Dissertations

Spring 4-11-2023

Parents' Expectations of Developmentally Delayed Children With Special Education Needs (SEN) When Transitioning Out of Non-Classroom Based Independent Studies Charter High Schools

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Parents' Expectations of Developmentally Delayed Children With Special Education

Needs (SEN) When Transitioning Out of

Non-Classroom Based Independent Studies Charter High Schools

A Dissertation by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2023

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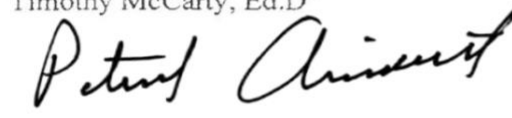
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Action is the antidote to despair." – Joan Baez

iv

ABSTRACT

Parents' Expectations of Developmentally Delayed Children With Special Education

Needs (SEN) When Transitioning Out of Non-Classroom Based

Independent Studies Charter High Schools

by Yolanda Vazquez

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe the

expectations of parents of developmentally delayed special education needs (SEN) high

school children regarding their children's transition out of independent studies charter

high schools. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify how parents

perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their

SEN children during the transition process.

Methodology: This study used qualitative methodology to gain insight into the lived

experiences and perceptions of parents with SEN high school students in a NCB ISP

high school transition program. Data was collected from 10 participants with interviews

as the primary data collection method which was compiled with the researcher's

observations during the interview process. This methodology was aligned with the

purpose statement and research questions.

Findings: The findings of the research demonstrate that parents of SEN

developmentally delayed students who enroll their students in a NCB ISP charter high

school do so because they are actively looking for an education model that fits their

student's unique needs. Parental expectation is that the NCB ISP charter high school will

provide more choice and opportunities for their students as they go through the special

education transition process. Based on the information gathered from the semi-structured interviews, it was concluded that the majority of parents viewed the NCB ISP charter high school transition programs as superior to or on par with conventional public high schools.

Conclusions: Parents of special education (SEN) students who are looking for an effective special education transition services model often choose NCB ISP charter high schools. Successful SEN transition programs at NCB ISP charter high schools emphasize career development and preparedness. Parents require formal training to understand and participate effectively in the special education transition process.

Recommendations: The researcher recommends that all NCB ISP charter high schools have a dedicated special education transition staff and program. Transition programs are to have a parent education component that is relevant. Parents will benefit from having experts guide them through the special education training process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

It took an act of congress to ensure that students with special education needs (SEN) were prepared with post-secondary goals and skills for life after high school. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 required transition plans for all SEN students over the age of 16 (Pub. L. No. 108-446, 20 USC §1400 et seq.) Transition services were outlined as a coordinated set of services to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. The reauthorization addressed the low entrance numbers into post-secondary education programs and the historically high unemployment rates among Americans with disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). As part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), transition services were sanctioned as a vehicle to address this disparity and equity in opportunity (Paul-Constantin, 2012).

The IEP document includes an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) component beginning at the age of 16. It is student-centered and outlines goals, activities, and services in the areas of career/college awareness, independent living, and education for post-secondary success (Marman, 2018). Parents play a critical role as active members of the IEP team. At this transition stage, parents help plan post-secondary goals. In a study by McNair and Rusch (1990), 63% of the parents of students with an IEP already had an idea of what they wanted their students to do after high school. This indicated to the authors that the parents had already researched careers and options based on their students' strengths and interests. Such research information is vital to the ITP process

and, when shared, allows the parent to be involved in the IEP/ITP decision-making process. Parents are a great resource to the IEP team (Salembier & Furney, 1997).

Although parent involvement is attributed to student success, parent involvement at the high school level, including parents with high school SEN students, drops significantly compared to their counterparts with children in elementary schools (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003). Several factors contribute to this slide, including the parents' availability, cultural differences, lack of knowledge, and the confidence to be involved (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003) in the decision-making process. Studies show that parents of high school SEN students have additional factors that contribute to a lack of IEP/ITP planning participation, such as a lack of skills to participate in a planning meeting and teachers' negative perceptions of parent participation in the IEP/ITP process (Salembier & Furney, 1997).

Parent involvement in the IEP/ITP process in charter schools is more significant, as charter school parents are typically more involved than their public-school counterparts (Borup & Stevens, 2016). Parent involvement in an independent study program (ISP) charter school is still greater. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (as cited in Borup & Stevens, 2016), "Perhaps more than any other type of educational environment, full-time virtual charter schools require self-motivated students and highly involved parents" (p. 8). While limited, the current research provides helpful insights into the growing area of virtual transition services and parents' involvement in the development of IEP/ITP (Borup & Stevens, 2016).

The parents' role and influence on the transition process from high school to post-high school are critical. Parents in an ISP charter high school have an additional impact,

given their increased levels of involvement. As a member of the IEP/ITP team and as a parent, they are invested in post-secondary success. And when involved in the transition planning process, parents have reported enhanced satisfaction with their student's transition (Hirano et al., 2016). The level of parent involvement in the IEP/ITP process will impact how they feel about the student's transition and how the ISP charter school addressed their SEN children's needs during the transition process.

Background

History of Special Education

Prior to the 1970s, and with only 1 in 5 students with SEN being served in the public school system, school districts often denied enrollment of students in special education (Martin et al., 1996). Most states' laws allowed schools to refuse educational services to any student who was deemed "uneducable" (Martin et al., 1996). Even when permitted enrollment into public schools, SEN students were not served properly (Martin et al., 1996). The focus on the lack of access to equal education rights came at a time when the civil rights movement focused its attention on equal rights for all. Education as a civil right was a fight that took to the courts (Martin et al., 1996).

Between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, a series of legislative events across the country shaped the course of special education procedural safeguards and responsibilities. At the state level, 45 states passed legislation in support of SEN students (Martin et al., 1996). Through case law, the federal courts determined that all SEN students had equal protection and due process rights under the 14th amendment (Zirkel, 2018). The US Congress enacted several legislative pieces at the national level that provided support and equal protection for SEN students (Ordover & Boundy, 1991). Among those legislative

pieces that became a cornerstone of special education rights include Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997, and the subsequent 2004 reauthorization.

US Federal Law Governing the Education of Students with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first federal law that provided a measure of protection for individuals with disabilities (Ordover & Boundy, 1991). Section 504 prohibits the discrimination of individuals with disabilities. A disability, as defined under Section 504, can be emotional, physical, or intellectual. Further, this law required accommodations and modifications in the testing of SEN students and Special Education programs. Therefore, under Section 504, students with disabilities were able to access the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers (US. Department of Health, Education Welfare, Office for Civil Rights, 1978).

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in multiple areas of society (ADA, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328, 1990). This law was modeled after Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and expanded the areas where individuals with disabilities were protected (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990). When used in conjunction with Section 504, students with physical disabilities can access buildings via ramps and elevators. To be protected by the ADA, the disability must be physical or mental, and it must considerably limit life activities. The ADA does not cover health ailments such as cancer because it is

meant to protect individuals with lifelong, altering disabilities (ADA, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328, 1990).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 and 2004 Reauthorization

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures free appropriate public education to eligible students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). It further ensures that these students receive specialized academic instruction and related services. The IDEA regulates how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services. The reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 included specific language to help special education students transition to post-high school education and vocational opportunities to address the high unemployment rates among young people with disabilities. As noted by Brault (2012) to be "4-in-10 individuals aged 21 to 64 with a disability were employed, compared with 8-in-10 individuals with no disability" (p. 3).

Part of the language of IDEA 2004 states that at the age of 16, all students must have an ITP as part of their IEP. The ITP provides goals and activities, and services to support students in career/college awareness, independent living, and education. To promote accountability, IDEA 2004 mandates that every state, as part of their State Performance Plan (SPP), provide information on how many students with disabilities who are ages 16 and older receive transition support services-and how many former students with IEPs, when they left school, are gainfully employed or enrolled in an education program.

Transition Definition

The reauthorization of the IDEA in 2004 included new and specific provisions for transition services and instruction for students with disabilities ages 16-22. In Sec. 300.43

of IDEA (2004), transition services are outlined as a coordinated set of services to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. Once a SEN student ages out of the school system, they sometimes do not have enough options to pursue, educational or otherwise (Haring et al., 1990). Therefore, many former special education students will have difficulty adjusting to life after they are done with school. According to Butrymowicz and Mader (2019), these former students often cannot find good-paying jobs and may not be equipped to live independently. Therefore, these transition services are intended to prepare young adults with disabilities for life after they age out of the school system and prepare them for post-secondary education, employment, and independent living by addressing the post-secondary goals outlined in the ITP section of the IEP. With the proliferation of charter schools and non-classroom-based independent study charter schools, the choice in transition services offered and provided are different from those provided in the traditional brick-and-mortar school setting (Johnson et al., 2020).

Independent Studies as a Growing Option for Transition Services

According to a recent report from Lafer et al. (2021), "In 2018-19, nearly 175,000 California students were enrolled in non-classroom-based charter schools, representing 27 percent of all charter school students in the state" (p. 3). A non-classroom-based (NCB) independent study (ISP) charter high school definition applies to a school where less than 80 percent of the student's learning occurs in a brick-and-mortar classroom (Lafer et al., 2021). In this setting, most of the high school students' education is delivered primarily in a virtual classroom, with the parent as a learning coach who plays an active role. All educational services are provided in a virtual platform, including

special education services. The NCB ISP charter school as a preferred vehicle to advance their student's needs is a choice that many parents have made for their high school SEN students based on personal reasons (Johnson et al., 2020).

The NCB ISP charter school, as a parent choice, allows the parent flexibility in curriculum, educational supports, and enrichment opportunities. By providing the parent with instructional funds (Lafer et al., 2021) to use on curriculum and enrichment opportunities for their students, SEN parents can tailor their education to focus on their students' strengths and interests. For the SEN parent, this involvement in their student's education extends to related service providers' preferences. This parental choice and instructional support participation are not typical of their traditional brick-and-mortar public school peers (Lafer et al., 2021). It is this choice and says in how their students are educated that has led to some of the growth of NCB ISP charter schools (Lafer et al., 2021).

Parent Participation

The student's district of residency is responsible for delivering the transition services outlined in the IEP and the ITP (IDEA, 2004). However, current research suggests that the parental role in transition planning is critical and often overlooked during ITP planning (Francis et al., 2019). Hirano and Rowe (2016) emphasized that any school's attempt to get parents involved has to be based on the belief that there is real value in parental contributions to transition planning. Further, in the model for evaluation transition programs, "Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0." Kohler et al. (2016) designated family engagement as one of the five primary practice categories of a successful transition program. The family practice category focuses on the importance of

family involvement. In their study, Doren et al. (2012) highlighted that the role parents play in transition planning and the expectations they set for their students have a direct correlation to student outcomes. Larson and Bolton (2019) also noted how necessary it is for students of transition-age to have a parent or an adult who clearly understands how the ITP tools can help them meet transition goals and objectives.

The ITP meeting provides an opportunity for the student and family to communicate expectations on what they will need to have mastered for post-high school success (Zirkel, 2018). The student and family are an integral part of the ITP writing process. Their feedback is invaluable and necessary for the ITP to be successful; therefore, the school and the family must be in alignment with the goals. The parents' involvement in the ITP writing process will increase the likelihood of active participation in community and vocational experiences.

Impact and Importance of Parent Participation in Transition on Parents

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 emphasized parental involvement. By providing procedural safeguards and making the parent a required IEP team member, the US Congress was very clear about the role a parent should play in their SEN student's educational decisions (IDEA Section 300.43, 2004). For the parent whose student is transitioning out of high school, the ITP is an additional critical piece in preparing the student for post-high school because once the student leaves the high school setting with either a high school diploma or age out at age 22, they are no longer eligible for special education services (IDEA Section 300.43, 2004). Parents and educators alike will label this point as "the cliff" (Samuels, 2019). This event may cause great anxiety and stress for families, as they now find themselves

alone and responsible for navigating a labyrinth of nonprofits and government agencies for direction (Defur et al., 2001).

The parent's role and influence on the transition process from high school to post-high school are critical (Defur et al., 2001). Their input and involvement in the ITP writing process ensure its functionality and success (Matuszak et al., 1996). ITP goals are then written and supported through services that will build on the student's and family's expectations of what post-high school will look like (Doren et al., 2012). The ITP writing is meant to be an ongoing discussion and plan of student-centered action, incorporating parental goals for the student (IDEA Section 300.43, 2004). The parents' participation in this transition phase will provide a smoother experience for all and allow for course correction as prescribed by the data collected at each follow-up IEP meeting. When parents are involved in the transition planning process, they have reported enhanced satisfaction with their student's transition (Hirano et al., 2016).

Theoretical Foundations

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

In her book, *Overwhelmed,* Schlossberg (2007) described a transition as an event, whether positive or negative, that impacts the individual's existence and lived experience. Schlossberg (2008) further noted that the particular transition's perception affected an individual's response to that transition. As an example, Schlossberg (2008) indicated that a transition into college might be exciting for one person and intimidating for another.

Using the four domains, Schlossberg (2008) created a way to understand the nature of transitions and how individuals cope with change. The Schlossberg Transition Theory is applicable in most circumstances where a transition takes place (Schlossberg,

2008). To help individuals experience transitions smoothly, Schlossberg developed a process she called "taking stock" to examine the situation and the individual's response to it (Barclay, 2017). Taking stock consists of four domains (Barclay, 2017):

Situation. This refers to the position the person finds themselves in.

Support. This domain refers to the people and elements that provide strength and encouragement for the individual.

Self. This domain looks at the individual. Who are they, and how optimistic are they during transitions?

Strategies. The last domain looks at the ways the individual functions and copes with transitions.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991). The Theory of Reasoned Action asserts that the strongest indicator of willful action is the individual's behavioral intention (Hale et al., 2002). Thus, the Theory of Planned Behavior takes it one step further and accounts for the individuals' intention to perform an action or behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (1991) explained, "Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior; they are indications of how hard people are willing to try" (p.181). The Theory of Planned Behavior can be used to predict behavior and its impact by looking at the intention behind the behavior. Then, the attitude toward the behavior is analyzed, followed by the subjective norm, and finally, the perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The research of Bracke and Corts (2012) used the Theory of Planned Behavior to better understand obstructions to parental involvement in schools. By looking at the impact,

attitudes, norms, and controls on the behavior of parent participation in schools, they were able to isolate barriers to parent participation and ways to increase parental involvement and participation in schools (Bracke & Corts, 2012).

Parent-Teacher Partnership Theory

The Parent-Teacher Partnership Theory provides a framework that considers human relationships' dynamics and intricacies (Keyes, 2000). The role of communication is considered in this theoretical framework as the importance of building a connection between teacher and parent. By looking at the parent's ecology and the teacher's ecology, they intersect when the student is involved (Keyes, 2000) and creates an opportunity for interaction. The Parent-Teacher Partnership Theory considers the relationship between the teacher and the parent, which are part of the same social system, and highlights the importance of communication (Keyes, 2000). Using this theory may help educators examine their own beliefs and attitudes regarding the value of a parent-teacher relationship and how it impacts their behavior or response to parents (Keyes, 2000).

Negotiation Theory

Negotiation Theory looks at a cooperative attitude and manner to understand the other party (Harvard University, 2014). Furthermore, Negotiation Theory focuses on the interests and not on the positions of the parties who are negotiating. In an education setting, the parent and the teacher's shared interest might be the student. Three negotiation theory principles comprise the theory:

1. Focus on interests. By focusing on common interests, parties are more likely to agree based on a mutual understanding.

2. Anticipate and address sources of bias. This requires both parties to check their
    bias before entering into a negotiation with the other party.

3. Reach agreement within and across parties. This requires the parties to enter into
    an agreement with other parties impacted by the decisions made. (Harvard
    University, 2014)

The Negotiation Theory requires that the interests of the other party and
additional potential stakeholders be considered and integrated into the negotiation
(Harvard, 2014). This is important to acknowledge when considering the parent's interest
in negotiating the terms of their student's IEP and transition plan.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the Framework for Research in
Transition created by Trainor et al. (2020). Trainor et al. (2020) wanted a more
comprehensive and interactional framework to steer future research for the benefit of all.
This theory is best suited for this study because it fully integrates the foundational
theories of Transition, Parental Involvement, the negotiating or bargaining done at the
ITP/IEP meeting, and the importance of communication during the transition process.
Further, it looks at the student through a continuum of school experiences during the
transition and post-school outcomes. This framework has a core focus on the individual
with a disability. The core "runs through multiple layers representing culture, services
and supports, levers, and quality of life" (Trainor et al., 2019, p. 7). As a result, the theory
was chosen by the researcher as the most current and most applicable theory to use as the
theoretical framework for the study. Trainor et al. (2019), "The arrangement of layers
reflects proximity and immediacy in the life of the individual with a disability" (p. 8).

The framework is based on four focal components that impact the transition of a student (Trainor et al., 2019).

Culture

The first layer is the cultural group which includes family and family dynamics. The placement at the top layer represents the importance of the parent or family role in transition planning. This layer looks at the family culture and considers race, socioeconomic status, immigration status, home language, and other cultural aspects that intersect with disability. It consequently contextualizes transition planning from the perspective of the home (Trainor et al., 2019).

Services & Supports

The services and supports layer (i.e., assessment planning, instruction, supports, activities, and relationships) represents the "formal and informal experiences associated with learning how to meet the demands of adulthood" (Trainor et al., 2019, p.8). This layer encompasses most of the transition planning that is individualized for the special education student (Trainor et al., 2019).

Levers

The third layer, levers, contains components that shape the transition services, such as funding, policies, and law. These elements are critical in framing and creating transition supports and services (Trainor et al., 2019).

Quality of Life

The fourth layer, quality of life, includes the outcomes for the student in the transition process. (Trainor et al., 2019). The quality-of-life outcomes in this framework

factor into what indicates a "good life" for individuals with disabilities at different points in time.

Trainor et al.'s (2019) Framework for Research in Transition is distinct from others because the layers are always next to the individual with special needs. Further, the layers are collapsible and can be used as a whole or singularly (Trainor et al., 2019). In this manner, the transition research question's focus is highlighted and viewed through the lens of the individual with special needs.

Gaps in Research

Current gaps in research include the lack of literature on parents' lived experiences of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools. A few studies look at the parent perspective at independent charter high schools (Borup & Stevens, 2016). Still, the focus is on students without disabilities and not transitioning into and out of high school for special education students and the parent's perspective. There is no seminal or landmark study to reference that focuses on the parental experience of having an SEN high school student transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools.

Therefore, this phenomenological study aims to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools.

Summary

The reauthorization of the IDEA in 2004 included language requiring transition plans for special education students over the age of 16. This reauthorization of IDEA in

2004 addressed and called attention to the importance of parent participation in transition planning. The proliferation of NCB independent studies charter high schools has renewed the dialogue on the importance of parent participation (Lafer et al., 2021)

Parent participation in charter high schools is higher than in their traditional brick-and-mortar peers (Borup & Stevens, 2016). The SEN parents at NCB independent studies charter schools also participate at higher rates than their counterparts in traditional brick-and-mortar high schools (Martinez et al., 2012). However, this higher participation has not translated into a study that looks at the parental expectations of the transition into and out of high school for their students in NCB independent studies charter schools. There is no seminal study that focuses on this lived experience.

A study that looks at the parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children and their expectations of how independent studies charter high schools addressed transition needs would benefit educators and lawmakers. This research would add to the current body of literature. It would help advance and develop policy at the local and state levels to ensure transition programs in NCB independent studies are appropriate and meet their students' and families' needs and expectations.

Statement of the Research Problem

Three decades of research indicate that parent participation is one of the most important components of special needs transition planning from high school to post-secondary options (Johnson et al., 2020). However, the most current research suggests that the parental role in transition planning, while critical, is often overlooked during ITP planning (Francis et al., 2019). For the parent whose student is transitioning out of high school, the ITP is an additional critical piece of the IEP in preparing the student for post-

high school success (Pleet-Odle et al., 2016). Highlighting the importance of parent participation at this transition stage is knowing that once the student leaves the high school setting with either a high school diploma or ages out at age 22, they are no longer eligible for special education services (IDEA, 2004). Consequently, parent participation in the IEP/ITP process was emphasized in the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004. By making the parent a required and equal member of the IEP team, the parents were given a seat at the table as an expert on their student (IDEA, 2004)

The special needs parent of a high school SEN student, as an IEP team expert, can bring a wealth of knowledge to transition planning. In their study, Doren et al. (2012) highlighted that the role parents play in transition planning and the expectations they set for their students have a direct correlation to student outcomes. Likewise, Larson and Bolton (2019) noted how necessary it is for transition-age students to have a parent or an adult who clearly understands how the ITP tools can help meet transition goals and objectives. The ITP meeting provides an opportunity for the student and family to communicate expectations on what they will need to experience post-high school success (IDEA, 2004). Hirano and Rowe (2016) emphasized that any school's attempt to get parents involved has to be based on the belief that there is real value in parental contributions to transition planning.

The value of parental involvement in a collaborative relationship with schools has been acknowledged as a beneficial educational practice (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Further, the research on the importance of parent participation in the transition process has been noted in seminal studies such as "Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0" (Kohler et al., 2016). This study designates family engagement as one of the five primary practice

categories of a successful transition program and process. The NCB ISP Charter High School's growth has provided additional engagement options to families who want to prepare their students for a positive transition (Johnson et al., 2021).

According to Lafer et al. (2021), 27 percent of all charter school students in the state were part of an NCB charter (p. 3). Additionally, NCB ISP Charter Schools are expected to continue to grow as the 2-year moratorium set by CA Assembly bill 1510 expires at the end of 2021. Accordingly, with the expected growth, the need to know more about the parents' expectations for transition planning will be critical for the schools to establish programs and norms properly.

A review of the research shows a lack of information regarding the parent's expectations concerning the transition for their SEN student when they are part of an NCB ISP Charter High School. Understanding the parent's expectations in this nontraditional setting can help improve the transition process and highlight areas for growth and further need for study. Research is needed to look at this growing field of virtual educational instruction and the expectations parents of SEN students have regarding transition planning and life after school.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of parents of developmentally delayed special education needs (SEN) high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools?

Research Sub-Questions

1. What expectations do parents of high school SEN children have regarding the transition process into and out of the independent studies charter school?

2. What factors do parents of SEN children perceive as important to the transition process into and out of the independent studies charter high school?

3. What supports and barriers do parents of SEN children experience during the transition process into and out of the independent studies charter high school?

4. In what ways do parents of high school SEN children perceive the independent studies charter high school addressed their children's needs during the transition process?

Significance of the Problem

Parent participation in planning their student's education is crucial to a positive outcome (Defur et al., 2001). As addressed in their research, Defur et al. (2001) confirmed IDEA 1997 required that "parent participation be sought in all aspects of decision-making on behalf of their child's special education, including transition planning" (p. 20). The 1997 reauthorization strengthened parent participation in the special education process and made it a fundamental IDEA principle (Wolfe & Harriott, 1998). As an expert on their student, the parent provides input at the IEP/ITP meeting that helps create an ITP that functions (IDEA, 2004). However, despite the essential role

that parents play in the transition planning process, it is often overlooked during ITP planning (Francis et al., 2019).

Parent and family involvement is considered essential for a successful transition. Yet, few studies have examined the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of the growing number of independent studies charter high schools (Borup & Stevens, 2016). A review of the research shows a lack of information regarding the parent's expectations and understanding concerning their SEN student transition when they are part of an NCB ISP Charter High School. This is important, considering that "27 percent of all charter school students in the state of California were part of an NCB charter" (Lafer et al., 2021, p. 3). Additionally, NCB ISP Charter Schools are expected to continue to grow as the 2-year moratorium set by CA Assembly bill 1510 expires at the end of 2021 (Lafer et al., 2021).

This study will add to the body of literature by providing information on parents' specific expectations and perceptions during the transition phase into and out of high school for their SEN students in NCB ISP Charter High Schools. As NCB ISP Charter High Schools continue to grow, it will be important for all stakeholders to know how to best serve the students and families during the transition process. Therefore, this study will help identify components that promote a positive transition process as perceived by the parents. Understanding the parent's expectations in this nontraditional setting can improve the transition process and highlight areas for growth and further need for study in the NCB ISP Charter High school setting. The results of this study will empower NCB ISP Charter High School Principals, Special Education Directors, and their school boards to make informed decisions when building Transition Programs so that they are perceived

as successful. This research study will highlight the training and resources needed to ensure the NCB ISP Charter High School staff feels confident in providing transition services.

Information gathered from this study will help the Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) that support NCB ISP Charter High Schools. The SELPA can use this information for the planning and development of successful transition programs in NCB ISP Charter High Schools. Additionally, this information can be used by the SELPA as they review and evaluate existing special education transition programs in an NCB ISP. Research is needed to look at this growing field of virtual educational instruction and the expectations parents of SEN students have regarding transition planning and life after school (Borup & Stevens, 2016).

Definitions

For this study, the following terms are defined for the relevance and conceptual framework of this study:

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA): ADA is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities because of their disabilities.

Case manager: A case manager is the assigned special education teacher who works with SEN students and is the point of contact for all IEPs and matters associated with the SEN student.

Free and appropriate public education (FAPE): Every student with a disability is entitled to an appropriate education at public expense (at no cost to parents or guardians (Kauffman et al., 2018).

Independent Studies Program. An alternative program of study that has different attendance requirements is student interest lead and can be primarily virtual (Barrat & Berliner, 2009).

Individualized education plan (IEP). Every student with a disability is to have a written IEP, which includes a statement of the special services to be provided and the goals of those services (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2005).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA (1997, 2004) mandated transition planning for students not later than age 16, requiring the identification of professionals to assist in the transition planning process (Trach, 2012).

Least restrictive environment (LRE). Every student with a disability is to be educated in the LRE that is consistent with his or her educational needs, as close to home as possible, and insofar as possible with students with disabilities (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2005).

Non-Classroom Based Charter School. A public school under a charter that is primarily online**,** publicly funded, and full-time (Waters et al., 2014).

Parental involvement. This study used the definition of parental involvement that was used in Epstein and Dauber's (1991) study that pinpoints the six types of parental involvement.

Self-determination. Self-determination is encouraged by providing meaningful opportunities for students with disabilities to express their needs and goals to promote independence to guide their decision-making (Friend & Bursuck, 2006).

Special education. As defined by IDEA (2004) Section 300.39, special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

Special education local planning agency (SELPA). As defined by the California Department of Education (2021), SELPAs facilitate high-quality educational programs and services for special needs students and training for parents and educators. The SELPA collaborates with county agencies and school districts to develop and maintain healthy and enriching environments in which special needs students and families can live and succeed.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders include all members who are part of an IEP team who help plan and facilitate the process.

Transition. This term describes the movement of students with disabilities from school to independent, productive, satisfying postschool environments (Trach, 2012).

Transition plan. Children who are identified as developmentally delayed must have an IEP by the age of 3 in addition to a mandated transition plan between the ages of 14 and 16 that describes strategies for adult transition (Russell, 2003).

Delimitations

This study will be delimited to parents of SEN students at four NCB ISP High School Charter students in Southern and Central California. In phenomenological research, the sample size of participants has traditionally been between 2 and 25 (Alase, 2017). By using four SEN parents from each NCB ISP Charter High School, the researcher determined the appropriate sample population for this study was 16 SEN parents.

Organization of the Study

      This research study is organized into five chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter I is an introduction to Special Education, Transition, and NCB ISP Charter High Schools. Chapter II is a review of the literature regarding special education policy on transition, Independent Studies as a Growing Option for Transition Services, transition in and out of the NCB ISP Charter school environment, parental involvement, and parent participation needed for transition planning. Chapter III explains the research design and the methodology that was used for this study. A more thorough comprehension of the event as it was really lived will be presented (Patton, 2002). The phenomenological method enables the researcher to get insight into how parents experience the phenomena of their children moving on from high school by examining "how they see it, describe it, feel about it, evaluate it, recall it, and make sense of it" (Patton, 2002, p. 115). The use of a phenomenological method makes it possible to conduct an in-depth analysis of the unique experiences of the participants.

      Chapter IV defines the population used in the study. Further, it includes the sample and data gathering process, the approach used to collect and analyze data collected, and techniques used to analyze the data collected. Chapter V contains the summary of the study. This includes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The transition planning process for students with special needs is legally required to start at the age of 16, per IDEA (2004). However, IDEA (2004) allows states to begin the transition planning process earlier. Thus, the timing varies according to the state and the individual school district. During this time of transition planning, the IEP team considers the students' individual needs and interests to determine what supports need to be in place to help achieve postsecondary success. Thus, the literature review is divided into three major sections. The first portion will cover the history of special education and the IEP process, including the transition education service planning and legislation. The second portion of the literature review will discuss Non-Classroom Based Independent Charter Schools and the service delivery model for special education transition services. The third section and final portion of the literature review will examine parents' perceptions of how independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

History of Special Education and the IEP Process

The history of Special Education in the United States has a distinct timeline that encompasses court decisions and legislation. Prior to the 1950s, Americans with disabilities had few, if any, legal protections in the United States of America (Matthews, 2018, as cited in De Los Santos & Kupczynski, 2019). Following many decades of change in how society views individuals with disabilities and court decisions, there has been a significant impact on how children with disabilities are educated and accommodated in schools throughout the United States. The degree to which students with SEN are accommodated by their institutions of education makes a difference in

whether or not they succeed academically (De Los Santos & Kupczynski, 2019).

Following is a review of the congressional legislative acts that have shaped special

education services and approaches currently in place at K-12 educational institutions

across the United States of America.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Section 504

When Congress enacted the Rehabilitation Act on September 23, 1973, it was in

reaction to federal litigation protecting the educational rights of children with disabilities

(Hetherington et al., 2010). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its many provisions were

the first federal civil rights legislation to safeguard the rights of those who were

physically or mentally handicapped (Russo & Morse, 1999). Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 declares that "No otherwise qualified individual with a

disability in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be

excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to

discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance...." (29

U.S.C.§ 794(a.), 1998).

Section 504 further prevented discrimination by requiring schools to provide

customized adjustments for children with disabilities who otherwise met all of the

Rehabilitation Act requirements of the law. It declared that schools must offer assistance,

benefits, and services that are similar to those provided to children who are not impaired.

Also, students with and without disabilities must have resources, instructor quality,

school term length, and daily hours of teaching that are similar to those without

impairments (Russo & Morse, 1999).

Education for All Handicapped Children (EAHC) 1975

The EAHC of 1975, subsequently named the Individuals with Disabilities Act, was the first federal legislative act that sought to ensure a right to a free and appropriate public education for all students with disabilities (Goldberg, 1989). Prior to this, it was legal for schools to deny enrollment to students based on their disabilities (Martin et al., 1996). Most states had legislation in place until the mid-1970s, which permitted school districts to decline to accept students with special needs into their programs. The term used to describe such a student was "uneducable" (Martin et al., 1996). The EAHC gave special needs students protections and rights to a free and appropriate public education. This act created a process by which the student with special education received an IEP to be reviewed at least annually by a team of experts. Additionally, the EAHC provided that parents were now allowed to challenge any decision the schools made regarding the students' educational programming (Goldberg, 1989). The title of the act was changed by amendments in 1983 and again in 1990 when it was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Martin et al., 1996).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990

The IDEA Act of 1990 and the subsequent reauthorizations in 1997 and 2004 brought newly required elements to the IEP. The reauthorization in 2004 was called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. It included major changes to the IDEA 2004 section on transition services (Johnson, 2005). Each new reauthorization of IDEA has added additional requirements to the IEP document that must be developed and reviewed by the IEP team. The 2004 reauthorization addressed some concerns by experts and parents. Among the changes added was the required use of results-driven

preparation methods for post-secondary educational opportunities. It included new language on what encompassed transition services and added the provision of services for students between the ages of 18 and 21 (Gartin & Murdick, 2005).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1995, by President George H. W. Bush. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability. The ADA was amended in 2008 to broaden the definition of what a disability is. This action created an expansive safety net. Previously the US Supreme Court had limited the definition of disability through court case decisions that limited protections for some individuals (Shapiro-Lacks, 2021). The ADA is divided into five separate titles that cover employment, public services, public accommodations, telecommunications, and miscellaneous (Shapiro-Lacks, 2021). The ADA, in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, provides a comprehensive legal framework for the protection and equal opportunities under the law for individuals with disabilities.

IEP Process

The IEP process is guided by the IDEA 2004 legislative framework. For every student that has been found to be eligible for special education, an IEP is developed. The IEP document details the students' educational program, which includes many legally required components (McGahee-Kovac, 1995).   Team meetings and written documents, the two primary components of the IEP requirement, are intended to work together to satisfy the spirit and legal purpose of the IDEA (Simon, 2006). IDEA includes six key legislative points, all of which must be implemented (Neild & Fitzpatrick, 2020). According to Neild and Fitzpatrick (2020), the six points are:

• Zero reject—Students can learn and benefit from an appropriate

education regardless of the severity of the disability.

• Nondiscriminatory evaluation—Materials and procedures used are not

racially or culturally biased.

• Least restrictive environment—Students with disabilities are educated in

the same environment as students without disabilities to the maximum

extent possible.

• Parental participation—Parents serve as advocates for their child with a

disability and as members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Team.

• Procedural due process— Parents, or those acting in this capacity, are

assured a voice in decisions made by the IEP team.

• Appropriate education—Students' educational needs are met as outlined

in the IEP. (p. 81-82)

These six components are intended to have four specific outcomes (Neild &

Fitzpatrick, 2020). The outcomes are intended to allow students with disabilities the same

access to the curriculum and to resources as their non-disabled peers. Neild and

Fitzpatrick (2020) further outlined the four possible outcomes as follows.

• Equal opportunity—Students with disabilities are provided equitable

access to the general education curriculum to the maximum extent

possible.

• Full participation—Students with disabilities should not be excluded

from extracurricular activities (e.g., chess club, band, sports teams) to the

maximum extent possible.

• Independent living—Individuals with disabilities should be integrated

into society, including quality of life and leisure activities, to the

maximum extent possible.

• Economic self-sufficiency—Individuals with disabilities should be

employable to the maximum extent possible. (p. 82)

These four outcomes, in conjunction with the IEP federally required IEP

document components, are meant to ensure FAPE for the student with disabilities. Gartin

and Murdick (2005) carefully outlined and described each of the IEP document required

sections per IDEA (2004). Gartin and Murdick (2005) provided an overview of the IEP

document. They maintained that an IEP, as the legislation defines it, is "a written

statement for each student with a disability" (Gartin & Murdick, 2005). An IEP must be

prepared, reviewed, and changed in accordance with Section 614 of the statute (The

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates 2004). Additionally, the IEP must include

specific components for it to be considered an appropriate program that complies with

applicable state and federal laws and regulations. According to Mcgahee-Kovac (1995),

these requirements are as follows:

1. Present levels of performance. This section includes very detailed

information about the student's current level of academic achievement and

other aspects of the student's life, including other areas of concern.

2. Annual goals and short-term objectives. The goals are created by and agreed to by the interdisciplinary team that supports the student. The goals are meant to be attainable and completed within one calendar year. The short-term objectives are the smaller steps a student must take to meet the annual goal. Typically, the short-term objectives are only for students who have moderate to severe cognitive disabilities.

3. Services and Accommodations/Modifications. These specialized academic instructional modifications and related services are outlined and tied to specific goals. A very clear understanding of how the service will help the student meet the goal is provided. All services are meant to ensure student success.

4. Participation in general education. This section notes what percentage of the day the student is in the general education classroom. To ensure that every student is placed in the LRE, the percentage in the general education classrooms is noted. Additionally, if a student with moderate to significant cognitive disabilities requires a special day class, this section will note the reasons why.

5. Start date and frequency of services and modifications. The IEP document will include specific start and stop dates, frequency of, location, and setting of all academic and related services. This includes any modifications to the student's program.

6. Behavior Intervention Plan. Students with an emotional disability or substantial maladaptive behaviors require an intervention plan that is based on a functional behavior assessment.

7. Evaluation Criteria. The team that develops the IEP will clarify how and which data will be collected and analyzed to ensure that the student is making progress towards their goal. This progress information is to be shared with the parents.

8. Assistive Technology (AT). AT, such as larger computer screens and digital recorders, are provided to students to ensure they are accessing their general education curriculum. The AT assessment will provide guidance to the IEP team on what the student's needs are.

9. Transition Plan. The Individual Transition Plan (ITP) and Transition goals are created for students who are 16 years old and older. However, some states provide these at 14 years of age. These services are meant to prepare students for life after high school. The ITP is student-driven and outlines the goals, services, and strategies a student must obtain in order to achieve their post-secondary goals.

Transition

In 1997 IDEA was amended (Public Law 105-17) to include a new federal IEP requirement. The transition requirement established the post-secondary success of students with disabilities as a significant intention of FAPE (Benz et al., 2000). This amendment brought attention to the ways in which students' whole high school curricula might be organized to promote success in high school as well as their transition to

postsecondary employment, further education, and independent life (Benz et al., 2000). The Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) is student interest-driven and includes postsecondary employment, further education, and independent life as areas where goals and services are to be provided to students. The focus on transition planning, in part, is due to the historically low graduation rates and post-secondary employment rates of students with disabilities when compared to the general population.

Over the last ten years, the proportion of children with disabilities who graduate with a high school diploma has remained consistent at around 30 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1998, as cited in Benz et al., 2000). In 2019, the National Center for Education Studies (NCES) reported that 53.1% of special education students who were out of high school for up to 8 years stated that they were gainfully employed. When the study looked at each of the IDEA's 13 categories of disabilities individually, the NCES (2019) noted that only 24.2% of special education students who were out of high school for up to eight years stated that they were gainfully employed.

In their seminal study, "The Post-High School Outcomes of Young Adults With Disabilities up to 6 Years After High School- Key Findings From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)," Sanford et al. (2011) tracked students with disabilities who had moved on to post-secondary status. To qualify for this study, the student had to have been out of secondary school for up to six years and between the ages of 19 and 23 when telephone interviews were performed in 2007 (Sanford et al., 2011). There were several key findings in the three areas that are required to be addressed in the ITP: postsecondary education, employment, and independent living skills. In Figures 1, 2,

and 3, Sanford et al. (2011) provided a concise comparison of postsecondary status

between former students who had an IEP and those that did not.

Figure 1

Postsecondary School Enrollment of Young Adults with Disabilities and Young Adults in

the General Population by School Type

Postsecondary school enrollment of young adults with disabilities and young adults in the general population, by school type
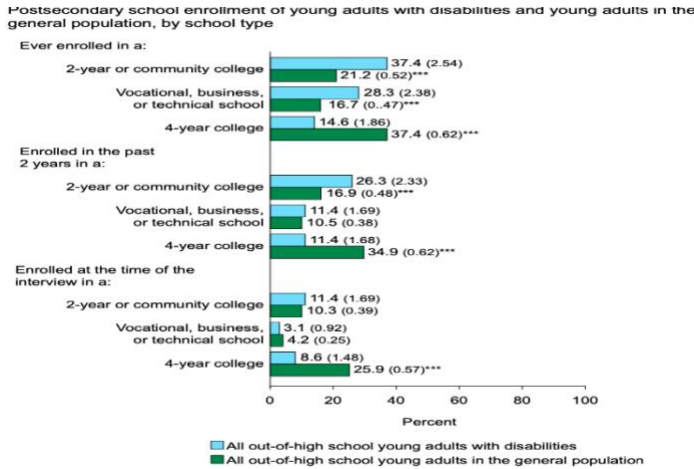
Figure 2

Employment Status of Young Adults with Disabilities and Young Adults in the General

Population

Employment status of young adults with disabilities and young adults in the general population
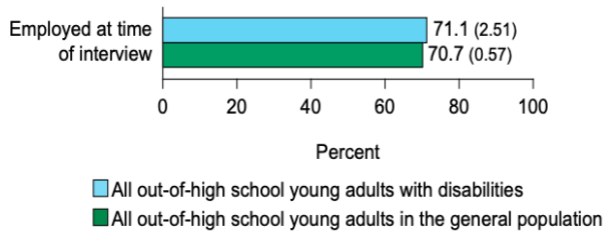
Figure 3

Residential Independence of Young Adults with Disabilities and Young Adults in the

General Population at the Time of the Interview

Residential independence of young adults with disabilities and young adults in the general population at the time of the interview
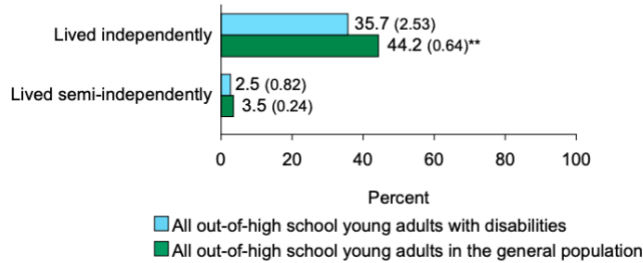
Charter Schools

Unlike other types of public schools, charter schools are given the opportunity to be more creative while yet being held responsible for improving student learning. This ability to individualize an educational program appeals to parents and guardians. According to Collins (1999), parents, guardians, and their students are increasingly turning to charter schools because they are dissatisfied with traditional brick-and-mortar public schools. Among the reasons people are drawn to charter schools, as Collins (1999) discovered, are high standards, small class sizes, and a perceived supportive atmosphere that charter schools provide. In general, charter schools are designed to generate learners who are academically successful (Sautter, 1993, as cited in Collins, 1999). As enrollment at charter schools rises, parents and guardians continue to note a preference for charter schools based on their families' unique needs (David et al., 2018).

According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2021), in the 2017-18 school year, almost 3.2 million students are enrolled in more than 7,000 charter schools nationwide. Further, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2019) reported that there were 654,549 students enrolled in public charter schools in California

during the 2018-2019 school year. David and Hesla (2018) posited that based on existing

parent demand, the potential size of the charter school sector is about three times more

than the present enrollment level. David and Hesla (2018) further posited that in order to

meet this student enrollment demand, the charter school industry would need to build

thousands more charter schools over the course of the next 5 to 10 years. This anticipated

increase in charter school enrollment continues to demonstrate that parents seek out

innovative and high-quality educational alternatives to traditional brick-and-mortar public

schools (David & Hesla, 2018).

Independent Study Charter Schools

Independent study is a public education option developed to address students'

needs, interests, and learning styles whilst still ensuring that students meet their school

district's curriculum and graduation requirements. All independent study students have a

personalized learning plan to guide their education, so they can submit assignments at

any time, pace, or site that is consistent with the plan (Barrat & Berliner, 2009).

Independent study dates back to the 1970s (Barrat & Berliner, 2009) and recognizes that

certain learners require an educational environment that is other than traditional brick and

mortar institutions. Among the student population that chooses independent study as their

educational choice include those who are pursuing specific talents or interests.

Additionally, students who are credit deficient and require a targeted intervention are

likely to be interested in an independent study model that allows flexibility in the areas

that potentially derailed them in the traditional setting, such as regular attendance at

specific dates and times (Barrat & Berliner, 2009).

The academic rigor and requirements for an independent study student at a charter school are much like their peers in a district independent study program (Barrat & Berliner, 2009). In Education Code Section 51745 (a)(3), the California Department of Education (CDE, 2021, Independent Study Frequently Asked Questions) clarifies that "independent study is an instructional strategy for delivering California's standards-based, grade level content; not an alternative curriculum, and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum."

Non-Classroom Based (NCB) Virtual Charter Schools

Non-classroom-based (NCB) virtual charter schools, unlike traditional brick and mortar schools, offer educational programs in which students get instruction mostly at home via technology-mediated and online delivery. Many public schools that offer web-based courses require students to connect from school computers; online charter school students often join from home. Online charter schools often rely on parents, often called "Learning Coaches," to assist with and monitor student teaching and learning. By utilizing online trained and credentialed teachers, the NCB ISP charter school is able to provide individualized teaching. Additionally, this component allows NCB ISP charter schools to manage and offer their own courses, making them an attractive schooling alternative for families (Thomas, 2002). As families look for alternative education models, NCB charter schools have increased significantly in number (Thomas, 2002). By 2002, in more than half of the states, state virtual schools are now in place to encourage and assist schools and students in taking online courses. K-12 students may take online courses offered by charter schools around the nation (Thomas, 2002).

Model of Service Delivery of SPED Services/Related Services

All charter schools, whether housed in a physical building or online, get their money from the public school system. They must be free and open to everyone, including students with disabilities. This requires that virtual charter schools must follow the IDEA and other related rules (Rhim & Kowal, 2008). How a virtual school handles placement depends on what kind of legal entity it is according to state law and the charter contract. If a virtual charter school is its own LEA, it must offer a full range of placement options. On the other hand, the traditional LEA is in charge of this if the charter school is part of that LEA (Rhim & Kowal, 2008). The LEA must provide the related services.

SEN students enrolled in virtual schools have the right to related services if the IEP team decides that these services are needed for the student to be able to access the general education curriculum. Virtual schools often hire full-time staff or sign a contract with an outside provider (like a local school district or a non-public agency) to get services in this area. NCB ISP Charter schools must ensure that all related services written into the IEP are provided to the SEN students (Rhim & Kowal, 2008).

Transition Services in an NCB

IDEA provides a framework for establishing policies and procedures that may assist students with disabilities in making the transition from secondary education to the workforce or to further education (IDEA, 2004). By taking federal funding, virtual charter schools are obligated to adhere to the same policies, requirements, expectations, and accountability as their counterparts in conventional public schools and traditional charter schools with physical locations. This applies to the postsecondary provisions in the IDEA 2004 reauthorization. IDEA 2004 mandates that all public schools devise a

transition plan for children with disabilities before they are 16 years old. While delivered virtually, the NCB ISP charter school is still responsible for providing instruction and opportunities for growth in the areas of education/training, employment, and independent living (IDEA, 2004). At this time, there is insufficient information available on the well-established and extensive Transition programs that are made available at the NCB ISP Charter High Schools located across the state of California.

Parent Participation

IDEA 2004 highlighted again the importance of the parents' participation in meaningful dialogue leading to a successful individual transition plan. In their seminal research study, Doren et al. (2012) established how influential parent participation is to a successful transition into and out of programs for their students. Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003) further noted that parental engagement in public schools is academically useful, politically supported, and treasured by many educators and the public. However, Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003) pointed out that despite widespread support for parent engagement, recent research shows that it is underused at all levels, especially in high school. Parents exhibited greater interest in being a member of the transition team and playing an equal role in decision-making than they did in actually being able to accomplish either of those things (McNair & Rusch, 1990).

Theoretical Foundations

To better understand the purpose and dynamics of a transition, the researcher looked at the following theoretical foundations. Each of the following transition theoretical foundation speaks to a specific area of transition and the necessary skill set to arrive at the end goal. It is the intention of the researcher to illustrate how each

foundation is then represented in the transition theoretical framework used to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools. These theoretical foundations will also help to inform the dissertation study identifying how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

Schlossberg (2008) defined a transition as an occasion, whether favorable or unfavorable, that affected the person's existence and lived experience. Schlossberg (2008) added that how a person perceived a particular shift had an impact on how they reacted to it. She gave the example of how entering a college may be thrilling for one person while being daunting for another. Through her extensive research, she developed a methodology for comprehending the nature of transitions and how humans respond to change based on the four domains. Schlossberg's (2008) study and framework are consistently used by various researchers when looking at transitions. In their work on counseling adults on work transitions, Anderson et al. (2011) linked this theoretical foundation with real-world transitions. Using the Schlossberg-created method called "taking stock," Anderson et al. (2011) elaborated on the application of this theory by assessing the transition circumstance and the person's reaction to it in order to aid people in navigating transitions (Barclay, 2017).

Taking Stock

The four domains that make up the Schlossberg-created method called "taking stock" include the following (Barclay, 2017; Schlossberg, 2008):

1. Situation. This is a reference to the situation the individual is in (Barclay, 2017; Schlossberg, 2008). The circumstance of the transition is specific to the goal of that transition.

2. Support. The people and things that give a person support and inspiration fall under this category (Barclay, 2017; Schlossberg, 2008). This support can look very differently for many people going through a life transition.

3. Self. This area examines the person. Who are they, and how upbeat are they in times of change (Barclay, 2017; Schlossberg, 2008)? This component looks at the individual and the personal reasons for the transition. What is the desired outcome?

4. Strategies. The final domain examines how each person behaves and handles changes (Barclay, 2017; Schlossberg, 2008). This area explores the behavioral aspect of the transition. It should be noted that the mental health of the individual comes into play and can impact the final outcome of the transition being attempted.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) takes into account an individual's purpose in carrying out a specific action or behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (1991) explained, "It is generally accepted that intentions capture the motivating variables that impact a behavior; intentions are signs of how much effort people are willing to put forth." (p.181). The TPB predicts behavior and its outcomes based on intention. The subjective norm, attitude toward conduct, and perceived behavioral control follow (Ajzen, 1991).

In their study, Bracke and Corts (2012) applied TPB to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers that prevent parents from being involved in their children's education. They were able to identify barriers to parent participation in schools as well as ways to increase parental involvement and participation in schools by looking at the impact, attitudes, norms, and controls on the behavior of parent participation in schools. This was done by looking at the impact, attitudes, norms, and controls on the behavior of parent participation in schools. Conner and Armitage (1998) added that they were of the opinion that there is evidence to imply that the TPB only gives an explanation of the determinants of behavior in situations when there is a high level of motivation as well as an opportunity to process information.

Parent-Teacher Relationship Theory

The Parent-Teacher Partnership (PTR) Theory offers a conceptual framework that takes into account the complexities and dynamics of human interpersonal connections (Keyes, 2000). This theoretical framework takes into account the role that communication plays and the significance it has in the process of establishing a connection between the teacher and the parent. When the student is involved, the parent's ecology and the teacher's ecology overlap (Keyes, 2000), which creates a chance for interaction between the two parties.

The successful formation of relationships between parents and teachers is contingent on the roles being complementary to one another (Ang et al., 2021). This theoretical foundation can help inform and guide the teacher and the parent as they learn to connect (Keyes, 2000). In their research study, Ang et al. (2021) discovered that the students that had the most effective results in terms of learning had extremely high levels

of support from their parents. These parents were rated as high collaborators with the educators assigned to their students. Ang et al. (2021) went on to describe how parents and instructors have an impact on one another in a variety of ways (p. 6). Some of these ways are subjective able to be described or quantified. Ang et al. (2021) suggested that parents can model desired transition behavior (p. 6).

Negotiation Theory

The concept of negotiation emphasizes maintaining a cooperative mindset and acting in a way that demonstrates an awareness of the interests of the other side (Harvard University, 2014.) The interests of the parties involved in the negotiation are given precedence above their respective positions in negotiation theory. Within the context of an educational institution, the student may serve as the point of convergence for the interests of the teacher and the parent. Thompson (2006) addressed this theory and the emotional aspect of negotiation and asserted that this process could result in high emotions. This can be particularly problematic in education and special education in particular, as emotions are already fraught with anxiety (Thompson, 2006). This theory is then comprised of the following three negotiation theory principles: (Harvard, 2014).

1. Focus on things that fascinate you. It is more likely that the parties will reach a consensus based on their mutual understanding if they concentrate on their shared interests.

2. Prepare for and address any sources of prejudice. Because of this, it is necessary for both sides to examine their own prejudices before beginning negotiations with the other party.

42

3. Come to an agreement both within and amongst the parties. Because of this, it is

   necessary for the parties involved to reach a consensus with any other parties

   whose interests will be affected by the decisions that are made.

The philosophy of negotiation mandates that both the interests of the opposite party and the interests of any extra potential stakeholders be taken into account and incorporated into the bargaining process (Harvard, 2014). When taking into consideration the parent's interest in negotiating the parameters of their student's IEP and transition plan, it is crucial to recognize this fact.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the Framework for Research in Transition created by Trainor et al. (2020). Figure 4 is a visual representation of the framework created by Trainor et al. (2020) puts into context the intersections of meaningful transition sections and future areas for research.

Figure 4

Framework for Research in Transition
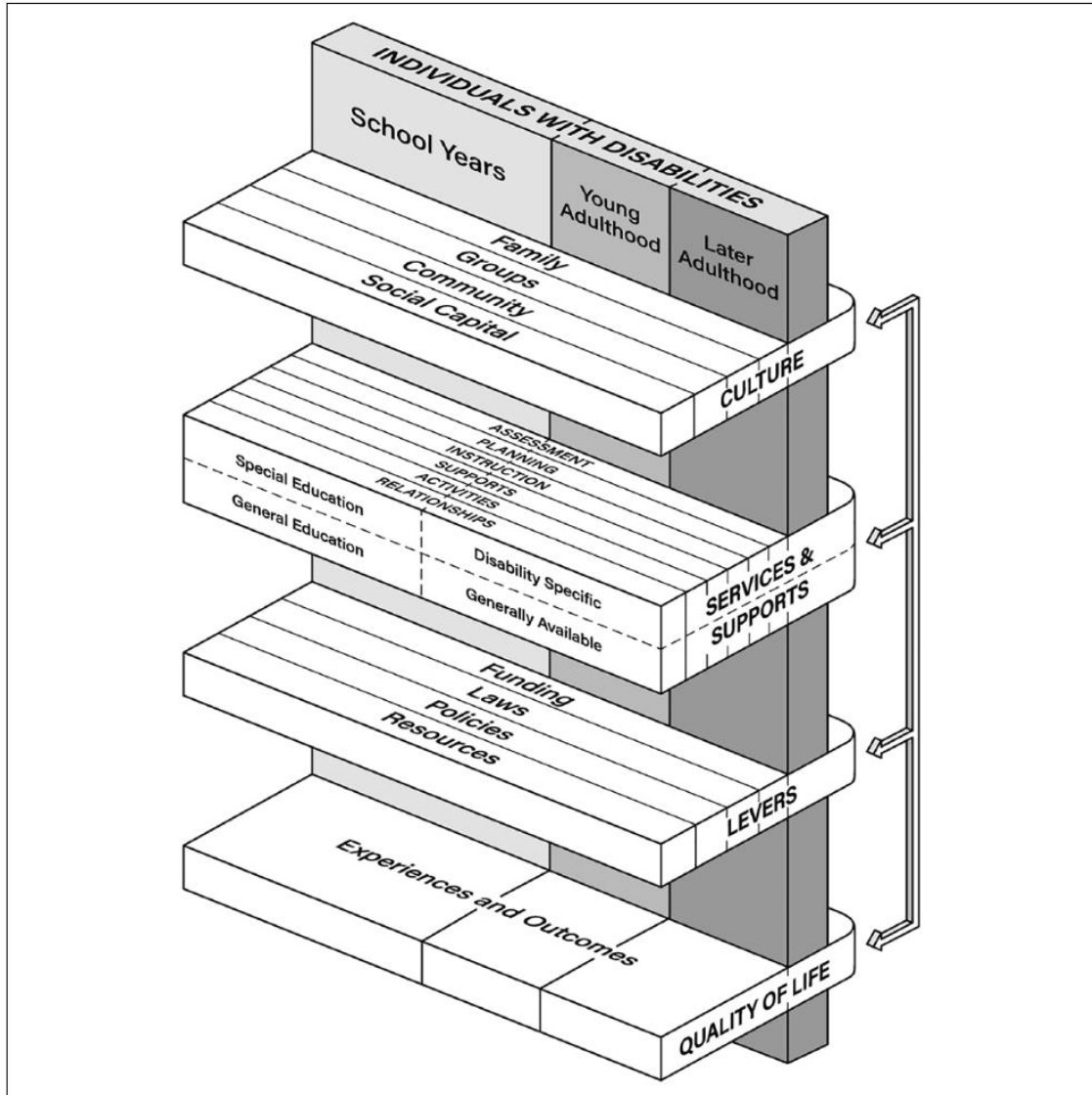
Trainor et al. (2019) wanted a more comprehensive and interactional framework to steer future research for the benefit of all. This new theory looks at four specific components that impact the transition of an SEN student when first identified for special education eligibility and the multiple transitions that take place from early school years to late adulthood. This research study looks specifically at special education transition

during the high school years and the transitioning out of high school. Particularly when SEN students transition out of an NCB ISP charter high school special education transition program. Therefore, this theory is best suited for this study. It fully integrates the foundational theories of Transition, Parental Involvement, the negotiating or bargaining done at the ITP/IEP meeting, and the importance of communication during the transition process. Further, it looks at the student through a continuum of school experiences during the transition and post-school outcomes. This framework has a core focus on the individual with a disability. The core "runs through multiple layers representing culture, services and supports, levers, and quality of life" (Trainor et al., 2019, p. 7).

Trainor et al.'s (2019) transition framework is distinct from others because the layers are always next to the individual with special needs. Further, the layers are collapsible and can be used as a whole or singularly (Trainor et al., 2019). In this manner, the transition research question's focus is highlighted and viewed through the lens of the individual with special needs. Due to this specific lens, this framework was chosen by the researcher as the most current and most applicable to use as the theoretical framework for the study. The framework is based on four focal components that impact the transition of a student (Trainor et al., 2019).

Culture

Trainor et al. (2019), "The arrangement of layers reflects proximity and immediacy in the life of the individual with a disability" (p. 8). The first layer is the cultural group which includes family, groups, community, and social capital. The placement at the top layer represents the importance of the student's personal network of

45

support's role in transition planning. This layer looks at the family culture and considers race, socioeconomic status, immigration status, home language, and other cultural aspects that intersect with disability. It consequently contextualizes transition planning from the perspective of the home (Trainor et al., 2019).

The importance of respecting the student and family background is corroborated by previous research on lived experiences through the transition planning process. As cited by Hetherington et al. (2010), parents who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and speak a variety of languages have expressed a strong desire for a more personalized connection that would help them feel less alone and more appreciated as a part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and transition process (Geenen et al., 2001, 2003; Landmark et al., 2007, as cited in Hetherington et al., 2010). As noted by Blanchett et al. (2009), the degree to which parents seek out services and support for their students is also influenced by their cultural perceptions of disability. Further, Blanchett et al. (2009) articulated parents' cultural beliefs affect how they view the American special education system.

Services & Supports

The services and supports (i.e., assessment planning, instruction, supports, activities, and relationships) represent the "formal and informal experiences associated with learning how to meet the demands of adulthood" (Trainor et al., 2019, p.8). This layer encompasses most of the transition planning that is individualized for the special education student (Trainor et al., 2019). This layer includes the special education and general education transition services and supports that are both disability specific and available to all students. It includes the IDEA (2004) mandates requiring schools to

prepare high school education special education students for postsecondary success through an ITP, services, and support. This ITP is reviewed annually and includes the activities and agency linkage required for success (Gartin & Murdick, 2005).

A layer of services and support include the relationships and connections built between the family and the student's school and/or other organizations in support of transition goals. These services include but are not limited to state and federally-funded opportunities; this will be discussed in further detail in the framework's layer known as *levers*. According to Bianco et al. (2009), establishing these ties was very vital for the parents. It brought families comfort and a sense of ease, knowing that the relationships established with schools and other agencies helped to ensure that their young adult's needs were being addressed. Further, parents (Bianco et al., 2009) perceived effective partnerships as trustworthy and concerned for their adult students.

Levers

The third layer, levers, contains components that shape the transition services, such as funding, policies, and law. These elements are critical in framing and creating transition supports and services (Trainor et al., 2019). A recent 2020 in-depth examination of the funding for special education in the state of California estimated the cost to serve 725,000 SEN students to be over $12 billion yearly through funding from the federal government, state governments, and local governments (California Department of Education, n.d. as cited by Willis et al., 2020). Only 11 percent of total expenditures for special education come from the federal government, with the remainder coming from money provided by individual states and local governments (California Department of Education, n.d., as cited by Willis et al., 2020). In a practice that is

uncommon and unique to California, funding for special education is dispersed through the Special Education Local Plan Agencies (SELPAs); the state has a relatively small amount of control over the amounts of funding that are received by the majority of Local Education Agencies (LEAs). This also practices and their corresponding funding formulas apply to charter LEAs as well (California Department of Education, n.d., as cited by Willis et al., 2020).

When looking at the levers of resource funding for special education that drives the laws and policies created, the high cost of special education in California is prominently featured. As cited by Willis et al. (2020), through their research of CDE reports and budgets, California has some of the least well-funded monetary pools for expensive special education services in the country. To compare, California funds the high-cost pools at a rate of $9 per SEN student, while New York and Pennsylvania fund SEN high-cost pools at a rate of $2,278 and $37, respectively (Willis et al., 2020).

As indicated by Beales (1993), California and federal law are clear in that an SEN student cannot have their education or support services modified or denied based solely on cost. Beales (1993) acknowledged that this dynamic had forced school administrators to "encroach" onto funding from general education in order to pay for the costs of special education. This economic hardship position that districts are put into may very well determine the extent to which schools in California may offer special education transition services.

Quality of Life

The fourth layer, quality of life, includes the outcomes for the student in the transition process. (Trainor et al., 2019). The quality of life of a student with SEN is the

culmination of all of the activities and results of the many levels of assistance that they

have received at various stages of their educational and early adulthood journey. All

students with special educational needs who go through the transition assessments,

planning, instruction, supports, activities, and relationship building that are included in

the Services and Supports layer of this theoretical framework are aimed to achieve the

desired outcome of having a high-quality life in their adulthood. Wehmeyer and Schalock

(2001) stressed that one of the reasons that SEN students are not prepared to self-

advocate for a better quality of life once they leave school is that their experiences in

school and otherwise up to that point, have not adequately prepared them to become self-

determined young adults.

As emphasized in their seminal study, Turnbull et al. (2003) acknowledged that it

is difficult to measure the quality of life as it tends to be subjective. Further, the SEN

student may have different desired outcomes that would indicate a good quality of life.

However, as pointed out by Turnbull et al. (2003), in moving beyond academic goals as

per IDEA (2004), the same experiences and outcomes that are significant to SEN students

and their families should also be included when assessing the quality of life of SEN

students. As the opportunity for experiences and outcomes for SEN students and their

families might be different or limited due to the specific disability and need,

individualization of quality-of-life indicators is important. While designing and creating a

meaningful assessment or indicators for quality of life, careful attention should be made

to the one-of-a-kind qualities of each and every person (Borthwick-Duffy, 1996, as cited

in Turnbull et al. (2003).

Parental Expectations of Experiences and Outcomes for Their SEN Students

The descriptive findings of the NLTS2 reveal that parent expectations of the quality of life of SEN students might differ depending on the family's income as well as a range of individual demographic variables of the adolescent, such as the adolescent's disability, ethnicity/race, and gender (Newman, 2005). Doren et al. (2012) concluded that when parents have high expectations for their adolescents' accomplishments and adult quality of life, their SEN students tend to achieve results that are in line with those expectations.

Sadly, McNair and Rusch's (1990) study indicated that a quarter of respondents said their young adults' schools and community agencies didn't have high expectations for academic or future quality of life for their SEN students. Parents in the study further asserted that they didn't have a good perception of the traditional brick and mortar special education transition programs their SEN students were in.

In reference to special education transition programs that are made available at the NCB ISP Charter High Schools in California, there are not enough studies or information that have been researched, backed by peer review, and available on the parental lived experiences and expectations of well-established and extensive transition programs that are made available at the NCB ISP Charter High Schools. This prevents the researcher from being able to compare this study to others at this time.

Gap in Research

According to Westbrook et al. (2012), there is an obvious need to establish an evidence-based approach to assess and guide the implementation of programs that best prepare SEN students to transition into adult-integrated work experiences due to the lack

of a scientifically rigorous literature base addressing the effectiveness of school-to-post secondary opportunities transition programs. Westbrook et al. (2013) further asserted that while it is an important area of research, there has not been much exploration on the topic of the successful implementation of special education transition programs. The success of such a program depends on parental involvement and parental expectations for their SEN students. The transition plan for students with SEN relies heavily on parental involvement, particularly throughout the high school years (Newman, 2005). The lived experience and expectations are filtered through the parents' lens of culture, services, supports, levers, and quality of life for their SEN students (Newman, 2005; Trainor et al., 2019).

Research conducted by McNair and Rusch (1990) revealed that a quarter of parents of SEN student respondents said that the traditional schools and community organizations where their SEN students were involved did not have high expectations. These parents did not have a positive impression of the transition programs their SEN students were participating in. The proliferation of NCB ISP Charter High Schools (Lafer et al., 2021) in California provides new experiences and outcome opportunities for SEN students during the school year transition planning years. The growing number of charter students can predict a growing trend of charter based sped transition services (Lafer et al., 2021). In looking to establish a baseline on lived experiences of parents of SEN high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools, the researcher was not able to establish one. At this time, there is a dearth of well-researched, peer-reviewed data on the experiences and expectations of

NCB ISP Charter High School parents on the comprehensive transition programs offered at these schools. This gap in literature will be the focus of this dissertation study.

Summary

The information provided in this literature review was intended to highlight the needs of SEN students and their parents as they transition into and out of the non-classroom-based independent study program charter high school environment. Transition theoretical foundations and a theoretical framework were reviewed and discussed and emphasized as necessary for a proper discussion on transition experiences and expectations. The theoretical framework for this study was the Framework for Research in Transition created by Trainor et al. in 2019. To better inform this study, the person with the impairment is at the center of this framework. The "core" is comprised of "many layers reflecting culture, services and supports, levers, and quality of life" (Trainor et al., 2019, p. 7). The layers of culture and services, and supports include parental involvement, which is important for positive and meaningful outcomes. These layers help to identify how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

This literature review discussed the shortage of well-researched and peer-reviewed data available at this time on lived experiences of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition into and out of independent studies charter high schools. The rising number of children enrolled in charter schools makes it possible to anticipate the expansion of NCB ISP transition programs (Lafer et al., 2021). This void in the existing research will serve as the primary focus of this dissertation's investigation.

Lastly, a synthesis matrix was developed in order to facilitate additional analysis of the literature study and to summarize and highlight the most significant findings. The synthesis matrix can be found in Appendix A, and it contains a list of all the references and sources that are mentioned or referred to in the literature review. Chapter III outlines the methodology that was used to conduct this phenomenological study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology and all the components used to conduct the research and data collection in this study. This study is inspired by a thematic study conducted with Brandman University in 2015. The 2015 thematic dissertation examined parental expectations of their SEN students during a school transition in traditional brick and mortar schools. Sesay (2012) noted that the description of the methodology used in a research study becomes a major part of the study. It demonstrates the extent that the researcher considered the context, the gap in the current research, and the purpose of the study. The methodology also demonstrates whether the researcher selected the optimal methodological path for the study to reach the research goals.

This study seeks to add to the body of literature on special education transitions, looking at the transition out of a charter high school. Further, this study looks specifically at NCB ISP Charter High Schools. The purpose statement and the research questions are framed in the context of the theoretical orientation and approaches used. This was a phenomenological study that incorporated a qualitative approach. The chapter also includes the research design, population, sample, instrumentation, reliability/validity, data collection/ analysis, and limitations as they apply to this study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition out of independent studies charter high

schools in the state of California. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify

how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the

needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of parents of developmentally delayed special

education needs (SEN) high school children regarding their children's transition out of

independent studies charter high schools?

Research Sub-Questions

1. What expectations do parents of high school SEN children have regarding the

    transition process out of the independent studies charter school?

2. What factors do parents of SEN children perceive as important to the transition

    process out of the independent studies charter high school?

3. What supports and barriers do parents of SEN children experience during the

    transition process out of the independent studies charter high school?

4. In what ways do parents of high school SEN children perceive the independent studies

    charter high school addressed their children's needs during the transition process?

Research Design

The research method for this study used a qualitative phenomenological approach.

According to Patton (2002), "Qualitative inquiry means going into the field – into the real

world of programs, organization, neighborhoods, street corners and getting close enough

to the people" (p. 56). A more profound understanding of the lived experience will be

provided (Patton, 2002). The phenomenological approach allows the researcher to see

how parents experience the phenomenon of transition into and out of high school, "how

they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Patton, 2002, p. 115). A phenomenological approach allows for the in-depth investigation of participants' individual experiences. Lodico et al. (2010) described phenomenological research as a means that looks closely at participants' interpretation of their experiences in education, and it attempts to understand the lived experiences from their perspective, making it possible to explore the phenomena in depth.

For this study, data gathering consisted of individual, semi-structured interviews with parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school students who have transitioned out of independent studies charter high schools. The participants were provided with questions that helped the researcher understand their lived experiences and perspective of the transition process. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for themes.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "A population is the group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which the results can be generalized" (p. 289). According to the California Department of Education (CDE), in 2018-2019, there were 795,047 SEN students in California. SEN students may come from two-parent, single-parent, or guardianship households. For this study, the researcher conservatively assumes one parent per student. Therefore, the population of the study is parents of SEN students in California.

Target Population

Creswell (2013) described a target population as a selected group based on specific criteria intended to generalize a group's results. To identify the target population, the researcher looked at the number of charter school SEN students in California.

According to the California Charter School Association (CCSA), there were 652,933 students in 1,313 charters in 2018-2019. Of these students, 11% had a learning disability (CCSA, 2019). Considering that there were approximately 71,822 SEN students in California charter schools in 2018-2019 (CCSA, 2019), the researcher conservatively assumes one parent per student. The researcher then further narrowed the target population by looking at NCB ISP charter high schools. The researcher narrowed further still by looking at four NCB ISP Charter high schools in Central and Southern California, each with an SEN population of approximately 100-300 students and conservatively assuming one parent per student. Therefore, this study's original target population was to be parents of SEN students at NCB ISP High School Charter students in Southern and Central California.

Sample

As stated by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a sample is "the group of subjects from whom data are collected; often representative of a specific population" (p. 490). The researcher will use purposeful sampling. In purposeful sampling, the "researcher selects elements from the population that will be representative…about the topic of interest" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 138). This will include "small groups or individuals who are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009, p. 489). Using purposeful sampling, the researcher targeted parents who had recently experienced the phenomenon of the transition and then documented their lived experiences. In phenomenological research, the sample size of participants has traditionally been between 2 and 25 (Alase, 2017). By using four SEN parents from each NCB ISP Charter High School, the researcher

determined the appropriate sample population for this study was 16 SEN parents. During the proposal defense, the dissertation committee advised that a study of 12 SEN parents would be appropriate.

It was difficult and impractical for the researcher to access all members of the target population because it would have been arduous and complicated. A specific population sample was normally selected using predefined criteria (Lodico et al., 2010) to ensure the consistency and validity of the sample. The sample for this study was selected from the entire population using the following criteria:

- High school student who had an active IEP.

- Enrolled in an NCB ISP public charter school.

- Received transition services for more than one year.

- Recommended for participation by local SELPA or district special education director.

- Willing to participate.

Sample Selection Process

Parents of transition parents were referred to the researcher by various methods and by various special education leaders in Central and Southern California. The researcher reached out to directors of Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) leaders and special education leaders of public non-classroom-based charters for a recommended list of parents who fit the criteria of the study.

An adequate sample size was a concern. The recommended sample size of more than 15 people may be large enough to conduct a thorough analysis of the collected data. The researcher was able to recruit 17 participants for the sample, which was adequate for

obtaining new, valuable information (Suter, 2011). There is information in the literature

that notes that determining the sample size in qualitative research is a matter of judgment

by the researcher. This type of research seeks to describe and interpret results from the

sample rather than to generalize (Fortune et al., 2013; Lichtman, 2006). By limiting the

sample size to this number, the researcher conducting the study can cover material to an

in-depth level and form a better understanding of the data as it relates to the purpose of

the study and the research questions. According to Patton (2002), the qualitative sample

size is best determined by researchers according to the time allotted, resources available,

and study objectives.

This study used purposive sampling, which is sampling based on the

characteristics of the target population and the purpose of the study (Daniel, 2011; Ray,

2012). By using purposive sampling, the researcher's goal was not to obtain a large

sample but to select people from various locations who have diverse experiences that will

provide the richest and most detailed information to address the research questions

(Lodico et al., 2010). Purposive sampling is the suitable method in this context due to the

limited availability of parents who have students in a transition program.

The additional sampling method used by the researcher was homogeneous

sampling in this study. Homogenous sampling occurs when the individuals within the

sample have similar shared experiences. This means that they have experienced the same

phenomenon (special education placement and transition services) in similar settings

(middle and high schools). Homogeneity in a sampling method implies that the findings

of this study should be transferable to other similar people facing the same experiences in

the same contexts. However, it is important to realize that the interpretation of the

phenomenon under study and the individual's own reality may vary from person to

person, so the findings may not be equally applicable to all concerned (Baldwin et al.,

2018).

Instrumentation

The SEN parent participants were offered the opportunity to participate in the

individual semi-structured interviews through a telephone interview or a Zoom video

conference. Semi-structured interviews are the most common and widely recognized

method to collect data in a qualitative research study (Patton, 2002). As the COVID-19

pandemic has changed the social interaction landscape, the researcher wanted to be

mindful and respectful of the participants' hesitation to meet in person for an interview

and thus offered no-contact interviews. The participants were given multiple dates and

times for the interview to allow for flexibility and to accommodate busy schedules.

Translators were also offered in the parents' native language as needed.

The researcher conducted an extensive review of the literature regarding special

education transitions. These special education transitions are specific to students who are

in high school, have an IEP, and receive transition services meant to support their

transition to postsecondary success. Based on the literature review and the theoretical

framework that was used, the instrumentation tool was created to elicit responses that

would highlight the four focus areas of the transition theoretical framework based on the

research questions. Interview questions were created that revolved around culture,

services & supports, levers, and quality of life, as they informed and helped to create the

expectations of parents with SEN students transitioning into and out of the Non-

Classroom Based Independent Study Program (NCB ISP) Charter high schools. The interview questions were field-tested to ensure reliability and validity.

Validity and Reliability

Reliability is a required prerequisite for validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A study must be able to be replicated and yield consistent results to be credible. This consistent outcome will indicate that the study is valid and accurate. As a qualitative study, the main instrument for data collection was semi-structured interviews. The interview questions used by the researcher were field tested with the help of two Ed.D educational administrators who silently observed and later provided feedback. The researcher reviewed the interview questions prior to the interviews to determine if any revisions needed to be made to ensure that they aligned with the research questions.

Content Validity

Content validity refers to the extent of the instrument and to what intent an instrument represents all key aspects of a concept (phenomenon) studied (Yin, 2011). In this study, content validity concerns whether the developed instrument, which is the interview guide, can answer the formulated research questions. Content validity in this study was validated as a result of the field-test and feedback the researcher received from the field test interview. All interviews for this study followed the same protocol, and the researcher read all of the explanations, protocols, and questions to ensure that each participant was able to address the same issues and lived experiences in their responses.

Reliability

Reliability in a qualitative research study is defined as the extent to which the results of the study are consistent and reliable in different contexts. The results of the

study should represent the total population of the study. This researcher has recognized

that due to the nature of qualitative studies, not all of the results can be accurately

reproduced because each participant has their own unique experiences and perceptions

(Ary et al., 2018; Syed & Nelson, 2015). This researcher implemented two common

methods of ensuring the reliability of qualitative studies. The two methods include a

researcher reflexivity journal and the use of two Ed.D education administrators who

coded all interviews alongside the researcher for intercoder reliability (also referred to as

interrater reliability) (Syed & Nelson, 2015).

Data Collection

The purpose of data collection in a qualitative study is to collect data that would

reflect the participants' position regarding the topic or lived experiences under research.

While quantitative research studies collect specific data using standardized instruments to

support or refute a hypothesis, qualitative research explores the meaning that participants

attribute to a social phenomenon (Randolf, 2008). To do this, the researcher used parents

of high school and middle school students who have participated in a transition program

and participating in special education. The research was conducted in Central and

Southern California.

The first step of data collection in studies involving human participants involves

paying attention to ethical considerations and IRB. As explained by Nijhawan et al.

(2013), informed consent is the process wherein participants are informed about all

aspects of the study, which are important for them to make a decision. After studying all

aspects of the study and the significance of the research for the advancement of

knowledge and social policies, participants are invited to confirm their willingness to

participate voluntarily. Nijhawan et al. (2013) emphasized that informed consent should be written in a language easily understood by potential participants, which means that it should not contain any ambiguous or misleading statements or complex terminology. In this study, the researcher followed these recommendations and developed an informed consent (Appendix G) form presenting the study's goals, participants who contributed to the current knowledge, and the significance of the study for the educational field. The consent form also includes a concise description of what exactly is expected from participants. In addition, it emphasized that they were free to stop the interview and leave anytime they wanted.

Receiving institutional review board (IRB) approval is another critical step that allows ensuring that the study is conducted according to the fundamental ethical standards. Federal requirements state that regardless of the researcher's position, all studies involving human participants must be carefully reviewed and approved (Drew et al., 2008). Therefore, data collection in this study began only after the researcher obtained the University's IRB approval (Appendix C). Johnson and Christensen (2019) highlighted that researchers should remain attuned to the ethics of their research even after receiving the IRB approval because of the number of ethical concerns that can emerge during the research process (e.g., privacy). To maintain confidentiality and privacy in this study, the researcher stored the obtained data on a password-protected computer kept in the researcher's home and assigned numbers to participants to avoid using their true names. This qualitative study was presented to the UMass Global IRB in December 2022.

Data were collected from four NCB ISP Charter High schools during a 2-week time frame. Each high school identified four parents that fit the criteria needed for this research study. Each parent was contacted via email to inform them of the research study opportunity. Once the researcher obtained their verbal consent, the release of information and consent forms were sent to the participants. Upon receipt of the signed consent forms, the researcher set up a date and time for the interview.

The interview protocol was established and shared with the participants. All participants and school names were referred to in the study by a pseudonym to protect the confidentiality of all. The interviews were recorded using the Zoom virtual conference recording and transcript features. The researcher took notes as the interviews were being conducted to further cross-reference information.

The semi-structured interviews helped provide a detailed picture of the participants' lived experiences. This interview format is used when conducting qualitative research to really explore the participants' understanding and involvement in an experience. Using the semi-structured interview, the researcher was able to learn things that were not explicitly asked in the interview questions.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a challenging and complex process due to the nature of qualitative data, which makes it difficult to develop some universal rules for data analysis (Lichtman, 2012). However, there are general rules that do apply in data analysis. One rule is that qualitative data collection uses inductive reasoning, which means that ideas are generated from the collected data. The researcher uses these ideas generated from the data (in this study, interview findings) to extract themes and develop explanations as well

as interpretations in order to construct and provide answers to the research questions. Another rule that is applicable to this process is applying the answers to a process that generates comprehension, synthesis, and analysis of findings with prior research and literature.

Key to qualitative data analysis is the examination and identification of themes and codes, which simplify data interpretation (Elliot, 2018; Lodico et al., 2010). Themes are defined as big ideas that combine several sub-themes or codes in the data in order for the researcher to track the themes and connections between interviewees' lived experiences as well as make sense of the common patterns. Creswell (2013) noted that themes are "broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 186). The researcher read the data several times and examined all data many times in order to ensure that no important idea was overlooked. This time-consuming phenomenological work requires that the researcher is fully immersed in and concentrated on the phenomenon (Guerrero-Castañeda et al., 2017). After the data is carefully studied and analyzed, the researcher identifies common topics (themes) emerging across all of the interview data. There are normally no more than seven wider themes that emerge from a study, while the number of codes or sub-themes (smaller bits of information) is much higher (Houser, 2019).

To order to identify themes and codes, the interviews were transcribed using the Zoom transcription feature. The researcher reviewed the transcripts and compared them to the audible recording to ensure accuracy in transcription. According to Chenail (2012),

In the simplest terms, QDA involves collecting quality talk, observations, and/or documents, and being able to talk about the talk, make observations about the observations, and/or document the documents along with the ability to talk about the talk, make observations about the observations, and/or document the documents about the documents. (p. 248)

Once the transcription was verified as accurate, the researcher began to code and look for common themes. Next, the researcher considered using a software application called NVivo. The application of this software allowed the researcher to specify which words and phrases occurred most often in the data and which have the greatest significance (Fujita & Herrera-Viedma, 2018). The researcher utilized the support of two Ed.D educational administrators to code alongside them to ensure validity, which reduced bias and ensured that all key information was included without omissions.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity occurs when the researcher monitors one's subjectivity and bias when generating credible findings. This process allows the researcher to be constantly aware of biases and personal beliefs that may affect data collection, interpretation, and analysis (Darawsheh, 2014). Attia and Edge (2017) described reflexivity as a process that can be both prospective and retrospective. Reflexivity involves thinking about the researcher's potential interference and how the research may influence the researcher's way of thinking or position regarding some key issues or topics. Reflexivity makes the researcher self-aware and requires the researcher to know when to stop and reflect on the research process (Attia & Edge, 2017).

In this study, the researcher kept a reflective journal, which included observations, thoughts, ideas, the rationale for decisions, and self-examination for bias. The journal acted as a mirror allowing the researcher to analyze the reasons behind all decisions and actions, which controlled for bias. Reflexivity through journaling requires the researcher to monitor the tension between involvement in the study and detachment from the study (Berger, 2015).

Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability is defined as the extent to which raters (researchers) code the same sets of data in the same way. The amount of agreement between the coders, which should be 80% or greater, determines the credibility of the findings (MacPhail et al., 2016). Intercoder reliability addressed the limitations of the researcher as an instrument. Intercoder reliability ensures that codes are not a result of one person's ideas, experiences, or opinions; it ensures that the results are objective and shared across coders. Intercoder reliability in this study occurred when a second experienced researcher examined 20% of the data to look for themes and trends in the collected data. The second researcher coded at least 20% of responses looking for themes which resulted in an 80% match in themes and codes generated by the author of the study.

Limitations

Any study has limitations originating from the selected methodology (Green et al., 2006; Lichtman, 2012). Although the aim of the research is to minimize limitations by addressing all ethical and methodological standards, some things are difficult to control. The researcher of this study has identified the limitations of this study, which included the researcher as an instrument and sample size connected to population, time, and

location. This study was also delimited by the availability and willingness of the participants. All data were collected by the researcher as an ethnographer, which allowed the researcher to gather interview data and produce a detailed and comprehensive account of a social phenomenon identified in the study (Reeves et al., 2013).

Researcher as Study Instrument

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. In phenomenological studies, the researcher can potentially influence the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Atieno, 2009; Pezalla et al., 2012). Because of this potential influence, it is recommended that reflexivity and the inclusion of other researchers in the study are needed to address potential limitations (Pezalla et al., 2012). For this study, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal which was used during the data collection process. The use of the journal allowed the researcher to control for biases and reflect and respond to the environment as well as the thoughts and attitudes the participants induced during the process (Berger, 2015). The researcher made an intentional effort to be unbiased and nonjudgmental during interviews and data analysis in order to keep up with the high standards of qualitative scientific research. A second researcher used interrater reliability as a way to reduce possible bias when the researcher is the instrument.

Sample Size

Sample size is a common limitation of qualitative phenomenological research. It should be acknowledged that there is no standard recommendation when determining the sample size, and sample size may vary according to the topic and research design (Yin, 2011). This study began with 17 participants, with the goal of capturing 12 lived

68

experiences; however, due to participant availability, the final total was 10 participants. The population and the sample were composed of parents of SEN students who transitioned into and out of NCB ISP Charter High Schools. It did not include traditional brick and mortar high school students. Further, it did not include SEN students in a non-public school (NPS) high school setting.

Including more people in the study was not necessary; according to Guetterman (2015), unneeded sampling possibly leads to data becoming repetitive, and the analysis of the data could lose its depth. The researcher was able to minimize the risks of the small sample size by conducting in-depth interviews and collecting detailed data on parents' perceptions of transition programs for independent study high school students in special education in order to help understand the experience of the target population.

Location

This study was limited to the Central and Southern California regions to permit face-to-face interviews, increase participation, and limit travel and other expenses. Limiting this research study to these two large geographic areas does narrow the possibility of including more parents of students in a transition program; it was necessary to do so in order to meet the time and budget constraints.

Time

Due to the nature of qualitative data collection, time becomes a limitation. This type of study normally takes a great deal of time because each interview with each participant should be conducted face-to-face with the time allotted for deep interaction (Yin, 2011). This specific research study took several weeks because interviews were scheduled around the needs and schedules of each of the participants. Due to packed

schedules, sometimes interviewees had limited time, therefore, limiting the researcher to 40-60 minutes of the interview. To make sure that time did not prevent the researcher from obtaining the needed clarification, the researcher sent the interview questionnaire to participants in advance of the interview in order for the participants to have enough time to think and reflect on their possible answers.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to inform the reader of the purpose of the study and the research questions. This study used qualitative methodology to gain insight into the lived experiences and perceptions of parents with high school students in a high school transition program. Data were collected from 16 participants, with interviews as the primary data collection method, which was compiled with the researcher's observations during the interview process. This methodology was aligned with the purpose statement and research questions. Detailed in this chapter is the time and effort the researcher invested in ensuring high validity and reliability for this study by conducting a thorough and unbiased data collection and data analysis process, as well as addressing all limitations. The final two chapters of this study will consist of data findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to guarantee that qualified students with disabilities throughout the country have access to a free, adequate public education that includes specialized instruction and other necessary supports. In accordance with the IDEA, states and government organizations must offer early intervention, special education, and other relevant services to children with disabilities. The IDEA was reauthorized by Congress and signed into law on December 3, 2004. Specific revisions to the IDEA included explicit language and requirements for the transition process to ensure post-secondary success for students in special education. The 2004 IDEA reauthorization with transition requirements is memorialized in Section 300.43 of the IDEA:

(a) Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—

(1) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes—

(i) Instruction;

(ii) Related services;

71

(iii) Community experiences;

(iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living

objectives; and

(v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional

vocational evaluation.

(b) Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education if

provided as specially designed instruction or a related service if required to assist

a child with a disability to benefit from special education (Department of

Education, 2017).

This chapter examines and summarizes data on parent expectations and

perceptions of the transition process that families with high school special education

children with developmental disabilities confront at an NCB ISP Charter school. The

purpose statement, study questions, research methodology, and data-gathering techniques

are again reiterated in this chapter. The demographic and samples are described. Then the

themes and data analysis are presented.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe the

expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding

their children's transition out of independent studies charter high schools. In addition, it

was the purpose of this study to identify the perceptions of parents regarding how

independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN

children during the transition process.

Research Questions

The following central research question will inform this study: What are the lived experiences of parents of developmentally delayed special education needs (SEN) high school children regarding their children's transition out of independent studies charter high schools?

Research Sub-Questions

1. What expectations do parents of high school SEN children have regarding the transition process out of the independent studies charter school?

2. What factors do parents of SEN children perceive as important to the transition process out of the independent studies charter high school?

3. What supports and barriers do parents of SEN children experience during the transition process out of the independent studies charter high school?

4. In what ways do parents of middle school SEN children perceive the independent studies charter high school addressed their children's needs during the transition process?

Methodology

A qualitative phenomenological inquiry was used for this research. According to Patton (2015), "Qualitative inquiry means going into the field – into the real world of programs, organization, neighborhoods, street corners and getting close enough to the people" (p. 56). Additionally, phenomenological research, according to Lodico et al. (2010), examines participants' interpretations of their educational experiences and strives to comprehend their lived experiences from their perspective. This allows for an in-depth exploration of the phenomena. The semi-structured interview was chosen as the

instrumentation to explore this phenomenological phenomenon further. It is well established that qualitative research data is most commonly collected through semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2002).

Having been inspired by a previous study and after an extensive review of the literature, the researcher developed the questions to ensure calibration with the theoretical framework and the central research question. To the benefit of this research study, the researcher is a special education administrator and a parent of a child with significant disabilities. As an administrator, the researcher has previous expertise in constructing transition programs and navigating them. As a parent, the researcher has lived experience interacting with transition programs. Therefore, the researcher was privy to enough information to allow the creation of interview questions that would provide the most detailed data possible.

At the advice of the dissertation committee, the researcher field-tested the questions to ensure validity and reliability. To help with the field test, the researcher recruited two Ed.D education administrators as silent observers during the pilot interview with a parent volunteer. The researcher briefed these two Ed.D education administrators on their role and purpose for their observation. During this brief, the observers were provided with a rubric (Appendix F) of what to look for during the interview so targeted feedback would be provided on improving the interview process for participants.

The parents who volunteered to partake in the pilot interview via a Zoom video conference met the criteria set forth by the research study. Before setting a date, they were informed about the two silent observers and that the purpose of the pilot interview was to help calibrate the research questions and ensure all safety procedures were

included in the line of questioning. Every part of the interview process was tested during

this pilot. A release of information, a participant bill of rights, and a sample of the study

questionnaire were all provided to the parent volunteer in the same way they were

provided to the research participants. Each interview was audio recorded upon participant

consent to transcribe on completion. With permission from the parent volunteer, the

interview was audio recorded to allow the researcher to hone their skills with the

transcribing procedure. During the Zoom interview, the parent volunteer was attentive to

the questions and thoughtful in their responses. Right after the interview, the researcher

met with the two Ed.D education administrators who sat silently during the pilot

interview to review their recommendations. Based on this detailed data, the researcher

made it a point to define the word "factors" on question number 7 (Appendix A) for the

parent participants moving forward in the research phase of the study.

      The pilot interview provided an opportunity to ensure all Google documents were

accessible to parent participants, including the release of information Google survey.

Based on pilot interview feedback, the researcher knew to change the settings on the

survey to ensure the Google survey was accessible to anyone outside of UMass Global,

the owner of the Google suite the researcher used to create and store the release of

information survey. The pilot interview also yielded the following information,

interviews via Zoom rely heavily on body language. The researcher noted that while

taking copious observational notes during the recorded Zoom pilot interview, the

volunteer participant appeared apprehensive, as noted by their facial expressions. The

researcher had not noticed that while they were taking notes, they looked down at their

desk. To the volunteer participant, this small detail translated as though the researcher

was not fully present and engaged in listening to their telling of their lived experience. Once the researcher noticed this, they shared with the volunteer participant that their head was down as they took notes but that they had listened to everything they said. However, moving forward, the researcher made it a point to only take notes during an organic pause in the interview or when the participant asked for a break. To ensure all observations were memorized, the observer immediately wrote down highlights of the interview and memorable moments. The researcher then scheduled interviews with parent participants via Zoom video conference.

Zoom video conference interview dates were scheduled on the date and time of the parent participants' availability. The researcher noted that while flexible dates and times were needed to ensure parent participation, this created an interview window larger than anticipated. The interviews were held between February 17, 2023, and March 13, 2023. Prior to starting the interview, the researcher reminded the participants once more of their participant rights and the role of the International Review Board (IRB) in ensuring the safety of all participants in research studies. The researcher noted that three parents were initially surprised to know that an IRB existed but expressed appreciation for the safety measures taken by the researcher and UMass Global as an educational institution.

The researcher streamlined the interview process by reviewing demographic information at the outset of each session. This presented an excellent opportunity to clarify the special education eligibility group. Due to the researcher's experience with interviews via Zoom, each participant was asked if they would like for the researcher to share on the computer screen via Zoom screen sharing the research questions being

reviewed. 100% of the participants consented to the Zoom screen sharing. Two parent participants noted that as visual learners, they appreciated the offer of having visual support. The researcher noted that these same two parents had arrived at the Zoom interview with a printed copy of the questions sent to them to review before the interview.

Throughout the interviews, the researcher memorialized observational field notes by handwriting them whenever there was a natural stop or interruption in the conversation. The interview questions were asked to each participant precisely in the same way and sequence. Clarification questions to elaborate on participant answers were followed several times to ensure the researcher captured the essence of the participant's lived experience. The researcher interjected at times to remind participants of their right to ask for a break if they needed one or their right to stop the interview entirely. All participants followed this process to guarantee that the research study did not have any extra factors inserted into it, which may have affected the information that was ultimately gathered.

Each interview was audio recorded via Zoom and then transcribed on the Otter platform on completion. Permission to audio record was given by each participant through a Google survey. A total of 11 interview questions were asked of each participant, with additional questions for clarification as needed. At the end of each interview, the researcher thanked each participant for their time and participation in the study. The researcher acknowledged that as a parent of a child with significant needs, they know personally how time is a valuable resource and carefully spent. To show how grateful the researcher was for their valuable input in this research, she informed each

participant that they would get an electronic copy of the finished dissertation. This would allow them to see how they played a role in helping to frame or change the narrative on transition programs from a parental perspective. Lastly, the researcher reiterated that all data would be kept confidential, anonymous, and destroyed in three years.

The researcher then converted every audio recording from Zoom into an MP4 format. The MP4 format is commonly used to store video and audio (Harris & Park, 2008). Once the audio recording had been formatted into an MP4, the researcher uploaded it into Otter. Otter is a web-based service that provides transcription (Corrente & Bourgeault, 2022). The researcher uploaded all audio MP4 recordings of the interviews. Otter provided a very accurate transcript with a summary at the top of the transcript of the words most often used and by whom during the interview. The researcher reviewed each transcript for accuracy and noted that the summary at the top of each transcript of words most often used during the interview would help when the task of finding themes and coding followed.

Following a conversation with the dissertation committee chair, the researcher then took the transcribed interviews with the added summary of words most commonly used and hand-coded all transcripts. The decision was made to hand code to ensure that every nuance and rich tapestry of each parent's lived experience was fully captured. To ensure coder reliability and accuracy, 100% of the data were coded by the same two Ed.D education administrators who observed the pilot interview. Common themes and repeated words/phrases were marked in each copy. In addition, the researcher and Ed.D coding partners made notes on each transcript to color code, code, tag, and analyze the data in

search of recurring patterns. The researcher then identified exemplary quotations that were utilized to answer the study questions.

Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "A population is the group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which the results can be generalized" (p. 289). In phenomenological research, the sample size of participants has traditionally been between two and 25 (Alase, 2017). Creswell (2013) described a target population as a selected group based on specific criteria to generalize a group's results. Using Creswell's definition of a target population and Alase's parameters of a phenomenological research sample size, the researcher looked at the number of charter school SEN children in California to determine the target population.

In 2018-2019, there were 652,933 students in 1,313 charter schools, according to the California Charter School Association (CCSA). 11% of these pupils had a learning disability (CCSA, 2019). Given that about 71,822 SEN students were in California charter schools for the 2018-2019 school year (CCSA, 2019), the researcher estimates one parent per student. The researcher further limited the target group by looking at NCB ISP charter high schools. The number of Non-Classroom-based Charter Schools based on the 2019–20 Second Principal Apportionment (CDE, 2019) was 308. It was impossible to survey every parent in California who had a child attending an SEN NCB ISP charter high school due to the size and dispersion of the population, as well as the researcher's limited resources. To find and choose parents who were representative of the general community while enhancing the practicality of the study, the target group population was restricted to parents whose students attend or attended Central and Southern California

NCB ISP Charter high schools.

Sample

A sample, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), is "the group of subjects from whom data are collected; often representative of a specific population" (p. 490). Through purposeful sampling, the researcher identified and documented the lived experiences of parents who had just gone through the transition process. Considering the target population and size, it was determined that the sample size would be 16 parents of SEN high school students in an NCB ISP charter high school. During the proposal defense, the dissertation committee further restricted the sample size to 12 parents of SEN students, noting that in phenomenological research, the sample size of participants is between 2 and 30. During the interview and research process, in consultation with the dissertation chair regarding parents canceling appointments due to a busy IEP spring season, it was agreed that a sample population of 10 would still adhere to a phenomenological research study and would be appropriate. It was concluded that reducing the number of participants from 12 to 10 would have little to no statistical consequence.

The researcher identified 25 NCB ISP charter high schools in Central and Southern California. A letter was sent to special education leaders at each of the 25 NCB ISP charter high schools (Appendix D). This letter explained the purpose of the research study and the needed criteria and asked for their support in identifying parents willing to participate. The special education leaders identified 20 parents, and their contact information, including email addresses, was forwarded to the researcher.

Once the researcher received this information, they sent an email letter to the identified parents (Appendix E) to introduce themselves and the reason for the email. Further, this email contained information on the research study, a copy of the participant's rights, and a link to a letter of consent and release for audio recording sent via a Google survey.

Seventeen parents agreed to participate in the study. As a parent of a child with significant needs who had to cancel appointments at the last minute to meet their child's needs, the researcher interviewed all 17 parents who had agreed to participate. This decision by the researcher proved fruitful in the end, as 7 of the parents who had initially agreed to participate in the research study had to drop out. Each participant who had to drop out was gracious and kind in explaining their reasons for not being able to continue. The researcher reassured them that they understood the constant daily challenges a parent of a child with special needs faces.

Presentation and Analysis of Demographic Data

The 10 parent participants involved in the study were asked to provide demographic details through a pre-interview questionnaire that asked the following questions:

- Age of the high school student
- Age at which they enrolled their student in the NCB ISP Charter High School
- Special education eligibility of the student
- Age at which the student was first identified for special education services
- Location of the Non-Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program the student attends.

In order to obtain the most significant amount of information possible from the participant's responses, Table 1 was created to present data and demographic information in a visual modality.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Parent Participant	Age of the high school student	Age of student at enrollment in the NCB ISP Charter HS	Special education eligibility of the student	Age of student when identified for SPED	CA Regional Location of NCB ISP Charter HS
1	18	9	AUT/SLI	4.9	South
2	24	16	AUT	4	South
3	23	14	ID/AUT	9	South
4	16	11	OHI/SLD	8	South
5	18	15	AUT	7	South
6	18	10	AUT/ID	8/birth	South
7	18	13	TBI	9	South
8	16	13	AUT	9	South
9	17	17	AUT/ID	birth	South
10	13	8	ID	3.5	Central

Note. ID = Intellectual disability, AUT= autism spectrum disorder, SLI = speech-language impairment, OHI = other health impairment, SLD = specific learning disability, TBI=traumatic brain injury

Participants were informed that the demographic information would be utilized purely for statistical purposes and to provide context for the dissertation study's ultimate conclusions. The demographic information listed in Table 1 provides a starting point for analyzing the demographic data. An analysis of the demographic data revealed that the overwhelming number of research study participants, 90 % were from Southern California (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

CA Regional Location of NCB ISP Charter HS
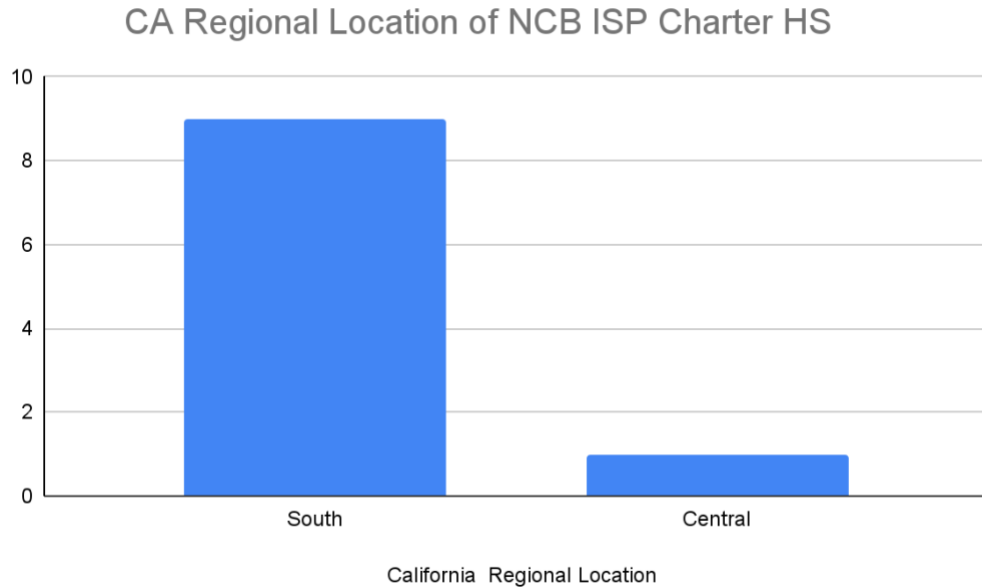
The researcher has no data to explain why there was such an abnormally high participation rate among the parents of children attending charter schools in Southern California NCB ISP. Based on the findings, the researcher can only speculate that parents from Southern California might be more familiar with research study participation.

Analyzing the data on the age at which the participants' students were first identified as eligible for special education, the ages span from birth to nine years. With 10 participants, it was possible to calculate a percentage score in all demographic information categories by 10% increments (see Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6

Age of Student When First Identified for SPED
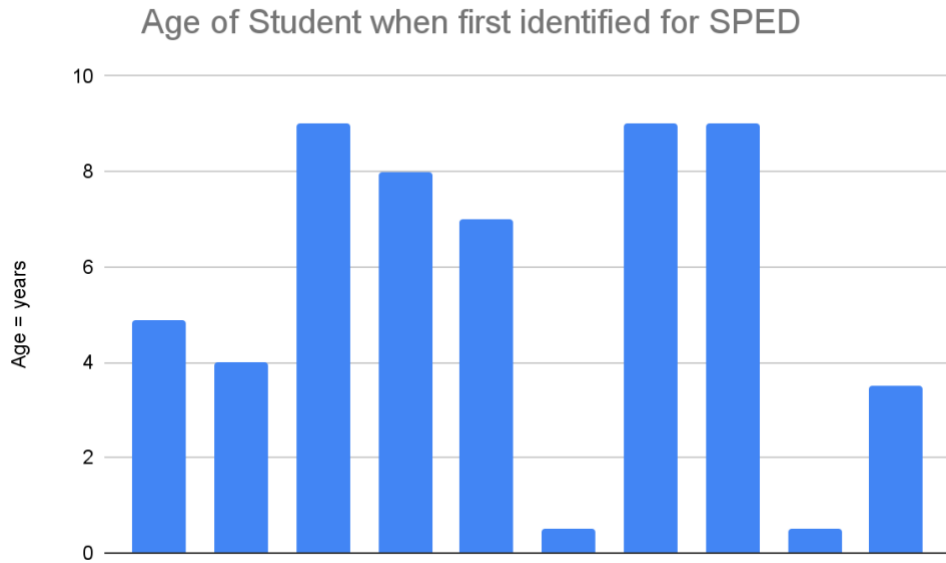
Age of Student when first identified for SPED

Note. ID = Intellectual disability, AUT= autism spectrum disorder, SLI = speech-language impairment,

OHI = other health impairment, SLD = specific learning disability, TBI=traumatic brain injury

100% of the students were identified as eligible for special education services before the

age of 10 years.

Figure 7

Special Education Eligibility of the Student
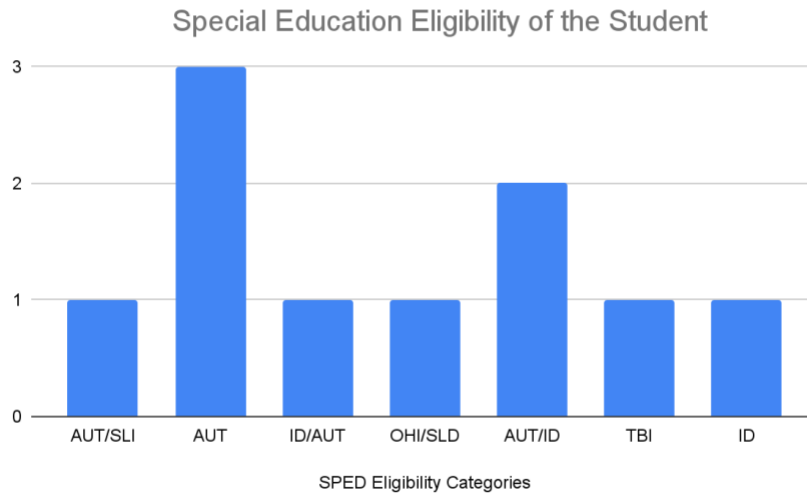
When the age at which the participants' students were identified as needing special education services was compared to the age at which students were identified as falling into an eligibility category under IDEA (2004), the data shows that at a rate of 50%, students with ID and AUT were identified by the age of 5 years. Analyzing data on the age of students at different points in their lives, when the participants enrolled in an NCB ISP Charter High School, 90% were enrolled at the beginning or close to the beginning of the student's high school career. To assist in explaining this phenomenon, one participant (p 1) remarked that "they had nothing for my student." This statement was made after the parent mentioned the age at which their student enrolled in the NCB ISP charter school. The age range of the participants' students was between 13 and 24, according to a subsequent study of the demographic data (See Figure 8).

Figure 8

Age of Student during Enrollment in the NCB ISP Charter HS

Age of Student during Enrollment in the NCB ISP Charter HS
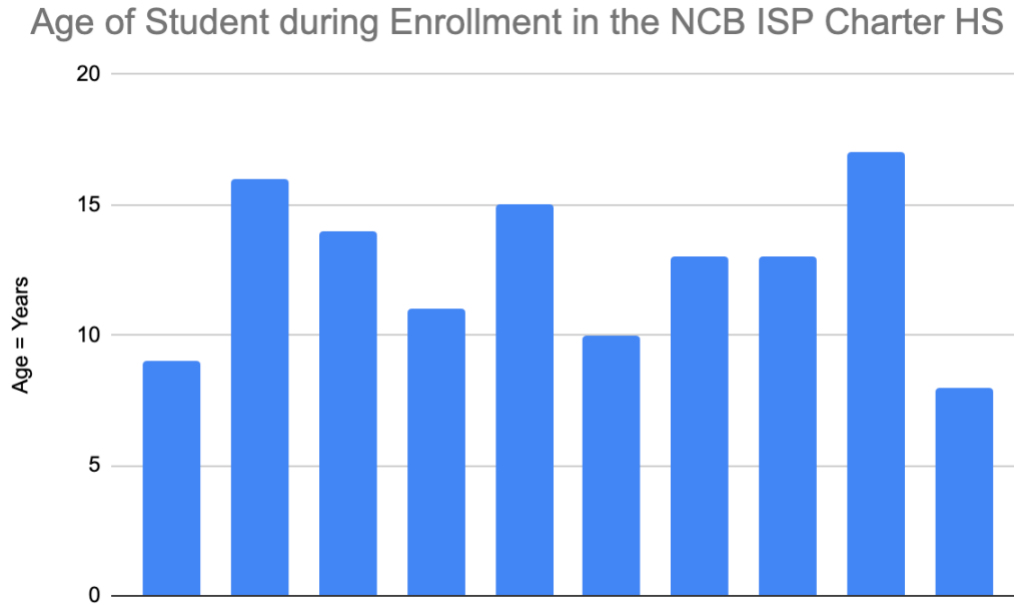
Presentation of Interview Observational Data

During the interviews via Zoom video conference, the parents were polite and fully involved in the conversation. Every single parent did their best to answer all of the questions. Every parent gave carefully considered responses. They all made genuine efforts to ensure that the researcher grasped either the literal meaning of their statement or the essence of what they were trying to convey. During several interviews, the researcher asked follow-up questions to clarify previous answers to obtain additional insight into the participants' experiences. The parents shared specific details such as their experiences, the educators who left a lasting impression on them, and the other SEN families they interacted with, which either supported or reinforced their positive or negative experiences during the transition program/process.

Presentation and Analysis of Interview Data

The four research questions of the study were used to structure and present the one-on-one semi-structured interview analysis. For each research question, there is a discussion of recurring themes that surfaced during the data analysis. In addition, examples relevant to the themes are provided to expand on each theme and provide more profound knowledge (see Table 2).

Table 2

Parent Expectations Themes

Theme	Frequency	Number of Participants
Student Employment Preparation	25	10
Parent Education	21	7
Agency Linkage	13	7
Self Sufficient Instruction	9	5
Student Safety Instruction	3	1

Research Question 1

What expectations do parents of high school SEN children have regarding the transition process out of the NCB independent studies charter school?

Finding 1: Employment Preparation and Support For the Student

All 10 participants mentioned at least once that preparation for future employment for their student is either an expectation, goal, or experience that a transition program should provide. One parent (p 1) stressed how job preparation and everything entailed, including creating a resume and filling out applications, was the most critical role of the transition program.

For us, it was very important since he came into high school right away to ask for the transition process. Since he was diagnosed, actually a year later when he was diagnosed, our goal was to make sure that he will be able to fully be independent when he graduated from high school, so that if something were to happen to us, him, we wanted to make sure that he could live on his own and not depend on his sister, or anybody else's family member.

Preparing a student to be self-sufficient for employment preparation was essential to five parents and was mentioned several more times during the research study.

Finding 2: Parent Education

A total of seven participants mentioned that they would appreciate knowing more about what a transition program is and how it will help their students with post-secondary success. Parent education can be a series of lectures, seminars, webinars, and other modalities. Three participants had students who had recently (less than five years) graduated from high school or had aged out of the education system.

Participant 3 stated, "I didn't learn anything from the school. I had to search for things." Participant 2 stated, "I think that for general, parents-student relationships, there may not be that level of training that's already inherent. And so maybe providing some parent workshops or providing an extra amount of support."

The need for parent education on the transition process and programs were cross-referenced during research question 2. Research question 2 focuses on factors perceived as necessary by parents during the transition process. A connection was made between collaboration and parent education. If a parent is well informed about the transition

process and their role as a contributor to the process, a collaborative relationship with the IEP Team might be the result.

All of the research on this finding comes to the same conclusions. Parents do not feel well educated on the transition process. As noted by Martinez et al. (2012), the transition process for parents was overwhelming and did not seem like a collaborative process. The process was not made clear to them.

Finding 3: Agency Linkage

Seven of the 10 participants noted that they would have significantly benefited from being made aware of the many resources available to students and families with disabilities. There was disbelief that there is currently no central place to get information on everything available, both public and private, to families of students with disabilities. Participant 7 stated,

> There's no common core for, you know, or universal place for parents to go to for information. But that's why when I heard about you asking these questions, it's like, I think what you're doing is amazing because there's a lot of parents out there, you know, who were like me, who didn't know how to help their kids.

This finding on agency linkage intersects with research question number 3. Question 3 speaks to supports for parents as they go through the transition process with their students. A finding of that question number 3 was that other parents are their primary source for agency linkage and information on events that showcase resources.

Participant 5 stated, "There's so much I do wish that people had shared with me." Participant 3 stated,

And I've, I've always, I fly solo, and that's it. You know, it's hard, and it's

isolating. But when you are able to get in with other parents, it is really, I think

the best experiences have come from learning from other parents, what activities

and what opportunities, you know, when they've shared with me.

Research Question 2

What factors do parents of SEN children perceive as important to the transition

process out of the NCB independent studies charter high school? A summary of the

findings is in Table 3.

Table 3

Factors Parents Perceive as Important to the Transition Process

Theme	Frequency	Number of Participants
Collaborative Communication with the school	26	10
Individualized support based on student interest	25	10
Clarity and Transparency	6	6
Adulting	4	4
Financial Literacy	2	1

Finding 1: Collaborative Communication with the School

Effective communication with parents is listed as essential in all the literature

reviewed by the researcher. Participant 8 defined this collaborative communication as

"just communicating with his teachers if I have any issues. They're there for help." All 10

participants noted that they had a collaborative relationship with their current or past

NCB ISP charter high school. Participant 2 stated, "We had really good communication."

Participant 4 stated, "It was really important, particularly… Yeah, with the school that

he's at, they're very center based. So there's a lot of guidance, you know when we need it."

Finding 2: Individualized- Support Based on Student Interest

Every participant stated that their reason for leaving the traditional brick-and-mortar public school was their students' lack of individualization and choices. This component was so important to them that they left schools where their students had been enrolled for many years. Participant 8 stated,

And they do especially well, with children with the IEPs and special needs. It seems like they were more trained, or... and have more patience with them than the traditional general education. they get more of that, that intense attention that helps to make them move forward.

Participant 9 stated,

I appreciate very much what they are doing by now. So far I have noticed that their tests are very practical. And then, that's our first experience with them. And so, but so far, like I said, I am happy with the way they are teaching my daughter.

Finding 3: Clarity and Transparency

More than half, 60%, of participants noted that the need to trust their students' school staff was necessary. Trust was a theme that came up continuously throughout the interviews. Providing clear information, including the pros and cons of choices, was part of the clarity and transparency that built trust. Participant 5 stated that they knew the school administration was not being transparent with the special education options available to their student; they stated, "A lot of people wanted to share things with me, but they couldn't because they weren't allowed to speak out."

Research Question 3

What supports do parents of SEN children experience during the transition

process out of the NCB independent studies charter high schools? A summary of the

findings is in Table 4.

Table 4

Supports Parents Experience During the Transition Process

Theme	Frequency	Number of Participants
School based	25	10
Agency Based	21	10
Community of other SPED parents	18	8
Family	3	3
Neighbors	1	1

Finding 1: School-Based

IDEA (2004) requires that schools provide an individualized transition plan for

every student. Each plan includes a series of events, goals, and services to ensure post-

secondary success. It was no surprise to know that every participant reported receiving

services for their students. Some participants used the term supports to describe services

provided, while others mentioned supports as direct services to the family in support of

the student. Participant 2 stated,

> So the formal supports that my student received in the accommodations were
>
> really helpful. We received equipment and technical support as well. And then his
>
> needs-based supports as far as the therapy that was provided was really critical.

And all of those elements were very accessible through the providers and also

through the charter school itself.

Participant 4 viewed supports as additional opportunities afforded to their student

in support of their entire person and stated,

The Independent, the school that he's at, as well, they have, like a cadet corps

program, which is kind of like a, like a Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts program. And

that's been really beneficial to him, because he's around other peers that allow him

to feel like he's, he's accepted as who he is, and whatever he wants to do, and all

of his talents or his skills are very much appreciated with what he does. And so

I'm really thankful that he has the support that we all have for him.

Finding 2: Agency Based

All 10 participants' students were, at some point, a client of the Regional Center

or the Department of Rehabilitation. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS,

2019) works with nonprofit private businesses known as regional centers (RC) to

establish contracts that allow the regional centers to either deliver or coordinate services

and supports for people who have developmental impairments. The mission of the

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR, 2023) in the state of California is to provide persons

with disabilities with services and advocacy that will lead to employment, independent

living, and equality. This mission is carried out in conjunction with consumers and other

stakeholders. It should be noted that per conversations with the participants, there

appeared to be a difference in experience from one RC and DOR to another, depending

on the assigned RC or DOR. It should be noted that several agency-based supports, which

are typically in person, were suspended during the initial COVID-19 world pandemic in

2020. The interruption to the agency-based support was detrimental to the participants' families. Participant 2 stated,

> I had hoped that the vocational education that he had gotten would be able to be continued after he exited from the transition program, so that he would be able to keep busy keep learning skills, but with a lot of support. And the expectations once he did exit the transition, changed greatly, in part due to the situation that we had with COVID. And the sudden restrictions on possible face to face services that were supposed to come into play after he exited the transition period, within the charter school.

Participant 10 stated,

> Yeah, I we have the regional center, but we don't really use them; we have them kind of on the back burner just for whenever the time comes. But yeah, I don't think we've actually had any type of encounters yet.

When asked for clarification, the parents stated that their current NCB ISP charter high school provided all the support they needed.

Finding 3: Community of other Special Education Parents

Almost every participant, at 80%, mentioned the support, both guidance and moral, that they receive from other parents of SEN students. Several parents gave precise details on the new resource shared. Participant 3 stated, "I've gotten my information from other parents, not the school. The parents are the most valuable resource." Participant 4 stated,

> I think that when we run into when, when Special Needs parents meet other special needs parents. I don't know. I'm always very grateful because I know that

94

we all are silently asking questions and silently helping each other out. And so,

I'm just grateful for that.

Participant 5 stated,

Again, I ...anything that I could say or do or offer to other parents that have a

child with special needs, or educators working with special needs children, even

children that don't have it, just you know. I want to.

When the semi-structured interviews were finished, and the participants were free to go, 80% of the parents lingered behind to engage the researcher in further conversation about the lived experience of a special education parent. Every participant who stayed behind wanted to know more about the researcher's lived experience as a parent of a child with significant needs. Further detail and reflections on this unexpected occurrence will be provided in Chapter V.

Research Question 4

In what ways do parents of high school SEN children perceive the NCB independent studies charter high school addressed their children's needs during the transition process? A summary of the findings is in Table 5.

Table 5

Ways Parents Perceived the NCB ISP Charter school addressed their Children's Needs During the Transition Process

Theme	Frequency	Number of Participants
Choice	28	9
Individualized support	10	9
More Opportunities for Students	15	7
Curriculum	7	6

Safety	7	5

Finding 1: Choice

Charter schools, by definition, are a school of choice. The student's parents or guardians must consciously decide to enroll their student in a charter school. The data showed that the participants (90%) perceived the charter schools as having more choices and options for their students in terms of flexibility in their schedule and opportunities for different experiences than were found in the traditional brick-and-mortar public school setting. One participant moved their student to an NCB ISP charter high school due to an issue with bullying in their former school.

Participant 10 stated, "Because everything I've seen on there has been pretty, you know, easy, because we can choose the different topics as far as what we want them to do." The researcher noted that the participants spoke about choice and opportunities for students in the same answer. It was perceived by 70% of the participants that choice ultimately led to opportunities for their students.

Finding 2: Individualized Support

The theme of individualized learning was interwoven into many of the responses given by the participants. Consequently, the same finding was found in response to research question 2. Individual learning, supports, and teaching modalities are expectations of parents who enroll their students in charter schools. This research study demonstrated that this theme drove every participant's decision to enroll their student in an NCB ISP Charter high school.

Participant 8 stated, "No, I just I've felt like the charter schools...the smaller or the smaller the school is, it's more better for kids to learn, especially like kids with disabilities." Participant 2 stated,

> So it prepared him for some success there it introduced those things like writing a resume and working online, but also working with various individuals and as activities. I think it also helped me see where more direct guidance for helping him be successful is needed to be given to unfamiliar providers as well as agencies, planners and agencies for the program. So the experience of working with the teachers and the others in the independent study charter high school transition program was preparatory for me also.

Finding 3: More opportunities for students

As noted under finding 1, the participants used choice and opportunity interchangeably, and it is noted that one led to the other. The researcher noted that a cursory look at the California Charter Schools Association's (CCSA, 2023) website markets charter schools as full of opportunities without the bureaucratic constraints of traditional brick-and-mortar schools.

Participant 10 stated, "And seems like there's a lot of options, and which I think are fantastic." Participant 1 stated,

> Well, I can tell you that if he would have not been in the transition program at the charter school, I don't think he would have been able to get a job and get the experience that he has now and in how confident I see him.

Summary

The findings and results of this study are reported in Chapter IV. These findings and results were derived from the one-on-one semi-structured interviews that were carried out. After analyzing the extrapolation of data, answers to the research study questions were provided sequentially, ensuring every research question was addressed and connected to the theoretical framework. According to the findings of this phenomenological research study, semi-structured interviews led to the emergence of organic discussions that brought to light several recurring themes in response to the interview questions. Recurring themes, such as the individualization of support, flavored every conversation.

Further, the study found that when participants were asked about expectations about transition programs in an NCB ISP charter high school, the themes that arose were (a) employment preparation and support for the student, (b) parent education, and (c) agency linkage. When asked about the factors participants perceived as important to the transition process out of the NCB independent studies charter high school, the following themes emerged: (a) collaborative communication with the school, (b) clarity and transparency, and (c) individualized support based on student interest. When asked about supports that the participants received during the transition process, the themes that arose centered around the entity that delivered said support, including (a) school-based, (b) agency-based, and (c) community of special education parents. Lastly, when asked in what ways the participants felt that the NCB ISP charter schools had addressed their students' needs during the transition process, the responses provided featured the

following themes: (a) choice, (b) more opportunities for students, and (c) individualized support.

Because of this collection of data and the following analysis, a base of information was built concerning the perspectives and expectations of parents of SEN HS students enrolled in an NCB ISP charter high school. The study results indicate that having a school of their choosing that fits their student's needs was essential. Further, parents indicated that they felt their students received more attention and individualized support from the NCB ISP charter schools than they had experienced at their traditional brick-and-mortar schools.

Chapter V provides a summary of the research study. It reviews major findings and unexpected findings associated with Chapter IV. Lastly, Chapter V reviews conclusions resulting from the findings, implications of action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks and reflections from the researcher.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Parental and family participation in education significantly correlates to enhanced student outcomes, asserted Hirano et al. (2016). The evidence of this correlation is acknowledged in other pieces of literature. According to Hetherington et al. (2010), the importance of having individualized connections between educators, students, and their families is a topic that is widely discussed in the relevant body of academic research. They further stated that as parents contact more personally with school employees, they feel more like a part of the transition process. As the importance and influence of parental involvement during the transition process cannot be overstated, the researcher looked at lived experiences to research how it was viewed through the perspective of the parent.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding their children's transition out of non-classroom-based independent studies charter high schools. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process. The ambition of this study was to tell a story from the point of view of the NCB ISP charter high school SEN parents and families. The story tells of a lived experience as parents assisted their students in preparing for post-secondary success with the help of their special education transition programs.

The narrative describes a real-life situation in which parents assisted their children in preparing for success beyond high school by using special education transition programs offered by the NCB ISP Charter high schools their children attended.

Chapter I of this research gave an overview of special education's legal and practical aspects. It was a historical survey of special education and the legislation implemented by the United States federal government to ensure that students with disabilities have equal educational opportunities. This chapter also examined the 2004 IDEA reauthorization, which expanded and outlined the necessary SPED transition services for students to be successful in post-secondary settings. Chapter 1 concluded by examining the increasing enrollment at California's NCB ISP charter high schools.

Chapter II offered a literature review pertinent to the goal of this research. It was discovered that there is a paucity of research on parental perceptions and expectations at the transition phase in NCB ISP charter high schools. Chapter III presents the technique and procedures forming the methodology utilized to perform the research in this phenomenological study. Chapter IV reviewed the themes from the data acquired during the semi-structured one-on-one interviews, and data analysis was evaluated.

Chapter V summarizes the findings from the study. Chapter V reviews parents' opinions and expectations of their SEN students at NCB ISP charter schools as they transition from high school to post-secondary life. Chapter IV's themes and data collected from the 1-1 semi-structured interviews and material from the literature review are referenced. Chapter V continues with major findings followed by the conclusions, the implications for action, and recommendations for further action. Finally, this chapter concludes with remarks and reflections.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed SEN high school children regarding

their children's transition out of independent studies charter high schools. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What expectations do parents of high school SEN children have regarding the transition process out of the independent studies charter school?

2. What factors do parents of SEN children perceive as important to the transition process out of the independent studies charter high school?

3. What supports and barriers do parents of SEN children experience during the transition process out of the independent studies charter high school?

4. In what ways do parents of middle school SEN children perceive the independent studies charter high school addressed their children's needs during the transition process?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This study used qualitative phenomenology. According to Patton (2015), "Qualitative inquiry means going into the field—into the real world of programs, organization, neighborhoods, street corners and getting close enough to the people" (p. 56). According to Lodico et al. (2010), phenomenological research seeks to understand participants' educational experiences from their perspective. This enables in-depth study. This phenomenological phenomenon was investigated using the semi-structured

interview. Semi-structured interviews are the standard method for collecting qualitative research data (Patton, 2002).

After being inspired by a previous study and reviewing the literature, the researcher developed the questions to match the theoretical framework and central research question. The researcher, a special education administrator, and a parent of a child with significant disabilities benefited from this research study. The researcher built and managed transition programs as an administrator and used transition programs as a parent. The researcher had enough information to create interview questions with the most detailed data.

Field-testing the questions was recommended by the dissertation committee. The researcher asked two Ed.D education administrators to silently observe the pilot interview with a parent volunteer for the field test. The researcher briefed two Ed.D education administrators on their role and observation purpose. During this brief, observers were given a form entitled Field Test – Observer Feedback (Appendix F) to help improve the interview process for participants, by providing feedback to the researcher on the completion of the pilot interview.

The parents who volunteered for the Zoom video conference pilot interview met the research study's criteria. They were informed about the two silent observers and that the pilot interview would calibrate the research questions and ensure safety procedures before setting a date. This pilot tested every interview step. The parent volunteer received the same release of information, participant bill of rights, and study questionnaire sample as the research participants. After consent, each interview was audio recorded and transcribed. The parent volunteer allowed the researcher to record

the interview to practice transcribing. The parent volunteer answered the Zoom interview questions thoughtfully. After the pilot interview, the researcher met with the two Ed.D education administrators, who sat silently to discuss their recommendations. Based on this detailed data, the researcher defined "factors" in question 7 (Appendix A) for parent participants in the research phase.

The pilot interview allowed parents to access all google documents, including the information google survey. Based on pilot interview feedback, the researcher changed the survey settings to make it accessible to anyone outside of UMass Global, the owner of the google suite the researcher used to create and store the release of information survey. Zoom interviews use body language, according to the pilot interview. The researcher observed that the volunteer participant appeared apprehensive during the recorded Zoom pilot interview. The researcher was unaware they looked down at their desk while taking notes. This small detail made the volunteer participant think the researcher was not listening to their story. After noticing this, the researcher told the volunteer participant they were taking notes but had listened to everything. Moving forward, the researcher only took notes during natural pauses in the interview or when the participant requested a break. The observer immediately recorded interview highlights and memorable moments to remember them. The researcher then interviewed parents via Zoom video conference.

Zoom video conference interviews were scheduled according to parent availability. The researcher noted that parent participation required flexible dates and times, which extended the interview window. Interviews were held February 17–March 13, 2023. The researcher reminded participants of their rights and the role of the

International Review Board (IRB) in ensuring research participant safety before the interview. The researcher noted that three parents were surprised to learn that an IRB existed but appreciated the safety measures taken by the researcher and UMass Global as an educational institution.

By reviewing demographics before each interview, the researcher streamlined the process. This was a great chance to clarify special education eligibility. Due to the researcher's experience with Zoom interviews, each participant was asked if they wanted the researcher to Zoom screen share the research questions being reviewed. All participants allowed Zoom screen sharing. Two parents appreciated visual support as visual learners. The researcher noted that these same two parents arrived at the Zoom interview with a printed copy of the questions sent to them for review.

The researcher hand-wrote observational field notes whenever the interview stopped. Each interviewee received the same questions in the same order. To capture the participants' lived experiences, the researcher repeated clarification questions. The researcher occasionally reminded participants of their right to take a break or end the interview. All participants followed this process to ensure the research study had no extra factors that could have affected the data.

Zoom recordings were transcribed on Otter after each interview. Participants consented to an audio recording via Google survey. Each participant was asked 11 interview questions, plus clarification questions. The researcher thanked the participants after each interview. As a parent of a child with special needs, the researcher knew how precious time was. She gave each participant an electronic copy of the dissertation to show her gratitude for their participation. This would show them how they shaped

transition program narratives from a parental perspective. Finally, the researcher

reiterated that all data would be confidential, anonymous, and destroyed in three years.

The researcher then MP4-encoded all Zoom audio recordings. MP4 is a popular

video and audio format (Otter.ai., 2012). The researcher uploaded the MP4 recording to

Otter.ai which transcribes online. The researcher uploaded all MP4 interview audio.

Otter provided an accurate transcript summarizing the words most often used and by

whom. The researcher checked each transcript for accuracy and noted that the summary

of words most often used in the interview at the top would help with themes and coding.

After consulting with the dissertation committee chair, the researcher hand-coded

all transcribed interviews with a summary of commonly used words. To capture each

parent's rich experience, hand coding was chosen. Two Ed.D education administrators

who observed the pilot interview coded all data to ensure coder reliability and accuracy.

Each copy marked repeated words and themes. The researcher and Ed.D coding partners

also made notes on each transcript to color code, code, tag, and analyze data for patterns.

Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "A population is the group of

individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be

generalized" (p. 289). Phenomenological research typically uses 2–25 participants (Alase,

2017). Creswell (2013) defined a target population as a selected group based on specific

criteria to generalize results. The researcher looked at California's charter school SEN

children to determine the target population using Creswell's definition and Alase's

phenomenological research sample size parameters.

The California Charter School Association reported 652,933 students in 1,313 charter schools in 2018–2019 (CCSA, 2019). 11% of students have learning disabilities (CCSA, 2019). The researcher estimates one parent per student based on 71,822 SEN students in California charter schools in 2018–2019 (CCSA, 2019).

NCB ISP charter high schools narrowed the researcher's target group. The 2019–20 Second Principal Apportionment listed 308 Non-Classroom-based Charter Schools (CDE, 2019). Due to the population's size and dispersion and the researcher's limited resources, surveying all California parents of SEN NCB ISP charter high school students was impossible. The target group population was restricted to parents whose students attended or attended Central and Southern California NCB ISP Charter high schools to find and choose parents who were representative of the general community and make the study more practical.

Sample

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated, "The group of subjects from whom data are collected; often representative of a specific population" (p. 490). The researcher purposefully sampled transitioning parents and recorded their experiences. The target population and size determined the sample size of 16 parents of SEN high school students in an NCB ISP charter high school. During the proposal defense, the dissertation committee limited the sample size to 12 parents of SEN students, noting that phenomenological research requires 2–30 participants. After consulting with the dissertation chair about parents canceling appointments due to a busy IEP spring season, it was decided that a sample population of 10 would still be appropriate for a

phenological research study. Reducing participants from 12 to 10 had little statistical

impact.

Major Findings

A summary of major findings that emerged from the data analysis in Chapter IV

is presented Table 6 and in the explanations which follow.

Table 6

Key Findings Summary Table

Theme	Frequency	Number of Participants
Collaborative Communication with the School	26	10
Student Employment Preparation	25	10
Individualized support based on student interest	25	10
School Based Supports	25	10
Agency Based Supports	21	10
Choice	28	9
Individualized Support	10	9

Finding 1: Collaborative Communication with the School is Key

Every participant spoke on the importance of collaborative communication. A

distinction was made between a sharing of information and a true collaboration. The

importance of maintaining open and honest lines of communication with the parents was

emphasized. Participant 8 described communication as "just communicating with his

teachers if I have any issues. They're there for help. They are there to provide

assistance." All 10 participants said they had either a present or a previous collaborative

relationship with the NCB ISP charter high school they attended.

Finding 2: Parents Expect Employment Preparation and Support For The Student

All 10 participants said a transition program should prepare their students for future employment. One parent (p 1) said employment preparation, including Currriculm Vitae (CV) writing and application filling, was the most essential part of the transition program.

> For us, it was very important since he came into high school right away to ask for the transition process. Since he was diagnosed, actually a year later when he was diagnosed, our goal was to make sure that he will be able to fully be independent when he graduated from high school so that if something were to happen to us, him, we wanted to make sure that he could live on his own and not depend on his sister, or anybody else's family member.

Finding 3: Interest-based Individualized Student Support Was the Reason For Enrollment at the NCB ISP charter high school

All respondents cited their children's lack of personalization and options as the primary motivation for abandoning the conventional public-school model. Because of the importance they placed on this factor, they pulled their children out of schools where they had been enrolled for years.

Finding 4: School-Based Services Were Perceived to Be Above Average

Participants perceived special education transition services as being better or, at the very least, comparable to traditional brick-and-mortar schools. It was no surprise to know that every participant reported receiving services for their students. Some participants used the term supports to describe services provided, while others mentioned supports as direct services to the family in support of the student.

Finding 5: Providing Agency Linkage and Resource Information Was Seen As Necessary During The Transition Process

All participants said that they would have significantly benefited from being made aware of the various options that are accessible to families and kids who have impairments. It came as a surprise to many parents that there is not presently a centralized location where families of children who have disabilities may get information on all of the governmental and private resources that are available to them. Participant 5 stated, "There's so much I do wish that people had shared with me."

Finding 6: The NCB ISP Charter High Schools Provided Choice

Ninety percent of the participants in the study thought that charter schools give students more freedom and variety in terms of schedules and extracurricular activities than traditional public schools. By encouraging choice, the NCB ISP charter high schools have an excellent opportunity to recruit marginalized students and families. The transition programs can be further tailored to meet the unique needs of students who did not thrive in a traditional school setting.

Finding 7: The NCB ISP Charter High Schools Provided More Individualized Support

Parents who send their students to charter schools often do so with the expectation that their students will receive a more personalized education. The results of this study showed that this central idea was central to every parent's justification for choosing an NCB ISP Charter High School for their student. The individualized support during the transition process stated participant 2, " …prepared him for some success there. It introduced those things like writing a resume and working online, but also working with various individuals and activities…."

Unexpected Findings

Throughout this research study, the literature review aligned with the major findings from the participants' interview data analysis. The researcher is also a parent of a child with significant needs, so the participants might have felt more comfortable sharing their stories. The researcher can only speculate as to this point when considering the following unexpected findings.

Representation Matters

Parents in the study felt understood by someone who had been through a similar process. This aligns with studies that show the need for teachers of color to teach students of color due to a perceived kinship. According to Boser (2011), when students of color are taught by people of their own race, who have had similar experiences, they feel understood and do better in many ways. It was perceived by the parents that the researcher understood them on a personal level, akin to kinship.

Participant 7 stated that "only a parent of a student with SEN or disabilities could fully comprehend the critical importance of having options when it comes to support services." This finding impacts every support system, from the local to the state and federal governments. A voice that represents this community needs a chair at decision-making tables.

Conclusions

This study examined parental expectations and perspectives as their SEN high school students transition out of an NCB ISP charter high school. This study also examined how parents thought independent charter high schools met their SEN children's transition needs. The 10 participants' perceptions and expectations led to several

significant findings and one unexpected finding. Based on those findings, the following conclusions were made:

1. SEN high school parents found NCB ISP charter high schools met their needs and represented the future of education. According to the framework for transition research written by Trainor et al., the layers within the framework show how close and immediate things are in the life of a person with a disability. The first layer, culture, is made up of family, groups, community and social capital. Within the NCB ISP charter high schools, parents found an educational model that provided community and became the model the world modeled after during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Parents who choose an NCB ISP charter school will be better supported and more successful in navigating the transition process out of high school. Parents perceived that NCB ISP charter high schools prepared their students for post-secondary success at higher rates than the traditional school setting. Parents pointed to individualized support based on high-interest topics for post-secondary success during the transition process. Parents expect a school of choice to provide individualized instruction and support.

3. Successful SEN transition programs at NCB ISP charter high schools emphasize career development and preparedness. A number of the parents who participated in this survey described this aspect of transition preparation as crucial for their students to be as independent as possible after they had graduated or aged out of high school.

4. Clear and collaborative communication with staff builds trust with parents builds trust. A trusting relationship between parents and school staff will lead to a positive experience during the special education transition process.

Implications for Action

The following are implications for actions in fulfilling parent perspectives and expectations of the special education transition process in an NCB ISP charter high school. In an NCB ISP charter high school, the following actions should be taken to meet parent views and expectations of the transition process.

Listed below are recommendations for action based on the data analysis, major and unexpected findings, and conclusions of this study. The recommendations are listed without regard to priority.

1. All NCB ISP charter high schools must have a dedicated special education transition staff and program that incorporates reporting compliance and accountability to stakeholders. The special education transition process is a specialty within special education. Some particular pieces of IDEA 2004 transition language are not currently reviewed in major credentialing programs (Kleinhammer-Tramill et al., 2003). All stakeholders benefit from clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

   a. A group of educational partners from the school's community will get together to talk about the goal of a transition program and the goals of the parents. There will be ongoing professional development training that builds on the previous topic explored for staff who have been hired for/ identified as transition school staff, and parents will center around the

listed priorities and concerns to ensure knowledge of the most current resources, trends, and case law.

b. This dedicated staff will build a transition program that is focused on individualized student employment preparation, school-based supports, and incorporate a community-based instruction component as a requirement.

c. NCB ISP charter high schools are to have a yearly parental survey wherein parents are asked to rate and provide feedback on the special education transition process. This will ensure that the programs continue to evolve in meeting the needs of its students and families.

d. All schools will create/implement metrics/measurements to report to the school board and stakeholders as it relates to student success.

2. The California Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services and private investors, will create a separate department exclusively to support parents of developmentally delayed SEN students.

a. This department will establish a decision-making panel representative of parents of developmentally delayed SEN in NCB ISP charter high schools.

b. This department is to have a phone center that parents can call for information and support. The department will staff and train experienced parents of developmentally delayed SEN in NCB ISP charter schools, to be the experts at the call center. Parents in the study explained that their best source of information is other parents who have had a similar experience.

       i.   The parents who staff the center are considered employees and will earn income as established by the CDE guidelines.

   c. This department is to establish a mentoring program to pair experienced parents of developmentally delayed SEN in NCB ISP charter schools with parents new to the virtual world or whose students are newly diagnosed with a developmental disability.

       i.   The parents who operate as mentors are contracted employees and will earn income as established by the CDE guidelines.

3. The California Department of Education is to establish a recruitment project of SEN parents into a special education teaching credential program. Part of this recruitment project will be incentivized by providing recruits with childcare and respite to ensure the completion of the study. Additionally, this recruitment effort will provide tuition reimbursement/student loan forgiveness after five years in the classroom.

4. The California Department of Education in collaboration with the SELPAs will mandate that schools start the special education transition conversations and parent education when the student is 14 years of age, at the minimum. By starting earlier, the parents will have an extended time frame to learn about the special education transition process.

   a. Part of that conversation will include the following:

       i.   Monthly parent webinars and workshops that are special education transition focused, with a new topic-specific approach each month.

ii.   School-based resources are easily accessible via a website, newsletter, or student information system.

iii.   Every annual IEP must review in detail the reason for special education transition services as a legally required part of IDEA and an invitation for the parents and the team to attend the monthly transition webinars to learn more about the special education transition process.

5.   The California Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, shall establish and maintain one central location of resource information for parents of developmentally delayed SEN students. This central location will be a website updated monthly and accessible to all. All parents requested one central location to gather current and relevant resource information available to their students and families.

Recommendations for Further Research

The recommendations for further research presented by this study and the parents' accounts are as follows.

1.   Conduct a comparison qualitative phenological research study and study whether or not parents hold the same beliefs in another California region regarding the special education transition programs and services offered at NCB ISP charter high schools.

2.   Conduct a quantitative research study to determine what kinds of professional development opportunities parents of SEN NCB ISP charter high schools would benefit from to feel confident in the special education transition process.

3. Conduct a comparison mixed method research study of NCB ISP charter high schools that start the special education transition services generally provided at the onset of 16 years of age at an earlier age, and determine if this impacted the perceptions and expectations of parents.

4. Conduct a mixed-method research study to see how special education and general education teachers collaborate to support families during the special education transition planning process in the NCB ISP charter high schools.

5. Conduct a longitudinal mixed method research study to determine if expectations for parents of SEN NCB ISP charter high schools match the expectations that the parents have themselves during their high school four-year plus duration.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

This research study looked at the history of special education and the laws enacted to ensure that students with disabilities had the same right to a free and appropriate public education. Specifically, it looked at the IDEA 2004 reauthorization and its requirement for preparing students for post-secondary success. It also examined the rise of non-classroom-based independent study charter high schools and the projected growth and its attractiveness to parents of SEN high school students who want a better educational experience for their children. The literature review provided context and highlighted the lack of literature on the perception and expectations of parents of SEN students with developmental disabilities enrolled in NCB ISP charter high schools.

The rich narratives parents shared during their one-on-one semi-structured interviews revealed recurring themes that shed light on their anticipations and actual experiences with the special education transition process as their children moved from the

117

NCB ISP charter high schools to life. As a result of this data analysis, major findings and recommendations were provided on ways to improve practices to support the perspectives and expectations of parents of students with special educational needs and developmental disabilities who were enrolled in NCB ISP charter high schools. These findings and recommendations concerned improving practices to support SEN students with developmental disabilities. It is hoped that this research will pave the way for innovative strategies and practices that will improve transition planning for SEN developmentally delayed students and their families at NCB ISP charter high schools and beyond.

As the mother of a nine-year-old with profound autism, I felt a duty to explore how high schools prepare developmentally delayed students for life. As a special education administrator at an NCB ISP charter school, I also wanted to learn how we can improve our delivery and model of transition services. Living in these two worlds simultaneously and not feeling out of place in both is difficult. Through this dissertation process, I often had to remind myself that living in both worlds had to be a strength at some point in my life and career. My thought on this was validated by the group of selfless women who offered up their precious free time to interview with me. I was told that it made a big difference to them to speak to someone who knew their life intimately and didn't just have theoretical knowledge of what they were going through. It was so easy to talk to them. I was humbled by the advice they gave me, the special education director trying to find a way to make the world a better place for my son.

I will end with this, writing this dissertation and having lived this experience has been the honor of a lifetime.

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Synthesis Matrix

	Special Education History	Independent Studies Charter Schools	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973)	ADA (1990)	IDEA (2004)	Parent Participation	Transition Planning	Purpose of the Individual Transition Plan	NCB Growth	Parent Perceptions of Transition Services	Framework for Research in Transition	Supports and Barriers	Problems Identified	Gaps in literature
Ajzen (1991)								x						
Barrat & Berliner (2009)		x				x			x				x	
Barclay (2017)					x		x	x			x			
Benz, et al. (2000)	x				x		x	x				x	x	
Bianco, et al. (2009)					x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
Blacher, Kraemer, & Howell (2010)					x	x	x			x			x	x
Boehm, Carter, & Taylor (2015)						x	x			x		x	x	
Boone (1992)					x	x	x			x		x	x	
Borup & Stevens (2016)		x			x	x			x			x	x	
Bracke & Corts (2012)					x					x		x	x	x
Burke (2013)					x					x		x	x	x
Butrymowicz & Mader (2019)	x				x			x		x		x	x	
CDE (2021)		x							x			x	x	x
Chenail (2012)											x			
Collins (1999)		x							x			x	x	x
Cummings, et al. (2000)	x				x		x	x		x		x	x	x
David & Hesla (2018)		x				x			x					
Defur, Todd-Allen & Getzel (2001)	x				x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Dennis, Williams, Giangreco, Cloninger (1993)	x				x		x							
De Los Santos & Kupczynski (2019)	x		x	x	x		x	x						
Digest of Education Statistics (2019)		x							x					
Disability Employment Statistics (2020)		x					x					x	x	x
Doren, Gau & Lindstrom (2012)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
Dragula (2009)	x				x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Everson & Mon (1987)	x	x			x		x	x		x		x	x	x
Fitzpatrick & Theoharis (2014)	x		x	x	x		x	x						
Francis, Regester, & Reed (2019)	x				x	x	x			x		x	x	x
Gartin & Murdick (2005)	x		x	x	x									
Goldberg (1989)	x	x												
Grigal & Neubert (2004)	x				x	x				x				
Hale et al, (2002)											x			
Haring et al, (1990)					x		x	x				x	x	x
Hetherington, et al, (2010)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	

Source														
Hirano & Rowe (2016)	x	x			x							x	x	
Hornby (2015)	x											x	x	x
IDEA (2004)					x									
Johnson (2005)			x		x		x	x				x		
Johnson et al, (2020)	x		x		x		x	x			x	x	x	x
Keyes (2000)				x						x		x	x	
Klein (2006)		x		x					x					
Kohler et al, (2003)					x		x	x			x	x	x	x
Kohler et al, (2016)					x		x	x			x	x	x	x
Lafer et al, (2021)	x				x							x	x	x
Landmark et al, (2010)					x		x	x				x	x	
Landmark et al, (2013)					x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
McGahee-Kovac (1995)					x		x							
Marman (2018)					x		x	x				x		
Martin et al, (1996)	x		x	x	x									
Martinez et al, (2012)					x	x	x	x			x			
Matuszak et al, (1996)					x		x	x						
Morningstar et al, (1995)					x	x	x	x			x			
Mueller et al, (2019)	x				x	x								
Negotiation Theory (2014)											x			
Newman (2005)					x	x					x			
McNair & Rusch (1990)					x	x	x	x			x			
Nor & Yasin (2018)											x			
Paul-Constatin (2012)					x	x					x		x	
Pillay & Brownlow (2017)					x		x	x					x	x
Pleet-Odle et al, (2016)						x					x			
Prince et al, (2013)					x		x	x						
Rodriguez et al, (2014)					x	x					x			
Russo & Morse (1999)	x		x											
Salembier & Furney (1997)					x	x	x	x			x			
Samuels (2019)				x			x	x			x			
Shapiro-Lacks (2021)				x										
Simon (2006)	x				x		x	x						
Suk et al, (2020)				x			x	x			x	x		
Tinkel (2017)					x		x	x					x	
Torre (2013)		x							x				x	
Trainor (2010)					x	x		x			x			
Trainor et al, (2020)											x			
Waters et al, (2014)		x							x					
Wehman et al, (1985)							x	x						
Will (1983)					x		x	x						
Wolfe & Harriott (1998)	x			x										

Appendix B:

Interview Questions

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Welcome! My goal is to get an accurate picture of the transition experience by finding out what parents expect and how they see it. Here are the questions from the pre-interview questionnaire and the questions from the one-on-one interview. There may be more follow-up questions for the participants to answer, so that everything is clear.

Interview Script
Interviewer: Yolanda Vazquez
Interview time planned: Approximately 30 minutes
Interview place: Zoom
Recording: Digital voice recorder
Written: Field and Observational Notes

Opening Comments: Do you understand, based on the email or flyer you received, that this study explores the perspectives, expectations, and lived experiences of parents of developmentally delayed high school students with special education needs (SEN) regarding their children's transition to and from independent studies charter high schools? I would want to express my gratitude and thank you for taking part in this study.
This interview's information will be used in my dissertation. For reasons of confidentiality, your identity will not be divulged, and all information will stay private. You may at any moment withdraw your consent to participate in this study, even though you have already signed the consent form. Before we begin, do you have any worries or questions?

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

We will be talking about your experience as a parent who has a high school student with disabilities participating in a Non-Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program in Central and Southern California. Please answer the following questions:

- What is the age of your high school student? _____

- What is the special education eligibility classification that allows your student to receive special education services from the school district? _____

- What age was your student first identified for special education services? _____

- Which Non Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program does your student attend? _____

One on One Interview Questions

1. What do you perceive is the role of the school as your student transitions from the middle school to Non Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program?

2. As a parent, what role do you play in helping your student succeed in the transition process?

3. When planning for your student's transition, what specific things do you do to help your student transition successfully?

4. How important is it for you and the Non Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program to work together during the transition process?

5. Describe the types of support from the Non Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program you have received during the transition process.

6. Describe any barriers you have encountered when working with the Non Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program during your student's transition process.

7. How can the Non Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program better serve families during the transition process?

8. What factors do you perceive as important to the transition process into and out of the independent studies charter high school?

9. What expectations do you have for your student's future?

10. How do you believe the Non Classroom Based Independent Study Charter High School transition program prepared your student for the future you expect for your student?

Closing Comments: I would like to thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. Before we conclude are there any additional comments or thoughts you would like to add to this discussion?

Appendix C:

IRB Approval

IRB Application Approved: Yolanda Vazquez

1 message

Institutional Review Board <my@umassglobal.edu>   Fri, Jan 6, 2023 at 9:41 AM
Reply-To: webmaster@umassglobal.edu
To: yvazquez@mail.umassglobal.edu
Cc: ddevore@umassglobal.edu, lgoodman@umassglobal.edu, irb@umassglobal.edu

Dear Yolanda Vazquez,

Congratulations! Your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the UMass Global Institutional Review Board. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If you need to modify your IRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at IRB.umassglobal.edu

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank You,

IRB
Academic Affairs
UMass Global
16355 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618
irb@umassglobal.edu
www.umassglobal.edu

This email is an automated notification. If you have questions please email us at irb@umassglobal.edu.

Appendix D:

Letter Sent to Special Education Leaders

Dear Special Education Leader,

My name is Yolanda Vazquez, and I am a doctoral candidate at UMass Global, formerly known as Brandman University, conducting research to learn about the lived experiences of parents of developmentally delayed special education needs (SEN) high school children regarding their children's transition out of independent studies charter high schools.

I am looking for parents of SEN HS students whose:

1. High School student has or had an active IEP in the last 5 years.

2. Enrolled in a Non-Classroom Based (NCB) Independent Study Program (ISP)

   public charter school in the last 5 years.

3. Received transition services for more than one year.

4. Recommended for participation by local SELPA or district special education

   director or transition teacher/administrator.

5. Willing to participate.

Are you able recommend three parents from your NCB ISP Charter High School that meet the above requirements, and who would be willing to participate? This research seeks to add to the body of literature on what is known about parental lived experiences as their SEN high school students transition out of high school.

This study involves two steps for the parents.

First Step:
I will send an electronic link via email that will include a consent form and an electronic survey. I will invite you to complete the 5-question survey within 1-2 days of receiving

it. The survey should take approximately 3 minutes to complete. I will receive responses electronically and want to ensure that names and responses will remain confidential and known only to me.

<u>Second Step:</u>

The second step of this study involves a 30–45-minute interview via Zoom at a time that is convenient for you. All information shared during the interview will remain confidential, and names will not be attached to any notes or the interview transcript. All information will be stored in locked files accessible only to me. Further, parents will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time. Finally, all records will be destroyed in three years.

Your support in identifying parents who might want to participate to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. An electronic copy of my final dissertation study will be made available to you and your special education transition program.

I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address yvazquez@email.umassglobal.edu

<div align="center">**Appendix E:**

Letter Sent to Parent Participants</div>

Good Morning/Afternoon (Name),

First, I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

The purpose of my research is to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed special education needs (SEN) high school children regarding their children's transition out of independent studies charter high schools. In addition, it is the purpose of this study to identify how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

 As a Special Education Transition Administrator at an independent studies charter school and as the parent of a SEN student, I am interested in learning about the experiences of parents whose SEN HS students have been through the special education transition process in independent studies charter schools. I am interested in learning how they perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process

This interview will take approximately 30- 45 minutes. There will be 11 questions to help learn more about your lived experience. There may be follow up questions for clarification as needed.

I have attached a consent form that you will need to complete prior to our interview:

- [Click here: Electronic Informed Consent & Audio Recording Release](#)

In addition, if you could kindly answer with the best day and time for an interview, that would be fantastic. I must conduct all necessary interviews by February 10, 2023.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to learning about your experience.

Gratefully,

Yolanda

Appendix F:

Field Test – Observer Feedback

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set based on experience and feedback. Gaining

valuable insight about interview skills and affect with the interview will support the

collection of data gathering when interviewing actual participant. As the interview

observer you should reflect on the questions below after the interview is finished. You

should provide independent feedback at the conclusion of the interview field test. As

observer you should take notes that will assist the interviewer to be successful in

improving their interview skills.

1. How long did the interview take? _____Did the time seem appropriate?
2. Did the interviewer communicate in a receptive, cordial, and encouraging

   manner?
3. Was the introduction of the interview friendly with the use of commonly

   understood language?
4. How did the interviewee feel during the interview?
5. Was the interviewer prepared and relaxed during the interview?
6. Did the interviewee understand the interview questions or did they require

   clarification?
7. What parts of the interview went smoothly and why?
8. What parts of the interview seem to struggle and why do you think that was the

   case?
9. Did the interviewer maintain objectivity and not interject value judgments or lead

   the interviewee?

10. Did the interviewer take opportunity to discuss or request artifacts that support the data gathered from the interview?

11. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you suggest changing it?

12. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

<p style="text-align:center">**Appendix G:**</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**Electronic Informed Consent & Audio Recording Release**</p>

INFORMATION ABOUT: What are the lived experiences of parents of developmentally delayed special education needs (SEN) high school children regarding their children's transition out of independent studies charter high schools?

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Yolanda Vazquez

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Yolanda Vazquez, a doctoral student from the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Global ("UMass Global"). The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the expectations of parents of developmentally delayed special education needs (SEN) high school children regarding their children's transition out of independent studies charter high schools. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

By participating in this phase of the study, I agree to participate in an individual interview. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be conducted electronically by the researcher using Zoom at the participant's discretion. Completion of the individual interviews will take place in February 2023. Questions in the interview will pertain to identifying how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a password-protected digital file that is available only to the researcher. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

b) I understand that the interview will be recorded digitally (audio). The recordings will be available only to the researcher. The recordings will be used to capture the interview

dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. A text transcript of the audio will be generated by Zoom and checked by the researcher for accuracy within 48 hours of the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings and transcripts will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding how parents perceived independent studies charter high school schools addressed the needs of their SEN children during the transition process . The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Yolanda Vazquez (researcher) at yvazquez@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at 323-559-4110; or Dr. Laurie Goodman (advisor) at lgoodman@umassglobal.edu

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMASS GLOBAL, at 16355 Laguna

Email

Short answer ▼

Short answer text

Required ⬤

By typing my full name in the box below, I acknowledge that I have received an electronic copy of this *
form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby
consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

Short answer text

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. Clicking on the "agree" button indicates that
you have read the informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree
to participate. If you do not wish to participate in this interview, you may decline participation by clicking on
the "disagree" button.

◯ AGREE: I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and "Bill of Rights." I have read the mat…

◯ DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this interview

Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.