

# Family Capacity-Building Practices: II. Methods and Strategies

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## Purposes of the Workshop (continued)

- Describe a set of methods and procedures that practitioners can use to build and strengthen family capacity to use any targeted early childhood intervention practice
- Illustrate the use of the family capacity-building practices with two different early childhood practices (interest-based child learning and responsive teaching)
- Describe lessons learned from research and practice on parents' involvement in their infants' and toddlers' early childhood intervention
- Introduce a web-based set of training modules for promoting early childhood professionals' understanding and use of family capacity-building practices

# Research Foundations

The family capacity-building approach has evolved from research and practice on:

- The characteristics of capacity-building, family-centred practices and especially the use of ***participatory family-centred practices*** to promote active parent involvement in their children's early intervention
- The characteristics of effective adult learning methods and practices for promoting understanding, adoption, intervention, and use of evidence-based and evidence-informed early childhood intervention practices

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Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Hamby, D. W. (2007). Meta-analysis of family-centred help giving practices research. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*, 13, 370-378.

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.

# Participatory Family-Centred Practices

- Participatory family-centred practices actively involve parents in informed decision-making and in the use of existing skills and the development of new skills needed to obtain resources and supports or to achieve desired outcomes based on informed family choices
- Active parent participation in child-focused early intervention is a special case of participatory family-centred practices where parent decision-making centres around child learning and development and parent use of evidence-based or evidence-informed everyday child learning opportunities

# Evidence-Based Adult Learning Methods

- Findings from a meta-analysis of 58 randomized design studies of four different adult learning methods (N = 4,308 adult learners) indicated that active learner participation in acquiring new knowledge and skills was associated with effect sizes 2 to 3 times larger than those associated with trainer, coach, or instructor practices
- Results were used to develop capacity-building methods and procedures that used the key findings from the meta-analysis and other research and practice to ensure family capacity-building practices include elements that will likely have positive benefits

# Use of the Family Capacity-Building Practices

- The family capacity-building methods and procedures have been used with parents and with practitioners working with parents to promote parents' use of many different kinds of early childhood intervention practices in family and community settings
- The practices include, but are not limited to, child response-contingent learning opportunities, responsive teaching, everyday child learning opportunities, interest-based child learning, child language learning practices, early literacy learning practices, family-centred practices, family systems intervention practices, and social support interventions

## Caveats and Cautions

- The descriptions of the family capacity-building practices in settings like a workshop unfortunately are done out-of-context which makes the methods and procedures seem rigid and mechanical
- The practices, however, are quite flexible, and have been found to be applicable to a wide range of early childhood intervention practitioner and family situations
- Nonetheless, it is very important to take into consideration practitioner knowledge and skills, parent knowledge and skills, and parenting and family circumstances, when using the capacity-building practices

# Main Purposes of the Capacity-Building Practices

- The family capacity-building practices are intended for use in early childhood intervention programs where the goal is to promote parents' use of evidence-based or evidence-informed intervention practices with their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to enhance child learning and development
- The practices, if effective, ought to enhance and promote parents' abilities in ways that strengthen their use of early childhood intervention practices and positively influence parenting self-efficacy beliefs

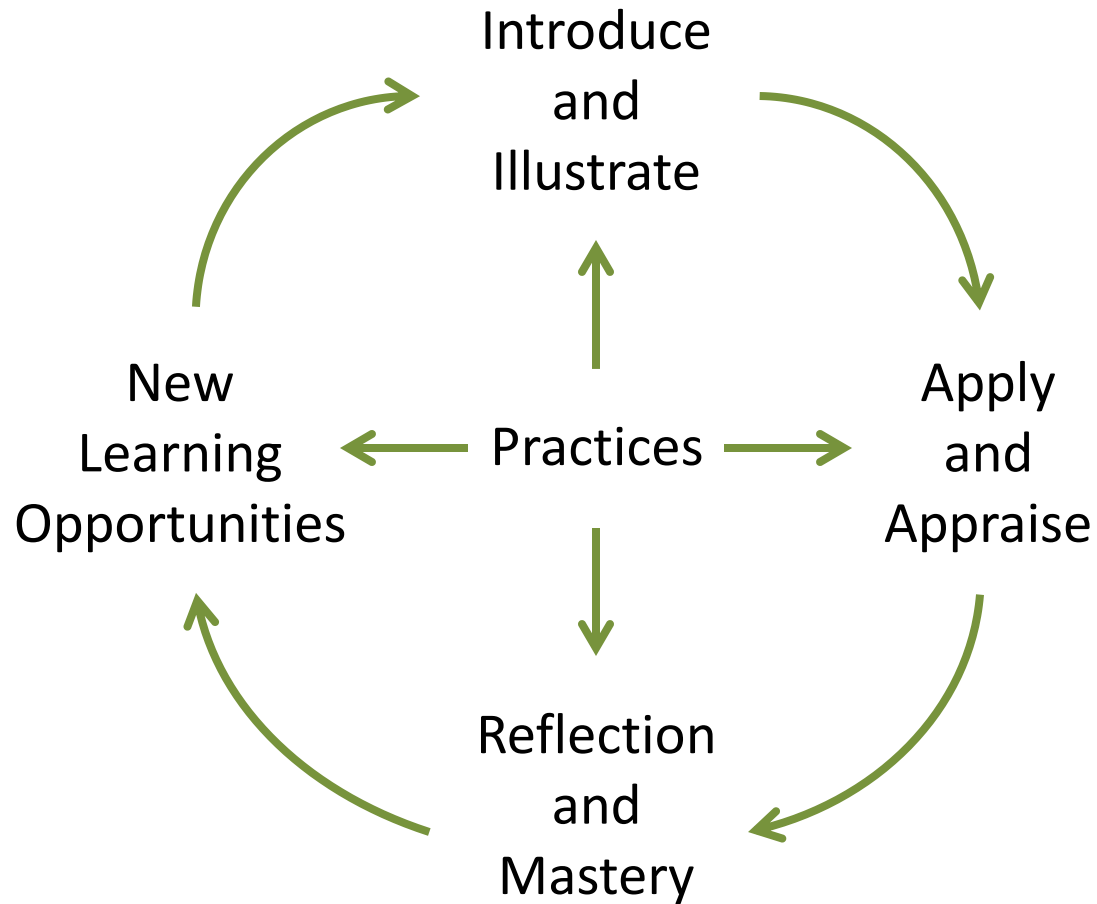


# An Evidence-Based Approach to Family Capacity-Building in Early Childhood Intervention

The family capacity-building practices include methods and procedures for:

- Introducing and illustrating a practice to a parent
- Having the parent use the practice and appraise (evaluate) his or her experience with the practice
- Engaging the parent in descriptions (assessment and reflection) of his or her understanding and ability to use the practice
- Having the parent (based on his/her experiences, understanding, and mastery) identify and engage in other learning opportunities to build and strengthen a parent's understanding and use of the practice

# Family Capacity-Building Process



# Introducing and Illustrating a Practice

- Provide a brief overview or description of the practice
- Describe the intended benefits of using the practice
- Introduce the key characteristics of the practice
- Use parent observed behaviour to describe and illustrate key characteristics of the practice
- Use a parent-friendly checklist, if appropriate, to illustrate the key characteristics of the practice
- Use some type of multimedia to illustrate the practice or to demonstrate the use of the practice
- Use examples that are appropriate for parent, child, and family circumstances

# Using the Practice and Evaluating the Experience

- Engage the parent in real-life (authentic) use of the practice or a component of the practice
- Use familiar everyday activities as the contexts for the parent to use the practice
- Provide supportive guidance, feedback, and suggestions as part of the parent's use of the practice
- Engage the parent in a description of what (s)he did and what happened as a result of using the practice
- Engage the parent in a description of how easy or difficult it was to use the practice

## Reflection on and Mastery of Use of the Practice

- Use a parent-friendly checklist, if appropriate, to have a parent review the key characteristics of the practice
- Facilitate the parent's self-assessment of his or her understanding and use of the practice using the parent responses to the checklist indicators
- Engage the parent in a description of what kinds of experiences would be most helpful to promote further understanding and use of the practice
- Provide ongoing support and feedback to encourage the parent's continued use of the practice

## Expanded Opportunities to Use the Practice

- Use the parent-described experiences to jointly identify new everyday opportunities to use the practice
- Engage the parent in descriptions of how (s)he would use the practice in 3 or 4 of the newly identified everyday activities
- Discuss ways the parent can record or document the use of the practice in the new activities
- Identify ways to encourage the parent to obtain ongoing feedback and support in response to using the practice

# **Example of the Use of the Capacity-Building Practice: Identifying Child Interests**

# Promoting Parents' Identification of Child Interests

- Describe child interests and illustrate interest-based child learning opportunities
- Engage the parent in an assessment of his or her child's interests and the selection of interest-based child learning opportunities
- Engage the parent in a description (evaluation) of what (s)he did and what happened as a result of the assessment process
- Have the parent use the assessment results to select interest-based learning opportunities for his or her child
- Identify together with the parent ways for engaging his or her child in everyday interest-based learning opportunities



# Introducing Child Interests

An interest assessment typically begins with a preview or overview of child interests and how they are related to child learning

- Interests include the things a child prefers to do, likes to do, and enjoys doing
- Child interests are one way of providing a child everyday learning opportunities
- Interest-based child learning is important because it keeps a child engaged in everyday activities
- Child learning that is fun and enjoyable is more likely to promote a sense of child mastery

## Two Types of Child Interests

It is often helpful to point out that there are two types of child interests that provide a child interest-based learning opportunities:

- A child's individual likes, favourites, preferences, and other individual child characteristics are called *personal interests*
- People, events, and objects that get and maintain a child's attention and involvement are called *situational interests*

## Examples of Children's Interests

Take, for example, children who like to play in water. Some children like bath time or playing with water in the kitchen sink. Other children like playing in a wading pool or watering the lawn with a hose. Some children like to play in puddles of water or water playgrounds.



## Other Examples of Children's Interests

Some children like to be always on the move. This might include running and jumping, or climbing on playground equipment. Other children might like “lil’ tots” gymnastics or just rolling around on grass. Some children like to ride on tricycles or other riding toys.



## How To Identify a Child's Interests?

Two ways for identifying a child's interests include:

- Making a list of a child's interests
- Completing a checklist of a child's interests

# Making a List of a Child's Interests

A parent can be asked questions like those on the exhibit to identify a child's interests. Parents' responses to the questions will result in a profile of a child's personal and situational interests. The interests on the profile can then be used to have the parent select everyday activities to provide his or her child interest-based learning opportunities.

Exhibit

Types of Questions for Identifying a Child's Interests
What makes your child smile and laugh?
What makes your child happy and feel good?
What gets your child excited?
What are the child's favorite things to do?
What things are particularly enjoyable and interesting to your child?
What does your child especially work hard at doing?
What gets and keeps your child's attention?
What behaviours does your child particularly like to do?
What "brings out the best" in your child?
What gets your child to try new things?
What does your child choose to do most often?

# Completing an Interest Checklist

Some parents prefer to complete a checklist rather than answer questions during an interview. The exhibit shows a portion of a checklist that includes some 80 different activities. A person completing the checklist simply marks or checks whether an activity *Is My Child's Interest* (personal interest) or is an activity that *Would Be Interesting To My Child* (situational interest).

Exhibit

This activity . . .	Is my child's interest	Would be interesting to my child
Being part of mealtime conversations		
Listening to songs or nursery rhymes during bath time		
Looking at picture books		
Listening to bedtime stories		
Snuggling with a parent		
Playing lap games like "Peek-a-boo" or "So Big!"		
Playing naming games like "Where Is Your Nose?"		
Playing with toys like See 'n Say		
Playing in water		
Scribbling on paper		
"Drawing" in sand or dirt		
Using crayons, markers, pens, and pencils		
Singing songs, nursery rhymes		
Listening to music, songs		
Having friends over to play		
Talking on the phone		
Saying hellos/good-byes		
Playing with or visiting a friend		
Going on a neighborhood walk		
Feeding ducks at a pond		

# Parent Evaluation of the Interest-Assessment Process

- The process for actively engaging parents in identifying their children's interests almost always elicits a response something like "I didn't realize my child had so many interests"
- This as well as other responses are easily used to have a parent evaluate the experience and describe what was learned as a result of the interest-assessment process
- The results are then used to have a parent identify interest-based child learning opportunities and to develop and implement a plan to increase child participation in the activities
- Most parents prefer to use a daily reminder list of the interest-based learning opportunities to remind them to engage their children in the learning activities



# **Example of the Use of the Capacity-Building Practice: Responsive Teaching**

# Promoting the Use of Responsive Teaching

- Describe the key characteristics of responsive teaching using a parent-friendly checklist
- Provide examples of the everyday activities where responsive teaching could be used
- Illustrate or demonstrate the use of responsive teaching or specific characteristics of the practice
- Engage the parent in a description of which activities s(he) thinks would be the best settings to use the practice
- Determine which of the characteristics of the practice would be most appropriate for the parent to try first
- Have the parent involve his or her child in everyday activities and use the responsive teaching characteristics
- Engage the parent in an evaluation of his or her experience using the practice

# Introducing Responsive Teaching

Some of the things that can be done to introduce responsive teaching to a parent include a description of each of the components of the practice:

- Responsive teaching is a particular way of interacting with a child that starts with a parent following a child's lead while the child is involved in an interesting activity
- Responsiveness simply involves a parent making positive comments and actions about what a child is doing, providing feedback, and joining in the child's play
- Responsive teaching also includes things that a parent does to support and encourage new ways for a child to interact with people, toys, or objects

# Introducing Responsive Teaching

The key characteristics of the practice can be introduced using a simple list of steps or components of responsive teaching. The exhibit lists the four basic steps for using responsive teaching.

## Exhibit

### Four Easy Steps to Responsive Teaching

1. Involve your child in interest-based activities (activities that your child finds fun and enjoyable)
2. Pay attention to what your child is doing in the activities
3. Respond positively to your child's behaviour and interactions with you and with objects
4. Encourage your child to try different things in new and different ways

# A More Detailed List of the Elements of Responsive Teaching

The components of or steps to responsive teaching are further illustrated by either checklists or other lists of the key characteristics of the practice. The exhibit shows a parent-inspired reminder sheet that was developed in response to parents' requests for a simple way of remembering what to do while interacting with their children.

## Exhibit

### Responsive Teaching Reminders

1. **Involve** your child in **everyday activities** that are **interesting** and that offer many good opportunities for language learning.
2. **Pay attention** to how your child tries to communicate or use language during these everyday activities.
  - See your child's behaviour as his/her way of saying "I want to interact with you" or "I want to interact with other people" during this activity.
3. **Respond** positively to your child's communication or attempts to communicate in the activities to get him or her to keep interacting with you:
  - Acknowledge your child's attempts to interact with you.
  - Comment on or praise your child for trying to communicate or use language in the activities.
  - Join in interactions or play with your child.
  - Imitate your child to encourage him or her to keep an interaction going or to keep playing.
4. **Encourage** your child to communicate in **new or different ways**:
  - Respond in ways that are slightly more complex than your child's attempts to communicate.
  - Give new information or use a new word with your child.
  - Ask simple questions in response to your child's attempts to communicate.
  - Arrange things so your child needs to communicate or use language in different ways in order to make things happen.

# Illustrating the Use of Responsive Teaching

Responsive teaching can be illustrated any number of ways to highlight the key characteristics of the practice

- Describing the key characteristics of the practice as depicted in photographs and by pointing out what is shown and what transpired
- Providing examples of what the practice “looks like” as part of everyday activities
- Showing a video of a parent using the practice with his or her child
- Demonstrating the use of the practice with the parent’s child

# Photographic Examples of Responsive Teaching

Responsive teaching starts by paying attention to interest-based child participation in everyday activities (following the child's lead). These photographs include examples of the different things children are doing in everyday activities. The behaviour the children are displaying is what parents would be responsive to while the children are involved in everyday activities.



# Photographic Examples of Responsive Teaching

Responsiveness to what children are doing in everyday activities is how a parent can get a child to continue or repeat what he or she is doing. These photographs include examples of things parents did to maintain their children's involvement in different activities.





# Photographic Examples of Responsive Teaching

Responsive teaching is an excellent way of helping a child to try to do new and different things while involved in everyday activities. These photographs illustrate some of the things parents did to get their children to do new things while engaged in everyday activities.



# Video Examples of Responsive Teaching

Videos of parents using responsive teaching with their children can be an especially effective way of illustrating responsive teaching to a parent. The video you will see shows a mother using responsive teaching with her daughter Stella during a shared book reading activity.



## Parent Use of Responsive Teaching

- Multi-component practices like responsive teaching are often learned by concentrating on one or two characteristics rather than all of the characteristics at once
- It is generally best to have the parent select from all responsive teaching elements the one or two elements that the parent feels most comfortable doing
- Engaging the parent in use of the element(s) is most easily accomplished when done as part of familiar everyday activities
- Encouraging and supporting a parent's use of the practice during and after application is generally necessary to promote and enhance parenting confidence and competence

# Parent Evaluation of the Use of Responsive Teaching

- Parent evaluation of his or her use of responsive teaching is accomplished by simply asking a parent to describe his or her experience and by also describing what his or her child did in response to using the practice
- The parent's descriptions are used to determine which types of practitioner feedback, supports, and encouragement would be helpful to facilitate continued use of the practice
- A parent's continued use can either focus on the same practice elements or the addition of other responsive teaching elements

# Reflection on and Mastery of Responsive Teaching

- Understanding and use of practices like responsive teaching can be promoted by using parent-friendly checklists to have a parent informally self-assess his or her understanding of the practice
- A parent is simply engaged in the review of the checklist indicators where (s)he is asked to describe his or her experiences using the indicators
- Practitioner-facilitated parent self-assessment (reflection) of each of the practice indicators is used to enhance deeper understanding of the practice

# Family Capacity-Building in Early Childhood Intervention *Web-Based Training Course*

## **Module 1**

- Lesson 1: Introduction and Overview
- Lesson 2: Family Capacity-Building Practices

## **Module 2**

- Lesson 3: Response-Contingent Child Learning
- Lesson 4: Early Learning Games
- Lesson 5: Child Anticipatory and Mastery Behaviour

## **Module 3**

- Lesson 6: Practitioner Guidelines for Using Family Capacity-Building Practices

## Lessons Learned

- Descriptions and discussions of a practice without explicit illustration and active parent involvement in the use of a practice simply do not have capacity-building consequences
- Illustrating and/or demonstrating the use of a practice is necessary but not sufficient for a parent to learn to use a practice
- Active parent participation in using a practice with family-friendly practitioner feedback, support, and encouragement can go a long way to promoting a parent's confidence and competence
- Deep understanding and sustained use of a practice are achieved by having parents self-assess their ability to use a practice
- Family capacity-building is best achieved when “learning opportunities” are distributed over time and include opportunities to reflect on what worked and did not work

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