

Connecting the Dots: Framing and Examining a 2Gen Approach to Promoting Equity in Infant Early Language Experiences

Jennifer Stapel-Wax, PsyD¹, Susan Brasher, PhD, RN, CPNP, FAAN², Amy Becklenberg, DNP, FNP-BC², Arianne Weldon, MPH³, Janet Adams⁴

Emory University School of Medicine¹, Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing², Georgia Family Connection Partnership³, Atlanta Fulton Family Connection⁴

Background

- Families in Georgia face significant economic and educational disparities that disproportionately impact certain racial and socioeconomic groups.
- Third grade reading achievement, a predictor of high school graduation, is one of the lowest in the country.
- Atlanta, Georgia is ranked the worst city in the U.S. for economic mobility.
- Combined, these factors have serious repercussions on health and well-being of children and families.
- Interventions aimed at promoting early language interactions and supporting economic stability will address risk factors associated with social determinants of health and have the capacity to close the gaps on economic and educational disparities.

Objective

Connecting the Dots (CTD) is a family-centered approach that leverages home visiting, coaching, and engagement with community organizations to improve family well-being. In CTD, families of young children work with navigators to attain self-identified goals to achieve dual outcomes for parent and child.

Methods

- Our interdisciplinary team partnered with community organizations and families to identify the acceptability of a two-generation (2Gen) home visiting model and ways to enhance adoptability.
- A logic model was constructed to demonstrate partnerships, resources, outcomes, and impact of CTD.
- Community asset mapping was conducted to identify resources and supports.
- A family-centered 2Gen curriculum was developed consisting of 20 sessions of early childhood language and brain development strategies along with parental pathways to family self-sufficiency.
- Early childhood language and brain development content includes the CDC developmental milestones and Talk With Me Baby (TWMB).
- Parental pathways to family self-sufficiency include SMART goals, career exploration, job and career coaching, and financial well-being.
- Throughout the program, families are connected to community resources to ensure they have opportunities for educational advancement and increased economic mobility.
- Navigators provide coaching to families residing in rural and urban areas for up to two years through a home visiting model.

Results

- Data serving as the foundation for CTD was garnered from community agencies and families living in these communities through qualitative and survey measures (n=143).
- These assessments provided information insight into
 - Recruitment
 - Home visiting preferences and experiences
 - Desired services and support
 - Coaching content preferences
 - Program fit and acceptability
 - Community engagement strategies
 - Importance of building trust with the navigator
- Community asset mapping identified resources and supports across four domains: Early care and education, Family support services, Higher education and workforce, and Physical and behavioral health.
- Results to date reinforce the need and desire for a 2Gen project aimed at addressing educational and economic disparities in communities of need.
- Ongoing iterative research will further illustrate successful aspects of the approach.

Conclusions

- CTD is a community-based, scalable, evidence-informed 2gen model of child-level and adult-level interventions supporting families towards long-term educational and economic attainment.
- The project educates parents on the importance of language in the earliest stages of their infants' brain development and ways to strengthen language-rich social interactions
- The project also engages parents on ways to achieve economic sustainability for their family through goal setting, coaching and lasting community connections.
- CTD incorporates: (1) family-centered home visiting; (2) person-centered goal setting and (3) community navigation to achieve dual outcomes for parent and child.
- The community serves as an extensive network of partners integral to helping families navigate their paths to educational and economic well-being.
- Ongoing community capacity building is achieved through community events bringing partners together to better serve families.

Overall Impact Examples

