A Family-Centered Approach to Understanding Family-School Relationships

Carl J. Dunst, Ph.D.
Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute
Asheville, North Carolina

Overview

• Illustrate the manner in which professional practices, parent self-efficacy beliefs, and practitioner responsiveness to parents’ requests are related to family involvement in their children’s learning and parenting confidence and confidence studies

• Summarize findings from both primary studies and meta-analyses of the relationships between family-centered practices and parent and child behavior and functioning

• Share lessons learned from both practice and research on family-school relationships
### Types of Child and Parenting Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Project</th>
<th>Setting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family, Infant and Preschool Program</td>
<td>Home-Based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Resource Programs</td>
<td>Center-Based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement in their Children’s Special Education</td>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Follow-Through Institute</td>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
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</tbody>
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Family-Centered Practice and Research

Assess the extent to and manner in which the use of family-centered (help giving) practices are directly and indirectly related to parent involvement in their children’s learning and early education, parenting confidence and competence, and child behavior and development mediated by parents’ self-efficacy beliefs
## Major Practice and Research Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family-Centered Practices</td>
<td>Relational and participatory practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/Family Informational and Support Needs</td>
<td>Practitioner helpfulness and responsiveness to parents’ requests for information and support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy Beliefs</td>
<td>Parents’ judgments of their likelihood of success to obtaining needed supports and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Capabilities</td>
<td>Parenting confidence and confidence</td>
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</tbody>
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Definition of Family-Centered Help-giving Practices

Family-centered help-giving practices treat families with dignity and respect; provide family members with information needed to make informed decisions and choices; involve active family involvement in obtaining resources and supports; and practitioner responsiveness and flexibility to family requests and desires.
Two Types of Family-Centered Help-giving Practices

Our research has consistently found that there are two clear discernable kinds of practices that “fall into” distinct subcategories of help-giving practices:

- Relational help-giving practices
- Participatory help-giving practices
Relational Family-Centered Practices

• Relational practices include behavior typically associated with effective clinical practice, including, but not limited to, compassion, active and reflective listening, empathy, and effective communication.

• Relational practices also include practitioner beliefs and attitudes about family and cultural strengths, values, and attitudes, and practitioner sensitivity to these beliefs and values as part of intervention practices.
Participatory Family-Centered Practices

- Participatory practices include behavior that actively involve family members in (a) informed choice and decision making and (b) using existing strengths and abilities as well as developing new capabilities needed to obtain resources, supports, advice, etc.
- Participatory practices also include practitioner responsiveness to and flexibility in how help is provided to children and their families.
Practice-Based Framework for Investigating the Influences of Family-Centered Practices

Family-Centered Practices

- Relational
- Participatory

Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Participant Outcomes
- Parent
- Family
- Child
Practice-Based Research Syntheses of Family-Centered Help-giving Practices

- Meta-analysis of 52 studies conducted by more than 20 researchers and research teams in seven countries\textsuperscript{a,b}
- Meta-analysis of 18 studies conducted by Dunst, Trivette, and colleagues in one early childhood intervention and family support program\textsuperscript{c}


## Selected Characteristics of the Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percent Mothers</th>
<th>Age Range (Years)</th>
<th>Formal Education (Years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis 1</td>
<td>11,500+</td>
<td>63-100</td>
<td>15-60+</td>
<td>3-20+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis 2</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>16-50+</td>
<td>5-20+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Measures</td>
<td>Instruments/Constructs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family-Centered Practices</td>
<td>Family-Centered Behavior Scale,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family/Professional Collaboration Scale,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enabling Practices Scale, Help-giving Practices Scale, Brass Tacks, FOCAS,</td>
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<td>Measure of Process of Care,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family/Provider Relationship Instrument,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family-Focused Intervention Scale</td>
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<td>Outcome Measures</td>
<td>Program participant satisfaction, staff helpfulness, self-efficacy beliefs, parent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>empowerment, parenting capabilities, personal well-being, family functioning, social</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support, child functioning, child health</td>
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Direct Effects of Family-Centered Help-giving Practices on Parent, Family, and Child Behavior and Functioning
Direct Effects of Self-Efficacy Beliefs on Parent, Family, and Child Behavior and Functioning

MEAN EFFECT SIZE ($r$)

- Program Helpfulness
- Parenting Capabilities
- Child Behavior
- Social Supports
- Parent/Family Functioning

OUTCOME MEASURES
Direct and Indirect Effects of Family-Centered Help-giving Practices on the Study Outcomes Mediated by Self-Efficacy Beliefs
Relationships Between Family-Centered Practices, Practitioner Responsiveness, Parenting Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Parenting Confidence and Confidence

- Parents of preschool aged children involved in five different family resource centers (N = 100+)
- Structural equation modeling of the relationships among measures
- Focus on the extent to which family-centered practices is indirectly related to parenting capabilities mediated by practitioner responsiveness and self-efficacy beliefs
Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Expanded Practice-Based Framework Analysis

Relational

Participatory

Family-Centered Practices

Efficacy Attributions

Outcome Expectations

Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Parent/Family Needs

Respnsiveness

Helpfulness

Parenting Capabilities

Competence

Confidence

Indirect Effects of Family-Centered Practices

.74*

.57*

.29*

.39*

.21

.40*

* p < .001.
Lessons Learned from Family-Centered Research and Practice

• Use of family-centered practice provide a foundation for strengthening parent-professional relationships
• Family involvement in their children’s learning and education needs to be judged as meaningful (worthwhile) by the children’s parents to sustain engagement
• Responsiveness to parents’ informational, instrumental, and other types of supports is one factor contributing to parents’ judgments of meaningful involvement
• Self-efficacy appraisals are one determinant of the likelihood of parent involvement having positive parent and child benefits