



## Characteristics and Consequences of Capacity-Building Intervention Practices

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### Abstract

Selected references to the characteristics and consequences of capacity-building intervention practices are included in this *CASEmaker* bibliography. Capacity-building practices both strengthen existing capabilities and promote acquisition of new competencies. The particular sources of information are ones that provide a foundation for understanding the kinds of child, parenting, family, and community intervention practices and participatory experiences (both informal and formal) that support and strengthen child, parent, family, and community member competence and confidence.

This *CASEmaker* bibliography includes selected references to different characteristics and consequences of capacity-building interventions practices. Capacity-building is defined as a continuous process of providing, creating, or mobilizing experiences through which children, parents, families, and community members strengthen their ability to engage in (identify and meet) development-enhancing opportunities or address challenges in sustainable ways (Wilson, et al., 2002). Capacity-building intervention practices are ones that support and strengthen existing child, parent, family, and community member knowledge and skills, and build upon existing capabilities to strengthen and enhance individual and group competence and confidence. The particular approach to practices constituting the focus of this bibliography is one of the conceptual foundations of an integrated framework for practicing evidence-based early childhood intervention and family support (Dunst, 2000, 2004).

The *building blocks* of capacity-building approaches to child, parent, family, and community interventions include: (a) an interest- and asset-based foundation and approach, (b) the use of participatory opportunities and active participation in achieving self-identified outcomes, (c) practitioner use of family-centered participatory helping practices to strengthen existing and promote new child, parent, family, and community member competence and confidence, and (d) the desired and expected outcomes and competency-enhancing benefits of capacity-building intervention practices. The *Prescription*

*for Practice* includes a number of source materials that readers should find helpful for more fully understanding and appreciating the characteristics and consequences of capacity-building intervention practices with children, parents, families, and community members. The reader is referred to Dunst and Trivette (2005), Mott (2005), and Wilson (2005), for additional sources of information on capacity-building intervention practices.

### Child Capacity-Building Intervention Practices

The characteristics of child capacity-building intervention practices include a strengths- and asset-based approach to promoting child competence and confidence, interest-based child learning activities, participatory child learning opportunities and experiences, and active child participation in everyday family and community

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## Rx Prescription for Practice Rx

- Aspen Institute. (1996). *Measuring community capacity building: A workbook-in-progress for rural communities*. Queenstown, MD: Author.
- Beaulieu, L. J. (2002). *Mapping the assets of your community: A key component for building local capacity* (No. SRDC-227). Mississippi State: Mississippi State University, Southern Rural Development Center.
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life events. *Strengths and assets* include the child specific talents and abilities that are most likely to be used as a means to participate in different settings, activities, and events. Being strengths- and asset-based is having a basic belief/attitude that everyone (e.g., children, parents, families, and communities) has existing strengths and abilities (assets) and the capacity to become more competent (Dunst, 1995). *Interests* include individual children's likes, preferences, favorites, and so on that encourages participation in different activities, and which result in both the expression of existing abilities and enhancement of new competencies (Dunst, Herter, & Shields, 2000; Krapp, Hidi, & Renninger, 1992; Raab, 2005; Raab & Dunst, 2006). *Participatory learning opportunities* include the experiences afforded children that provide them meaningful contexts to practice existing abilities and acquire new knowledge and skills in ways strengthening their confidence and competence.

*Participation* refers to children being actively engaged in everyday learning opportunities and experiences promoting and strengthening their interactive capabilities. Several useful sources of information about the meaning and the key characteristics of child capacity-building intervention practices can be found in:

- Campbell, P. H., Milbourne, S. A., & Silverman, C. (2001). Strengths-based child portfolios: A professional development activity to alter perspectives of children with special needs. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 21, 152-161.
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- Freeman, J. G. (1998). Interest and special education: The role of interest in teaching children with learning disabilities. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 59(02), 455A.
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### **Parenting Capacity-Building Intervention Practices**

A basic foundation of capacity-building parenting supports and practices is recognizing the strengths and assets of parents, and using these capabilities as the basis for supporting and strengthening parenting competence and confidence. *Strengths- and asset-based* parenting practices include the belief and attitude that parents have existing strengths and abilities and the capacity to become more competent (Dunst, 1995). *Interest-based* parenting support and parent education programs and activities focus on self-identified priorities and desires as a way to strengthen existing parenting skills and develop new competencies. *Participatory opportunities* include a variety of experiences that strengthen existing parenting capabilities, and which provide contexts for learning new parenting skills. Enabling experiences and opportunities that strengthen parenting competence and confidence in turn are likely to bolster parents' self-efficacy beliefs about their parenting abilities (Bandura, 1997). Several useful sources of information about the meaning and the key characteristics of capacity-building parenting education and support practices can be found in:

- Brody, G. H., Flor, D. L., & Gibson, N. M. (1999). Linking maternal efficacy beliefs, developmental goals, parenting practices, and child competence in rural single-parent African American families. *Child Development, 70*, 1197-1208.
- 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*. New York: Plenum.
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### **Family Capacity-Building Intervention Practices**

Family capacity-building intervention practices build on family interests and priorities and family strengths and assets, and use family participatory opportunities and active family participation in activities as a means of supporting and strengthening family competence and confidence. Families who are actively involved in identifying, implementing, and evaluating desired outcomes and accomplishments are more likely to experience increased knowledge and skills, and make positive attributes about individual family members' capabilities as well as those of the family as a whole. Several helpful sources in providing capacity-building supports and interventions to families can be found in:

- Bailey, D., Dunst, C., Kramer, S., Turnbull, A., Hurth, J., & Brown, C. (1989). Identifying child and family strengths and needs. In B. E. Hanft (Ed.), *Fam-*

*ily-centered care: An early intervention resource manual* (pp. 3/39-33/46). Rockville, MD: American Occupational Therapy Association.

- Chavez, M. D., & Menning, E. P. (1992). Building on the strengths of diverse families: The process of empowerment in an Albuquerque community. *Family Science Review*, 5(1-2), 23-40.
- Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (1996). Empowerment, effective helping practices and family-centered care. *Pediatric Nursing*, 22, 334-337, 343.
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### **Community Capacity-Building Intervention Practices**

Community member capacity-building is achieved by groups of individuals identifying and recognizing individual and group assets, taking ownership and responsibility for identifying desired outcomes and priorities, and actively engaging in collective action necessary for accomplishing desired outcomes. Effective community capacity-building interventions include interest- and asset-based practices and a focus on providing participatory opportunities facilitating active community participation as effective ways to build community capacity. The following includes sources of information useful for understanding community capacity building.

Aspen Institute. (1996). *Measuring community capacity building: A workbook-in-progress for rural communities*. Queenstown, MD: Author.

- Beaulieu, L. J. (2002). *Mapping the assets of your community: A key component for building local capacity* (No. SRDC-227). Mississippi State: Mississippi State University, Southern Rural Development Center.
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- Chaskin, R. (2001). Building community capacity: Underlying strengths and strategies. *Community*, 4(2), 19-25.
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### Conclusion

This *CASEmaker* bibliography included sources of information about different approaches to capacity-building intervention practices. These kinds of practices place emphasis on both strengthening existing capabilities and promoting acquisition of new competencies. More specifically, capacity-building practices focus on interests and strengths and use participatory learning opportunities and participation to accomplish desired outcomes. The consequences of using such practices strengthens and promotes children, parent, family, and community member existing abilities to engage in development-enhancing opportunities or address challenges in sustainable ways.

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