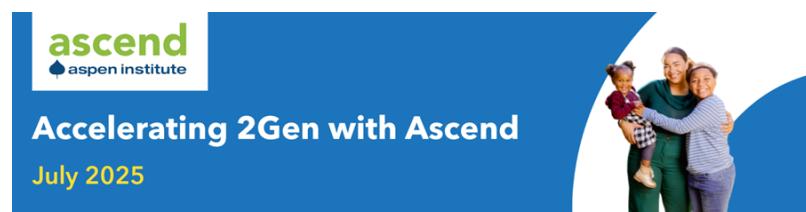


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Two-generation (2Gen) approaches are paving pathways for children and their families to reach their full potential *together*. This monthly newsletter highlights 2Gen practice and policy breakthroughs so you can cultivate innovation, collaborate within and outside your organization, and improve outcomes for whole families.



Big Bets, Bold Imagination, and the Change Capital Families Deserve

“Money alone won’t change the world — but imagination can.”

At Aspen Ideas Festival 2025, Ascend’s Founder and Executive Director Anne Mosle hosted a powerful conversation on just that concept – and how imagination can forge new opportunities for families.

Along with Dr. John Deasy (Bezos Family Foundation), Nicole Taylor (Silicon Valley Community Foundation), and Jonny Dorsey (Office of Maryland Governor and Ascend Fellow [Wes Moore](#)), Ascend explored how to invest boldly in families from a public and private perspective by blending financial, social, talent, intellectual, and imagination capital. From Maryland’s [ENOUGH Act](#) to transformative investments in the next generation, these leaders are, as Governor Moore says, rejecting a “no and slow” mindset in favor of “yes and now.”

Aspen Ideas Festival is a powerful place for leaders to come together and imagine what a better future for families, for communities, and the planet looks like. As

we convened with partners new and known, we covered the many factors required for families to thrive – from finances to health to joy. Our Managing Director, Marjorie Sims, joined the [Aspen Institute Sports & Society](#) to discuss how parents can be involved in play by engaging in conversations about youth sports participation. Together, they covered how a 2Gen approach to movement builds more resilient families and sets them up for intergenerational success. As a companion to the conversation, [Project Play](#) – the signature initiative of the Sports & Society Program – provides [Parent Checklists](#) to help parents cultivate a love of body and movement in their children, from birth through age 17.

Anne's reflections, lessons, and hopes for what's next for America's families are captured in [this blog](#).

[READ BLOG](#)



Standing with Our Network Partners in Texas

Our thoughts are with the families and communities in Kerr and Travis counties impacted by the recent floods. We are deeply grateful for the leadership and care of Ascend Network Partners on the ground, who are responding with urgency and compassion.

One of our Network and Accelerator Community Partners, [United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County](#), has launched the [United for Kerr County Fund](#) to support both immediate and long-term recovery efforts. The fund, seeded with \$100,000 and additional resources in collaboration with local foundations, will invest 100 percent of contributions into services for those affected. Learn more about the fund and ways to support it.

[LEARN MORE](#)

The Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country is also supporting flood recovery efforts through the [Kerr County Flood Relief Fund](#), which supports nonprofit organizations, first responder agencies, and local governments actively involved in response, relief, and recovery efforts.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Upcoming Webinars & Convenings

Ascend fosters dialogue with communities from across the country to build connections, learn from one another, and document promising practices for family well-being.

STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS WEBINAR SERIES

JULY 18

Creating Classroom Policies for Student Parent Success

with Kylie Stryffeler

Education Design Lab

Creating Classroom Policies for Student Parent Success

Friday, July 18th

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ET (12:00 – 1:00 p.m. MT)

Join [Education Design Lab's](#) Student Parent Organization for an engaging session designed to advance equity in the classroom for student parents. This conversation will highlight practical strategies institutions can adopt to better support student parents, such as flexible, inclusive classroom policies, effective engagement and communication practices, and guidance on Title IX protections for pregnant and parenting students.

Institutions interested in this webinar can learn further about supporting student parents with [Tapping the Talent of Student Parents](#), a playbook for postsecondary leaders.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



Leading, Learning, and Partnership Opportunities in the Ascend Community

Apply Now: Beyond the Cliff Cohort – Martha O'Bryan Center

Applications are open through July 28 to join the next [Beyond the Cliff Coalition](#), led by Ascend Network Partner, [Martha O'Bryan Center](#).

Launched in 2024, the Coalition began with 14 nonprofit and government professionals from across the country who are tackling the benefits cliff, an issue that limits economic mobility for families. **Nonprofits, government agencies, and public-private partnerships** that are actively exploring or implementing solutions to mitigate the cliff effect are encouraged to apply.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Funding Opportunity: Families at the HEART Initiative

[Perigee Fund](#) is launching Families at the HEART, a \$2.55 million national initiative to expand community-rooted mental health models that support families during pregnancy and early childhood. The initiative will award up to six organizations with \$425,000 each to grow therapeutic and/or somatic models that center the experiences of historically marginalized families, especially BIPOC communities. Grantees will also participate in a cohort-based learning experience focused on healing-centered systems change.

Information sessions will be held on July 17 (in English) and July 22 (in Spanish), and Expressions of Interest are due August 15.

[LEARN MORE](#)

New Funding Available: Support for Innovative Perinatal Care Projects

[Columbia University's Center for the Transition to Parenthood](#), led by Ascend Fellow Catherine Monk, is seeking bold, evidence-informed ideas to strengthen the perinatal care ecosystem. Two selected organizations will each receive \$50,000 to advance research or community-driven approaches that strengthen support for families during the perinatal period.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Now Hiring: Executive Director, Institute for Thriving Children and Families

[The Institute for Thriving Children and Families \(TCF\) at Bank Street Graduate School of Education](#) is seeking a visionary Executive Director for a hybrid role based in New York. TCF brings together the [National Center for](#)

[Children in Poverty \(NCCP\)](#) and the [Straus Center for Young Children & Families](#) to champion equity- and evidence-informed policies that support young children and families, particularly those impacted by poverty, racism, and systemic injustice.

Ideal candidates will bring 10+ years of leadership experience in early childhood, family well-being, or policy research.

[**APPLY HERE**](#)



2Gen Stories & Accomplishments

Explore these new stories to inspire and advance how you partner with families.



Beyond Survival: An Interview with Ascend Fellow Dr. Clinton Boyd, Jr.

In this powerful interview, Ascend Fellow [Dr. Clinton Boyd, Jr.](#) '18, shares his personal journey as a young father and his professional work at [Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago](#), where he serves as a researcher and executive director of [Fathers, Families, & Healthy Communities](#). Dr. Boyd reflects on the systemic exclusion Black fathers face and calls for trauma-informed innovations that truly center their experiences. His [contributions](#) offer an urgent reminder of the need to shift narratives and design systems that support, rather than sideline, Black men and fathers in Chicago and beyond.

READ THE INTERVIEW



Two Leading D.C. Organizations Launch New Partnership to Support Multigenerational Learning

Ascend Network Partners [The Family Place \(TFP\)](#) and [AppleTree Institute](#) have launched a new partnership to strengthen family well-being through a multigenerational model that combines early learning, adult education, and family support. This community-centered approach links

TFP's home-based HIPPY early literacy program with AppleTree's high-quality preschool, allowing parents to continue their education while their children build a strong foundation for learning.

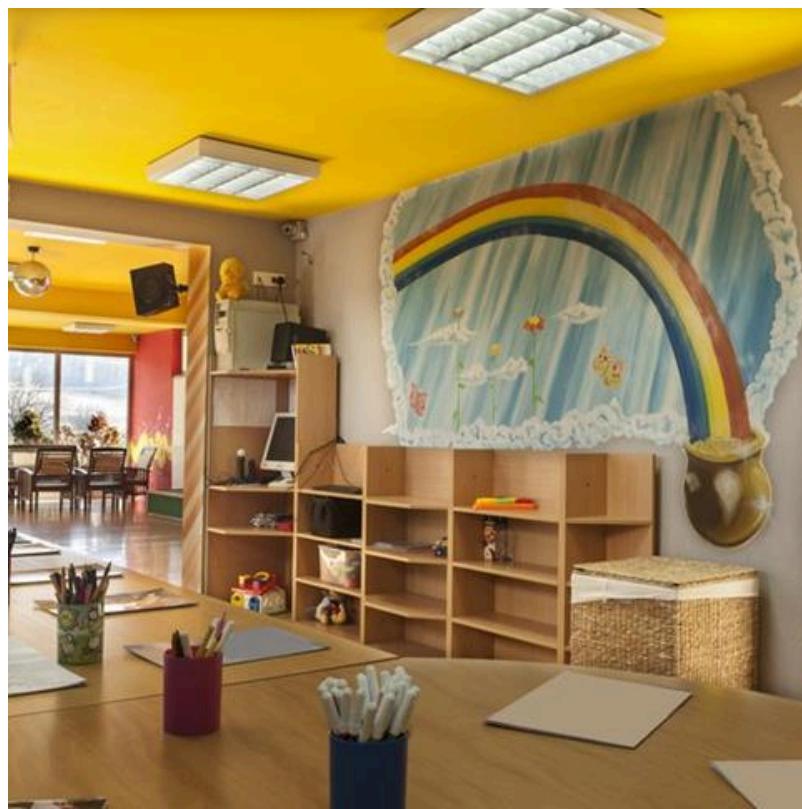
READ



CUNY Salutes 5,000 Student-Parents Among Its 2025 Graduates

Ascend Network Partner [The City University of New York \(CUNY\)](https://www.cuny.edu) celebrates approximately 5,000 student parents among its Class of 2025 graduates. As the nation's largest urban public university, CUNY credits its investment in 17 on-campus child care centers across all five NYC boroughs as key to helping student parents thrive and succeed.

READ



Promising Partners: Community Colleges and Child Care Resource & Referral Networks

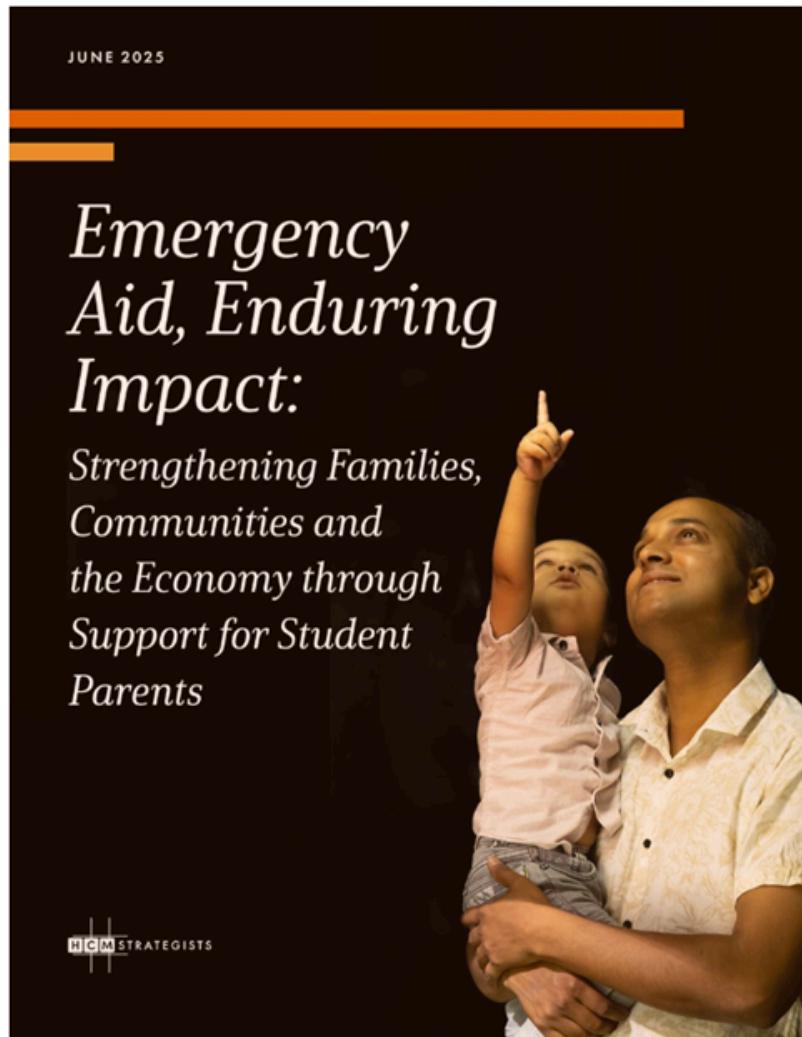
A new blog from [New America](#) highlights how stronger collaboration between Community Colleges and Child Care Resource & Referral Networks (CCR&Rs) can help expand child care access for student parents. The piece offers practical tips for states interested in aligning higher education and early childhood systems to better support student success.

[READ](#)



Recent Research & Reports

Our [2Gen Resource Library](#) has hundreds of free and evidence-informed materials to advance your 2Gen work. Read these new resources authored by Ascend staff, Ascend Fellows, and partners about building whole family well-being.



Emergency Aid, Enduring Impact: New Research on Student Parent Success

A new policy brief series from [HCM Strategists](#), in partnership with [Scholarship America's National Emergency Scholarship Fund for Student Parents](#), explores how emergency aid and wraparound supports can help student parents stay on track. Findings show that while 30 percent of students cited financial challenges as the reason they left college, small, flexible grants, often under \$500, can improve persistence and graduation rates.

[READ THE REPORT](#)



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Speaking of Psychology: 'Dad brain': How becoming a parent changes the brain, with Darby Saxbe, PhD

A recent episode of the [Speaking of Psychology](#) podcast by the [American Psychological Association](#) features [Dr. Darby Saxbe](#), who shares research on how becoming a parent leads to structural brain changes in both mothers and fathers, suggesting a potential "third neuroplasticity window" after early childhood and adolescence. The episode also highlights how paid paternity leave improves mental health, sleep, and bonding across the family.

[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)



Contribute to the 2Gen Movement

Embedding family voice and community input are core to making a 2Gen approach relevant, accessible, and

effective. Help us learn from your work and elevate your community's expertise on a national level.

The [Aspen Institute Ascend Network](#) is a community of more than 600 organizations from across the US and beyond that uses 2Gen approaches in their work so that children and families can reach their full potential. The Ascend Network connects leaders from across sectors with diverse areas of expertise so that we build relationships, spark connections, and co-create innovative solutions that lead to better outcomes for families. If your organization isn't already in the Network, take a 15-minute survey to join.

JOIN THE 2GEN NETWORK

Want to learn more about the 2Gen approach and mindset? Check out our website!

LEARN ABOUT 2GEN

Thank you for all the work you do to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Best,



Sarah Haight

Director, 2Gen Practice
Ascend at the Aspen Institute

**Stephanie Brueck-Cassoli**

Senior Program Manager,
Ascend at the Aspen Institute

**Jordan Colvin**

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