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WORKING PRACTICE PROFILE

Growing Language Skills with Immigrant and Refugee Families: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Working Practices



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For immigrant parents in the United States, lack of English-language proficiency can be a barrier to good jobs, healthcare, education and more. Family-school communication challenges, inadequate educational supports or the lack of quality programs for young, immigrant-background children who are dual language learners may also fuel educational achievement gaps. Social service organizations can support immigrant and refugee families through culturally responsive programs that build on the strengths of the home language while also helping grow English language skills.

What does it take for service organizations to grow home and English language skills with immigrant and refugee families, and what positive results can flow from those efforts? What steps can organizations take to provide accessible and inclusive services to families who speak a language other than English? In 2021, a project team from the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, the Migration Policy Institute and Higher Heights Consulting set out to lift up 2Gen practices that work to grow language skills with immigrant families by listening to the organizations doing this work. There's no doubt that overcoming language barriers is challenging and must be done intentionally, but two broad strategies arose from our survey, interviews, webinars, and peer advising and learning convenings: **organizations should provide culturally and linguistically accessible and responsive services and offer language-learning programs that meet the needs of children and their parents.**

This brief is the third of four that explore practices that service organizations are using to provide 2Gen services to immigrant and refugee families. Each brief includes anonymous interview data, as well as multiple case studies that dive into the details of how a service organization conducts its

work with immigrant and refugee families. Together, the briefs address trust-building, working with families regardless of legal status, overcoming language barriers, and strategies to increase cultural competency. We hope the lessons and insights shared here can inspire other organizations to adopt and adapt these practices to better support the immigrant and refugee families they work with. To access all four briefs please visit this **website**.[1]



Commonly Spoken Languages

A survey[2] of 125 immigrant-serving organizations, conducted in the spring of 2021, uncovered core aspects of the language-related needs of immigrant and refugee communities in the United States. It comes as no surprise that Spanish is the top language spoken among immigrant families, and Table 1 lays out the other four most spoken languages among families who receive organization services. It also shows the percentage of organizations providing services in those top five languages — highlighting a gap between the languages spoken by immigrant and refugee families who seek services and the capacity of organizations to communicate or provide services in those languages. Additionally, 60% of organizations indicated they serve families who speak languages other than these five most common ones, and in one open-ended response, an organization indicated it serves different families that speak a long list of languages, including: Albanian, Armenian, English-Based Creole, German, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Nepali, Newari, Pashto, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Sherpa, Sindhi, Somali, Spanish, Tibetan, Turkish, Urdu, and Wakhi. Providing services that are accessible to families who speak so many different languages can present a big challenge for organizations because of the resources required for interpretation and translation, a lack of bilingual workers who can cover all of the languages and the difficulty in coordinating services in so many different languages.

Top Five Languages Reported by Survey Respondents	Percent of Organizations who Serve Families Speaking Language	Percent of Organizations Who Provide Services in Language
Spanish	93%	86%
Arabic	42%	23%
French	34%	20%
Chinese	25%	16%
Vietnamese	22%	14%



Why 2Gen and Immigrant Families?

It can be challenging to reach and serve immigrant families because of trust and language barriers and cultural differences — the very challenge areas that drove our research. Furthermore, many social service programs focus solely on the child or the parent, often due to funding constraints or traditional areas of expertise within the organization. The two-generation (2Gen) approach does not focus exclusively on either children or adults because their well-being is directly interconnected. Instead, it takes stock of the family as a whole and uses a holistic, family-centered lens to understand the multiple dimensions of families and consider a variety of pathways for promoting positive outcomes.[3]

To learn more about growing language skills with immigrant families, you can find resources shared during the event and view the recording here.

The 2Gen model was developed over the past decade by family-based practitioners to reduce barriers to services and increase mobility out of poverty for children and adults. Championed nationally by **Ascend** and the **Community Strategies Group** at the Aspen Institute, the 2Gen mindset and model recognizes whole family units, as families define themselves, and meaningfully engages parents and caregivers in designing policies and programs that affect them. By working with families to solve problems, access new resources and sharpen existing talents and skills, the 2Gen approach creates experiences and opportunities for all families to reach their full potential and for communities to thrive economically and socially. Because of these aspects, the 2Gen approach is a good fit for organizations that work, or seek to work, with immigrant families.

The Growing Language Skills with Immigrant Families Webinar

The third of the four-part *Immigrant Families: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Working Practices* series addressed strategies for growing language skills that work to advance the lives of parents and children together. 2Gen organizations working to offer educational, career development and other programs in a multilingual format shared their secrets to success, including developing a flexible curriculum tailored to families' needs and honoring and celebrating language and culture. Featured speakers on the webinar include Banu Valladares, Executive Director of Charlotte Bilingual Preschool, who spoke about the school's dual language instructional model as well as the program's impressive efforts to engage parents in early childhood development topics and improve their own skills and career prospects. Karissa Coltman Burnett, Assistant Director of Family Advancement for CAP Tulsa, advised that providing effective and engaging English acquisition programs for parents often involves tailoring offerings to key subgroups — including those most interested in supporting their children's early development and school success and those seeking workforce advancement. She also underscored that being cognizant of the different dialects that families may speak is important, in addition to hiring a diverse staff and translating all resources to make them accessible. To learn more about growing language skills with immigrant families, you can find resources shared during the event and **view the recording here**.[4]



Working Practice1: Provide Linguistically Accessible and Responsive Services

Service organizations working with immigrant and refugee families must provide linguistically accessible and responsive services. If an organization only provides English language services, it is unlikely that immigrant families, particularly those who are limited English proficient (LEP), will come to trust and access those programs and services, however good they may be.[5] Failing to take steps to remove language barriers to services that are supported with federal funds is also a violation of federal civil rights laws as well as some state and local laws.[6] As first steps, service organizations should translate written resources like applications, forms and informational brochures, and provide interpreters or bilingual staff for important interactions such as meetings, interviews and parent-teacher conferences.

Multiple agencies we interviewed referenced language access solutions that involved both hiring bilingual staff from local communities as well as hiring multilingual parents in their programs as program staff or translators/interpreters.[7] When organizations are unable to pay for the cost of translators or interpreters, many nurture partnerships with other local organizations to reduce costs. Some organizations rely on fee-based translation services for their written documents. In light of the inaccuracies often reported in translations provided by web-based applications, service organizations we talked to recommend paying local experts to review translations, improving translation accuracy and engaging community members. For example, one interviewee shared that a member of their local Vietnamese community provided feedback on the quality of the group's translated documents. They recommended having native speakers provide or review translations — and stated that doing so can build stronger community relationships.

Linguistically responsive programs and services go beyond providing basic access to information and interactions that would otherwise be provided only in English, including by designing a program or service in ways that comply with important civil rights requirements and respond to the language development needs of a child or adult. Providing linguistically responsive services is central to meeting the 2Gen success needs of immigrant families. This is especially important in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) arena, where multiple programs and funding streams are intended to close gaps in areas such as maternal and child health, school readiness and early school success, and to more generally support young children's healthy development.

Home Visiting and preschool programs (including Head Start) are prime examples of programs that must be provided in a manner responsive to the language and literacy needs of parents and children so that they may receive the intended benefits of the program service. Recognizing this, the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration's Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center notes that linguistically responsive teaching practices "support the learning, development, and engagement of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds." These can include various practices that support development of children's home or tribal languages and allow them to fully participate in learning experiences regardless of their level of English proficiency. The Home Visiting and preschool programs described in the following case study provide excellent examples of services that have been designed in a linguistically responsive manner.



CASE STUDY 1

Charlotte Bilingual Preschool supports dual language learners and celebrates regional dialects

Established in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1999, Charlotte Bilingual Preschool (CltBP) prepares Spanish-speaking children for success in school and life by providing superior dual language, multicultural early childhood education. CltBP's 2Gen approach offers a host of programs to help family members engage fully in their children's educations, including weekly virtual literacy programs for families and children; English classes for adults; workshops and cafés on topics families identify; and a growing suite of resources for family members eager to pursue careers in early childhood education. CltBP serves families that represent a wide array of Spanish-speaking cultures and dialects — some who have recently immigrated to the U.S. and others who have lived in the country for decades. To encourage participation and build community, all family communication (other than English classes) occurs in Spanish as well as English.



BANU VALLADARES
Executive Director
Charlotte Bilingual Preschool

Many members of the Charlotte Bilingual Preschool team contributed to this work. Banu Valladares, Executive Director, and Andrew Gadaire, Research and Evaluation Director, sat for an interview in the summer of 2021, and Banu also participated in the national webinar focused on growing language skills status. Banu Valladares, Andrew Gadaire and Susana Jerez, Family Programs & Talent Director, all joined the resource team for the peer advising and learning session on growing language skills.

CltBP's main program is an innovative bilingual preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds that builds on students' existing language skills to fuel their cognitive development and learning across multiple domains. Most students are dual language learners (DLLs) from Spanish-speaking homes, though some classrooms include children from English-speaking households as well. Each CltBP classroom has two bilingual teachers: a Spanish lead and an English lead. They co-teach using the Reggio Emilia approach, a student-centered pedagogy rooted in respect, responsibility and community. CltBP teachers use the Creative Curriculum, a comprehensive, research-based curriculum adapted to its dual language model. This approach nurtures children's home languages and facilitates exploration, learning and social-emotional development in the preferred language, effectively serving young DLLs and closing education achievement gaps while also helping children develop the English skills they will need to succeed in elementary school and beyond.

CltBP embraces the fact that its team and family members speak different regional variants and/or dialects of Spanish and come from different cultural backgrounds. As a result, CltBP hires the most diverse array of team members possible. Places of origin currently represented include Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

A common language can serve as a bridge between different regional cultures and help families feel supported rather than isolated, so CltBP encourages its *comunidad* to show regional pride and honor all regions and cultures. CltBP designates specific days for representing each region and dressing in traditional attire. Students celebrate their cultures through class projects and show-and-tells. Family events also underscore this multicultural perspective, with such themes as "The Great Tamale Cook-Off," "Cookies con Santa," and "Día de los Reyes." These efforts help overcome potential home culture prejudices and create cross-dialect friendships that would not have occurred otherwise.

CltBP's advocacy efforts seek to advance legislation that supports effective and responsive program designs for young DLLs. It uses California's Dual Language Learner platform as a launching pad to promote dual language early education at the local, state, and national levels. CltBP is even working to remove barriers to family economic mobility by recruiting and training its family members as dual language teachers in its classrooms. In addition to benefits for families, this practice builds CltBP's capacity to provide culturally responsive supports to students and families. However, many barriers interfere with family members' training and professional development. For example:

- Many immigrants and non-native English speakers are deterred from higher education because courses require a high level of English literacy and are designed based on unfamiliar cultural norms.

- Immigrant families often do not qualify for in-state tuition at the community colleges that offer training in early childhood education.
- Individuals experience challenges transferring credits from universities in their home countries and navigating unfamiliar enrollment and financial aid processes in English.
- California ECE certificates are not recognized by North Carolina ECE licensure programs, so right now, there are no incentives for ECE programs to hire teachers who have completed certificates but not received an associate's or bachelor's degree. In turn, there are no financial incentives for families to complete a certificate program unless they are continuing to receive their AA or BA.

Nonetheless, CltBP has helped more than 70 Spanish-speaking adults in Charlotte to enroll in an ECE certificate program offered in Spanish. These adults, all from the CltBP family community, cite personal growth, interest in providing high-quality early education, desire to respond to a community need (i.e., the lack of preschool teachers, much less bilingual preschool teachers), and economic opportunity as reasons for enrolling. CltBP is collaborating with Central Piedmont Community College to decrease barriers and design pathways for Spanish-speaking family members to reach their goals. In doing so, CltBP simultaneously contributes to its community's capacity to hire high-quality ECE professionals to teach dual language learners.



Working Practice 2: Offer English language-learning programs for parents that meet family needs

Service organizations often seek to help immigrant and refugee parents grow their language skills through formal English for Speakers of Other Languages[10] (ESOL or ESL) classes. **Interviewees overwhelmingly recommended designing such programs and curriculum around the needs of families, whether they need employment-related programming or useful language skills to connect and communicate with teachers.** It is important to note that family needs will change with time, so any program should be designed to be flexible and adaptive. Interviewees emphasized the importance of showing families that you value them and are taking the time to understand what they want to get out of the program. **They also noted that ESOL programs should be strengths- and assets-based and ask participants for input to improve future iterations of the program.** One interviewee wisely noted that one doesn't have all the answers at the get-go and one should make no assumptions about family needs. Instead, ask questions about what is most useful and be responsive.

CASE STUDY 2

CAP Tulsa provides 2Gen programs and offers English classes focused on family and classroom communication

CAP Tulsa is a Community Action Agency in Tulsa, Oklahoma that supports children in achieving future academic success and families in gaining better outcomes, with the aim of disrupting the cycle of poverty. Formed in 1974, CAP Tulsa is the largest anti-poverty agency in Oklahoma, serving more than 2,000 children in low-income families across 13 early childhood centers. With an intentional 2Gen approach, CAP Tulsa offers free, high-quality education for newborns to kindergarteners as well as ESL and career training programs for parents. About 40% of their families speak Spanish, and the second most frequently spoken languages are Zomi and/or Burmese, as about 10% of the population they serve are refugees from Myanmar.



KARISSA COLTMAN BURNETT
Assistant Director of Family Advancement
CAP Tulsa

Many current and former members of the CAP Tulsa team contributed to this work including Karissa Coltman Burnett, Assistant Director of Family Advancement; Claudia Cruz, Manager of Programs; and Diane Eason Contreras, Director of Immigrant and Refugee Services at YWCA Tulsa (formerly of CAP Tulsa,) who all sat for an interview in the summer of 2021. Karissa participated in the national webinar focused on growing language skills and was joined by her colleague Ria Patino, Specialist in Family Advancement, for the peer advising and learning session on the same topic.

By working with community partners, CAP Tulsa can offer support in the languages most spoken by families. They provide family support in both Spanish and Burmese through school staff and language translators, and they also arrange for translation services through a contract with the local YWCA, an allied organization with programs that also serve immigrants and refugees in the community. They braid together multiple grant funding sources with a mix of private philanthropy donors.

CAP Tulsa's two primary early childhood programs focus on preparing children for school by strengthening their writing, critical reading and behavioral skills. The *Learning@Home* program works with parents who are expecting and children ages 0-5 to build parents' confidence and knowledge of their child's development. Highly qualified Parent Educators visit the family's home and give parents activities they can do with their child, along with relevant resources and information regarding child development. These visits typically last 60-90 minutes and occur either weekly or semimonthly. CAP Tulsa's school-based program uses an evidence-based classroom curriculum taught by bilingual teachers to promote reading, writing and math skills, as well as creativity. The program works holistically to ensure children have access to nutritious meals, regular health checkups and childcare before and after school. The program also wraps social and mental health services around all families in the program.

In addition, CAP Tulsa's *CareerAdvance* program supports parents by providing free English language classes that include career training and coaching services that connect participants with local job opportunities, primarily in the healthcare field. Parents can usually earn their course certificate in about 18 weeks, and as they navigate the career advancement program, they have access to free childcare. CAP Tulsa staff draw on the COACH model from Central New Mexico Community College — an interactive course where clients receive coaching on how to achieve their goals — and have adapted it for coaching immigrant parents to achieve their language learning goals. While coaches are not necessarily mental health specialists, they collaborate with dedicated family support and behavioral support service staff to ensure English language learners in the program can access mental health services.

Staff at CAP Tulsa have learned over time that when participants form connections with coaches and peers within their cohort, they are more likely to be engaged and can also build their social capital. Their classes use a cohort model; in addition to regular classes, English coaches hold weekly partner meetings for participants to communicate with peers, which creates a space for them to not only discuss what they have learned, but also to share stories about what is going on in their household (for example, they can share observations on their children's health if some are not feeling well). This fosters relationships between participants, their peers and the coaches, providing parents with support from their entire cohort.

CAP Tulsa has seen great success in designing language content tailored to what parents need; they have found that families in their community want conversational skills to connect with their kids and engage with their kids' teachers. While staff initially thought their English program would be an offshoot of their career training program, when they asked families what they needed most, they found it was more important for parents to have English language skills to hold conversations with children and their teachers. After more closely tailoring the content to what the parents needed, they designed an ESOL cohort in which all the participants had children enrolled in CAP Tulsa's early childhood program. Structuring the class around a common student characteristic allowed them to better support family needs while advancing the English learning goals of the students.

Even while making progress in one area, CAP Tulsa tries to stay flexible with its ESOL curriculum, as families' language needs do change over time. They suggest trying out different pilot programs until you find what works by asking for feedback and tracking outcomes, and they emphasize that it's okay if this learning process takes time. They approach their programs flexibly, adapting the English classes when families' needs change.

CAP Tulsa builds feedback and input into their program design using human-centered design techniques, focus groups and surveys. Human-centered design techniques have been baked into CAP Tulsa's ESL program from the very beginning; they have a long history of going to families for input on program design. At the conclusion of each course, they conduct a survey to ask families what they want and receive feedback on what is and is not working. "Getting feedback from the people you are seeking to serve, it's the most important thing you can do. It builds trust, and helps you solve problems. Go to them, they are the experts in their life, they can tell you what they need. Respecting that builds trust." Implementing this feedback loop is one of the process-improvement tools that supported the rapid growth of the program, tripling the number of participants served in 7 years.

Policy Implications

For over 50 years, numerous policies and programs in the U.S. early childhood, social services and related fields have aimed to close gaps in children's school readiness and help lift families out of poverty. However, frameworks governing these programs have failed to keep pace as linguistic and cultural diversity among young children and their families dramatically increased in recent decades. Today, children from immigrant families comprise 25.8 percent of all U.S. children under age 18.[11] And while they and their families possess many strengths, immigrant parents are significantly more likely than their U.S.-born peers to face challenges such as poverty, low or very low levels of formal education, and/or limited proficiency in English.[12] Earlier lags in policy and system responses mean that today's policy landscape is littered with longstanding challenges. However, opportunities also abound as several major federal programs are slated for reauthorization and significant new investments are flowing and/or are under consideration to help the U.S. emerge stronger from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With one-third of U.S. children ages 0-5 growing up in a household where a language other than English is spoken,[13] improving policy designs and scaling programs that are responsive to the needs of these children — commonly known as dual language learners[14] — is critical. The Charlotte Bilingual Preschool's program designs for children, parents and future bilingual ECEC workers thus carry numerous important policy implications. DLLs and their parents face inequities in quality and access to key programs such as Home Visiting, Child Care and Head Start/preschool when, for example, parents are unable to communicate with program staff, or when program designs disregard DLL children's particular language development needs. Yet, disparities in program access and quality facing these families are virtually impossible to track and address because there are no national requirements for systematic identification of DLLs.[15] Similarly, most state quality rating improvement systems — the central means by which quality in ECEC services is assessed — do not meaningfully incorporate, much less require, linguistically responsive program or service designs as a basic measure of quality.

While improving equity and quality for immigrant families in critical ECEC services can be addressed via multiple policy and program levers, two stand out in particular:

- **Enact DLL identification policies:** adopting and implementing robust identification policies[16] for DLL children ages 0-5 in ECEC programs will provide the only truly reliable foundation upon which other efforts to improve system access and quality for DLL children and their families can be built. Such policies can be included in legislation at the federal or state levels[17] or as part of budgetary proposals involving child care or other ECEC investments.
- **Scale responsive program designs:** requiring use of program models that effectively address DLLs' language development needs and supporting their scaling through capacity-building initiatives is critical to improve equity and quality in ECEC services for DLL children. Given parents' critical role in supporting their children's healthy development and early learning, and the severe shortage of quality programs currently available for young DLLs, scaling programs for parents focused on child development topics and strategies for raising a DLL child is another urgent priority. As demonstrated by the Charlotte Bilingual Preschool Program, such programs can also serve as an on-ramp for bilingual and bicultural individuals interested in pursuing training and employment in the ECEC field. Equitable provision and expansion of such programs can be supported through legislation or funding initiatives at all levels of government.

CAP Tulsa has excelled in providing a wide range of well-designed and targeted programs for children and families for many years. This brief focused most heavily on their adult English and workforce skills programs, which include education and training for adults seeking employment and higher wages, particularly in the health care field, as well as English classes tailored to immigrant parents' interests in supporting their children's healthy development and school success. Described below, the challenges this high-functioning organization has faced in bridging the diverse needs and interests of families they serve with federal and state requirements of adult English and workforce programs highlight a major flaw in policies governing these systems, one which undermines provision of two-generation services for many immigrant families across the United States.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) governs federal support for adult education and workforce programs. Adult education services funded under the law include basic education for adults who lack a high school diploma or equivalent, as well as classes for those seeking to learn English. WIOA's passage in 2014 included a significant departure from earlier system policies, with the performance measures previously mandated for workforce training programs now also applied on a mandatory basis to adult education programs. Three of the six performance measures focus on employment and wage gain post program completion, one on effectiveness in serving employers, one on post-secondary transition or credential attainment, and only one on providing credit for advancing a level in English or basic education.[18] Thus, even though parents are a key target population under the law, those who don't work outside the home and/or who are primarily interested in gaining knowledge and skills to support their children's education were made a risky population to serve given their inability to meet many of the mandatory performance measures.[19]

Given the diversity in learning goals and levels of formal education and English among CAP Tulsa's clients, it continues running its *CareerAdvance* program using public funds, while privately fundraising to support its English classes that focus on family and child success topics. Elsewhere around the country, however, a significant share of such parent-focused programs have closed; their demise was also hastened by cuts made during the Obama Administration to family literacy programs funds, which ultimately ran out in 2011.[20] These and other parent-focused adult education programs had for decades served as an on-ramp into local school and service ecosystems for immigrant and refugee families, but due to these policy developments, many have been lost over the past decade.

With WIOA's reauthorization expected to be taken up by Congress in 2022, several measures that could push the system towards equitably serving parents include: exempting parents who don't work outside the home from the law's employment-related performance measures; requiring states to demonstrate that they are equitably serving parents of young and elementary-school-age children; and ensuring that the Statistical Adjustment Model used to rate states' performance does not penalize and in fact provides credit to those who serve parents.

Finally, many states provide more than the funding match required under federal law for adult education funds.[21] Those interested in better serving parents can reduce their federal match funds and direct them towards parent-focused programs and/or provide new funds designated for parent programs that operate outside the federal system, using performance measures appropriate to the program's purposes.

Conclusion

Across the country, service organizations are doing the hard work of overcoming language barriers through intentionally designing their interventions to meet the needs of families. The research and case studies above explore two broad strategies that arose from our survey, interviews, webinars, and peer advising and learning convenings: ***organizations should provide culturally and linguistically accessible and responsive services and offer language-learning programs that meet the needs of children and their parents.*** The list below synthesizes many of the top-level findings related to this work.

- **Create programming that is responsive to the needs and developmental trajectories of dual-language learning children and effectively engaged with their families.**
- **Design your ESOL program and curriculum around the needs of families**, whether that means employment, being able to communicate better with teachers, or a different need. These needs will change with time, so the program should be flexible.
- **Create spaces for program participants with common life experiences** (e.g., those who are parents) to allow them to connect, build bonds, share resources and ideas and build their network. This can be both inside and outside the ESOL classroom.
- **Grow staff-family relationships** by having linguistically and culturally competent staff intentionally connect with families, whether through Home Visiting programs, Pre-K or other programming focused on supporting two-generation success. Sincerity and empathy will help show families that the organization cares about them.
- **Translate written and online resources for immigrant and refugee families.**
- **Hire bilingual staff and/or use qualified professional or volunteer interpreters for interactions with low English proficiency caregivers and their children.**
- **Recognize and account for dialects when sharing resources or providing services.** Ensure that translation services and classroom materials are suited for the different regional variants or dialects spoken by families in the program. Also aim to hire a diverse team of staff who speak the different dialects and reflect the cultural as well as linguistic backgrounds of participants.
- **Honor and celebrate language and culture.** Language can serve as a bridge between different cultures, and participants may share the joy of finding someone else who also speaks their language.
- **Show families that you value them.** ESOL programs should be strengths- and assets-based. Regularly ask for family input to revise future iterations of the program.

Description of the Project

With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the project team explored and examined the challenges and promising 2Gen working practices used by organizations that serve immigrant families. The project team included the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, the Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy (MPI), and Higher Heights Consulting, with valuable input from Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

We were initially interested in how the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic shaped current challenges and responses of immigrant-serving organizations, but we also wanted to discover durable and promising 2Gen practices that could be replicable (and therefore valuable) within other organizations. A related goal of the effort was to advance the entire field of service provision by helping organizations who were not yet or only partially implementing a 2Gen approach to improve their work with immigrant families.

To discover 2Gen working practices, we first needed to assess organizational challenges and responses. The project team conducted a national survey of immigrant serving organizations, reaching a target audience of over 1,000 through multiple national service organization networks, including the National Community Action Partnership, the United Neighborhood Houses, and Welcoming America. The survey netted over 125 complete responses, and analysis revealed positive trends grouped around four major areas: building trust, overcoming language barriers, developing cultural competency, and working through documentation status.

To sharpen the promising 2Gen working practices that organizations use with immigrant families, the project team selected 25 geographically diverse and reputationally-strong organizations and conducted 90-minute interviews with each one. Nine of these organizations were invited to participate as expert panelists at four webinars that individually covered the four positive area trends mentioned above. They also participated as part of the resource team for a peer advising and learning session on that same topic, held following the webinar. The learnings from the survey, interviews, topical webinars, and peer advising and learning sessions are gathered in a set of four issue briefs, of which this is one.

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Endnotes

[1] "Working with Immigrant and Refugee Families," *Aspen Institute*, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/community-strategies-group/family-economic-success/2gi/.

[2] For more on this survey and the research project that supports this brief series, please see the final Description of Project section in this document.

[3] For more on the 2Gen approach, visit the Ascend at the Aspen Institute website; "The 2Gen Approach," *Ascend at the Aspen Institute*, https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/2gen-approach/.

[4] "Growing Language Skills with Immigrant Families: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Working Practices," *Aspen Institute,* 14 October 2021, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/events/growing-language-skills/.

[5] For more on building trust with immigrant families, see the brief on this subject located on this website; "Working with Immigrant and Refugee Families," *Aspen Institute*, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/community-strategies-group/family-economic-success/2gi/.

[6] "Executive Order 13166," *LEP.gov*, https://www.lep.gov/executive-order-13166, accessed 24 January 2022.

[7] Hiring and retaining diverse staff is one of the working practices highlighted in the building trust brief in this series. Click here to read more.

[8] Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) Curriculum Consumer Report; "Criterion 12: Linguistic Responsiveness," *Head Start ECLKC*. See also, "Head Start Program Performance Standards Excerpts, 45 CRF Chapter XIII, Subchapter B – The Administration For Children And Families, Head Start Programs, References To: Dual Language Learners (DLLs), Culturally And Linguistically Appropriate, Language And Culture, Home Language, Tribal, Migrant & Seasonal And American Indian And Alaska Native," *HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS EXCERPTS*.

[9] "Reggio Emilia – Values," *Reggio Emilia Approach*, https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/valori-en/.

[10] English classes for adult who are non-native English speakers have in recent decades been known by several names and acronyms, including English as a Second Language (ESL) and English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL). Under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act they are currently termed English Language Acquisition programs; however, this terminology has not yet been widely adopted across the country.

[11] Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey (ACS); "Children in U.S. Immigrant Families (By Age Group and State, 1990 versus 2019)," *Migration Policy Institute*, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/children-immigrant-families.

[12] See, for example: Jacob Hofstetter and Margie McHugh, "Immigrant and U.S.-Born Parents of Young and Elementary-School-Age Children: Key Sociodemographic Characteristics," *Migration Policy Institute*, April 2021, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-us-born-parents-young-children.

[13] Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey pooled for 2015–19; "Young Dual Language Learners in the United States and by State," *Migration Policy Institute*, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-state-profiles-young-dlls.

[14] *Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs,* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and U.S. Department of Education (ED), 2016, https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/dll-policy-statement-final.pdf. 2. According to HHS and ED in this joint statement, "the term 'Dual Language Learners' may encompass or overlap substantially with other terms frequently used, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), bilingual, English language learner (ELL), English learner (EL), and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE)."

[15] This is in striking contrast to K-12 schools where requirements for identification and provision of responsive programming for students who are English learners have been in place for decades.

[16] Maki Park and Delia Pompa, *Ending the Invisibility of Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Systems: A Framework for DLL Identification*, Migration Policy Institute, May 2021, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/framework-dual-language-learner-identification. Within this framework, several other foundational elements are involved, including, for example, "Comprehensive state early childhood data systems aligned with K-12 systems" and "Effective, culturally relevant, and age-appropriate assessments and tools for use across the birth-to-age-five continuum."

[17] "Preschool: dual language learners," CA AB-1363, 2021, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1363.

[18] Margie McHugh and Catrina Doxsee, *English Plus Integration: Shifting the Instructional Paradigm for Immigrant Adult Learners to Support Integration Success*, Migration Policy Institute, October 2018, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/english-plus-integration-instructional-paradigm-immigrant-adult-learners, 8.

[19] Maki Park, Margie McHugh and Caitlin Katsiaficas, Serving Immigrant Families Through Two-Generation Programs: Identifying Family Needs and Responsive Program Approaches, Migration Policy Institute, November 2016, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/serving-immigrant-families-through-two-generation-programs-identifying-family-needs-and, 3.

[20] Even Start was a family literacy program that included activities such as early childhood education and care (ECEC), adult literacy, and parenting instruction. Even Start received federal funding from 1988 until 2011, when the program was eliminated. See Park, McHugh and Katsiaficas, Serving Immigrant Families Through Two-Generation Programs – Ibid; "Programs: Even Start," *U.S. Department of Education,* updated 9 April 2014; Alyson Klein, "Congress Chops Funding for High-Profile Education Programs," *Education Week*, 4 March 2011.

[21] Margie McHugh and Catrina Doxsee, *English Plus Integration*, Migration Policy Institute, October 2018, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/english-plus-integration-instructional-paradigm-immigrant-adult-learners, 21-22.

[22] For a list of people and organizations interviewed, visit this webpage.

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ABOUT CSG AND MPI

The **Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group** convenes, equips, and inspires local leaders as they build more prosperous regions and advance those living on the economic margins — with our primary focus on rural America since our founding in 1985. Committed to increasing equity and opportunity, CSG advances an asset-based and systems-building approach to improve economic, social, and health outcomes through community and economic development.

The **Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy** is a crossroads for elected officials, researchers, state and local agency managers, grassroots leaders, local service providers, and others who seek to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities today's high rates of immigration create in local communities.