

PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR PARENTING STYLES AND INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSITION PROGRAMS FOR THEIR ETHNIC- MINORITY YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

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Agenda



How did I get here?

Why does this research
matter?

Facts

- 7.5 million students aged 3 – 21 receive services under the Individuals with disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
 - 15% of public-school students
 - 54% represent students from an ethnic-minority group
- Over 1.6 million students are served under Section 504.
 - 40% represent students from an ethnic-minority group

References:

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2024). Profile of Students with Disabilities in U.S Public Schools during the 2020-2021 School Year (2020-2021 Civil Rights Data Collection Data Snapshot). Retrieved October 28, 2025, from <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/crdc-student-disabilities-snapshotpdf-21420.pdf>

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2024). Students with Disabilities. Condition of Education. U.S Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved October 28, 2025, from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg>.

Research Introduction

Youth's success in their academic or community agency outcomes is highly related to their parent's involvement and level of engagement (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

Studies show that nearly 25% of children reside in single-parent households (United States Census, 2022).

Single-parent households account for the variance in the family's socioeconomic status, along with factors such as cultural, ethnic, and spiritual ideologies (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2021).

The benefits of having families, including parents, involved at different levels of the students' services have been demonstrated to be meaningful (Hirano & Shanley et al., 2018).

Brief overview of the challenge.

The need for vocational rehabilitation (VR) for transition-aged youth has been a concern for decades (Rowe et al., 2015; Scheef & McKnight-Lizotte, 2021; Sung et al., 2015).

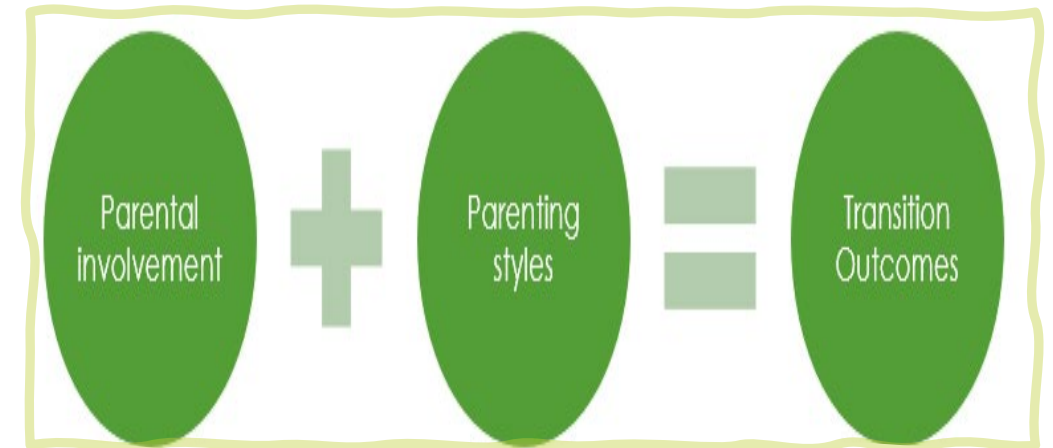
With the improvement of the overall VR success over the past few years, minority students with disabilities continue to fall behind their peers in achieving competitive employment (Vryhof & Balcazar, 2020).

Parents are limited in associating the type of work and the work environment needed for their children to be successful. This lack of awareness can result in their child lacking sufficient resources and being free of obstacles to sustaining work (Reimann et al., 2019).

Gaps in research literature exists

Limited research is focused on parental involvement, parenting styles, and transitional outcomes of minority students with disabilities in the VR system (Marcucci, 2020).

Although the literature supports the relationship between positive parental support and higher education success, less is known about the relationship between positive parental involvement and the success of students who are exiting school and entering the world of work (Phoenix et al., 2020).



Conceptual Framework and Methodology.

Conceptualization guides research



BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY (cont.)



To understand the child's development, Bronfenbrenner theorized that one must understand the five levels of the ecological system and how each level inevitably interacts with and influences the others in all aspects of the child's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The child is conceptually at the center of all five levels and details their influence on child development.

References:

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

Parental Involvement – Epstein model

The Epstein (2007) model of parental involvement presents the importance in developing partnerships between the home, school, and community to support students throughout their education. As these partnerships evolved, student outcomes were expected to improve (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010).

The overlapping spheres of influence suggested that students acquire needed knowledge when parents, professional staff, and community organizations work together, sharing responsibilities for student success (Epstein et al., 2018).

Epstein et al.(2018) has continued work on the six domains and has established a model of six types of involvement that reflect multi-level partnerships, with families, educators, and communities working collaboratively.

References:

- Epstein, J. L. (2007). Improving family and community involvement in secondary schools. *Principal leadership*, 8(2), 16-22. [homeschoolconnect.pbworks.com/f/Improving+ Family+and+Community+Involvement.pdf](https://homeschoolconnect.pbworks.com/f/Improving+Family+and+Community+Involvement.pdf)
- Epstein, J. L., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2010). School counselors' roles in developing partnerships with families and communities for student success. *Professional School Counseling*, 14(1), 2156759X1001400102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X1001400102>
- Epstein, J. L.; Sanders, M. G.; Sheldon, S. B.; Simon, B. S.; Salinas, K. C.; Jansorn, N. R.; Roderiguez, N.;VanVoorhis, F. L.; Martin, C. S.; Thomas, B. G.; Greenfield, M. D.; Hutchins, D. J.; Williams, K. J.. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*. (4th ed.). Corwin Publishing.

Parental involvement and engagement

- Jeynes (2018) postulated that social science research has evolved from parental participation to theories of parental involvement and engagement.
- The divergence from parental involvement to engagement is subtle and is important when considering ethnic-minority youth with disabilities in transition settings (Scanlan, 2008).

References:

- Jeynes, W. H. (2018). A practical model for school leaders to encourage parental involvement and parental engagement. *School Leadership & Management*, 38(2), 147-163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1434767>
- Scanlan, M. (2008) Caregiver Engagement in Religious Urban Elementary Schools, *Marriage & Family Review*, 43:3-4, 308-337. doi: 10.1080/01494920802072520

Cultural aspects

Cooper (2021) and Yan (1999) provided a brief conceptualization of diverse families' types of parental involvement and the rationale for their particular type of involvement.

Poor minority parents often were less knowledgeable and involved in their children's educational programs than European American parents of students in the same programs (McWayne et al., 2016; Parker et al., 1999).

Park et al. (2002) Family Quality of Life Domains identified five key impacts of poverty on the family. The five key impact areas are health, productivity, physical environment, emotional well-being, and family interventions.

References:

- Cooper, K. (2021). Are poor parents poor parents? the relationship between poverty and parenting among mothers in the UK. *Sociology (Oxford)*, 55(2), 349-383. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038520939397>
- McWayne, C. M., Melzi, G., Limlingan, M. C., & Schick, A. (2016). Ecocultural patterns of family engagement among low-income latino families of preschool children. *Developmental Psychology*, 52(7), 1088-1102. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/10.1037/a0040343
- Park, J., Turnbull, A. P., & Turnbull III, H. R. (2002). Impacts of poverty on quality of life in families of children with disabilities. *Exceptional children*, 68(2), 151-170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290206800201>
- Parker, F.L., Boak, A. Y., Griffin, K. W., Ripple, C., & Peay, L. (1999). Parent-child relationship, home learning environment, and school readiness. *School Psychology Review*, 28(3), 413. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.1999.12085974>
- Yan, W. (1999). Successful African American students: The role of parental involvement. *Journal of Negro Education*, 68(1), 5-22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2668206>

Parent's Perspective on their Involvement

- Researchers suggested that parents deal with many issues that can impact their level of involvement (Epstein, 2007; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).
- While these issues are not listed hierarchically, the most common factors impacting parenting involvement are the parent's mental and emotional health, socioeconomic status, and cultural influences (Brown et al., 2020).
- A study of parental cultural differences found that nonWhite parents reported negative interactions with their children's school and community representatives and chose not to participate in school-related activities (Lechuga-Peña & Brisson, 2018).

References:

- Brown, S. M., Doom, J. R., Lechuga-Peña, S., Watamura, S. E., & Koppels, T. (2020). Stress and parenting during the global COVID-19 pandemic. *Child abuse & neglect*, 110, 104699.
- Epstein, J. L. (2007). Improving family and community involvement in secondary schools. *Principal leadership*, 8(2), 16-22. [homeschoolconnect.pbworks.com/f/Improving+ Family+and+Community+Involvement.pdf](https://homeschoolconnect.pbworks.com/f/Improving+Family+and+Community+Involvement.pdf)
- Hornby, G., & Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: An explanatory model. *Educational Review* 63(1), 37-52. doi: 10.1080/00131911.2010.488049
- Lechuga-Pena, S., & Brisson, D. (2018). Barriers to School-Based Parent Involvement While Living in Public Housing: A Mother's Perspective. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(5), 1176+. https://link-gale-com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/apps/doc/A542577892/AONE?u=msu_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=bf8393e4

Parenting Styles

- The two best-known models of parenting styles are Baumrind's 1968 parenting styles model and Maccoby and Martin's 1983 model.
- Baumrind's (1968) model and Maccoby and Martin's (1983) model emphasized that there are specific combinations of parenting practices that impact child development.
- Both models detailed combinations of parenting styles (e.g., authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful) in their research.

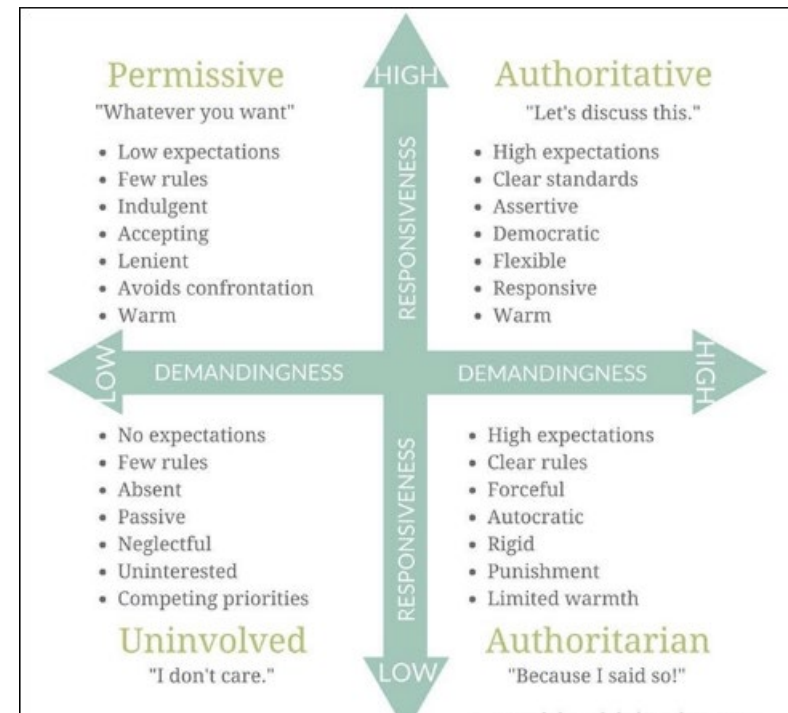
References:

- Baumrind, D. (1968). Authoritarian vs. authoritative parental control. *Adolescence*, 3(11), 255-272. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1969-06772-001>
- Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In P. H. Mussen, & E. M. Hetherington (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, Personality, and Social Development* (pp. 1-101). Wiley.

Parenting Styles (cont.)

Responsiveness refers to the degree to which parents are accepting and sensitive to their child's emotional and developmental needs. Parent responsiveness can predict children's social competence and functioning (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Demandingness refers to the extent that parents control their child's behavior or demand maturity and is associated with academic performance and problem behavior (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019).



Key Findings

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i># of children</i>	<i># of children with disabilities</i>	<i>Highest level of education</i>	<i>Employment status</i>	
<i>P1</i>	Dawn	35	Female	African-American	Single	1	1	H.S Diploma	Unemployed
<i>P2</i>	June	61	Female	African-American	Married	2	2	Some College	Employed – Full-time
<i>P3</i>	Ester	51	Female	African-American	Single	1	1	Some College	Employed— Full-time
<i>P4</i>	Francine	44	Female	African-American	Married	4	3	Master’s Degree	Employed- Full-time
<i>P5</i>	Augusta	50	Female	African-American	Widowed	4	3	Some College	Employed – Part-time
<i>P6</i>	Chahna	46	Female	South Asian American	Married	3	1	Doctorate Degree	Employed – Full-time
<i>P7</i>	Dave	47	Male	African-American	Single	1	1	Some College	Employed – Full-time

Themes

Themes	Subthemes
1. Ecological Issues	1a. Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped Educational and Disintegrated Community Services 1b. Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services 1c. Societal Stigma due to Race and Ethnic Status
2. Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy	2a. Parents' Needs to Actively Advocate for Their Youths to Receive Services 2b. Parents' Advocacy Action Sets a Role Model for Their Youths
3. Impact on Parents	3a. Parents Worry about the Youths' Future 3b. Adverse Parental Mental Health
4. Impact on Youths	4a. Adverse Impacts on the Youths' Vocational and Educational Activities 4b. Adverse Social Interactions 4c. An Authoritative Parenting Style is Influenced by the Needs to Care for their Youth.
5. Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency	5a. Alignment of Youths' Interests and Transition Goals: The youth's transitional support system positively aligns youths' interests 5b. Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Supports 5c. Parents Acts as Positive Support System for Their Youth 5d. Family and Community are Available as Informal Support. Available as Informal Supports

Theme 1: Subtheme 1 - Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped Educational and Disintegrated Community Services

Parents discussed their challenges with getting their youths into disability-specific programs.

Specifically, parents reported that governmental policies and program eligibility criteria often hinder their child in delaying or even not being able to enroll in certain services.

- Chahna – ““So their argument is, well, we cannot have two services simultaneously. You cannot have community living supports and skill building. So it has to be skill-building.”
- Francine – “It's more systemic. A person is doing well and we gonna take away their support and they're supposed to continue doing well. Well, no, the reason they're doing well is because of that support. And I understood it was systemic, but it doesn't make it any better. Like, I was pissed. And the fact of having to go through that whole thing all over again was really aggravating. So that sounds like it. Yeah. That was a negative, but I knew it wasn't the school”

Theme 1: Subtheme 3 - Societal Stigma Due to Racial-Ethnic Status

Parents stated that because of their youths' racial and ethnic identity, they continue to face pervasive discrimination.

Parents often had to assist their youths, dealing with the nuance of navigating different cultures' social interactions and incorporating the family elements into service as the cultural needs.

- Francine “I think being in high school and the age he's at in a predominantly White district, his social interactions have been impacted. And I think he feels a little awkward around his friends at school that looked like him. because he has always interacted with kids that didn't look like him. So my conversation with him has been around you. You don't need to make new friends if you don't want to just because they're Black. You make friends with people who you feel comfortable with regardless of their color
- Chahna “The systems, we worship the system. The system is the center. And if my son fits it, he fits it great. If he doesn't too bad. But it should be that the family is the center. And what are our needs

Theme 3: Subtheme 2 - Adverse Parental Mental Health.

Parents expressed that providing care for their youth with disabilities can also result in caregivers experiencing emotional stress and anxiety.

Regularly dealing with healthcare and educational systems and managing challenging emotions might adversely affect the emotional well-being of parents.

- Ester “The difficult part of it is that even though she has a disability, I wish that she could talk a little bit more to communicate with you because I just want to know her thoughts. I want to hear her voice. And that's hard. As hard as it's after the tough days that we have had up until this day here.
- Dave ““well, being that I am a little older now, so, not wanting leave him home alone, for too long, that would probably be the only thing that I see is holding me back. you know, certain behaviors tend to be a little annoying at times. It can be stressful.

Theme 4: Subtheme 3 - An Authoritative Parenting Style is Influenced by the Needs to Care for their Youth.

Parents identified that their approach involved fostering autonomy in their youth through clear rule-setting and boundary establishment.

Additionally, parents emphasized the importance of maintaining open lines of communication, actively being attentive to their youth's thoughts and concerns.

- Francine “you're gonna be the only little black boy in the group and I don't want you walking down the street with them because I've seen them together and they act very silly and doing stuff and getting in trouble. And if you're out there, you're probably gonna be the one to get in trouble. So to prevent that, I'll drop you off or you just can't do that. So I'll say things like that because my thing is, if my parent can't tell me the truth, why should I think society will? And I'll tell him that too.
- Augusta “I encourage him to be more independent. So that's kind of where I am now with, with him because he's 18 and because, you know, soon enough he'll wanna, you know, go off and get his own place. So I'm really working on trying not to be so hands-on because he's a boy and he's 18, so I don't wanna be too, you know, but yeah, right now I'm really more so pushing him towards more independent skills, so he depends less on me.

Theme 5: Subtheme 2 - Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Supports

- Parents stated that they felt it was critical for their youth's community agency to assist in coordinating mental and medical support.
- Several parents said that finding resources for their children was difficult and that finding services might not have been possible without a strong network of supportive people.
 - Augusta "I think they worked with him very well, especially when he was younger and it was, more severe, his speech delay, but I think overall they did pretty good in catching him up, uh Helping him with his, yep. I think she helps out a lot. I know she's really busy because she probably has to take on a lot of other people that she's helping. But, she does have resources that she's able to hook us up with and, she did tell me to, you know.
 - Dave "But there were a couple of things that I wanted to address with the counselor. And he lost his brother and his mom. So grief counseling is something that she's working on with, and she works with him about social cues and all those other things. So as far as interacting with her, you know, she's pretty, you know, she communicates, communicates a lot with me.

Recommendations and Implications

Implications for Educators

- Reinforce the importance of training rehabilitation counselors to strongly advocate for implementing vocational and career counseling early in the school for students with disabilities.
- Educators integrate curriculum elements that emphasize early intervention practices to ensure that students understand the development requirements and potential obstacles encountered by individuals with disabilities.
- Educators promote partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and governmental officials.
 - Educators should incorporate policy analysis projects that focus not only on disability policy but also on how to advocate on behalf of their students for equality and access.
- Rehabilitation educators training future rehabilitation professionals play a crucial role in ensuring the pre-service professional is training in multicultural aspects of one's disability.

Implications for Practitioners

- Results of the research showed that parents wanted their youth service delivery team to be more informed and advocate on behalf of their child
- Practitioners should build rapport not only with the student but with their parents/caregiver. Research supports that when practitioners build rapport with families, cultural sensitivity is appreciated and the families start to trust their youth's service provider.
 - Donath and colleagues (2023) conducted a study on practitioners receiving professional development in diversity and inclusion found that when professional development is implemented appropriately, they can improve their knowledge, skills, and beliefs and increase student achievement
- Continuous learning and professional development -To ensure that vocational rehabilitation, educational, and community services providers are current in their culturally responsive approach

Recommendations for Vocational Rehabilitation Policymakers

- Expansion of the eligibility criteria of ethnic-minority youth when seeking vocational rehabilitation services requires changing eligibility criteria to be more inclusive of individuals with severe disabilities.
 - According to Yin and colleagues (2021), racial disparities among people with disabilities who pursued vocational rehabilitation services were evident. Ethnic-minority individuals with disabilities receive lower eligibility decisions and employment outcomes than their White counterparts.
- Agencies should change their policies to revise the definitions of impairment and functional limitations.

Recommendations for Vocational Rehabilitation Policymakers (cont.)

- Incorporate policies and practices that:
 - Recognize the environmental aspects and impacts - systems, discriminations
 - Recognize the resilience of the family and family as a resource, but also the need to provide them with knowledge, training, and support
 - Teach families and individuals with disability advocacy and self-advocacy skills
 - Outreach to culturally diverse families and students with disabilities to provide services for them

Personal Reflections and Looking Ahead!

Questions and Answers (Q & A)

