



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 16, 2016

Parents Invited to Free Day of Peer-to-Peer Workshops Designed to Help Parents Work and Children Thrive

At Two-Gen Parent Academy on Jan. 7, 2017, parents will learn skills to improve their economic security and how the power of their stories can inform public policy.

Two-Gen Parent Academy is Sat., Jan. 7 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Legislative Office Building.

HARTFORD – Families too often fall between the cracks of well-intentioned social service supports, where the needs of the child and the needs of the parents are addressed separately, and are often logistically in conflict. In contrast, the “Two-Generational” approach – in programs, policy, and research – puts the entire family on a path to permanent economic security.

In 2014, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to write a Two-Generational systems approach into law, and now Connecticut leads the nation in the administering and promoting of this *parent-driven*, coordinated system of keeping entire families’ needs at the center of service delivery. The General Assembly’s Commission on Women, Children and Seniors staffs the Two-Gen initiative here in Connecticut.

Parent input is central to the Two-Gen philosophy, and the first-ever Two-Gen Parent Academy, planned by a group of parent volunteers from the community, will help parents become their children’s strongest allies.

“The Academy is about building stability, learning about resources in the community, securing good jobs, getting involved in policy – all the things that combine to make parents the best advocates for their own kids,” says Stephan Palmer, a resident of Hartford and Two-Gen Parent Academy planning committee member.

The Two-Gen Parent Academy, open to all parents in the Greater Hartford area, will be held on Saturday, Jan. 7 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Legislative Office Building. The entire event is free – tuition, childcare, lunch and books will be provided at no charge.

Workshops will range from nuts-and-bolts issues such as how to turn a good idea into a thriving small business, to public speaking skills, to topics as wide-reaching as building self-esteem.

According to Veronica Rosario of East Hartford, another parent on the planning committee, “Two-Gen is ‘one-stop shopping’ for everything a family needs to succeed: if you need daycare, you go here for info; if you need to develop work skills, you go here; if you want to go to college, you go here. And none of these resources conflicts with the others – it’s coordinated and so much easier than trying to navigate all this on your own. I’m so grateful to be able to work on this initiative because it helped me discover my skills. It’s only right I should give back and help other parents discover their own skills, too.”

The day’s workshops and presenters are:

Entrepreneurship – Turning great ideas into Business
Choosing Quality Childcare & Accessing it

Frank Dixon, President of Black Business Alliance
Maureen Reid, Lead Early Childhood Specialist, 2-1-1
Samantha Dynowski, Advocacy Director, Early Childhood Alliance
Elizabeth Frasier, Policy Manager, CT Association for Human Services

Fatherhood & the Two-Gen Experience

Doug Edwards, Founder and Program Director of Real Dads Forever
Anthony Judkins, Program Manager, DSS Fatherhood Initiative

Using Your Voice to Advocate for You & Your Child

Elaine Zimmerman, Regional Director for the Administration of Children & Families
Melvette Hill, State Coordinator for Parent Leadership Institute

Telling Your Story

Erika Hayes, Community Educator, CT School Finance Project

Filming Your Story to Effect Change for Families

Allan Chips, West Hartford Videographer
Ronald Martin, Hartford Videographer & Parent

Panel Discussion: School & Workforce Readiness

Sara Dudzic, Director, Move UP!
Nanfi Lubogo, Director, PATH Parents Available to Help. Inc.
Kim Oliver, Director of the Dept. of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation for the City of Hartford
Frank Dixon, President of Black Business Alliance
State Senator Beth Bye, Co-Chair Appropriations Comm.
Scott Jackson, Commissioner, State Dept. of Labor

Teen Parents – A Community of Support for Young Moms & Dads

Sade Blocker, Hartford Urban League
Michelle McFarlane, Library Assistant, Hartford Public Library

How Parents Can Participate to Improve Schools - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Charlene Russell Tucker, Chief Operating Officer
Connecticut State Department of Education

Overcoming Obstacles to Economic Success

Scott Jackson, Commissioner of CT Department of Labor

Chronic Absence: How Attendance Impacts School Success

Charlene Russell Tucker, Chief Operating Officer
Connecticut State Department of Education

According to Sade Blocker, a Prospect resident who serves as program facilitator for adult education for the Urban League of Hartford, “parents walk away from this full day of workshops feeling as if they are not alone. They connect with other parents in a meaningful way, and they come away refreshed. Even teen parents learn there is a light at the end of the tunnel.”

For more information on the Two-Gen Parent Academy, contact Melvette Hill at 860-240-8442, or Melvette.hill@cga.ct.gov.