Foundations for an Evidence-Based Approach to Early Childhood Intervention and Family Support

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Abstract

Sources of information constituting the foundations of an integrated approach to early childhood intervention and family support are included in this *CASEmaker* bibliography. The integrated approach has theoretical, conceptual, operational, and performance foundations that, taken together, insure interventions with children, parents, and families have capacity-building characteristics and consequences. Research on different aspects of the integrated approach to early childhood intervention and support constituting the focus of the integrated framework has produced evidence supporting the validity of the model.

This *CASEmaker* bibliography includes selected references to an approach to early childhood intervention and family support that aims to strengthen and build child, parent, and family capacity and competence (Dunst, 2000, 2004). The integrated model is shown in Figure 1. According to this approach, early childhood intervention and family support are defined as the provision and mobilization of children's learning opportunities, parenting supports, and family and community resources in a family-centered manner. The intersecting and overlapping elements of the model include the contexts for children's everyday learning opportunities (activity settings), the methods and procedures for promoting child competence (development-enhancing parenting styles and practices), and the experiences afforded parents strengthening existing and promoting new parenting competence (participatory opportunities).

The integrated framework has theoretical, conceptual, operational, and performance foundations that, taken together, provide an approach for using theory and research to inform practice in ways that support and strengthen child, parent, and family capacity (see e.g., Dunst, 1999). The model differs from other approaches to early childhood intervention and family support by its explicit focus on child, parent, and family *capacity building* as the major outcome for measuring success. The *Prescription for Practice* lists key sources of information that readers should find helpful in developing a better understanding and appreciation of the key characteristics of early childhood intervention and family support constituting the focus of the integrated framework.
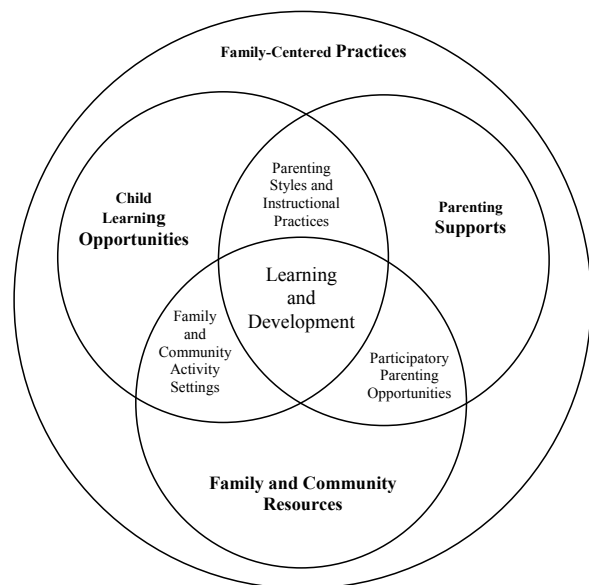

Figure 1. Integrated Framework for Practicing and Studying Early Childhood Intervention and Family Support

Rx   Prescription for Practice   Rx

Dunst, C. J. (2004). An integrated framework for practicing early childhood intervention and family support. *Perspectives in Education, 22*(2), 1-16.

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Dunst, C. J. (2001). *Parent and community assets as sources of young children's learning opportunities*. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Theoretical Foundations

The integrated framework draws from a number of sources of information providing the theoretical foundations for a capacity building approach to early childhood intervention and family support. The framework uses *ecological* and *social systems* theory for understanding how different intervention processes (practices) influence and contribute to human growth and development. Major sources of information about the theoretical foundations for the integrated framework include:

Alvarez, A. (1994). Child's everyday life: An ecological approach to the study of activity systems. In A. Alvarez & P. del Río (Eds.), *Educations as cultural construction* (pp. 23-38). Madrid, Spain: Fundación Infancia y Aprendizaje.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology, 22*, 723-742.

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Revised formulations and current issues (pp. 187-248). Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.

Chaiklin, S., & Lave, J. (Eds.). (1996). *Understanding practice: Perspectives on activity and context.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Dent-Read, C., & Zukow-Goldring, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Evolving explanations of development: Ecological approaches to organism-environment systems.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Garbarino, J. (1992). *Children and families in the social environment*. (2nd ed.). New York: de Gruyter.

Hobbs, N., Dokecki, P. R., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Moroney, R. M., Shayne, M. W., & Weeks, K. H. (1984). *Strengthening families*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Horowitz, F. D. (1987). *Exploring developmental theories: Toward a structural/behavioral model of development*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Conceptual Foundations

The implementation of the integrated model is accomplished using a capacity-building "world view" that provides the foundation for the approach to early childhood intervention and family support constituting the focus of this *CASEmaker* (see especially Dunst, 1995; Dunst & Trivette, 1997). The conceptual foundations for the integrated framework draw from key characteristics of *promotion, empowerment, strengths-based, resource-based, and family-centered models*, with a special emphasis on how these approaches support and strengthen human functioning.

Promotion Models

Bond, L. A. (1982). From prevention to promotion: Optimizing infant development. In G. W. Albee & J. M. Joffe (Eds.), *Primary prevention of psychopathology: Vol. VI. Facilitating infant and early childhood development* (pp. 5-39). Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.

Cowen, E. L. (1994). The enhancement of psychological wellness: Challenges and opportunities. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 22*, 149-179.

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Thompson, R. B. (1990). Supporting and strengthening family functioning: Toward a congruence between principles and prac-

tice. *Prevention in Human Services, 9*(1), 19-43.

Seeman, J. (1989). Toward a model of positive health. *American Psychologist, 44*, 1099-1109.

Winett, R. A. (1995). A framework for health promotion and disease prevention programs. *American Psychologist, 50*, 341-350.

Empowerment Models

Cochran, M., & Woolever, F. (1983). Beyond the deficit model: The empowerment of parents with information and informal support. In I. Siegel & L. Laosa (Eds.), *The empowerment of parents with information and informal support* (pp. 225-246). New York: Plenum.

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & LaPointe, N. (1992). Toward clarification of the meaning and key elements of empowerment. *Family Science Review, 5*(1/2), 111-130.

Rappaport, J. (1981). In praise of paradox: A social policy of empowerment over prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 9,* 1-25.

Rappaport, J. (1987). Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 15,* 121-148.

Trickett, E. J. (1994). Human diversity and community psychology: Where ecology and empowerment meet. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 22*, 583-592.

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., Hamby, D. W., & LaPointe, N. J. (1996). Key elements of empowerment and their implications for early intervention. Infant-Toddler Intervention: *The Transdisciplinary Journal, 6,* 59-73.

Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational and community levels of analysis. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 43-63). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Strengths-Based Models

Asinwall, L., & Staudinger, U. (Eds.). (2003). *A psychology of human strengths: Fundamental questions and future direction for a positive psychology.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Curran, D. (1983). *Traits of a healthy family: Fifteen traits commonly found in healthy families by those who work with them.* Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press.

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Mott, D. W. (1994). Strengths-based family-centered intervention practices. In C. J. Dunst, C. M. Trivette, & A. G. Deal (Eds.), *Supporting and strengthening families: Methods, strategies and practices* (pp. 115-131). Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Kretzmann, J. P., McKnight, J. L., & Rans, S. A. (2005). *Hidden treasures: Building community connections by engaging the gifts of people on welfare, people with disabilities, people with mental illness, older adults, young people: A community building workbook.* Chicago, IL: Asset Based Community Development Institute. Retrieved April 12, 2005, form http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd/hiddentreasures.html

Stinnett, N., Lynn, D., Kimmons, L., Fuenning, S., & DeFrain, J. (1984). Family strengths and personal wellness. *Wellness Perspectives, 1*, 25-31.

van Lieshout, C. F. M., & Heymans, P. G. (Eds.). (2000). *Developing talent across the life span.* Hove, England: Psychology Press.

Resource-Based Models

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Deal, A. G. (1994). Resource-based family-centered intervention practices. In C. J. Dunst, C. M. Trivette, & A. G. Deal (Eds.), *Supporting and strengthening families: Methods, strategies and practices* (pp. 140-151). Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Gilley, T. (1995). *Responding to service users: Exploring a resource-based approach to delivering human services.* Melbourne, Australia: Brotherhood of St. Laurence.

Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L. (1993). Building communities form the inside out: A path *toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets.* Chicago, IL: ACTA.

Mott, D. W. (2005). *Conceptual and empirical foundations of resource-based intervention practices.* CASEinPoint, 1(5). Available from: http://www.fippcase.org/products

Sarason, S. B., Carroll, C. F., Maton, K., Cohen, S., & Lorentz, E. (1977). *Human services and resource networks: Rationale, possibilities, and public policy.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Deal, A. G. (1997). Resource-based approach to early intervention. In S. K. Thurman, J. R. Cornwell, & S. R. Gottwald (Eds.), *Contexts of early intervention: Systems and settings* (pp. 73-92). Baltimore: Brookes.

Family-Centered Models

Dunst, C. J. (1997). Conceptual and empirical foundations of family-centered practice. In R. Illback, C. Cobb, & H. Joseph, Jr. (Eds.), *Integrated services for children and families: Opportunities for psychological practice* (pp. 75-91). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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Duwa, S. M., Wells, C., & Lalinde, P. (1993). Creating family-centered programs and policies. In D. M. Bryant & M. A. Graham (Eds.), *Implementing early intervention: From research to effective practice* (pp. 92-123). New York: Guilford Press.

Rosenbaum, P., King, S., Law, M., King, G., & Evans, J. (1998). Family-centred service: A conceptual framework and research review. *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics, 18*(1), 1-20.

Shelton, T. L., & Stepanek, J. S. (1994). *Family-centered care for children needing specialized health and developmental services.* (3rd ed.). Bethesda, MD: Association for the Care of Children's Health.

Smith, L., Coleman, V., & Bradshaw, M. (2002). *Family-centred care: Concept, theory and practice*. New York: Palgrave.

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., Boyd, K., & Hamby, D. W. (1995). Family-oriented program models, helpgiving practices, and parental control appraisals. *Exceptional Children, 62,* 237-248.

Operational Foundations

Major sources of information about the key characteristics of the operational foundations of the integrated framework are included in this section of the bibliography. These different but procedurally congruent kinds of practices provide the foundations for ensuring that child, parent, and family interventions have capacity building and competency enhancing consequences (see e.g., Dunst & Trivette, 1996; Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1994; Trivette, Dunst, & Hamby, 1996).

Child Learning Opportunities

Dunst, C. J., Bruder, M. B., Trivette, C. M., Hamby, D., Raab, M., & McLean, M. (2001). Characteristics and consequences of everyday natural learning opportunities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 21*, 68-92.

Dunst, C. J., Bruder, M. B., Trivette, C. M., Raab, M., & McLean, M. (2001). Natural learning opportunities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. *Young Exceptional Children, 4(3),* 18-25 (Erratum in Vol. 4(4), 25).

Dunst, C. J., Hamby, D., Trivette, C. M., Raab, M., & Bruder, M. B. (2000). Everyday family and community life and children's naturally occurring learning opportunities. *Journal of Early Intervention, 23,* 151-164.

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Renninger, K. A. (1989). Individual patterns in children's play interests. In L. T. Winegar (Ed.), *Social interaction and the development of children's understanding* (pp. 147-172). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Renninger, K. A. (1992). Individual interest and development: Implications for theory and practice. In K. A. Renninger, S. Hidi, & A. Krapp (Eds.), *The role of interest in learning and development* (pp. 361-395). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Hamby, D. (2004). Sources of variation in and consequences of everyday activity settings on child and parenting functioning. *Perspectives in Education, 22*(2), 17-35.

Parenting Supports

Cochran, M., & Brassard, J. (1979). Child development and personal social networks. *Child Development, 50,* 601-616.

Dunst, C. J. (2001). *Parent and community assets as sources of young children's learning opportunities.* Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

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Garbarino, J., & Kostelny, K. (1993). Neighborhood and community influences on parenting. In T. Luster & L. Okagaki (Eds.), *Parenting: An ecological perspective* (pp. 203-226). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Unger, D. G., & Nelson, P. (1990/1991). Evaluating community-based parenting support programs: Successes and lessons learned from empowering par-

ents and adolescents. *Journal of Applied Social Sciences, 15*, 125-153.

Family and Community Resources

Dunst, C. J. (2001). Participation of young children with disabilities in community learning activities. In M. J. Guralnick (Ed.), *Early childhood inclusion: Focus on change* (pp. 307-333). Baltimore: Brookes.

Dunst, C. J., Herter, S., Shields, H., & Bennis, L. (2001). Mapping community-based natural learning opportunities. *Young Exceptional Children, 4*(4)*,* 16-24.

Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (2001). *Parenting supports and resources, helpgiving practices, and parenting competence*. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Jodry, W. (1996). Influences of social support on children with disabilities and their families. In M. Guralnick (Ed.), *The effectiveness of early intervention* (pp. 499-522). Baltimore: Brookes.

Garbarino, J., & Kostelny, K. (1994). Family support and community development. In S. L. Kagan & B. Weissbourd (Eds.), *Putting families first: America's family support movement and the challenge of change* (pp. 297-320). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

McKnight, J. (1995). *The careless society.* New York: Basic Books.

Sarason, S. B., Carroll, C. F., Maton, K., Cohen, S., & Lorentz, E. (1988). *Human services and resource networks: Rationale, possibilities, and public policy.* (Rev. ed.). Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Family-Centered Helpgiving

Dempsey, I., & Dunst, C. J. (2004). Helpgiving styles and parent empowerment in families with a young child with a disability. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, 29,* 40-51.

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Performance Foundations

The performance foundations of the integrated model include practice indicators that are used as standards and benchmarks for determining the extent to which practices are consistent with those having capacity building characteristics and consequences. Several sources of information that have been useful in developing the practice indicators for the integrated framework are included in this section of the bibliography. Also included are references to scales that have been developed as part of measuring adherence to the practices constituting the focus of the integrated framework practices.

Burger, D. (1998). *Designing a sustainable standards-based assessment system.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

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Otis-Wilborn, A. K., Winn, J. A., & Ford, A. (2000). Standards, benchmarks, and indicators. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 32*(5), 20-28.

Trivette, C. M., & Dunst, C. J. (2000). Recommended practices in family-based practices. In S. Sandall, M. E. McLean, & B. J. Smith (Eds.), *DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education* (pp. 39-46). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Trivette, C. M., & Dunst, C. J. (2004). Evaluating family-based practices: Parenting experiences scale. *Young Exceptional Children, 7*(3)*,* 12-19.

Wilson, L. L., & Dunst, C. J. (2004). Checking out family-centered helpgiving practices. In E. Horn, M. M. Ostrosky, & H. Jones (Eds.), *Family-Based Practices* (Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 5). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Conclusion

The integrated framework for practicing early childhood intervention and family support provides one way of culling theory and research and using both for opera-

tionalizing and implementing practices having competency-enhancing and capacity building consequences. The approach "brings together" diverse but conceptually and procedurally consistent sources of information which makes possible model building for understanding the factors, conditions, experiences, and opportunities best suited as "interventions" supporting and strengthening child, parent, and family functioning. This *CASEmaker* include the major sources of information that was used to develop the integrated framework.

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