

**"It's Our Normal:" A Follow-Up Study on Adaptations Families Make for Older Children  
with Developmental Disabilities**

**Researchers:**

Christine Maul, Ph.D., Associate Professor  
Department of Communicative Sciences and Deaf Studies, Fresno State

Jennifer Ortiz, B.A., Communicative Sciences and Deaf Studies

**Background:** This qualitative study was a follow-up to a study originally conducted by Maul and Singer (2009). Eight families of older children with developmental disability (DD) were interviewed during the course of the present study. Six of the families who participated in the original study were located, and they agreed to be interviewed for this follow-up study. Two of the families were new families who did not participate in the original study.

**Methods:** The focus of this study was on the ways in which families adapt to new challenges that might face them as their children grow older. A grounded theory approach was employed to discover which common themes may have persisted through the years, and whether or not new themes emerged.

**Results:** Results indicated that there were numerous pieces of data to support previously established themes. There were also new themes that were discovered, such as the parents' concern for the safety of their children and the diminished level of service available to their older children, compared to the level of services that were available when their children were younger.