

Becoming Independent: Parental Perceptions of Work Readiness in Emerging Adults with Down Syndrome

PRESENTER:

Katherine L. Long @KLugerLong



BACKGROUND:

• Down syndrome (DS) is the **leading genetic explanation** for intellectual disability and is often associated with developmental delays.

• A successful transition to adulthood involves growth in independent living, **employment preparedness**, and community involvement.

• The study implemented a qualitative phenomenological approach to interviewing **parents of emerging adults with Down syndrome** about their experiences with work readiness.

METHODS:

• **11 parents** (8 mothers and 3 fathers) were interviewed.

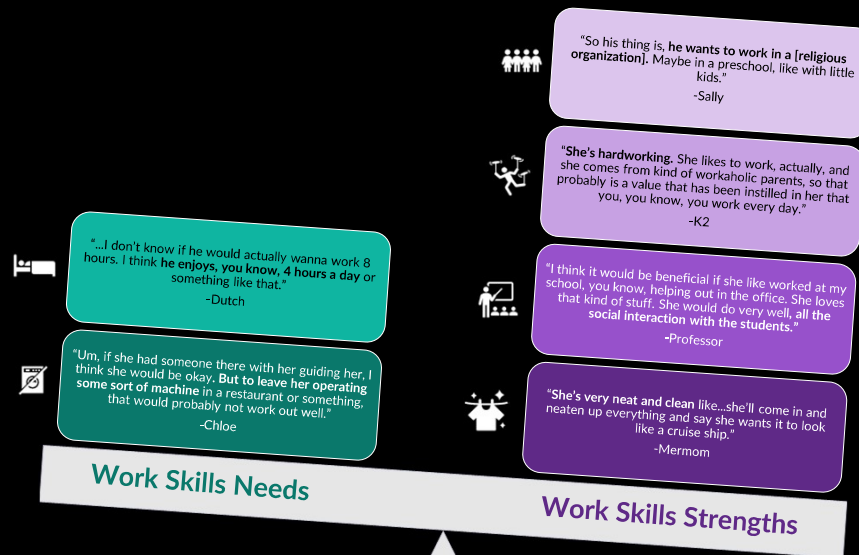
• Parents were interviewed via Zoom where they were asked open-ended questions to facilitate **in-depth responses**.

• Using **MaxQDA software**, data were coded and analyzed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.

Questioning Route

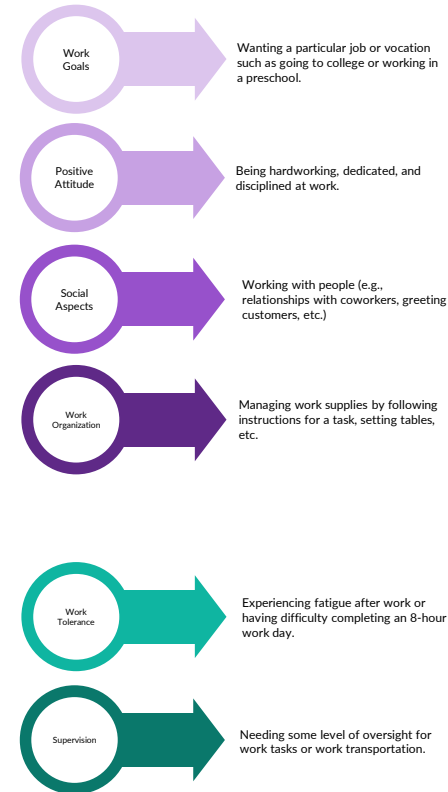
1. Tell me about your child.
2. What does a typical day look like for your child?
3. What does it mean for your child to be an "adult"?
4. How do you feel about your child becoming an adult?
5. What does it mean for your child to be independent?
6. What is your child's living situation at the moment?
7. What comes to mind when you think about work and your child?
8. How does your child access transportation (e.g., if they wanted to get to work, to the grocery store, etc.)?
9. What is your child doing now in your community?

Strengths outweigh needs for emerging adults with Down syndrome preparing for work.



Take a picture to download the poster.

RESULTS:



DISCUSSION:

• Parents see **work as an essential part** of becoming an adult which is consistent with prior studies (De La Garza et al., 2023).

• Previous research has emphasized the **importance of job fit** for people with Down syndrome (Channell et al., 2023).

• The findings in this study can help professionals understand the **role of meaningful work** in the transition to adulthood for emerging adults with Down syndrome.

• K. L. Long, S. Chavez, A. Karimi, A. Mini, E. L. Nelson, & Stephens, D.

Florida International University

This project is funded by an FIU Psychology Seed Grant.