

Beginning the Journey Toward Full Inclusion: Experiences of Preschoolers and Their Families

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Introduction

- A universal aspect of young children's daily lives throughout the world is that participation in everyday activities are contexts for learning socially situated and culturally meaningful behavior
- Inclusion for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities can be conceptualized as participation in everyday family and community activities with family members, relatives, and other children and adults
- Participation of young children with disabilities or delays in everyday activity is a form of early intervention for promoting and enhancing child learning and development and strengthening child confidence and competence

Purposes of the Session

- Describe the kinds of everyday activities that are sources of participatory opportunities for young children with disabilities
- Describe and illustrate similarities and differences in the patterns of participation in everyday activities among young children with and without disabilities
- Provide examples of children's' participation in everyday family and community activities
- Describe the approaches to intervention that have proven most successful for increasing child participation in everyday activities

Everyday Activity Settings, Participatory Opportunities, and Child Inclusion in Family and Community Activities

- My colleagues and I have conducted research and practice where activity setting theory has been used as a framework for understanding young children's participation in everyday activities.
- The particular model we have used focused on identifying the child characteristics, the characteristics of other persons, and environmental characteristics that are associated with positive child participation in everyday activities.
- One goal of the research and practice has been the identification of the characteristics associated with optimal child benefits and the use of the characteristics to promote child participation.

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 behavioral propensities of others.” (Dunst et al., 2002).

Dunst, C. J., Bruder, M. B., Trivette, C. M., Hamby, D., Raab, M., & McLean, M. (2001). Characteristics and consequences of everyday natural learning opportunities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 21*, 68-92.

Farver, J. A. M. (1999). Activity setting analysis: A model for examining the role of culture in development. In A. Göncü (Ed.), *Children's engagement in the world: Sociocultural perspectives* (pp. 99-127). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

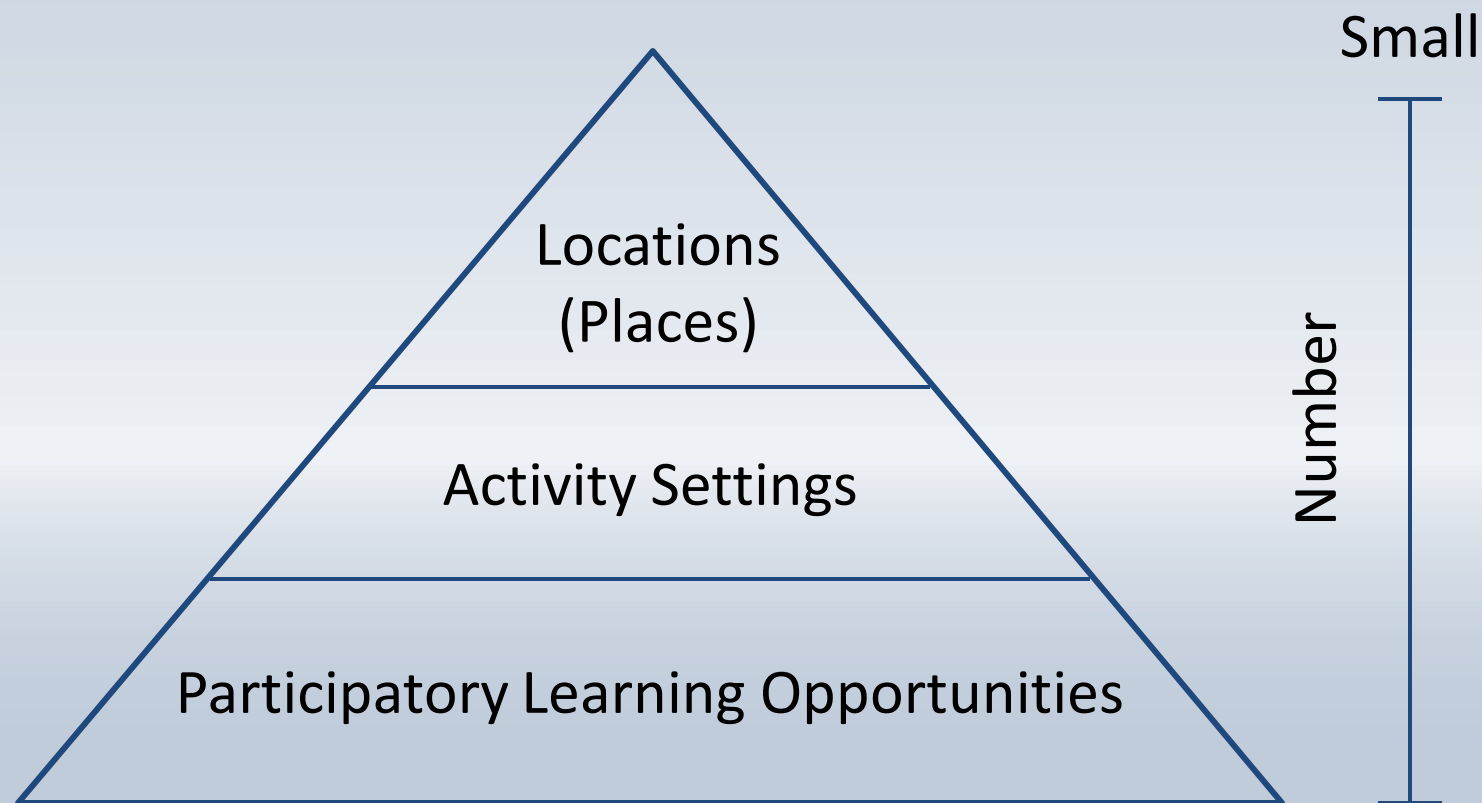
Tharp, R., & Gallimore, R. (1988). *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in social context*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Everyday Activity Setting Projects

- Increasing Children's Learning Opportunities Early Childhood Research Institute
- Building Community Resources Inclusion Project
- POSSIBILITIES Recreation and Leisure Project
- Project ABLE (Asset-Based Learning Experiences)
- Anyplace, Anywhere Child Learning Opportunities Project
- Project PAL (Parents Assisting Learning)
- Contextually Mediated Everyday Child Learning Project
- Power of the Ordinary Project

Increasing Children's Learning Opportunities

Early Childhood Research Institute



Relationship Between Locations, Activity Settings,
and Children's Participatory Learning
Opportunities

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MACROLOCATIONS

Home

Community

MICROLOCATIONS

Kitchen

Playground

MACRO ACTIVITY SETTINGS

Table

Sink

Cabinets

Slide

Swings

Teeter-Totter

MICRO ACTIVITY SETTINGS

Meals

Games

Dinner
Talk

Steps

Platform

Sliding
Trough

Examples of Locations and Activity Settings Serving as the Contexts for Children's Learning Opportunities

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NOTE: The locations, natural learning environments, and learning opportunities are only a small sampling of the make-up of a child's community life.

Examples of Child Participation in the Everyday Family and Community Activities

















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 were 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 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 abberations	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.

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

National Survey of Everyday Family and Community Life

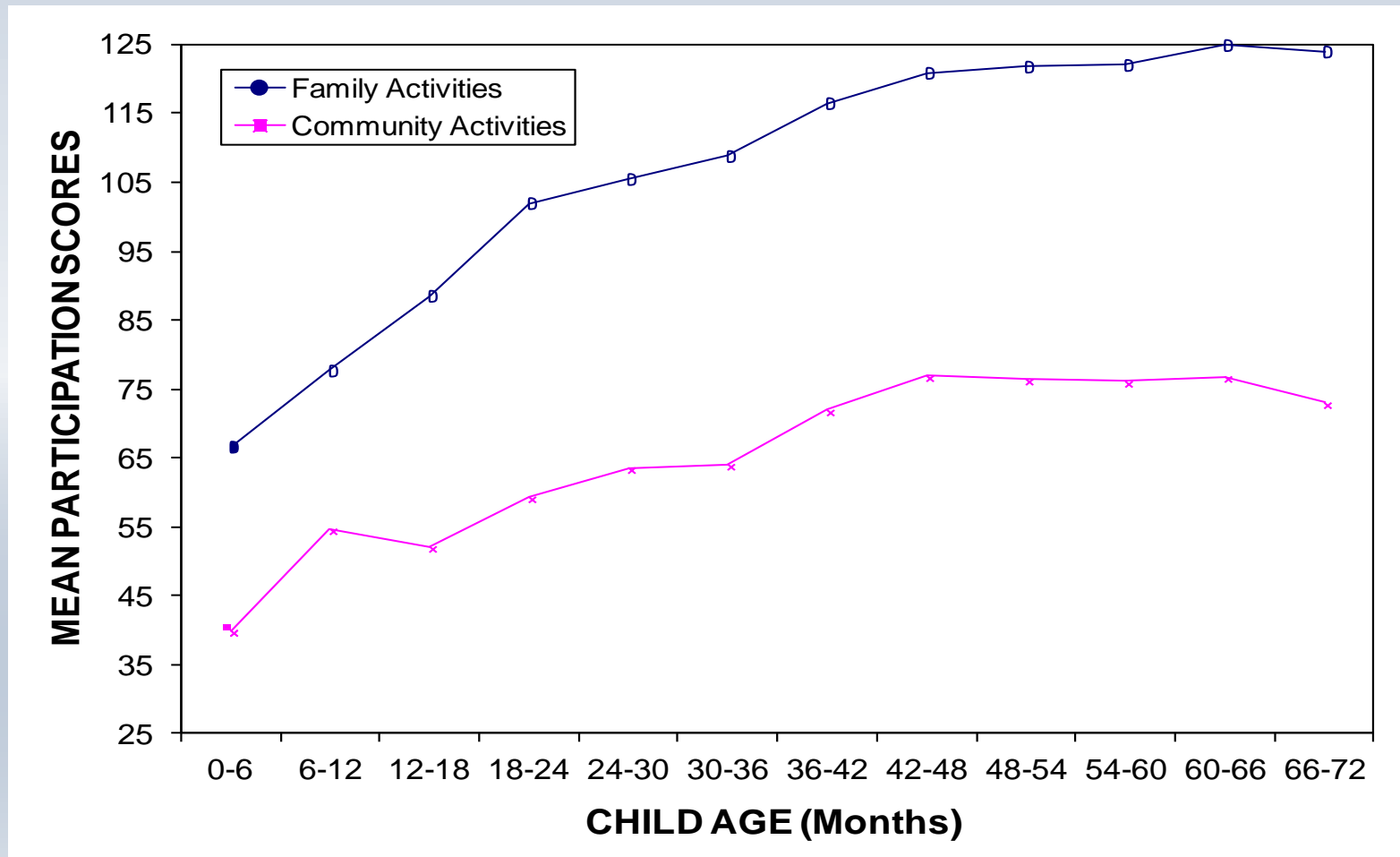
- **Purpose:** Determine the age-related changes in child participation in everyday family and community activities.
- **Participants:** 3283 parents and other caregivers in 48 United States, Puerto Rico, and Yap (Micronesia).
- **Survey:** Participants completed a survey including either 50 family activities or 50 community activities that were identified from an extensive review of the literature.
- **Method of Analysis:** Determined the average scores for the children in 12 6-month age ranges between birth and 72 months of age.

^aC. J. Dunst et al. (2000). Everyday family and community life and children's naturally occurring learning opportunities. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 23, 151-164.

Everyday Family and Community Activities

Family (Example)	Community (Example)
Family Routines (Cooking)	Family Excursions (Car/bus rides)
Parenting Routines (Child's bedtime)	Family Outings (Visiting friends/neighbors)
Child Routines (Dressing/undressing)	Play Activities (Playgrounds)
Literacy Activities (Telling child stories)	Community Activities (Library/book mobile)
Play Activities (Lap games, nursery rhymes)	Outdoor Activities (Nature trail walks)
Physical Play (Rough housing)	Recreation Activities (Swimming)
Entertainment Activities (Dancing/singing)	Children's Attractions (Petting zoos/animal farms)
Family Rituals (Saying grace at meals)	Arts/Entertainment Activities (Concerts/theater)
Family Celebrations (Holiday dinners)	Church/Religious Activities (Sunday school)
Socialization Activities (Having friends "over")	Organizations and Groups (Children's groups)
Gardening Activities (Vegetable garden)	Sports Activities (Football)

Child Participation in Everyday Family and Community Activities



Examples of Child Participation and Inclusion in Everyday Family and Community Activities











































Factors Associated with Positive Child Participation Inclusion in Everyday Family and Community Activities

Child Factors

- Strengths-based approach to promoting child participation in everyday activities
- Interest-based child participation in everyday activities

Adult Factors

- Parent and other adults strengths and interests as sources of participatory child learning opportunities
- Strengths-based attitude and perspective of children's capabilities

Activity Factors

- Situationally interesting features of everyday activities encouraging child participation

Child Strengths and Interests

Child Strengths

- What is the child good at doing?
- What are the child's special skills or talents?
- What abilities does the child demonstrate most often?
- What is the child most successful at doing?

Child Interests

- What does the child like or prefer to do?
- What most excites the child?
- What gets and maintains the child's attention?
- What are the child's favorite things to do?

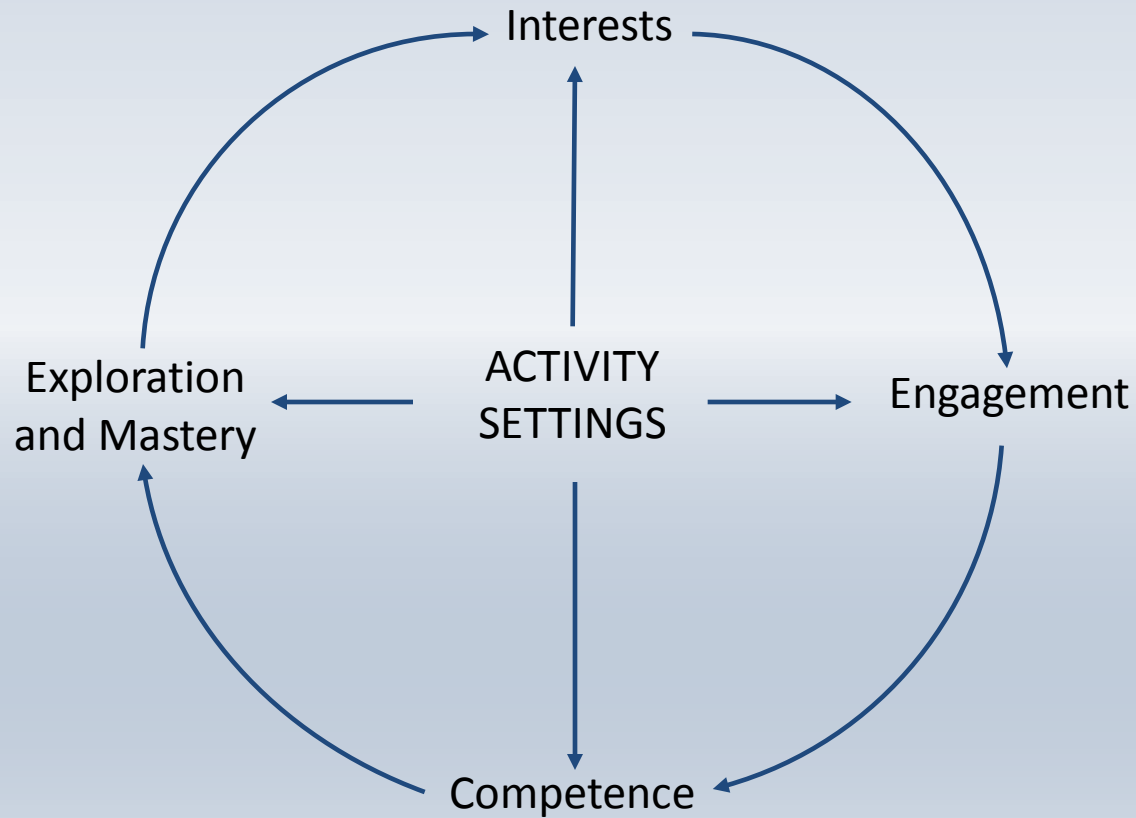
Strengths-Based Child Participation in Everyday Activities

- A focus on child ability rather than disability has been found to be a more effective strategy for engaging children in everyday activities.
- Use of adults' strengths as a factor promoting child participation in everyday activities increases the likelihood of successful child inclusion.
- Participation in everyday activities that builds on both child and adult strengths simultaneously bolsters the positive effects of inclusion.

Interest-Based Child Participation in Everyday Activities

- One child characteristic that has consistently emerged as a person factor influencing everyday learning as part of our research and practice is a child's personal interests (preferences, choices, desires, likes, etc.).
- One activity setting characteristic that has consistently emerged as setting factor influencing children's everyday learning is the situationally-interesting (engaging) features of everyday activity settings.
- Incorporating either personal or situational interests into everyday child learning has been found to be associated with optimal child benefits.

Strengths- and Interest-Based Everyday Child Learning



Lessons Learned From Activity Setting Research and Practice

- Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities participate in everyday activities in ways similar to other children.
- Intentional efforts to promote children with disabilities participation in everyday activities necessitates a paradigm shift toward strengths-based and away from deficit-based approaches to intervention.
- Of particular note is the fact that strengths- and interest-based child participation in everyday activities shifts others perspectives of children with disabilities to see their abilities rather than disabilities.

PowerPoint presentation available at:

www.puckett.org