

Case Study of the Generation Connection Program:
An Intergenerational Program Transfer Initiative

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Abstract

The Generation Connection Program (GCP), an intergenerational program transfer initiative, was examined as the focus of this study in order to determine how an enabling agency approach can advance the implementation and sustainability of innovative intergenerational programs throughout a community. Teachers and long term care staff from three sites with active programs and staff from two sites that had disbanded programs participated in this study. Additional data included field notes from intergenerational program activities and orientations observations, journal articles, implementation package materials, newspaper articles, and the GCP's internal written documents. This study was largely exploratory, as the critical factors for the successful transfer of social programs are not clearly understood. Five themes emerged from the data: the process of program transfer as a continual process, the transfer of knowledge and skills, building collaborative relationships between long term care staff and teachers, continual innovation, and building capacity through networks. The findings suggest that a community-based managed network approach, combining central agency leadership with capacity in long term care centers and schools/child care centers, can advance the implementation and institutionalization of intergenerational programs.