

2-Gen

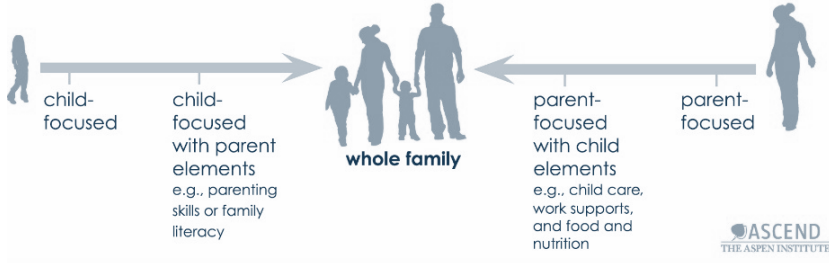
Principles to Practice

A tool for Minnesota program managers committed to using 2-Gen approaches for implementing social programs



There is growing agreement that in order to serve families well, systems, policies, programs, practice, and research must take into account the reality of the inextricable link between the wellbeing of parents and the wellbeing of children. This “two-generation” approach considers both parent and child and puts elements necessary for a thriving family at the center of efforts: education, post secondary and career pathways, economic assets, health and well-being.

The Two-Generation Continuum



Adapted from the Ascend Institute

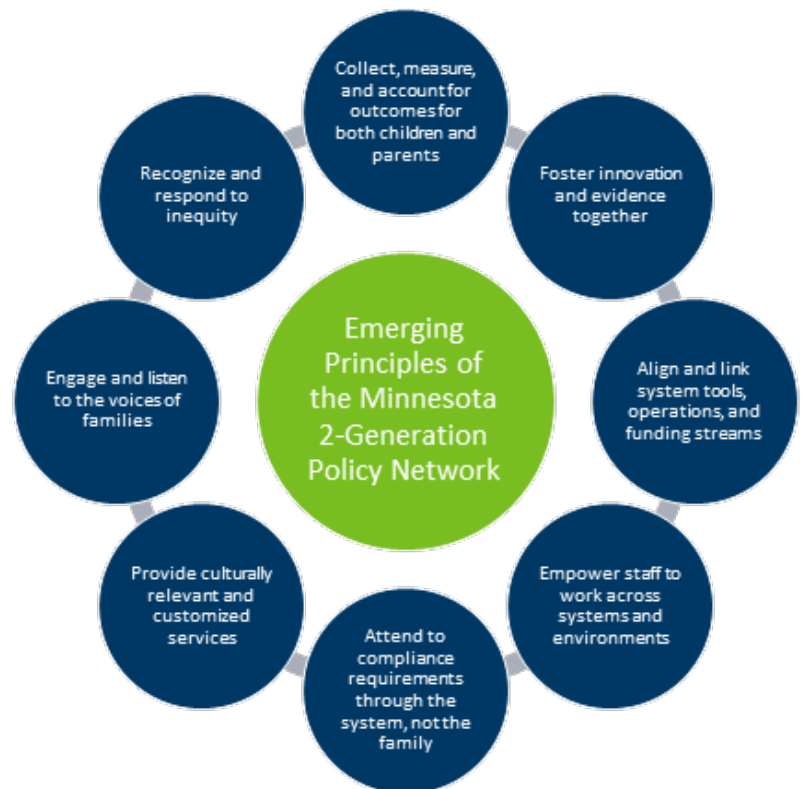
While intuitive, federal, state, and local systems across sectors are not always conducive to this direction. The Minnesota 2-Generation Policy Network acknowledges and seeks to address this incongruity through engaging in learning that is co-directed with state, county, and local organization partners.

Principles of 2-Gen Work in MN

These principles in this document emerged through interagency and cross-sector efforts during 2017 and 2018.

This tool intends to surface strengths and opportunities for moving the principles into practice for those who create policy or manage programs that affect families.

The principles are equally important and interrelated; as you go through the tool, you may find that practices in one principle rely on practices in another. They are presented in no particular order.



How to use this tool

This tool will generate conversation as well as tangible changes to day to day work to bring 2-Gen principles into practice.

Page 13 has these same steps with more area for notes.

STEP ONE: Select a specific policy or program for which you have responsibility or authority. Gather resources that are easily available to you - statutes, rules, policy manuals, staff expertise and knowledge, previous research, etc.

STEP TWO: Using this tool, take a snap shot of your current context. Think about what currently exists; make note of what could exist in the future as you go along.

STEP THREE: With each principle, consider how you might be able to improve current practice. Consider what issues might benefit from deeper assessment or would require partners or additional authority, and document that information. Make note of what you can do: there may be small decisions and larger commitments or conversations that you need to start. Lead from where you sit.

STEP FOUR: Connect with other agencies and find partners to support the implementation of new practices. Assess the impact of the new approaches, both intended and unintended.

STEP FIVE: Repeat. This is a snapshot-in-time assessment and is not an exhaustive list of how to implement a 2-Gen approach. Set an intention to revisit this on a semi-annual basis.

What's your current context?



Not required in policy and rarely implemented

Required in policy, but rarely implemented

Prohibited in policy



Required in policy in certain cases only

Required in policy, but not regularly implemented

Not required in policy but regularly implemented

Policy is locally-determined and implemented only in some regions/counties/agencies/sites



Required in policy and regularly implemented

Policy is locally-determined and regularly implemented by majority of regions/counties/agencies/sites

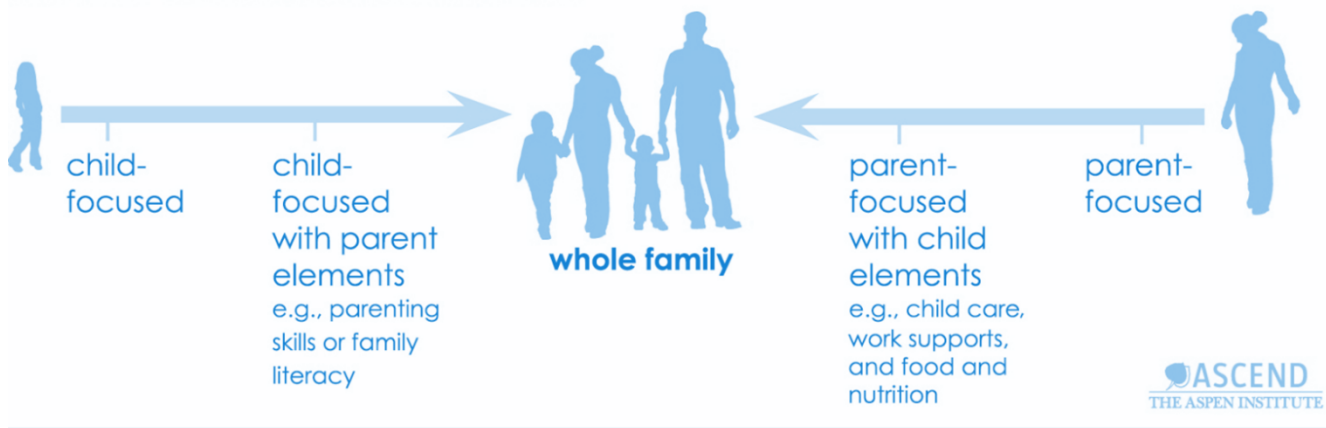
Overview

Name of policy or program:

Brief description:

Where on the 2-Gen continuum is the emphasis of the policy or program? (Mark with an X)

The Two-Generation Continuum



Which “gear” is the emphasis of the policy or program? Notes:
(Mark with an X)



Principle: Engage and listen to the voices of families

In human-serving systems, it is important for those who design policy and programs to understand the perspectives of those we seek to serve. This principle helps to assure we stay focused on the ‘human-centered’ dimension in the design of our systems.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



We regularly seek and document the input of families on the design and implementation of our program and policies.			
We center the voice of families who are low-income and racially and culturally diverse families on our boards and committees.			
When we engage with families to shape policy and program design, we value their time (monetarily) and provide for child care, transportation, and meals in order that they can easily participate.			
In our grants and contracts, we ask for and give preference to partners with who are from or have a history of working with the community we are seeking to serve.			
We have establish feedback loops with the communities we serve.			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Principle: Empower staff to work across systems and environments

Minnesota’s historic place of innovation in policy and program stems from our strong connections across sectors, agencies, and communities. This legacy is a resource in developing more 2- generation program responses, as state-agencies, counties, tribes, and local nonprofits draw on shared goals and visions for a system with the family at the center. Connecting across these is easier when staff know one another and can work together.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



<p>We provide our staff time and encourage them to participate in boards, committees, and other leadership opportunities that increase their access to and interaction with community members, staff from relevant organizations, and/or peers from other agencies or jurisdictions.</p>			
<p>We know the names and contact information of staff in roles related to our work (county government, nonprofit advocacy, nonprofit service agencies, state agencies) and regularly draw upon their knowledge and experiences to improve how our policies/ practices serve families.</p>			
<p>We place value on collaboration, building in time in staff schedules and project timelines for building and coordinating partnerships.</p>			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Principle: Foster innovation and evidence together

The current system does not work for most families. Responding to that reality means we need to do things in a new, innovative ways and build a also base of evidence and evaluation to guide future work to ensure new ways of operating works for families and improves outcomes for both parents and children.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



We regularly engage our staff and partners in conversations and exercises intended to examine efficacy of current practices and develop innovative approaches to our shared challenges.			
To inform the shape of our work, we consult evidence-based clearinghouses and research to understand effectiveness of similar models			
When we are developing new, innovative approaches, we develop the evaluation of this work at the same time.			
We publicize and promote "permission" for innovative approaches, highlighting openness to risk and options for changing existing policy.			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Principle: Align and link system tools, operations, and funding streams

Two-generation approaches will require reaching across the silos of conventional approaches and systems. Necessary to implementing the approach then, is the alignment and linking of funding streams, operational approaches, eligibility structures, and system tools to enable more holistic family services.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



We know what other programs/ services our families are most likely to engage with and take that into account when writing policy, and/or administering this program.			
Enrolling in services and programs that complement the needs of our families can be done easily.			
We have analyzed and adapted funding streams to maximize flexibility and support cross-sector, parent-child approaches and/or approaches that are particularly innovative.			
We leverage flexible funding streams to test innovative approaches to serving families.			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Principle: Attend to compliance requirements through the system, not the family

A two-generation approach works to build the social capital of families and capitalize on the time spent with systems to this end (generative interactions) rather than spending time and resources on compliant tasks. This often means shifting the onus of system requirements to system actors, rather than the family.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



We use data sharing with other programs or agencies to assist applicants in gathering required verifications or documentation.			
We are able to gather information needed for eligibility through existing system data or have streamlined intake forms and recertification processes.			
We look at current and new policies and programs using lessons in brain science and administrative burden how we might simplify the family experience.			
Our policies and programs are designed to allow staff to minimize compliance-focused interactions with families and maximize generative interactions with families.			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Principle: Collect, measure, and account for outcomes for both children and parents

It is important to do what we can to ‘see’ the whole family in our administrative system. The way we assemble and analyze data is an important dimension of moving forwards a more holistic family orientation throughout the system.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



When developing a policy or rule, we use data to evaluate the effects of the policy on both parent and child, thinking through the 2-Gen gears (for example, running family scenarios or using policy expertise to understand interaction effects of policies).			
<i>Adult specific program:</i> We collect information on the parenting status of its participants. ("Are you a parent?") <i>Child specific program:</i> We collect information on the child's parenting arrangement.			
Our system allows for the linking of data for parent and child.			
We regularly analyze and use data we collect about the parents, children, and families to improve our work and understand outcomes.			
We collect or can easily link to outcomes data for parent and child across the five domains of education, career pathways, social capital, health, and economic assets.			
We work with communities to identify strengths-based, culturally-specific measures.			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Principle: Provide opportunity for culturally relevant and customized services

Families in Minnesota are not one-size and engagements with families, especially those families with complex histories, should not be one-size fits all. In order to serve families to achieve positive outcomes, we must be able to adapt efforts so that practices and programs are meaningful to the values and identities of communities and families.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



We acknowledge and attend to the impact of historical trauma and adverse childhood experiences on communities we serve. This means we have trained our staff and modified our practices to be more trauma-informed.			
We are explicit program flexibility in implementation exists so that engagements with families can be culturally relevant.			
Our staff and leadership look like the communities we serve.			
We develop our staff's ability to operate interculturally, for example, trainings and regular conversation.			
We intentionally seek out, learn from, and support culturally specific and emerging best practices.			
In our grants and contracts, we ask for and give preference to partners who have a history of successfully working with the community we serve and/or are delivering services in a culturally-specific way.			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Principle: Recognize and respond to inequity

Systems intended to serve families don't work well for every family. Inequitable outcomes can be seen across race, ethnicity, and cultural identities; signs that systems designed to help families are recreating and/or perpetuating inequity. Reform of a program, policy, or system must examine disparate outcomes and systematic inequity in order to effectively foster equitable outcomes going forward.

PRACTICES

Which of these icons best illustrates your current context?



<p>We examine outcomes of our policies across a range of characteristics including: race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, disability status, and family structure and have a targeted approach to address any inequitable outcomes.</p>			
<p>We use tools and resources available to us to shape our thinking and program development with race and equity in mind, such as: racial equity tool kits and racial equity action plans.</p>			
<p>When we have inequitable outcomes in our policies or programs, we develop a targeted approach to address them.</p>			

Notes or other ideas to put this principle to practice:

Next Steps

STEP THREE: Consider what issues might benefit from deeper assessment or would require partners or additional authority, and document that information. There may be small decisions and larger commitments or conversations that you need to start. Lead from where you sit.

List the resources that you will explore further.

What issues arose that you want to assess further and require more information than what you currently have available to you?

What might be barriers to implement changes? How will you work around those?

STEP FOUR: Connect with other agencies and find partners to support the implementation of new practices. Assess the impact of the new approaches, both intended and unintended.

List potential partners who could support the implementation of new practices in your policy/program area.

How will you assess the impact of these new approaches?

STEP FIVE: Repeat. This is a snapshot-in-time assessment. Set an intention to revisit this on a semi-annual basis.

Add a reminder to your calendar 6 months from now to take another snapshot.

About this tool

Staff from the State of Minnesota and the Future Services Institute at the University of Minnesota drafted these principles drawing from: 2-Generation convenings from October 2016 to January 2018; Interagency efforts of the Minnesota Children’s Cabinet, and National 2-Generation information from organizations such as Ascend, the Parents and Children Thriving Together initiative (of the National Governor's Association and the Center for Law and Social Policy), and the U.S. Department of Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Recognizing the strong overlap in mission and framework, the Minnesota 2-Gen Policy Network and the Early Childhood Systems Reform effort partnered to embed in the principles relevant recommendations the Systems Reform Steering committee generated.

Inspired by a similar tool used by the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, and prompted by requests from our 2-Gen Policy Network partners, we wanted to support leaders and managers, and other policymakers across the state to align their actions with 2-Gen principles.

