



## Characteristics and Consequences of Family-Centered Helpgiving Practices

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### Abstract

Selected references to family-centered practices are included in this bibliography. The particular sources of information are ones that provide a foundation for understanding the characteristics and consequences of helpgiving that builds parent and family capacity and strengthens parent and family functioning.

This *CASEmaker* bibliography includes selected references to different conceptual and operational features of family-centered practices. The particular approach to family-centered practices constituting the focus of attention is one component of an integrated model for practicing early childhood intervention and family support (Dunst, 2000, 2004). Family-centered practices place families in central and pivotal roles in decision-making regarding needed supports and resources (information, advice, material assistance, parenting guidance, etc.) and their active involvement in procuring and obtaining resources and supports having positive benefits and consequences. The *Prescription for Practice* lists four articles that readers should find helpful in order to fully appreciate the characteristics and consequences of family-centered practices.

### Family-Centered Practices

The references included in this *CASEmaker* bibliography are organized into six sections: Conceptualization, operationalization, procedures for measuring family centeredness, the degree to which family-centeredness has been achieved (adherence), factors accounting for variations in the degree of adherence, and the benefits and outcomes of family-centered practices.

### Conceptualization

Family-centeredness has been conceptualized in a number of different but theoretically similar ways. Several useful sources of information about the meaning and definition of family-centered practices include:

Allen, R. I., & Petr, C. G. (1998). Rethinking family-centered practice. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 68, 4-15.

Dunst, C. J. (1997). Conceptual and empirical foundations of family-centered practice. In R. Illback, C. Cobb, & H. Joseph, Jr. (Eds.), *Integrated services for children and families: Opportunities for psychological practice* (pp. 75-91). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Duwa, S. M., Wells, C., & Lalinde, P. (1993). Creating family-centered programs and policies. In D. M. Bryant & M. A. Graham (Eds.), *Implementing early intervention: From research to effective practice* (pp. 92-123). New York: Guilford Press.

### Operationalization

Operationalization of family-centered practices has been accomplished by specifying the key elements of this approach to working with families. Descriptions of the key characteristics of family-centered practices can be found in:

Dunst, C. J., Johanson, C., Trivette, C. M., & Hamby, D. (1991). Family-oriented early intervention policies

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Rx Prescription for Practice Rx

Improve your knowledge and understanding of family-centered practices by reading and mastering the following:

Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (1996). Empowerment, effective helping practices and family-centered care. *Pediatric Nursing*, 22, 334-337, 343.

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Hamby, D. W. (1996). Characteristics and consequences of help-giving practices in contrasting human services programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 24, 273-293.

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Hamby, D. W. (1996). Factors associated with perceived control appraisals in a family-centered early intervention program. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 20, 165-178.

Wilson, L. L., & Dunst, C. J. (2004). Checking out family-centered helping practices. In E. Horn, M. M. Ostrosky, & H. Jones (Eds.), *Family-Based Practices*. (Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 5). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

and practices: Family-centered or not? *Exceptional Children*, 58, 115-126.

Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (1994). Aims and principles of family support programs. In C. J. Dunst, C. M. Trivette, & A. G. Deal (Eds.), *Supporting and strengthening families: Methods, strategies and practices* (pp. 30-48). Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (1996). Empowerment, effective helping practices and family-centered care. *Pediatric Nursing*, 22, 334-337, 343.

Shelton, T. L., & Stepanek, J. S. (1994). *Family-centered care for children needing specialized health and developmental services*. (2nd ed.). Bethesda, MD: Association for the Care of Children's Health.

Trivette, C. M., & Dunst, C. J. (2000). Recommended practices in family-based practices. In S. Sandall, M. E. McLean, & B. J. Smith (Eds.), *DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education* (pp. 39-46). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

### Measurement

The extent to which programs and practitioners operate and behave, respectively, in a family-centered manner can be determined using different measurement scales and tools. Procedures for assessing and measuring family-centered helping practices are described in:

Allen, R. I., & Petr, C. G. (1996). Toward developing standards and measurements for family-centered practice in family support programs. In G. H. S. Singer, A. P. Turnbull, H. R. Turnbull, III, L. K. Irvin, & L. E. Powers (Eds.), *Family, community, and disability: Redefining family support. Innovations in public-private partnerships* (pp. 57-85). Baltimore: Brookes.

Dempsey, I. (1995). The Enabling Practices Scale: The development of an assessment instrument for disability services. *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 20, 67-73.

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Hamby, D. W. (1996). Measuring the helping practices of human services program practitioners. *Human Relations*, 49, 815-835.

King, S. M., Rosenbaum, P. L., & King, G. A. (1996). Parents' perceptions of caregiving: Development and validation of a measure of processes. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 38, 757-772.

King, G., Kertoy, M., King, S., Law, M., Rosenbaum, P., & Hurley, P. (2003). A measure of parents' and service providers' beliefs about participation in family-centered services. *Children's Health Care*, 32, 191-214.

King, S. M., Rosenbaum, P. L., & King, G. A. (1996). Parents' perceptions of caregiving: Development and validation of a measure of processes. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 38, 757-772.

King, G. A., Rosenbaum, P. L., & King, S. M. (1997). Evaluating family-centred service using a measure of parents' perceptions. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 23, 47-62.

Murphy, D. L., Lee, I. M., Turnbull, A. P., & Turbiville, V. (1995). The family-centered program rating scale: An instrument for program evaluation and change. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 19, 24-42.

Wilson, L. L., & Dunst, C. J. (2004). Checking out family-centered helping practices. In E. Horn, M. M. Ostrosky, & H. Jones (Eds.), *Family-Based Practices*. (Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 5). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

### Adherence

Adherence refers to the extent to which actual behavior matches professed or desired behavior. The extent to which professionals practice, and families experience, family-centered practices are described in:

- Dempsey, I., & Carruthers, A. (1997). How family-centered are early intervention services: Staff and parent perceptions? *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education, 1*, 105-114.
- Dunst, C. J. (2002). Family-centered practices: Birth through high school. *Journal of Special Education, 36*, 139-147.
- Dunst, C. J. (2003, Spring/Summer). Adopt, apply, adhere: Stay true to family support. *America's Family Support Magazine, 22*, 16-20.
- McBride, S. L., Brotherson, M. J., Joanning, H., Whiddon, D., & Demmitt, A. (1993). Implementation of family-centered services: Perceptions of families and professionals. *Journal of Early Intervention, 17*, 414-430.
- McWilliam, R. A., Maxwell, K. L., & Sloper, K. M. (1999). Beyond "involvement": Are elementary schools ready to be family-centered? *School Psychology Review, 28*, 378-394.
- McWilliam, R. A., Tocci, L., & Harbin, G. L. (1998). Family-centered services: Service providers' discourse and behavior. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 18*, 206-221.
- Petr, C. G., & Allen, R. I. (1997). Family-centered professional behavior: Frequency and importance to parents. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 5*, 196-204.

### Sources of Variation

Many different factors influence whether or not a program or practitioner operates or behaves, respectively, in a family-centered manner. Some of the factors associated with different degrees of adherence to family-centered practices are described in:

- Dempsey, I., Foreman, P., Sharma, N., Khanna, D., & Arora, P. (2001). Correlates of parental empowerment in families with a member with a disability in Australia and India. *Developmental Disabilities Bulletin, 29*, 113-131.
- Dunst, C. J., Boyd, K., Trivette, C. M., & Hamby, D. W. (2002). Family-oriented program models and professional helpgiving practices. *Family Relations, 51*, 221-229.
- Judge, S. L. (1997). Parental perceptions of help-giving practices and control appraisals in early intervention

programs. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 17*, 457-476.

- Law, M., Hanna, S., King, G., Hurley, P., King, S., Ker-toy, M., & Rosebaum, P. (2003). Factors affecting family-centred service delivery for children with disabilities. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 29*, 357-366.
- Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Hamby, D. W. (1996). Characteristics and consequences of help-giving practices in contrasting human services programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 24*, 273-293.

### Outcomes and Benefits

Evidence now indicates that being treated in a family-centered manner is associated with different parent and family benefits. These include, but are not limited to, parent/family empowerment; parent/family well being; parents' judgments regarding their parenting competence and confidence; and parents' judgments about their children's behavior. The following constitutes sources of information about the consequences of being treated in a family centered manner.

- Dempsey, I., & Dunst, C. J. (2004). Helpgiving styles and parent empowerment in families with a young child with a disability. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, 29*, 40-51.
- Dunst, C. J., Brookfield, J., & Epstein, J. (1998, December). *Family-centered early intervention and child, parent and family benefits: Final report*. Asheville, NC: Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute.
- Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (2001). *Benefits associated with family resource center practices*. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.
- Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (2001). *Parenting supports and resources, helpgiving practices, and parenting competence*. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.
- King, G., King, S., Rosenbaum, P., & Goffin, R. (1999). Family-centered caregiving and well-being of parents of children with disabilities: Linking process with outcome. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 24*, 41-53.
- Thompson, L., Lobb, C., Elling, R., Herman, S., Jurkiewicz, T., & Hulleza, C. (1997). Pathways to family empowerment: Effects of family-centered delivery of early intervention services. *Exceptional Children, 64*, 99-113.
- Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., Boyd, K., & Hamby, D. W. (1996). Family-oriented program models, helpgiving practices, and parental control appraisals. *Ex-*

*ceptional Children*, 62, 237-248.

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Hamby, D. W. (1996). Factors associated with perceived control appraisals in a family-centered early intervention program. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 20, 165-178.

### **Conclusion**

Despite arguments to the contrary (e.g., Feldman, Ploof, & Cohen, 1999; Mahoney et al., 1999), the adoption and use of a family-centered approach to working with families is now known to have value-added benefits not realized using other approaches to family intervention (see e.g., Dunst & Trivette, 1996). Moreover, evidence has increasingly been amassed regarding the particular kinds of family-centered practices that matter most in terms of their influence on parent and family functioning (Dunst & Trivette, 2001). A forthcoming practice-based research synthesis of the family-centered literature (Dunst, Snyder, & Trivette, 2004) “pulls together” nearly all available evidence with a particular focus on the direct and indirect effects of being treated in a family-centered manner. Armed with knowledge about the key characteristics of family-centered practices and how these practices are related to improved parent and family functioning, program builders and practitioners are in a much better position to understand *why and how* being a family-centered professional matters a great deal in the lives of children and their families.

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Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (1996). Empowerment, effective helping practices and family-centered care. *Pediatric Nursing*, 22, 334-337, 343.

Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (2001). *Benefits associated with family resource center practices*. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Feldman, H. M., Ploof, D., & Cohen, W. I. (1999). Physician-family partnerships: The adaptive practice model. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, 20, 111-116.

Mahoney, G., Kaiser, A. P., Girolametto, L., MacDonald, J., Robinson, C., Safford, P., & Spiker, D. (1999). Parent education in early intervention: A call for a renewed focus. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 19, 131-140.

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