



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
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Charlotte, NC

Empowering Adults with Down Syndrome at GiGi's Playhouse: A Curriculum Promoting Employment Through Classroom Learning and Community Involvement

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Project Description

Description: This doctoral capstone project was designed with an aim to increase employability and independence of adults with Down syndrome. The main goal of this project was to design a job and career-focused curriculum and enhance the adult programs at GiGi's Playhouse in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Areas of Study: Program and Policy Development | Advocacy

Topic: Work and Industry

Population: Adults with Down syndrome, adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Site: GiGi's Playhouse | Charlotte, North Carolina

Needs Assessment

- Community need for career program for individuals with DS
- Barriers to employment for individuals with IDD identified
- Interviews and assessments with local businesses that support inclusive employment and with parents of adults with Down syndrome
- OT responsibility to consider work-related issues for people of all abilities (WFOT, 2012).

Literature Review

- The DS population has a low employment rate of approximately 11% (Kumin & Schoenbrodt, 2016).
- 36% of employed adults with DS work in community settings while half of these individuals work less than 10 hours per week (Loveall et al., 2022).
- Adults with DS typically work community jobs for fewer hours per week and get paid less than those with other intellectual disabilities (Bush & Tassé, 2017).

Deliverables

- 1: Assessment and Interview Outcomes
- 2: Skills Inventory and Employment Guidelines
- 3: Adult Career Curriculum
- 4: Certificates of Completion: Continuing Education Courses
- 5: Outcome Measures for Program Curriculum
- 6: Training Modules for Volunteers at GiGi's Playhouse
- 7: Case Studies: Inclusive Employment
- 8: Spreadsheet: Local Organizations Supporting Inclusive Hiring
- 9: Career Preparation Community Flyer
- 10: Employer Resources: DS 101 & Inclusive Employment
- 11: Sensory Strategies to Promote Positive Learning Outcomes

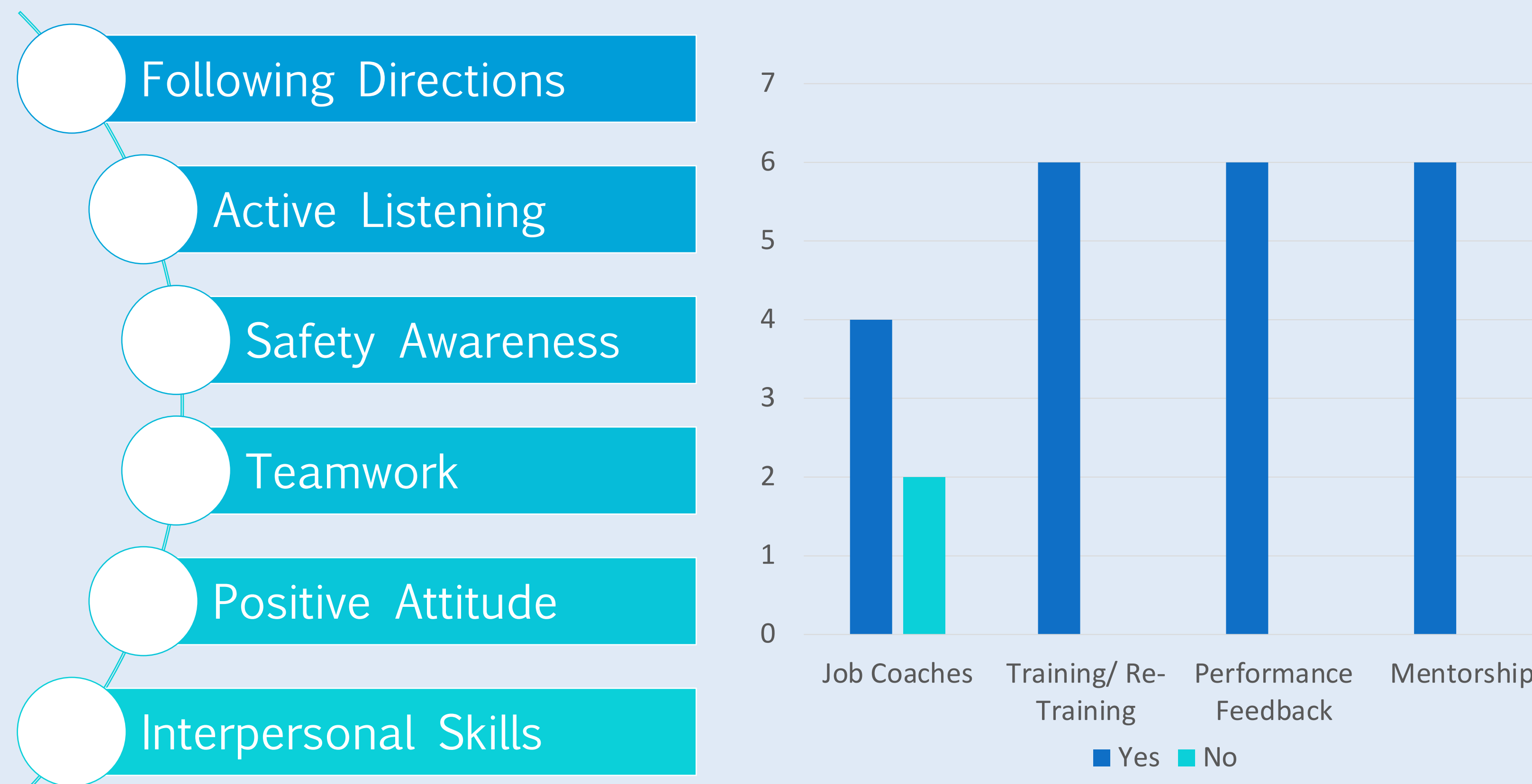
Process

Gathering Data:
Assessments and
Interviews

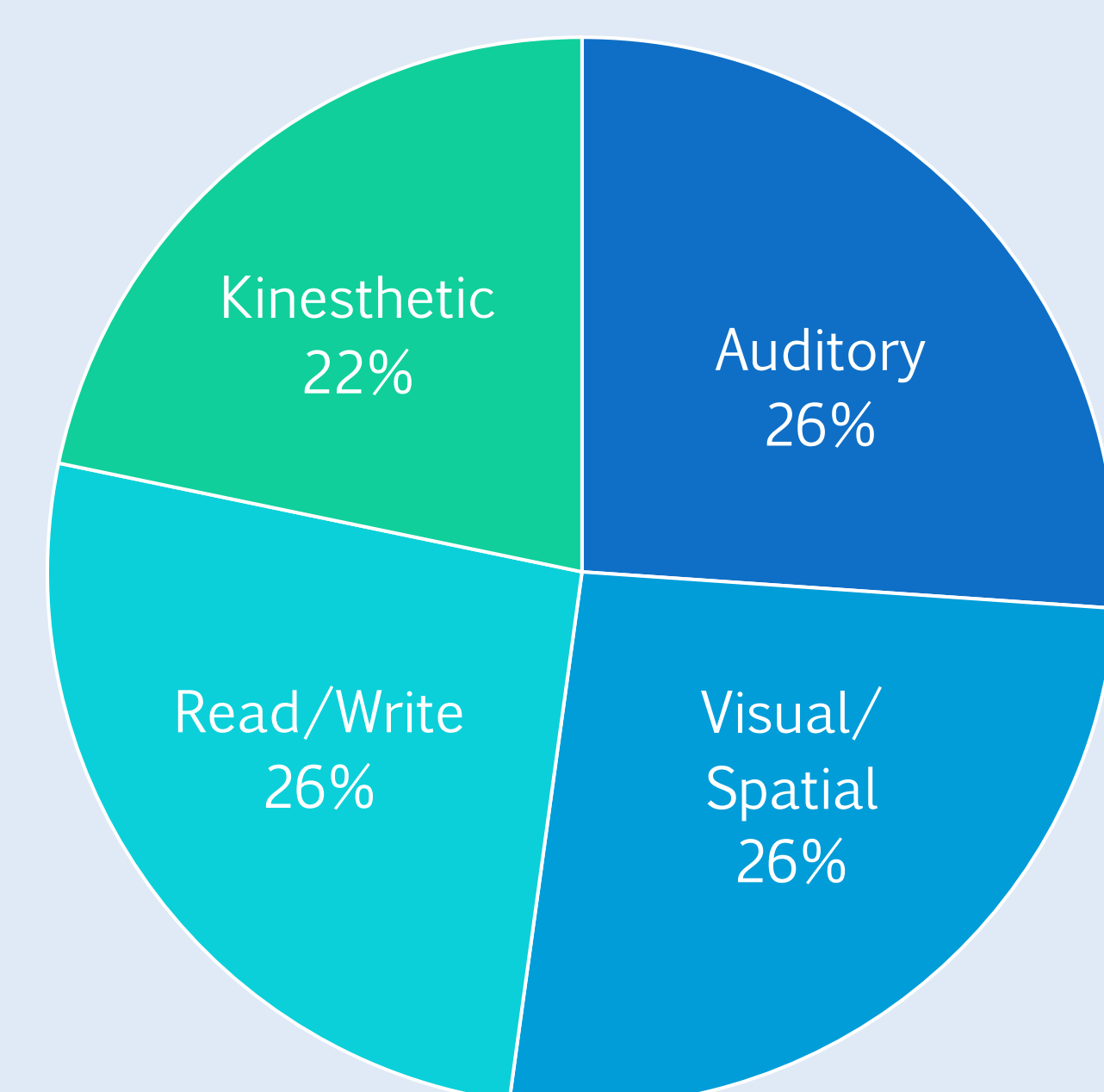
Analyzing and
Comparing
Results: Skills
Inventory

Program Design
and
Development

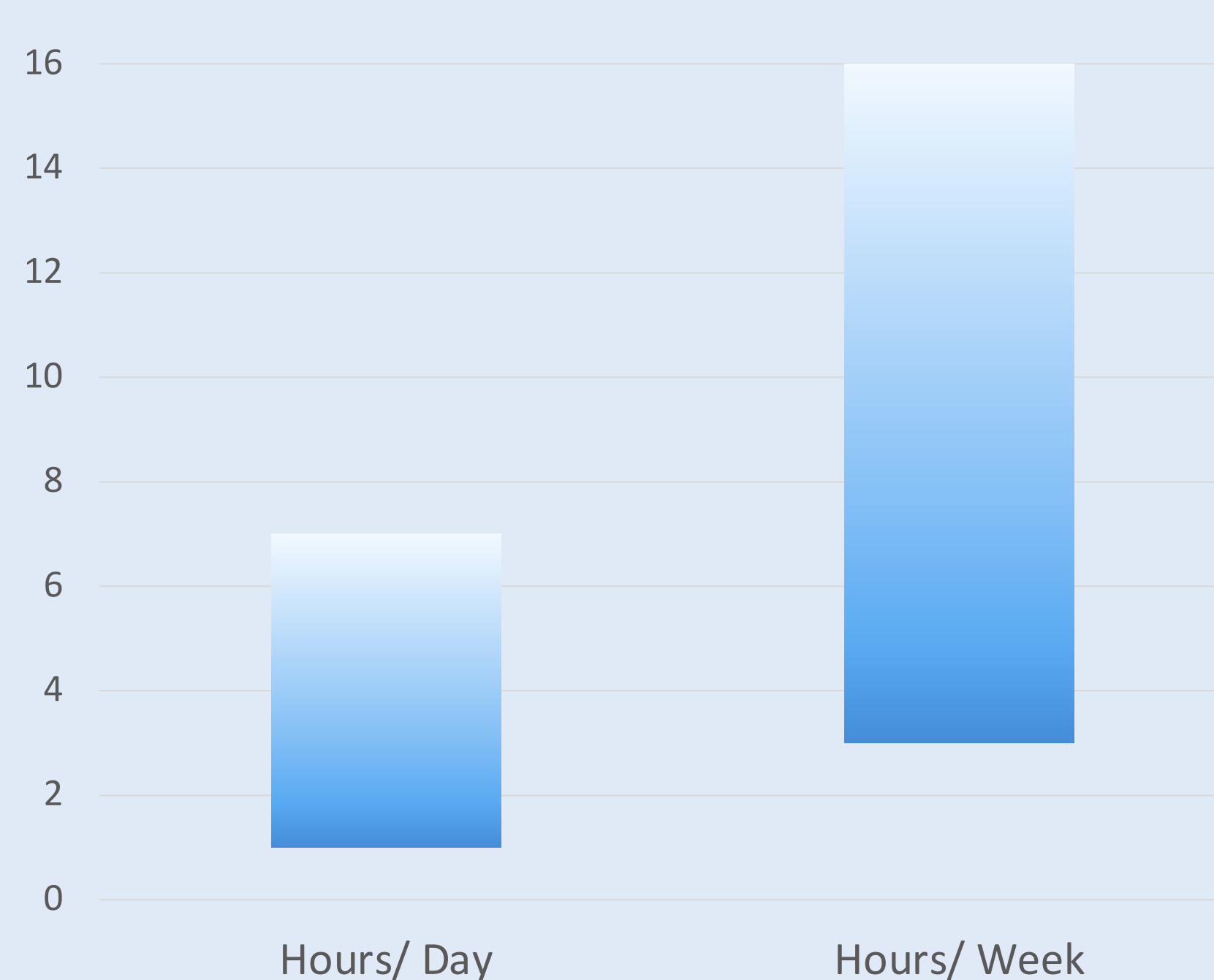
Data and Results



Teaching Styles



Work Hours



Project Completion and Outcomes

Outcome Measure 1: Program and Policy Development: Creation of a job skills program for the purpose of increasing employability of individuals with DS

Outcome Measure 2: Work and Industry: Presentation of the essential vocational skills needed for sustained employment to the community and inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with DS

Christ | Scholarship | Service

- Christ:** Proverbs 18:15
- Scholarship:** Literature, research, education opportunities,
- Service:** Serving adults with DS through community outreach and education

Future Implications

OT Impact

- Program includes occupational therapy principles and was designed to fit various learning needs to ensure positive learning outcomes. The training modules and activity instructions guide program volunteers and leads how to tailor and grade the activities for all abilities and ensure activities are meaningful.

Career Impact

- Doctoral capstone experience contributed to personal and professional development. Leadership, networking, and program development experiences will contribute to my success as a clinician and future educator.

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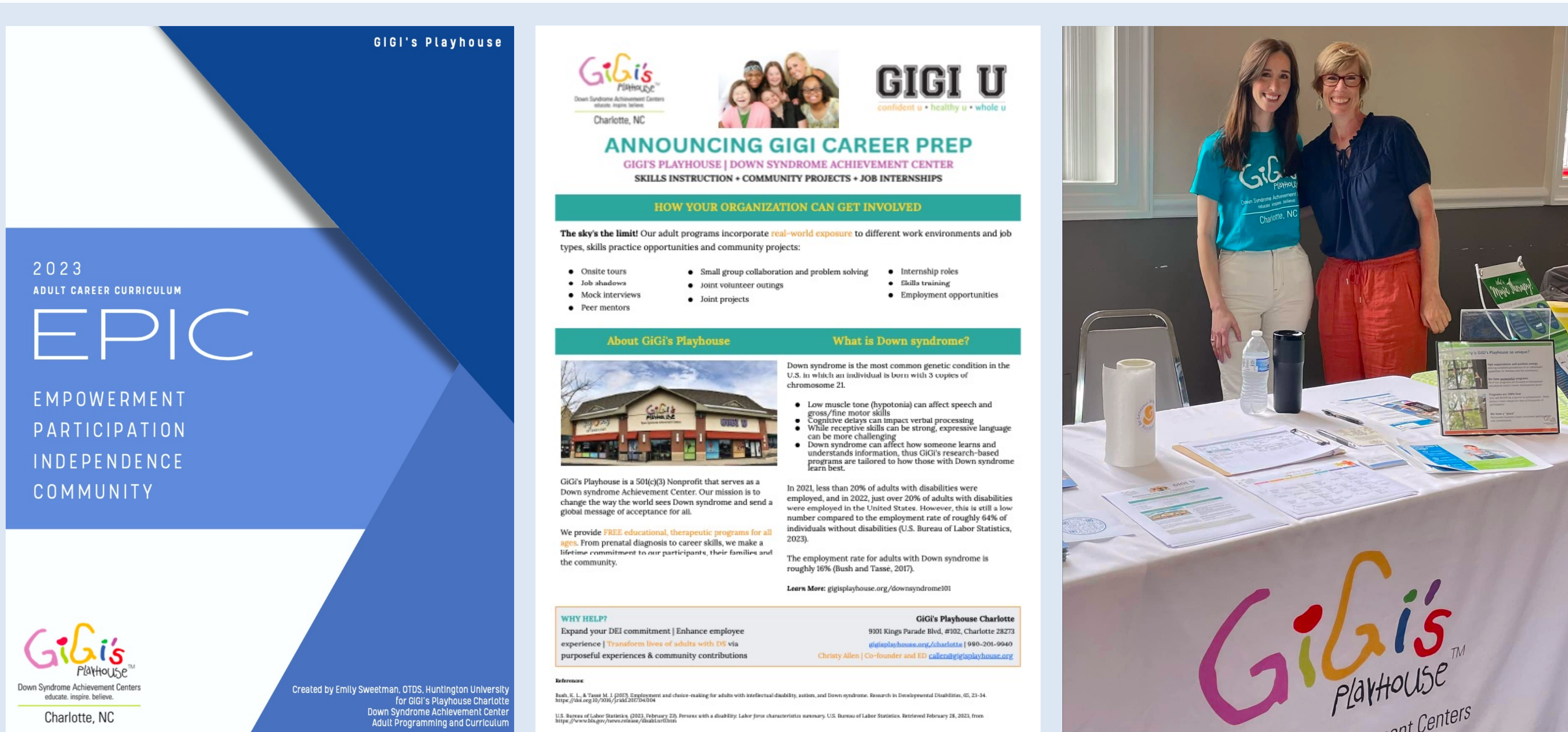
Key References *Full reference list available upon request*

Bush, K. L., & Tassé, M. J. (2017). Employment and choice-making for adults with intellectual disability, autism, and down syndrome. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 65, 23- 34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2017.04.004>

Kumin, L., & Schoenbrodt, L. (2016) Employment in adults with down syndrome in the United States: Results from a national survey. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 29(4), 330-345. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12182>

Loveall, A. J., Channell, M. M., Burke, M. M., & Rodgers, D. B. (2022). Post-high school transition outcomes for young adults with down syndrome. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 127(2), 135-148. <https://doi.org/10.1352/1944-7558-127.2.135>

WFOT (2012). *Vocational Rehabilitation* [Position statement]. <https://wfot.org/resources/vocational-rehabilitation>



Mission and Vision Statements

Project Mission Statement: To assess and enhance a career program at GiGi's Playhouse in Charlotte, NC to improve employability and independence of adults with Down syndrome.

Project Vision Statement: To advocate for more employment opportunities and promote an inclusive workplace culture for individuals with disabilities.

