

Parent Involvement and Engagement with Families from Diverse Communities

Current Research Literature, 2007 to 2013

Purpose

PACER Center is Minnesota's Parent Training and Information Center federally-funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). PACER has been a collaborative partner with the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts, as well as the Minnesota Department of Education in a 5-year State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Parent Involvement Project. The goal of the project is to improve educational results for children and youth with disabilities from diverse communities, particularly Hispanic and Latino, African American, Hmong and Southeast Asian, and Somali families. In addition to PACER's multicultural specialists conducting needs assessment activities with school staff and parents, the project team searched current research to inform the development of strategies, activities, and materials to increase school staff's capacity to meaningfully engage with families in their children's education.

Scope and methodology

The search was not exhaustive and focused on research conducted in the last six years that included information specific to diverse families. Search terms included "parent involvement," "parent engagement," "family involvement," and "family engagement." We noted a shift over time to more widespread use of "engagement" rather than "involvement," and "family" or "family and community," rather than "parent." In many cases, the terms appeared to be used interchangeably with no meaningful distinction. While not used consistently, more recent literature purposefully delineates a difference between the terms, with "involvement" describing school-generated activities that parents are invited to participate in, and "engagement" as the ways in which schools and parents work as more equal partners in the child's education. The Minnesota Department of Education defines family engagement as "the collaboration of families, schools and communities as active partners in the shared responsibilities of ensuring each student's success in lifelong learning and development."

The first section includes parent involvement and engagement studies that are multicultural in scope. This

is followed by culturally-specific research studies. We found limited research specific to parents from diverse communities whose children have a disability. An asterisk next to the entry indicates a disability focus.

We have attempted to include a representative list of the research literature, particularly those studies which address the interests and needs of educators, and have excerpted pertinent descriptive information from the abstracts or the studies themselves. Inclusion on the list is not an endorsement of the particular research study or its conclusions.

“As parents, we are not familiar with parent engagement or school involvement. Also, most of us, we do not attend many school activities because of many reasons; it could be we don't have as much freedom as many mainstream families do; it could be it is difficult for us to stay engaged because of the language. However, we value education and we try to help our kids at home, or pay extra money for a tutor.

~ A Somali parent”

Current Multicultural Research Literature

Noel, A., Stark, P., and Redford J. (2013). *Parent and Family Involvement in Education, from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2012*, (NCES 2013-028), National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.

Contains statistics on family involvement in students' education (grades K-12) during the 2011-2012 school year as reported by parents. Demographic information, such as poverty status, parent education, language spoken at home, and school characteristics, are presented.

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Positive Development of Minority Children (2013). Social Policy Report from Society for Research in Child Development, Vol. 27 (2).

Highlights research on the positive development of minority children and supplements it with emerging research that illustrates how multiple factors at the individual, family, and community levels might provide opportunities for children's positive development across domains and developmental periods. Research focuses on areas of strength in minority children, youth, and families across groups and developmental periods.

The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Teachers, Parents and the Economy. (2011) MetLife Inc. New York, NY.

The survey documents—from the perspective of teachers, parents and students—how schools and parents can and do effectively collaborate to promote student learning, and how factors such as parent engagement and the economy are associated with teacher job satisfaction.

Highlighted findings include:

- A three-fold increase in the number of students who report that their parents visit their school at least one time a month – up from 16 percent in 1988 to 46 percent today.
- Since 1987, there have been significant declines in the proportion of teachers and parents reporting that most or many parents take too little interest in their children's education, fail to motivate their children so they want to learn, or leave their children alone too much after school.
- Parents of students attending schools with high parent engagement are more likely than those with low engagement to rate their child's teachers as excellent or good on a range of measures, including being responsive to their requests for info (98 percent vs. 57 percent), contacting them if their child is having academic or social problems (97 percent vs. 50 percent), providing guidance on what they can do to help their child succeed (96 percent vs. 41 percent), and being flexible to meet with them at different times of day or locations (91 percent vs. 47 percent).

*Trainor, A. (2010). *Diverse approaches to parent advocacy during special education home-school interactions: Identification and use of cultural and social capital.* Remedial and Special Education, 31(1), 34-47.

This article examines a study on parent advocacy during special education home-school interactions and describes a variety of roles that parents and families assume when

advocating for their children with disabilities. The findings suggest that parents' socioeconomic, educational, and linguistic backgrounds factor strongly into their decisions about how to advocate for appropriate special education services. Parents in the study often expressed dissatisfaction with the reception that they had received in schools, and their testimonies may help school-based support teams and those responsible for service provision think about appropriate ways of engaging families and encouraging collaboration.

*Olivos, E. M., Gallagher, R. J., & Aguilar, J. (2010). *Fostering collaboration with culturally and linguistically diverse families of children with moderate to severe disabilities.* Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation, 20(1), 28-40.

This article presents recommendations for ways in which educators can engage culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents of children with disabilities as partners in their children's education. Because tensions occasionally exist between CLD families and schools, the authors find that schools often involve families to the extent mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), but do not fully engage them as collaborators in the decisions about the appropriate special education services for their children. Educators working to build positive, respectful partnerships with families from a variety of backgrounds will find this article useful.

Blagg, Deborah. (2009). *The Parental Involvement Puzzle,* Harvard Graduate School of Education. www.gse.harvard.edu/news-impact/2009/10/the-parental-involvement-puzzle/

This is a report on a study done by Nancy Hill and Diana Tyson of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, looking at the impact of parental involvement on variables such as behavior, achievement, and occupational and educational goals for middle and high school students.

Turney, Kristin & Kao, Grace. (2009). *Barriers to School Involvement: Are Immigrant Parents Disadvantaged?* Journal of Educational Research, 102 (4).

Parental involvement at school offers unique opportunities for parents, and this school-based involvement has important implications for children's academic and behavioral outcomes. The authors used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001) to examine race and immigrant differences in barriers to parental involvement at school. Minority immigrant parents, compared with native-born parents, reported more barriers to participation and were subsequently less likely to be involved at school.

Among immigrant parents, time spent in the United States and English language ability were positively associated with involvement, but these associations differed by race. Barriers to involvement serve as another source of disadvantage for immigrant parents and their children.

*Dorris, Amanda. (2007). *Parental Engagement: A Comparison of School District and Parent Center Perceptions*, Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative Research Brief (Waltham, MA).

Survey results compare the perceptions of current practices held by school districts with those held by Parent Training and Information Centers in their communities, examine barriers to parent involvement, and share successful strategies used to engage families of students with disabilities. Includes survey results (with survey questions) and descriptions of barriers to engagement by parent centers and school districts.

Bowen, Natasha K. and Lee, Jung-Sook Lee. (2006). *Parent Involvement, Cultural Capital, and the Achievement Gap Among Elementary School Children*, American Educational Research Journal, 43(2).

This study examined the level and impact of five types of parent involvement on elementary school children's academic achievement by race or ethnicity, poverty, and parent educational attainment. Consistent with the theory, parents with different demographic characteristics exhibited different types of involvement, and the types of involvement exhibited by parents from dominant groups had the strongest association with achievement. However, contrary to theoretical expectations, members of dominant and non-dominant groups benefited similarly from certain types of involvement and differently from others. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Selected Earlier Multicultural Research:

Family School Partnership Lab Published Papers:

- *Parent's motivations for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of theoretical model of parental involvement*. Journal of Educational Psychology, 99, 532-544. (2007) Green, C.L., Walker, M.M.T., Hoover-Dempsey, K.V. & Sandler, H.
- *Why Do Parents Get Involved? Research Findings and Implications*, Elementary School Journal, 106(2) (2005)
- *Parent's Motivation for Involvement in their Child's Education*. (2005)

Southwest Educational Development Lab (2003). *Diversity: Family and Community Connections with Schools*.

A synthesis of research on family and community

involvement with schools that relates directly to issues of diversity. Includes discussion of 64 research studies related to the role that families can play in improving academic achievement among minority, immigrant, migrant, English language learners (ELL), culturally diverse, and economically disadvantaged students.

Garcia Coll, C., Akiba, D., Palacio, N., Bailey, B., Silver, R. etc. (2002). *Parental Involvement in Children's Education: Lessons from three immigrant groups*. Parenting: Science and Practice, 2(3), 303-324.

This study explores immigrant group and individual differences within groups in parental reports of involvement in their children's education as a function of both sociodemographic and cultural variables. The findings suggest both similarities and differences in the processes of parental involvement in children's education across three quite different immigrant groups.

“My children go to two different schools. At one school, all the adults greet me. Waiting time is short and when I have to wait longer they ask if I need water or coffee. My other child's school does not do that. I have to go to the main office and they do not even say “hi.” It has been difficult for me to go to the school. I wish they say “hello” to me and help me find who I need to meet, rather than just ignore me when I go in. I would have to stand there alone.

~ A Hmong parent

Latino Literature Review

Hoover-Dempsey, C.L., Sandler, H. and Walker, J.M.T. (2011). *Latino Parents' Motivations for Involvement in Their Children's Schooling: An Exploratory Study*. The Elementary School Journal, 11(3), 409-429.

This study examines the ability of a theoretical model of the parental involvement process to predict Latino parents' involvement in their children's schooling. Results are discussed with reference to research on Latino parents' involvement in children's schooling, as well as suggestions for school practices that may encourage parents' involvement.

Hill, Nancy E. & Torres, Kathryn. (2010). *Negotiating*

the American Dream: The Paradox of Aspirations and Achievement among Latino Students and Engagement between Their Families and Schools. Journal of Social Issues, 66(1), 95-112.

Understanding the paradox between the aspirations of Latino families and their academic outcomes is the focus of this article. The experiences of Latino children in U.S. schools, the incongruence between the cultural worldviews of U.S. schools and Latino families, and the interactions and expectations for partnerships between families and schools are integrated and applied to the question of why Latino students are not reaching their potential, despite goals for achievement, and significant parental sacrifice and investment.

Civil, Marta. (2010). *Involving Latino and Latina Parents in their Children's Mathematics Education.* Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Research Brief.

This piece focuses on linking research and practice in the area of Latino parental involvement in mathematics education as a way to help address the "Latino education crisis." The brief offers recommendations that provide opportunities for parents and school personnel to engage in conversations centered on mathematics teaching and learning.

Fact Sheet: Latino Students and U.S. High Schools. (2009). Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Provides statistics on graduation and dropout rates for this group; the level of segregation and teacher quality in the schools with high Latino population; and some promising trends in the area of college preparatory testing. *Includes a small section on higher rate of restrictive setting placements for Latinos in special education. www.all4ed.org

Ortiz Lopez, Cynthia & Donovan, Loretta. (2009). *Involving Latino Parents with Mathematics through Family Math Nights: A Review of the Literature.* Journal of Latinos and Education, 8(3), 219-230.

Grounded in J. L. Epstein's (2001) types of involvement, this literature review investigates family-school partnerships that empower Latino families in the area of mathematics education, promote student achievement in mathematics, impact parent-child involvement in mathematics at home, and support Family Math Nights. Family Math Nights are school-sponsored events in which parents, teachers, and students interact around a mathematics curriculum. Effective partnerships between schools and Latino families consider language, individual differences, and parental concerns, and view parents as partners in the education process. Implications of the review will inform math educators and school administrators.

*Hughes, Marie Tejero, Martinez Valle-Riestra, Diana, & Arguelles, Maria Elena. (2008). *The Voices of Latino Families Raising Children with Special Needs.* Journal of Latinos and Education, 7(3), 241-257.

This study examined the perceptions of 16 Latino families regarding their views and experiences raising a child with special needs and their involvement in their child's schooling. Families talked about treating their child like a "normal child" regardless of the child's unique needs, but they also stated that their level of involvement was different compared to raising their other children. All families shared their expectations for their child, with most wanting their child to reach a level of independence. Overall, families were satisfied with the special education program; however, some families were concerned with the progress their child was making.

Zarate, Maria Estela. (2007). *Understanding Latino Parental Involvement in Education: Perceptions, Expectations, and Recommendations,* Los Angeles, CA: The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute.

In conducting this study, the Institute examined: Latino parents' perceptions of their participation in the education of their children; schools' and teachers' expectations of parental involvement; programmatic initiatives addressing parental involvement in education; and Latino students' perceptions of the role of parental involvement in their education. The findings of this study indicated that divergent definitions and perceptions of parental involvement in education exist among the different stakeholders. Moreover, the findings revealed that schools lack clear organizational goals and objectives on how best to involve parents in the schools. School administrators, school board members, corporate school partners, policymakers, outreach programs, parent leaders, and teachers will discover the findings of the study useful as they seek to increase parental involvement in schools.

Osterling, Jorge P. & Garza, Armandina. (2004). *Strengthening Latino Parental Involvement Forming Community-Based Organizations/School Partnership,* NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 2:1, 270-284.

Latino community-based organizations (CBOs) represent a natural, yet largely untapped, source of leadership and opportunities to encourage and strengthen Latino parental involvement in American schools. The authors challenge the assumption that Latino parents' lower levels of formal parental involvement indicate a lack of interest in their children's education and argue that traditional methods of involving parents in their children's education are not always effective. Their preliminary findings indicate that parental

policy changes and practices are needed to promote genuine collaboration between Latino parents and the schools that their children attend rather than imposing agendas for an “appropriate” one-size-fits-all involvement.

“My children’s school has changed a lot through time. When they started it was difficult for me because they didn’t speak Spanish and I didn’t speak English. Now they have more staff interpreters and cultural liaisons. They have English and computer classes which helped me a lot because when I just got here I couldn’t talk to anybody and was shy to use the little English that I had. The support I got from these programs was tremendous. And for me the school was the key to move ahead in life.”

- A Latino parent

African American Research Literature

Williams, Terrinieka & Sánchez, Bernadette. (2012).

Parental Involvement (and Uninvolvement) at an Inner-City High School, *Urban Education*, 47(3), 625-652.

This study sought to understand the perceptions of parental involvement and parental uninvolvement at a predominantly African American inner-city high school. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 15 parents and 10 staff at an inner-city public high school. Five major themes emerged regarding the meanings of parental involvement at this school: participation at school, being there outside of school, communication, achieve and believe, and village keepers. Results showed that some participants’ perceptions of parental involvement were consistent with earlier understandings of parental involvement. Results also highlighted areas in which earlier models may not address the context of inner-city schools.

Jacobbe, Tim, Ross, Dorene D., and Hensberry, Karina K. R. (2012). *The Effects of a Family Math Night on Preservice Teachers’ Perceptions of Parental Involvement*, by *Urban Education*, 47(6), 1160-1182.

This study examined the impact of a Family Math Night on preservice teachers’ perceptions of low-income parents and their engagement in their children’s education.

Participants were enrolled in an elementary mathematics methods course; one section served as the treatment group. Participants were required to aid in the planning and implementation of a Family Math Night held at a school serving a predominantly African American high-poverty community. Results of a pre- and post-survey analysis indicate that the treatment group had more positive perceptions of parental involvement overall. These results were not sustained one year later, suggesting important implications for mathematics teacher educators.

Lopez, Raquel. (2011). *The Impact of Involvement of African American Parents on Students’ Academic Achievement*. *The Journal of Multiculturalism in Education*, 7.

The factors related to parental involvement and the academic achievement of African American students were examined. The main bodies of literature related to parental involvement and African American students’ academic achievement embraces parental involvement and student achievement, African American parental involvement, contrasting ethnical perspectives, community involvement, and success in parental involvement. Research suggests that Asian and European American students’ parents are more involved in school related activities than parents of African American students. In contrast, African American students are more likely to face barriers such as low socioeconomic status, unemployed parents, and parents working more than one job, among other societal issues. Nonetheless, there are examples of success in parental involvement amongst African American students in which a combination of community involvement and leadership appeared to be the solution in overcoming economic and societal disparities.

Abdul-Adil, Jaleel K., & Farmer Jr., Alvin David. (2006). *The Inner-City African American Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools: Getting Beyond Urban Legends of Apathy*. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 21(1), 1-12.

Contemporary parental involvement research has produced some promising findings, but parental involvement efforts with inner-city African Americans are currently limited by problems of research methodology and program foci. Certain research studies do, however, demonstrate that inner-city African American parents have responded positively to parental involvement programs that emphasize themes of empowerment, outreach, and indigenous resources. Based on these three promising themes, the authors propose practical strategies for increasing inner-city African American parental involvement as a means of increasing parental participation and school success among inner-city African American families.

Jackson, Kara & Remillard, Janine. (2005). *Rethinking Parent Involvement: African American Mothers Construct Their Roles in the Mathematics Education of Their Children*, *School Community Journal*, 15(1), 51-73.

This article presents initial findings from a study that examined how African American mothers from a low-income neighborhood conceptualized their roles in their children's mathematics learning. Based on interviews and observations focusing on 10 mothers' involvement in their children's education, the study offers a framework that expands typical characterizations of parent involvement. This framework privileges practices that are both traditionally visible and invisible to the school, and highlights how parents act as "intellectual resources" in their children's education (Civil, Guevara, & Alleksaht-Snider, 2002). Findings offer evidence that traditional understandings of parent involvement may overlook ways that low-income parents deliberately involve themselves in their children's education. Findings also identify challenges that these parents face in relation to their children's mathematics education. Some of these challenges were due in part to stereotypes held by practitioners about the families they serve in low-income urban schools.

The school staff people at my child's school are very open to feedback and suggestions AND they act upon our suggestions.

~ An African American parent

Somali Research Literature

Kruizenga, T.M. (2010). *Teaching Somali Children: What Perceived Challenges Do Somali Children Face?* *International Journal of Education*, 1(1).

This article reviews the literature on the experience of Somali immigrant children and their lives at school. A semi-structured, open interview provides insights into the historical and personal backgrounds of Somali children. Data explores issues of language acquisition, religion, and familial connections in relation to their schooling experience. Suggestions are offered to educators for improving the educational experience for Somali children and families.

Kia-Keating, Maryam, & Ellis, B. Heidi. (2007). *Belonging and Connection to School in Resettlement: Young Refugees, School Belonging, and Psychosocial*

Adjustment. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 12(1), 29-43. <http://ccp.sagepub.com/content/12/1/29.abstract>

This study examines school belonging and psychosocial adjustment among a sample of 76 Somali adolescents resettled in the United States. A greater sense of school belonging was associated with lower depression and higher self-efficacy, regardless of the level of past exposure to adversities.

Nderu, Evangeline. (2005). *Somali Families and Parent Involvement in Schools*, University of Minnesota, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs Reporter. <http://www.cura.umn.edu/publications/catalog/reporter-35-2-0>

This article presents the results of a study conducted in the Twin Cities area that attempted to understand the perceptions Somali parents had about their children's schooling and their own roles in their children's education. The purpose of the study was to determine whether differing perceptions among teachers and Somali parents about Somali parent involvement are rooted in cultural differences. The author concludes that many recent Somali immigrants do not fully understand the English language or educational norms in the United States, and that cultural differences can easily create misunderstandings about the degree of parental support exhibited by Somali parents. The article offers recommendations for both parents and schools to bridge cultural differences, including using existing infrastructure in the Somali community to help parents become more actively involved, conducting workshops for parents to disseminate information and help reduce misperceptions, providing informal settings for parents and teachers to meet to discuss children's progress, and recognizing and utilizing parents' skills by involving parents in decisions regarding students' education.

*Greeson, C. J., Veach, P. M., & LeRoy, B. S. (2001). *A qualitative investigation of Somali immigrant perceptions of disability: Implications for genetic counseling*. *Journal of Genetic Counseling*, 10, 359-378. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1016625103697#page-1>

This study examined the potential utility of genetic counseling services for Somali immigrants by investigating their perceptions of disability. Five Somali women participated in structured interviews that assessed their perceptions of the nature, causes, and impact of disability, and care for persons with disabilities. Using a Heideggerian Hermeneutics qualitative method of analysis, six major themes emerged: disability refers to both physical and

mental conditions, with mental disability generally thought of first and as more severe; in Somalia, the family cares for disabled family members, treating them as if they were “normal”; there are major cultural differences between Somalia and the United States in how persons with disabilities are treated; caring for a person with a disability is stressful for the family; Allah determines whether or not a child will be disabled, and this cannot be predicted or altered; and family is the primary life focus, and therefore, risk of disability does not affect reproductive decisions. These themes suggest that traditional genetic counseling may have limited utility for Somali immigrants. This study recommends several modifications to traditional genetic counseling for Somali patients that also may be useful for populations that have similar beliefs.

“My son’s school teacher gives us an opportunity to come to the school either before or after school so we can meet with her. It is a very good way to communicate with me since I don’t know how to use the computer and reading English is difficult.”

~ A Somali parent

“My daughter’s school has the same arrangements; however I must take two buses to get to the school and often there are other parents waiting. I may not get any time to have my questions answered that day.”

~ A Somali parent

Hmong Research Literature

Yang, Monica M. & Kathleen A. (2010). *Exploring the Dynamics of Hmong Parental Involvement in Education*, Nybrotten, Dept. of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire.

This study explores Hmong parental beliefs regarding education and identifies ways in which siblings, kin, and school aides assist in Hmong education. It also explains obstacles and hardships that these families face in the U.S. educational system.

Bigelow, Martha et al. (2008). *Special Issue on Hmong Newcomers to Saint Paul Public Schools: Supporting Hmong Newcomer’s Academic and Social Transition to Elementary School*, *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*, 3, 1-22.

When elementary aged Hmong children were resettled in St. Paul Public Schools after the closing of the Wat Tham Krabok refugee camp in Thailand, their families largely enrolled them in either a transitional language center or a language academy program. This study reports on the perceptions teachers and educational assistants had about how well these programs met the needs of this unique population of newcomers. Findings show that the transitional language centers were better able to ease the adjustment to school for the Hmong newcomers because of the safe, bilingual environment they created.

Adler, Susan M. (2007). *Hmong Home-school Relations: Hmong Parents and Professionals Speak Out*. *Asian American Education: Acculturation, Literacy Development, and Learning*. pp. 77-104.

This qualitative study in a Midwestern U.S. urban school district assesses home-school relations from the perspectives of Hmong parents and Hmong educational professionals.

Ngo, B., Bigelow, M. & Wahlstrom, K.L. (2007-2008). *The Transition of Wat Tham Krabok Hmong Children to Saint Paul Public Schools: Perspectives of Teachers, Principals, and Hmong Parents*, *Hmong Studies Journal*, 8, 1-35.

In 2004, with the closing of the last Hmong refugee camp, Wat Tham Krabok, the latest group of Hmong refugees resettled to the U.S. To facilitate the language transition of approximately 1,000 school-aged newcomer Hmong children, the Saint Paul Public Schools developed and established transitional language centers. This article examines the experiences and perspectives of principals, teachers, and educational assistants who worked with newcomer Hmong children in the newly-established transitional language centers and well-established language academy programs. It also elucidates the experiences of Hmong parents with the schools that served their children. The research offers insights into the important work of the transitional language centers as well as the need to better support newcomer Hmong parents.

Adler, Susan M. (2004). *Home-School Relations and the Construction of Racial and Ethnic Identity of Hmong Elementary Students*. *School Community Journal*, 14(2) 57-75.

This qualitative study examines how Hmong parents and professional staff at one elementary school perceive home-

school relations and how they construct racial and ethnic identities of Hmong children. The study was conducted at a Midwestern elementary school where the Hmong student population is over 50 percent and where five Hmong staff members are employed (three teachers and two aide/translators). Findings indicate differing opinions among parents and school staff. Conflicts with work schedules and language barriers are common constraints to parent involvement in the classrooms. Hmong parents are deeply concerned about their children's education and expect the school staff to be accountable for student achievement. Like some other Asian American groups, parent participation is seen as a division of labor with complimentary responsibilities between home and school.

Ngo, B. (2010). *Doing 'Diversity' at Dynamic High: Problems and Possibilities of Multicultural Education in Practice*. *Education and Urban Society*, 42(2), 473-495.

This article examines how students, teachers, and staff understood and addressed cultural differences at an urban, public high school in the United States. The research reveals that the school's multicultural practices contradictorily sustained and exacerbated problems and made teachers resistant to multicultural education. It also shows ways in which pedagogy that focuses on tensions and conflicts that arise from cultural differences offer important possibilities for multicultural education.

*Hatmaker et al. (2010). *Commentary: The Hmong and Their Perceptions About Physical Disabilities: An Overview and Review of Selected Literature*. *Hmong Studies Journal*, 11, pp 1-16.

The Hmong are one of the fastest growing populations in Central California. Hmong refugee families arrived in Fresno in the late 1970s facing a variety of challenges regarding their traditional health beliefs and the customs of mainstream Western biomedicine. Differing and sometimes conflicting perceptions about physical disabilities have resulted in painful misunderstandings between Hmong families and Western health care providers. The aim of this paper is to present a review of some of the Hmong health belief literature concerning physical disabilities in children. It also includes commentaries from those who work with the Hmong families of physically disabled children.

*Baker, Dian L. et al. (2010). *Developing Culturally Responsive Approaches with Southeast Asian American Families Experiencing Developmental Disabilities*. *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*, 126, 146-150.

Southeast Asian American families are underrepresented among recipients of special education and social services

for people with developmental disabilities. This study uses a community-based participatory research approach to examine Hmong and Mien families' perceptions of developmental disabilities, and understand barriers to and facilitators of service provision among families experiencing developmental disabilities. Described is a case study of a successful attempt to engage marginalized and underserved communities to understand their needs to improve access and services for persons with developmental disabilities. A predominant theme was the perception that reliance on governmental support services is not appropriate. Common barriers identified included lack of accurate information, language difficulties, lack of trust, and limited outreach. These perceptions and barriers, combined with limited access to services, interfere with community acceptance and use of available support services. Despite these barriers, participants indicated that with education, outreach, and culturally responsive support, families would likely accept services.

*Vang, Halee and Manuel T. Barr. (2004). *Hmong Parents' Perceptions on Instructional Strategies for Educating Their Children with Disabilities*. *Hmong Studies Journal*, 5, 20 pages.

This article reports how Hmong parents were involved in an educational research study to examine their views on a structured reading instruction protocol developed in English and then translated into Hmong for Hmong children identified with disabilities. Six Hmong female parents were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. The responses from the interviews revealed that Hmong parents of disabled children are not only very concerned about seeking education equity, but that they need more communication and knowledge about their children's education. The research methodology revealed a process to engage Hmong parents in discussing their perceptions about schools, and their relationships with schools and classroom instruction.

*Wathum-Ocama, John. (2002). *Hmong Immigrants' Views on the Education of Their Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children*. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 147, 3, 44-53.

The study investigated the attitudes, perceptions, and feelings of parents of seven Hmong families that included a deaf or hard of hearing child attending a U.S. public school. The findings indicate that many Hmong parents value education and want to be involved in their deaf or hard of hearing child's learning. However, the parents in the study did not know how to become involved, and needed the support of the school. Most of the parents reported limited knowledge of the policies, procedures, practices, and organizational structures of special education, and all cited

communication barriers as impediments to involvement in their child's education. Most of the parents expressed strong satisfaction with their child's educational program. The findings suggest several areas for further research.

Collignon, F.F., Men, M. & Tan, S. (2001). *Finding ways in: Community based perspective on Southeast Asian family involvement with schools in New England state*. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 6(1&2), 27-44.

This research examines barriers to participation of Southeast Asian families in their children's education. Data from community focus groups, and writings from a career ladder project and a summer academy indicated that Southeast Asians had insufficient knowledge of the American educational system. There were also low expectations for Southeast Asians and insufficient attention to issues of language proficiency and cultural competency in service provision.

“ I am not sure about school expectations and the level of support for such engagement. I feel the school needs to provide encouragement and support for parent involvement. ”

- A Hmong parent