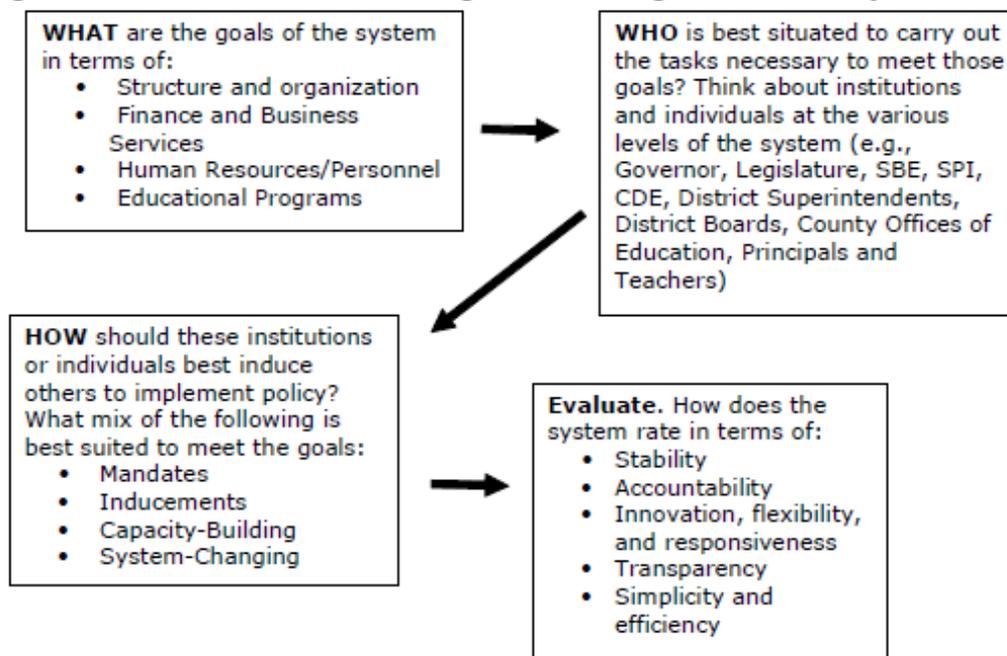
Governing Capacity

Exclusive from the desire to centralize governing functions is the concept of governing capacity--can a centralized structure adequately deliver the required services? Centralizing governance structures successfully means the new institution has the necessary resources to perform a more expansive set of functions.

The following resources help contextualize the capacity challenges states face:

- [Reforming Educational Governance: Lessons for California from Texas and Florida](#): This 2007 article uses an in-depth study of education governance reform in California, Florida and Texas to present a rare comparative analysis of educational governance issues. Although these states tend to be unique in terms of the types of governance practices utilized and the scale of governance issues faced, the paper provides insight into how policy leaders may approach reshaping governance structures. Specifically, the authors surveyed stakeholders in the three states on the effectiveness of policy reforms against five criteria: stability, accountability, innovation, transparency and simplicity:

Figure 1: Framework for Understanding and Evaluating a Governance System



- [The Capacity Challenge: What It Takes for State Education Agencies to Support School Improvement](#): This 2013 report from the Center on Reinventing Public Education asks whether state education agencies (SEAs) have the capacity to drive change and improve outcomes for students. The report finds, generally, that SEAs do not have the capacity to push for large improvements in the education system. The reasons for this include lack of coordination between SEA finances and the broader strategy for educating students, issues with talent pipelines, and inflexibility in the use of authority. The authors recommend SEAs improve financial transparency, seek flexibility, and improve talent pipelines, among other recommendations.

Although K-12 and higher education do not necessarily need to be administered out of the same agency, the internal difficulties highlighted in this report are worth keeping in mind, especially if (as is true in most cases) the state governing structure for higher education and the SEA are two separate entities. Moreover, this report demonstrates that capacity encompasses a much broader set of issues than just personnel and funding levels. Rather, the report shows that capacity is the ability to coordinate, adapt and commit to change in addition to objective measures of resources, formal authority and staffing levels.

Student Outcomes

The expansive goals of two-generation approaches translate to measured outcomes that go beyond traditional student success metrics. The numerous advantages to two-generation approaches have been well documented by the [Aspen Institute](#), whose studies find improved outcomes in parenting skills and knowledge, educational motivation, greater attainment in educational milestones, and overall family literacy.

The following are a small sample of the [results](#) showing improvement in multiple areas of educational attainment:

- [Preschool Test Score Improvement](#) – After following the development of 300 young children over a 6-year period, researchers tested the effects of the Harrisburg Preschool Program (HPP) on academic and social

competence. The results demonstrated that HPP participants scored better on state standardized tests than students who did not participate in HPP. The results are significant because they assess testing outcomes for participating students who have advanced on to fifth grade, demonstrating the longer-term effects of preschool on student achievement.

- [Closing the Achievement Gap](#) – A study performed in Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland sought to understand the impact of Head Start full and half day pre-K programs on student outcomes as well as individual subgroup populations. The results show that students participating in the full day program were more likely to meet reading benchmarks, and that the largest improvement effects were found among African American males. Additionally, African American students and students receiving free and reduced price lunches were significantly more likely to meet reading benchmarks after participating in full-day pre-K.
- [Improvement in Home Learning Environment](#) - This resource examines technological advances that work to support two-generation models, and finds that technologically based models improve within-family learning. In addition, the approach supports parent involvement in their child’s education, as it is shown to improve the “educational motivation, persistence and interest of both parents and children.”
- [Increased Likelihood of Adult Postsecondary Attainment](#) – Adopting a more expansive approach to research methodology, this research sought to understand the effect of child participation in Head Start on parent educational attainment. Using a randomized sample of 4,000 program participants, the researchers tracked the educational attainment of parents with participating students against parents with children who did not participate. The results show a steeper increase in educational attainment from parents with children participating than parents with children who are not.

Additional Resources

We were also able to locate several other resources that may prove useful. Although they tend to be more descriptive in nature, they provide in-depth analysis on the goals and benefits of two-generation models as well as provide several case studies with high level overviews of the models in action:

- [The Aspen Institute \(Ascend Toolbox\)](#): Many of the resources referenced above were produced by the Aspen Institute as part of its Ascend program. The toolbox provides a more action oriented set of assistance including a [messaging guide](#) as well as information on [coalition building and communications](#) (among others). Perhaps most useful are the case studies that provide narratives of two-generation models from the state perspective (see [Colorado](#)) and local level (for example, [Tulsa](#)).
- [The Future of Children \(Vol. 24 No. 1 2014\)](#): The Future of Children is a biannual scholarly publication produced by a partnership between Princeton University and the Brookings Institute. The volume referenced here presents analysis on the benefits of two-generation models. Among the topics discussed are intergenerational payoffs for education, improving family income, and the connection between parent’s employment and a child’s wellbeing.