



The Bell Policy Center

The Bell Policy Center and its Role in SWFI

The Bell Policy Center is a nonpartisan, progressive public policy research and advocacy organization. We identify, research and advocate for ideas that build and sustain economic opportunity in Colorado. We are members of the Aspen Institute's Ascend Network that works to promote Two-Generation policies to alleviate poverty and have conducted several research projects on Two-Generation models.

Our role in the SWFI project is to conduct focus groups with students and staff members and interview leaders at the community colleges, community partners and other key informants in the region. We also conducted a review of the literature on best practices for coordinating early childhood systems and workforce development and postsecondary education systems. We will present the results of our research to the learning community along with suggestions for additional community partners and policy and systemic changes that could improve the outcomes for SWFI families.

Results of our Research to Date

What we've been exploring

- What 2Gen best practices/themes are identified in the literature/research?
- What are people's goals for the program and the learning community?
- What barriers are student-parents experiencing?
- What are student-parents doing about, and looking for in, child care?
- How do student-parents feel about SWFI?
- What resources are needed to help student-parents achieve their goals?
- Who else should be at the table or in the conversation?
- What policy/program changes are needed for systems change?

What are 2Gen best practices/themes based on the literature review

- SWFI is using many of the best practices identified in the literature
- High quality child care is a key part of 2Gen strategy
- Navigators and coaches are key
- Listen to the people – honor their views and desires
- Don't treat or describe children/families as "barriers"
- Take a holistic view of the parent and family in determining how the support system can be improved and made less complicated
- Include potential community partners based on where participants access the system (e.g., libraries) and where they experience barriers (e.g., housing)
- Create a community of stakeholders to help drive systems change
- Use data to track and show SWFI parent and child outcomes

What are people's goals for the program and learning community?

College leadership – mission driven

- Further the institutional goal on equity
- Open doors for students that might not otherwise attend and complete

- Counter the perpetuation of poverty
- Connect students to community resources the college cannot provide (e.g., child care)
- Understand and better serve the growing “post-traditional” student population
- Develop a more family-friendly campus culture and policies
- Work with community partners to create systems change
- Create new partnerships that will benefit students
- Discover innovative ways to utilize college resources (e.g., ECE programs) and community partnerships to enhance the quality of “Family, Friends, and Neighbors” (FFN) child care without licensing

Current partners – family and community driven

- Lift families out of poverty
- Access to sustainable employment that lifts children out of poverty
- Provide easier access to child care – both quantity and quality
- Develop alternative pathways to quality and improvement for FFN child care providers without licensing
- Create more family-friendly workplaces
- Build stronger communities/workforce; financially healthy communities
- Link dropouts with credentials and employment
- Engage the business community/employers to make the system work better

Students – individual and family driven

- Improve opportunities for self and family
- Be a good role model for children and family
- Obtain a better job/better life; stop “job hopping”
- Get job with health insurance (needed for child)
- Prove cultural stereotypes wrong
- Show yourself, family, and others that you can do it
- Get my A.A. degree
- Take the first step to career; learn new things for new career
- Take the first step to “something else”

How do the student-parents feel about SWFI?

- Positives: SWFI has made a difference
- Suggestions for strengthening: more proactive and consistent communication

Who else should be at the table or in the conversation? – Suggestions from the interviews

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| • Housing | • Financial institutions |
| • Libraries | • Care.Com (map resources/ID needs and capacities) |
| • ECE Faculty at CCA and CCD | • Workforce system representatives |
| • County and city representatives | • Community Based Organizations |
| • Public school systems | • Foundations |
| • Adult education providers | • Family Resource Centers |
| • Emily Griffith Technical College | • Fire Departments/Stations |
| • FFNs – engage providers themselves | • Businesses/employers/chambers of commerce |
| • Transportation | |

Takeaways/Key Questions for the Learning Community

- **Who** else should be at the table or in the conversation?
- **What** program/administrative steps are needed to create a 2Gen/family-friendly system?
- **Where** can policy changes be made to best drive systems change?
- **How** can FFNs be engaged by/included in SWFI and the learning community to increase the quality of care without licensing?