

# State and Local Policy Opportunities and Challenges

Tara Smith

Ray Marshall Center, LBJ School of Public Affairs

*Two-Generation Policy Approaches:  
State & Local Convening  
Austin, TX*

July 24, 2012

# Session Objectives

- Present a summary of RMC's working paper *Promoting Two-Generation Strategies at the State and Local Level*
- Gather input from participants on messaging, issues for further consideration, and next steps

# Two-Generation Strategies

- Engage *both* parent and child in education and development activities
- Link early childhood education (PreK-3<sup>rd</sup>) with sectoral workforce development/postsecondary education for parents and with wrap-around and family support services

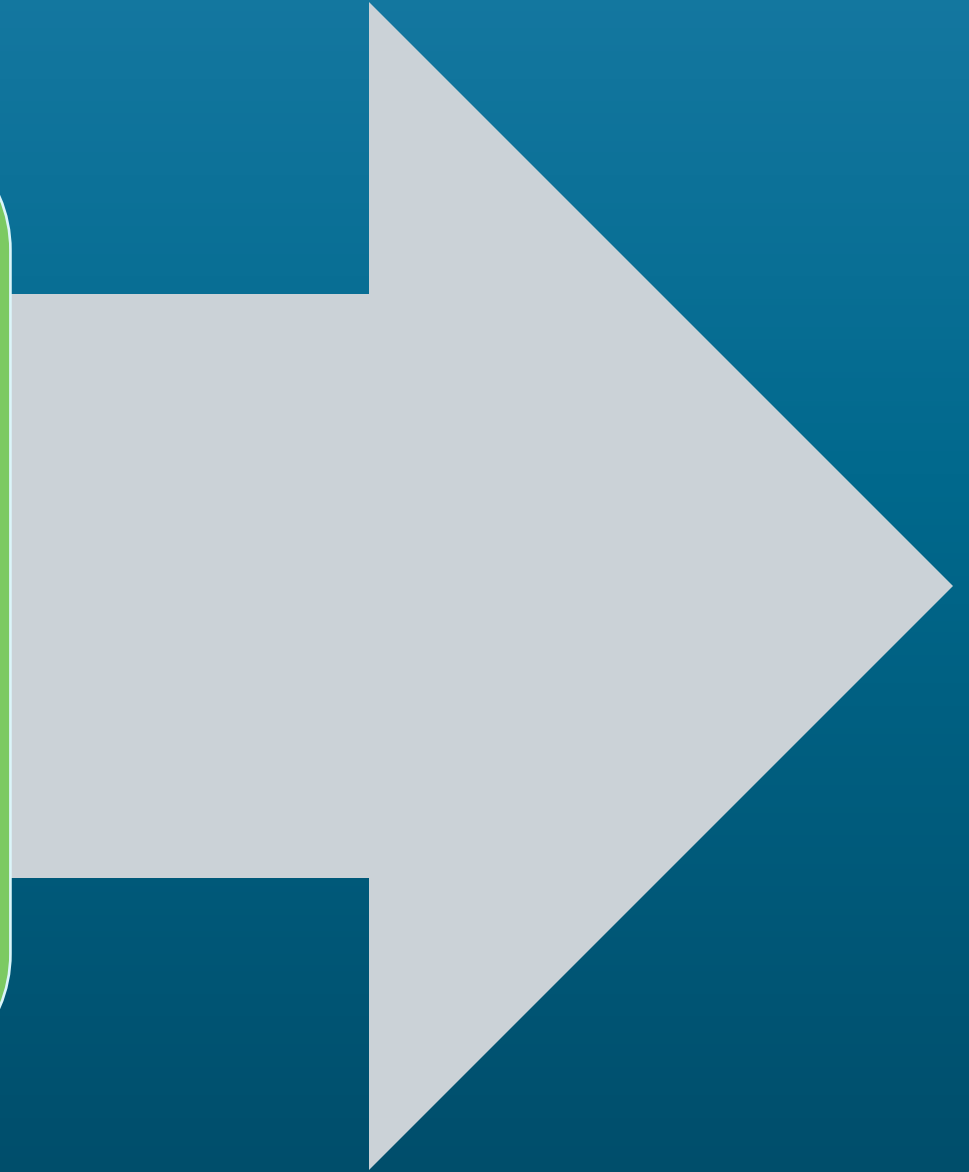
# Key Characteristics

- High-quality child education including school and out-of-school-time programs available full-time/full-year
- Sectoral workforce programs targeting high-wage, demand occupations with benefits and paths to advancement
- Workforce intermediaries to connect across employers, training providers, and human services organizations to meet local demand
- Wrap-around and family supports may include asset development, housing and transportation assistance, healthcare and mental health services, adult basic education and tutoring, and financial incentives

# Expected Outcomes Over Time

## Near-term

- Improved school readiness and attendance for kids
- Higher rates of enrollment in adult basic education, career training, and postsecondary education for parents
- Higher motivation to pursue education, training, and career goals for both



# Expected Outcomes Over Time

## Mid-term

- Improved academic success and social adjustment to school for kids
- Improved persistence and completion of education and career training programs for parents
- Improved interactions between kids and parents

# Expected Outcomes Over Time

## Long-term

- ° Improved high school graduation and postsecondary matriculation for kids
- ° Improved employment, earnings, and incomes for parents
- ° Increased well-being and greater life stability for both

# Challenges and Opportunities for Two-Generation Strategy Development

Key areas for consideration:

1. Policy
2. Coordination
3. Administration
4. Funding
5. Implementation



# Policy

## *Challenges*

- Inertia
- Isolated policy development and planning

## *Opportunities*

- Commitment to evidence-based policy making
- Comprehensive policy structures to encourage integrated planning and policy development

# Coordination

## *Challenges*

- Absence of high-level policies
- Conflicting goals, performance expectations, and services
- Systems characterized by silos and isolation

## *Opportunities*

- Prior collaborative projects and community-driven efforts
- Active interagency workgroups in social, education, or economic development

# Administration

## *Challenges*

- Rigid or resistant organizational culture
- “We’ve always done it this way”

## *Opportunities*

- Organizational interest in efficiency and effectiveness of services

# Funding

## *Challenges*

- Structural separation
- Multiple, restrictive mechanisms
- Resource limitations

## *Opportunities*

- Flexible SNAP/TANF E&T Funds
- General revenues
- State UI employer taxes
- Business and philanthropic resources

# Implementation Challenges

- Poor basic skills
- Ineffective approaches to adult basic education and developmental education
- Differing schedules for child and parent programming
- Communication within and across programs and systems

# Implementation Opportunities

- Existing investments in high-quality education programs across the lifespan
- Well-developed sectoral workforce development programs
- Active and increasing number of workforce intermediaries
- Robust data collection and reporting systems

# Recommendations for Two- Generation Strategy Development

- Tailor to state and local policy and program environment *and* local economic/labor market conditions
- Consider action across the key areas:
  1. Policy
  2. Coordination
  3. Administration
  4. Funding
  5. Implementation

# Policy Recommendations

## *State*

- Issue guidance and directives in support of two-generation strategies
- Integrate program funding, planning, service delivery within and across systems

## *Local*

- Target low-income *families* as a service priority



# Coordination Recommendations

## *State*

- Shift away from siloed approaches towards more integrated and flexible systems
- Coordinate across agencies to remove funding, reporting, and measurement barriers

## *Local*

- Communicate often between organizations and among staff at multiple levels
- Identify an intermediary or other “backbone” organization to spearhead collaboration
- Target education to both parent and child

# Administration Recommendations

## *State*

- Collect data and/or establish performance measures related to family services rather than just child or adult services.

## *Local*

- Offer programming for children and parent on the same schedule to facilitate engagement
- Offer case management, career/life coaching, and family support services
- Collect and use data to improve programs

# Funding Recommendations

## *State*

- Allow existing funding streams to be used
- Develop pilot and demonstration projects
- Create incentive funds for local strategy adoption

## *Local*

- Raise awareness among local funders
- Seek funds to support coordination tasks
- Connect existing investments and economic supports around common mission

# Implementation Recommendations

## *State*

- Convene partner agencies to raise awareness and detail steps and needed supports
- Provide or support technical assistance and training for implementation

## *Local*

- Identify potential community partners
- Schedule periodic feedback and planning sessions
- Require intensive participant engagement
- Use peer cohorts to help participants manage multiple roles and build social capital

# Issues for Further Consideration

- Identify champions and backbone/intermediary organization
- Create funding strategies
- Consider a continuum of strategies ranging from coordinated existing services to fully integrated services resulting from systems change
- Conduct rigorous two-generation research

# Next Steps for Two-Generation Strategy Development

- Initiate action among state policymakers, local organizations, and potential funders
- Seek information, guidance, and assistance in moving forward