



Employment Planning for High School Youth with Disabilities: Addressing Families' Values, Barriers, and Connections to Support

Marcy Hintz
2021 UNM CDD LEND Trainee

Problem Framing

Though individuals with disabilities now have greater access to fair wage, competitive employment, parents of young adults with disabilities often feel hesitancy about supporting their son's or daughter's work.

In my capstone, I wanted to:

- A. Examine whether the values of the Employment First movement are actually shared by individuals with disabilities who work.
- B. Examine studies that describe the place of work in quality of life across cultures.
- C. Talk with parents from culturally and linguistically diverse communities to learn more about the values and experiences driving their concerns.

LEND COMPETENCIES: 1). Family-Centered, Culturally-competent practice; 2). Interdisciplinary Practice; 3) Research and Critical Thinking

Product

Podcast, co-hosted with Daniel Ekman from the DDPC, discussing:

- Why Employment?
- Family concerns and fears about employment
- Steps families can take with their children to build toward a future quality of life, which might include employment

Goal #1: Examine whether the values of the Employment First movement are actually shared by individuals with disabilities who work.

Kocman A, Weber G. Job Satisfaction, Quality of Work Life and Work Motivation in Employees with Intellectual Disability: A Systematic Review. J Appl Res Intellect Disabil. 2018 Jan;31(1):1-22. doi: 10.1111/jar.12319. Epub 2016 Dec 21. PMID: 28000421.

- Systematic review of 23 different studies that met inclusion criteria
- Consistently, **overall job satisfaction of people with intellectual disability is reported to be high** (Test et al. 1993; Petrovski & Gleeson 1997; Kumin & Schoenbrodt 2015).
- Melchiori & Church (1997) found **higher rates of job satisfaction among workers with intellectual disability than among their colleagues without intellectual disability working in the same environment**
- **High work motivation among people with intellectual disability was found in both quantitative** (Holwerda et al. 2013) **and qualitative research** (Li 2004).

What specific features of work contribute to quality of life?

- **The activity of work itself.** Twelve studies report results within this category.
- **Financial rewards.** Money is the main motivating factor for work in people with intellectual disability and the main reason for working (Andrews & Rose 2010; Jahoda et al. 2009; Lysaght et al. 2009)
- **Self-efficacy.** Ten studies consistently indicated that opportunities for using competencies as well as personal growth and development are relevant factors for job satisfaction in people with intellectual disability (Jahoda et al. 2009; Lysaght et al. 2009; Andrews & Rose 2010; Akkerman et al. 2014).

Akkerman A, Kef S, Meininger HP. Job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities: the role of basic psychological need fulfillment and workplace participation. *Disabil Rehabil*. 2018 May;40(10):1192-1199. doi: 10.1080/09638288.2017.1294205. Epub 2017 Mar 13. PMID: 28288522

Method: A total of 117 persons with intellectual disabilities, recruited from a Dutch care organization, were interviewed on need fulfillment at work and job satisfaction.

Findings: Allowing workers with intellectual disabilities to act with a sense of volition, feel effective, able to meet challenges, and connected to others is essential and contributes to job satisfaction. In order to achieve job satisfaction, it is essential that workplaces allow for fulfillment of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence of people with intellectual disabilities.

Goal #2: Examine studies that describe the relative value of work in quality of life across cultures.

Hirano, K.A., Rowe, D., Lindstrom, L. et al. Systemic Barriers to Family Involvement in Transition Planning for Youth with Disabilities: A Qualitative Metasynthesis. *J Child Fam Stud* 27, 3440–3456 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1189-y>

Transition planning is heavily rooted in Western values of independence and autonomy which sometimes don't align with the values of families from other cultures.

As Latinos, we don't see our kids living alone. The culture here is more open to that idea, as soon as they graduate, they move out of the house. For us, it's until they get married. Our children, male or female, live with us until they marry" (Povenmire-Kirk et al. 2010, p. 46).

I think the biggest thing is the insensitivity they (professionals) have around the needs of our minority families. They just don't get it... they don't get that we might possibly see the world differently than they do" (Geenan et al. 2003, p. 35).

Rural Special Education Quarterly. Facing Double Jeopardy: The Transition Experiences of Latina Family Caregivers of Young Adults With Disabilities Living in a Rural Community
Grace L. Francis, PhD, Judith M. S. Gross, PhD, Carlos E. Lavín, MA, First Published October 23, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8756870519879069>

In-depth interview with two mothers, both recent immigrants, hesitant to support their sons' entry into the workplace because of the mistreatment they'd experienced in their American workplace.

- **Reminder to me that employment's correlation with quality of life is dependent on the quality and dignity of the work itself.**

Goal #3: Talk with parents from culturally and linguistically diverse communities to learn more about the values and experiences driving their concerns.

Interview with three sets of parents in rural, southern New Mexico.

Major theme:

Safety

- Physical
- Social/Psychological
- Availability of Support

Final Product

- Podcast 1.0 – Work's contribution to quality of life; second-hand report of interview with families, used with their permission; tips for nurturing students' workplace-adaptive skills.
- Podcast 2.0 – Invited parent audience questions in advance; posed questions to fellow parents; played recorded interview with parent.

Lessons Learned

- The irreplaceable value of parents sharing with parents, self-advocates with self-advocates
- The boundaries and strengths of what I have to offer (resources, tools, strategies, and being a learner)
- Monitoring, acknowledging my cultural blind spots. Looking for different application of the quality of life factors within employment (choices, self-efficacy, community interaction, dignity of risk)

Podcast URL:

<https://cdd.health.unm.edu/autismportal/2021/04/08/hilos-sobre-el-autismo-empoderando-nuestros-hijos-y-hijas-para-el-empleo/>

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