

Are Two Generation Strategies a Solution to Poverty and Social Immobility? Suggestions for Action



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Plan

1. How Are Children and Families Doing?
2. How Could a Two-Generational Focus Help?
3. Why Is It So Hard?
4. Where Are The Opportunities for Improvement?
5. What Can You Do?

How Are Children and Families Doing?

Children Are the Poorest Americans

- 22% live under the federal poverty line (about \$20,000 for a family of 3).
- Over 40% live under twice the poverty line.
- Young children are the poorest.
 - More than 25% of children under six are poor.
- Black and Latino children are hit hardest.
 - But almost one third of poor children are non-Hispanic white.

Many Poor Children Live with Working Parents.

- Low wages and insufficient hours keep working families poor.
 - Over 2/3 of poor children live with 1+ workers.
 - Over 30% of poor children and more than half of low-income children live with a full-time, full-year worker.
- Having two parents helps....
 - Even when single mothers work full-time, year-round, nearly 20% of their children are poor.
- But two-parent families with low-wage workers are also poor.
 - One in 9 children and almost one in four Hispanic children in two-parent homes are poor.

The First Years of Life Bring Particular Risk

- A child born poor is substantially more likely to be poor as an adult than other children.
- Poverty in the first two years of life is associated with worse outcomes than later poverty

How Low-Wage Work Undercuts Parenting: No Time Off

- Nearly half of all workers in the lowest 25 percent of wage earners have no paid time off at all (paid personal time, sick time, family leave, or vacation).
- Only 30 percent of low-wage workers in the private sector have paid sick days.
- Only 12 percent of all private sector workers (5 percent of low-wage workers) have access to paid family leave.

How Low-Wage Work Undercuts Parenting: Scheduling

- Volatile and nonstandard schedules are increasingly the new normal for low-wage workers.
 - Rigidity: Nearly half of low-wage workers
 - Unpredictability: 20-30 percent required to work overtime with little or no notice.
 - Instability: More than one in four part-time and one in five full-time workers experienced reduced hours when work was slow.
 - Nonstandard schedules: About half of low-wage hourly workers.
- All these scheduling problems pose major challenges for child care.

Children Are Rapidly Becoming “Majority Minority”

- In the past decade, the number of white children fell by 4.3 million.
- The number of Hispanic and Asian children increased by 5.5 million.
- Children live in different parts of the country than in the past.
 - Rapid growth in the South and Southwest
 - Fewer children in the Northeast and Midwest.

Children of Color and Their Parents Face Additional Barriers, Including...

- Immigration enforcement:
 - About 4.5 million citizen children have unauthorized parents.
 - About 9.5 million children live in Latino immigrant families regardless of legal status.
- Parents' trauma and exposure to violence in high-poverty communities.
- Parents' lack of access to high quality high school and post-secondary opportunities.

How Could a Two-Generational Focus Help?

Parents Are Crucial to Children's Development and "Social Mobility"

- Parenting deeply affects children's development.
 - Parental stress, health and mental health, parental education affect parenting.
- Poverty affects children's development.
- Quality and stability of out-of-home care affect children's development.
- Parents' jobs affect stress/ parenting, poverty, and quality of care.

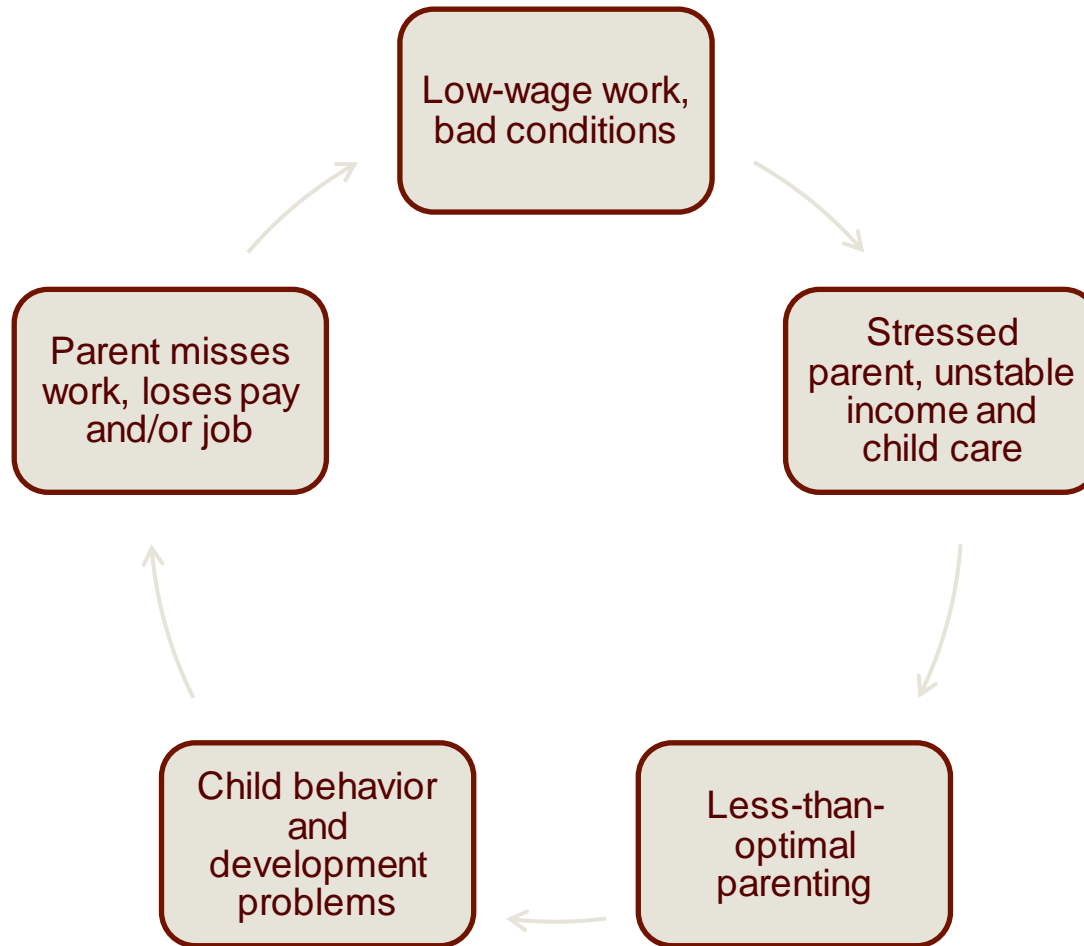
Do Children Affect Parents' Success?

- Less studied – but the answer is yes.
- When children are ill or having problems, that affects parents' attendance, stability, success at work
 - Interaction between children's wellbeing and parents' mental health (Early Head Start depression evidence)
- When parents start out with volatile schedules and/or no leave benefits, the trade-offs are extreme even without special health problems.

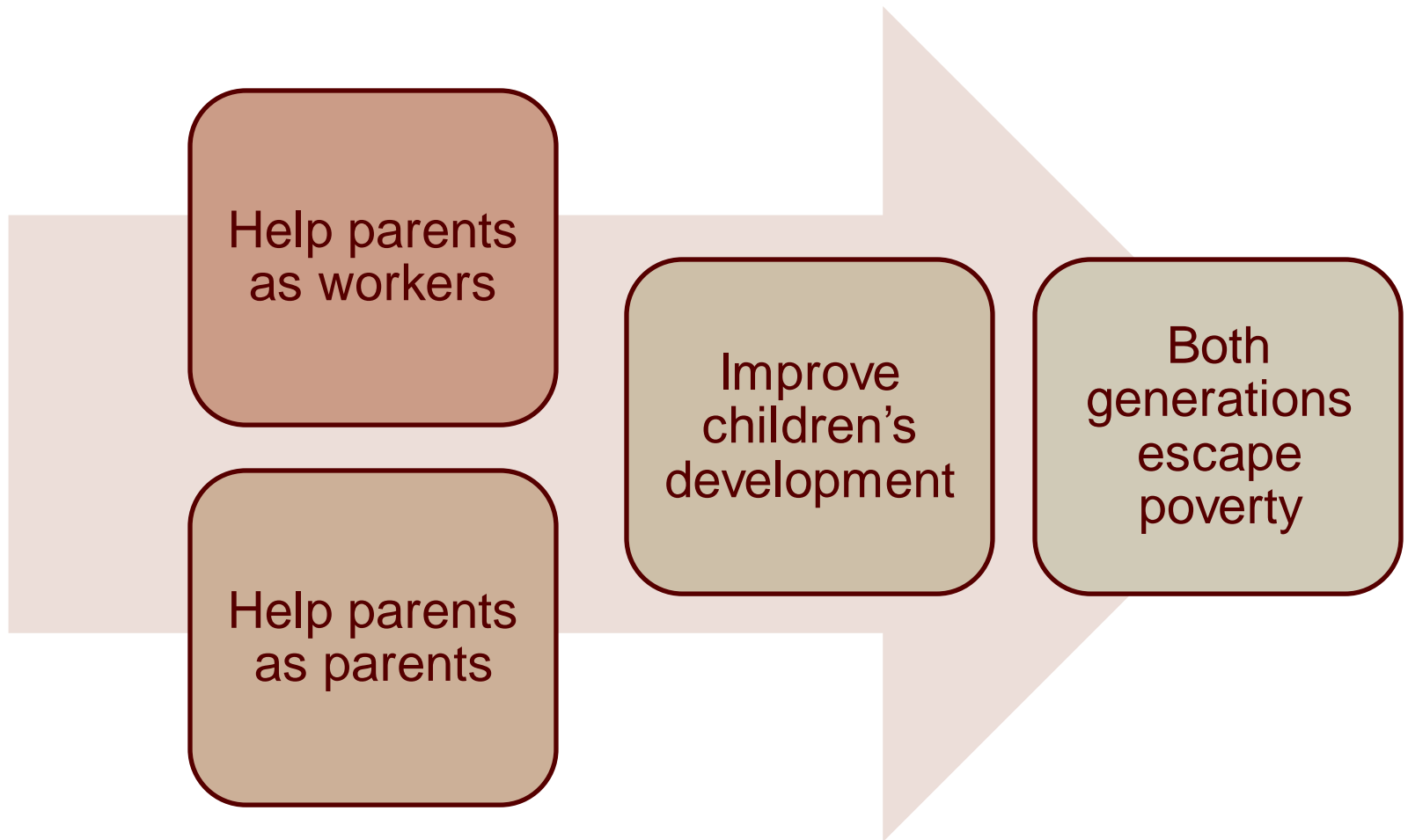
Parents and Children: Positive Cycle



Parents and Children: Vicious Cycle



Two-Generational Strategies



Why Is It So Hard?

A Simple Definition

“Two-generation” strategies get the role of parents in children’s lives, as both providers and nurturers, and the role of children in parents’ lives.

The Policy Terrain: What's Out There for Each Generation?

Children only

- Medicaid before ACA
- K-12 Education

Parents only

- Pell grants, community college
- Workforce training programs (limited availability)

Both Generations – Widely Available

- Nutrition (SNAP, WIC, child nutrition)
- Medicaid/ health exchange after ACA

Both Generations -- Limited availability

- Head Start
- Home visiting
- Child care assistance
- Paid family leave (3 states)

When both generations get help, is the program two-generational?

Yes.....

- Positive effects for each generation are important (nutrition).
- There's potential to build a positive cycle even if not yet implemented.

No....

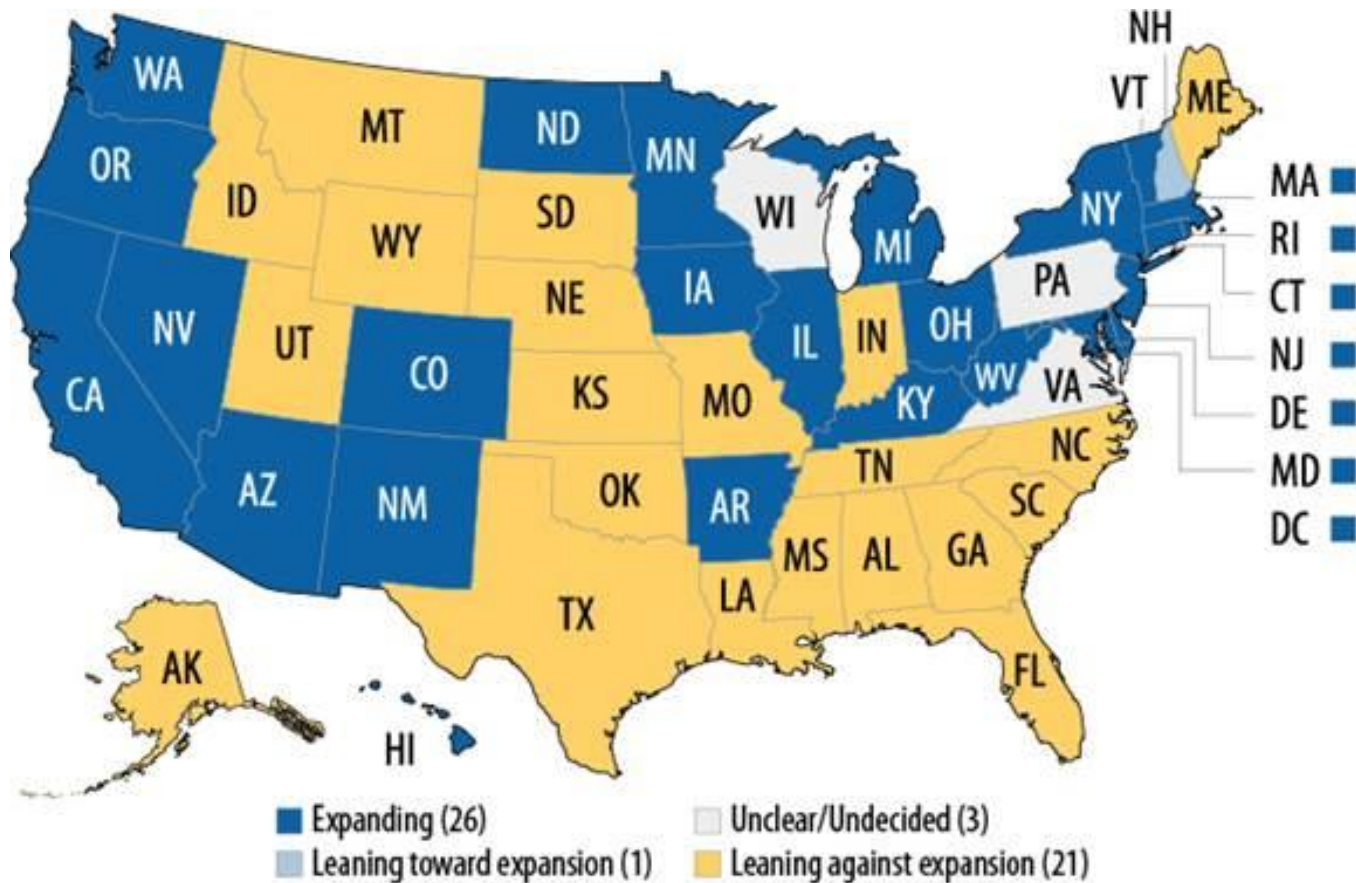
- May serve adults and children separately, fail to focus on adults' role as parents ("parallel play").
- May serve both but just take one seriously (work schedule vs. child development needs).
- Fail to take on the challenges of low-wage work.
- Limited availability hinders 2-generational strategies.

It Matters What State You Live In.

- States are partners in virtually all the public child and family programs.
 - EITC (national only) and Head Start (local partners) are the major exceptions.
 - SNAP has national policy – but state implementation.
- In Medicaid, states make policy decisions within a federal framework.
- In child care subsidies and TANF, states oversee the framework, policy, and implementation (block grants).

About Half the States Are Likely to Expand Medicaid in 2014

As of October 30, 2013



Is your program “two-generational”?

- What are the barriers that you experience?

Top 10 Reasons It Is Hard To Work Two-Generationally

1. We serve (parents or children). It's not our mission to serve (children or parents).
2. We don't have enough money to serve both parents and children.
3. We don't have enough time to connect to parents/ children.
4. Our staff don't know about child development.
5. Our staff don't know about adult education/ employment/ mental health.

Top Ten Reasons, Continued

6. (From child-oriented programs) We've tried to reach out to parents but they won't get involved/ don't care.
7. (From child-oriented programs) Parents should be focused on their children, not their jobs.
8. (From adult-oriented programs) Parents can't get special treatment from us any more than they would from an employer.
9. (From adult-oriented programs) We try to link to support services of all kinds, and child care is on the list – we don't have capacity to do more.
10. We've never asked if the adults/ youth we serve are parents. We don't have any data.

Opportunities for Improvement

Policy Opportunities

1. Health and mental health treatment
 - Game-changing opportunities in the Affordable Care Act
 - The example of maternal depression
2. Home visiting
3. Education and training pathways
4. Engagement/ support for immigrant and mixed-status families
5. Improving low-wage work

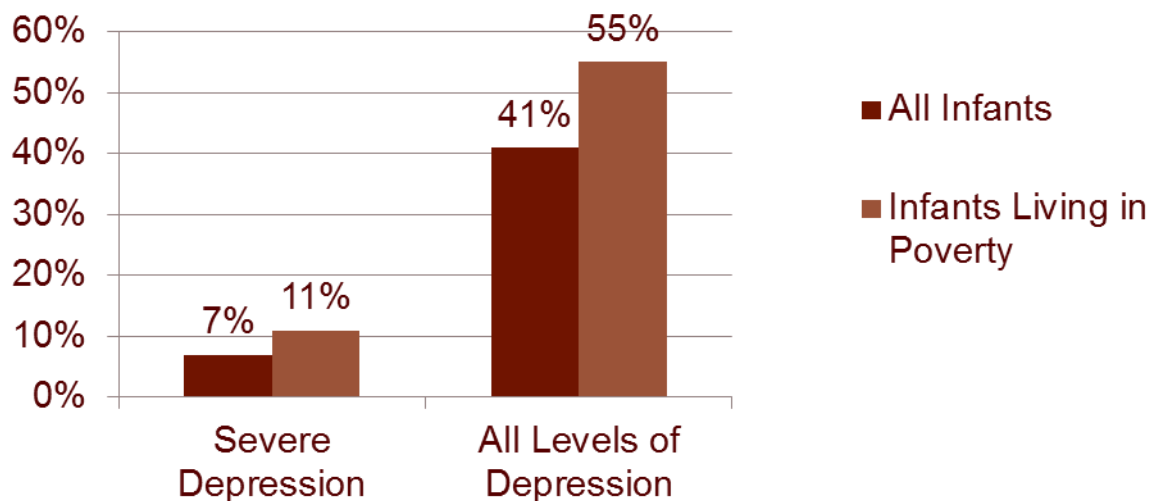
The Example of Maternal Depression

Why Focus on Maternal Depression?

- Key intervention point for improving young children's environment and opportunities:
 - Depression is widespread, especially among low-income mothers of young children.
 - It's treatable.
 - When untreated, damages parenting and places children's development at risk.
 - Few low-income mothers receive treatment.
 - That's true even for major depressive disorder.
- Treatment for mothers is high-payoff prevention for children.

How Many Babies Have a Mother Experiencing Depression?

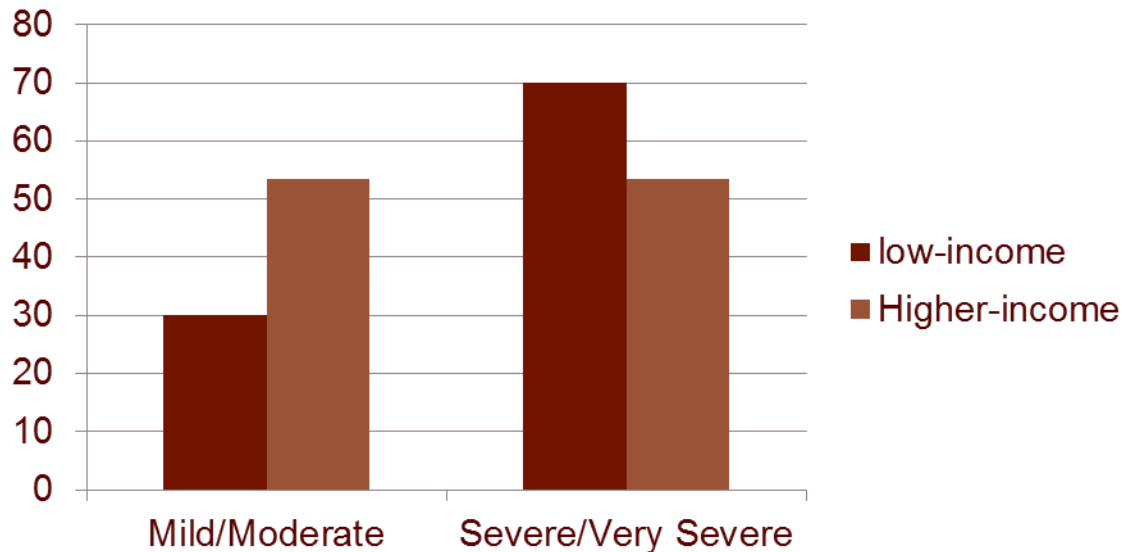
Percent of Infants Whose Mother is Experiencing Depression



Source: Vericker, Macomber, and Golden 2011 (from 2001 Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort)

Depression is More Severe Among Low-Income Mothers

Comparison in depression severity among low- and higher-income mothers with a Major Depressive Episode in the past year:

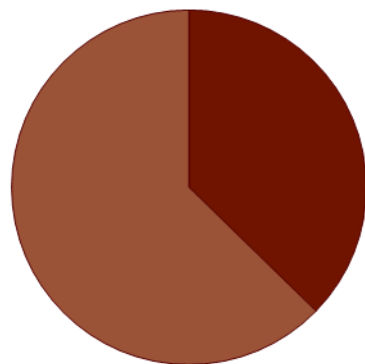


- 14.5% of all mothers had major depression
- Source: 2008-2010 National Survey of Drug Use and Health

Low-Income Mothers are Less Likely to Receive Treatment

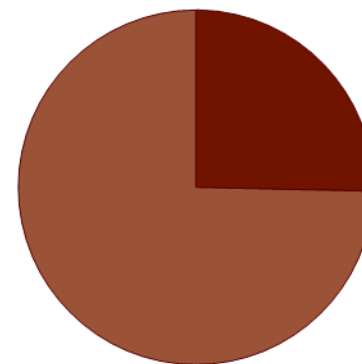
Proportion of mothers with a Major Depressive Episode in the past year who have not received any treatment, by income category:

Low-income mothers



37.3%

Higher-income mothers



25.3%

■ No Treatment
■ Treatment

■ No Treatment
■ Treatment

The ACA Tears Down Major Barriers to Depression Treatment

- Many mothers get health insurance for the first time.
 - Largest effect in states that take the Medicaid expansion.
 - Potentially important opportunities in others as well.
- The benefit package includes mental health (and substance abuse) treatment.
- Access to primary and preventive care.
- Important provisions promote integrated care.
- Prevention/ screening and quality measures also target depression.

Other Policy Opportunities....

1. Home visiting
2. Education and training pathways
3. Engagement/ support for immigrant and mixed-status families
4. Improving low-wage work

What Can You Do?

Next Steps For Early Childhood Educators and Program Leaders

1. Learn about parents.
2. Set priorities.
 - It is hard to respond two-generationally.
 - Better to find one linkage that you can do well than to try everything half-heartedly.
 - You can get more comprehensive over time.
3. Find partners who can help with your top priorities.
 - Consider staff trainings, referral connections.
 - For health linkages, see ACF's "Ten Ways" paper.
 - <http://marketplace.cms.gov/getofficialresources/other-partner-resources/ten-ways-state-child-care.pdf>

For those of you who are ready to go deeper....

1. Go beyond referral to build service partnerships.
2. Build advocacy partnerships.
 - Within early childhood?
 - Health/ ACA/ Medicaid?
 - Other?
3. Tell the stories of parents as well as children. Help people understand how inter-related their lives are.

Resources from CLASP

- Our website: www.clasp.org
- Sources I've used here (among others):
 - <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/2014-03-27-Scrambling-for-Stability-The-Challenges-of-Job-Schedule-Volat-.pdf>
 - http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/2014-04-09-Inequities-and-Paid-Leave-Brief_FINAL.pdf
 - <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Maternal-Depression-and-Poverty-Brief-1.pdf>
 - <http://www.clasp.org/issues/child-care-and-early-education/in-focus/clasp-responds-to-senate-finance-committee-letter-on-mental-health-improvements>
 - http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/9.18.13-CensusPovertyData_FactSheet.pdf
 - <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CLASP-CBPP-Joint-Brief-FINAL.pdf>