

It Takes a Village: Assets for Parent Education

Linda S. Behrendt, Ph.D.
Indiana State University

ABSTRACT. Social and cultural changes in the 21st century have impacted the task of parenting, and in response to these challenges, the role of parent education has taken on increased importance. The National Extension has defined skills for effective parenting titled *Parent Education Model of Critical Parenting Practices*, which provide guidelines for educators. Search Institute has identified 40 developmental assets that all children and youth need to aid them in successfully navigating to adulthood. The theoretical question addressed in this paper is whether the *Parent Education Model* and *Asset Development* used together would enhance parent education. A review of the *Parent Education Model* and *Asset Development*, as well as results from two focus groups, informed the theoretical question. Implications for practice include curriculum suggestions for use in a variety of parent education, social service, and youth settings.

The task of parenting is the foundational influence in overall child well-being and includes “literally hundreds of activities that parents engage in either with or for their children” (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005, p. 140). Ginott, Ginott, and Goddard (2003) define the goal of parenting to “help a child grow up to be a decent human being, a mensch, a person with compassion, commitment, and caring” (p. 192). Thus defined, parenting is a 24/7 task enduring over days, weeks and years that encompasses both small and large decisions that will influence children’s lives. Social and cultural changes have influenced the task of parenting; families are more likely to live apart from extended family, to have both parents in the workforce, and to be influenced in multiple ways by technology and media (Powell & Cassidy, 2007). In addition, family structure is not what it once was, with roughly half of all children spending some time in a single-parent home before they turn 18 (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 1993, Powell & Cassidy, 2007). These changes have increased the receptiveness of parents in seeking support and guidance in an effort to adequately meet the demands of their role, and so parent education opportunities have increased over the past 10-15 years in an effort to support and meet the needs and confidence of parents in raising their children (Jacobson, 2003; Carter 1996).

Interactions between parent and child are, however, influenced by the broader cultural and social institutions in which they occur (Brooks, 2004). In truth, the social and cultural structure of towns and cities across the United States work against the healthy development of children and youth (Benson, 1997). Young people exist in a very age-segregated world in which they are separated from adults, families are isolated, and privacy is stressed to the detriment of civic commitment (Benson, 1997). Parents are struggling to meet the demands of raising children, and 21st century society does not support them (Benson, 1997; Hewlett & West, 2002).

Focusing on parents’ needs and concerns, the National Council on Family Relations supports an approach to parent education that takes a broader perspective on the parenting task and places parenting within the ecosystemic perspective (Jacobson, 2003). Jacobson (2003) acknowledges that parents bring a wide range of knowledge, experience, and understanding of the parenting

Direct correspondence to Dr. Linda S. Behrendt, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809. Email: Linda.Behrendt@indstate.edu.

role to the task, along with cultural, social, and environmental influences. Benson (1997) contends that there are risk factors present in the ecosystem that work against parents' best efforts, which can leave them feeling overwhelmed and unsupported. Conversely, the influence of the broader social context can compensate when parenting skills and practices are not effective (Garbarino, Bradshaw, & Kostelny, 2005). All parenting concerns have public aspects, contributing to the need for comprehensive parent education that is able to address and support the full spectrum of the parenting process (Anderson & Doherty, 2005). Brody and colleagues (2001) found that when communities were able to work collectively and offer social support to parents there was a carryover effect on children. Hewlett and West (2002) assert that "Parenting is an indispensable civic activity, not simply a set of private joys and responsibilities" (p. xx).

Search Institute has identified 40 developmental assets--building blocks of development that help children and young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Simpson and Roehlkepartain (2003) acknowledge that, "The framework of developmental assets was constructed to recognize the important roles and responsibilities that all segments of the community and society have for contributing to young people's healthy development" (p. 158). In addition to offering support to parents, *Asset Development* holds the promise of changing communities so that they, in turn, can support and encourage both parents and youth.

The asset development framework grew out of nationwide research that involved 250,000 youth from grades 6-12 (Benson, 1997). Search Institute asserts that the current reality of American youth (e.g., engagement in risk behaviors, lack of prosocial commitments) extends beyond the ability of parents or schools alone to change. From a shared responsibility perspective, development of healthy youth is accomplished when parents, extended family, schools, faith-based organizations, government, and businesses work together to create communities committed to care for young people from birth to age eighteen (Benson, 1997). Recognizing the importance of community and environmental factors, developmental assets represent a paradigm shift from a negative to a positive focus of youth, and young people's relationships with adults in the community are key (Benson, 1997).

There are 40 developmental assets grouped into 8 categories that research has proven are influential in building skills and values that help young people avoid problems (Scales & Leffert, 1999). The developmental asset approach is, according to Search Institute, a community-wide movement, bringing residents together around the common intention of creating a culture that supports and empowers children and youth (Benson, 1997).

The first four assets, considered *external assets*, are "positive developmental environments and experiences that surround young people" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 5), and include the categories of support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. The next four assets, termed *internal assets*, are "competencies and values that youth develop internally that help them become self-regulating adults" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 5). These four assets are identified as commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

Parent education assumes that parents care for their children and want to be capable at child-rearing; it is also understood that all parents are capable of learning and growing through the parenting process (Campbell & Palm, 2004). Each parent brings his/her unique understanding and strengths to both parenting and the parent education process (Family Resource Coalition, 1996). Experience in community-based parent education provides the foundation for The Cooperative Extension System in developing a national parent education program, the National

Extension *Parent Education Model* (Smith, Cudaback, Goddard, & Myers-Walls, 1994). Smith and colleagues (1994) report that the conceptual model includes the “fundamental skills that comprise the very heart of quality parenting” (Part 1, p. 4), and the commitment to create a curriculum that would be easily communicated and “facilitate collaboration and networking” (Part 1, pg. 4). The National Extension *Parent Education Model of Critical Parenting Practices* encompasses six categories of skills deemed priorities for effective parent education.

Children are important to parents, providing psychological needs and more satisfaction than distress (Brooks, 2004). Children are also important to society, as Lerner, Sparks, and McCubbin (2000) assert “children constitute 100 percent of the future human and social capital on which our nation must depend” (p. 391). Hewlett and West (2002) allege that parents play an enormously important societal role. How can parenting roles be supported and encouraged in the 21st century, acknowledging the demands of dual-career families and a social structure that is “family friendly” in rhetoric but not necessarily in practice?

Theoretical Question

Both theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bubolz & Sontag in Boss et al., 1993) and practice (Jacobson, 2003) acknowledge the importance of the ecosystem on the parenting process. The use of the *Asset Development* framework, inclusive of multiple influences (e.g., parents, school, faith-based communities, government) is intent on creating a healthy environment in which children and youth can flourish. *Asset Development* and the National Extension *Parent Education Model* both stress that they are frameworks upon which a variety of programming/curriculum can be built. Could these two frameworks be used in tandem, each to enhance the other? Given that parenting is a daunting task, Search Institute’s framework, which encourages community involvement in establishing structural, practical, and personal practices to build and strengthen positive assets in youth, certainly embraces supporting parents in their role. Conversely, National Extension’s assumption that “the goal of parent education is strengthening and educating the parent (or caregiver) so that he or she is better able to facilitate the development of caring, competent, and healthy children” (Smith et al., Part 1, p. 5) would conceivably support and extend youth *Asset Development*. The question then is whether inclusion of the *Asset Development* framework can enrich and extend parent education to include the community as a resource for parents.

Methodology

Self-contained focus groups were chosen as the qualitative research method to investigate the viability of *Asset Development* as a tool for parent education. Morgan’s (1997) inclusive approach, in which focus groups are viewed as “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (p. 6) was employed. In February 2005 a group of family life educators from Texas and Oklahoma attended a workshop held during a parenting conference in Denton, Texas. A brief Power Point presentation introduced the basic concepts—parenting, the role of social and cultural influences, and the Bronfenbrenner’s ecological perspective. The introduction also included an overview of Search Institute’s *Asset Development*. The focus group was questioned regarding their knowledge of Search Institute and *Asset Development*. Some participants had not heard of Search Institute, and while everyone knew about *Asset Development*, there were varying degrees of familiarity regarding the framework. Handouts of the *Asset Development* framework were distributed, detailing all 40 *Assets* and their developmentally appropriate application from birth to age 18. An opportunity to

apply *Assets* was provided through an activity in which participants considered the children they had contact with in their daily lives and the assets they contributed to building in each child.

The focus group transitioned to a discussion regarding the concept of using Search Institute's *Asset Development* in the context of parent education. Individuals had the opportunity to share the specifics of what their current involvement was in the parent education field. No two individuals were delivering parent education in the same setting, although everyone present was working in the not-for-profit sector. No one in the group had ever considered using *Asset Development* with a parent education curriculum. One participant was using *Asset Development* material with children; however, the material had not been incorporated into the parent education classes for parents of the children. Focus group members were divided into smaller groups of consisting of 3 or 4 people, and asked to share their thoughts and ideas about using parent education and *Asset Development* in tandem by responding to two questions. Did participants think there was a conceptual connection between parent education and *Asset Development*? Would *Asset Development* be helpful in the parent education process? After everyone in each group had the opportunity to respond to the questions, the small groups were brought back together and queried about their conversation. The responses by participants to the questions posed were overwhelmingly positive, though fairly general in nature.

Each participant was then asked to consider one or two assets that would be helpful to what they were currently doing in parent education. A lively discussion ensued, as members traded ideas and weighed the merits of choosing among the 40 *assets*. Ultimately each participant chose one or two assets they believed would be most helpful to include in parent education curriculum. The *assets* chosen were largely from the external category: Support (family support, positive family communication), Boundaries and Expectations (family boundaries, adult role models), and constructive use of time (religious community, youth programs). Not all participants offered a rationale for their choice of *assets*; the researcher hypothesized that the external assets chosen offered more tangible, obvious applications given the restraints of the meeting time and the request for quick feedback. Working in small groups, participants examined the assets they had chosen and applied them to their individual settings. From each small group a different, self-chosen theme emerged: focusing on parents of preschoolers, parents of school-aged children, community involvement in asset development, and neighborhood support for parents. In addition to applying assets, each small group identified resources that could be employed to enhance *Asset Development* in their individual parent education settings. Identified resources incorporated co-workers, extended family members, local businesses, community center, and individuals from other professions to support and extend parents' ability to build assets in their children. The focus group provided direct evidence that family life educators view Search Institute's *Asset Development* as a workable foundation for parent education and a foundation for the creation of a supportive and encouraging community environment for parents, children, and youth.

Given the favorable responses of the first focus group, the author continued to work with the concept of using parent education and *Asset Development* in tandem. The National Extension *Parent Education Model* (Smith, Cudaback, Goddard, & Myers-Walls, 1994) offered a foundation from which to base curricular outcomes, and an initial application of the two frameworks (*Assets* and *Parent Education*) was created. A second opportunity for discussion regarding *Assets* and *Parent Education* occurred at a round-table session at a conference in Phoenix Arizona in November 2005. This focus group was composed of family life educators who not only provide education to parents but also educate individuals preparing to be parent

educators; in addition, all attendees actively participated in research in family studies. In initial conversation all participants presented a thorough understanding of *Asset Development*. Reflection from the first focus group led to the creation of a conceptual map displaying the interplay of parent education and *Asset Development* (see Figure 1), which was distributed to the second focus group. The first draft of the two frameworks as supporting each other was also shared with the participants. The conversation in this second focus group was more theoretical and less applied than the first group's discussion, zeroing in on ways in which *Assets* specifically support the domains of parent education. Participants noted that the internal asset categories were not as detailed as the external categories, and offered their thoughts about how specific *Assets* supported the *Parent Education* categories. The group agreed that *social competencies*, *positive values*, and *positive identity* belonged with *Care for Self*, and *positive values* and *positive identity* supported the *Guide* category.

Application

Table 1 evolved from the input of both focus groups, providing a visual application of each framework against the other. The first column lists the six categories of the National Extension *Parent Education Model*; the second and third columns contain Search Institute's supporting/corresponding external and internal assets for each category. The first parenting category of *Care for Self* impacts children indirectly, through parents' ability to manage their lives effectively, to "provide security, support and predictability" (Smith et al., 1994, Part 2, p. 1) and to make sound decisions with regard to their children. These skills relate directly to the external assets of *support* and *boundaries and expectations*. The *support* asset includes the ability of the family to provide high levels of love and support, as well as positive family communication, all of which are directly related to parents' self care. The *boundaries and expectations* asset includes family boundaries—rules and consequences for youth behavior; the ability to create and enforce boundaries is rooted in making sound decisions about one's children. The external assets that extend and support the parenting *Care for Self* category are *positive identity*, *social competencies*, and *positive values*. The young person's ability to take responsibility for self, to be honest, and to possess personal integrity are encouraged and established through parental modeling and expectations. The *social competencies* of resisting negative peer pressure and peaceful resolution of conflict are encouraged when parents model these skills. Perhaps the most direct connection between *Care for Self* parenting practices and *Assets* is the external asset of *positive identity*. Self-esteem, a positive view of one's future, and a sense of purpose are also identified by National Extension as components necessary for parents' ability to *Care for Self*.

The second *Critical Parenting Practice* identified by the National Extension researchers (Smith et al., 1994) is to *Understand*. This practice is focused on parent's knowledge of child and adolescent physical, cognitive, and social development, as well as understanding the bi-directional influences between parents and children. *Critical parenting* relates to the external asset categories of *support*, *boundaries and expectations*, and *constructive use of time*. Family support and positive family communication (*support* category) are enhanced when parents are knowledgeable about their child's ability to understand and process information (cognitive development). In turn, communicating with one's child can enhance parental understanding with regard to how the child thinks. Understanding child development enhances parents' ability to set appropriate rules and consequences for children (*boundaries and expectations*). The category

constructive use of time includes time spent at home each week with family members. Understanding of the bi-directional influence of the parent-child relationship encourages parents to make time at home a priority, creating the opportunity for positive family communication and parent-child relationship building. The internal categories of *positive values and positive identity* are directly influenced through parental understanding of the developmental process. The bi-directional nature of the parent-child relationship has the potential to foster the development of positive values and identity.

Guide, the third category of *Critical Parenting*, addresses many of the practices that are foundational to the process of parenting. Parental modeling of appropriate behavior, establishing and maintaining reasonable limits, and teaching children problem solving skills and personal responsibility are included in this category. Conveying personal values related to respectful treatment of others, as well as supervising children's activities and peer interactions, are also addressed in this category. All of the external assets are related to the *critical parenting* category *guide*. The external asset of *support* includes family support and embraces the importance of other adult relationships, a caring neighborhood and school environments. Caring environments can reinforce conveyance of appropriate limits and personal responsibility. Other adults may model appropriate treatment of others and teach problem-solving skills. The *empowerment* asset includes service to others, through which children and youth can acquire personal responsibility and develop the values involved in respectful treatment of others. The asset *boundaries and expectations* includes neighbors taking responsibility for monitoring children's behavior, the influence of positive peer influences, and the influence of other adults in role-modeling positive behaviors. *Constructive use of time* reinforces the *guide* category through encouragement of youth involvement in programs and activities, in which they can acquire personal responsibility, problem-solving skills, and values related to treatment of others. The internal asset categories *positive values, social competencies, and positive identity* relate to the *critical parenting* category *guide*. *Positive values* encompass personal values directly related to treatment of others and human decency; *social competencies* include conflict resolution skills and interpersonal competence in relating to others. All of these values and skills are integral to children's development of appropriate behavior, problem-solving skills, and personal responsibility. The *positive identity* asset includes possessing a sense of control over one's personal life, which supports the ability to be effective at problem-solving.

Critical Parenting's fourth category, *Nurture*, is, according to Smith and colleagues (1994), perhaps "the most important contribution parents can offer their children" (Part 2, p. 10). Every child has different emotional needs, and meeting those needs can be a great challenge for parents (Smith et al., 1994). Parental expression of affection and compassion, promoting self-respect, instructing children about how to show kindness, and connecting children to their family history are included in the *nurture* category. Issues of safety and physical well-being are also included in the *nurture* category. The external assets of *support* and *empowerment* are directly related to the practice of *nurture*. The definition of the support category includes showing high levels of love and support for family members, positive family communication and support from other adults. These relational qualities have a direct influence on parents' ability to nurture their children. The *empowerment* asset assesses the extent to which children feel safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood. The internal assets that relate to the *nurture* category are *positive values, social competencies, and positive identity*. Fostering children's self-respect is addressed in the *positive values* asset, where it is recognized that young people experience more positive outcomes when they are able to take responsibility for their behavior, understand the

importance of truth-telling, and stand up for their convictions. Understanding people with cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds different from one's own family are addressed in the *social competencies* asset. This asset directly relates to the *nurture* category of *critical parenting*, as knowledge of one's own family history facilitates children's curiosity and questions about different cultures. Self-respect qualities such as self-esteem, sense of purpose, and a positive view of one's personal future are included in the external asset category of *positive identity*, relating to parents' ability to foster self-respect in their children.

The fifth category of *Critical Parenting* is *Motivate*, which addresses issues directly related to children's intellectual development. Parents' responsibility to create optimal learning conditions and to educate their children about "themselves, others, and the world around them" (Smith et al., 1994, Part 2, p. 12) includes assisting children in managing and processing information. The external asset categories related to the *motivate* category are *support*, *empowerment*, and *constructive use of time*. The *support* asset includes a school climate that is caring and encouraging, as well as the importance of parents being actively involved in helping their children experience success in school. The *empowerment* asset acknowledges the importance of young people feeling safe at school as important to the ability to learn. *Constructive use of time* addresses the importance of learning that occurs outside of the traditional classroom setting, including youth programs, music, theater and other arts, as well as religious programming. Internal assets that support and extend the *critical parenting-motivate* category are *commitment to learning* and *social competencies*. *Commitment to learning* asserts that young people need to care about their school, be motivated to learn and actively engage in the learning process, spend at least one hour doing homework every school day, and read for pleasure three or more hours a week. *Social competencies* include the skills of being able to plan ahead and make choices, which are important in succeeding in meeting educational goals.

The sixth category of *Critical Parenting Practices* is *Advocate*, which focuses on parents' ability to find and connect with appropriate community resources to facilitate the growth and development of their children, as well as themselves. The ability to build relationships within extended family, the neighborhood, and the broader community is viewed as necessary for the overall good of all family members. Advocacy for one's children and family within the community and within the spheres of government is, according to Smith et al. (1994), important for child development and parental well-being. All of the external assets relate to this last category of *critical parenting*—*support*, *empowerment*, *boundaries and expectations*, and *constructive use of time*. The *support* asset includes parental advocacy for their children in their schooling; the *empowerment* asset addresses the importance of the community valuing youth and including them in useful roles within the community (community advocacy for youth). In the *boundaries and expectations* asset, the importance of adult role models for youth is stressed. Opportunity for children to be involved in learning activities within the community is stressed in the *constructive use of time* asset (community must advocate for programming). In the internal asset category, the assets of *positive values*, *social competencies*, and *positive identity* relate to the *critical parenting* category *advocate*. The *positive values* asset addresses the importance of youth being able to advocate for equality and social justice, as well as having personal integrity to stand up for their beliefs. *Social competencies* include interpersonal competence, defined as having empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills (all relate to the ability to advocate for another's well-being). Lastly, *positive identity* includes the feeling of control over what happens (advocate for oneself), and a positive view of personal future, that is, being optimistic about what the future holds (advocate for positive outcome).

Findings

The professionals who participated in the first focus group provided enthusiastic responses to the query “Can *Asset Development* assist in the effective delivery of parent education?” Working in small groups, participants examined the assets and applied them to their individual parent education settings. From each small group a different, self-chosen theme emerged; the themes focused on parents of preschoolers, parents of school-aged children, community involvement in asset development, and neighborhood support for parents. In addition to applying assets, each small group identified resources that could be employed to enhance *asset development* in their individual parent education settings. Identified resources incorporated coworkers, extended family members, local businesses, community centers, and individuals from other professions to support and extend parents’ ability to build assets in their children. This focus group provided direct evidence that family life educators view Search Institute’s *Asset Development* framework as a workable foundation for parent education and a foundation for the creation of a supportive and encouraging community environment for parents, children, and youth.

A draft of the application of *assets* to the domains of parenting created by the researcher was critiqued by the second focus group. A preliminary draft handout displaying the six critical parenting practices (Smith et al., 1994) with the applied internal and external assets (Benson, 1997) served as the discussion point. Both internal and external assets were matched as supportive helps for all six parenting domains.

Discussion

The theoretical question addressed in this paper was whether the *Parent Education Model* and *Asset Development* used together would enhance parent education. Search Institute’s *Asset Development* takes an ecological approach to raising healthy children, involving all aspects of the community to assist parents in instilling the 40 developmental assets. The assets function to inform appropriate developmental expectations that could be incorporated with most any parent education curriculum. The *Asset Development* model emphasis on everyone as an asset builder provides both an educational and practical focus within the community on youth well-being (Benson, 1997). In turn, the community focus on youth well-being supports and extends the National Extension *Parent Education Model*. Categorically these models were shown to fit together at their most basic foundational concepts.

The findings from the focus group have implications for family life educators, school administrators, teachers, community agencies, businesses, neighborhood groups, worship facilities, government agencies, and policy makers. The rhetoric of “it takes a village to raise a child” has been the call from many of the professionals and organizations listed above. *Asset Development* provides a common framework around which any organization can rally. Any adult, regardless of profession, can extend the work of parent education by becoming an asset builder in their family, neighborhood, workplace, or place of worship. Organizations can include youth participation in volunteer projects; local government agencies can recognize children and youth who make positive contributions to the community.

The focus group results support the use of *Asset Development* in parent education curriculum. Parent educators from a variety of settings embraced the concept of extending parents’ knowledge of children’s personal and environmental needs through Search’s program. The

inclusion of *Asset Development* allows educators the opportunity to identify community and workplace supports that confirm basic tenets of parent education.

Limitations and Future Research

Based on the theoretical investigation and focus group input regarding the *Parent Education Model* and *Asset Development* model, they appear to hold promise for use in parent education programs. Both models have been widely used separately; however, both programs were designed to address different audiences (parents and parents/community leaders/other invested adults). Therefore further study is needed in order to document both the ease of use and the effectiveness of the asset framework in parent education programs. The development of a prototype parenting program based on the categories from both *Parent Education* and *Asset Development* leading to an experimental course for parents would be the first step. Thorough evaluation of the curriculum and the experience of taking the course must follow. The opportunity for feedback must include input from parent educators as well as the parent participants.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative theoretical study was to investigate whether the National Extension *Parent Education Model* and Search Institute's *Asset Development* models might be used in tandem to strengthen and extend the effectiveness of parent education. The goal of parent education is to promote resilient, resourceful families who raise psychologically healthy children and adolescents (Jacobson, 2003). The culture of communities across the U.S. does not, in practice, support the above stated goal of parent education (Benson, 1997). Elkind (2002) asserts that, as the result of economic and social changes, the postmodern family is marked by a loss of importance of the parental role, which is the foundation of successful parenting. The loss of both community support and importance of the parental role add stress to the already demanding responsibility of being a parent (Benson, 1997; Hewlett & West, 2002).

A review of literature supported the growing need for parent education, as well as societal changes that have complicated the tasks of parenting (Jacobson, 2003; Powell & Cassidy, 2007; Benson, 1997). Theoretical examination of both models revealed companion goals. The National Extension model's goal to "facilitate collaboration and networking" (Smith et al., 1994, Part 1, pg. 4) is complemented by Search Institute's perspective of shared responsibility in developing healthy youth (Benson, 1997). Focus group meetings found parent educators from a variety of backgrounds receptive to the idea of combining the models; a second round of focus groups began the work of matching *Parent Education Model* categories with *Asset Development* categories. The findings from the focus groups have implications for family life educators, school administrators, teachers, community agencies, neighborhood groups, worship facilities, government agencies and policy makers. All adults, regardless of profession, can extend the work of parent education by becoming an asset builder in their family, neighborhood, and workplace. The joint use of these models shows promise for parent educators in supporting parents and engaging "the village" in creating a community that supports and enhances parental child-rearing efforts.

References

- Anderson, J. R., & Doherty, W. J. (2005). Democratic community initiatives: The case of overscheduled children. *Family Relations, (54)*5, 654-665.
- Benson, P. L. (1997). *All kids are our kids*. Minneapolis: Search Institute.
- Benson, P. L., & Roehlkepartain, E.C. (1993). *Youth in single-parent families: Risk and resiliency*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- Brody, G. H., Conger, R., Gibbons, F. X., Ge, X., McBride Murry, V., Gerrard, M., & Simmons, R. L. (2001). The influence of neighborhood disadvantage, collective socialization, and parenting on African American children's affiliation with deviant peers. *Child Development, 72*, 1231-1246.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development. *Developmental Psychology, 22*, 723-742.
- Brooks, J. B. (2004). *The process of parenting*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Brooks-Gunn, J., & Markman, L. B. (2005). The contribution of parenting to ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. *The Future of Children, 15*(1), 139-168.
- Bubolz, M. M., & Sontag, M. S. (1993). Human ecology theory. In P. Boss, W. Doherty, R., LaRossa, W. Schumm, & S. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach* (pp. 419-448). New York: Plenum Press.
- Campbell, D., & Palm, G. F. (2004). *Group parent education*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Carter, N. (1996). *See how we grow: A report on the status of parenting education in the United States*. Philadelphia: Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Elkind, D. (2002). Empty parenthood: The loss of parental authority in the postmodern family. In S. A. Hewlett, N. Rankin, & C. West (Eds.), *Taking parenting public* (pp. 29-44). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Family Resource Coalition. (1996). *Guidelines for family support practice*. Chicago: Author.
- Garbarino, J., Bradshaw, C. P., & Kostelny, K. (2005). Neighborhood and community influences on parenting. In T. Luster & L. Okagaki (Eds.), *Parenting: An ecological perspective* (2nd ed., pp. 297-318). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ginott, H. G., Ginott, A., & Goddard, H. W. (2003). *Between parent and child: The bestselling classic that revolutionized parent-child communication*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Hewlett, S. A., & West, C. (2002). Preface: The challenge. In S. A. Hewlett, N. Rankin, & C. West (Eds.), *Taking parenting public* (pp. xv-xxii). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jacobson, A. (2003). Parent education and guidance. In D. Bredehoft & M. Walcheski (Eds.) *Family life education: Integrating theory and practice* (pp. 110-116). Minneapolis: National Council on Family Relations.
- Lerner, R. M., Sparks, E. E., & McCubbin, L. D. (2000). Family Diversity and family policy. In D. H. Demo, K. R. Allen, & M. A. Fine (Eds.), *Handbook of family diversity* (pp. 380-401). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Powell, L. H., & Cassidy, D. (2007). *Family life education: Working with families across the life span*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

- Scales, P.C., & Leffert, N. (1999). *Developmental assets*. Minneapolis: Search Institute.
- Simpson, A. R., & Roehlkepartain, J. L. (2003). Asset building in parenting practices and family life. In R. M. Lerner & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *Developmental assets and asset-building communities: Implications for research, policy, and practice* (pp. 157-193). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Smith, C. A., Cudaback, D., Goddard, H.W., & Myers-Walls, J. (1994). *National extension parent education model*. Manhattan: Kansas Cooperative Extension Services.

Figure 1

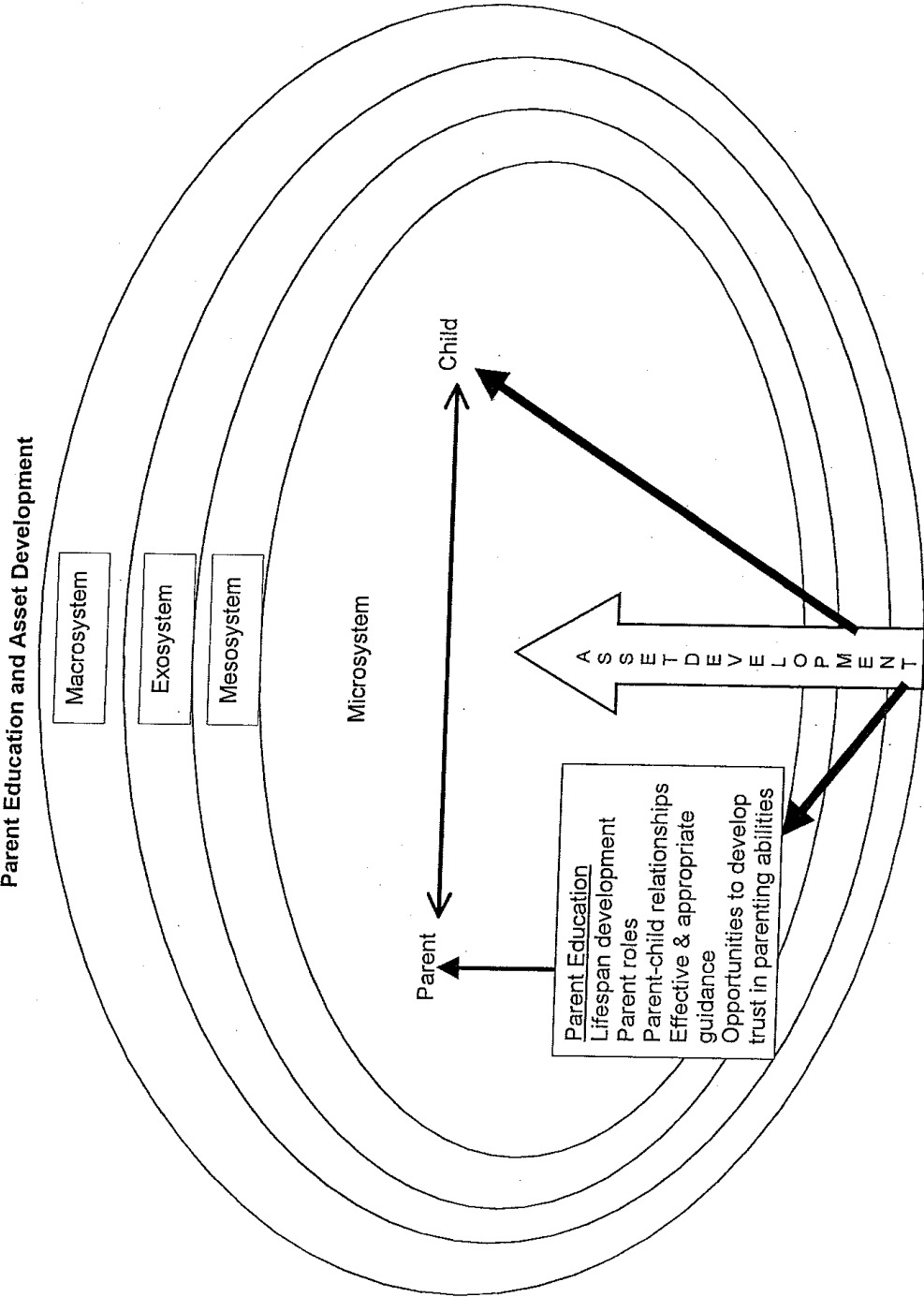


Figure 1

Table 1

Application of Support for Asset Development and Critical Parenting Practices

<u>Critical Parenting Practice</u>	<u>External Asset Category</u>	<u>Internal Asset Category</u>
<u>1. Care for Self</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Manage personal stress	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Identity
<input type="checkbox"/> Manage family resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries and Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Competencies
<input type="checkbox"/> Offer support to other parents		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Values
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for and accept support from others when needed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize one's own personal and parenting strengths		
<input type="checkbox"/> Have a sense of purpose in setting child-rearing goals		
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperate with child-rearing partner.		
<u>2. Understand</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Observe and understand one's children and their development	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Values
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize how children influence and respond to what happens to them	<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries and Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Identity
	<input type="checkbox"/> Constructive Use of Time	
<u>3. Guide</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Model appropriate desired behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Values
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish and maintain reasonable limits	<input type="checkbox"/> Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Competencies
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide children with developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries and Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Identity
<input type="checkbox"/> Convey fundamental values underlying basic human decency	<input type="checkbox"/> Constructive Use of Time	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teach problem-solving		

skills

- ❑ Monitor children’s activities and facilitate their contact with peers and adults

4. Nurture

- ❑ Express affection and compassion
- ❑ Foster children’s self-respect and hope
- ❑ Listen and attend to children’s feelings and ideas
- ❑ Teach kindness
- ❑ Provide for the nutrition, shelter, clothing, health, and safety needs of one’s children
- ❑ Celebrate life with one’s children
- ❑ Help children feel connected to family history and cultural heritage

External Asset Category

- ❑ Support
- ❑ Empowerment

Internal Asset Category

- ❑ Positive Values
- ❑ Social Competencies
- ❑ Positive identity

5. Motivate

- ❑ Teach children about themselves, others, and the world around them
- ❑ Stimulate curiosity, imagination, and the search for knowledge
- ❑ Create beneficial learning conditions supportive learning conditions
- ❑ Help children process and manage information

- ❑ Support
- ❑ Empowerment
- ❑ Constructive Use of Time

- ❑ Commitment to Learning
- ❑ Social Competencies

6. Advocate

- Find, use, and create community resources when needed to benefit one's children and the community children
- Stimulate social change to create supportive environments for children and families
- Build relationships with family, neighborhood, and community groups
- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Constructive use of time
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity

(Asset Development from Search-Institute.org; National Extension Parent Education Model from Smith, C. A., Cudaback, D., Goddard, H.W., & Myers-Walls, J. (1994). *National extension parent education model*. Manhattan: Kansas Cooperative Extension Services)