

New Models for Building Skills and Growing Capacity

NEW MOMS, A CHICAGO-BASED SOCIAL IMPACT ORGANIZATION led by President and CEO, Laura Zumdahl, PhD, addresses pressing issues facing young moms, including equitable access to resources, care during their pregnancy journeys, and support for young families. Through their innovative, neuroscience-based approach, New Moms impacts around 750 moms and children directly each year while re-shaping their sector. The Baumhart Center for Social Enterprise and Responsibility, along with expert judges in the fields of social and environmental impact, awarded New Moms with the Social Impact Award at the 2024 Leading for Good Conference.

Introduction

Within the dynamic human services realm, New Moms—located in Chicago’s Austin neighborhood—has become a pioneering entity, reshaping support paradigms for young motherhood with methodologies grounded in neuroscience. Laura Zumdahl, PhD, serves as the President & CEO of New Moms. Zumdahl and her team are driven by a universal vision: to see every young family thrive.

About New Moms

Established in 1983, the nonprofit organization New Moms has undergone significant growth since its humble beginnings, emerging as a dynamic force within the human services sector. “Parenting is hard,” asserts New Moms. “Parenting without a stable home, financial security, or community support is even more challenging. New Moms is here so young mothers don’t have to navigate this journey alone. Our impact is multi-generational, exponential, and profoundly beautiful.”

For over 40 years, New Moms has partnered with young mothers confronting poverty and homelessness in the Chicagoland area. Inspired by a fervent dedication to social impact, Zumdahl has steered New Moms towards expanding its array of programs and initiatives. Through their comprehensive offerings including housing, job training, family support, college success, and mental health programs, New Moms supports ~750 young mothers and children annually as they work towards achieving goals related to housing stability, economic mobility, and family well-being.

New Moms Innovative Approach to Human Services Pushes for Greater Impact

In the past 5 years, New Moms has undergone a transition, shifting from a deficit-based case management model to a strengths-based, family-centered coaching approach. This

transformative strategy aims to empower young mothers by helping them to identify and harness their individual strengths, capabilities, and executive skills – using those strengths to their advantage as they set and pursue goals for their families.

New Moms is building a better future by changing the way human service providers approach their work. New Moms has developed a brain science-based framework called Executive Skills Coaching. This approach places each participant into the “driver’s seat” as the expert on her family’s needs and goals. New Moms’ coaches then provide resources and encouragement as young moms work toward their own goals

As a result of this shift, New Moms has observed positive changes, improved outcomes in their work, and a greater number of young families flourishing, according to data provided by the Social Impact Research Center of Heartland Alliance

Zumdahl states, “There are three periods in which our brains develop the most rapidly in our lives: in early childhood, late adolescence, and new parenthood.” Due to New Moms’ innovative service model, they can simultaneously serve families at all three points.

Combining a Non-Profit and For-Profit Model

In 2022, New Moms launched a social enterprise called The Hub @ New Moms. The HUB @ New Moms anchors innovation within the organization and provides executive skills training and consulting to human services organizations throughout the nation. Partnering with human services organizations to transform the sector is a key strategy to fulfilling their vision to see every young family thrive.

The Hub @ New Moms is actually their second social enterprise. Bright Endeavors, the flagship social enterprise

soy candle company of New Moms, exists to provide paid job training to young moms, and to equip them with marketable job skills. According to the website, 100% of Bright Endeavors' proceeds support New Moms' Job Training program.

Conclusion

New Moms' innovative shift towards a strengths based, family-centered approach, combined with the integration of brain and behavioral science into coaching practices, showcases a steadfast dedication to empowering young mothers and their families through personalized, evidence-based support. Targeted social enterprises further scale their impact. Their distinctive fusion of compassion, expertise, and interdisciplinary collaboration establishes a noteworthy benchmark in the realm of youth motherhood support, catalyzing inspiration for other organizations to embrace similarly holistic strategies in tackling intricate social challenges.

Questions for Discussion

- What factors enable an organization to rethink its delivery without changing its mission?
- How can business model innovation broaden impact in other organizations and sectors?

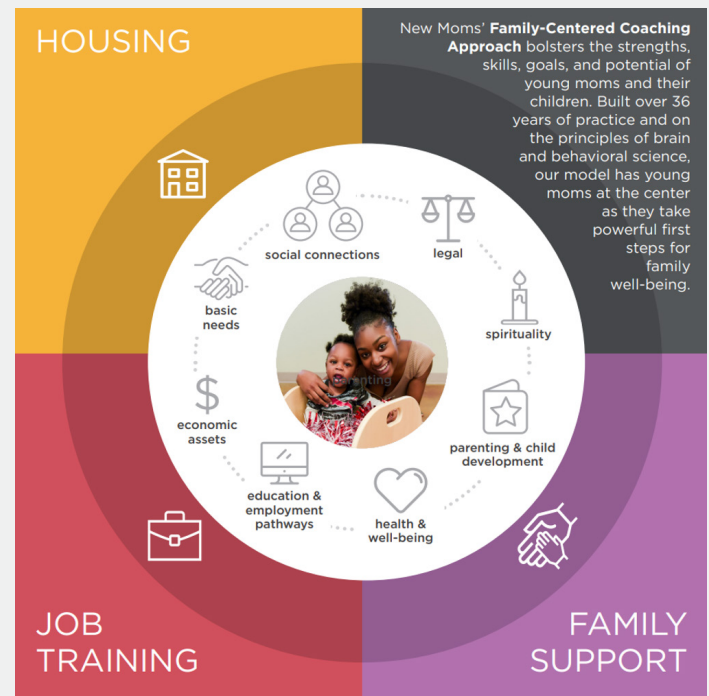


Exhibit 1: New Moms Family-Centered Coaching Approach
Source: New Moms, "Two-Generation Coaching Model", 2021, p. 2.