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# Family Capacity-Building Practices in Early Childhood Intervention

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# Purpose of the Presentation

- Describe the key characteristics of family capacity-building early childhood intervention practices
- Summarize findings from a number of studies of the antecedents and consequences of family capacity-building early childhood intervention
- Introduce e-learning lessons for promoting practitioner use of family capacity-building practices

# Four Guiding Principles of Early Childhood Intervention

- Everyday child learning opportunities should strengthen children's self-initiated behavior and children's recognition of their own capabilities
- Family members need the necessary supports and resources to have the time and energy, and knowledge and skills, to be able to engage their children in everyday child learning opportunities
- Family member provided everyday child learning should benefit not only young children but should also strengthen family member confidence and competence
- Many practitioners need professional development to strengthen their capacity to promote family member use of capacity-building practices to strengthen family member confidence and competence

# Need to Know

- Early childhood intervention provided by professionals twice a week for 50 weeks in the absence of family member or caregiver involvement accounts for less than 3 to 4 percent of a 2-year-old's waking hours; hardly enough time to make any meaningful difference in child learning and development (Dunst, 2007)
- Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities and delays participate in 40 to 50 everyday activities on a regular basis each day where each activity provides a child between 8 and 10 learning opportunities. This translates into more than 175,000 learning opportunities per year (Dunst et al., 2005)

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Dunst, C. J. (2007). Early intervention with infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities. In S.L. Odom, R. H. Horner, M. Shell, & 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 environments: Contrasting approaches to early childhood intervention indicate differential learning opportunities. *Psychological Reports*, 96, 231-234.

# Caregiver Involvement and Everyday Child Learning

Comparative analyses of caregiver provided vs. professional provided early childhood intervention 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 of once per week therapy sessions that would provide a child just **7,500** learning opportunities each year.
- McWilliam (2000) estimated that promoting child skill acquisition in the context of everyday routines would provide a child considerably more learning opportunities per episode compared to once a week therapy or educational intervention sessions.

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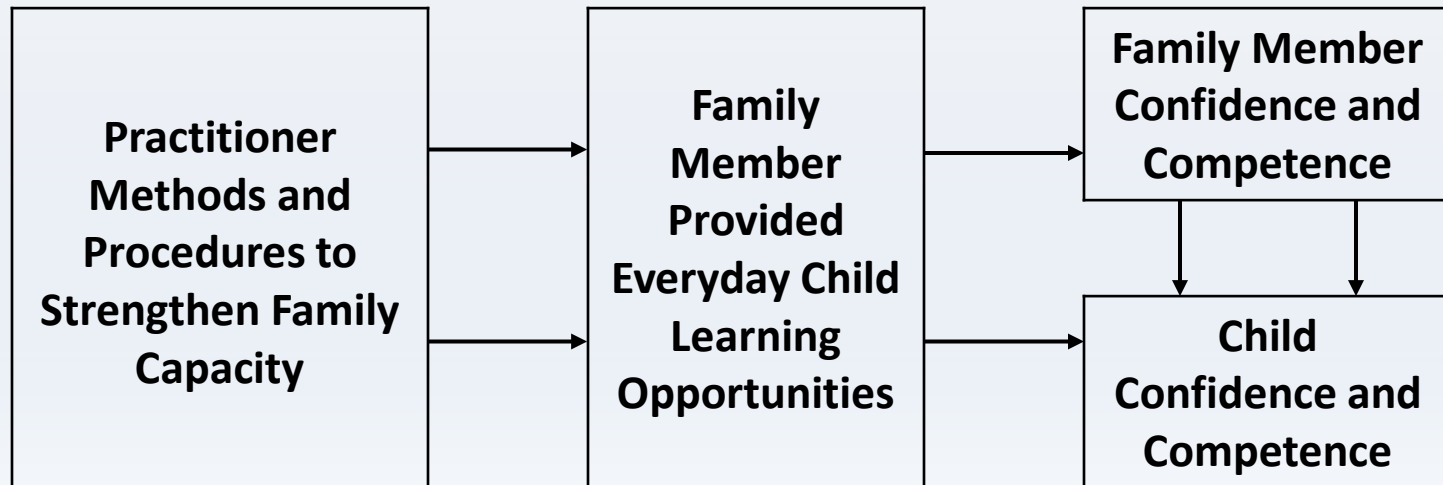
Mahoney, G., & MacDonald, J. (2007). *Autism and developmental delays in young children: The responsive teaching curriculum for parents and professionals*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

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.

## Definition of Family Capacity-Building Practices

Family capacity-building refers to (a) the methods and procedures used by early childhood practitioners to (b) engage caregivers in family-member-provided everyday child learning opportunities and experiences to (c) strengthen existing and promote the development of new caregiver abilities in a manner that (d) enhances and strengthens both caregiver and child competence and confidence

# Family Capacity-Building Process



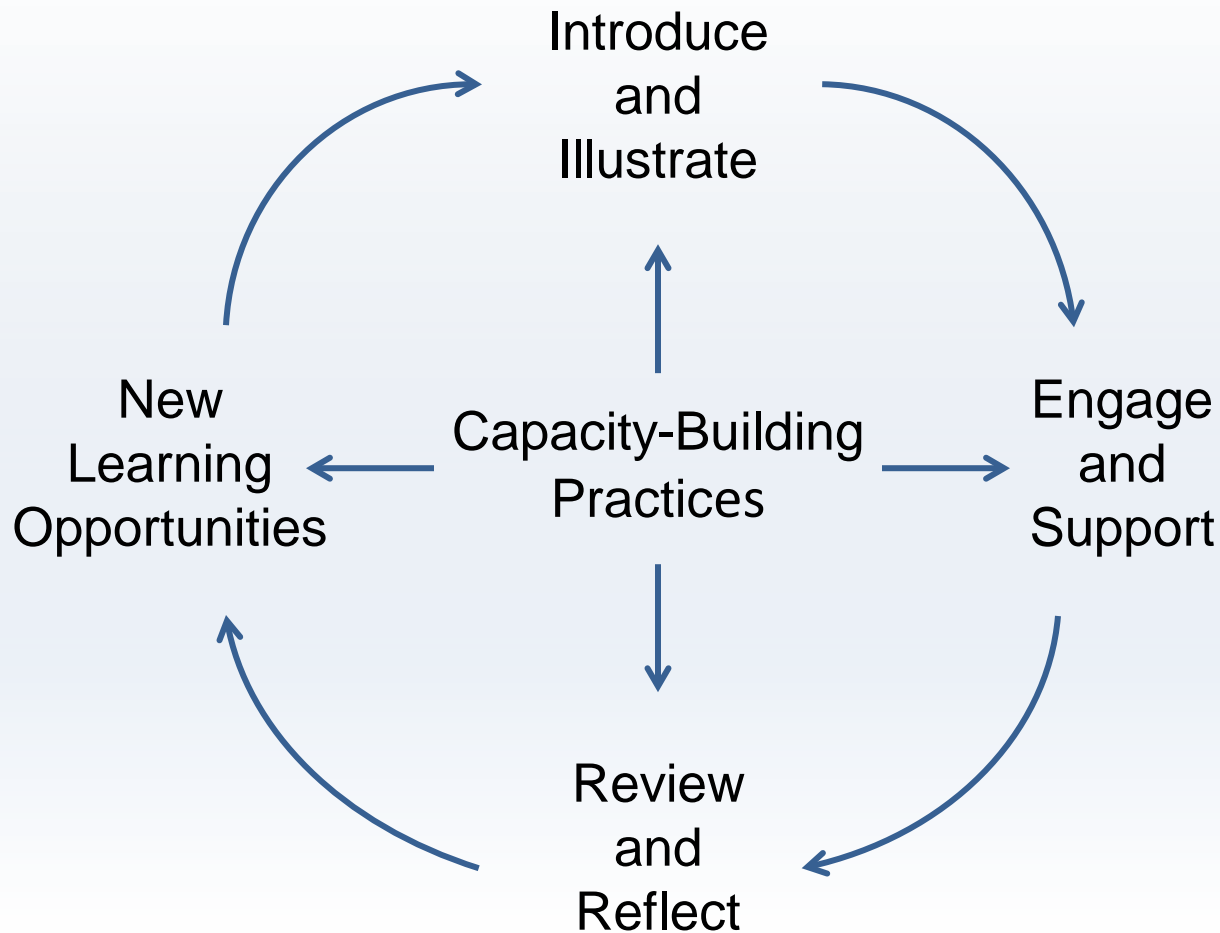
# Family Capacity-Building Terminology

The term **capacity-building** is described in the early childhood intervention literature by other terms, including, but not limited to:

- Participatory Practices
- Enabling Practices
- Capacity-Development Practices
- Empowering Practices



# Foundations for the Family Capacity-Building Process



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Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Hamby, D. W. (2010). Meta-analysis of the effectiveness of four adult learning methods and strategies. *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning*, 3(1), 91-112.

# Family Capacity-Building in Early Childhood Intervention

- ***Introducing and illustrating*** a practice to a caregiver is accomplished by describing an intervention practice and its expected benefits and demonstrating or illustrating how to do the practice
- ***Engaging*** a caregiver in the use of a practice and a practitioner ***providing supportive feedback, encouragement, and guidance*** as part of and in response to a caregiver using the practice
- Parent or other family members and a practitioner ***discussing*** (reviewing) a caregiver's experience using a practice and ***identifying*** different ways that the practice can be used with his or her child as part of everyday child learning activities

# Caregiver Confidence and Competence Associated with the Use of Caregiver-Provided Intervention Practices

**Purpose:** Determine the extent to which the use of caregiver-provided everyday child learning was associated with improvements in caregiver skills and self-efficacy beliefs

**Study Participants:** Three mothers and one grandmother of preschool aged children with disabilities or developmental delays

**Outcomes:** Measures of parenting behavior (skills) and parenting self-efficacy beliefs (confidence and competence)

**Methodology:** Multiple baseline design across study participants

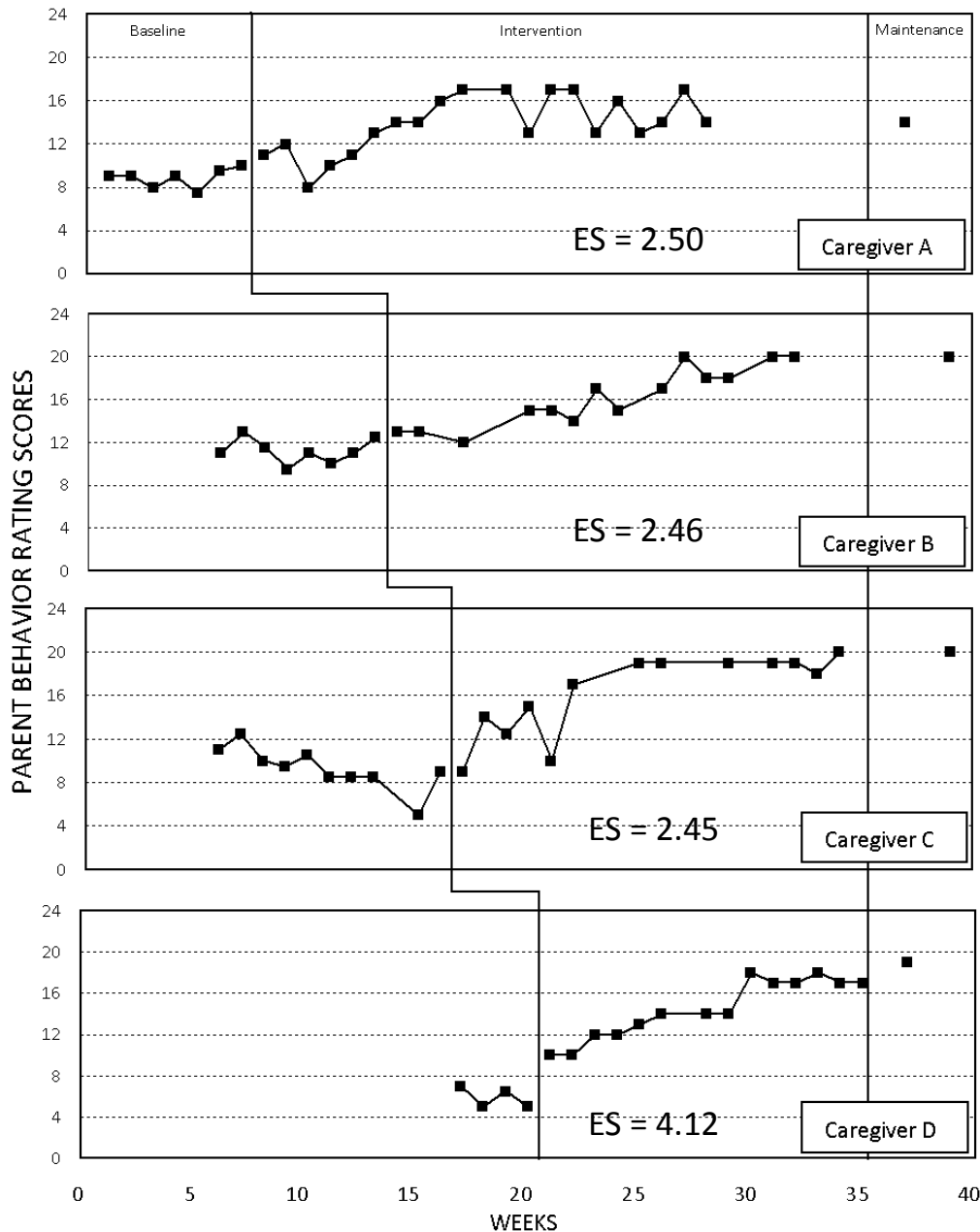
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Swanson, J., Raab, M., & Dunst, C.J. (2011). Strengthening family capacity to provide young children everyday natural learning opportunities. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 9(1), 66-80.

## Caregiver-Provided Early Intervention Practices

- Study participants used interest-based everyday activities as sources of child learning opportunities where the participants encouraged child learning in the activities using responsive teaching procedures
- Participants identified their children's interests, the everyday activities that were sources of interest-based learning opportunities, and the responsive caregiver behavior that was used to engage and sustain child engagement in interest-based everyday child learning
- An early childhood practitioner used family capacity-building practices to support and encourage the caregivers' use of the everyday child learning activities and responsive teaching practices

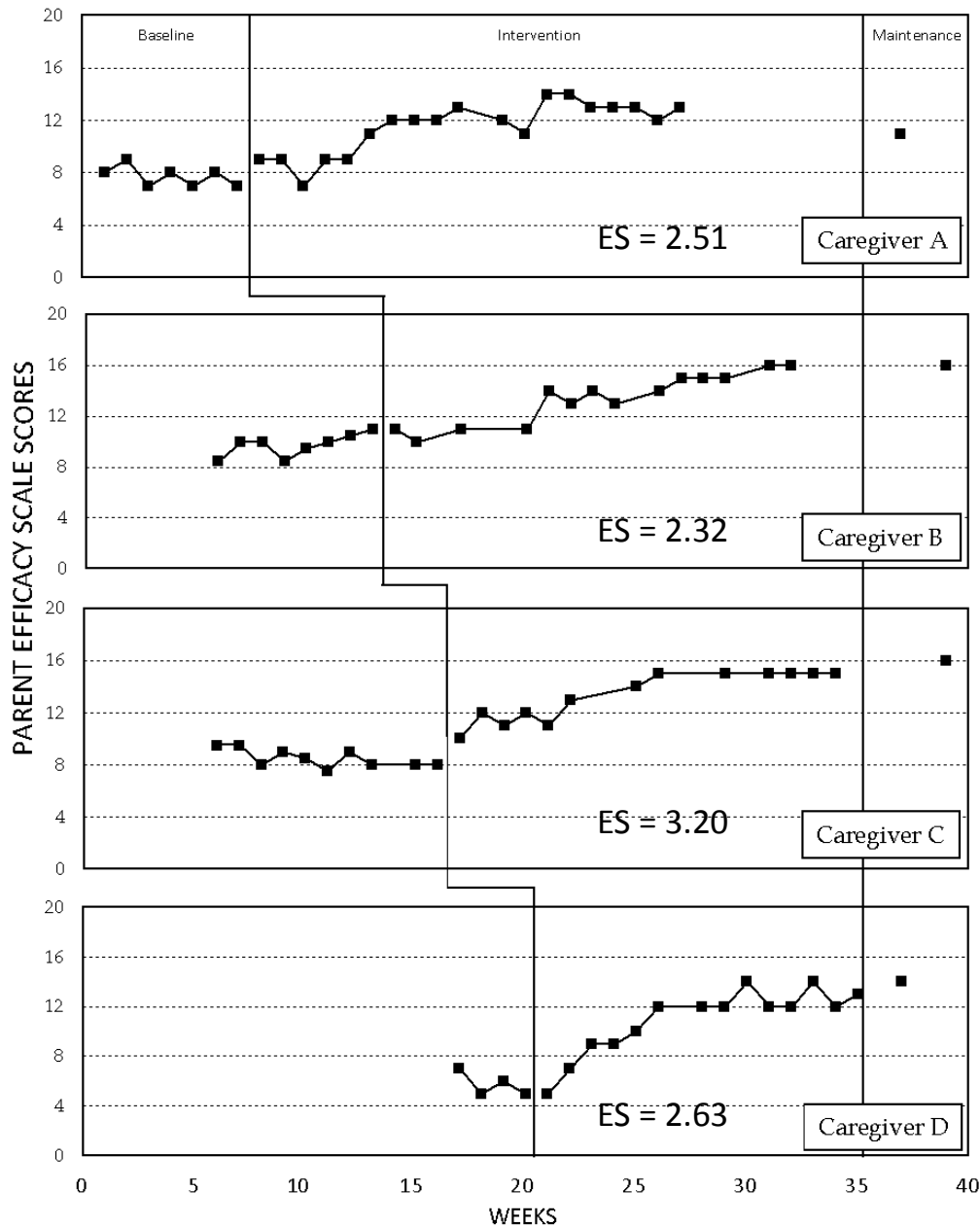
# Parenting Skills



Use of everyday activities as sources of interest-based child learning opportunities strengthened and promoted parents' skills in using the natural learning environment practices

(NOTE. ES = Estimated Cohen's *d* effect size for the baseline vs. intervention phase differences)

# Parenting Confidence and Competence



Findings also showed that promoting caregivers' use of everyday activities as sources of interest-based child learning opportunities had the effect of strengthening parenting self-efficacy competence and confidence beliefs

(NOTE. ES = Estimated Cohen's *d* effect size for the baseline vs. intervention phase differences)

# Practitioner-Provided Capacity-Building Professional Development Engenders Practitioner Use of Family Capacity-Building Practices

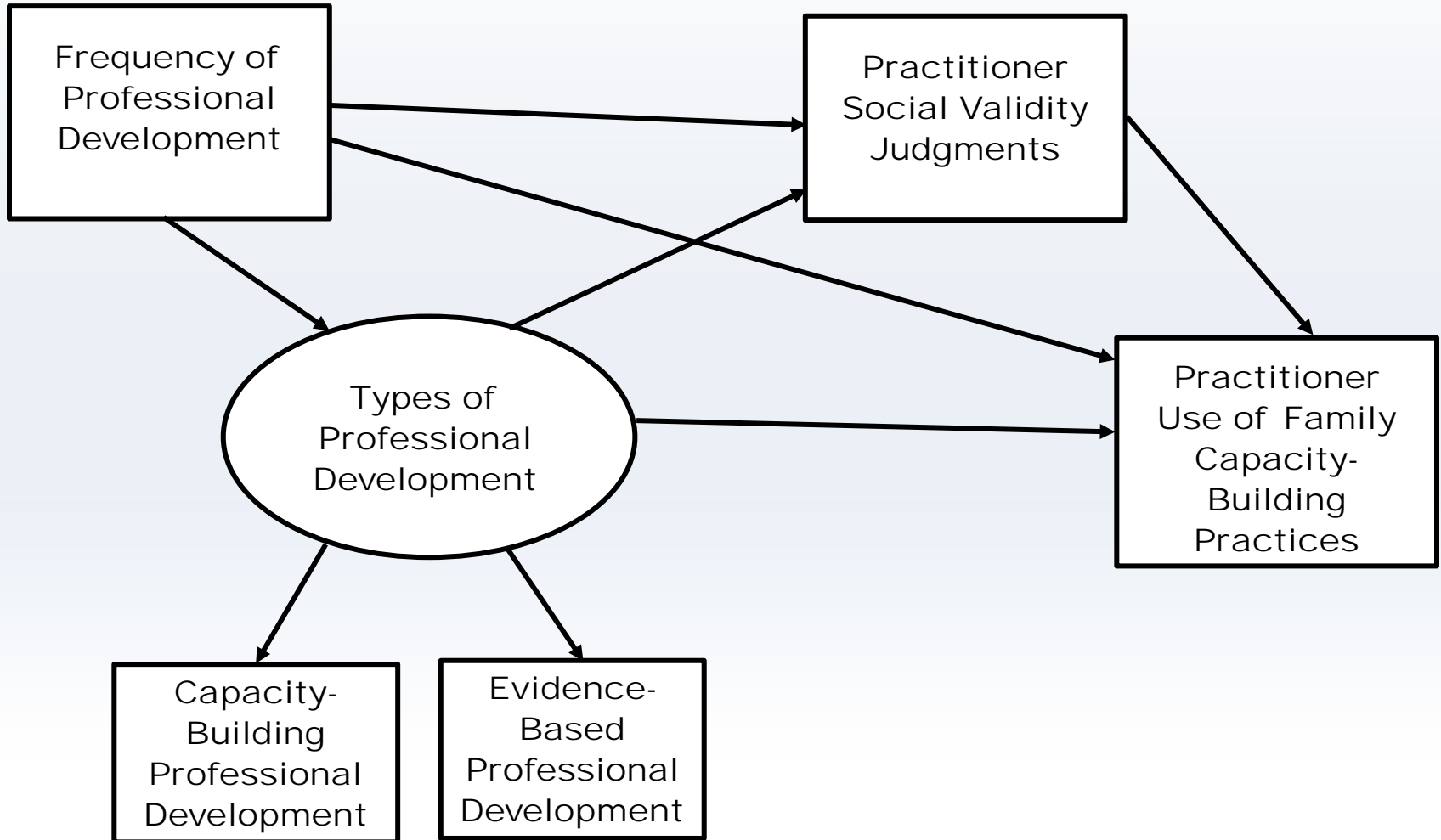
- As part of a study of practitioners' use of recommended early childhood intervention practices, secondary analyses found a relationship between the types of professional development afforded the practitioners and their reported use of family capacity-building practices
- Practitioners (N = 900+) were asked a number of questions about professional development which were used to code three different types of professional development
- Practitioners were also asked to make social validity judgments of the importance and acceptability of family capacity-building practices

## Data Coding and Analysis

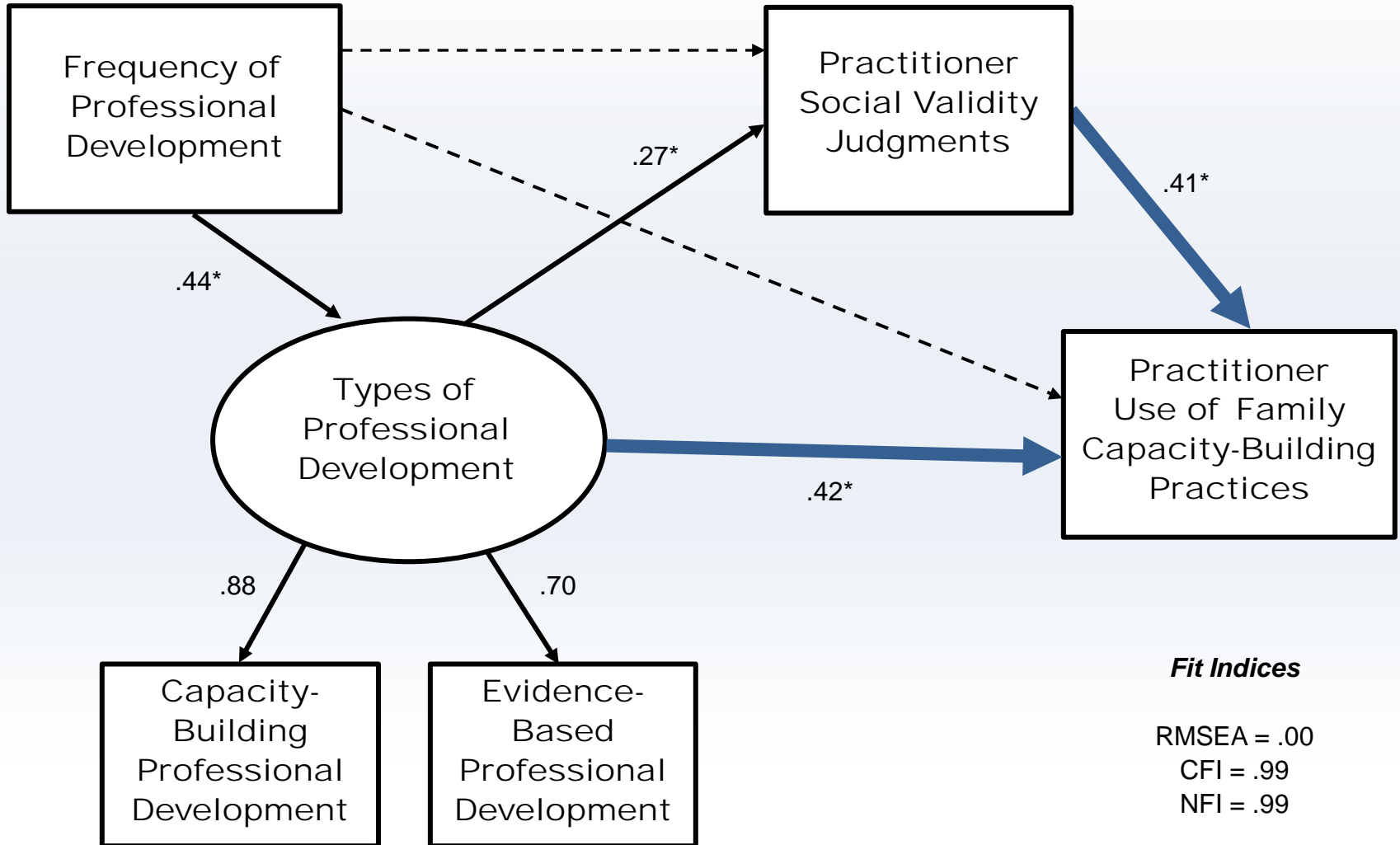
- Predictor measures were : (1) frequency of provision of professional development, (2) extent to which the professional development practices were evidence-based, (3) extent to which the professional development had capacity-building characteristics and consequences, and (4) the social validity judgments of family capacity-building practices
- The outcome measure was practitioner reported use of family capacity-building practices
- Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the direct and indirect effects of the predictor measures on the study outcomes



# Structural Equation Model

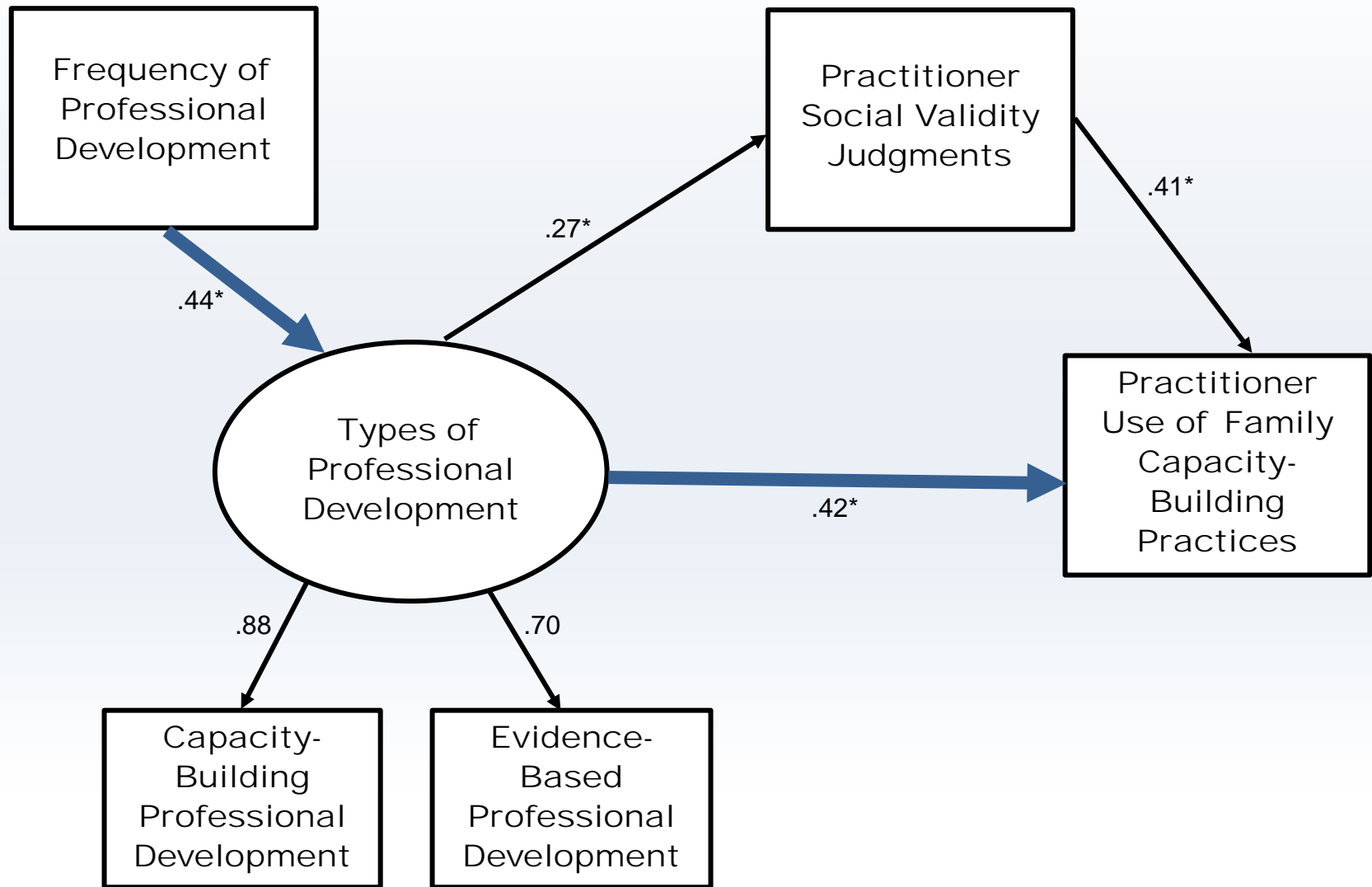


# Structural Equation Model Results



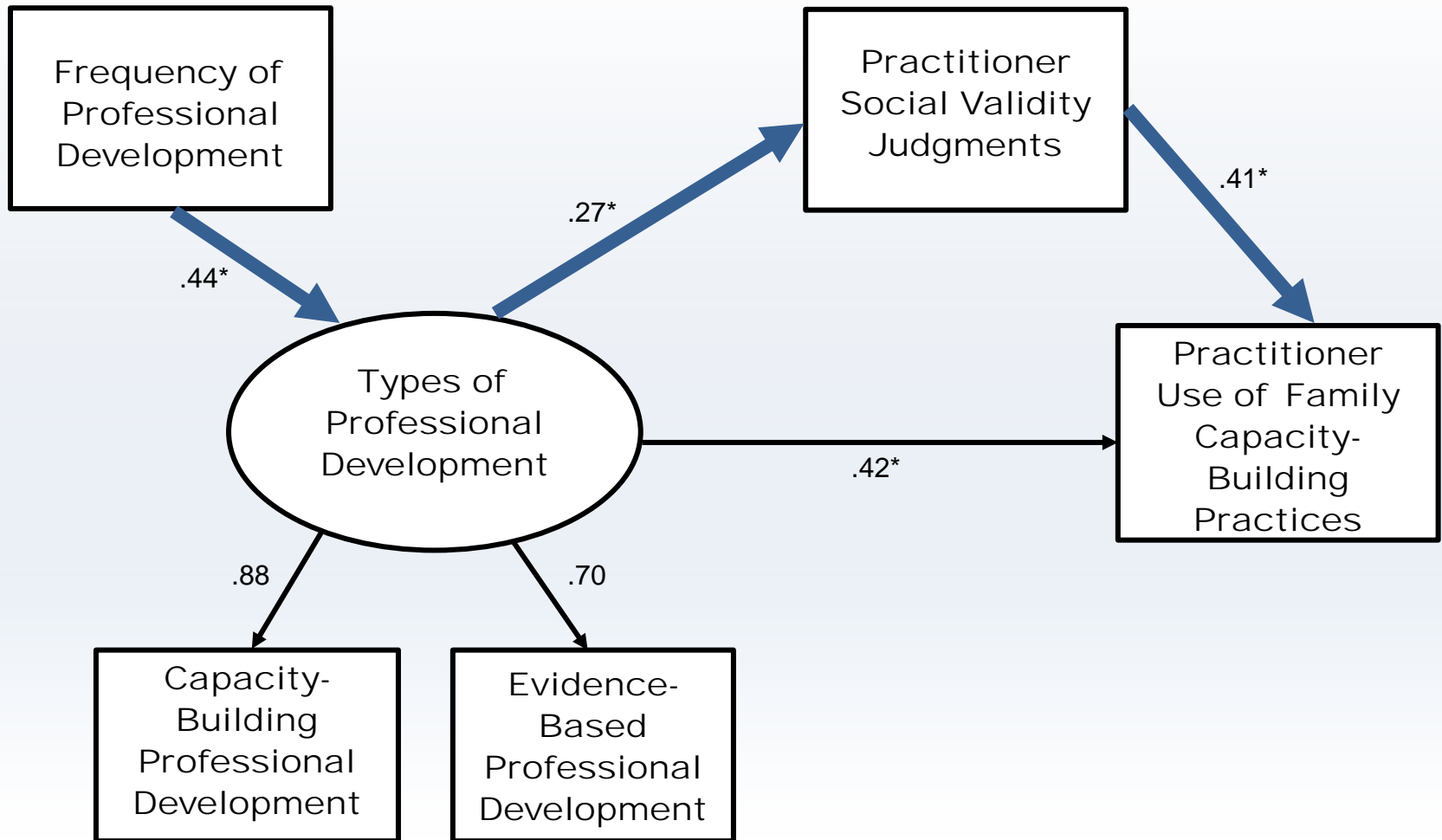
\* $p < .0001$ .

# Structural Equation Model Results



\* $p < .0001$ .

# Structural Equation Model Results

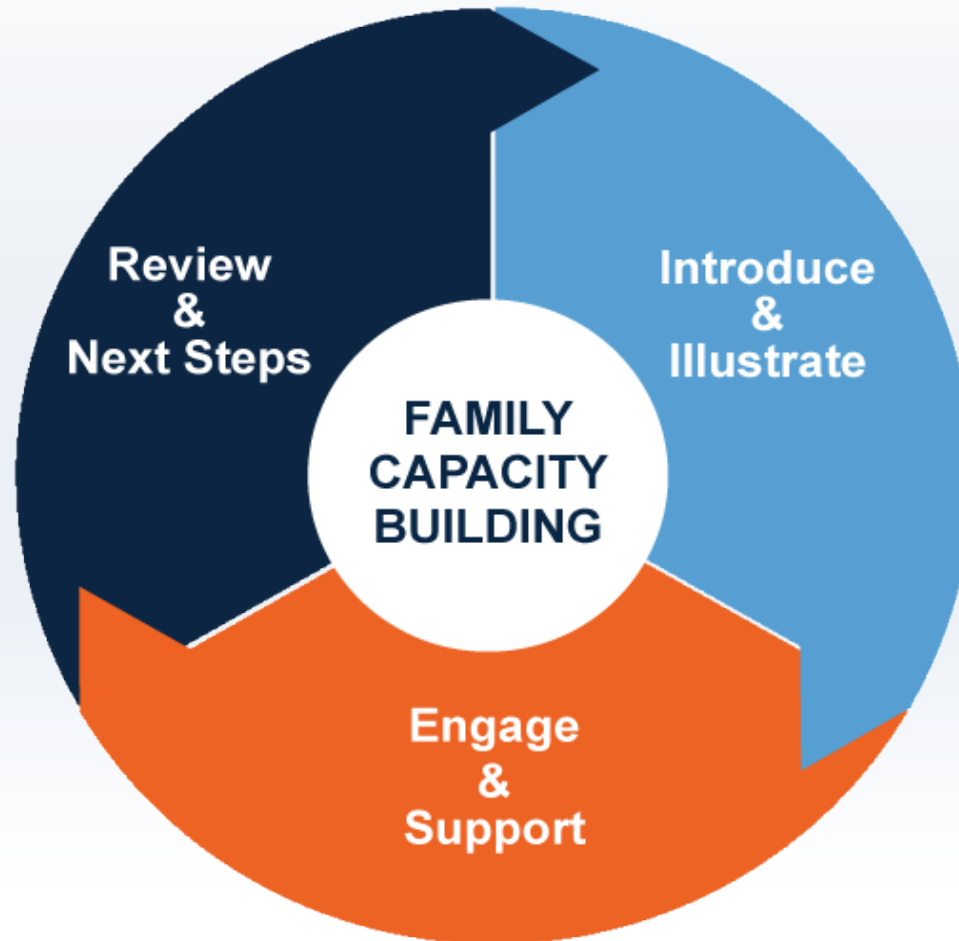


\* $p < .0001$ .

# Family Capacity-Building E-Learning Lessons

- The family capacity-building process was used as the foundation for developing e-learning lessons for promoting practitioners' use of family capacity-building practices
- The e-learning lessons were developed at the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and are freely available on the ECTA Center website ([ectacenter.org/decrp/fcb.asp](http://ectacenter.org/decrp/fcb.asp))
- The e-learning lessons include an evidence-informed family capacity-building performance checklist for practitioner self-assessment of his or her use of family capacity-building practices or a coach-facilitated practitioner self-assessment of his or her use of the practices

# Family Capacity-Building Process

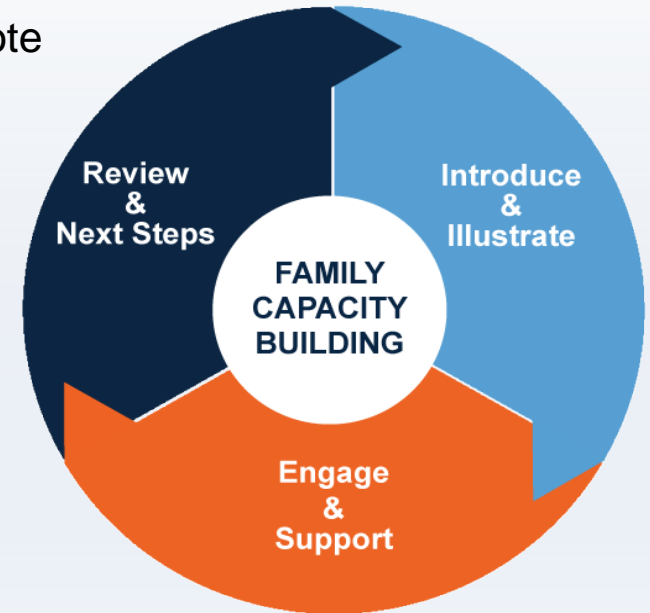


# Family Capacity-Building Online E-Learning Lessons

**Family capacity building** is used where the focus of early childhood intervention is caregiver-implemented early childhood practices. This approach can be used to promote parents' use of any type of early childhood intervention practice, and includes strategies to engage parents in activities to build their competence and confidence in providing everyday learning opportunities for their child.

The online module and e-learning lessons:

- introduce family capacity building to practitioners,
- explain the steps for introducing new practices to parents and other family members,
- include short video examples of a practitioner demonstrating the use of family capacity building practices,
- knowledge checks to assess a learner's understanding as part of a variety of interactive activities *and*,
- include a family capacity-building checklist for planning intervention sessions or for self-assessment.



# E-Learning Lessons

- Each e-learning lesson introduces a practitioner to new sets of authentic learning activities where later lessons build on learning in earlier lessons
- The e-learning lessons ***actively involve*** practitioners in different kinds of authentic learning opportunities to improve their use of family capacity-building practices

Introductory Lesson: Overview of Family Capacity-Building

Lesson 1: Introducing & Illustrating a Practice to a Parent

Lesson 2: Parent Use of a Practice and Practitioner Feedback

Lesson 3: Reviewing a Parent's Use of a Practice & Identifying Next Steps

Lesson 4: Family Capacity-Building in Action



## Evaluation of E-Learning Lessons for Strengthening Early Childhood Practitioner Use of Family Capacity-Building Practices

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### Abstract

Findings from a case study field-test evaluation of e-learning lessons for promoting early childhood intervention practitioners' understanding and use of family capacity-building practices are described. Participants were two early childhood program directors, two early childhood technical assistance providers, and two early childhood intervention practitioners. Pattern matching was used to evaluate whether or not participants with different roles and responsibilities judged the instructional design, interactivity, video illustrations, and usefulness of the e-learning lessons similarly or differently. Results indicated that the different features of the e-learning lessons were rated highly by all but one participant and that the patterns of responses were much the same regardless of participants' professional roles or responsibilities. Participant feedback and suggestions were used to revise the e-learning lessons and correct technical problems.

#### Keywords:

Family capacity-building  
Early childhood intervention  
Practitioner competence  
Family learning lessons.

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## Intended End-Users for the E-Learning Lessons

- The family capacity-building e-learning lessons were specifically developed for novice and beginner early childhood intervention practitioners with little or no formal training in working with parents and other family members
- Results from field-test evaluations indicated that patterns of responses matched hypothesized relationships



## Pattern Matching Results

- Field-test participants were asked to judge the instructional design, interactive features, and video examples of the family capacity-building e-learning lessons
- Program directors and technical assistance providers both agreed that all three aspects of the e-learning lessons were consistent with hypothesized effects
- One practitioner indicated that the interactive features did not meet expectations
- Feedback and suggestions from all field-test participants were used to make improvements in the e-learning lessons

## Summary and Conclusions

- Everyday activities are rich sources of learning opportunities and experiences for young children with developmental disabilities and delays
- Family-provided everyday child learning opportunities can be facilitated using family capacity-building practices
- Early childhood intervention practitioners often need professional development to promote their use of family capacity-building practices
- Family capacity-building e-learning lessons are one source of those professional development opportunities

Questions, Comments, etc.

PowerPoint available at  
[www.puckett.org/presentations.php](http://www.puckett.org/presentations.php)