

DEC
Institute on Family Engagement in Early
Childhood Special Education
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The Role of Families in their Child's Learning

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DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

If you treat an individual as he is he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as he ought to be, and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.

Goethe

Definition of Expert

One who knows a lot about a subject

OR

One who has a powerpoint

Life in the 21st Century

- Change is the Constant
 - Technology
 - Instant Gratification
 - Viral Communication
 - Personalized Learning

Early Childhood Challenges

Changing characteristics of families

Changing characteristics of children

Changing characteristics of communities

Changing models of early childhood programs

Changing roles for early childhood professionals

Family

We all come from families. Families are big, small, extended, nuclear, multi-generational, with one parent, two parents, and grandparents. We live under one roof or many. A family can be as temporary as a few weeks, as permanent as forever. We become part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage, or from a desire for mutual support. As family members, we nurture, protect, and influence one another. Families are dynamic and are cultures unto themselves, with different values and unique ways of realizing dreams. Together, our families become the source of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual diversity. Each family has strengths and qualities that flow from individual members and from the family as a unit. Our families create neighborhoods, communities, states, and nations.

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must be what the community wants for all its children

John Dewey

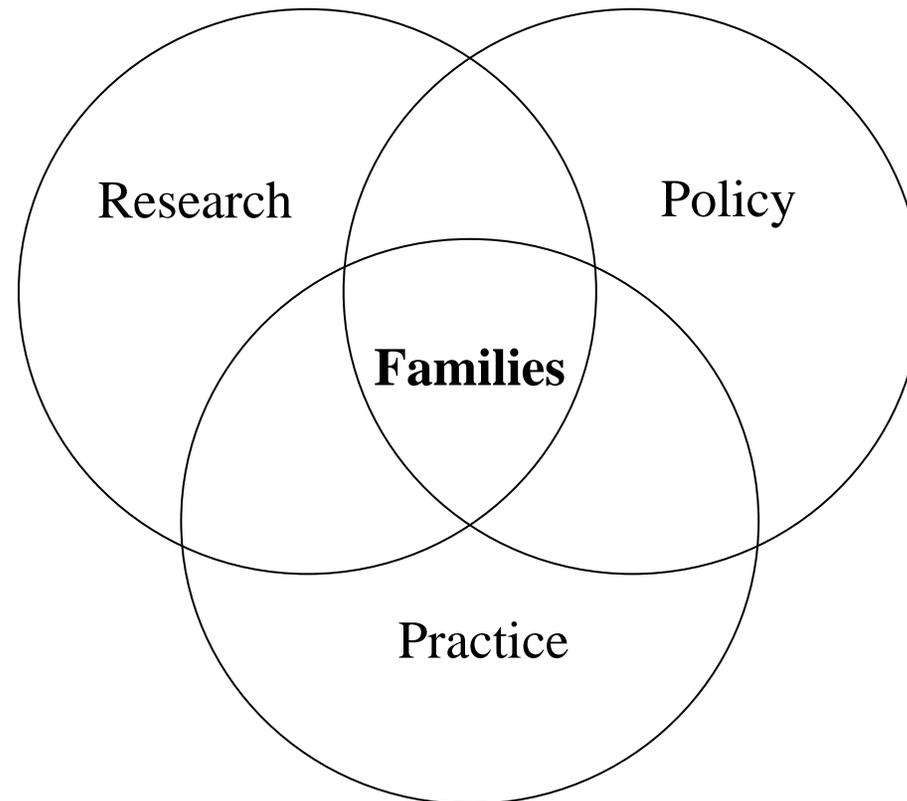
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Family Centered Care

recognizes and respects the pivotal role of the family in the lives of children. It supports families in their natural caregiving roles, promotes normal patterns of living, and ensures family collaboration and choice in the provision of services to the child.

Early Childhood Intervention



Policy

Legislation in Early Intervention

- 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act:
Initiated Head Start.
- 1968 Handicapped Children's Early Education Program:
Funded model preschool programs.
- 1972 Economic Opportunity Act; Required at least 10%
of children with disabilities in Head Start.
- 1976 PL 94-142 -The Education of All Handicapped
Children Act: FAPE for children 6-18.
- 1986 PL 99-457-Amendments to EHA: FAPE for
eligible preschool children; State plan
grants for birth to 3 systems.

IDEA-PART C; Sec. 631 FINDINGS AND POLICY

Findings.--Congress finds that there is an urgent and substantial need--

to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for developmental delay, and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during a child's first 3 years of life;

(2) to reduce the educational costs to our society, including our Nation's schools, by minimizing the need for special education and related services after infants and toddlers with disabilities reach school age;

(3) to maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently in society;

(4) to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities; and

(5) to enhance the capacity of State and local agencies and service providers to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of all children, particularly minority, low-income, inner city, and rural children, and infants and toddlers in foster care.

Early Intervention Services may include ...

- Family training, counseling and home visits
- Special instruction
- Speech-language pathology and audiology services, and sign language and cued language services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Service coordination services
- Medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- Early identification, screening, and assessment services
- Health services necessary to enable the child to benefit from other early intervention services
- Social work services
- Vision services
- Assistive technology devices and assistive technology services
- Transportation and related costs that are necessary to receive services

Qualified Personnel who provide early intervention services include ...

- Special educators
- Speech-language pathologists and audiologists
- Occupational therapists
- Physical therapists
- Psychologists
- Social workers
- Nurses
- Registered dietitians
- Family therapists
- Vision specialists, including ophthalmologists and optometrists
- Orientation and mobility specialists
- Pediatricians and other physicians

Research

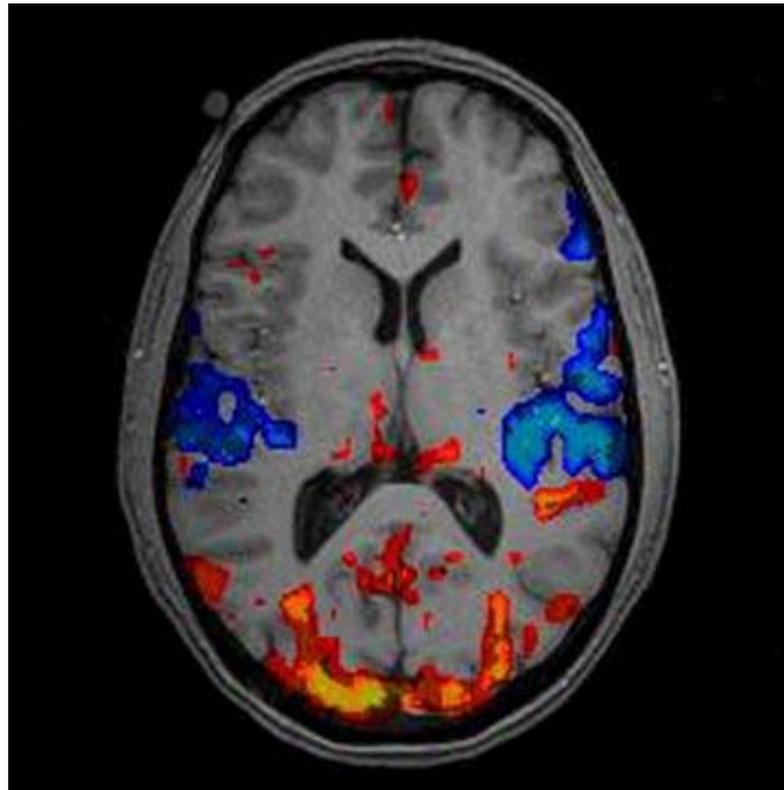
Definition of Evidenced Based Practice

Practices that are informed by research, in which the characteristics and consequences of environmental variables are empirically established and the relationship directly informs what a practitioner can do to produce a desired outcome.

Evidenced Based Practice

- Evidence is not value-free.
- There are no universal solutions or quick fixes.
- Evidence is often incomplete or equivocal.
- Evidence can be quite complex.

Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century: The Science of Learning



Science of Learning

The brain is adaptable and can be influenced by **positive experiences....**

The brain is vulnerable and can be harmed by **negative experiences....**

Evidence-Informed Early Childhood Intervention

- 50+ years of research has identified many of the intrafamily and extrafamily factors that account for variations in child, parent, and family behavior and development
- Different bodies of research now provide the foundations for a particular set of early childhood intervention practices that matter most for optimizing child, parent, and family outcomes
- The research and associated practices, taken together, are framed in an ecological model with intervention practices at different levels of systems influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Relationships Between Social Supports, Resources, Parent Well-Being and Parenting

“Whether parents can perform effectively in their child-rearing roles within the family depends on the role demands, stresses, and supports emanating from other settings....Parent’ evaluation of their own capacity to function, as well as their view of their children, are related to such external factors as flexibility of job schedules, adequacy of child care arrangements, the presence of friends and neighbors who can help out in large and small emergencies, the quality of health and social services, and neighborhood safety. The availability of supportive settings is, in turn, a function of their existence and frequency in a given culture or subculture.” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7).

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Relationship Between Supports, Resources, and Early Childhood Intervention

“Intervention programs that place major emphasis on involving parents directly in activities fostering their children’s development are likely to have constructive impact at any age, but the earlier such activities are begun, and the longer they are continued, the greater the benefit to the children. One major problem still remains...[Many] families live under such oppressive circumstances that they are neither willing nor able to participate in the activities required by a parent intervention program. Inadequate health care, poor housing, lack of education, low income, and the necessity for full-time work...rob parents of the [psychological] energy to spend time with their children (p. 449).”

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1975). Is early intervention effective? In B. Z. Friedlander, G. M. Sterritt, & G. E. Kirk (Eds.), *Exceptional infant: Vol. 3. Assessment and intervention* (pp. 449-475). New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Relationship Between Social Supports, Family Resources, and Parent Physical and Psychological Well-Being

- Parents are more likely to provide their children development-enhancing learning opportunities and interact with their children in responsive ways if their well-being is not compromised
- Research on the relationship between social support and parent and family well-being shows that well-being is enhanced and stress, anxiety, and other psychological disorders are lessened by the variability of needed supports and resources
- Results from a meta-analytic structural equation modeling study (Trivette et al., 2010) found that pathways of influence can be traced from social supports to parent well-being to positive parent-child interactions to changes in child development

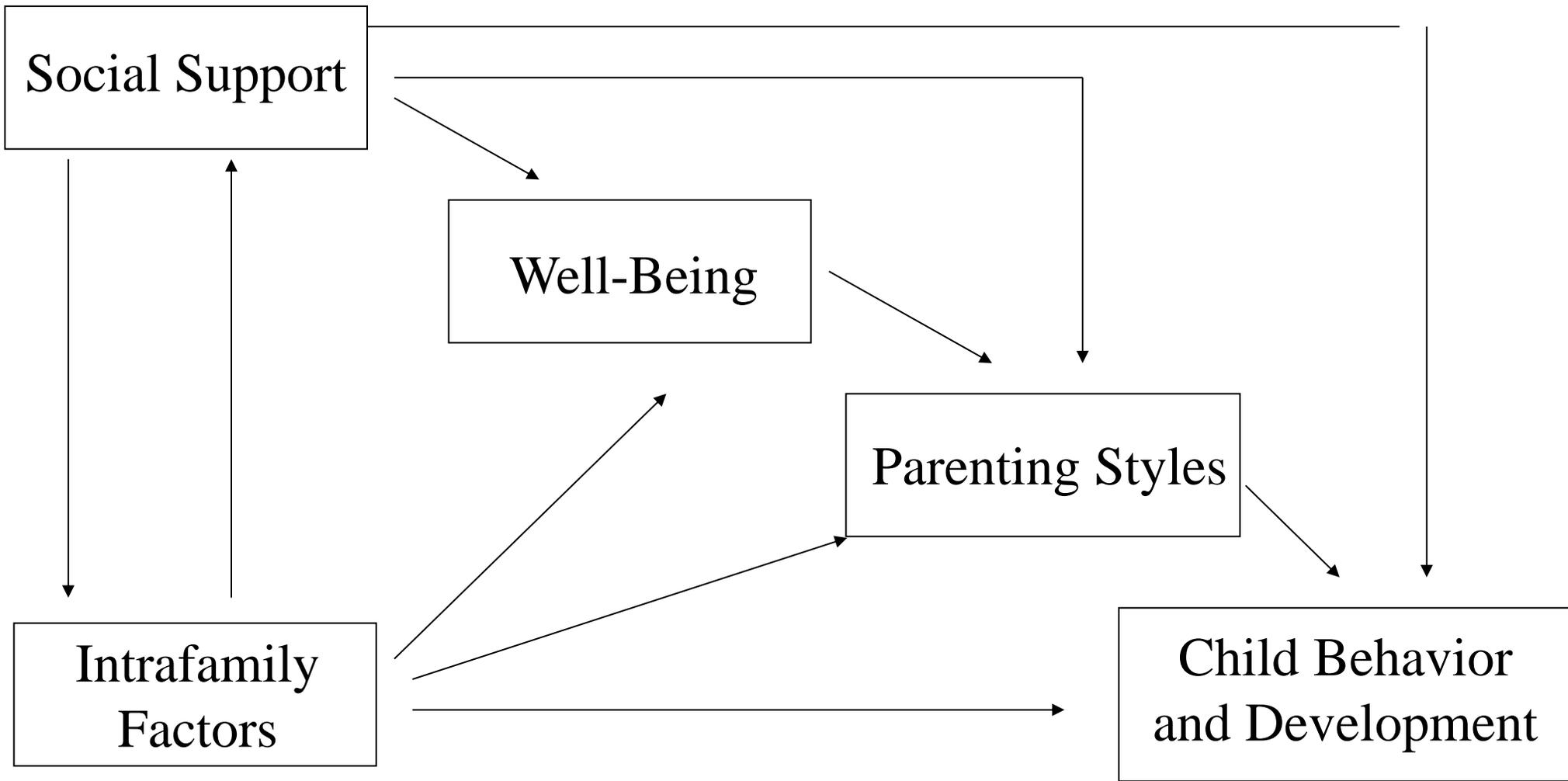
Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Hamby, D. W. (2010). Influences of family-systems intervention practices on parent-child interactions and child development. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 30*, 3-19.

Adult-Child Interactions as the Context for Strengthening Child Functioning

Linda Richter (2004), as part of a review of research and practice on caregiver-child interactions in many different countries and cultures throughout the world, concluded (among other things) that:

- “***Sensitive and responsive*** caregiving is a requirement for healthy child development” (emphasis added).
- “***Nurturing and supportive*** caregiving relationships have universal features across cultures, regardless of differences in specific child rearing practices” (emphasis added).

Richter, L. (2004.) *The importance of caregiver-child interactions for the survival and healthy development of young children: A review*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development.



Capacity-Building Help Giving Practices

- Relational help giving practices include early childhood practitioner knowledge and skills in their area(s) of professional preparation, their abilities to establish interpersonal and collaborative relationships with families, and their abilities to support and strengthen family capacity
- Capacity-building help giving practices focus on actively involving parents and other family members in informed decision-making and procurement of supports and resources, or engagement in desired activity, based on their choices

Family-Centered Participatory Help Giving Practices

Family-centered participatory help giving practices include (a) the methods and procedures used by early childhood practitioners to (b) actively engage family members in obtaining needed supports and resources or engaging in different activities that (c) improve family functioning in ways that (d) enhance and strengthen parent, family, and child competence and confidence

Family-Centered Capacity-Building Help Giving Practices

- Research conducted by investigators in different countries indicates that family-centered help giving is comprised of both relational (relationship-building) and participatory (capacity-building) practices that are related to family strengthening benefits and outcomes.
- Recent research “points to” particular characteristics of participatory help giving as necessary if practitioner interventions are necessary to have capacity-building consequences.

Influences of Family Capacity-Building Practices on Parenting and Child Outcomes

- 17 studies including 10,000+ infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with identified disabilities or delays and their parents
- Secondary analyses of a subset of measures were conducted for testing the relationships among the variables in our family capacity-building model
- The measures included family capacity-building practices (participatory help giving), frequency of parent-practitioner contacts, parenting self-efficacy beliefs, parent responsiveness to child behavior during parent-child interactions, and child development (cognitive and language development)
- Meta-analytic structural equation modeling was used to analyze the relationships among the study variables

Role of Children's Interests in Everyday Learning

- One child characteristic that has consistently emerged from research and practice as a person factor influencing everyday learning 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 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

Dunst, C. J., & Raab, M. (2012). Interest-based child participation in everyday learning activities. In N. M. Seel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the sciences of learning* (pp. 1621- 1623). New York: Springer.

Contrasting Approaches to Everyday Child Learning

Comparisons of two different approaches to young children's natural environment interventions found that using everyday activities as sources of child learning opportunities resulted in 3 to 4 more learning opportunities per activity setting compared to implementing early intervention in everyday activities (Dunst et al., 2005).

Dunst, C. J., Bruder, M. B., Trivette, C. M., & Hamby, D. W. (2005). Young children's natural learning environments: Contrasting approaches to early childhood intervention indicate differential learning opportunities. *Psychological Reports, 96*, 231-234.

Practice

Family Centered Helpgiving

Provide families with choices, and opportunities to act on their choices, to increase the self-efficacy benefits of practitioner helpgiving

Help Giving

Relational Help Giving:

- (a) behavior typically associated with effective clinical practice including, but not limited to, compassion, active and reflective listening, empathy, and effective communication
- (b) practitioner beliefs and attitudes about family and cultural strengths and values
- (c) practitioner sensitivity to these beliefs and values as part of intervention practices

Participatory Help Giving:

- (a) behavior that engages family members in informed choice and decision making
- (b) family members using existing strengths and abilities as well as developing new capabilities needed to be actively involved in different types of child and family interventions
- (c) practitioner responsiveness to and flexibility in how help is provided to children and their families

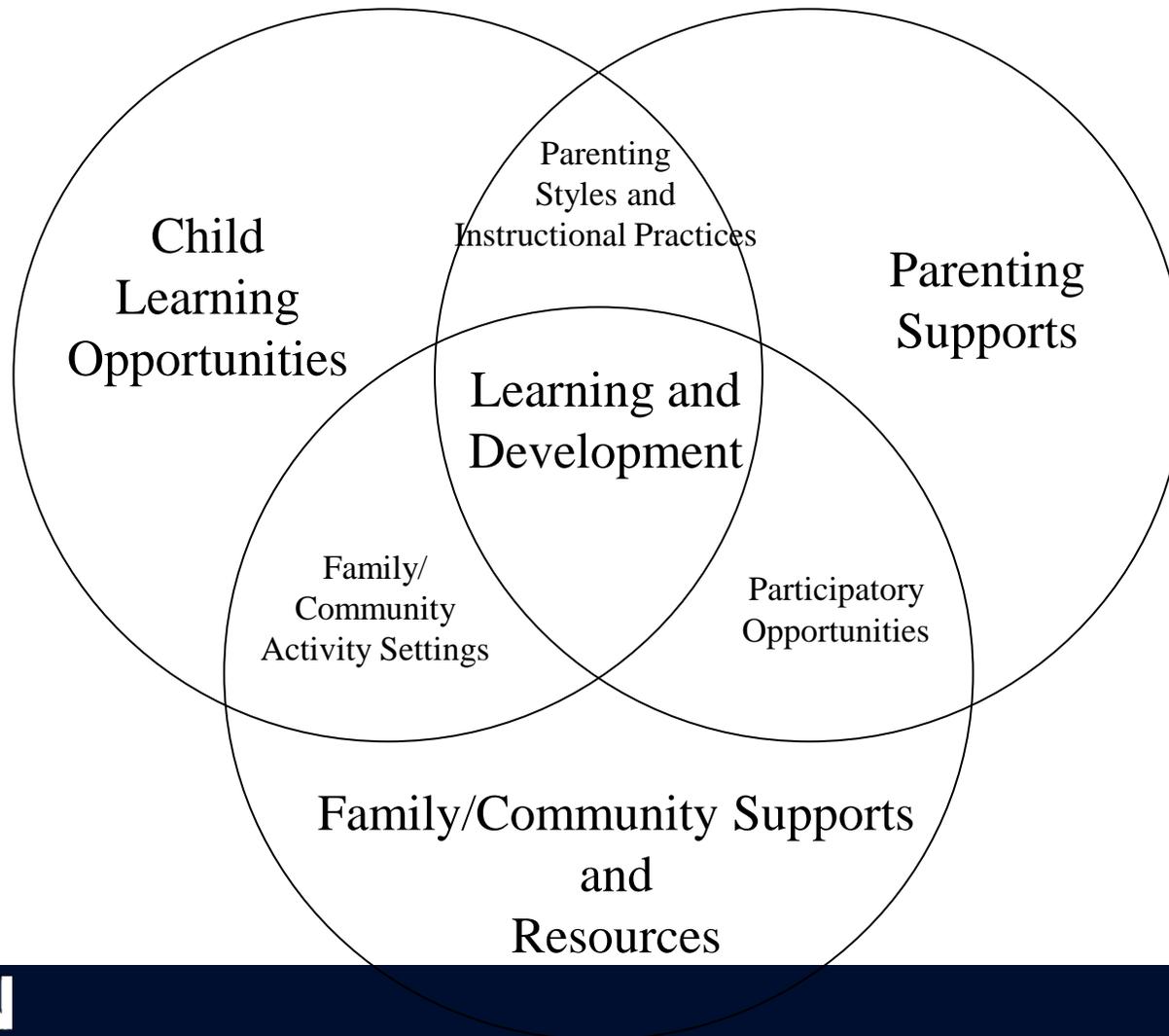
DEC Recommended Practices - Family

1. Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity.
2. Practitioners provide the family with up-to-date, comprehensive and unbiased information in a way that the family can understand and use to make informed choices and decisions.
3. Practitioners are responsive to the family's concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances.
4. Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs.
5. Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities.

DEC Recommended Practices – Family (Cont.)

6. Practitioners engage the family in opportunities that support and strengthen parenting knowledge and skills and parenting competence and confidence in ways that are flexible, individualized, and tailored to the family's preferences.
7. Practitioners work with the family to identify, access, and use formal and informal resources and supports to achieve family-identified outcomes or goals.
8. Practitioners provide the family of a young child who has or is at risk for developmental delay/disability, and who is a dual language learner, with information about the benefits of learning in multiple languages for the child's growth and development.
9. Practitioners help families know and understand their rights.
10. Practitioners inform families about leadership and advocacy skill-building opportunities and encourage those who are interested to participate.

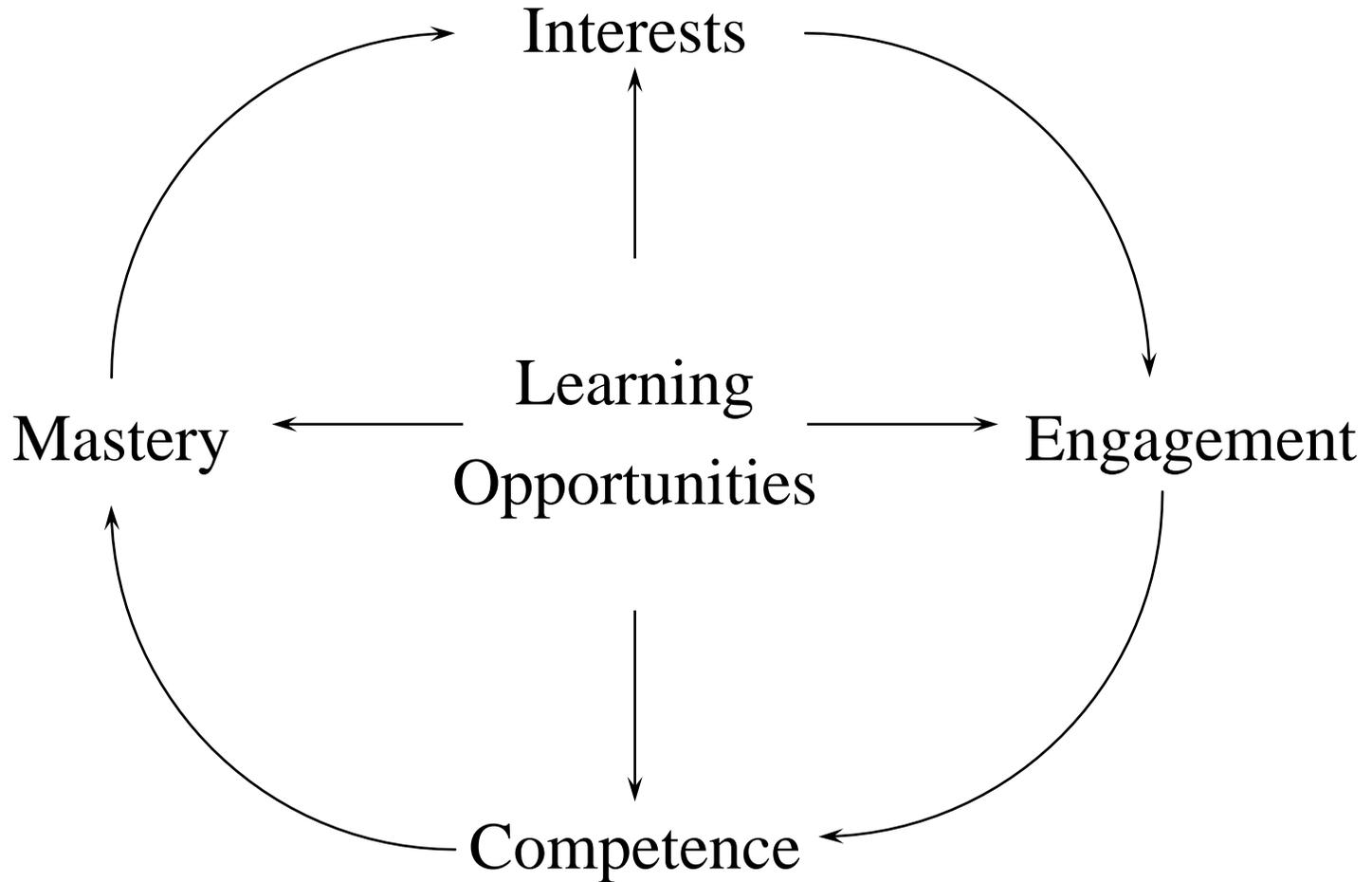
Family-Centered Practices



Practices That Matter Most

- Child strengths and interests as the building blocks for child learning and development
- Everyday activity settings as the context for child functional learning and development
- Parent (adult)-child interactions as the context for promoting and strengthening child and parent competence and confidence
- Parenting supports that provide parents the time, energy, and opportunities to carry-out parenting roles and responsibilities
- Family systems practices that promote and strengthen parents' abilities to obtain needed child, parent, and family supports and resources
- Family-centered participatory practices used by early childhood practitioners to support and strengthen parent and family functioning in ways having capacity-building consequences

Learning Paradigm



Family Characteristics

Personal characteristics of parents. Characteristics not related to child's disability or biological risk status (e.g., social support, marital relationship, financial resources).



Family Patterns

Quality of parent-child transactions. Family orchestrated child experiences. Health and safety provided by family. Attitudes and beliefs of families.



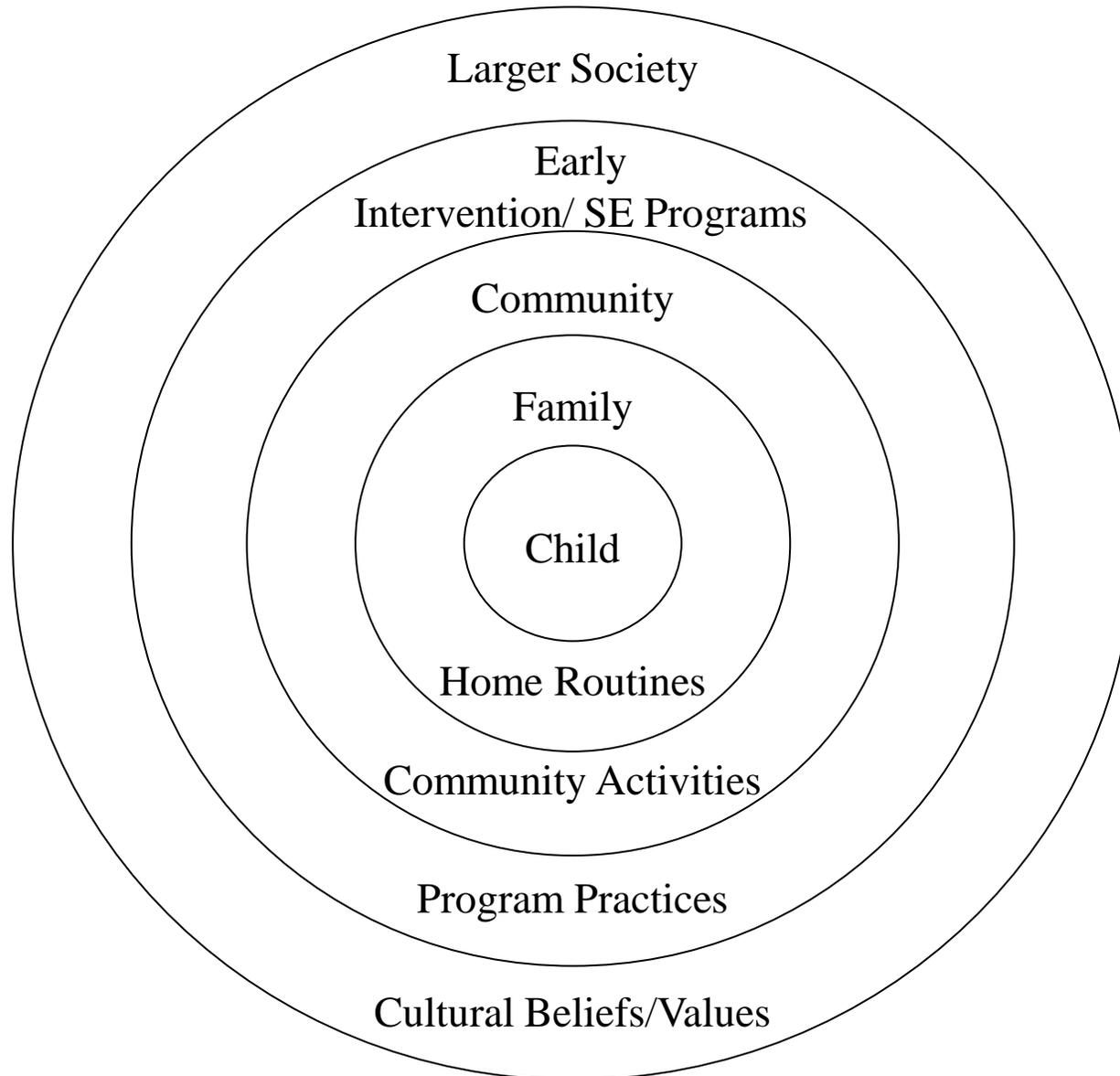
Child Development Outcomes

Examples of Factors Influencing Child Learning and Development

Microsystem Influences	Development-Enhancing Characteristics
Child Characteristics	Child temperament, child personal interests , child strengths , severity of child delay, type of child disability
Activity Setting Characteristics	Geography (activity locations), types of everyday activities , situationally interesting activities , material availability, activity setting features
Caregiver Characteristics	Cultural beliefs and values, parenting beliefs and attitudes, caregiver interactional styles , acculturation and enculturation

Wachs, T. D. (2000). *Necessary but not sufficient: The respective roles of single and multiple influences on individual development*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Model for Viewing Different Ecological Settings as Sources of Learning Experiences and Opportunities



Everyday Activity Settings as Sources of Child Learning and Development

- Activity settings are made up of everyday experiences rather than a deliberate curriculum [that contain] ordinary settings in which children's social [and nonsocial] interaction and behavior occur. They are the who, what, where, when, and why of daily life (Farver, 1999, p. 102).
- The different terms used to describe everyday activities include routines, rituals, daily occupations, activities of daily living, natural environments, and activity settings. Activity settings or everyday activities are the preferred terms for describing contextually based everyday child learning because they encompass routines, rituals, celebrations, natural environments, and other settings, places, and locations where child learning occurs.

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, England: Cambridge University Press.

Activity Setting

Everyday family and community experiences, events, and situations providing children learning opportunities that have development-enhancing (or development-impeding) qualities and consequences.

Family (Home) and Community Learning Environments and Children's Learning Opportunities

Family Settings (Examples)

Family Routines (Cooking, food shopping, animal care)

Parenting Routines (Child's bedtime and bath time)

Child Routines (Brushing teeth, dressing, eating)

Literacy Activities (Looking at books, listening to stories, reading)

Play Activities (Drawing, lap games, playing with toys)

Physical Play (Roughhousing, ball games, swimming)

Entertainment Activities (Dancing, singing watching TV)

Family Rituals (Family talks, spiritual readings, saying grace at meals)

Family Celebrations (Holiday dinners, birthdays, decorating the house)

Community Settings (Examples)

Family Routines (Running errands, car or bus rides, weekend chores)

Family Outings (Shopping, eating out, visiting friends)

Play Activities (Outdoor playgrounds indoor playlands)

Community Activities (Libraries, fairs, festivals)

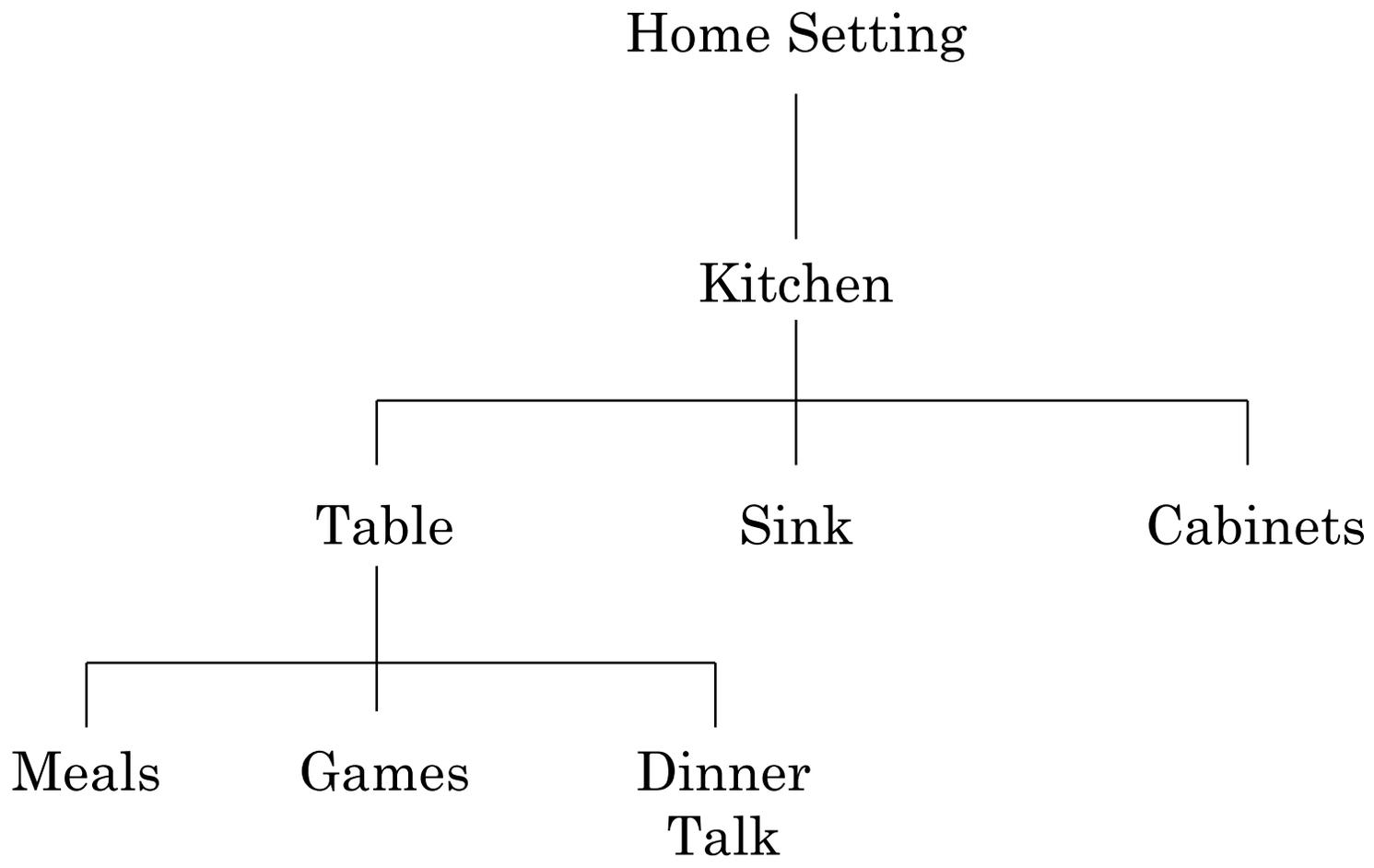
Physical Activities (Horseback riding, swimming, sledding)

Children's Attractions (Petting zoos, nature centers, pet stores)

Art/Entertainment Activities (Children's theater, storytellers, music activities)

Church/Religious Activities (Sunday school, church services)

Organizations and Groups (Karate, movement classes, parent/child groups)



Community Setting

Playground

Slide

Swing

Teeter-
Totter

Steps

Platform

Sliding
Trough

Relationship Between Locations, Activity Settings, Learning Opportunities, and Behavior and Development

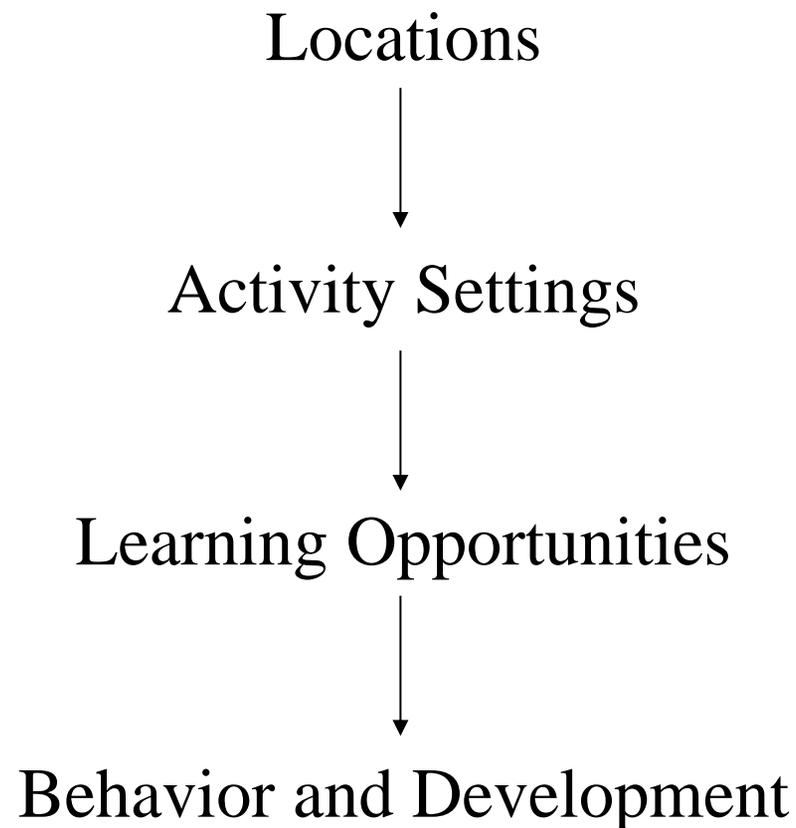


Table 15

Examples of the Home/Family Locations, Activity Settings, and Learning Opportunities for a 35 Month Old Child with Autism Participating in a Part C Early Intervention Program

Locations

Bathroom
Bedroom
Car
Church
Daycare
Kitchen
Living Room
Mall

Music Class
Neighborhood
Outdoors/Yard
Park
Playground
Playroom
Restaurant

Activity Settings

Active Play
Art Activities
Baking
Bath Time
Bedtime
Birthday Parties
Car Rides
Cleaning
Dressing

Holiday Celebrations
Meals
Music Activities
Shopping
Social Play
Solitary Play
Toileting
TV/Videos
Yard Work

Learning Opportunities

Being Dressed
Brushing Teeth
Coloring/Drawing
Dancing with Scarves
Eating Meals/Snacks/Holiday Dinners
Getting Ready for Bed
Hearing Bedtime Stories
Hearing Mass
Hitting a Piñata
Jumping on a Trampoline
Listening to Mom Play a Xylophone
Looking at Self in a Mirror
Looking Out the Car Window
Picking up Toys
Playing Chase with Mom

Playing Circle Games
Playing Turn-Taking Games with Mom
Playing with Doll House/ Other Toys
Playing with Golf Set
Potty Training
Praying
Reading/Looking at Books
Riding Up and Down Escalator
Roughhousing/Tumbling with Others
Running Errands with Mom
Running/Playing with Brother
Singing
Sliding on a Slide
Taking a Bath
Watching/Imitating Music Videos

Examples of the Community Locations, Activity Settings, and Learning Opportunities From Three Cultures.

Hawaiian
25 Months Old

Native American
16 Months Old

African American
17 Months Old

Locations

Beach
Car
Church
Mall
Neighborhood
Outdoor playground
Relatives' homes
Restaurants

Locations

Relatives' homes
Pueblo village
Jewelry shows
Woods
Lake
Park
Shopping stores
School playground

Locations

Family's church
Day Care at church
Friend's church
Church friends' homes
Relatives' homes
WIC office
Mall
Movie theater

Activity Settings

Car rides
Church socials
Family gatherings
Halloween carnival
Music activities
Ocean
Sand
Swings

Activity Settings

Car rides
Village dance area
Slide
Feast areas
Visiting relatives
Walks
Pow Wow
River

Activity Settings

Day Care
Bake sales
Family gatherings
Easter egg hunt
African American Street Festival
Sanctuary
Sunday School classrooms
Visiting friends

Learning Opportunities

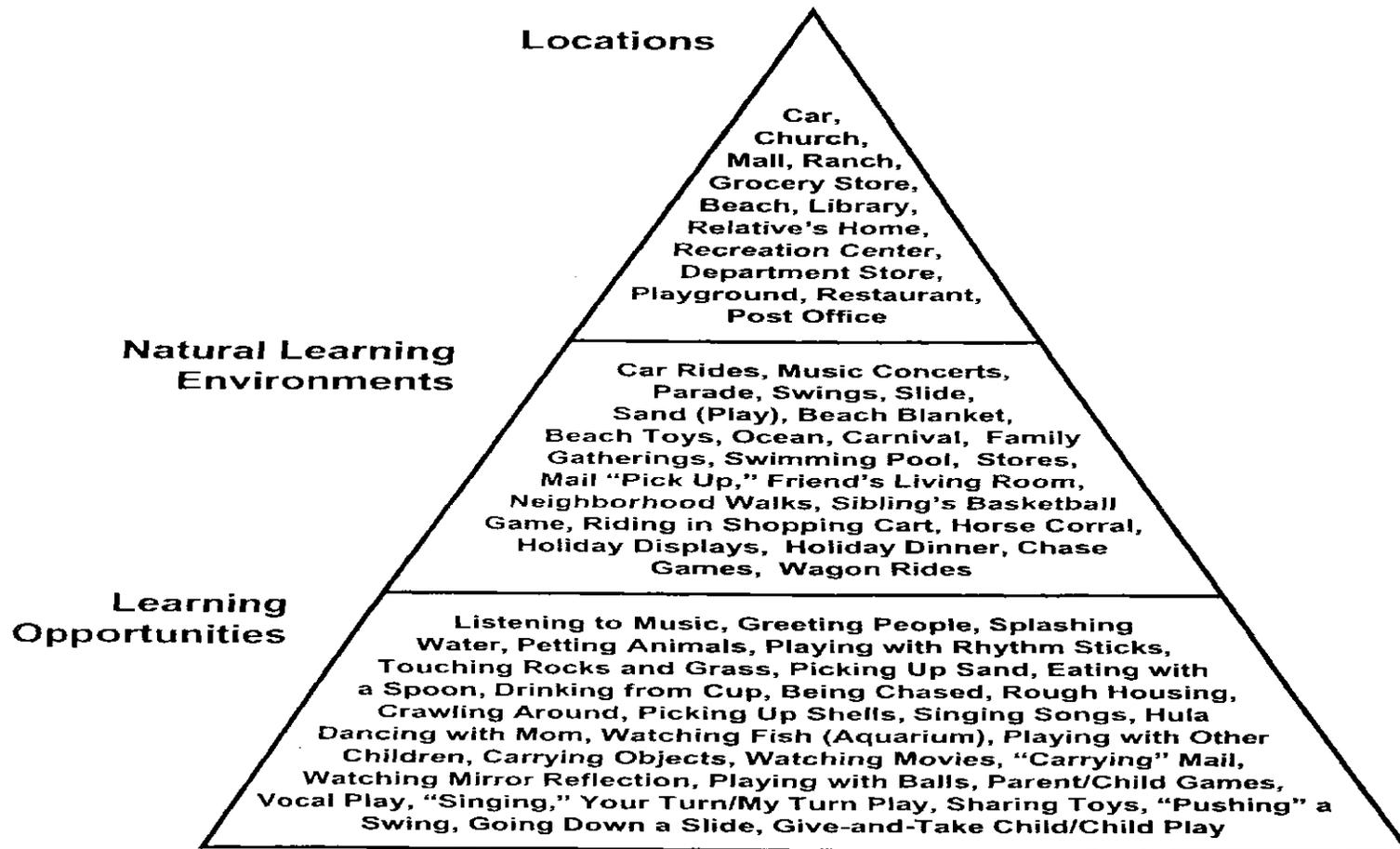
Being buried in the sand
Being carried by other children
Being pulled around in a basket
Floating in water
Going window shopping with Mom
Hearing Dad play ukelele
Hearing Dad give a speech
Hearing Mom count in Hawaiian
Watching Hula dancing
Putting feet in the water
Going on "Neighborhood Police"
walks
Playing a game of chase
Listening to music
Watching fish in tidal pools
Watching animals

Learning Opportunities

Singing Pow Wow songs
Playing in the mud
Listening to Grandfather tell stories
Playing with cousins
Watching tribal dances
Hearing Grandfather speak Kevis
Playing music with xylophone
Touching rocks, ground
Hearing Dad speak Zuni
Playing in water
Looking out car window
Playing a game of chase
Listening to Native American
music
Playing with toys

Learning Opportunities

Watching people at church
Playing "peek-a-boo"
Watching people in costumes
Listening to people sing
Playing with toys
Pulling on clothes
Watching movies
Bouncing up and down
Eating cookies
Playing with spoon
Listening to poems related to
black history
Clapping hands
Listening to story tellers
Sitting on Santa's lap



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

Community Activity Setting Recording Form

Interventionist: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Child's Name: _____

EXISTING ACTIVITY SETTINGS	NEW ACTIVITY SETTINGS

Learning Opportunities Recording Form

Parent's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Interventionist: _____

Date: _____

Location	Activity Setting	Frequency	Learning Opportunity	Why is it Important?

Activity Setting Analysis Worksheet

Activity Setting	Location	Person Responsible	as is	w/adapted materials	w/adapted curr/goals	w/personal assistance	Specific Adaptations
			YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	

*Change is not magic or
inspiration.*

*It's completing many
undramatic, small steps
successfully.*

Daniel & Schoonover, 1988

A paradigm is a set of rules and regulations that:

- define boundaries
- tell us what to do to be successful within those boundaries

We see things not as they are

But

As we are

**“The way we see the
problem may
be
the problem”**

*The best way to
predict the future is to
create it.*

Peter F. Drucker

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Elements of Change

Where are we now?

Where do we want to be?

What do we need to do to get from here to there?

Families Are Forever

Life Goes On.....

After Early Childhood Intervention

AND Beyond.....