

Eisenman, L.T., & Tanverdi, A. (2005, July). *Family-Style: Secondary and Postsecondary Community Activities of Youth with Significant Intellectual Disabilities*. Center for Disabilities Studies, University of Delaware.

### **Abstract**

We conducted semi-structured interviews with family members of 27 young adults who were enrolled in or graduated from a community-based transition program. We examined the types of community and social activities in which the young adults engaged. We also explored the resources and supports they used to enable participation in the community and the activities and resources they desired.

In general, families reported that the young adults participated in a wide variety of typical and specialized activities. There were few differences between those students currently enrolled and those who had graduated. Families provided the primary supports for their participation, and the activities tended to be those in which the family also engaged. Families reported that they and the young adults were mostly satisfied with their current community and social situations.

Some expressed a desire for the young adults to have a wider circle of friends and activities, and suggested that there was a limited set of available social activities that were age-appropriate and not dependent upon family participation. Most families used personal vehicles to get to and from activities; they had mixed opinions about their young adults using public transportation or paratransit services for community and social activities. Physical accessibility of public spaces was a challenge for those who used wheelchairs or who had other mobility limitations. Although they were generally satisfied, families identified several types of public services they wished were more readily available.

Excerpt from Final Report (p. 21)

#### ***Points for Further Discussion***

This evaluation did not look specifically at the role that TPP played in promoting students' community affiliations. However, prior research suggests that, as a community-based transition program that addresses multiple individualized educational goals including social and recreational outcomes, TPP has the right foundation for promoting students' participation in community living activities. Further, current and former students of TPP generally seem to be engaged in preferred community living and social activities. Therefore, the TPP Advisory Committee and program staff can work from a strengths-based position when discussing the implications of the present evaluation results.

Given the issues that families most often identified, two general discussion questions are offered:

- What is TPP's role in assisting families and students to locate and advocate for additional community social activities that create opportunities for students to widen their circle of peers?
- What is TPP's role in helping families and students to locate and advocate for specific public services that meet individual students' needs?