

- Policy Analyst at CHI.
- Came to CHI three years ago after completing a degree in behavioral neuroscience.
- Use that background to lead CHI's work in mental health and substance use.
- This year, have spent a lot of time immersed in the world of early childhood mental health.
- Today, I want to share some of what I've learned in that work.
- Specifically, I want to make the case that the way we can improve the well-being of Colorado's children is through a two generation approach to policy-making, both in and outside of the health sector.
- Joined by Lisa Jansen Thompson of the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County.



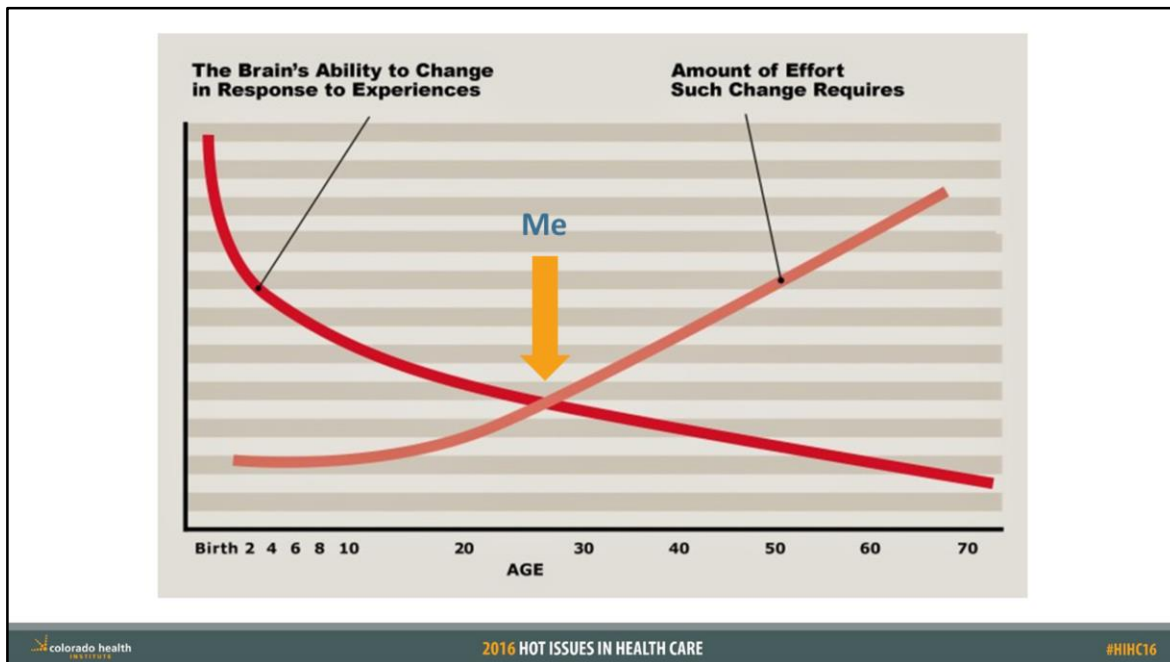
## Three Takeaways

- 1 The evidence makes the case for a two-generation approach.
- 2 Colorado is a leader in two-generation policies and programs.
- 3 Work remains to overcome barriers and move forward.

- Three things to remember after this presentation.



Story from community partner.



- The evidence for a two-generation approach begins with the importance of early childhood.
- The brain develops in response to experiences, environments and genes. And research tells us that early childhood is a critical time for this development.
  - The darker red line shows the brain's ability to change in response to experiences around us. We see that in the very earlier years, our brain is highly impressionable.
  - The lighter red line shows the amount of effort it takes for an experience to change the brain. See that in the earliest, the brain is easily malleable with little effort.
  - For example, by the first year, the parts of the brain that differentiate sound are becoming specialized to the language the baby has been exposed to; at the same time, the brain is already starting to lose the ability to recognize different sounds found in other languages. It isn't that you can't learn a language later in life, it's just harder for your brain to pick it up.
- This is important for a few reasons.
- First, it means that following my recent 26<sup>th</sup> birthday, for better or for worse my brain is pretty much set.
- It also means that this period of childhood is a window of opportunity to positively

influence brain development.

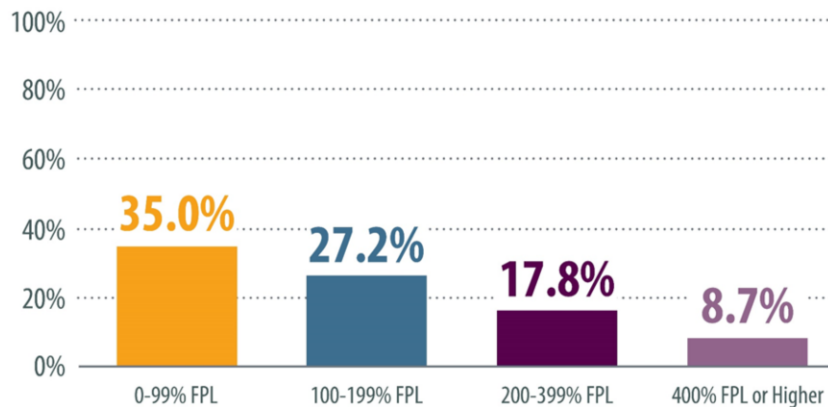
- But that means negative experiences that happen during this time can have a lasting detrimental impact.
- An example of that are adverse childhood experiences or ACEs



- How many of you are familiar with adverse childhood experiences? How many need a refresher?
- A refresher
  - Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are negative life events that happen before age 18
  - Emotional, physical or sexual abuse
  - Household mental illness or substance abuse
  - Household domestic violence
  - Parental divorce
  - Incarcerated household member
  - High ACE scores are associated with longer-term health impacts. Will talk about that in a minute
- But first, want to talk about ACE data in Colorado
  - We have data from the behavioral risk factor surveillance system – or the BRFSS – on adults who reflected on their first 18 years
  - About half of all Coloradans experienced at least one ace as a child.
  - About 15 percent experienced four or more.

# Adverse Family Experiences

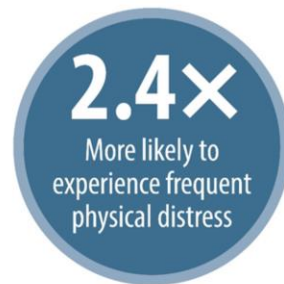
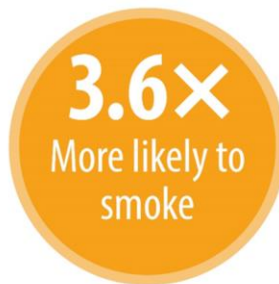
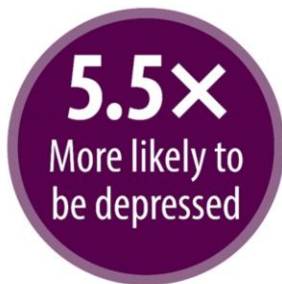
Children Ages 0-17, Colorado



- That was data on adult's. We also have data from parents about their children. Take that with a grain of salt.
- Nationally, Colorado ranks well. 19.9 percent of children experience two or more ACEs. This puts us 9<sup>th</sup> best.
- However, we know that there are disparities among income groups.
- Among children in the 0-99 FPL group, 35 percent experienced two or more aces.
- See that downward stair step pattern as income increases.

## ACE Scores and Health Outcomes in Colorado

### High (4+) ACE Scores:



- Why do high ace scores matter? Other than the emotional stress that these events cause, Coloradans with high ACE scores had increased odds of poor health behaviors and outcomes.
- Coloradans with high ace scores – again, four or more – were:
  - 5.5 times more likely to be depressed
  - 3.6 times more likely to smoke
  - And 2.4 times more likely to say they experience frequent physical distress



## Why Mental Health Matters

Of those who reported their  
Mental Health was **GOOD** ...



**NEARLY 90%** said their physical  
health was **GOOD**

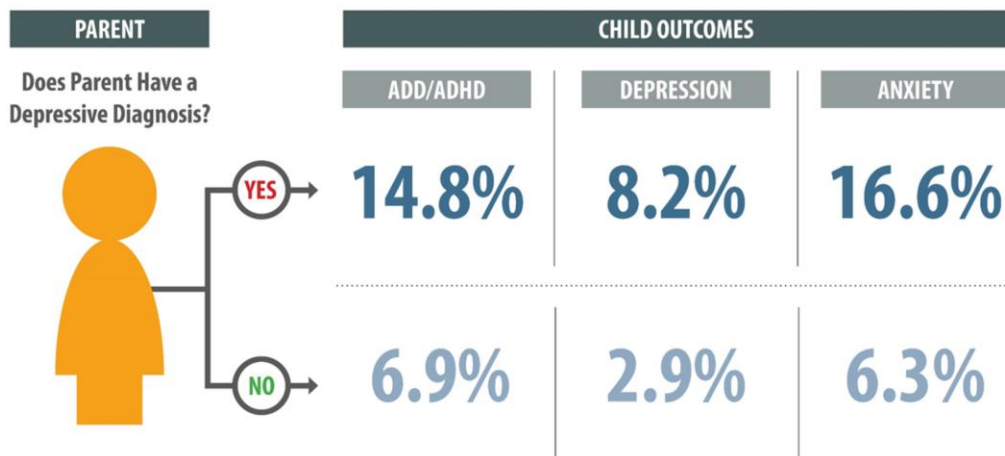
Of those who reported their  
Mental Health was **POOR** ...



**FEWER THAN 60%** said their physical  
health was **GOOD**

- I said that one thing to takeaway from this presentation is that early experiences and parental mental health matter for child well-being and mental health.
- First – why are we talking about mental health?
- We know that mental health is an important piece of our overall well-being. And, we have data from Colorado to back that up.
- Looking at data from the 2015 Colorado Health Access Survey, we see that:
- Of people who said they had “good” mental health – defined as fewer than eight days of stress, depression or problems with emotions in the previous 30 days – nearly 90 percent said their physical health was good.
- Of people who experienced eight or more days of poor mental health in the previous thirty, fewer than 60 percent said their physical health was good.
- Clearly, the link between our mental health and general well-being is strong.

## Parent Mental Health is a Determinant of Child's Mental Health



- I mentioned that parental mental illness is one of the ACE's.
- I want to dive into that specific experience a little bit further using a brand new analysis from chi. First people to see this analysis.
- We looked at data from the behavioral risk factor surveillance survey the BRFSS. There is a call-back for parents, which is how the child health survey is conducted.
- Because of this unique model, we were able to look at the linked data and analyze the relationship between a parental mental health diagnosis and their child's mental health.
- The data show that if a parent has a depressive diagnosis, their child is about twice as likely to have a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD, depression and anxiety.
- This is a trend we saw across the board in the other two categories of child outcomes – access and status – that you can read about in the paper.
- Want to stress that as you can see in the data, the majority of children whose parent has depression do NOT have a mental health challenge. But their likelihood is increased.



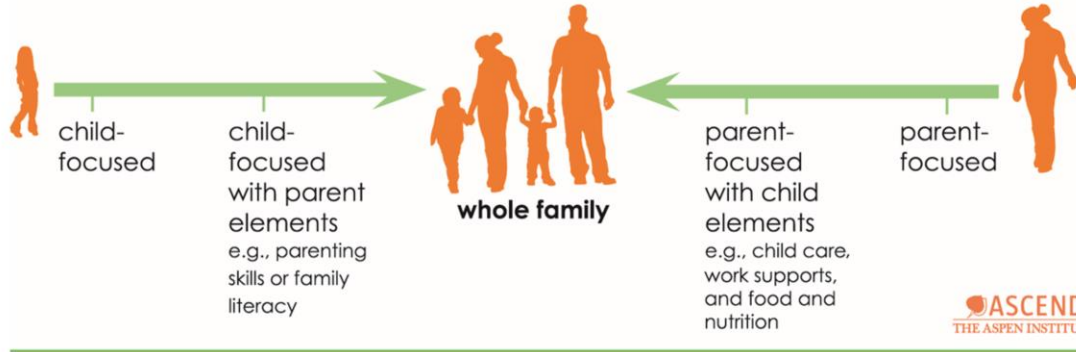
- So far we've seen that:
  - Mental health is clearly linked to physical health.
  - Early childhood is a critical time for health development.
  - Children raised in low-income households experience ACEs at a higher rate than children in other income groups.
    - This is important because we know that ACEs can have impacts down the line
  - And finally, parents mental health plays a role in the child's mental health.
- Taken together, what does this mean for addressing the well-being of children in Colorado?
  - It means that to have a real impact, interventions must be focused on the whole family.
  - Thriving children need thriving adults.



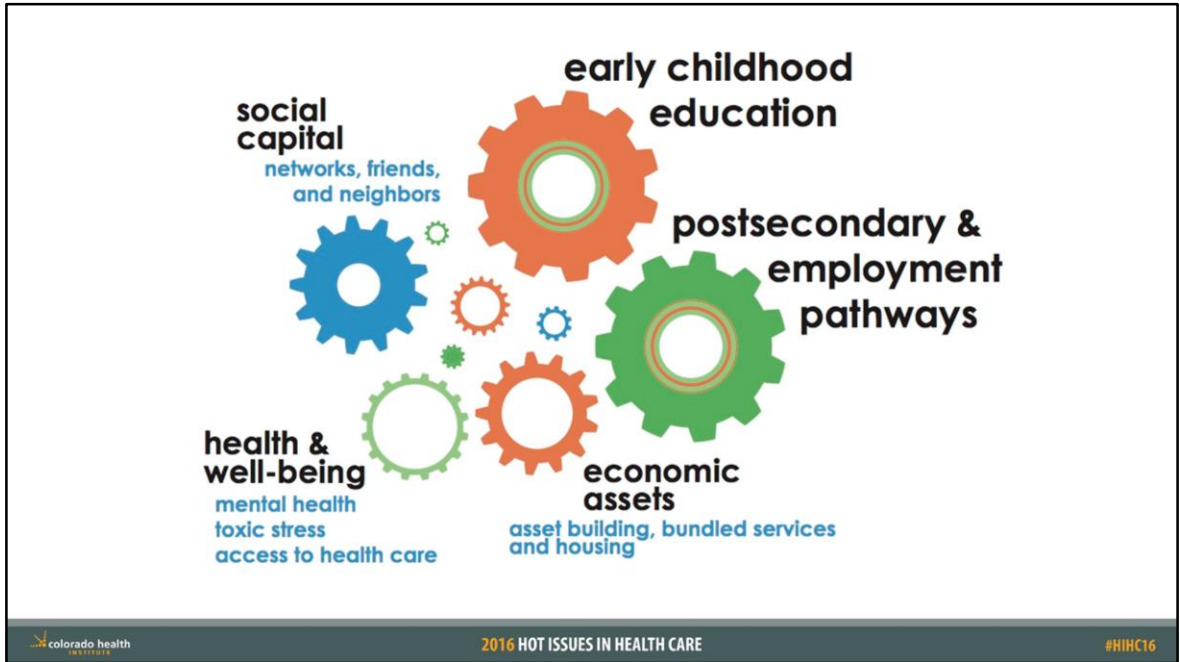
## A Two Generation Approach

- This whole family approach to policy making is called a two generation approach.

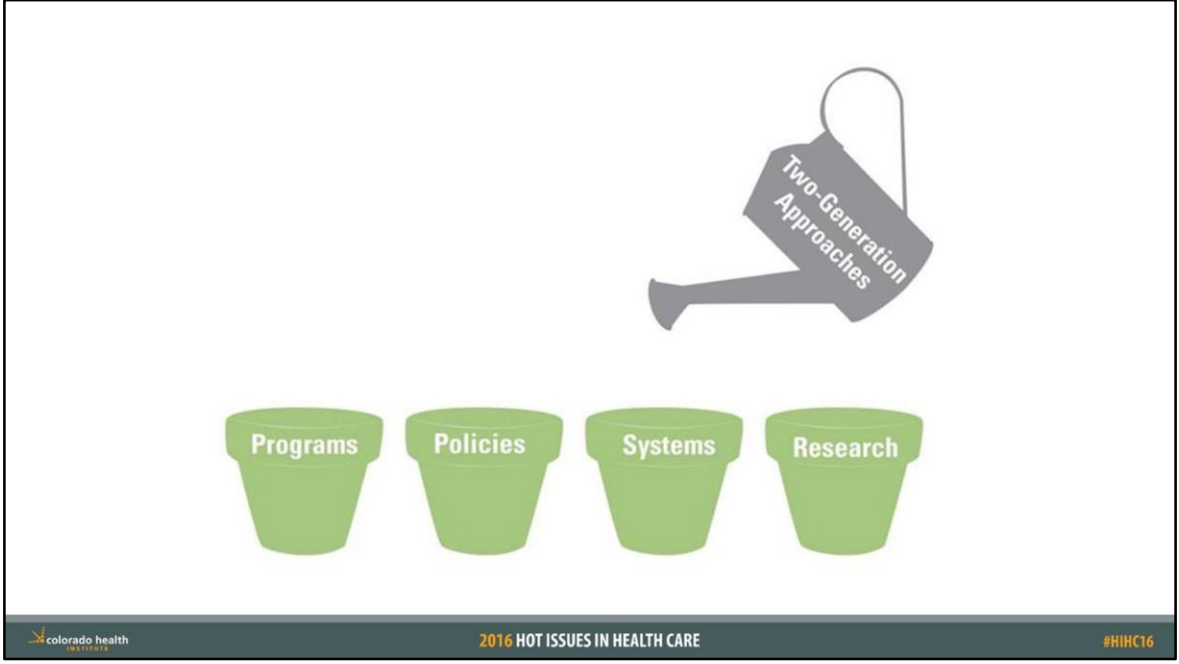
## The Two-Generation Continuum



LISA



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## The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County

### Increase the:

- Community's **capacity** to improve **access** for families to **available, affordable,** high **quality** early childhood services.

### In the areas of:

- **Early Learning, Health, Social-Emotional-Mental Health,** and **Family Support and Parent Education.**

LISA



**Mission:** Build a community where every young child can reach their full potential

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**Ultimate Goal:** Children enter school healthy and ready to succeed

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**Community Indicators for the first 8 Years:**

- Children are born healthy, into well-prepared families
- Children's health and early learning is supported, at home and in the community
  - Children achieve individually appropriate developmental milestones
  - Children enter school ready to learn
- Children read with proficiency at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**Cradle to Career**

LISA

## WHY?

- **90%** of the brain develops in the first 5 years of life
- A child's **early experiences** create the **foundation** for future ability to learn, grow, be healthy, and engage in positive relationships
- These early experiences must be **promoted** by their **primary caregivers**:
  - Parents, Families, Teachers, Doctors, Home Visitors, Case Workers, Therapists, Librarians, etc.
- Research shows that children who **start school behind** in Kindergarten, often **stay behind** and have poor life long outcomes

LISA

## Strengthening Families

- **Parental Resilience:** The ability to cope with and bounce back from all types of challenges.
- **Social Connections:** Friends, family members, neighbors, and other members of a community who provide emotional support and concrete assistance to parents.
- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** Accurate information about raising young children, appropriate expectations for their behavior, and knowledge of alternative discipline techniques.
- **Concrete Supports in Times of Need:** Financial security to cover day-to-day expenses and unexpected costs; formal supports like TANF, Medicaid, and job training; and informal support from social networks.
- **Children's Social and Emotional Competence:** A child's ability to interact positively with others and communicate his or her emotions effectively.

LISA

## Examples of Local Programming Using 2-Gen

- **Strengthening Working Families Initiative**

“Classic” 2 Gen approach to help low income parents of young children achieve higher education and income earning potential AND connect children to high quality early care and education

- **Care Navigation**

Connecting caregivers to needed supports and services to help ensure they can follow through with referrals for their child

- **Maternal Mental Health**

Connecting mothers to needed services and supports through mental health center – Adult and Child Services programs

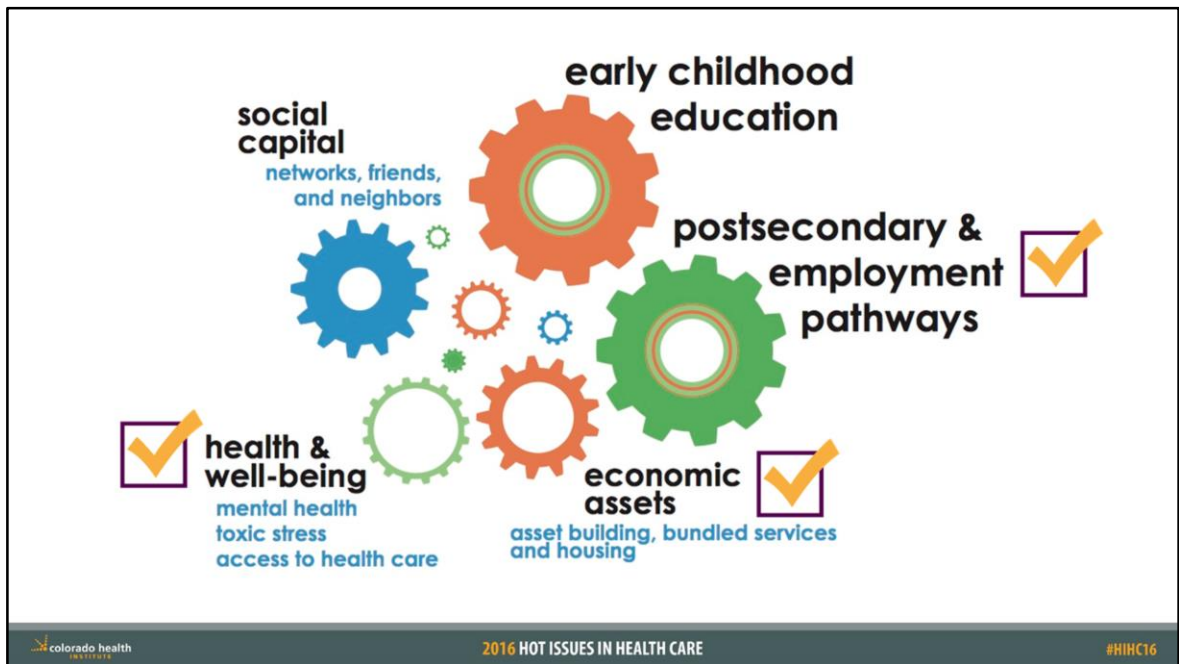
- **Family Resource Centers and Home Visitation**

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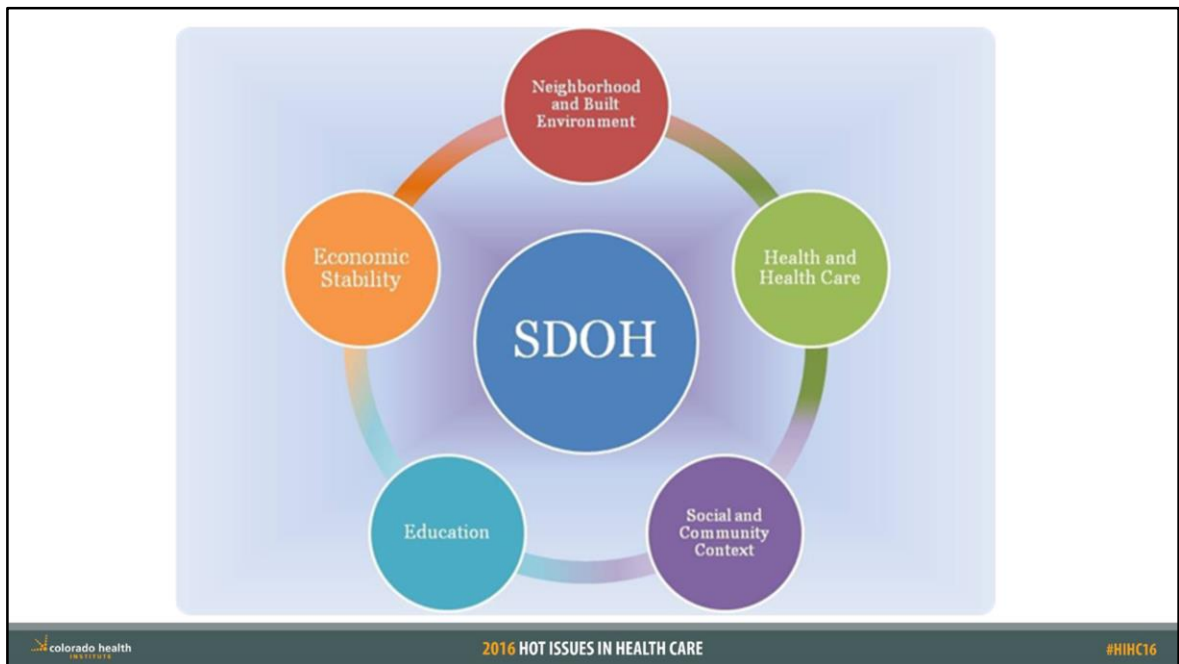
## Examples of Local Systems 2 Gen Work

- Intentional connection of Adult and Child Serving Entities – programming and funding
- Family Leadership and Equity
- Dual Outcomes

LISA



- Now we're going to shift to talking about policy.
- Again, these are the components of the two gen approach according to the Aspen Institute's framework.
- While all are the important, in the interest of time I want to highlight three categories today
  - Health and well-being, economic assets and postsecondary and employment pathways.
- I picked these because I wanted to bring in a blend of the familiar – health and well-being – and the unfamiliar – economic assets and postsecondary pathways.
- I want to highlight some of the ideas for policy in each of these three categories.
  - These range from ideas being piloted before they can be scaled up to state-wide initiatives that will impact all Coloradans
- As a reminder, CHI is a nonpartisan organization and we don't take positions as bills. The policies I'll share are meant to highlight the kinds of work happening in these categories.



- Before diving in, want to be very clear about why we're talking about economic assets and pathways to employment in the context of childhood mental health and well-being.
- As a reminder, here are some of the social determinants of health. You'll notice economic stability in orange among them.
- Researchers attribute 20 percent of health to clinical care and 30 percent to health behaviors. But the biggest factor in our health – 40 percent – is attributed to social and economic factors.
- I'm sharing these two generation policy ideas in postsecondary and employment pathways and economic assets because we know that economic stability is a determinant of health.
- Policies and programs should support parents both in their roles as parents but also in their role as a breadwinner.
- While I'm talking through these policy ideas, I'd like you to think about how a two generation lens could change your work. Or, if you are already working within the two generation framework, how a two generation lens has changed the way you work. I'll ask for some ideas at the end of the presentation.



- **Colorado Child Care Assistance Program**
- **Family-Centered Education**
- **WIOA State Plan**

- Start with post-secondary and employment pathways.
- Going to cover: Colorado's child care assistance program, family centered education and the WIOA state plan



## Colorado Child Care Assistance Program



- A two generation approach recognizes the importance of job stability in the lives of both parents and children.
- We know that one barrier to this stability is finding affordable, quality child care.
- And finding affordable child care can be a barrier to not only holding a job, but also to finding one.
  - **CCAP**
    - Colorado took this into account in landmark legislation in 2014.
    - As part of a comprehensive reform to Colorado's Child Care Assistance Program, which helps families pay for child care, the period of time that job-seeking parents were covered by CCAP was extended from 30 days to 60 days.
    - In addition, the bill created a new category of eligibility for parents pursuing postsecondary education for up to two years

## Family-Centered Education



- **Family centered education**
  - Along with ideas to support parents in their employment, there are also ideas that make it easier for parents to access postsecondary education.
  - Bell Policy Center put out a great report on this last month with recommendations for how Colorado can support parents who seek to continue their education. I'll share two of those recommendations.
  - The first is to bring back a bill from last year, which would have created a task force to offer ways of better serving the educational needs of low-income parents and their children.
  - Another recommendation is to provide more funding to the organizations who already think about these links, like family resource centers.

## WIOA State Plan



- The **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan** is an opportunity to emphasize the links between workforce development and early childhood education systems.
  - For those of you not familiar with WIOA, it's essentially a jobs training bill that was passed by the federal government in 2014. It's an update to the 2002 Workforce Investment Act.
  - Each state was required to develop a plan for how we would ensure that workers receive the necessary job training and education services to enter and advance in the workforce.
  - Colorado submitted its plan in March of 2016.
  - As the state continues to refine and eventually implement this plan, there is an opportunity to ensure that two generation principles are integrated.
  - The Bell Policy report specifically calls out using resources from WIOA to incentive partnerships between workforce development and child care providers.

## health & well-being

mental health  
toxic stress  
access to health care



- **Medicaid Expansion**
- **Pregnancy Related Depression Screens**
- **Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives**

- Going to turn now to a topic that may be more familiar to those in the room – health and wellbeing.
- **Medicaid Expansion**
  - Coverage for both children and their parents is a tenant of a two gen approach to health.
  - Colorado’s Medicaid expansion has been lauded as a two gen success by the advocate community.
  - Eligibility for parents with dependent children was increased from 100 to 138% FPL.
  - We also saw additional coverage for families occurring due to the welcome mat effect. These are people who were already eligible under pre-expansion but hadn’t yet signed up. HCPF estimates this was about 12% of the Medicaid expansion.
  - We’ve heard that when parents signed up, they signed up their children as well. Contributed to a child uninsured rate in colorado of 2.5 percent in 2015.
- **Pregnancy Related Depression Screens**
  - I showed you earlier how a parental mental health diagnosis increases the likelihood of a child experiencing challenges.
  - Pregnancy-related depression is an area where we see this clearly.

- Research finds that maternal depression has the potential to impact child development because the symptoms of depression sometimes get in the way of mothers providing the care they would like to provide.
- Early detection is critical, which is why advocates in Colorado seek to increase access to screening.
- Currently, maternal depression screens can be conducted at a well-child visit within the first six months of the child's life.
- The screen is billed to the child's Medicaid ID with the idea that the mother's mental health is a determinant for the child.
- Advocates, including the Colorado Children's campaign, are pushing to expand the number of covered screens from one to three.
  - The move from one to three would align with recommendations from Bright Futures to screen three times during the child's first year.
  - Would also align with the research, which shows that multiple screenings in the first year postpartum resulted in more women screening positive for depression.
  - Screenings at multiple points allow for time to build trust between patients and providers.
- **LARC**
  - Another health-related two generation approach is to make sure parents become parents when they're ready.
  - One way to do that is through providing access to contraception.
  - Colorado has gotten a lot of attention for its work on Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives, or LARC.
  - After years of private sector funding, last year the legislature authorized \$2.5 million for CDPHE to implement LARC.

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**economic  
assets**

asset building, bundled services  
and housing

- **Minimum Wage**
- **Children's Savings Accounts**
- **Two Generations Reaching Opportunity**

- Last of the policy examples is building economic assets.

## The Minimum Wage



- The American Academy of Pediatrics has identified poverty as the most important problem facing children in the US.
- There are numerous economic approaches to addressing poverty, but I'm going to talk about one today that is fresh off of the election.
- **Minimum wage**
  - Amendment 70 passed, increasing the minimum wage from its current rate of \$8.31 to \$12 an hour by 2020.
  - Advocates of the minimum wage focused on families and children largely supported Amendment 70, citing the research on poverty's detrimental effects on children's development.
  - From a two generation lens, the minimum wage is a way to build a child's economic assets by increasing their parent's.
  - Has, of course, not been without controversy.
  - Among the counter arguments is the projection that child care may increase by about ten percent in the next four years.

## Children's Savings Accounts



- **Children's savings accounts**

- A smaller scale idea that's being discussed to build economic assets for children specifically are children's savings accounts.
  - Idea is that parent incomes are not the only way that children can increase their economic well-being.
  - General idea is that a savings account is setup from birth that can be used for education later on in life.
  - Typically, a government entity makes the initial deposit and then private entities can match the funds.
  - Parents contribute what they can.
  - Typically, these programs include financial literacy classes for the parent and child when they are older.
- Research has shown that children with these accounts save significantly more for college than families who did not receive these accounts.
- Not only did financial assets increase, children provided a savings account at birth scored better on socio-emotional development indicators than their counterparts. Studies have found increased measures of hope, control and sense of security for the future.
- A bill to pilot savings accounts with initial deposits of \$50 from the

department of human services was tried but failed in 2016. Some legislators questioned the need for this program in the midst of other issues.

## Two Generations Reaching Opportunity (2GRO)



- **Two Generations Reaching Opportunity**
  - This is a proposal for a pilot in the governor's budget request called Two Generations Reaching Opportunity, or 2GRO
  - 2Gro would pilot a suite of highly coordinated services for about 150 low income families per year.
  - The program builds off of successful home-visiting programs and layers in elements critical for two gen like supporting quality education, economic supports and social capital.
  - I've included it here because of its focus on connecting families to economic supports to affordable housing, transportation, utility assistance and other programs that build financial literacy.

## Barriers To Two Generation Approaches



### Funding

- Utilize funding flexibility.



### Relationships

- Bring diverse partners to the table.



### Clinical Practice Shifts

- Treat the family as the patient.

- Of course, there are barriers to implementing two gen programs and policies.
- Three categories of barriers
- Funding
  - Funding for two generations can be tricky due to the cross-sector nature of the programming.
  - For example, think back to the slide on supporting parents on their path to education.
    - Adult education dollars cant be used for things like providing child care.
- Relationships
  - Many of these programs and policies we've mentioned today will require a diverse set of partners at the table.
  - In some cases, these are new partnerships. We know they will take time to develop. There's a need to ensure there are forums for these partners to interact and find ways to work together.
- Clinical practice shifts
  - The final category of barriers is the changes that need to happen to approach clinical practice from a two generation approach.
  - The end goal is to treat the family as the patient, but we know there are

issues to getting there.

- These include billing and patient record issues that practices have already begun tackling.
    - Think back to pregnancy related depression screens.
    - One piece of feedback advocates have heard from the pediatric community has been the difficulty in putting the mother's screening results in the child's file because of current workflow.
    - Will need to think through these pieces as we move towards this model.
  - Many of these barriers have to do with the silo'd nature of our health care and social service systems.
  - Part of the reason doing this presentation is to be a part of bringing down those silos.
  - You are at a health policy conference, but we know that health is broader than clinic care.
- IF TIME – how could a two generation lens change your work? Pair share, report out.





## Three Takeaways

- 1 The evidence makes the case for a two-generation approach.
- 2 Colorado is a leader in two-generation policies and programs.
- 3 Work remains to overcome barriers and move forward.

- Three things to remember after this presentation.

Discussion

How can a two-generation approach change your work?

# CHI in 2017

## A Sneak Preview

- New logo
- Updated website
- Same commitment to a healthy Colorado

Tamara Keeney

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Up next, you'll go to lunch.

Then following lunch we'll have a gifts, grants and donations panel.