



Defining a Two-Generation Logic Model

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Abstract

Two-generation initiatives intentionally combine intensive, high quality adult-focused services with intensive, high quality child-focused programs (such as Head Start or early childhood education) to improve outcomes for children, primary caregivers, and families. Integrating services for primary caregivers and their children can result in better outcomes than those accomplished by serving each generation in isolation (Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn 2014; Sama-Miller et al. 2017) and mapping out these services in a logic model is a powerful way for two-generation initiatives to articulate intended outcomes and related services for families. In *Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches (NS2G)*, researchers from Mathematica partnered with four two-generation initiatives to co-create and refine a two-generation logic model, identify strategies to strengthen the implementation of their initiatives, and test those strategies using rapid cycle learning.

This is the first of three briefs that aim to inform the field of two-generation approaches. This brief describes how two-generation initiatives participating in NS2G developed and refined a two-generation logic model to help them identify the right mix of services for primary caregivers and their children. This brief is intended for readers who want to develop a two-generation logic model. Logic models are diagrams that help initiative leaders and staff (1) articulate their plans for services, including the intensity, duration, and quality of services, (2) ensure that the plans line up with the expected outcomes for caregivers and children, and (3) identify expected outcomes and the associated measures for the outcomes (Ross et al. 2018). This brief includes a blank copy of a two-generational logic model template (Appendix A) in addition to instructions and guiding questions for initiative leaders and staff to consider during logic model development (Appendix B).

Introduction

This brief describes how two-generation initiatives participating in the Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches (NS2G) project developed and refined a two-generation logic model to help them identify the right mix of services for primary caregivers and their children. This brief is intended for readers who want to develop a two-generation logic model. Logic models are diagrams that help program leaders (1) articulate their plans for services, including the intensity (including duration) and quality of services; (2) ensure that the plans line up with the expected outcomes for caregivers and children; and (3) identify expected outcomes and the associated measures for the outcomes (Ross et al. 2018).

Two-generation initiatives intentionally combine intensive, high quality adult-focused services with intensive, high quality child-focused programs (such as Head Start or early childhood education) to improve outcomes for children, primary caregivers, and families. Integrating services for primary caregivers and their children can result in better outcomes than those accomplished by serving each generation in isolation (Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn 2014; Sama-Miller et al. 2017) and mapping out these services in a logic model is a powerful way for two-generation initiatives to articulate intended outcomes and related services for families.

In NS2G, researchers partnered with four two-generation initiatives to co-create and refine a two-generation logic model, identify strategies to strengthen the implementation of their initiatives, and test those strategies using rapid cycle learning. A blank copy of a two-generation logic model template is in Appendix A. Additional instructions and guiding questions for initiative leaders and staff to consider during logic model development are in Appendix B. This is the first of three briefs that aim to inform the field of two-generation approaches. Two additional briefs will describe how the initiatives participating in NS2G used their logic models to identify opportunities to strengthen implementation and generated insights for the two-generation field.

Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches project

The Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches (NS2G) project is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families to build the evidence base for fully integrated, intentional models for two-generation service delivery with adequate intensity and quality of services for caregivers and their children. Activities include partnering with four sites on formative evaluations, facilitating a learning community of 10 two-generation initiatives (including the four formative evaluation sites participating in NS2G), and developing a measure of mutually-reinforcing two-generation partnerships. The initiatives participating in NS2G formative evaluations include:

- Garrett County Community Action Committee, Garrett County, Maryland
- Northern Kentucky Scholar House at Brighton Center, Newport, Kentucky
- San Antonio Dual Generation, San Antonio, Texas
- Valley Settlement, Roaring Fork Valley, Colorado

For more information about NS2G, please visit

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/next-steps-rigorous-research-two-generation-approaches-ns2g-2019->

Components of a two-generation logic model

To develop an initial draft of a two-generation logic model, the NS2G team built on a conceptual framework for two-generation initiatives developed by an earlier project called Exploration of Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security project, which was funded by the Administration for Children and Families (Figure 1).¹ The conceptual framework illustrates the link between two-generation services and outcomes for primary caregivers and their children (Sommer et al. 2018). In the conceptual framework, the needs and motivations of primary caregivers and their children are interrelated. As a result, intentionally reinforcing, aligning, and coordinating services for both generations might help caregivers and their children achieve outcomes that support and enhance one another. For example, if a primary caregiver views their education and employment activities as helping their children as well as themselves, they might be more motivated to engage in services. In addition, their children might be more engaged in classroom learning activities if they see their caregiver set a positive example (Sommer et al. 2012).

The formative evaluation teams included initiative staff and two NS2G technical assistance (TA) providers who partnered to conduct a formative evaluation of program components through NS2G. The teams first co-created a two-generation logic model based on the Integrated Approaches conceptual framework. Specifically, the NS2G team built on the conceptual framework to develop a logic model template and partnered with leaders, staff, and participants from

Two-generation initiatives intentionally combine intensive, high quality adult-focused services with intensive, high quality child-focused programs to improve outcomes for children, primary caregivers, and families. We use the term “initiative” instead of “program” because it is a broader term that encompasses diverse ways that organization(s) may combine programs and services. For example, San Antonio Dual Generation is an initiative of the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County that encompasses a number of adult workforce development and early childhood education programs delivered by a wide range of providers in the San Antonio area.

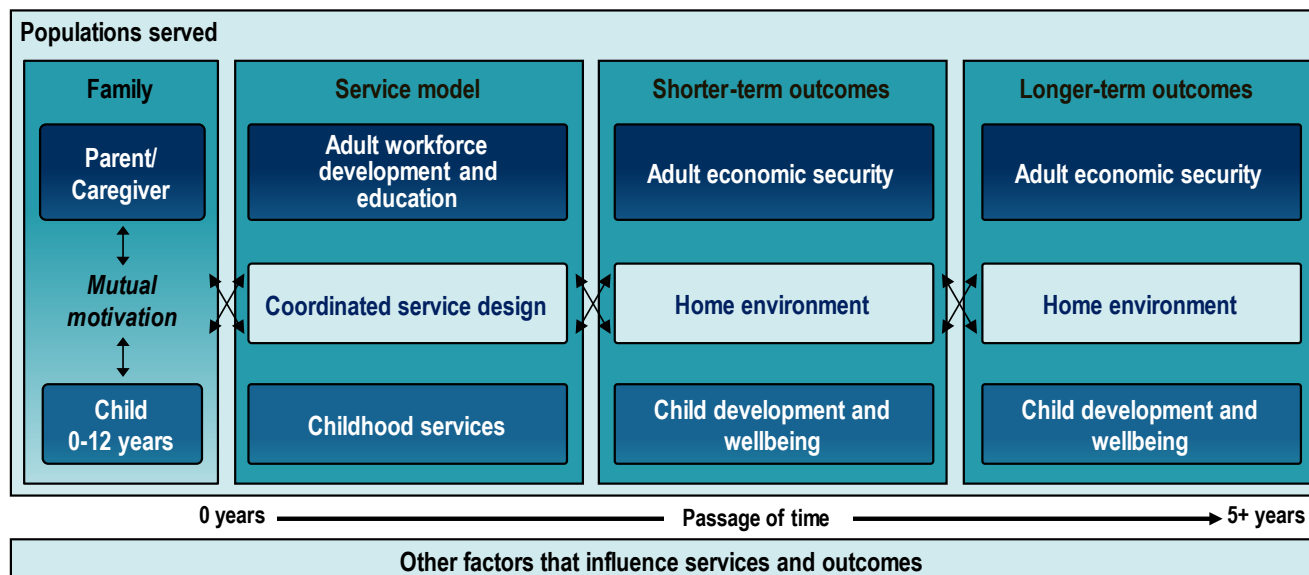
Logic models are diagrams that help program leaders (1) articulate their plans for services, including the intensity (including duration) and quality of services, (2) ensure that the plans line up with the expected outcomes for caregivers and children, and (3) identify expected outcomes and the associated measures for the outcomes (Ross et al. 2018).

Formative evaluation teams were groups of two-generation initiative staff and two NS2G TA providers who partnered to conduct a formative evaluation of program components through NS2G.

¹ Through a literature review and field work with existing two-generation initiatives, the Integrated Approaches project aimed to improve understanding of approaches that intentionally combine intensive, high quality, adult-focused employment and training services with intensive, high quality, child-focused programs (Sama-Miller et al. 2017). More information on that earlier project is available at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/integrated-approaches-supporting-child-development-and-improving-family-economic>.

four two-generation initiatives to use their real-world expertise in refining it. Staff from each two-generation initiative provided input on the structure and contents of their own logic model through a series of discussions focused on identifying and clearly defining each initiative’s core services or activities. The NS2G team refined the template as a result of these discussions. Table 1 describes the unique features included in the logic model template that make it possible for two-generation initiatives to achieve mutually reinforcing outcomes for caregivers and their children.

Figure 1. Two-generation conceptual framework^a



^a More information on the two-generation conceptual framework is available at:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/conceptual-frameworks-intentional-approaches-improving-economic-security-and-child-well>

Note: The two-generation conceptual framework is an adaptation of the change model for two-generation 2.0 programs by Chase-Landsdale & Brooks-Gunn (2014). See also Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2016) for a logic model developed at the same time as this conceptual framework.²

Table 1. Unique features included in the two-generation logic model

| Unique feature | Why feature is essential for two-generation initiatives |
|---|---|
| One box to represent the characteristics of the primary caregiver, the child, the family, and their mutual motivation | Successfully integrating services requires two-generation initiatives to consider the needs of each generation and build on each generation’s mutual motivation, which describes how each generation will be motivated to participate in services when it recognizes and values the other generation’s activities and progress. This differs from a typical logic model, which depicts participants without considering how the people in their lives and the circumstances of those people might influence them. |
| Separate boxes for adult, childhood, and family services | Two-generation initiatives ensure that each generation receives high quality and intensive services that meets its needs. In contrast to a typical logic model, this template depicts how an initiative might touch the lives of several people in the same family. |

² The figure note was updated in a revision to this brief in January 2023 to include a reference to a two-generation logic model presented in Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2016).

| Unique feature | Why feature is essential for two-generation initiatives |
|--|---|
| A box for mutually reinforcing services | Two-generation service providers intentionally coordinate services and set services up to be mutually reinforcing. This makes it possible for each generation to work toward achieving interconnected goals. This recognition that services to one member of a family might influence other family members is unique to a two-generation logic model. |
| Customizable arrows linking activities to outcomes | The arrows in the template link two-generation services to family outcomes. For example, these arrows illustrate the potential for intergenerational and familial links between activities and outcomes: activities can affect outcomes, and vice versa, across generations. Adult, child, and family outcomes can reinforce one another. These arrows serve the same function as the crisscrossed arrows in the conceptual framework for two-generation approaches. Depicting the richness of the relationship among family members and their outcomes is a key feature unique to two-generation logic models. |

Figure 2 shows the final logic model template, which is also available as a fillable template in Appendix A. The template aims to show the pathways from activities to intended outcomes for a two-generation initiative, in which children, primary caregivers, and families can achieve interconnected goals.

Mutually reinforcing services are services that align and build on each other toward achieving a shared vision and common or compatible goals for serving families as a whole.

Examples from NS2G: Intentionally coordinating mutually reinforcing services designed to meet the needs of families

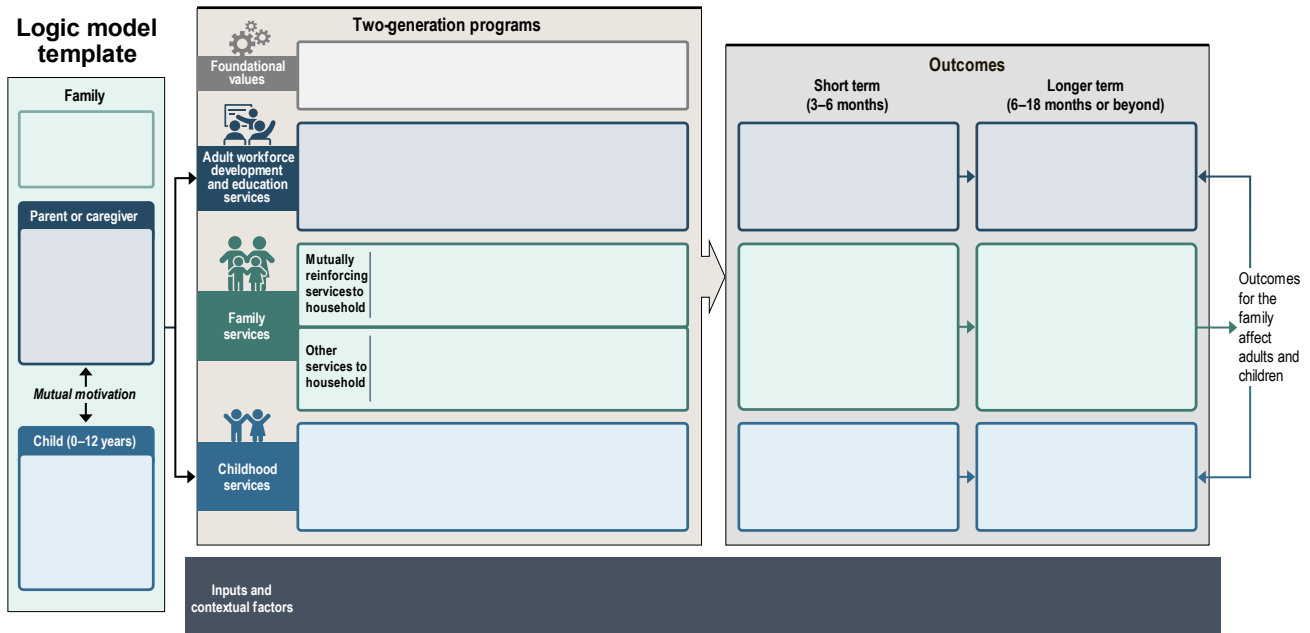
Northern Kentucky Scholar House at Brighton Center (NKSH) is a residential program for single parents and their young children. Parents at NKSH enroll in higher education, have access to family-centered coaching, and live in an apartment complex with other enrolled families. The apartment complex is co-located with a high quality early education center that provides education and care to children living at NKSH. NKSH’s services are mutually reinforcing because the residential setting provides families with a supportive, motivating community that eliminates several barriers to accessing high quality child care, including transportation, while parents pursue higher education.

During intake, families working with Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC) are paired with a family service coordinator who assesses family needs and eligibility for services. Once the coordinators identify families’ needs, they work in partnership with families to bundle services and develop a “Pathway Plan” that outlines action steps to support families in fulfilling their collective goals within and across generations. A family enrichment coach supports GCCAC’s family service coordinators. Family enrichment coaches meet with coordinators monthly to monitor family progress on the Pathway Plan, ensure adult and child services are bundled appropriately and are intentionally coordinated, and provide any other support that might be needed.

The logic model also describes the characteristics of the families served, the core services offered to each generation to support family economic security and child development, and how those services are intentionally coordinated and mutually reinforcing. In a two-generation logic model,

service providers' efforts align and build on one another toward achieving a shared vision and common or compatible goals for serving families.

Figure 2. Two-generation logic model



The two-generation logic model includes a space for inputs and contextual factors. Although these factors are not specific to two-generation programs and their logic models, initiative leaders and staff highlighted the importance of contextual influencers and moderators, such as deeply embedded community and policy factors (for example, geographic location and structural racism) that affect program operations. Initiative leaders and staff described how these factors fundamentally affect program planning, uptake, and operations. The placement of this box in the logic model attempts to acknowledge how each initiative grapples with these factors.

Example from NS2G: Contextual influencers and moderators

GCCAC is located in a rural community in Maryland’s panhandle. GCCAC staff described that transportation and resource access is challenge within Garrett County. They also shared that, because adjoining counties are in separate states, their community action committee is limited in expanding its service population because many funding streams are tied to county and state funding. Therefore, GCCAC’s location in a rural community is an important contextual influencer and moderator included in its logic model.

Finally, the two-generation logic model includes a space for foundational values. Many two-generation initiative staff participating in NS2G indicated that *why* they provide services and *how* they engage with their families is as core to their two-generation identity as *what* services they provide. This logic model element is not specific to two-generation initiatives in the same way as the elements highlighted in Table 2. Yet, we have added this element to the template because it is typically absent from logic models, and the work of NS2G revealed the need for depicting these values.

Example from NS2G: Foundational values

San Antonio Dual Generation is a place-based two-generation initiative providing child care, adult education, and workforce development services to families living in two disinvested neighborhoods in San Antonio. Valley Settlement works with immigrant families in the Roaring Fork Valley of Colorado to promote early childhood development, advance opportunity, and reduce barriers to accessing vital community resources. Both initiatives highly value participant voices when designing and providing services. For example, rather than prescribing a set of services to families, both initiatives work with families to develop an individualized service plan. These initiatives describe how it is more empowering and motivational for families to define their own needs.

Applying the two-generation logic model template

After developing the two-generation logic model template, the formative evaluation teams participated in a series of discussions designed to map their service delivery approach to the logic model. Through these discussions, initiative staff examined their service delivery structures, articulated their foundational values for how they approach families, and focused on the primary services they offered. Because this two-generation logic model aims to articulate the specific elements of two-generation initiatives (including mutually reinforcing services), each formative evaluation team articulated adult, family, and child-focused services and outcomes that were intentionally coordinated and mutually reinforcing.

How to develop your own two-generation logic model

Two-generation initiative leaders and staff can use the guiding questions in Table 2 to identify their core services or activities, prioritize their services, and distill the two-generation aspects of their work in order to develop or modify their two-generation logic model. As initiative leaders and staff work through this exercise, it is important to remember that logic model development is an iterative process and will typically require several rounds of discussion and revisions with staff. Therefore, it is recommended that initiatives identify a person with time and energy to champion the effort to schedule, convene, and lead these conversations, identify next steps, and maintain momentum with the group.

Each question in Table 2 is mapped to its corresponding section in the template for the two-generation logic model. Appendix B includes additional information and instructions for initiative leaders and staff to consider during these discussions.

Table 2. Guiding questions to identify your initiative’s core services or activities

| Section of the logic model template | Guiding question |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Family | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the characteristics of caregivers that participate in the initiative?• What are the characteristics of children that participate in the initiative?• What are the characteristics of families that participate in the initiative? |
| Two-generation initiative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the foundational values of the initiative?• What are the primary adult, family, and childhood services of the initiative?• How do you intentionally coordinate each service for primary caregivers and their children? |
| Short- and longer-term outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the most important needs of and challenges experienced by primary caregivers, children, and families?• What are the short- and longer-term outcomes you hope families will achieve by participating in each service? |
| Inputs and contextual factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What factors external to the initiative affect the initiative’s ability to be successful?• What factors within the initiative influence whether services are delivered in a high quality way that aligns with the intended model? |

Next steps after developing a two-generation logic model

After the initiatives participating in NS2G developed their two-generation logic models, they used their logic models to identify challenges and opportunities where they could strengthen processes to serve both generations more intentionally. Then, participating initiatives piloted these strategies using rapid cycle learning. Readers might want to consider similar next steps after developing their two-generation logic model. We will describe this process in greater depth in the second brief in this series. The third brief will describe lessons learned from piloting strategies to strengthen two-generation services.

OPRE's Portfolio on Coordinated Services

This project is part of a portfolio of research focused on coordinated services to support children and families. Projects within this research portfolio address the intentional coordination of two or more services. These projects span OPRE's program-specific research portfolios, including child care, Head Start, home visiting, child welfare, and welfare and family self-sufficiency. More information about OPRE's Coordinated Services projects can be found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/coordinated-services-research-and-evaluation-portfolio>.

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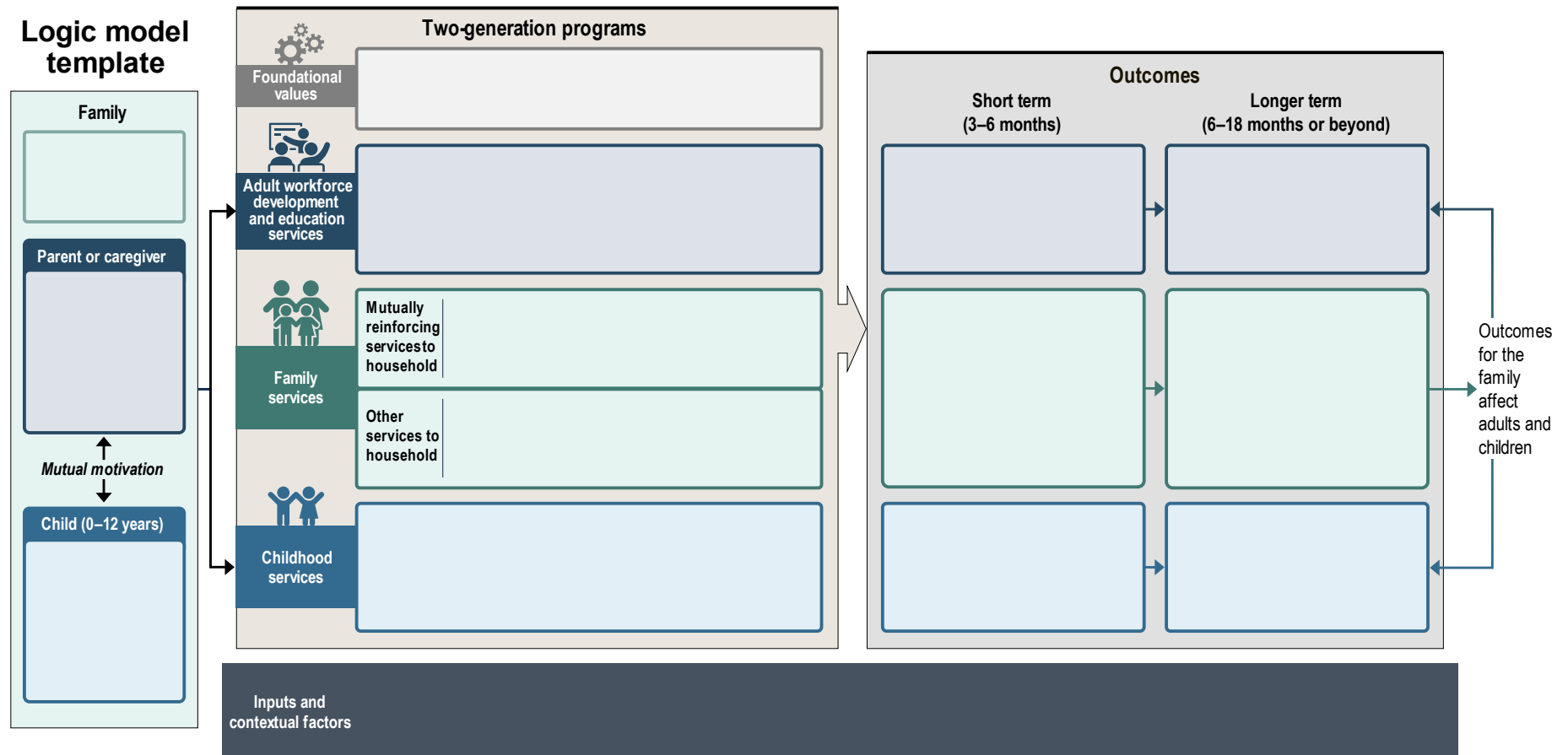
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³ This reference was added in a revision to this brief in January 2023, as noted in Figure 1. In addition, a reference was removed because it was not cited in the text and had been included erroneously.

Appendix A. Two-generation logic model template⁴



⁴ This appendix is also available as a [standalone PowerPoint file](#), for ease of filling boxes and customizing arrows. The standalone file was added along with a revision to this brief in January 2023.

Appendix B. Additional instructions for initiative leaders and staff to consider during logic model discussions

| Logic model component | Guiding question | Instructions |
|--|---|---|
| Family | What are the characteristics of families that participate in the initiative? | During this discussion, focus on traits that are important or directly relevant to the organization or community context. For example, an organization that typically serves families with grandparents as primary caregivers would list “Grandparents are primary caregivers” under the “Caregiver” box. |
| Two-generation initiative | What are the foundational values of the initiative? | Discuss your initiative’s mission statement and distill the elements most relevant to your initiative’s two-generation approach. List those elements in the “Foundational values” box. |
| | What are the primary adult, family, and childhood services of the initiative? How do you intentionally coordinate each service for primary caregivers and their children? | When thinking about services, consider the intensity, service population, format, uptake, and implementation supports. Discuss how each service addresses participant needs and could theoretically contribute to outcomes. Once you identify all services, describe which services are co-located, how they are scheduled, or the availability of a family case management or service navigation component. This discussion will help you prioritize which services to include in the logic model. |
| Short- and longer-term outcomes | What are the most important needs and challenges of primary caregivers, children, and families? What are the short- and longer-term outcomes you hope families will achieve by participating in each service? | Discuss the intended outcomes for each service listed in the “Two-generation programs” section. Once you identify all intended outcomes, identify the outcomes directly relevant to your initiative’s two-generation approach and list these outcomes for each row in the template (adult, family, or childhood services). Once you add outcomes to the template, read the logic model from left to right to ensure the short- and longer-term outcomes are link to the correct service (adult, family, or childhood services). |
| Inputs and contextual factors | What affects the initiative’s ability to be successful? What factors influence whether services are delivered in a high quality way that aligns with the intended model? | Consider factors within the organization (such as funding, staff supports, and supervision) and influences outside the organization (such as public policy or community-level issues). |

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