

Two-Generation Family Approaches to Citizenship Education

Naturalization has always involved the whole family. From children helping their parents study the 100 civics test items at the dining table to new citizens looking forward to reuniting with family members overseas, the naturalization process itself brings families together and helps build communities.

Two-generation or “2Gen” approaches to citizenship education is a model of education that involves both parents and children in the learning process. At the heart of the model is family engagement – and with greater engagement, programs achieve greater outcomes.

USCIS 2Gen Citizenship Education Model: What can it look like?



K-12 Citizenship Education – i.e. civics for children

A K-12 school is exploring new ways to engage parents. The school serves a large number of immigrants. The parent engagement coordinator surveys the parents and sees that there is a strong interest in the citizenship process and learning the civics content needed to pass the naturalization test. They invite their local USCIS Community Relations Officer to do a presentation on the naturalization process during their next parent-teacher association (PTA) meeting. After the PTA presentation, teachers and the parent engagement coordinator realize that they have enough parents interested to hold an adult citizenship class. The school reaches out to education specialists at the Office of Citizenship to help set up a new adult citizenship class after parents drop children off in the morning.



Family Civics Time – i.e. field trip to a history museum



Adult Citizenship Education – i.e. civics for adults

A nonprofit that provides adult citizenship education in the evening is struggling with attendance and retention. They know that many of their students have young children at home and daycare costs in their city are steep. To help improve retention, the teachers offer onsite childcare staffed with volunteers. The teachers also reach out to education specialists at the Office of Citizenship to help align their curriculum for adults and children, so both parents and children are exposed to the same civics content. Once a week they plan an interactive civics activity, such as visiting a local history museum, with the entire family.

Strategies

2Gen Citizenship Education Strategies in K-12 Education:

- Display a citizenship corner with **resources** for parents.
- Contact the **Office of Citizenship** for any help setting up programs, materials, and resources.
- Engage PTA groups and invite your local USCIS Community Relation’s Officer to present on pathways to naturalization.
- Offer daytime or evening adult citizenship/ ESL classes for parents.
- Conduct educational family home visits.

2Gen Citizenship Education Strategies in Adult Education:

- Offer onsite childcare to boost retention and tap into parental motivation.
- Use volunteers to teach civics in childcare rooms while parents are studying.
- Invite the entire family for educational field trips and other events.
- Conduct educational family home-visits.

Outcomes:

- Greater engagement and retention in both K-12 and adult education programs
- Stronger long-term educational outcomes by creating a culture of family learning at home
- Children stop being seen as a barrier but as a motivational asset in adult education
- Diversified avenues for fundraising for organizations

Resources in the field:

USCIS Program Development Guide - https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/guides/M-677_Program_Development_Guide.pdf

National Center for Families Learning - <https://familieslearning.org/>

Ascend – The Aspen Institute - <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/>

Migration Policy Institute - <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/serve-immigrant-families-through-two-generation-programs-identifying-family-needs-and>



**U.S. Citizenship
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www.uscis.gov/citizenship