



Motivation for Participation in Extracurricular School Clubs for Students with Severe Disabilities

Alicia Pence^a

^aMiddle Tennessee State University

Dr. Alicia Pence is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Elementary and Special Education. Dr. Pence received her Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests are in the areas of inclusive education and professional partnerships with families. Her current research investigates the beliefs and preparedness of early intervention service providers that are working with families of limited financial resources. Dr. Pence also supervises student teachers, while teaching courses related to professional partnerships, math, and literacy. Prior to her appointment at Middle Tennessee State University, Dr. Pence taught middle school special education in Kentucky for ten years where she served as a resource teacher, co-teacher, and Response to Intervention Math Specialist. Ultimately, Dr. Pence endeavors to prepare dynamic educators while maintaining strong advocacy efforts for individuals with disabilities.

The participation of students with severe disabilities in school-based extracurricular activities provides students with opportunities to experience a full inclusive school event. Typically, however, students with severe disabilities remain underrepresented in extracurricular involvement as compared to their peers without disabilities (Agran et al., 2017; Cadwallader, et al., 2003). Understanding factors influencing students' decisions to participate, or not to participate, in extracurricular activities is a concept frequently investigated in the existing literature for students without disabilities; however, participating in extracurricular school events is seldom explored for students with disabilities. Research highlights two factors when considering participation by students without disabilities in why these students select extracurricular school activities; these factors include individual and social-environmental motivational influences.

Individual Factors

Evidence indicates that individual (or psychological) factors contribute to a student's decision regarding whether or not to join an extracurricular activity. For example, Fredricks and Eccles (2002) discuss how that out of 41 students interacting in extracurricular programs focusing on athletics and/or art, students describe enjoyment as the most common reason to participate. These youth describe feelings of pleasure, fun, and satisfaction as rationales to initially interact

in extracurricular activities and then, refer to these same reasons to continue their participation. Additional fewer common reasons cited by youth to participate in extracurricular school activities included filling their free time, gaining useful skills for future careers, as well as a release from family/school pressures.

Weiss and Williams (2004) describe perceived competence as "...a child's belief about his or her own ability" (p. 228). Youth that join and continue participation in extracurricular activities oftentimes do so because they believe they are 'good at it.' Fredricks and Eccles (2002) describe adolescents who positively perceive their ability to succeed in an activity as more likely to continue investing in the same event across time because they felt they possessed the abilities to evidence success, thus increasing their self-confidence. Increased self-worth (i.e., self-esteem) also influences students' decisions to participate in activities. Bohnert, Martin, and Garber (2007), in examining the relationship between adolescent self-worth with activity involvement, discuss how adolescents with high levels of self-worth demonstrate more involvement in extracurricular activities during school as compared with students who did not report high levels of self-worth. Their findings suggest students with high levels of self-worth tend to expect more positive gains and rewards (e.g., contact with peers, awards, and honors) from participation, which is an underlying motivation for their initial decision to become involved in activities.

Social-Environmental Factors

Social-environmental factors affecting participation in extracurricular activities also include the roles of parents and friendships. Parental encouragement for involvement in extracurricular activities appears to increase youth participation (Fletcher, et al., 2000; Hueber & Mancini, 2003; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Through parental endorsement for participation in activities, parents send strong messages to their children about the value of involvement. Parents with high expectations for their child's success in extracurricular activities become more willing to provide access to such opportunities; thereby, parents positively impact their child's motivation to participate (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004; Hueber & Mancini, 2003). Parents' decisions and resulting behaviors (e.g., enrolling their child for music lessons, buying sporting equipment) influence children's interests, skills, and preferences for future activity choices. Additionally, parents who value community civic engagement and demonstrate high involvement with community activities provide their children with positive role models. In turn, parents' actions result in their children's enhanced interaction in extracurricular participation (Fletcher et al., 2000).

Friendship is another reason why youth choose to participate in extracurricular activities. Specifically, peer relationships may assume heightened importance during adolescence as compared with earlier years of development because of the redefining nature and complexity of peer networks (Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990). Opportunities to spend time with friends as well as make new ones indicate links to higher involvement of youth in extracurricular activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Hueber & Mancini, 2003). Also, continued involvement in an extracurricular activity demonstrates an increase in the likelihood youth will develop sustained relationships with peers participating in the activity (Patrick et al., 1999).

Fostering relationships with peers evidence an influence on students' decisions to participate in extracurricular activities. Youth who identify with club members as sharing common values and interests as their own are more likely to join for membership, compared to youth who perceive club members as representing different values and interests (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Patrick et al., 1999). Youth may also desire to expand their social networks. For instance, Patrick and colleagues (1999) assert youth perceive their involvement in activities as increasing the extent to which they could initiate contact with new peers, thus expanding their peer network. As youth create new peer relationships and nurture existing ones, they continuously improve social skills, concepts of well-being, and motivations to continue involvement in the activity. However, when youth are unable to build satisfying peer relationships within the activity, their motivation for involvement decreases as time spent with friends outside of the activity becomes more important (Lovitt, et al., 1999; Patrick et al., 1999). Youth participating in athletics indicate greater enjoyment and intrinsic motivation for continuing involvement in the activity when they have established personal friendships with other team members (Weiss & Smith, 2002; Weiss & Williams, 2004).

Little is known about the motivation for students with severe disabilities to participate in extracurricular activities. Limited evidence alludes to potential explanations, such as socialization with peers and skill acquisition; however, existing research for typically developing peers and youth with challenging behaviors suggest additional reasons like perceived competence, increased self-worth, and parental encouragement. There have been no empirical studies investigating motivation, extracurricular participation, and students with severe disabilities. Understanding what motivates students with severe disabilities to become, and stay, involved in extracurricular activities is critical for providing evidence as to the importance of these broad school experiences. To address these gaps in the literature, a study is warranted to explore the involvement of students with severe disabilities in extracurricular activities.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the motivating factors for school-aged students with severe disabilities in extracurricular school clubs. Of the variety of extracurricular activities available in most public schools (e.g., choir, sports), school clubs were selected because research has shown them to be the most frequented activity for students with severe disabilities (Kleinert, et al., 2007a). Additionally, school clubs typically have many opportunities for students to participate and are accessible to most students in the school. To address the gaps in the literature, this study examined what motivated students to initially join school clubs and, once enrolled, describe reasons for their continued participation.

Method

This qualitative investigation exploring the participation of students with severe disabilities in extracurricular school clubs sought to answer the research question, "What do stakeholders believe motivates students with severe disabilities to participate in school clubs?" To explore the phenomenon of motivation, in-depth interviews were conducted with parents of students with severe disabilities, school club sponsors, and special education teachers. Bandura's theory of

self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1991) was also used to inform the design of this study as well as to explain the construct of motivation. Therefore, for purposes of this research, motivation was defined as being a perspective given by an individual about the rationale, reasoning, and/or purpose for the involvement of a student with SD in a school club.

Three students with severe disabilities, along with their parents, school club sponsors, and special education teachers were purposefully selected to participate in this study. For this project, a student with a severe disability was defined as having extensive support needs (e.g., autism, intellectual disability) and meeting eligibility criteria for the state's alternative assessment. Extracurricular school clubs were defined broadly to include any student-interest organization that had regular scheduled meetings and were open to all students. Each student participated in one school club related to either spirit, leadership, or service.

Three students with severe disabilities were the focal participants in this study. These students had previously identified intellectual disabilities, with one of them also having a rare neurological disorder that impacted her fine and gross motor abilities. Students were receiving special education services in their local public secondary schools and ranged in ages from twelve to fifteen years. The time that students spent in school, typically involved spending most of the day in special education self-contained classrooms, while occasionally included with their peers without disabilities for elective courses (e.g., music, choir).

Data Collection and Analysis

Interview data were collected for three club sponsors, three special education teachers, and the parents of three students with disabilities. In total, fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted (i.e., two for each club sponsor, two for each special education teacher, and one for each parent). Each interview took approximately one-hour to complete, was audio recorded, and consisted of one to two specific questions related to student motivation for (a) joining the school club, and (b) continued participation in the club. Interview questions were developed based on the literature in the field and the researcher's experience facilitating extracurricular opportunities for students with severe disabilities. Interview questions were piloted with four non-participants of similar backgrounds as the research participants. Subsequently, minor revisions were made to the interview questions to provide greater clarity.

All interview data were analyzed using open-coding and constant comparative methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Individual interviews were coded, one at a time, by the researcher and a second coder (i.e., graduate student). Both coders met multiple times to discuss and compare codes. Codes were then defined and recorded in a master codebook, and interview data were analyzed again to apply the codes. These coding procedures were repeated for each set of interview data until coders agreed data reached saturation. Final codes were then merged into categories which led to emerging themes that were represented across all interview data (Miles, et al., 2014).

Measures were taken during the data collection and analysis stages to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of findings. First and second level member checking procedures were employed so

that participants could have many opportunities to provide feedback (e.g., clarify a response). Investigator triangulation allowed for multiple perspectives from several investigators (i.e., researcher, second coder, second researcher) throughout data analysis. For example, the researcher peer debriefed during weekly meetings with a second researcher to discuss emerging codes, categories, and themes. Lastly, a researcher identity journal was used consistently throughout the study. This journal provided a space for the researcher to challenge personal assumptions, perspectives, and biases.

Findings

Findings are organized by themes that emphasize commonalities across all interview data (Stake, 2006). The first two themes (i.e., who you know matters, what you know matters) relate to why students initially joined clubs. Although several examples of motives for students joining clubs (i.e., recruitment efforts by club members, prior experience participating in clubs, variety of extracurricular activities from which to choose, relationship with the club sponsor, adult advocated for the student) were identified, data describing the most prominent reason students with severe disabilities enrolled in extracurricular activities were used in order to engage in activities they enjoyed with their friends. The last theme (i.e., finding a niche) explains motivators that influenced students' ongoing participation in club activities. In general, students were motivated to continue their involvement because they liked being part of a group and they were continuously encouraged to participate; identified as less frequent motives included related to having a relationship with peers outside of club activities and learning new skills.

“Who” You Know...Matters

Ultimately, students were motivated to take part in club activities because they perceived these events as fun activities that they could experience with someone they knew. In each case, there was at least one club member (e.g., childhood friend, peer mentor, sibling) who assumed an integral part in motivating students to join the clubs. In fact, all the students with severe disabilities who became club members evidenced pre-existing relationships with individuals/club members with whom they already felt comfortable. Interestingly, two of the club members indicated relationships with typical students emphasizing providing mentoring or personal support as contrasted with reciprocated friendships. For example, one student with a severe disability that participated in a leadership club had a preexisting relationship with a club member. Adult participants strongly believed that the student's awareness of this relationship was a key motivator for her wanting to get involved in the club. The relationship between the student with a severe disability and the peer typically consisted of partaking in school activities together, like eating lunch at the same table or saying hi to each other in the hallway. This relationship did not, however, extend beyond the school day to other common social activities such as attending sleepovers or talking on the phone together. Irrespective of the parity in this relationship, the peer oftentimes spoke to the student about the particular club and would frequently invite the student to attend club activities.

In another case, adult participants agreed that the sibling of a student with a severe disability was a major reason for joining a spirit club. The student with severe disabilities sibling was heavily involved in the spirit club the year prior to the student showing an interest in joining. In

particular, the club sponsor believed that the student's sibling frequently encouraged him to join the club, and even "drug him along [to club activities]" before he was a club member. The student's mother also conveyed strong viewpoints about the profound role that the sibling had on her son's eagerness to join the club by stating, "He just knew right away that he wanted to be a part of it [the club]."

"What" You Know... Matters

Students' interests, experiences, and skills influenced the types of clubs they chose to join. Club selection had more to do with students' familiarity with certain activities and knowing how to participate in the activities than their belief that a club sounded intriguing or their desire to experience something new and different. Before deciding to join a club, students participated in leisure activities with their families. Due to these experiences, students selected to participate in club activities at school that closely resembled their family activities. In turn, membership in familiar clubs meant that students could capitalize on previously learned skills that closely aligned with what was soon becoming an area of leisure interest.

Family experiences helped to cultivate a sense of curiosity and personal interest for students with severe disabilities. These experiences also afforded students with opportunities to gain skills required for participation. In one student's case, her mother discussed how she had grown to enjoy cooking, a skill that was important for her participation in a service club. "I always try to include my daughter in everything [in the kitchen] ... I think the club drew her [in] because that is what we do all the time [at home]." Importantly, the student's engagement in family cooking helped her to acquire skills (e.g., making simple measurements, following a cooking recipe) that were utilized in various club activities such as preparing and serving food at a local community center.

Similarly, one student participated in the spirit club and had been raised in a family environment that valued participation in community activities (e.g., sports). In fact, the student spent the majority of his childhood attending his older sibling's basketball and football games. He was described as having a "good understanding" of the basic rules that govern common sporting events such as basketball. Through his involvement in sporting events with his family, he also mastered the skill of cheering (i.e., appropriate voice inflection, use of hand signals). The student's mother remarked on how the spirit club became a natural fit for her son, "He identifies with sports fandom because that's what we do all the time...since he was born. I think it's just so much a part of what we do as a family."

Finding a Niche

Students' reasons for wanting to join clubs revolved around their desire to participate in activities they enjoyed and, sometimes, with peers that they already knew. However, their motivation for continued membership stemmed from finding their own niche, a place where they fit-in with their peers, within the larger context of their school communities. Students continuously looked forward to going to club activities and "being with their friends." On the days that clubs met, students spoke often about their excitement about upcoming club activities; while at home, clubs

were an important topic of conversation around the evening dinner table. One club sponsor noted, “This is her [student with severe disability] club. This is where she comes on Wednesdays once a month...she doesn’t want to miss anything because she is having so much fun.” Students were also committed club members who took great pride in their affiliations with the club. They demonstrated their commitment by attending many of the club meetings and events as well as signing up for volunteer activities. As one club sponsor stated, “If she [student with severe disability] signs up for an activity, I know that she will show up for it.” Students were also perceived to have participated in more activities than many of their peers. For instance, one student with a severe disability won a selfie-stick for being one of her club’s highest sellers of raffle coupons. As students’ commitment to their clubs deepened, so did a newfound sense of pride for their schools. “I think he considers himself a Lion...he’s proud of that,” the spirit club sponsor commented as she discussed how the student wore blue and grey school colors almost daily.

After approximately two months of participating, students with severe disabilities became increasingly accustomed to the different types of club activities and routines. As students’ awareness for club rituals strengthened, so did their comfort as club participants. These growing positive experiences led to a greater sense of self-confidence in their own abilities to be contributing club members, fueling their motivation for continued involvement. The club sponsors took notice of the positive changes in students. The leadership club sponsor remarked on one student’s more recent involvement: “I think she feels more comfortable now...especially since she has gotten to know so many of the [club] members through the activities she came to...she doesn’t seem as shy anymore.” Interestingly, the student was later nominated and elected, by her peers, for an official officer role in the club.

Emotional support from students’ families and individuals in the school clubs, also enabled students to find their niche. Club sponsors oftentimes used phrases such as “considerate,” “tolerant of (student’s) idiosyncrasies,” “patient,” and “accepting” to describe club members without disabilities. Club sponsors were also continuously reinforcing the same expectations for everyone. One club sponsor spoke extensively about her personal belief in the importance of following the basic principle of “treat everyone the same” while participating in the club. Essentially, club sponsors strongly believed that each club member should be expected to attend meetings, participate in club events, and follow appropriate social norms (e.g., raising your hand before speaking, not touching other club members). In addition, encouragement from parents was paramount to students’ ongoing participation in club activities. Parents ultimately placed great value in their children being involved in school activities with their peers. As one parent remarked, “I like that she is working with peers [in the service club] and getting out of that special class all day...it’s good for her.” Encouragement from parents happened often. Another parent reinforced the importance of extracurricular activities by telling her child, “the best part of school is being involved and getting to know the people you go to school with.”

Discussion

Students with severe disabilities joined clubs for the same reasons as their peers without disabilities. Youth with and without disabilities simply wanted to have fun with their friends while participating in activities they enjoyed. This finding is supported in the existing literature on extracurricular activities (Bohnert, et al., 2007; Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Hueber & Mancini, 2003). Research for typically developing students also describes these youth sometimes indicate more sophisticated reasons for deciding to join an activity, such as a desire to expand their social network (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Hueber & Mancini, 2003). In contrast to this literature, students with severe disabilities associated joining a club with people with whom they had a pre-existing relationship (e.g., childhood friend, sibling) and might not have perceived the opportunities to make new friends as a potential motivator. Complicating the issue of expanding peer relationships is the disenfranchisement that is often experienced by students with severe disabilities. Students, who are spending large amounts of time in classrooms separate from their peers, have fewer opportunities to create or maintain social networks with peers that are outside the purview of the school day.

The current data substantiate the claim that having fun is an underlying motivator for joining activities, holding equal value for students with and without disabilities. However, students with severe disabilities might not be able to accurately assess their preference for certain activities because they have few experiences to compare an event, since past research has shown that students with intellectual disabilities have limited leisure time activities in which they partake (Buttimer & Tierney, 2005; McGuire & McDonnell, 2008; Orsmond, et al., 2004; Solish, et al., 2010). Moving forward, it will be imperative for students with disabilities to be provided with multiple opportunities to experience a wide range of extracurricular activities. Through these experiences, students will have a deeper understanding of what *having fun* feels like and be better positioned to make choices about the activities in which they choose to participate.

Once an extracurricular activity is selected, it is important students with severe disabilities feel motivated to continue their involvement. Parent encouragement remains a significant motivator for students with and without disabilities. These current data demonstrate the importance of parental encouragement for students with severe disabilities joining in extracurricular activities and support the existing research describing how parents' high expectations for students influence the motivation of students without disabilities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004; Hueber & Mancini, 2003). These results emphasize the important role for parents in supporting youth involvement. However, parents' support is especially significant for students with disabilities as many will require additional efforts to participate in activities. For instance, activity buses taking children home after school might not be equipped to transport students with complex support and physical needs. As a result, students with severe disabilities may need to rely on their parents for coordinating or providing transportation. Essentially, the influence of parent encouragement is far-reaching, providing important motivation for students as well as access to activities.

Students without disabilities continue involvement in extracurricular activities because of their positive self-concepts (i.e., high self-confidence, increased self-worth), as many of these youth

have a reputation for being hard workers and over achievers. As these youth maintain their involvement, their self-concepts continue to improve as they are reinforced by positive gains and benefits (e.g., improved athletic skills, increased time with peers) (Bohnert et al., 2007; Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Weiss & Williams, 2004). On the contrary, students with severe disabilities only begin to develop a positive self-concept across an extended period of time, and after their initial involvement. In part, this might result from the need for additional time and supports for students with severe disabilities to establish new club routines and interactions with peers. Club facilitators become integral in aiding the improvement of self-concept for students with severe disabilities. Through active, ongoing, collaboration with the special education teacher to understand effective strategies for supporting students with severe disabilities in club activities, facilitators become better positioned to create and sustain a supportive welcoming climate. As a result of these ongoing concerted efforts, students with severe disabilities will likely have greater intrinsic motivation, through improved self-concept, to continue their involvement.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study that should be considered when interpreting findings. Findings from interviews with adult participants (i.e., special education teachers, club sponsors, parents) are based on the perceptions of these individuals. Although these perceptions offer important insights into the underlying motives for why students were involved in clubs, they might not be an accurate representation of views held by students themselves. For instance, the findings related to leisure preferences for students with severe disabilities consistently demonstrate the mismatch between students' actual preferences when compared to their parents' preferences for them (Buttimer & Tierney, 2005). In addition, others involved in school club activities, like peers or paraprofessionals, might represent other insights not captured in this study.

Implications for Research and Practice

In order to provide an inclusive and holistic life experience for both students with and without severe disabilities, continued research examining motives for students with severe disabilities involvement in extracurricular activities is beneficial. For example, comparing factors associated with joining and participating in extracurricular programs for students with and without disabilities would support school personnel and club facilitator's efforts. Significantly, it will be imperative for future studies to include the authentic youth voice of students with disabilities. Innovative methods for capturing students' voices through artwork, collective stories, and interviews indicate potential for learning more about this topic.

Findings from this study also indicate critical implications for practice. Foremost, it is important for special education teachers to use evaluative tools beyond preference assessments to determine leisure preferences for students with severe disabilities. For instance, affording students with opportunities to explore and try-out various extracurricular activities will be essential for helping students to establish preferred interests. Secondly, it will be essential for club sponsors to maintain standards which cultivate an inclusive-shared space that consistently promotes a culture of high expectations, acceptance, and openness for every club member. To

help nurture club members positive self-concepts, club sponsors encourage members to share their unique qualities in the safety of the club environment where club members' differences are seen as benefits. Ultimately, a collaborative and supportive approach involving all membership in the extracurricular activity (e.g., special education teachers, club sponsors, parents, peers) becomes a necessary component to full inclusion in extracurricular opportunities for students with severe disabilities.

References

- Agran, M., Wojcik, A., Cain, I., Thoma, C., Achola, E., Austin, K. M., Nixon, C. & Tamura, R. (2017). Participation of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in extracurricular activities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 52(1), 3-12.
- Bandura, A. (1991). Self-regulation of motivation through anticipatory and self-regulatory mechanisms. In R. A. Dienstbier (Ed.), *Perspectives on motivation: Nebraska symposium on motivation* (pp. 69-164). Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.
- Bohnert, A. M., Martin, N. C., & Garber, J. (2007). Predicting adolescents' organized activity involvement: The role of maternal depression history, family relationship quality, and adolescent cognitions. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 17, 221-244.
- Buttimer, J., & Tierney, E. (2005). Patterns of leisure participation among adolescents with a mild intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, 9(1), 25-42.
- Cadwallader, T. W., Wagner, M., & Garza, N. (2003). Participation in extracurricular activities. In M. Wagner, T. W. Cadwallader, & C. Marder (with R. Cameto, D. Cardoso, N. Garza, P. Levine, & L. Newman), *Life outside the classroom for youth with disabilities. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. Retrieved from http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2003_04-2/nlts2_report_2003_04-2_complete.pdf
- Fletcher, A. C., Elder, G. H., & Mekos, D. (2000). Parental influences on adolescent involvement in community activities. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10(1), 29-48.
- Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2002). Children's competence and value beliefs from childhood through adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, 38, 519-533.
- Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2004). Parental influences on youth involvement in sports. In M. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 145-164). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Huebner, A. J., & Mancini, J. A. (2003). Shaping structured out-of-school time use among youth: The effects of self, family, and friend systems. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32, 453-463.
- Kleinert, H. L., Miracle, S., & Sheppard-Jones, K. (2007a). Including students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities in school extracurricular and community recreation activities. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 45, 46-55.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lovitt, T. C., Plavins, M., & Cushing, S. (1999). What do pupils with disabilities have to say about their experience in high school? *Remedial and Special Education*, 20, 67-76.
- Mahoney, J. L., & Stattin, H. (2000). Leisure activities and adolescent antisocial behavior: The role of structure and social context. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23, 113-127.
- McGuire, J., & McDonnell, J. (2008). Relationships between recreation and levels of self-determination for adolescents and young adults with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 31(3), 154-163.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Orsmond, G. I., Krauss, M. W., & Seltzer, M. M. (2004). Peer relationships and social and recreational activities among adolescents and adults with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 34, 245-256.

- Patrick, H., Ryan, A. M., Alfeld-Liro, C., Fredricks, J. A., Huda, L. Z., & Eccles, J. S. (1999). Adolescents' commitment to developing talent: The role of peers in continuing motivation for sports and the arts. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 28, 741-763.
- Savin-Williams, R. C., & Berndt, T. J. (1990). Friendship and peer relations. In S. S. Feldman & G. R. Elliot (Eds.), *At the threshold* (pp. 277-307). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Solish, A., Perry, A., & Minnes, P. (2010). Participation of children with and without disabilities in social, recreational and leisure activities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 23, 226-236.
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Weiss, M. R., & Smith, A. L. (2002). Friendship quality in youth sport: Relationship to age, gender, and motivation variables. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 24, 420-437.
- Weiss, M. R., & Williams, L. (2004). The why of youth sport involvement: A developmental perspective on motivational processes. In M. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 223-268). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.