
Agape's 2Gen Program in Memphis, Tennessee

Background

[Agape Child & Family Services](#) is a faith-based organization dedicated to serving individuals and families experiencing poverty and to improving communities in the Memphis, Tennessee, area. In 2016, the organization launched an integrated place-based model known as 2Gen because it is based on the two-generation paradigm of service provision. This cradle-to-career-and-beyond model offers comprehensive resources that support the whole child and family. These resources include but are not limited to case management and wraparound services focused on early childhood development, youth in schools, postsecondary and workforce pathways for adults, housing stability, and increased social capital and economic assets. Those served are primarily people of color (largely African American) living in single-parent households and experiencing poverty.

The Agape 2Gen model is unique in several ways:

1. Takes a **place-based approach**—that is, it brings desired services to families within site-based, community locations that include schools, apartment communities, and churches in three specific, under-resourced Memphis communities.
2. Uses a **no-wrong-door policy** and designs services based on a family **voice-and-choice framework** to allow families to enter through any 2Gen program and choose if, when, and how they take up services.
3. Seeks to hire **staff with traits and lived experiences that reflect those of the families who are being served.**
4. Collaborates with **more than 100 local, state, and national partners whose work complements the 2Gen program and focuses on diverse service needs** including early childhood and youth education, adult education and employment, financial wellness, health and well-being, housing stability and utility assistance, social capital, and transportation.

Mathematica's implementation study

In 2018, Mathematica partnered with Agape to help document 2Gen's implementation and the experiences of the families who were being served. Given the critical knowledge gap on best practices in 2Gen implementation, the team also worked to identify areas that Agape excelled in and opportunities to further refine 2Gen delivery. To meet these goals, the study team examined quantitative and qualitative data: data on enrollment and engagement, data from semi-structured interviews with Agape leadership and staff, and data from focus groups with adults that 2Gen serves.

Areas of opportunity for 2Gen implementation

The study team identified several opportunities for Agape to bolster 2Gen, with key recommendations that include:

- Surveying staff more to reveal training gaps
- Training staff explicitly on integrating equity and cultural responsiveness into services
- Standardizing the 2Gen supervision model
- Periodically assessing alignment between partners' and Agape's service missions

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- Bolstering staff's capacity to use data systems
 - Expanding the voice-and-choice framework by using equity-focused approaches to involve the broader Memphis community and families in continuous quality improvement