
Practitioner Strategies for Involving Family Members in Providing Young Children with Disabilities or Delays Everyday Learning Opportunities

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Presentation made at the 30th Annual Conference of the European Academy of Childhood Disability,
Tbilisi, Georgia, May 31, 2018

Purpose of the Presentation

- Describe the rationale for family-member provided everyday child learning opportunities
- Outline the key characteristics of family capacity-building early childhood intervention
- Summarize findings from a study illustrating (1) practitioner use of family capacity-building practices and (2) the caregiver benefits of family capacity-building intervention practices
- Describe e-learning lessons for strengthening 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 to have the time and energy, and knowledge and skills, to be able to engage their children in everyday child learning
- Family member provided everyday child learning should benefit not only young children but should also strengthen family member confidence and competence
- Practitioners need to use family member 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 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)
- Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities 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 200,000 learning opportunities per year at a minimum

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.

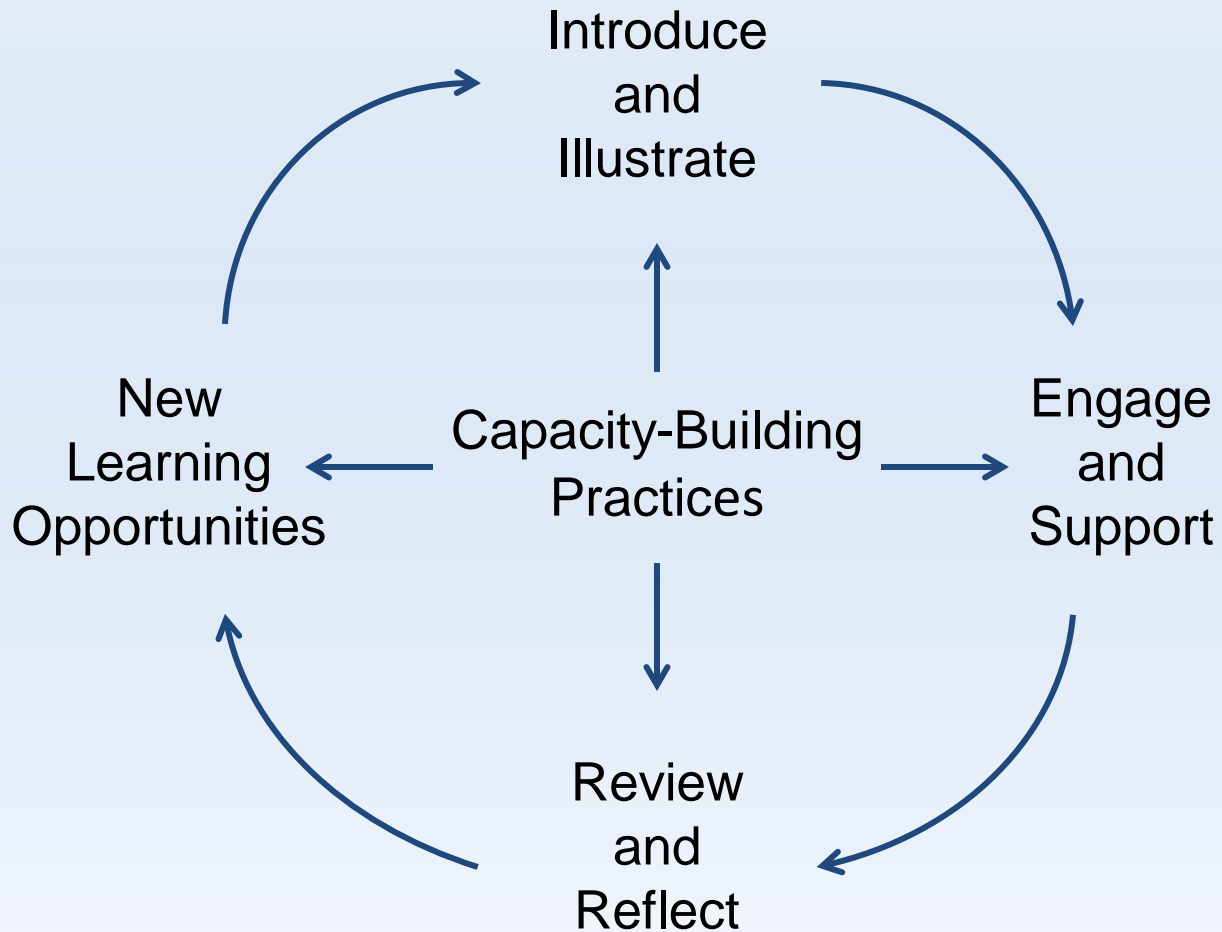
Mahoney, G., & MacDonald, J. (2007). *Autism and developmental delays in young children: The responsive teaching curriculum for parents and professionals*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

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

Foundations for the Family Capacity-Building Process



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
- Family member and 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

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, competence, and confidence

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)

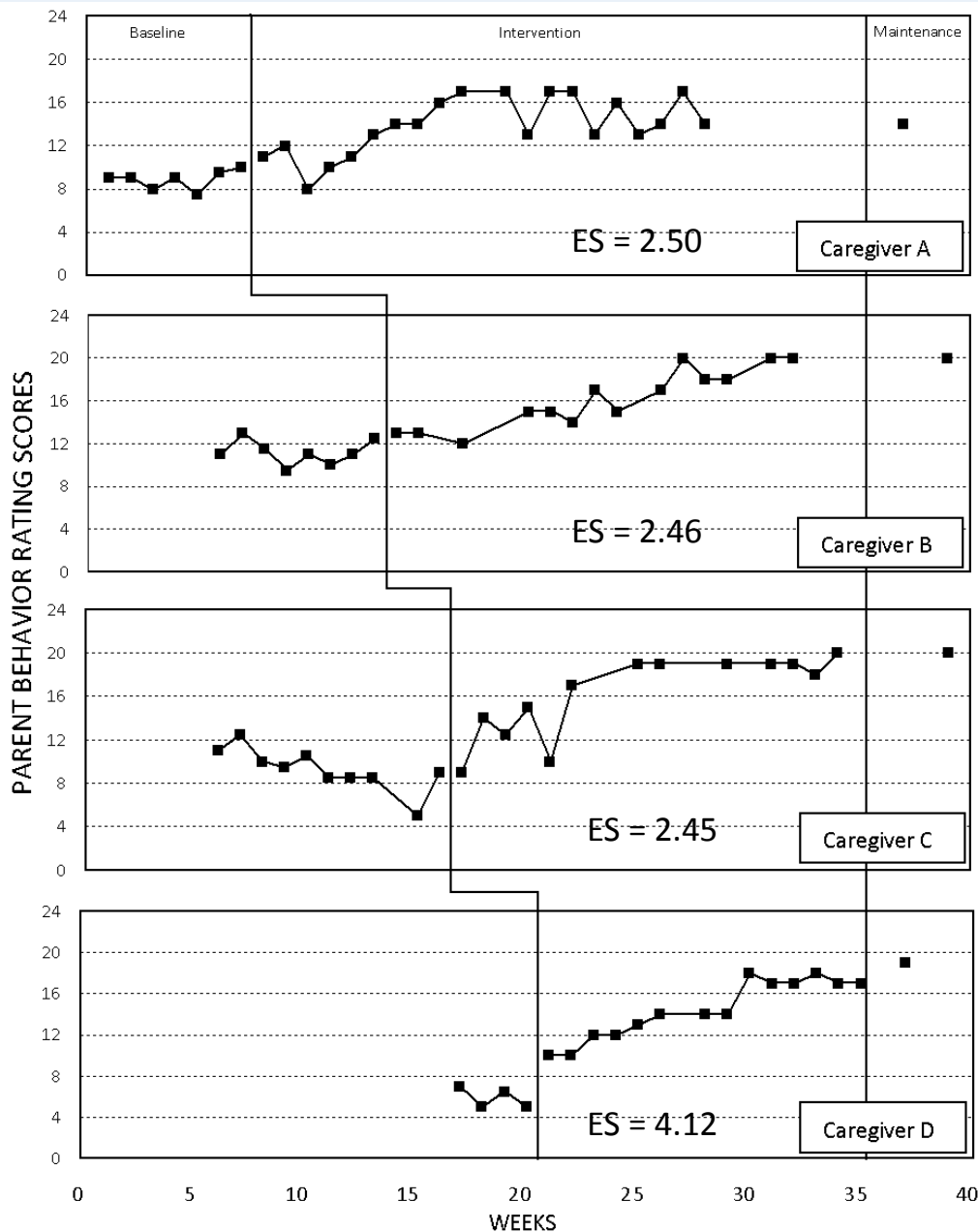
Methodology: Multiple baseline design across study participants

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

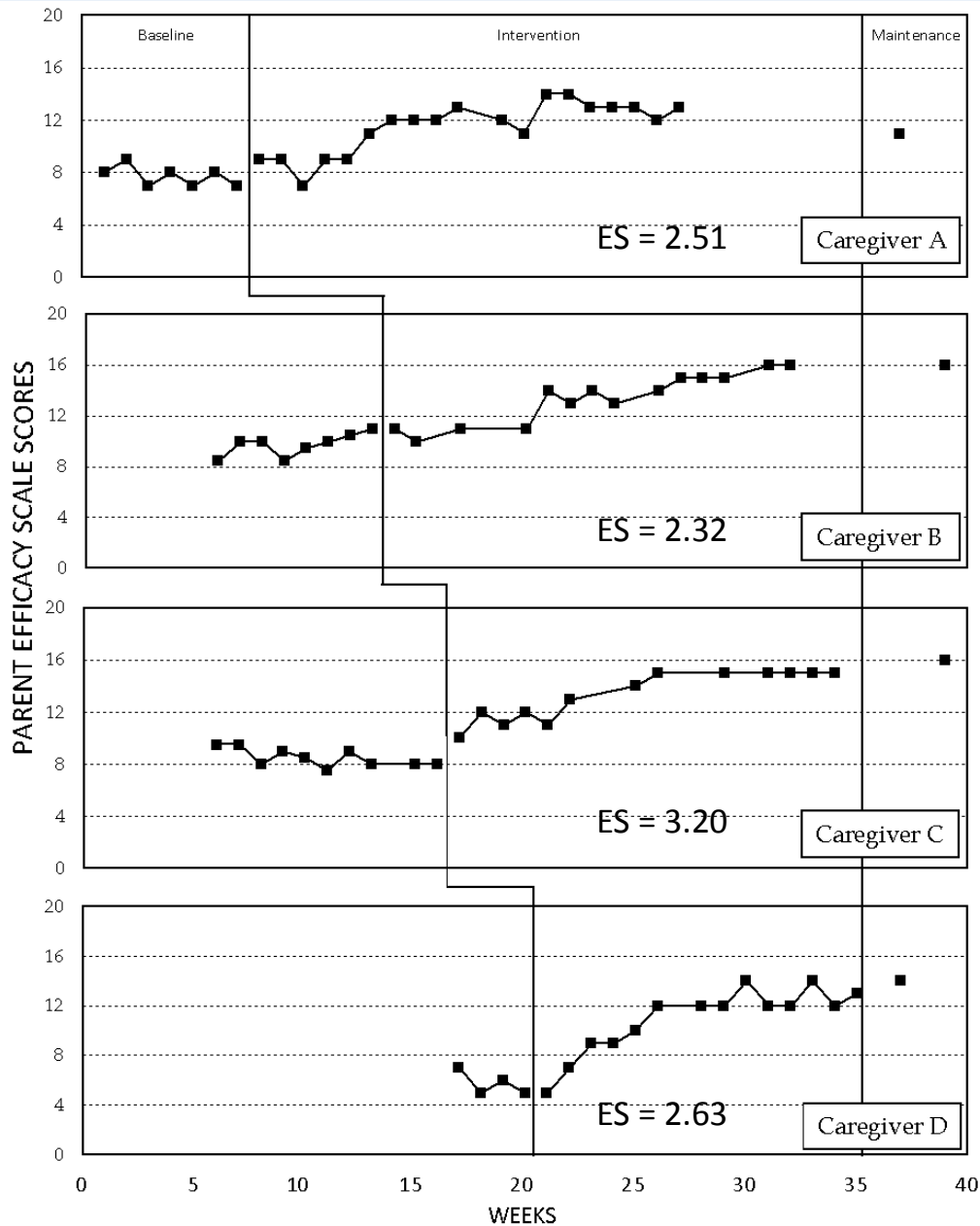
Parenting Skills



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)

Promoting Early Childhood Intervention Practitioners' Use of Family Capacity-Building Practices

- Practitioner use of family capacity-building practices has been the focus of my research and practice for more than 30 years
- Family capacity building does not come easily to many practitioners
- Promoting practitioners' use of family capacity-building practices needs to be explicit and systematic

Family Capacity-Building E-Learning Lessons

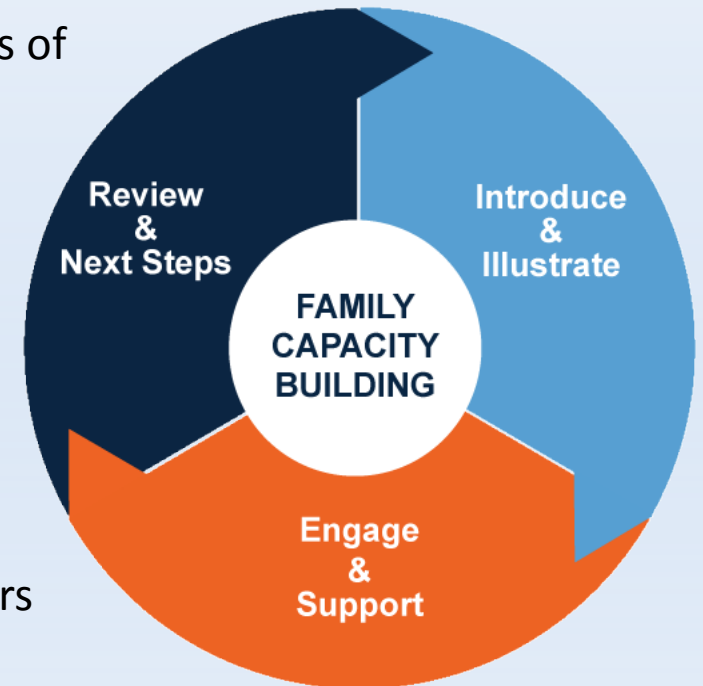
- The family capacity-building process was used as the foundation for developing e-learning lessons for promoting practitioners' use of family capacity-building practices
- The e-learning lessons were developed at the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and are freely available on the ECTA Center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

Family Capacity-Building Online Module

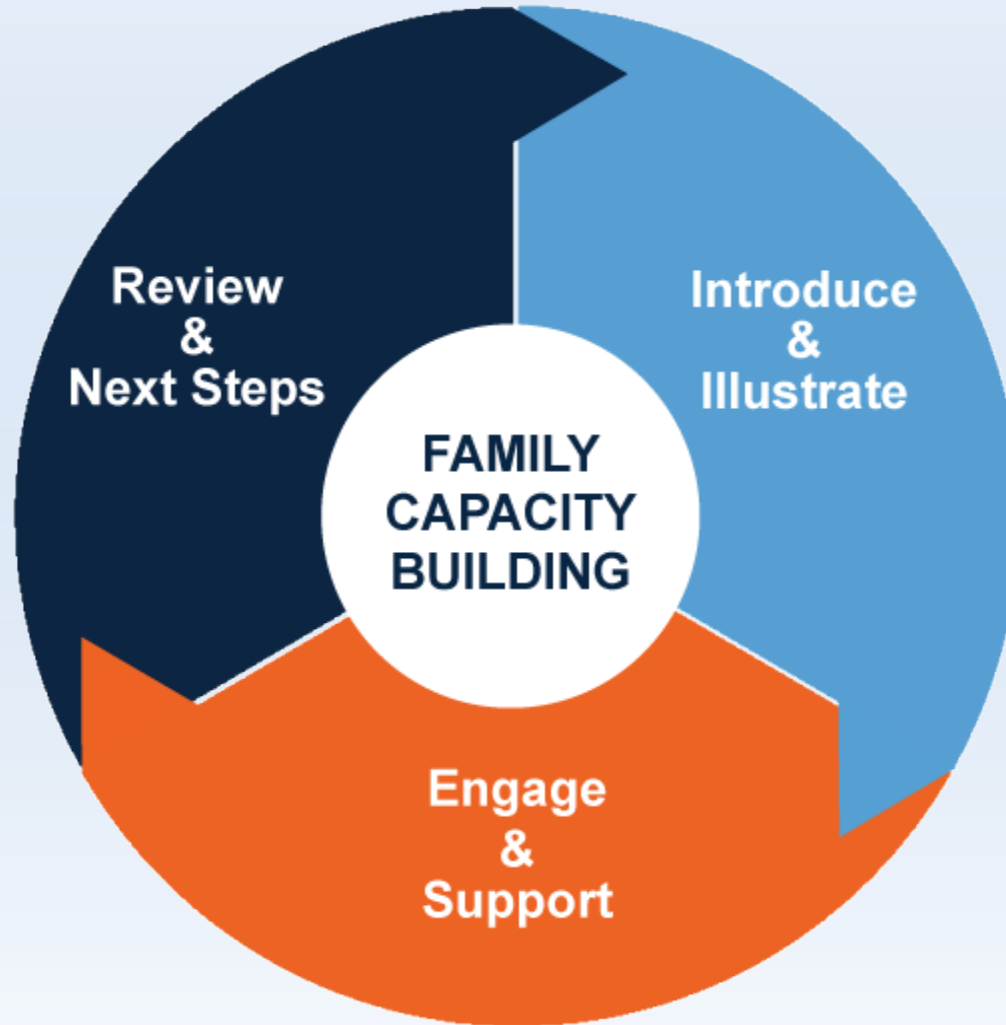
Family capacity building can be used where the focus of early childhood intervention is using early childhood practices that are implemented by parents. This approach can be used to promote parents' use of any type of early childhood practice, and includes strategies to engage parents in activities to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

The online module and e-learning lessons:

- introduce family capacity building to practitioners and service providers,
- explain the steps for introducing new practices to parents and families,
- include short video excerpts demonstrating family capacity building,
- knowledge checks to assess a learner's understanding through a variety of interactive activities, *and*;
- include a family capacity-building checklist for planning intervention sessions or for self-assessment.



Family Capacity-Building Process



E-Learning Lessons

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

Introduction: 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

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

PowerPoint available at
www.puckett.org/presentations.php