

# Enabling and Empowering Families 20 Years Later

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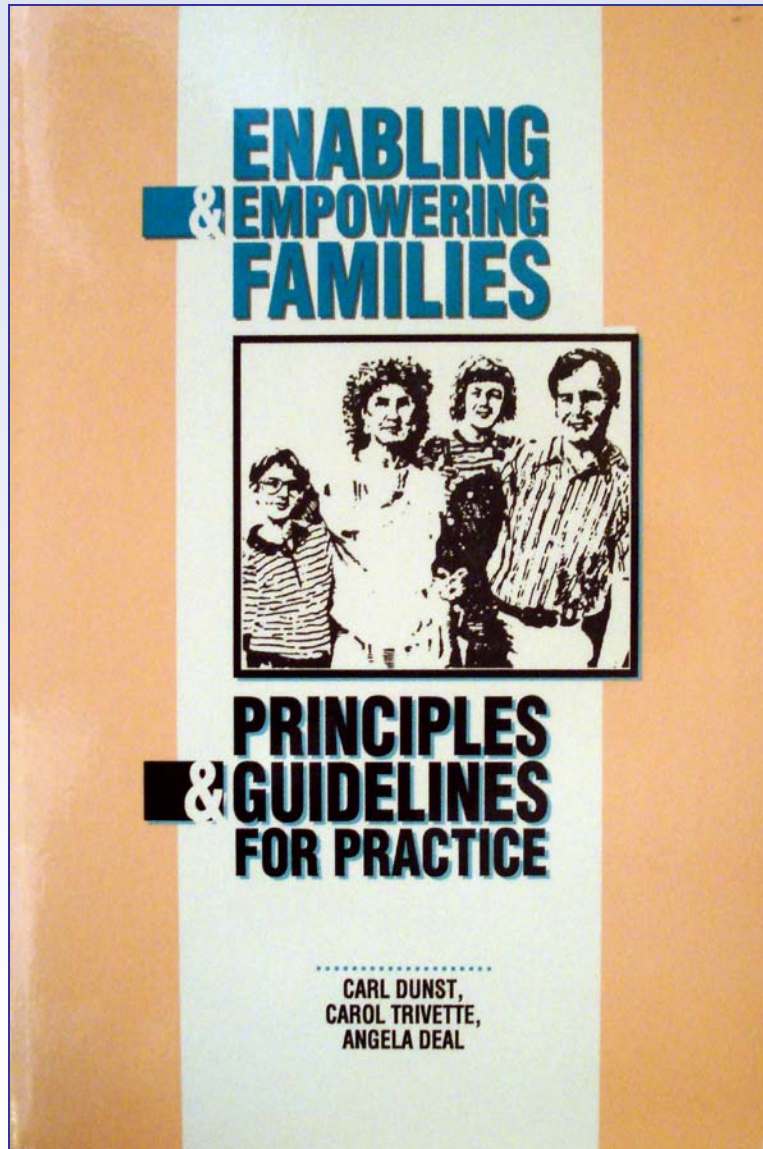
Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute  
Asheville and Morganton, North Carolina

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# Purposes of the Presentation

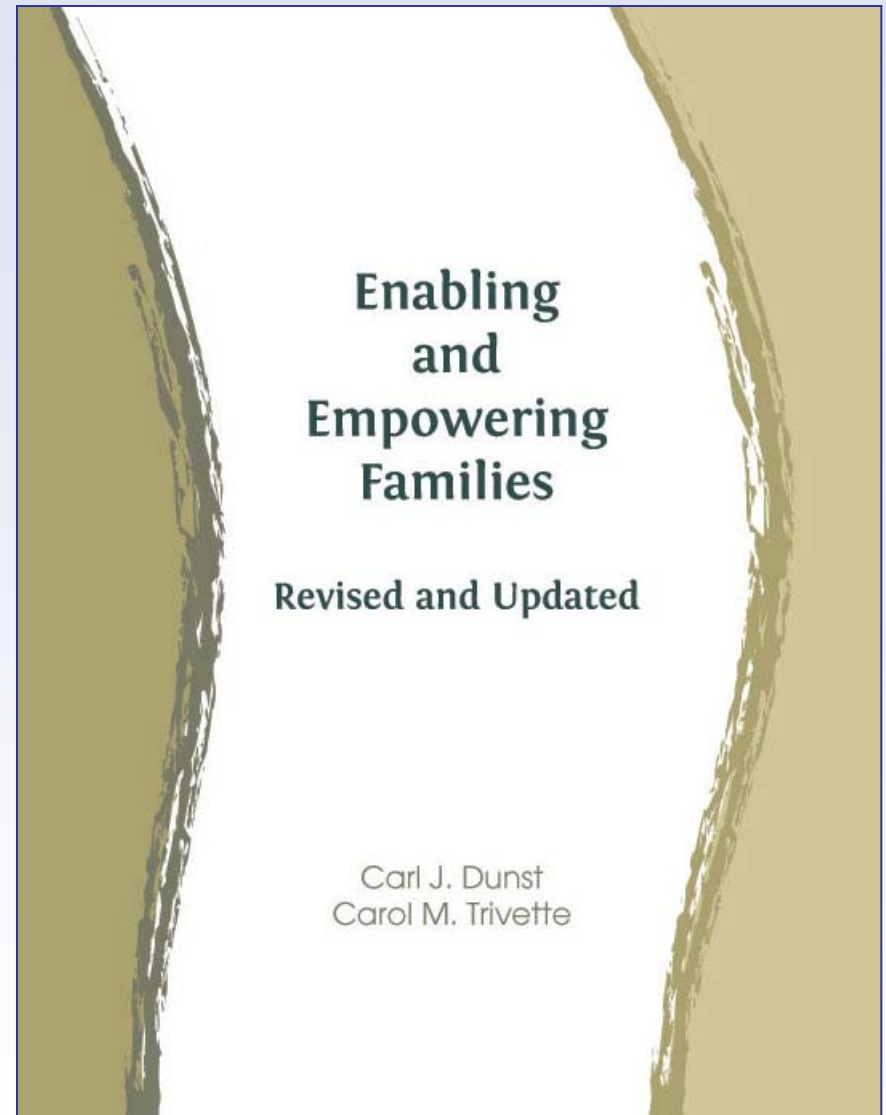
- Describe changes in the family systems intervention model described in *Enabling and Empowering Families* based on 20 years of research and practice.
- Describe a revised and updated version of the model based on both lessons learned from use of the model and research on the key components of the model.
- Summarize findings from research syntheses and meta-analyses of the relationships between the four family-system model components and parent, family, and child behavior and functioning.

Background



The approach to early childhood intervention and family support described in *Enabling and Empowering Families* used theory and research from a number of social systems theories to identify key features that formed the foundations of principles and practices guiding work with children and their parents.

Twenty years of research and practice have been used to revise and update the family systems approach to intervention. The changes that have been made include better conceptualization and operationalization of key features of the model.



## Definition of Terms

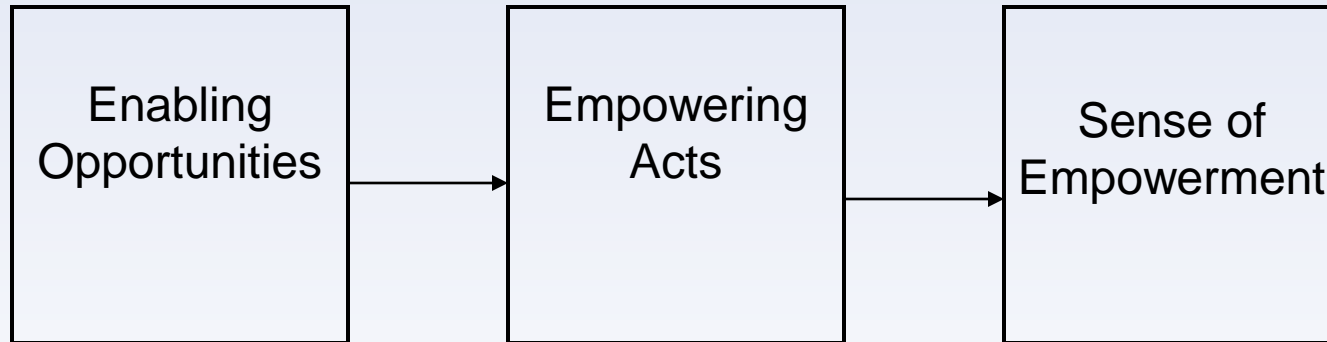
***Enablement:*** To make able; to provide a means or an opportunity

***Enabling:*** Create or provide opportunities to become able or competent

***Empowerment:*** The act of decision-making, choice, and the sense of capability resulting from the empowerment act

***Empowering:*** The sense of control and self-efficacy resulting from enabling experiences and opportunities

# Relationship Between Enabling Experiences and Empowering Acts and Consequences



# Julian Rappaport's Perspective of Empowerment

“Empowerment implies that many competencies are already present or at least possible....Empowerment implies that what you see as poor functioning is a result of social structure and lack of resources which make it impossible for existing competencies to operate. It implies that in those cases where new competencies need to be learned, they are best learned in a context of living life rather than in artificial programs where everyone, including the person learning, knows that it is really the expert who is in charge.” (*American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1981, 9, p. 16)



## A Guiding Principle

*Enabling and Empowering Families* was developed to be a flexible approach to family-systems intervention that could be used with families from diverse backgrounds having different life circumstances and in many different settings and contexts.

# Our Applications of the Family Systems Intervention Model

- Parents of children with disabilities in early childhood intervention programs
- Parents of young children in family support programs
- Teenage mothers receiving social support interventions
- Families on welfare involved in bartering interventions
- Multi-cultural families involved in early childhood intervention programs
- Parents of school aged children in parenting support programs

## Others Use of the Family Systems Intervention Model

The family systems model or components of the model have been used widely in early childhood intervention, human services and mental health programs, health care programs, and parenting support programs with families from diverse backgrounds and in different settings (e.g., incarcerated parents) in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Australia.

Where We Started....Where We Are Today

# Family-Systems Intervention Model

- Definition of Intervention
- Social Systems Framework
- Conceptual Foundations
- Operational Elements

**1988**

## **Definition of Intervention**

**Provision of support (i.e., resources provided by others) by members of a family's informal and formal social network that either directly or indirectly influences child, parent, and family functioning.**

2008

## Definition of Intervention

Procurement by and provision of supports and resources to families from informal and formal social network members that either or both directly and indirectly influence and improve parent, family, and child behavior and functioning.

**1988**

## **Social Systems Framework**

**A social systems perspective views a family as a social unit embedded within other formal and informal social units and networks. It also views those different social units as interdependent where events and changes in one unit resonate and in turn influence (directly or indirectly) the behavior of individuals in other social units.**



2008

## Social Systems Framework

A family is viewed as a social unit embedded within other informal and formal social support networks [where] the behavior of a developing child, his or her parents, other family members, and the family unit as a whole are influenced by events in settings beyond the family directly and indirectly affecting parent, family, and child behavior and functioning.

# 1988

## Conceptual Foundations (Rethinking Intervention Practices)

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**Social Systems Perspective**

**Effective parenting depends on factors external to the family**

**Family as Unit of Intervention**

**Families are viewed as nurturing systems that need to be supported**

**Family Empowerment**

**Empowering families strengthens functioning and improves their ability to obtain supports**

**Proactive Helping**

**Emphasis is placed on promoting self-sustaining behavior**

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# 2008

## Conceptual Foundations (Capacity Building Paradigm)

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Promotion Models	Enhancement and optimization of competence
Empowerment Models	Create opportunities to use existing abilities and learn new competencies
Strengths-Based Models	Emphasis on the use of strengths to obtain resources improving functioning
Resource-Based Models	Use of a broad range of resources and supports as “interventions”
Family-Centered Models	Family choice and family involvement in obtaining resources and supports

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# 2008

## Contrasting Approaches to Intervention

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Capacity-Building Paradigm Models	Traditional Paradigm Models
Promotion	Treatment
Empowerment	Expertise
Strengths-Based	Deficit-Based
Resource-Based	Service-Based
Family-Centered	Professionally-Centered

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# Operational Elements of the Family-System Model

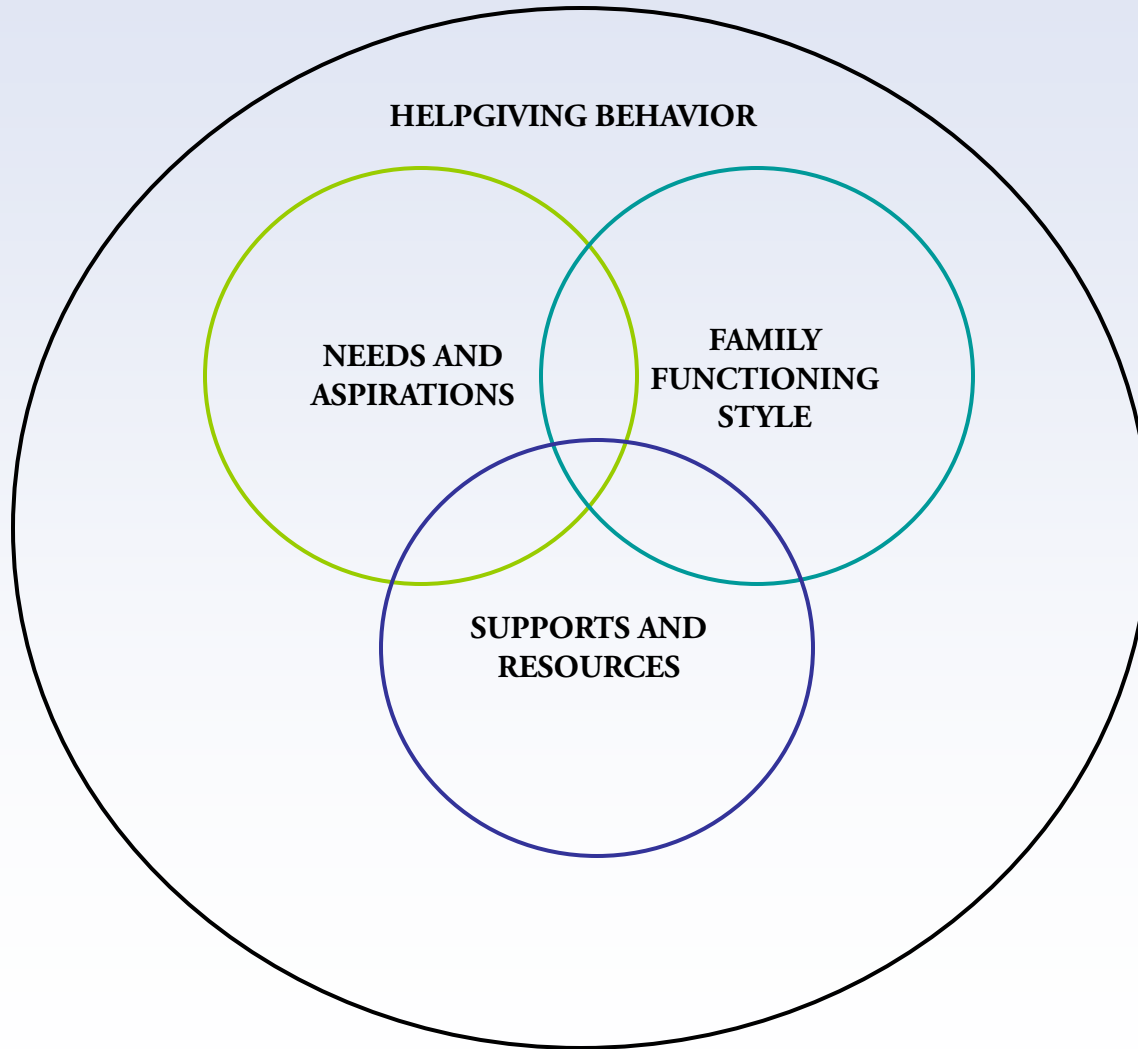
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1988	2008
<b>Needs and Aspirations</b>	Family Concerns and Priorities
<b>Family Functioning Style</b>	Family Member Abilities and Interests
<b>Supports and Resources</b>	Supports and Resources
<b>Help Giving Behavior</b>	Capacity-Building Helpgiving Practices

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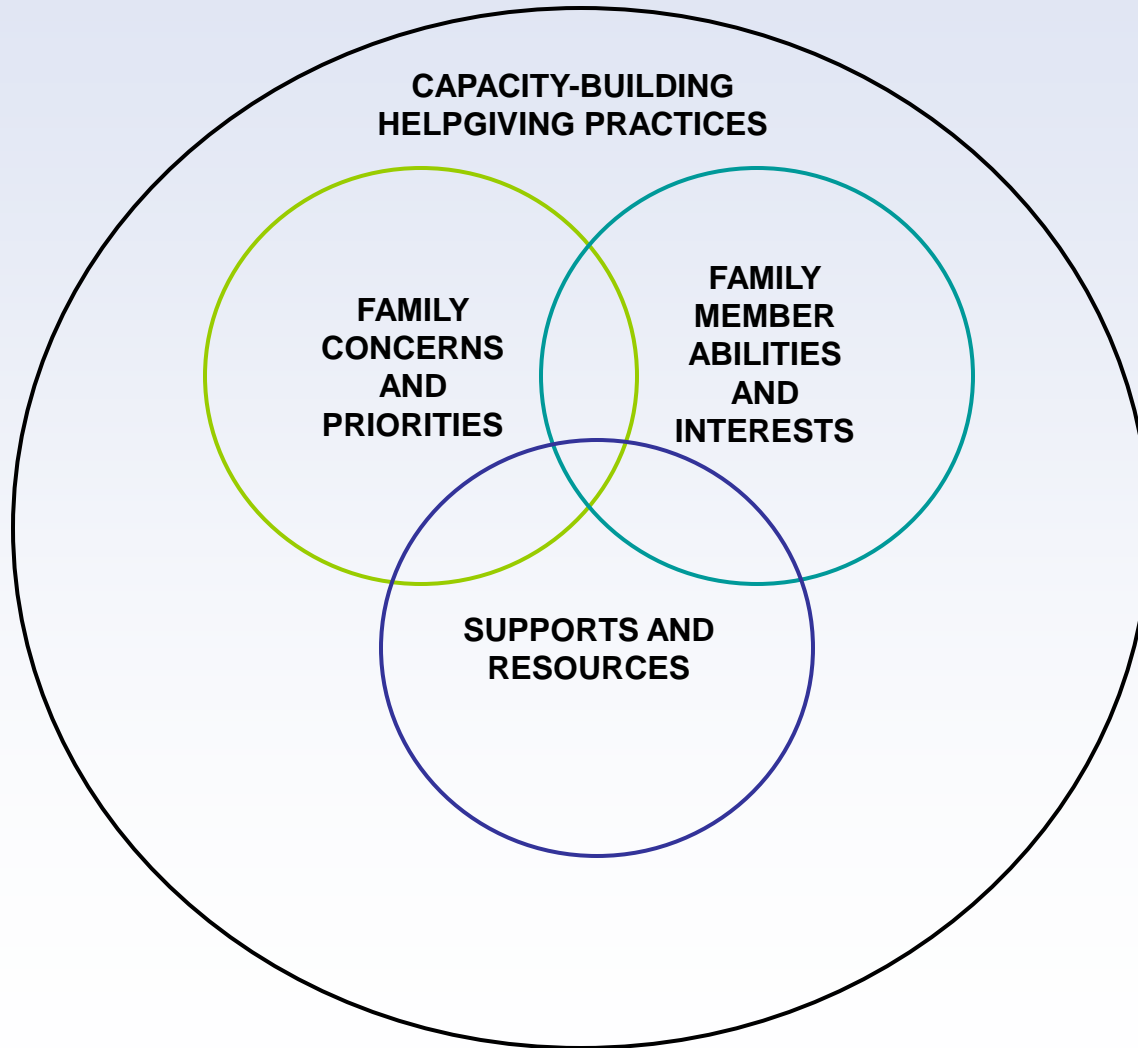
**1988**

# **Family Systems Intervention Model**



2008

# Family-Systems Intervention Model



# Main Focus of Each of the Model Components

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**1988**

**2008**

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**A need is something that is desired or lacking but wanted or required to achieve a goal.**

Concerns and priorities are viewed as determinants of how people spend time and energy obtaining supports and resources.

**Family functioning style is a unique combination of qualities that define a strong family.**

Family strengths are the abilities and interests used to engage in desired activities.

**Resources and supports include emotional, physical, informational, instrumental, and material aid and assistance.**

Information, assistance, experiences, opportunities, etc. for addressing concerns and priorities.

**Helpgiving emphasizes behaviors that promote acquisition of family capabilities and self-sustaining behavior.**

Capacity-building helpgiving practices strengthening the ability to obtain supports and resources, resulting in a sense of competence.

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# Research Foundations and Evidence for the Family Systems Intervention Model

# Types of Research on the Family-Systems Model

- Research syntheses of the relationship between the model practices and parent, family, and child outcomes
- Intervention studies of the use of one or more model practices to affect parent, family, or child behavior and functioning
- Structural equation modeling of the direct, indirect, and total effects of the model practices on parent, family, and child outcomes
- Meta-analytic structural equation modeling of studies examining the influences of the family systems model practices on parent, family, and child outcomes.

# Research Syntheses and Meta-Analyses of the Family Systems Model Components

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Model Component	Number of Studies	Number of Participants
Concerns and Priorities	32	7,781
Family Strengths	32	2,924
Social Supports	79	10,932
Helpgiving Practices	52	12,211

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# Independent Measures Used in the Synthesis Studies

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Model Component	Independent Measures
Concerns and Priorities	Family Resource Scale, Family Needs Scale
Family Strengths	Family Functioning Style Scale, Family Hardiness Index
Social Supports	Family Support Scale, Support Functions Scale
Helpgiving Practices	Helpgiving Practices Scale, Measure of Process of Care, Family-Centered Practices Scale, Enabling Practices Scale (+9 other scales)

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# Dependent Measures Included in the Synthesis Studies

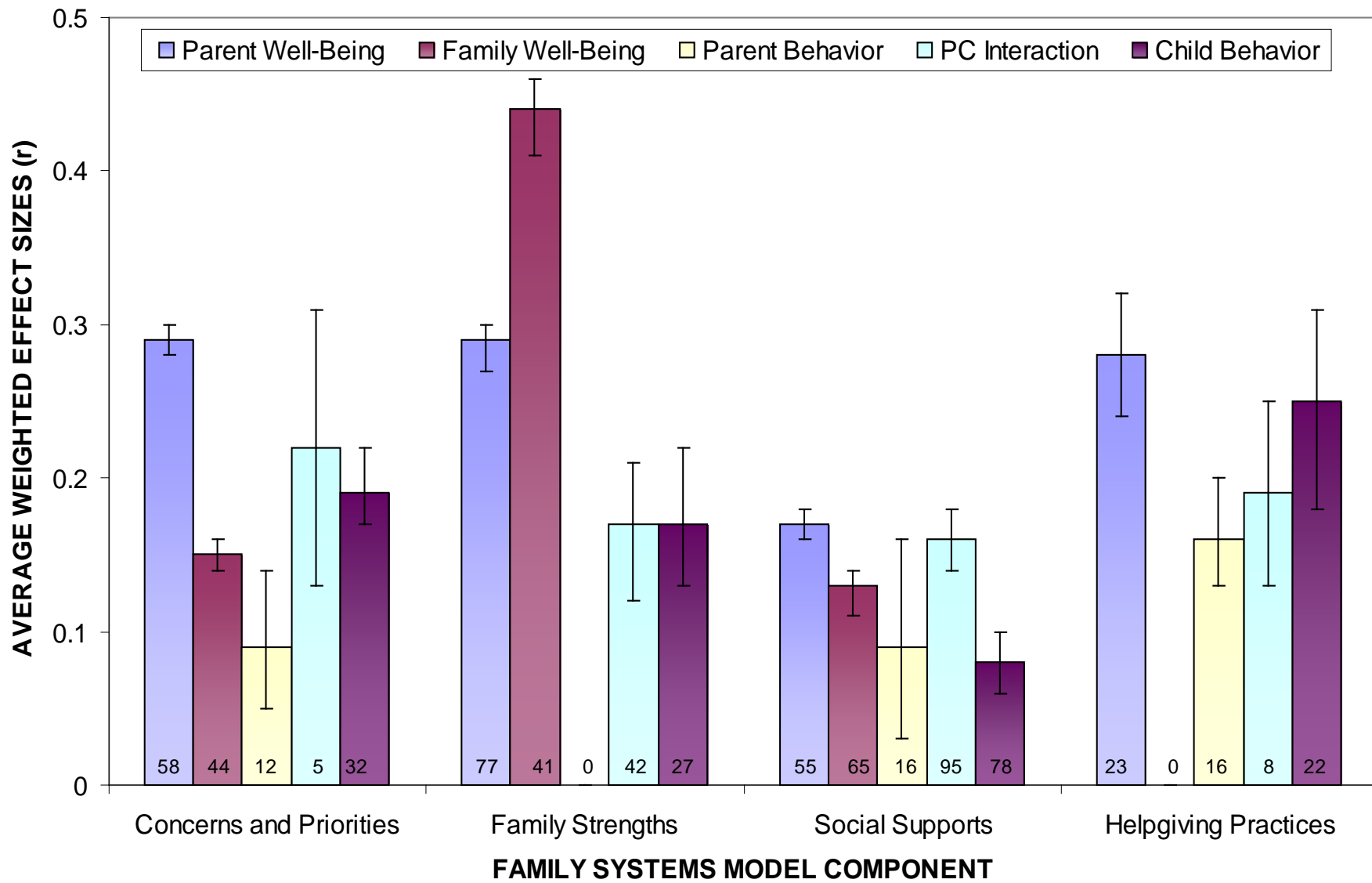
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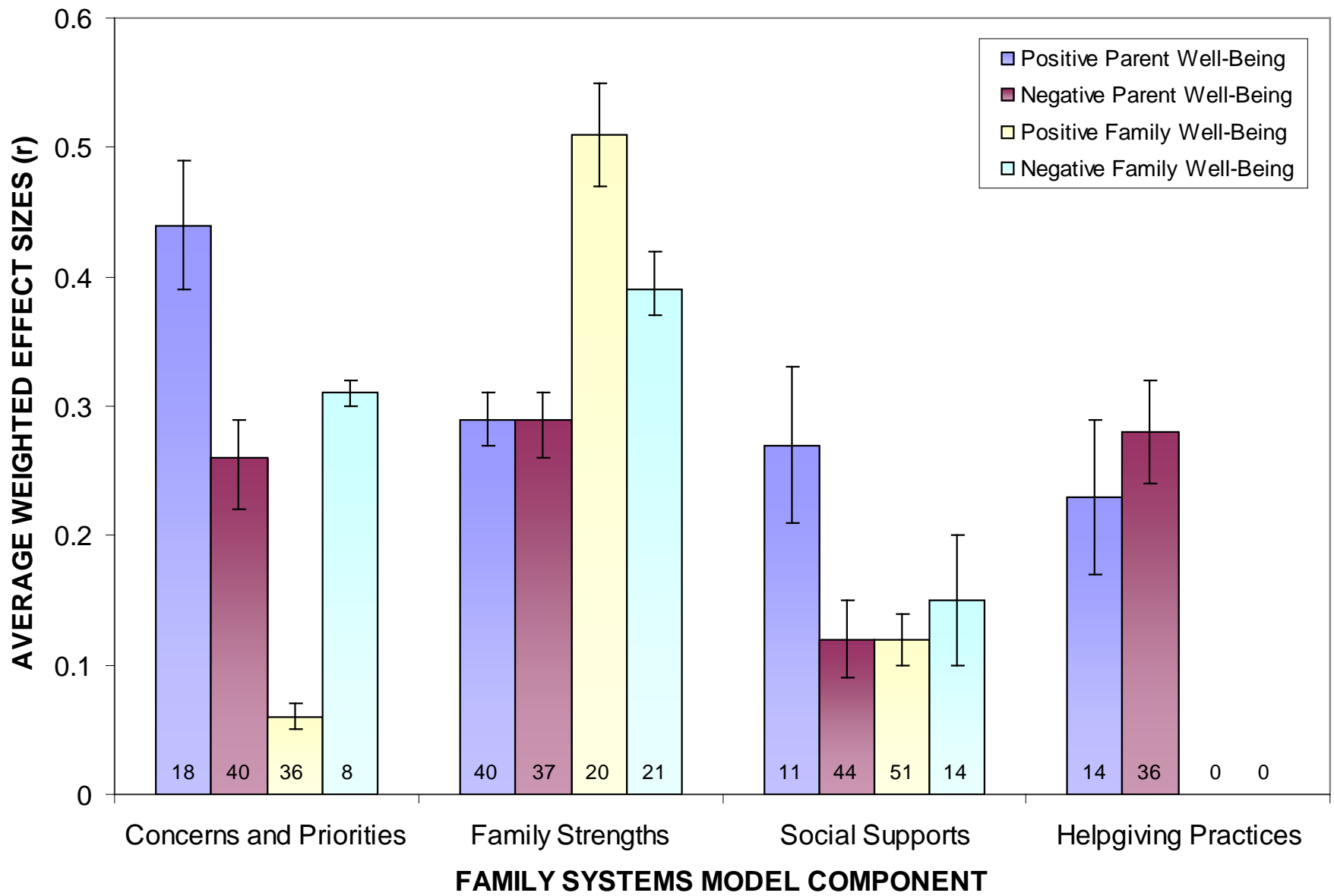
Outcome Domains	Outcome Measures (Examples)
Self Efficacy Beliefs	Family Empowerment Scale, Personal Assessment of Control Scale
Parent Well-Being	Psychological Well-Being Index, Parenting Stress Index, CES-D
Family Well-Being	Family Environment Scale, FACES, Self Report Functioning Scale
Parent/Family Coping	Coping Strategies Inventory, F-COPES, Ways of Coping Scale
Life Events	Parent Daily Hassles Scale, Family Inventory of Life Events
Parenting Behavior	Parenting Competence Scale, Everyday Parenting Scale
Parent--Child Interactions	Parent--Child Relationship Scale, Parent Styles of Interaction Scale
Child Behavior	Conners Parent Rating Scale, Child Behavior Checklist
Child Development	Bayley Scale, Vineland, Battelle, Adaptive Behavior Inventory for Children

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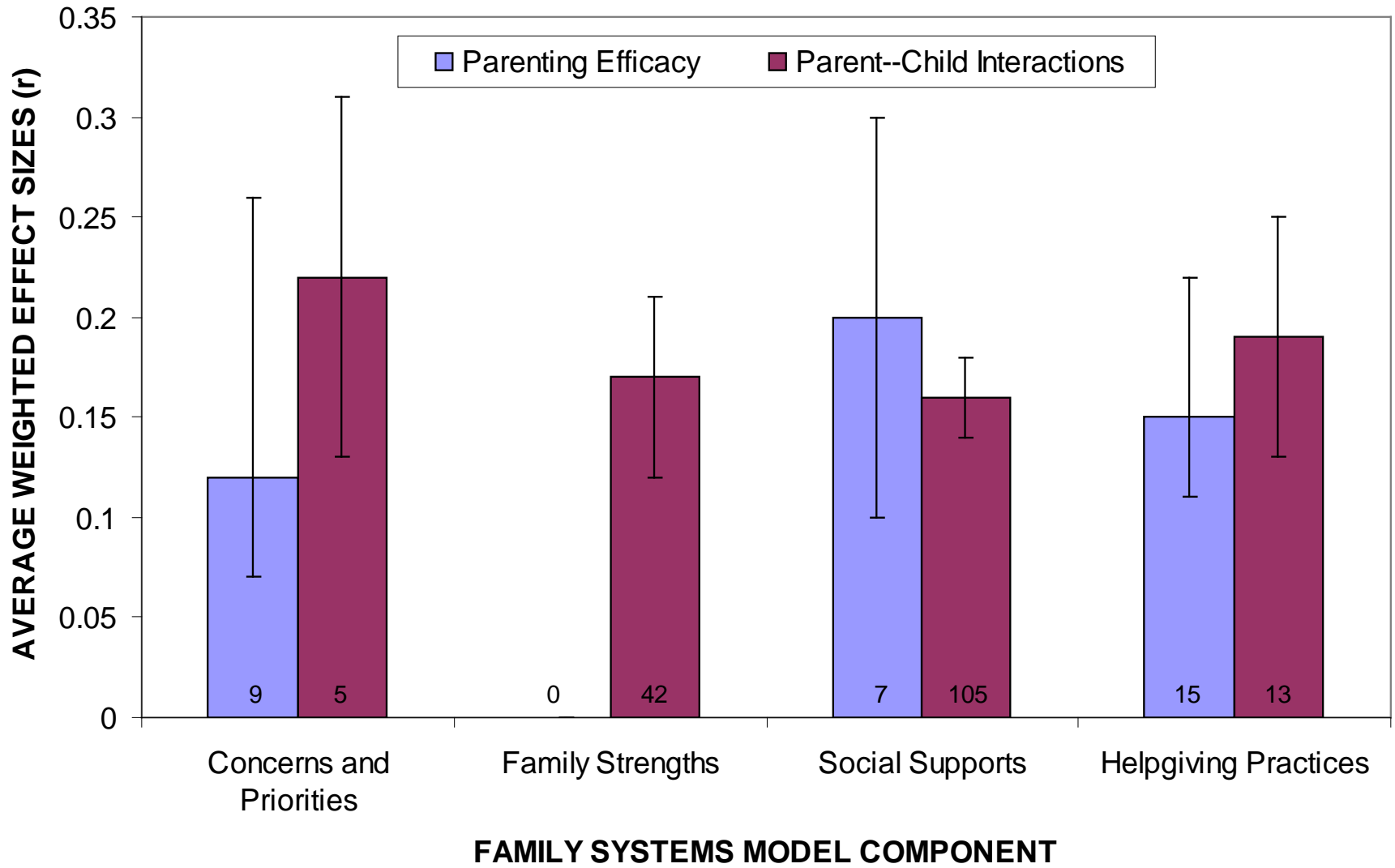
# Methods of Analysis

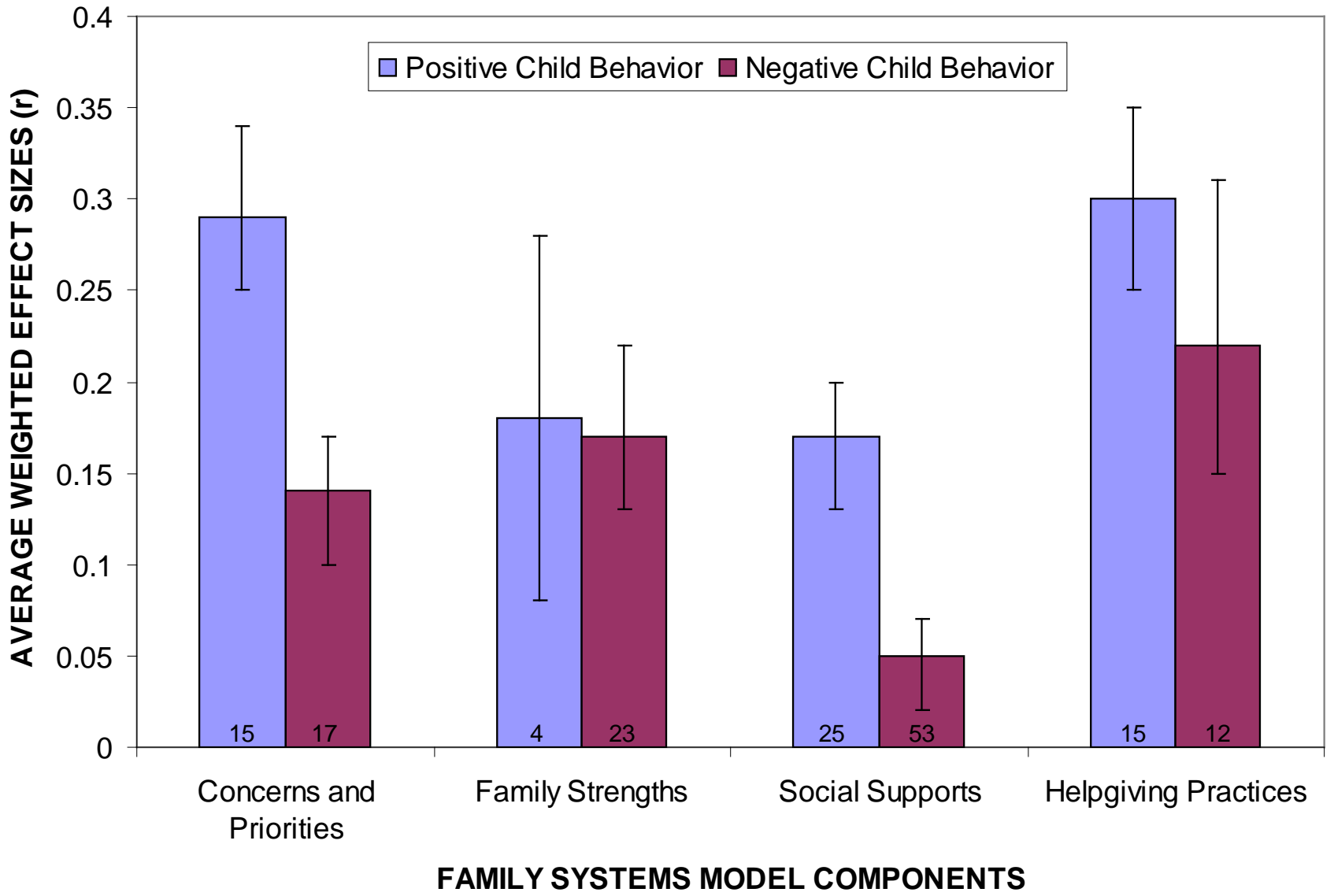
- Average weighted correlations between the independent and dependent measures (direct effects) were used as the size of effects between measures
- Indirect effects of the model components mediated by self-efficacy beliefs (sense of empowerment)
- Meta-analytic structural equation modeling of the direct and indirect influences of the four model components on parent, family, and child behavior and functioning

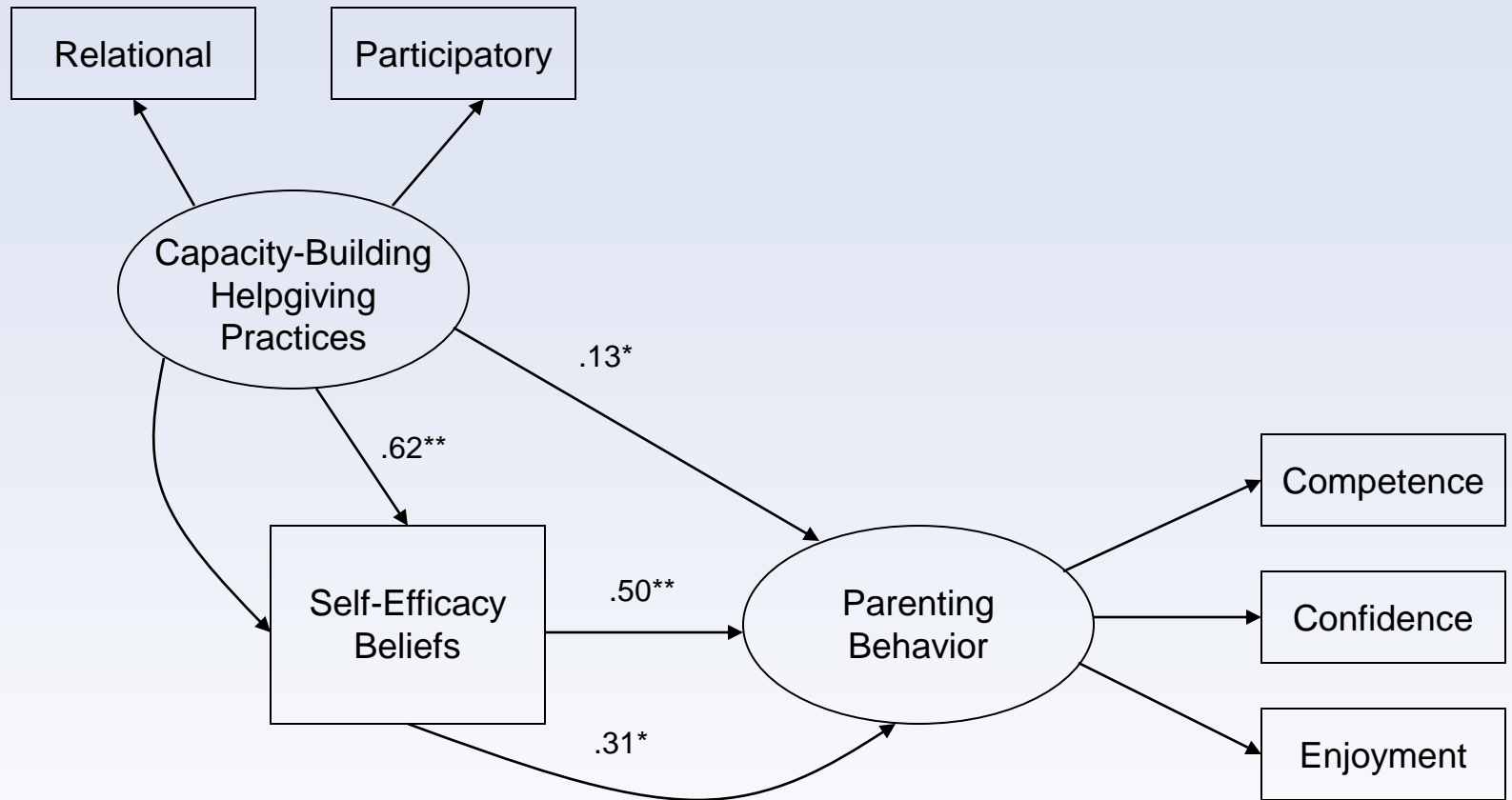












## Direct and Indirect Effect of Capacity-Building Helpgiving Practices on Parenting Behavior

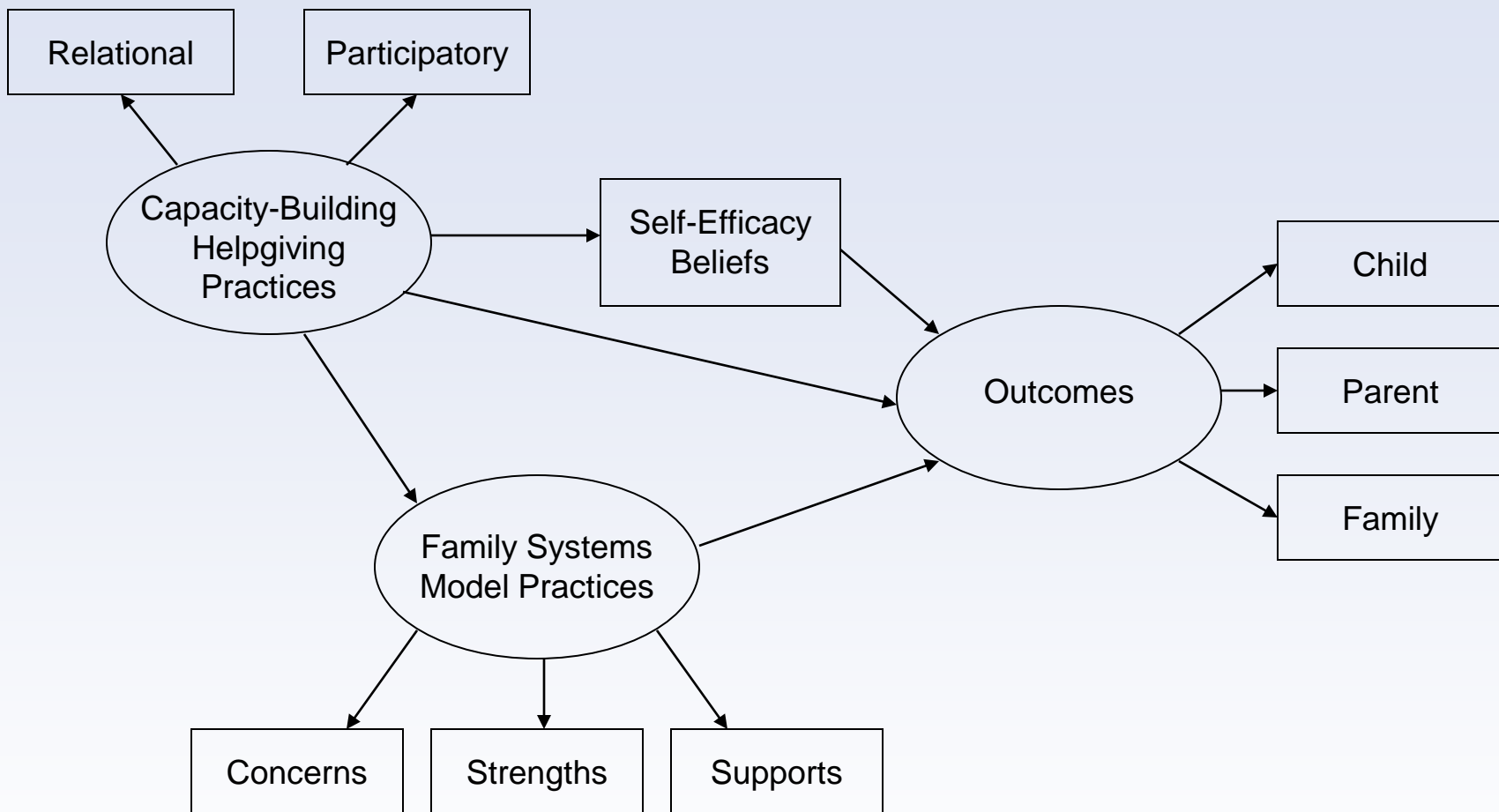
(NOTE. Straight lines are direct effects, curved line is indirect effect)

# Indirect Effects of Capacity-Building Helpgiving Practices

Outcome Measure	Type of Mediation					
	Meta-Analysis 1 <sup>a</sup>			Meta-Analysis 1 <sup>b</sup>		
	None	Partial	Complete	None	Partial	Complete
Parent Well-Being			✓		✓	
Parenting Behavior			✓			✓
Social Support		✓			✓	
Child Behavior		✓			✓	

<sup>a</sup> N=18 studies.

<sup>b</sup> N=52 studies.



Modified Meta-Analytic Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

# Conclusions

- We have been *surprised* that so many of the originally formulated ideas have “stood the test of time.”
- The family systems model has proven useful for working with families from diverse backgrounds in many different kinds of situations.
- The model practices capture many of the important life situations that can be addressed by interventions.
- Research findings to date show that there are discernable relationships between the model practices and parent, family, and child behavior and functioning.

# Sources of Information About the Model

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