

## Transition for Hispanic and Anglo Young Adults With Severe Intellectual Disability: Parent Perspectives Over Time

### Abstract

*This study examined parents' perspectives, assessed longitudinally, on the period of transition for young adults with severe intellectual disability, across two time points. There were two groups of respondents, 152 primarily Anglo and 98 Hispanic parents. In-depth interviews on parent transition experiences and views indicated that respondents from both cultural groups would like their sons or daughters to be working in integrated environments, but realistically, see their young adults working in more restrictive settings. Hispanic families were significantly less likely to see the young adult moving out of the family home after finishing high-school, as compared to Anglo families. Hispanic families reported significantly more worries regarding their sons' or daughters' transition, less involvement in the transition planning process, and a greater desire to be more involved in transition. These findings were consistent across time. Implications for working with families during the transition period are discussed.*

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The period of transition from high school to adulthood is a critical stage of development for adolescents and young adults with severe intellectual disability (ID) and their families. Parents of youth with severe disabilities worry both about their youth's ability to function independently in the future (Cooney, 2002; Kim & Turnbull, 2004) and their need for ongoing care throughout adulthood (Jordan & Dunlap, 2001; Schneider, Wedgewood, Llewellyn, & McConnell, 2006). Although much research has been published in the past 15 years in the area of transition, less is known regarding parent perspectives and involvement in transition planning for those with severe ID. Although we know that families are critical to the well-being of young people with severe ID (Kim & Turnbull, 2004; Kraemer & Blacher, 2001; Newman, 2005), we know less regarding the role of

families in transition planning, parent expectations and desires for their sons or daughters after exiting high school, and how parent involvement relates to positive transition experiences.

When discussing various transition outcomes for individuals with disabilities, particularly severe ID, parental perspectives must be taken into account (Chambers, Hughes, & Carter, 2004; Cooney, 2002; Defur, Todd-Allen, & Getzel, 2001; Miner & Bates, 1997; Wehmeyer, Morningstar, & Husted, 1999). McNair and Rusch (1991) were among the first to examine parent expectations of post-school outcomes for transition-age individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities. In examining questionnaires for 85 families with sons and daughters between the ages of 14-25 they found that forty-eight percent of parents imagined the young adult holding a job in the community, with 29% working in a sheltered workshop and 7% not working at all. Fifty-five percent of the parents imagined the young adult living at home after his or her education was completed and 29% imagined the young adult living in a group home.

In a more recent study examining parent perspectives on transition and post-school outcomes for students with severe ID, Chambers et al. (2004) found that all parents in their study viewed the young adult having a job as being very important, although they anticipated that the young adult would work in a segregated environment after exiting the school system. Similarly, Hill and colleagues found that 60% of parents in their study strongly endorsed the statement, "Work should be a normal part of life," yet, most parents chose a sheltered workshop or a day activity center as the preferred vocational placement for their adult children with severe ID (Hill, Seyfarth, Banks, Wehman, & Orelove, 1987).

In terms of community living, Chambers et al. (2004) found that most parents indicated that the young adult would live at home after exiting the school system. These data are similar to the most recent data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2), a 10 year longitudinal study currently taking place in the United States examining the period of transition for nearly 12,000 youth with disabilities being served in the public school system (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005). NLTS-2 data indicates that about 75% of all youth with disabilities are living at home within 2 years of exiting the school system. Chambers et al. also found that parents in their study were not very knowledgeable regarding living options for individuals with disabilities, which could be one reason that more young adults with disabilities do not live out of the family home within the first few years of exiting the school system. Or, if families are not very involved in the transition planning process, they would have little access to information regarding such issues.

The overall transition expectations of parents of high school students differ markedly between those who have youth with and without disabilities. Not surprisingly, parents of youth with disabilities, particularly severe ID, have more concerns regarding vocational options, future residential environments, social networks, and needs for assistance (Cooney, 2002; Kraemer & Blacher, 2001; Whitney-Thomas & Hanley-Maxwell, 1996). This discomfort may reflect a realistic view of the post-school world, that often offers limited adult services and greater uncertainty than the public school years (Ciulla Timmons, Whitney-Thomas, McIntyre, Butterworth, & Allen, 2004; Ferguson, Ferguson, & Jones, 1988; Kim & Turnbull, 2004; Neece, Kraemer, & Blacher, 2007). It is conceivable that if families were more involved in the

transition process and were given more opportunities to play an active role, their feelings regarding post-school outcomes would be more favorable, and perhaps even the outcomes themselves would be more positive.

### **Transition for Youth With Disabilities Who are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse**

Even less is known about how families who are culturally and linguistically diverse view or become involved in transition for their young adult sons or daughters. We do know, however, that the Hispanic population is the fastest growing minority group in the United States (Marotta & Garcia, 2003) and that in California Schools, for example, they comprise roughly 46% of those being served in the IDEA eligibility category of "mental retardation" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003.) Additionally, previous research has shown that this population shows high overall service need (Bailey et al., 1999) and low service use (McCallion, Janicki, & Grant-Griffin, 1997). This can lead to increased worries and anxiety on the part of the family when faced with major life events such as the transition from school to adult life. Indeed, in one recent study by Blue-Banning, Turnbull, and Pereira (2002) Hispanic families of children with ID reported worries regarding future residential options and employment opportunities.

Thus, while the transition period can be difficult for any family of a young person with severe ID, culturally and linguistically diverse families may encounter additional challenges and barriers (Geenen, Powers, Lopez-Vasquez & Bersani, 2003; Mpofu & Wilson, 2004; Simon, 2001). Families reported encountering barriers such as discrimination, cultural insensitivity, and problems accessing accommodations, services, and supports (Geenen et al., 2003).

In a qualitative study that focused on Hispanic mothers, Rueda, Monzo, Shapiro, Gomez and Blacher (2005) found that lack of information, particularly information in their native language, was a significant barrier for these mothers in participating in the transition process.

In addition, culturally and linguistically diverse families have reported specific expectations that are not being met in the school system. In a survey of 100 Hispanic families, Lian and Fontanez-Phelan (2001) found that the families wanted more opportunities for involvement at school, more parent orientations and more parent-teacher contact. Culturally and linguistically diverse families also reported placing a high importance on teaching their children about their culture, specifically cultural values and beliefs (Geenen, Powers, & Lopez-Vasquez, 2001; Geenen et al., 2003). These expectations may differ from those of Anglo families (Geenen et al., 2001) and may be overlooked by professionals.

Although it is essential to involve families in the transition planning process (Defur et al., 2001), diverse families feel that the transition process does not always reflect their cultural values. As an example, independent living is a key element of transition planning, but Hispanic families have reported that their culture does not necessarily share this as a primary concern. In several studies, Hispanic families reported that their culture places a high priority on staying at home and contributing to the family (Blue-Banning et al., 2002; Meier-Kronick, 1993; Rueda et al., 2005; Saetermoe, Beneli, & Busch, 1999).

Moreover, Hispanic mothers have reported feelings of alienation from service providers, and in particular from school personnel (Shapiro, Monzo, Rueda, Gomez, & Blacher, 2004). If parents do not

feel respected by professionals, they are certainly less likely to become involved. Furthermore, some investigators have questioned the cultural relevance of the entire transition movement for Hispanic groups. This topic was addressed in one qualitative study where 16 Hispanic mothers of young adults with severe ID reported on the meaning of transition for their family (Rueda et al., 2005). For example, these mothers described the transition from high school to adulthood as a form of post-school adaptation that was home-centered and sheltered, as opposed to the more conventional transition model emphasizing independent productivity and vocational pursuit. Indeed, if families who experience a very different cultural context have goals and priorities that don't reflect the view of school professionals, the transition process can become somewhat irrelevant.

This study was designed as an intensive interview of parents who have sons or daughters with ID who have recently exited, or will soon be exiting, the public school system in Southern California. The primary aim was to examine parent perspectives on key transition issues over time. The questions which served to guide the investigation were: (1) *Do parent aspirations and expectations of transition outcomes for their sons and daughters with severe ID vary by cultural group and across time?* and (2) *Does parent involvement in the transition process differ by cultural group and vary across time?*

## Method

### Participant Selection

Participants were 250 parents of sons or daughters with severe ID between the ages of 18 and 28. There were 152 primarily Anglo families and 98 Hispanic families. Once approval was obtained from the university Institutional Review

Board to conduct this overall research study, participants were recruited through Southern California Regional Centers, a statewide network in California in which all identified individuals with severe intellectual disabilities are registered. The Spanish-speaking Hispanic families were recruited primarily through the East Los Angeles Regional Center, which serves the urban region of Los Angeles inhabited by a large Latino community. For the purposes of recruitment, Regional Center staff mailed letters of invitation to families who had sons or daughters between 18-28 years of age with reported levels of moderate to severe ID. Recruitment continued until the sample criterion of 150 Hispanic families and 200 Anglo families were obtained. Invitation letters to families described the purpose of the study, its longitudinal intent, and provided details about informed consent (although actual consent was obtained in person, see Procedures.) Statistics were not available as to the number of families contacted to obtain these samples.

All families in the present study were involved in a larger study by the second author that included dimensions of family well-being not included here. This paper focuses exclusively on key dimensions of transition as viewed by parents. In order to be included in the present analyses, families needed to have participated in both waves of interviews (i.e., Time 1 and Time 2). Ninety-eight of the 150 Hispanic families participated in both waves of interviews and 152 of the 200 primarily Anglo families participated in both waves of interviews.

### Family and Young Adult Characteristics

Parent demographics are shown by sample in Table 1. In most cases mothers were respondents (77%), with both parents serving as respondents approximately 19% of the time. All of the mothers in the

Table 1. Family/Mother Characteristics by Sample: Time 2

Characteristic	Anglo	Hispanic	Chi Square
Mean Age in Years (SD)	51.44 (5.8)	52.9 (8.1)	ns
Education (% some college)	79.5	25.4	$\chi^2=70.8^{***}$
Health (% Good/Excellent)	84.2	54.1	$\chi^2=25.6^{***}$
Maternal Employment (% Employed)	78.3	77.6	ns
Marital Status (% married)	71.1	59.2	ns
Family Income (% > \$40g/yr)	76.9	18.4	$\chi^2=81.9^{***}$

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Hispanic sample reported their ethnicity to be "Hispanic/Chicano". The majority of mothers in the primarily Anglo group reported their ethnicity as Anglo (85%) with 15% of the sample reporting non-Anglo ethnicities (African-American = 7%; Asian=5%; Other = 3%). Mean mother age for both groups was approximately 51 years, with a range of 36-73 years for the two samples combined. Roughly 75% of the mothers were employed and over 50% of both groups were married (or

with partner.) The two groups differed significantly in their level of education, their self-reported health rating, and their family income. Mothers in the Anglo group were more highly educated, with 79.5% having obtained at least some college education, and they reported to be in better health, with 84.2% reporting good or excellent health. Anglo mothers also had a significantly higher family income, with 76.9% of Anglo families earning more than 40,000 per year.

Table 2. Young Adult Characteristics by Sample: Time 2

Characteristic	Anglo	Hispanic	Chi Square
Mean Age in Years (SD)	23.1 (2.6)	22.5(2.9)	ns
Gender (% male)	49.3	63.3	$\chi^2=4.1^*$
Ambulation (% Ambulatory)	79.6	83.6	ns
Diagnosis			
% Mixed MR	42.0	37.9	ns
% Cerebral Palsy	34.7	26.5	ns
% Down Syndrome	15.3	27.3	$\chi^2=5.4^*$
% Autism	8.0	8.3	ns
School Status (% Exited)	71.7	62.2	ns
Work Status of Exited Young Adults			
% Community/Supported Employment	10.2	9.8	ns
% Sheltered Workshop/Day Activity	71.3	68.8	ns
% At Home - Not Working	18.5	21.4	ns
Residential Status (% Out-of-Home)	19.1	3.1	$\chi^2=12.3^{***}$
Adaptive Behavior Mean Standard Score	24.8 (10.0)	23.0 (7.1)	ns
Maladaptive Behavior (Mean Score)	-13.74	-13.20	ns
Maladaptive Behavior (% moderate to high)	27.6	23.5	ns

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 2 contains demographic information for the young adults [see page 63]. The young adults in the samples ranged in age from 18-28 with no significant mean age differences between the two groups. There was a significant difference in the gender make up of the two groups, with 49.3% of the Anglo young adults being male, and 63.3% of the Hispanic young adults being male. Although all young adults qualified for Regional Center services in California under the primary diagnosis of "mental retardation", additional diagnoses were reported by the parent. The most common parent reported diagnoses were cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and autism. There were significantly more Hispanic young adults with Down syndrome compared to the Anglo group, with 27.3% of the Hispanic young adults having Down syndrome. Over 75% of both groups were ambulatory.

Both groups of young adults were severely cognitively involved, as measured by the *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales* (Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 1984). The mean standard score for the adaptive behavior composite was 24.8 and 23.0 for the Anglo young adults and the Hispanic young adults, respectively. The average developmental age equivalency for both groups combined was 3 years, 1 month. Roughly 25% of both groups of young adults had moderate to high levels of maladaptive behavior on the Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised Problem Behavior Scale (Bruininks, Woodcock, Weatherman, & Hill, 1996).

Although the majority of both groups of young adults lived at home with their parents at the time of the interviews, significantly more Anglo young adults (19.1%) lived out of the home compared to the Hispanic young adults (3.1%). Even so, their parents remained involved in their daily lives, and thus opted to participate in this study. Nearly two-thirds of the

Hispanic young adults ( $N=61$ ) and three-fourths of the Anglo young adults ( $N=109$ ) had exited the school system at the time of the second interview (see Table 2). Of those that had exited the school system, approximately 10% of both groups worked in the community or a supported work environment, 70% worked in a sheltered workshop or day activity center, and about 20% were not working at all.

### Instruments

The data presented on transition were derived mainly from two researcher-designed instruments: The *Transition Experiences Survey* and the *Parent Involvement in Transition Planning Questionnaire* (Kraemer & Blacher, 2001; Kraemer, McIntyre, & Blacher, 2003). The *Transition Experiences Survey (TES)* is a 38-item guided interview protocol that contains questions regarding the young adult's participation in school programming geared toward transitioning from the school system to adult life. It also contains questions pertaining to parent expectations of post-school outcomes [e.g., parent views of work in the future, parent views of young adult moving out of the family home], as well as the current living and work outcomes of the young adult [e.g., young adult's current work arrangement, such as competitive employment, supported employment, sheltered workshop, or not working]. The measure includes both open-ended and close-ended questions. Closed ended questions consist of dichotomous (yes/no) and Likert scale items. Although the questions have face validity, the measure does not contain scales appropriate for reliability analyses.

The *Parent Involvement in Transition Planning (PIT)* questionnaire is a 17-item questionnaire that assesses parents' level of involvement and opportunities to be involved in the transition planning process. Questions consist of dichotomous and

Likert scale items. Items assess the kinds of involvement parents actually had in transition planning for their young adults, such as participation in transition planning meetings, conversations with teachers, and observing potential vocational placements. Items also assess how much parents worry about various aspects of transition such as where their young adults will work, the possibility of community living, and access to general social opportunities. For these items parents are asked to rate their level of worry on a 5-point Likert scale, with anchors being “never worry” and “very often worry.” As with the *Transition Experiences Survey* described above, the PIT is examined at the item level and does not contain subscale scores appropriate for psychometric analyses.

Information on child and family characteristics were obtained via three questionnaires or instruments. The *Family Data Sheet* was used to obtain the demographic data reported in Tables 1 and 2. The *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales* (Sparrow et al., 1984) were administered to mothers as a semi-structured interview. The overall adaptive behavior composite, comprised of the communication, daily living skills and socialization domains ( $M=100$ ;  $SD=15$ ) was used in the present study. As reported by Sparrow et al. the adaptive behavior composite has an alpha of .92. Table 2 shows means and standard deviations for the Anglo and Hispanic samples of young adults.

*The Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised, (SIB-R) Problem Behavior Scale* (Bruininks et al, 1996) was used to assess maladaptive behaviour. The 8-item Problem Behavior Scale is comprised of three broad maladaptive behavior indices (Internalized, Externalized, Asocial) and a composite score, the General Maladaptive Index (GMI). The General Maladaptive Index (GMI) composite score ranges from 10 to -74, with lower scores indicating more

serious maladaptive behavior. The mean for “normal” samples is 0 ( $SD=10$ ). Scores below -20 are classified as moderately serious, scores below -30 are classified as serious, and scores below -40 are classified as very serious. In the present study individuals with scores below -20 were classified as having moderate to severe levels of maladaptive behavior. The manual provides sufficient evidence for reliability (e.g., test-retest reliability  $r=.86$ ; Cronbach alpha  $=.80$ ) and validity.

### Procedures

Once participants were selected, research staff scheduled in-home interviews with the caregivers. Families were interviewed in their own homes, with each interview lasting 2-3 hours. All Hispanic families were bilingual and were interviewed by bilingual staff who conducted the interview in the language preferred by the parents. Prior to participating in the interview, families were told the purpose of the interview and were also given a written description of the study, and a verbal and written overview of informed consent. All participating families signed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study. Interviews focused on parent views of the transition period, parent involvement in transition related activities, and parent desires/expectations for their sons and daughters after exiting the school system. Each family was interviewed at two time points (Time 1 and Time 2), with 2-3 years between interviews. Families received honoraria for their participation.

For both Time 1 and Time 2 interviews, 75% of the Hispanic families preferred to have the interview conducted in Spanish. All interviewers received training in the administration of instruments and in procedures, safety, and etiquette. Interviews were conducted in teams of two, for safety and reliability purposes. The interviewers read the questions for

Table 3. Parent Views Toward Work "I Would Like my Son or Daughter to Work in the Future"

	Between-group differences						Within-group differences over time	
	Time 1			Time 2			Anglo (p)	Hispanic (p)
	Anglo (%)	Hispanic (%)	p	Anglo (%)	Hispanic (%)	p		
Strongly Disagree	8.6	7.1	ns	17.1	2.0	.001	.05	ns
Disagree	6.6	5.1	ns	10.5	4.0	ns	ns	ns
Indifferent	7.2	4.1	ns	9.2	7.1	ns	ns	ns
Agree	25.0	22.4	ns	23.7	42.9	.01	ns	.01
Strongly Agree	52.6	61.2	ns	39.5	43.9	ns	.05	.01

all measures and recorded responses by hand; administration of the TES and PIT were also audio-taped. This was to assure accuracy of the information reported for later coding, and to record any qualitative information provided by the parent during the interview.

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 13.0 for Windows. Both parametric and non-parametric tests were conducted. Chi-square analyses were used for nominal data to compare the cultural groups at Times 1 and 2. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for ordinal data to compare the cultural groups at Times 1 and 2.

### Results

*Do parent aspirations and expectations of transition outcomes for their sons and daughters vary by cultural group and across time?* Table 3 illustrates parent responses to the question as to whether or not parents would like their son or daughter to work in the future. As it can be seen, at Time 1 families of both groups responded similarly, with no significant difference between the two groups. The majority of families from both the Anglo and Hispanic groups would like to see their young adult sons and daughters with severe ID working in the future. In fact,

some families have a very clear vision of what they would like their adult children to be doing in the future. One Hispanic mother relayed the following regarding her 23 year old son, "Ideally I would like to see him go to his job, work more than four hours, come home, make dinner, do his chores, relax, watch TV, relax, call his girlfriend."

At Time 2, when these same families were again asked the question regarding working in the future the responses were less optimistic, especially for the Anglo families. In response to the statement "I would like my son/daughter to work in the future" 86.8 % of the Hispanic families agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, compared to 63.2% of Anglo families. Over time it appears that the Anglo families, in particular, developed a somewhat less favorable view of their son or daughter working in the future, with a nearly 15% decrease from Time 1 to Time 2 in the agree/strongly agree categories. The following quote illustrates an Anglo mother's view toward work for her 23 year old son who had exited the school system: "We strongly disagree. It is unreasonable to expect him to work. We like the day activity program. He has reached his full potential."

When parents were asked their views toward having their adult son/daughter



Table 4. Parent Views Toward Young Adult Moving Out of Family Home

	Between-group differences						Within-group differences over time	
	Time 1			Time 2			Anglo (p)	Hispanic (p)
	Anglo (%)	Hispanic (%)	p	Anglo (%)	Hispanic (%)	p		
Never	34.2	79.6	.001	34.2	80.4	.001	ns	ns
Occasionally	25.0	8.2	.01	22.3	8.2	.01	ns	ns
Considered/Visited	23.1	9.1	.01	19.1	8.3	.01	ns	ns
Wait List/Moved Out	17.7	3.1	.001	24.4	3.1	.001	ns	ns

move out of the home, major differences emerged between the two cultural groups. As shown in Table 4 Hispanic parents were much less likely to view their young adult son/daughter moving out of the family home. In fact, nearly 80% of the Hispanic families reported that they “never” anticipated the young adult moving from the family home. Their responses remained virtually unchanged between Time 1 and Time 2. Anglo families, on the other hand, were much more open to having their son/daughter with severe ID move out of the home. At Time 2, only 34.2% of the Anglo families said they “never” see the young adult moving out of the home. Also, at the time of the Time 2 interview, 24.4% of the Anglo young adults already lived out of the family home or were on a waiting list for a group home; this is compared with only 3.1% of the Hispanic young adults ( $\chi^2=12.29$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

Because the two cultural groups differed significantly on some important demographic variables (see Table 1) that correlated with family views toward the young adults moving out of the home, family income ( $r=.27$ ,  $p<.01$ ), mother education ( $r=.31$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and mother health ( $r=.18$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were controlled for in analyses. Even when these variables were controlled for, the relationship between cultural group and views toward the young adult moving out of the home

remained,  $F(1,172)=8.22$ ,  $p<.001$ . A quote from an Anglo mother of a 20 year old who was still in school illustrated her view that movement out of the home for a young adult was a normal part of the life cycle: “I think it will be a good thing. It is time. He’s already transitioned to a group home and he’s happier. He’s outside a lot and it makes him happy. It’s a good thing.”

When asked if, and when, the young adult does move out of the family home, 42.1% of Anglo families at Time 2 viewed the son/daughter living in a group home, compared with 11.3% of Hispanic Families. The majority of Hispanic families (74.2%) viewed the young adult living with a sibling or other relative.

*Does parent involvement in the transition process differ by cultural group and vary across time?* Table 5 [see page 68] illustrates parent responses when they were asked to report on the kinds of involvement they had in their sons’/daughters’ transition planning. At Time 1, Anglo families reported consistently more involvement than Hispanic families. They were more often members of the transition planning team and had more teacher contact. They were also more often involved in finding vocational placements and future living placements for their offspring. At Time 2, higher reports of involvement in transition planning occurred for both

Table 5. Parent Report of Involvement in Transition Planning

	Between-group differences						Within-group differences over time	
	Time 1			Time 2			Anglo (p)	Hispanic (p)
	Anglo (%)	Hispanic (%)	p	Anglo (%)	Hispanic (%)	p		
Member of ITP	78.9	55.1	.001	86.1	92.9	ns	ns	.001
Teacher Contact at least 1x per month	82.2	65.3	.05	84.1	86.8	ns	ns	.01
Finding Job Placement	38.2	19.4	.01	47.0	30.6	.01	ns	ns
Finding Living Placement	28.3	6.1	.001	37.7	9.2	.001	ns	ns

cultural groups. This is particularly pronounced for the Hispanic parents. Nonetheless, Anglo families continued to report significantly higher involvement with regard to finding a job placement and future living arrangement.

When families were asked to identify kinds of supports and/or information that would be helpful to them in planning for their sons/daughters transition to adult life, significant differences emerged between the two cultural groups. Hispanic families reported a greater need for information about schools, specific skills of their son/daughter, more information on work options, a greater need for financial support, more emotional support from their family and a greater desire for involvement in a parent support group (see Table 6). Not surprisingly, Hispanic families reported desiring significantly less information on options for community living. Only Time 2 data are displayed here as few differences were found between Time 1 and Time 2.

When families were asked how much they worry about various aspects of transition, at Time 2 Hispanic families reported worrying significantly more about

vocational placements than Anglo families ( $\chi^2=15.64$ ,  $p<.001$ ), with 52% of Hispanic families reporting they often worry compared to 26.5% of Anglo families. More Hispanic (31.6%) as compared to Anglo (21.9%) families also reported they worry about their son/daughters access to social activities after exiting high school.

## Discussion

One of the distinguishing aspects of the present study was its examination of the period of transition with two cultural groups of young adults with severe ID and their families. To date, few cultural comparison studies can be found in the literature for individuals with disabilities, particularly during this period of the life-span. Additionally, this study provides a unique examination of parent expectations

Table 6. Parent Report of Support/Information Wanted to Plan for Transition: Time 2

More Information Wanted About . . .	Anglo (%)	Hispanic (%)
School	27.2	70.4***
Young Adult's Skills	31.1	74.5***
Options for Work	51.7	75.5***
Options for Community Living	41.7	24.1**
Financial Support	49.0	75.5***
Emotional Support From Family	39.7	58.2**
Involvement in a Parent Group	41.1	75.5***

\* $p<.05$ , \*\* $p<.01$ , \*\*\* $p<.001$

of post-school outcomes across time, as well as details of parent involvement at this crucial stage of the family life-course. Finally, within the transition literature, few studies have examined this period exclusively with youth with severe ID, with a reasonably large sample.

In the present study it was found that parent aspirations and expectations of vocational outcomes for their sons and daughters with severe ID differed little by cultural group, although more differences did emerge between the two groups over time. At the time of the first interview most families had positive views of their young adult children working in the community, however at the second interview (approximately 2-3 years later), families' views had become less positive, particularly for Anglo families. Post-school outcome data at the time of the second interview showed, for the most part, that these young adults spent their days in activity centers and sheltered work settings after exiting the school system. This is consistent with other post-school employment data for adults with more severe ID (e.g., Hill et al., 1987; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2005) and may explain the general decrease in parent optimism towards future work outcomes that we see in our data over time. However, not all families see work as essential. For some families having their sons/daughters involved in meaningful, stimulating activities with friends and family is the number one priority. As simply stated by one mother of a 16 year old boy: "I just want him to be happy ... I don't care if he works or not."

In terms of views toward moving out of the home, our data are consistent with other studies indicating that Hispanic families often do not view movement out of the home as a transition goal for their young adult child (e.g., Blue-Banning et al., 2002; Saetermoe et al., 1999). In the present study, Hispanic parents of young

adults with severe ID did not see the young adult moving out of the family home after leaving high school, with 80% reporting they *never* consider the young adult moving away from home.

Moreover, when our Hispanic families were "forced" to choose a future living environment for their son or daughter they chose living with a family member. These data are consistent with general findings comparing Anglo and Hispanic parent perceptions of adulthood, wherein Hispanic parents often place more importance on helping family members and Anglo parents place more importance on moving away from home and independence (Meier-Kronick, 1993; Rueda et al., 2005; Saetermoe et al., 1999).

Parent involvement in the transition process differed greatly by cultural group and over time. Hispanic families reported less involvement in transition planning at Time 1, but an increase in involvement over time. It is possible that the increase in parent involvement in transition that is evident at the time of the second interview is a result of these families already participating in an interview on transition a few years earlier. Involvement in the first interview process may have served as an impetus to become more involved in their sons or daughters transition planning.

Hispanic families also reported the need for more information related to their young adult's transition planning and greater worry about certain aspects of transition compared to Anglo families. These findings are consistent with extant literature on Hispanic families and the period of transition which indicates they often lack information and knowledge concerning availability of services (Mpofu & Wilson, 2004) and they often have difficulty communicating their wants and needs to professionals (Rueda et al., 2005). Rueda and colleagues found that communication difficulties can stem

from several sources including a lack of information available in Spanish, parents' suspicions that professionals really do not want parents to be actively involved or informed, and a mismatch between what family priorities are for their adult son/daughter and what professionals view as appropriate services and outcomes. Freedman and Boyer (2000) also noted that professionals should be responsive to the informational needs, culture and life stage of ethnic minority families.

Moreover, families have different priorities for their sons/daughters with severe ID. Some may view integrated work and post-school living options as crucial goals for transition planning, where others may view family involvement and social integration as priority areas. This latter option would be more in keeping with the importance of the parent-child-relationship in Hispanic families (Zuniga, 1998). Moreover, these goal areas may change over time. As an example, as the young adult with severe ID ages, the possibility of the development of more challenging behavior increases (Pfeiffer & Baker, 1994; Emerson, 2003), and options for both parents and the young adult may become more limited. One limitation of the study reported here is that the time frame, while longitudinal, was not really long enough to determine the impact of high school transition planning on the young adult and family. Another assessment, five or ten years after all the participants had exited high school, would likely yield valuable information.

There are two primary implications that can be drawn from the present study regarding transition planning for youth with severe ID from Anglo and Hispanic cultures. First, regardless of race, ethnicity or culture it is essential to involve families in the transition process. Families are critical to the well-being of youth and young adults with severe intellectual

disabilities and are key players in the transition planning process (Blacher, 2001; Blue-Banning et al., 2002; Chambers et al., 2004; Kraemer et al., 2003). After these youth have exited the school system it is the family that will remain the primary care-provider and life-long advocate for their young adult. Second, Hispanic families, in particular, report a need and desire for more information regarding their son/daughter's transition and options/services that are available. Professionals need to be aware of the priorities of the family and must consider the cultural context of the family when planning for transition (Geenen et al., 2001, 2003; Mpofu & Wilson, 2004).

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