

Young Children's Everyday Activities in Different Countries and Cultures

Carl J. Dunst, Ph.D.

Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute
Asheville, North Carolina, USA

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Introduction

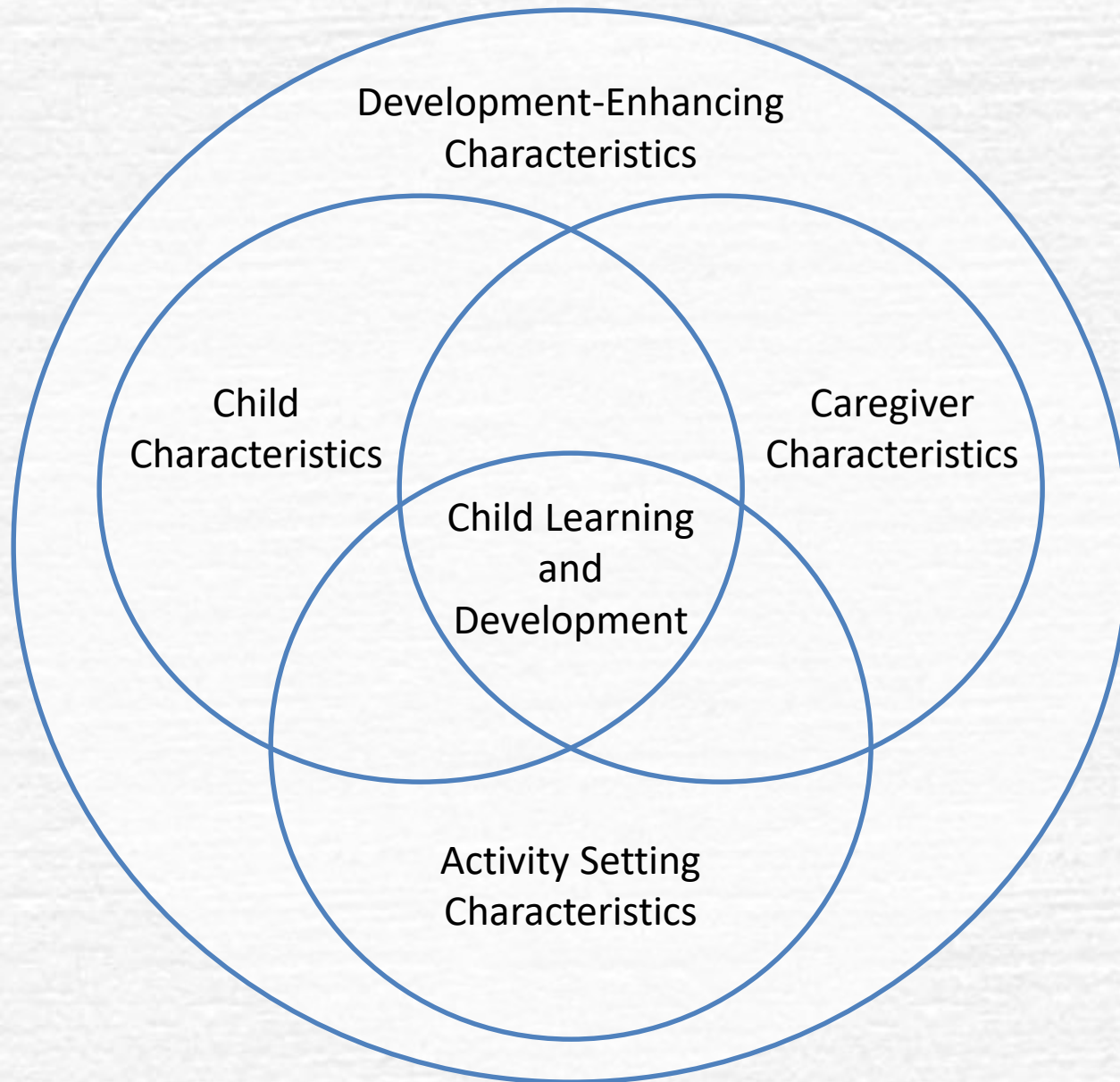
- A universal aspect of young children's daily life throughout the world is participation in everyday activities that are contexts for learning socially situated and culturally meaningful behavior.
- The everyday activity that young children with or without disabilities or delays experience can have either development-enhancing or development-impeding characteristics and therefore differential consequences.
- Participation of young children with disabilities or delays in everyday activity can function as a form of early intervention promoting and enhancing child learning and development.

Purposes

- Describe the triad of factors of young children's everyday activity that shape and influence child learning and development in the activities.
- Illustrate that the participation of young children with or without disabilities or delays in everyday activity is more similar than different.
- Describe some of the activity setting, child, and caregiver characteristics that “stand out” as most important in terms of influencing child learning and development in everyday activity.
- Propose an activity-setting approach to early intervention using everyday activities as sources of development-enhancing child learning opportunities.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Triadic Framework of Learning and Development

According to Urie Bronfenbrenner (1993), “The ***personal characteristics*** likely to be most potent in affecting the course...of development...(include) those that set in motion, sustain, and encourage processes of interaction between the [developing] person and two aspects of the ***proximal environment***: first, the ***people present*** in the setting; and second, the ***physical and symbolic features*** of the setting that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with an activity in the immediate environment.” (p. 11, emphasis added)



Examples of Factors Influencing Child Learning and Development

Triadic Characteristics

Development-Enhancing Characteristics

Child Characteristics

Child temperament, ***personal interests***, severity of delay, type of disability

Activity Setting Characteristics

Geography (activity locations), ***type of everyday activity, situationally interesting activity***, material availability, activity features

Caregiver Characteristics

Cultural beliefs, parenting attitudes, ***caregiver interactional styles***, acculturation and enculturation

Everyday Activity Settings

Definitions of Everyday Activity Settings

- “Contexts in which collaborative interaction, intersubjectivity, assisted performance, and learning occur.” (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988)
- “Activity settings are made up of everyday experiences...that contain ordinary settings in which children’s social interaction and behavior occur.” (Farver, 1999)
- “Situation-specific experiences, opportunities or events that involve a child’s interaction with people, the physical environment, or both, and which provide contexts for a child to learn about his or her own behavior capabilities as well as the propensities of others.” (Dunst et al., 2002)

Representative Examples of Activity Setting Research

Researchers	Topic of Research	Countries
Barbara Rogoff et al.	Guided participation in cultural activity	Guatemala, India, Turkey, USA
Jonathan Tudge et al.	Parental values and preschoolers activities	Estonia, Russia, South Korea, USA
Tiia Tulviste et al.	Child-rearing goals of mothers	Estonia, Finland, Sweden
Catherine Tamis-LeMonda et al.	Parents' child-rearing values	Greece, Taiwan, USA
Heider Keller et al.	Cultural models and socialization goals	China, Costa-Rica, Germany, Greece, India, Mexico, USA
Robert Levy et al.	Differences in parental ideas about child learning	Napal, Tahiti

Everyday Child Learning in Belize, Central America

Ethnic Make-Up in Belize^a

Asian
East Indian
Hindu
Maya
Mestizo
Spanish



African
Creole
Caucasian
Garifuna
Lebanese
Mennonite

^a Source. *Belize 2010 population and housing census*. Belmopan: Statistical Institute of Belize.















Everyday Children's Learning Opportunities Institute

- Case studies of infant, toddler and preschooler participation in everyday activities
- National surveys of the types of child participation in everyday activities and their consequences
- Intervention studies investigating the consequences of increasing child participation in everyday activities

Examples of Child Participation in the Everyday Children's Learning Opportunities Institute Studies













Case Studies of Young Children's Participation and Learning in Everyday Family and Community Activities

- Families of children with or without disabilities were visited on 6 occasions over a 5 to 6 month period of time to identify either the family or community activities that “made up” each child’s life.
- The case studies were conducted with families in Alaska, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Children and families were selected as participants based on different background characteristics.
- Observations, interviews, artifactual evidence (e.g., photographs, physical objects) and other information was used to identify the children’s everyday activities.
- Parents or other primary caregivers were then asked to report for each activity whether the child learned or engaged in context-specific functional behavior in the settings.

Number of Case Study Participants

Child Condition	Family Activities	Community Activities
Children with Disabilities	57	58
Children without Disabilities	46	45

Distribution of the Children's Ages

Child Age (months)	Children with Disabilities		Children without Disabilities	
	Family Activity	Community Activity	Family Activity	Community Activity
0 – 12	8	4	5	9
13 – 24	8	13	9	11
25 – 36	13	14	11	5
37 – 48	9	10	8	4
49 – 60	13	8	9	11
61 – 72	6	9	4	5

Children's Diagnoses and Etiologies^a

Typically developing	91
Developmentally at-risk	19
Motor impairments	19
Language impairments	15
Developmental delays	11
Autism spectrum disorders	9
Chromosomal aberrations	9
Medically-related disabilities	9
Sensory impairments	8
Multiple disabilities	8
Intellectual disabilities	4
Cranial disorders	4

^a All the children with identified disabilities or developmental delays were enrolled in U.S. Department of Education, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education Programs.

Distributions of Family Ethnicity

Family Ethnicity	Family Activity	Community Activity
African American	19	17
Asian American	11	8
Caucasian/White	22	27
Latino or Hispanic	25	23
Middle Eastern	7	2
Native American/Inuit	12	18
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	7	8

Case Study Findings

Family Activity Setting Case Study Results

Measures	Family Activity Samples	
	Children with Disabilities	Children without Disabilities
<i>Number of Activity Setting Locations</i>		
Mean	31.05	27.98
Standard Deviation	17.58	11.12
Range	7-98	13-64
<i>Number of Child Learning Opportunities</i>		
Mean	100.40	102.33
Standard Deviation	46.22	28.92
Range	36-262	39-205

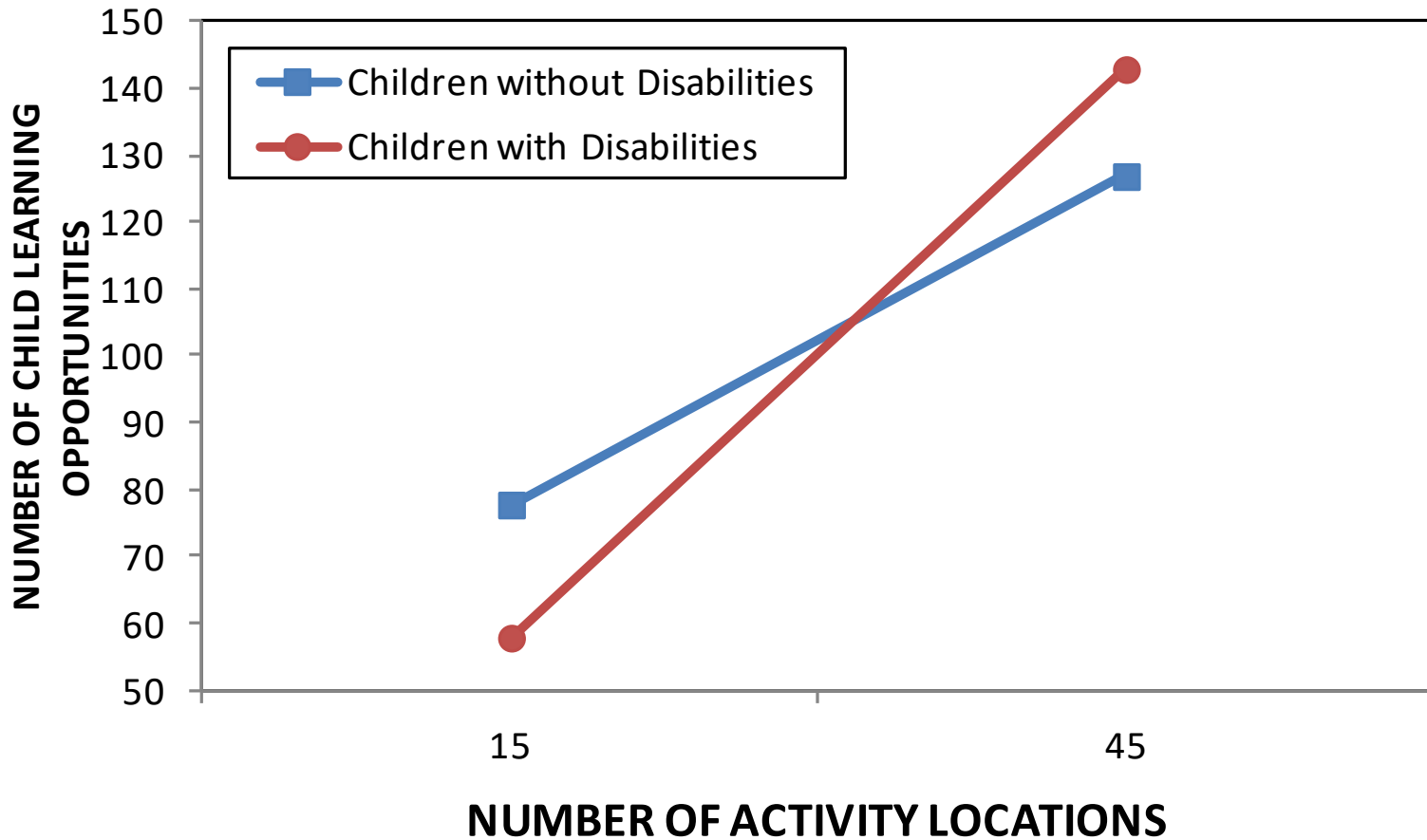
Community Activity Setting Case Study Results

Measures	Community Activity Samples	
	Children with Disabilities	Children without Disabilities
<i>Number of Activity Setting Locations</i>		
Mean	30.59	32.91
Standard Deviation	12.98	10.91
Range	13-75	13-67
<i>Number of Child Learning Opportunities</i>		
Mean	70.21	86.49
Standard Deviation	31.64	32.31
Range	23-154	33-177

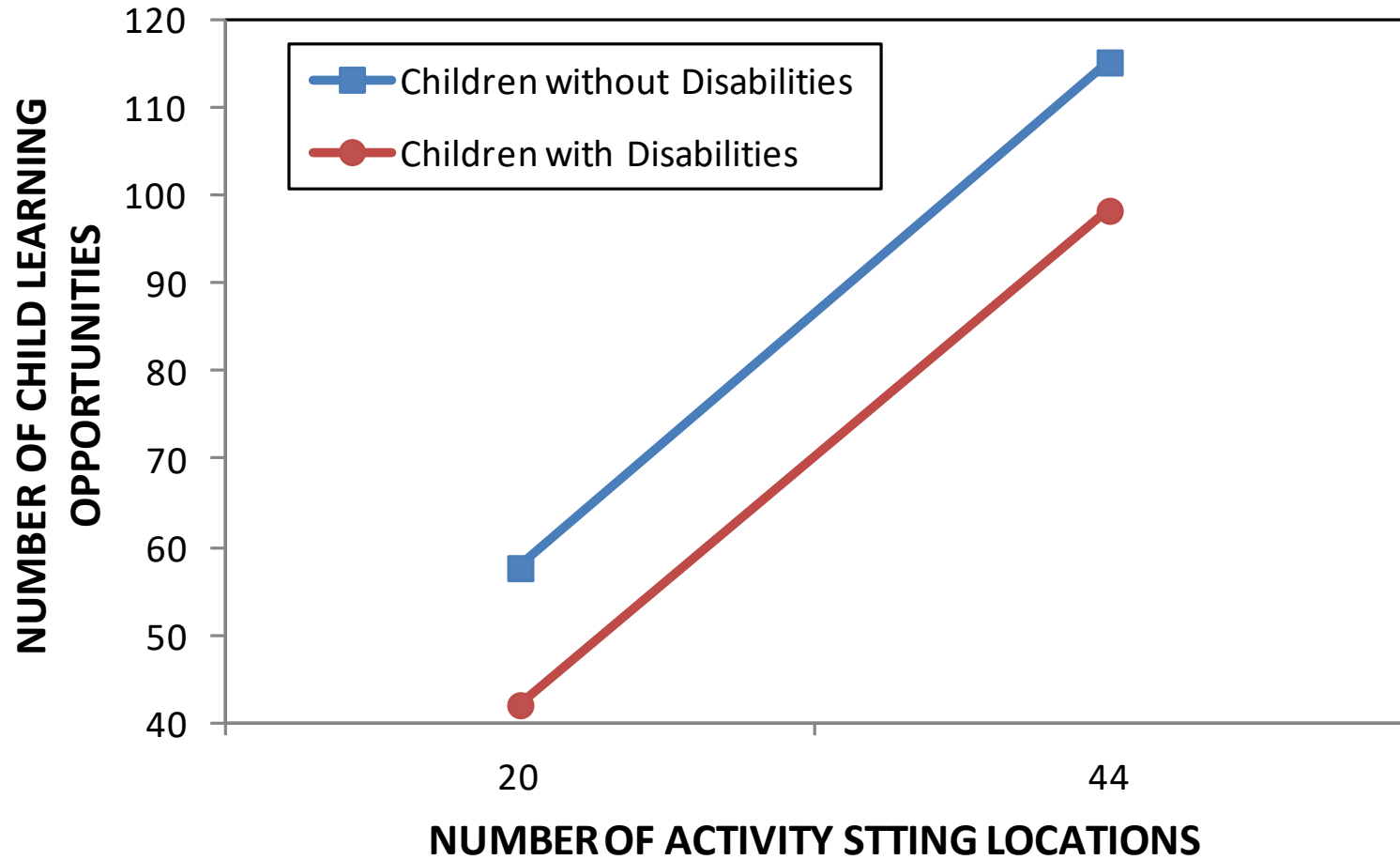
Relationship Between Everyday Activity Setting Locations and Number of Child Learning Opportunities

- The extent to which the number of activity setting locations was related to contextually-specific child learning opportunities was determined by regressing child learning opportunities on number of activity setting locations.
- One purpose of the analyses was to determine if the ecology of everyday child learning was similar or different for children with and without disabilities or delays.

Family Activity Settings



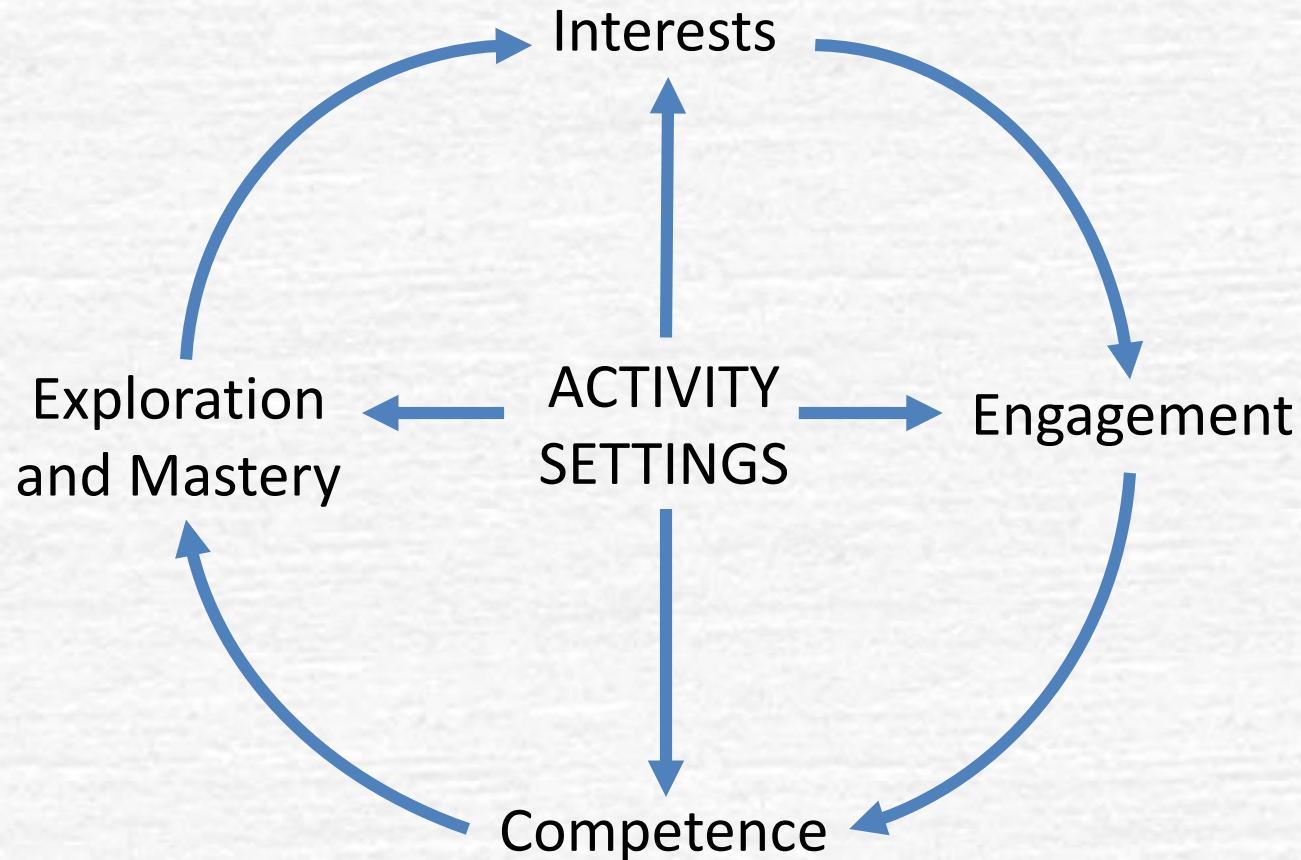
Community Activity Settings



Role of Children's Interests in Everyday Learning

- One child characteristic that consistently emerges as a person factor influencing everyday learning is a child's personal interests (preferences, choices, desires, likes, etc.). Personal child interests function as a development-instigating characteristic engaging children in preferred activity.
- One activity setting characteristic that consistently emerges as setting factor influencing children's everyday learning is the situationally interesting (engaging) features of activities. Situationally interesting activities invite child participation in everyday activity in a way consistent with Bronfenbrenner's microsystem framework.

Cycle of Interest-Based Everyday Child Learning



Examples of Interest-Based Child Participation in Everyday Activity



“Intense Engagement”



“Preferred Activities”



“Challenging Activities”



“Excitement”

Interest-Based Research Evidence

- Observational and intervention studies investigating the role of children's interests in everyday child learning
- Meta-analyses of research studies investigating the role of incorporating young children's interests into formal and informal child learning opportunities

Research Syntheses of Interest-Based Child Learning

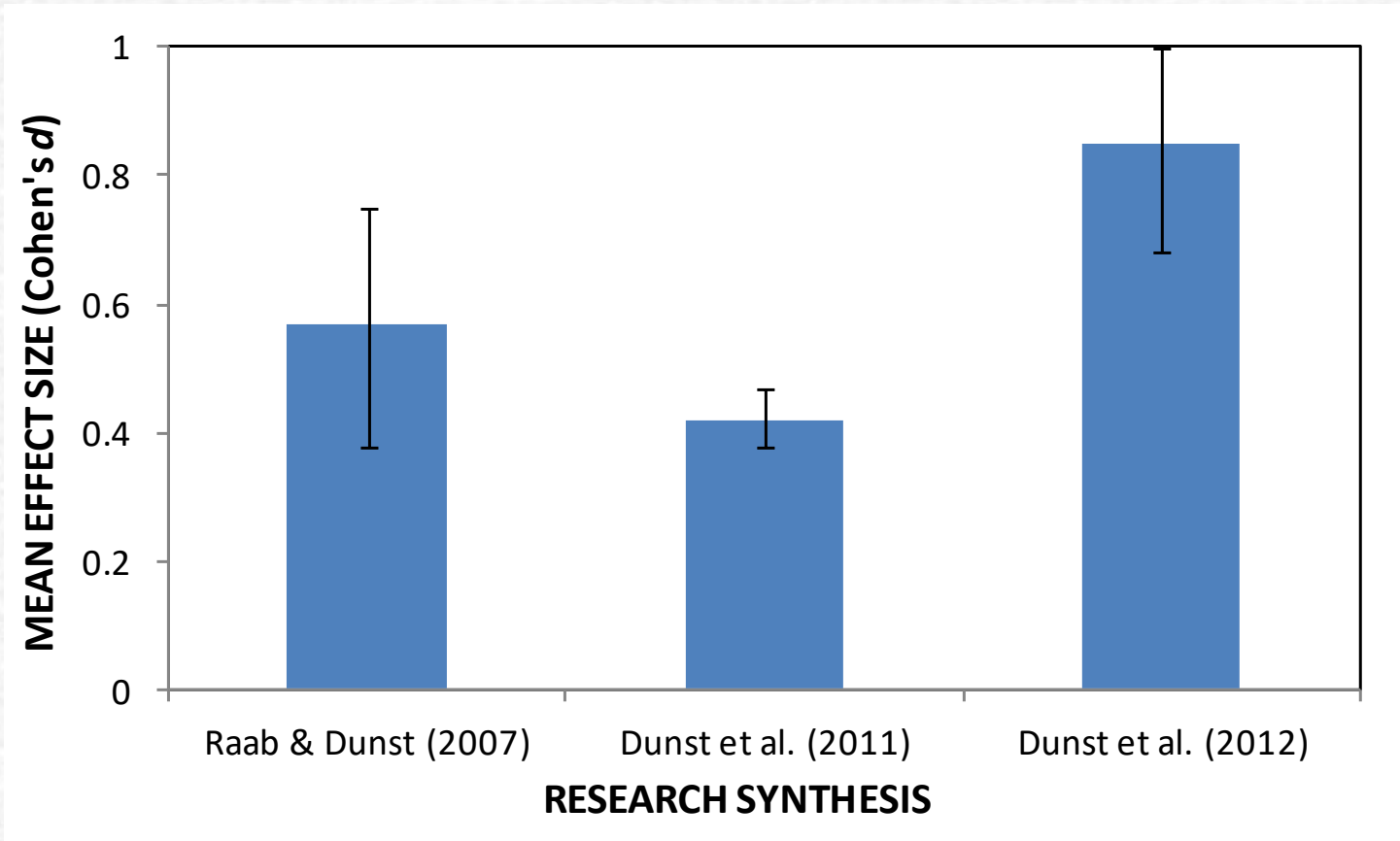
Synthesis ^{a, b, c}	Number of Studies	Number of Children	Child Characteristics	Outcomes
Raab & Dunst (2007)	25	543	With or without disabilities	Prosocial behavior, child progress, engagement
Dunst et al. (2011)	31	4,190	With or without disabilities	Language/Literacy
Dunst et al. (2012)	24	78	Autism Spectrum Disorders	Prosocial behavior, communication, skill acquisition

^a Dunst, C.J., Jones, T., Johnson, M., Raab, M., & Hamby, D.W. (2011). Role of children's interests in early literacy and language development. *CELLreviews*, 4(5), 1-18. Available at http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/cellreviews/cellreviews_v4_n5.pdf

^b Dunst, C.J., Trivette, C.M., & Hamby, D.W. (2012). *Meta-analysis of studies incorporating the interests of young children with autism spectrum disorders into early intervention practices*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

^c Raab, M., & Dunst, C.J. (2007). *Influence of child interests on variations in child behavior and functioning* (Winterberry Research Syntheses Vol. 1, No. 21). Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Average Effect Sizes and 95% Confidence Intervals for the Relationships Between Children's Interests and the Study Outcomes



Role of Caregiving Styles in Everyday Child Learning

Linda Richter^a, as part of a review of research and practice on caregiver-child interactions in many countries and cultures throughout the world, concluded (among other things) that:

- “***Sensitive*** and ***responsive*** caregiving is a requirement for healthy child development.”
- “***Nurturing*** and ***supportive*** caregiving relationships have universal features across cultures, regardless of differences in specific child rearing practices.”

^a Richter, L. (2004). *The importance of caregiver-child interactions for the survival and healthy development of young children: A review*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development.

Caregiving Styles and Naturalistic Teaching Practices

- Close inspection of the literature on caregiver styles of interaction and the naturalistic teaching literature finds considerable overlap in terms of the characteristics that are associated with optimal child behavioral and developmental outcomes.
- According to Richter (2004), interventions (both formal and informal) that promote caregivers' sensitivity and responsiveness to child behavior during everyday activities ought to positively effect child health and development.

Selected Characteristics of Naturalistic Teaching Procedures

Caregiver Characteristics

- Sensitivity to child initiations
- Engagement-facilitating caregiver behavior
- Responsiveness to child behavior
- Positive caregiver affect
- Turn taking and joint attention
- Caregiver support and encouragement

Child Characteristics

- Child interests
- Child strengths

Activity Setting Characteristics

- Situationally interesting activities
 - Everyday learning opportunities
-

Dunst, C. J., Raab, M., & Trivette, C.M. (in press). Characteristics of naturalistic language intervention strategies. *Journal of Speech-Language Pathology and Applied Behavior Analysis*.

Examples of Sensitive, Responsive, and Supportive Caregiver Interactional Behavior









Research Syntheses of Caregiver Styles and Naturalistic Teaching Practices Studies

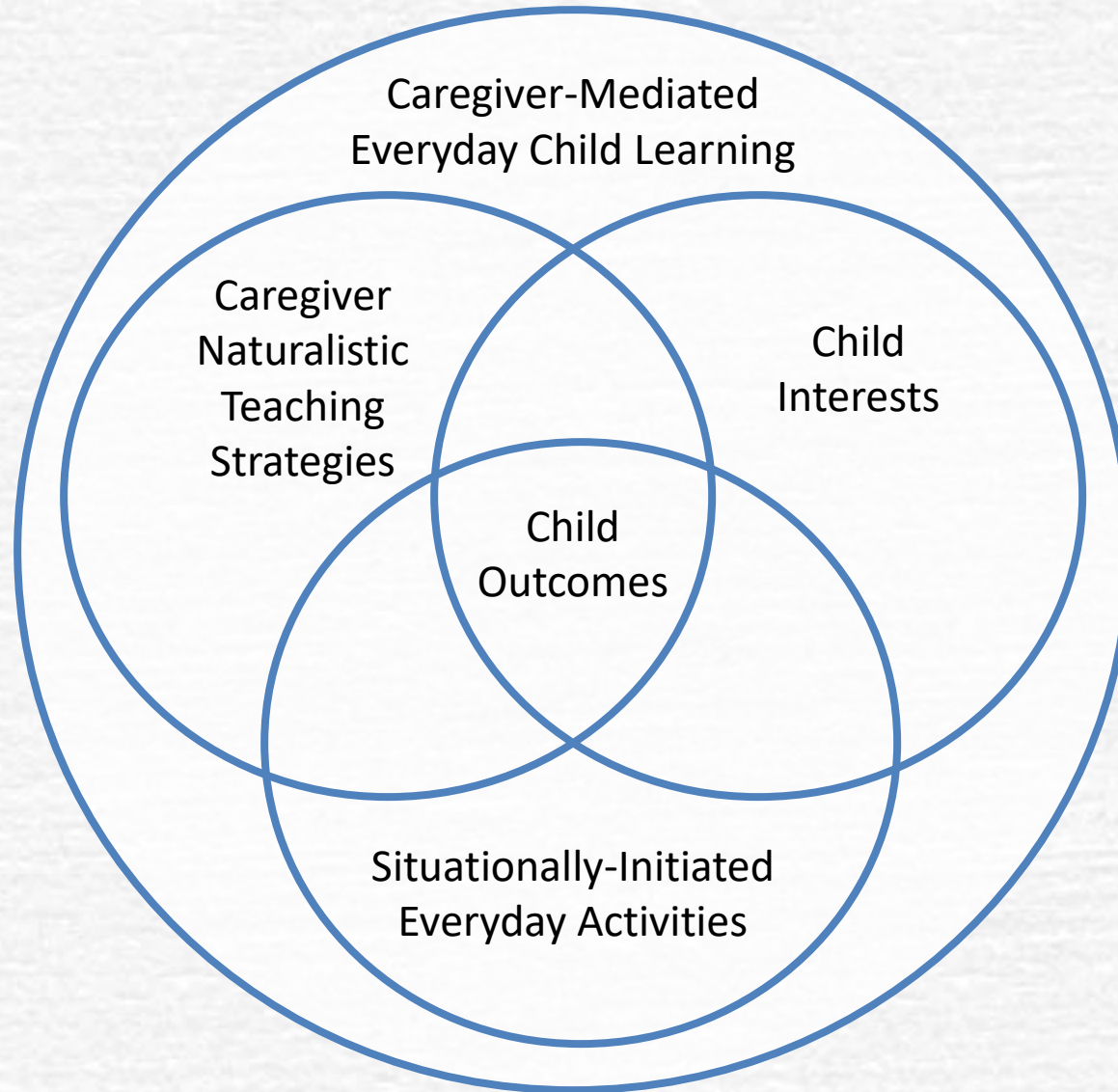
Research reviews, syntheses, and meta-analyses of studies investigating the relationships between the characteristics of either caregiver interactional styles and naturalistic teaching (e.g., Dunst & Kassow, 2008; Nievar & Becker 2008; Trivette, 2007) indicate that the behavior and development of young children with and without disabilities or delays benefit from these kinds of practices.

Dunst, C. J., & Kassow, D. Z. (2008). Caregiver sensitivity, contingent social responsiveness, and secure infant attachment. *Journal of Early and Intensive Behavior Intervention, 5*, 40-56.

Nievar, M. A., & Becker, B. J. (2008). Sensitivity as a privileged predictor of attachment: A second perspective on De Wolff and van IJzendoorn's meta-analysis. *Social Development, 17*, 102-114.

Trivette, C. M. (2007). *Influence of caregiver responsiveness on the development of young children with or at risk for developmental disabilities (Winterberry Research Syntheses Vol. 1, No. 12)*. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Research-Informed Model of Caregiver-Mediated Everyday Child Learning



Why Is Everyday Learning Warranted as Early Intervention with Young Children with Disabilities or Delays?

Comparative analyses of informal vs. formal early intervention practices indicate that everyday learning opportunities afford young children with disabilities or delays considerably more “instructional episodes” compared to more traditional types of professionally-provided early intervention.

- Mahoney and MacDonald (2007) estimated that caregiver-child interactions that occur just one hour a day seven days a week would include **220,000** learning opportunities each year compared to 30 minutes once per week therapy sessions which would provide a child just **7,500** learning opportunities per year.
- McWilliam (2000) estimated that promoting child skill acquisition as part of everyday routines provides a child experiences 3 or 4 more learning opportunities as afforded by once a week therapy or educational intervention sessions.

Mahoney, G., & MacDonald, J. (2007). *Autism and developmental delays in young children: The responsive teaching curriculum for parents and professionals*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

McWilliam, R. A. (2000). It's only natural ... to have early intervention in the environments where it's needed. In S. Sandall & M. Ostrosky (Eds.), *Natural Environments and Inclusion (Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 2)* (pp. 17-26). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Contrasting Approaches to Everyday Child Learning

- Dunst (2007) used findings from research on infants' participation in everyday activity to estimate that if a child experienced only three activities this would mean more than 2,000 learning opportunities per year compared to less than 100 for once a week therapy sessions.
- Dunst et al. (2005) empirically compared two different approaches to young children's natural environment interventions and found that using everyday activities as sources of child learning opportunities resulted in 3 to 4 more learning opportunities per activity compared to implementing early intervention in everyday activity.

Dunst, C. J. (2007). Early intervention with infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities. In S. L. Odom, R. H. Horner, M. Snell, & J. Blacher (Eds.), *Handbook of developmental disabilities* (pp. 161-180). New York: Guilford Press.

Dunst, C. J., Bruder, M. B., Trivette, C. M., & Hamby, D. W. (2005). Young children's natural learning environments: Contrasting approaches to early childhood intervention indicate differential learning opportunities. *Psychological Reports, 96*, 231-234.

Implications for Early Intervention

I conclude with a number of questions that might provide guidance with regard to using everyday activities as both early intervention and sources of learning opportunities for infants and toddlers with disabilities:

- When is informal (everyday child learning) and formal (traditional therapeutic or educational) early intervention with infants and toddlers with disabilities warranted? And why?
- Is it reasonable to expect that informal early intervention can be used as an alternative to formal early intervention at least with a certain number of infants and toddlers with disabilities? Which children with which conditions and life circumstances might benefit from everyday learning?
- Which families with which kinds of cultural and personal beliefs and values are likely to view informal early intervention as appropriate? And why?
- Assuming that informal early intervention proves more effective than formal early intervention. What is the future of formal or more traditional early intervention?

Answers to these as well as other questions will likely shape and influence how early intervention is practiced with infants and toddlers with disabilities.