

## **Southeast Asian Adolescents' Perceptions of Immigrant Parenting Practices\***

**By**

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### **Abstract**

In their countries of origin, immigrant youth are unlikely to question the age-old child-rearing practices of their elders; however, the parenting of adolescents in an adopted country can become a major source of family conflict. The purpose of this study is to investigate how Southeast Asian adolescents growing up in the United States perceive their parents' practices in six areas of parenting responsibility identified by the National Extension Parent Education Model: caring for self, understanding, guiding, nurturing, motivating, and advocating. Four focus groups were conducted with 37 Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese) adolescent boys and girls between the ages of 14 to 19 years to ascertain how they perceived parenting behaviors. An analytic induction procedure was used to analyze transcripts from in-depth focus group discussions. Results indicate wide divergence between the idealized practices of the model, the parents' actual practices, and adolescents' perceptions of parenting practices. The study has important implications for the growing number of immigrant families from diverse cultures who are parenting adolescents in unfamiliar cultural contexts and for the educators, human service providers, and others who work with them.

### **Introduction**

Most adults who are parents learned what their culture and their extended families expected of them by directly experiencing the daily practices of their own parents as children and by observing the practices of other parents in their nearby environment as they reached parenting age. There is an unbroken web of adult-child relationships and expectations passed down from one generation to the next with minor modifications and individual interpretations. Typically, the expectations of parents are reinforced by

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strongly held cultural beliefs and values, often embedded in religious practices (Bankston, 1997), and reinforced by other adults in the extended family, the village, and the larger society. Within this paradigm, children have little say, explicit consciousness, or comparative examples outside their own cultural milieu about how parents behave or how they go about the business of being parents. If older children have opinions about the quality or style of their parents' practices or comparisons with other parents it is generally expected that they will keep them to themselves. The idea that adolescents might have very different perceptions of how parents should parent or express a critical perspective on their own parents' practices would be considered an unacceptable breach of the natural order in most societies around the globe.

With the large scale migration of refugee and immigrant families from developing nations to developed nations during the past several decades, millions of parents find themselves in unfamiliar environments where what they know about parenting and what the host culture expects of them as parents is often at odds. The filial piety beliefs embedded in Asian cultures, for example, include the expectation that children will revere their elders, obey adults without question, keep their opinions to themselves, and spend their lives trying to live up to the high expectations of parents (Nguyen & Williams, 1989). In many Southeast Asian cultures the idea of adolescence, where youth gradually become more independent from parents, is viewed as an individualistic Western construct that is anathema to the group centered values and hierarchical family structures that parents brought with them to their new homes. Adolescents from immigrant families often find the traditional values and the parenting practices that accompany them to be highly restrictive and not in keeping with their efforts to fit into the expectations of their peers and their own changing view of themselves (Xiong, 2004). Herein lies the intergenerational conflict that is highly characteristic of immigrant families, most noticeable in the culturally diverse Southeast Asian immigrant populations that were among the largest newcomer groups in the United States during the past two decades (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 1995).

Research on parenting practices of European Americans and some ethnic groups has been documented in the literature (Amato & Folwer, 2002; Baumrind, 1968, 1978; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

However, research on the parenting practices of Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese immigrants is still at an early stage. Although there are a few studies, they are often limited to one Southeast Asian group or they employ culturally specific forced-choice measures developed for middle class European-American families (Dinh et al. 1994; DuongTran et al. 1996; Herz & Gullone, 1999). Studies based on the broad expectations of all four major Southeast Asian ethnic groups concerning parenting roles and responsibilities or the perception of their performance by adolescents have not been conducted. The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine how Southeast Asian adolescents perceive their parents' parental behaviors based on the six parenting categories developed by a team of researchers for the National Extension Parent Education Model (NEPEM) (Goddard et al. 1994). By examining adolescent perceptions of parenting it is possible to learn why so many immigrant families across ethnic groups and historical periods report difficulties with intergenerational relationships and why, in some cases, the breakdown in parent-adolescent relationships results in depression among parents and risky behaviors among their children.

### **National Extension Parent Education Model**

The National Extension Parent Education Model (NEPEM) (Table 1) was developed by a group of Cooperative Extension Specialists and researchers (Goddard et al., 1994) after extensive review of the parenting literature and parenting programs in hopes of identifying the most basic and reoccurring categories of parental behaviors amidst the cacophony of differing definitions used in research and parenting programs. Their primary goal was to develop a common vocabulary of parenting behaviors (categories) and practices to help educators structure and evaluate programs for families using a life span perspective. The model identifies six "parenting categories" with each category including several recommended "priority practices." The categories include caring for self, understanding, guiding, nurturing, motivating, and advocating. The priority practices refer to "recommended" methods that parents can use as they seek to fulfill their responsibilities in each parenting category (Smith et al. 1994). NEPEM was not originally intended to guide research programs; however, its emphasis on global parenting categories is suitable as a heuristic framework to explore parenting practices from the multiple

perspectives of Southeast Asian youth. In the present study, we examine the diverse practices of parents with adolescents in each category to develop a baseline understanding of parenting practices, and then we examine how adolescents perceive these practices. The NEPEM categories and practices were used to structure data collection and to analyze its meanings from the perspective of the youth who experience it directly.

## **Methods**

### *Participants*

A purposive sample (Table 1 in Appendix) was chosen to recruit adolescents from diverse backgrounds within the four Southeast Asian communities. The sample consisted of 37 Southeast Asian adolescents (17 males and 20 females), between the ages of 14 to 20 years, with 68% between the ages of 15 and 19. Of the 37 adolescents, there were 10 Cambodian, 7 Hmong, 10 Lao, and 10 Vietnamese. 21 out of 37 adolescents were considered second-generation (e.g., either born in the U.S. or brought to the U.S. during early childhood). All of the participants were from the upper Midwest where there is a high concentration of Southeast Asian people.

### *Procedures*

We recruited eight individuals to serve as focus group facilitators. Criteria for selection of facilitators included: a) employment in a position where they worked directly with Southeast Asian families (i.e., youth, parent, or family service); 2) bilingual fluency in English and the language of their native tongue; and 3) willingness to participate in an extensive facilitators' training. Two facilitators from each of the four cultural groups were selected: one male and one female, and one older and one younger. A diverse mixture of familiarity with family issues through differing employment, language facility, gender, and age increased the comfort level of participants and the quality of group interactions.

Prior to the focus groups, facilitators were trained for two days on informant recruiting strategies, the focus group approach, interviewing protocols and techniques, logistical issues, and evaluating the focus group questions (Krueger, 1994). Facilitators then helped to recruit adolescents from their own cultural groups for the focus groups. Participants were offered a small honorarium and refreshments as

incentives for participating in the focus group discussions. All focus groups took place in public places on days, evenings, or weekends during the summer and fall of 1995.

### *The Focus Groups*

The original research questions were designed for a larger curriculum development project entitled *Helping Youth Succeed: Bicultural Parenting for Southeast Asian Families* (Detzner, Xiong, & Eliason, 1999) and were based on the parenting categories of the NEPEM (Smith et al., 1994). The questions were co-constructed with extensive feedback from the focus group facilitators. The four focus group discussions started with global open-ended questions about parent-adolescent issues and ended with specific discussions of the NEPEM parenting categories and parenting practices. The focus group discussions were typically between two and three hours long. The discussions were audio recorded and later transcribed and translated verbatim from the Hmong, Khmer, Lao, and Vietnamese languages to English by the facilitators. In many cases the discussions took place simultaneously in both English and the native language. For this paper, we examine focus group discussions derived from two specific questions for each NEPEM parenting category. For every parenting category, we asked, for example, “What does a parent in your community who cares for themselves do?” or “What does a parent who understands do?” After sufficient discussion, we then asked participants to discuss the second question that asked: “What does a parent in your community who does not care for self do?” or “What does a parent who does not understand do?” Follow-up and probe questions were asked to elicit more detailed and nuanced discussions. This protocol was used for each of the six NEPEM parenting categories in each of the four focus groups.

### *Analysis*

An analytic induction procedure (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992; Manning, 1982; Rettig et al., 1996) was used to analyze transcripts from each focus group discussion based on the conceptual framework of the NEPEM (Smith et al., 1994). Analytic induction is an analysis procedure that examines qualitative data in order to develop “universal statements” that contain essential features of a phenomenon of interest, in this case, adolescent perceptions of parenting practices. In the present study, we examined

all of the parenting practices that were discussed by adolescents for each parenting category. We believe analytic induction matches well with the purpose of our study because it starts with a pre-existing theoretical viewpoint that guides the research. In this study, we began with the NEPEM parenting categories as the pre-existing theoretical model to guide the process of examining adolescent perceptions of essential parenting practices across four distinct but related cultural groups.

The first step of the analysis involved creating several Microsoft Word tables, one for each parenting category. Each table contained four columns, representing the four cultural groups. Second, two coders independently read the transcripts of each parenting category line by line and wrote down short descriptive or explanatory statements about each line onto the appropriate tables and columns. Third, the parenting practices were refined and reduced by combining similarly coded short statements with the same or related meanings for each cultural group. Next, printouts of all the completed coded tables were reviewed for consistency and discrepancies. Discrepancies in the coding of parenting practices between the independent coders, the first and third authors, were discussed and recoded after an agreement was reached between the two coders.

## **Results**

The analysis is presented below according to the parenting categories outlined in the original model. The results from several of the parenting categories are closely related, especially the nurture and understand categories and the motivate and advocate categories. Instead of combining them into a single theme to be reported in one combined category we chose to present them separately under the parenting category where they appeared originally, despite their similarities and overlap. Our initial analysis suggests that the NEPEM categories are fluid and highly interrelated rather than distinct and discrete, probably inevitable in any classification of parental roles and responsibilities. The quotations used to illustrate the adolescents' perceptions of their parents' practices are identified using three letters to represent the ethnicity of the respective focus group. For example, CFG represents the Cambodian adolescent focus group, HFG the Hmong adolescent focus group, and so on.

### *How Adolescents Perceive Parents Caring for Self*

The ways that Southeast Asian parents care for themselves was perceived quite differently by adolescents from each of the cultural groups. Our results show that Cambodian adolescents discussed more diverse ways in which their parents cared or did not care for themselves compared to the other three groups. Among the parental care for self behaviors discussed by Cambodian adolescents were running, taking medications, working, meditating, spending time with friends, and eating healthy foods. The Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese adolescents typically focused on a singular method of self care. For instance, Hmong adolescents talked most about delegating household responsibilities to others in the family as a way to care for self and they also discussed the idea of “losing temper” from overwork and then “just whipped you unnecessarily” as ways that Hmong parents reacted when they did not get the help they needed or care for themselves in other ways. One adolescent said, “If they [parents] get sick, take some medications, and go to bed, [they expect us to help]. If we don’t do the housework, then they’ll give us an eye [a gesture], then we know that we’ll get punished if we don’t do the housework” (HFG). Lao adolescents discussed the problems of fatigue and depression their parents encountered from work, especially from low paying jobs. Lao parents caring for self behaviors included reaching out to others for emotional support in order to regenerate energy to perform the demands and long hours of work. Vietnamese adolescents discussed parents’ care for self behaviors in terms of how their parents managed their marital relationships. To the Vietnamese adolescents, parents who did not care for self tended to “argue constantly in front of children” and to “end up abusing and neglecting their children” in the process.

### *How Adolescents Perceive Parents Understanding Them*

To the adolescents who participated in the focus groups, understanding parents are those who are flexible, adaptable, approachable, and open to communication. For instance, Vietnamese adolescents believed that understanding parents should always communicate well with their adolescents. Adolescents should not have to feel afraid when approaching them for a conversation. “If [there is] something or anything at all that we don’t understand, parents should be a good resource for us” (VFG). Contrary to

this expectation, Vietnamese adolescents perceived their parents as too protective and controlling, rarely allowing them to assert their independence. One adolescent said, “My parents are so protective. [They] never give any power for me to do anything on my own” (VFG). The adolescents believe that parents have to learn to let go of their children and allow them to experience what is right and wrong in life, and learn to take responsibility for their own actions. One adolescent explained that if parents continued to protect the adolescents, then the end result is that “[we] become too depend[ent] on them [so] that [we] don’t know when to let go” (VFG). Yet, most adolescents in this group felt little hope that their parents would change their beliefs and try to understand the adolescents.

Cambodian, Hmong and Lao adolescents frequently discussed the inflexibility of parents in permitting autonomous activities outside the view of parents or other responsible family members. In the Hmong group, these types of parent were referred to as “suspicious parents” (HFG). Hmong adolescents perceived parents who lacked “trust” of their own children as paranoid about gangs, which led them to excessively control the adolescents in the home and school. This perception of overprotection and control led the adolescents to feel either rebellious against parents or to feel hopeless about their relationship with their parents. One adolescent told the group that if she were to join an after-school activity, her parents would undoubtedly think she was creating an excuse to be a part of a gang. Another adolescent expressed her story as follows:

Like, I have soccer after school and when I got home my parents told me that I didn’t go to school, I just went out to join a gang or just went out to have fun. So they yell at you, make you don’t have any hope. (HFG)

Similarly, the Lao adolescents also believed that their parents did not trust them for fear of “bad friends.” Cambodian adolescents also shared a similar concern by stating that their parents are also deeply concerned about “bad friends.”

She [mom] knows my friends were getting into trouble, and she thinks when I go out with them, I get into trouble too. But, it’s not like that. My friends do something; I am not going to do it, unless it is something that I want to do. My mom thinks my friends will make me do something,



but it isn't like that. If I feel [like] doing something I will. If I don't then I won't. But she still doesn't understand...[because] my friends are in trouble and locked up [on probation]. (CFG)

#### *How Adolescents Perceive Parental Guidance*

According to the adolescents, parental guidance means setting limits, providing direction, participating in daily activities, teaching right from wrong, protecting, and setting a positive example. Cambodian adolescents believe their parents guide them by repeatedly talking to them about refraining from "bad" activities. One adolescent said, "They always talk to you and preach to you. They say the same thing over and over and tell you [to do] good things." (CFG). Good things that their parents repeatedly reminded them about included: "stay in school, stay out of trouble, don't go out with friends all the time to do bad things, be on time [when coming back home]" (CFG). Hmong adolescents believe that to guide is to protect the children from harm and from "bad" influences. One adolescent explained, "Parents don't usually allow their adolescents to attend parties because parties attract a lot of 'lai' or bad people. Because lai love to go to parties, parents don't trust us to go to parties" (HFG). Hmong girls thought that their parents were more lenient toward the boys and extremely strict toward the girls. The explanation the girls gave for this preferential treatment was that girls were more vulnerable to shame and isolation than boys. The close monitoring exercised by parents promoted a girl's positive reputation in the community, which led to a higher probability of good and intelligent men being attracted to her. Bad or disobedient girls and those who despised this type of monitoring would have a lower probability of getting married to good men, explained the adolescents. "So if anyone...has a good daughter, others would want their son to marry that daughter" (HFG).

Lao adolescents believed that to guide is to "give advice, give you direction" (LFG). They believed parents should not "just tell you to do the right things" (LFG), but should try to be involved in the adolescents' activities as a better way to guide them. Through involvement in the adolescents' activities, parents can help the adolescents understand the connection between choices and consequences. For example, parents can teach the adolescents that no education will lead to little opportunity for

advancement. Lao adolescents also wanted their parents to be a positive role model for them to follow.

One adolescent talked about his parents this way:

Like they told us not to do this and not to do that [drink, gamble, associate with bad people], but they themselves are doing it. Their words mean nothing to us...they are supposed to set a positive role model for us to follow. If they are doing it, then why should we listen to them? (LFG)

The Vietnamese adolescents believe that to guide is to set rules, boundaries, and directions for the adolescent. One adolescent explained, "No guide means no sense of direction and no sense of direction means any road could take them [adolescents] there" (VFG). Thus, parents have to "teach the adolescents all of the good things that they had learned in their life time and pass it down to us" (VFG). Parents should avoid criticizing the adolescents. Instead, they should try to take time to explain to the adolescents the reason behind their action or discipline, so the adolescents understand why their parents act in certain ways.

#### *How Adolescents Perceive Parental Nurturing*

According to the Southeast Asian adolescents who participated in the focus groups, parents who nurture them are warm, involved, and supportive. Adolescents in all groups wanted their parents to love and nurture them. They wanted their parents to occasionally tell them that they love them, care about them, and praise them when they have done something right or very well. Adolescents in all four groups agreed that their parents seldom told them that they loved them and rarely showed overt affection through kisses, hugs, or pats on the back. One adolescent said, "For Asian parents, they don't show love through physical affection, instead they try to provide for their teenagers everything they need. It is their way of showing love and affection to their teenagers" (VFG). It is the everyday efforts to provide for children that count for parents rather than words or affectionate actions. Another adolescent explained that some parents showed their love by purchasing expensive items on occasion as well as other basic necessities.

Adolescents across groups felt strongly that their parents did not really understand their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Many felt their parents intentionally ignored their inner thoughts and feelings. One adolescent said it in this way: "They just don't understand my mind, [so] they think this and that. It's like

they don't know what's going on with me. And I try to tell them, but they think this is the way it is. But it's not and I try to tell them...[Then] I say forget it!" (CFG) Some youth felt that not only did parents fail to acknowledge their ideas and feelings, but also they imposed their own ideas and values on them. Two Cambodian girls argued that these impositions were not appropriate parenting behaviors:

Well, I want to be able to talk and say what I want. Like when I talk to my mom, I want to be able to tell her how I feel, but she cuts me off and doesn't let me say it. I want her to respect me and let me say what I want, so she hears my side of the story or my opinion or whatever and not just her opinion. (CFG). They [parents] don't understand you. They want you to do things the way they want to be done. And you want to do something different than what they did when they were young. [Then] they'll get mad at you and won't understand why. (CFG)

#### *How Adolescents Perceive Parents Motivating Them*

The adolescents in this study believe that parents who motivate connect them to resources, teach them the consequences of not having an education, and recognize their achievements. Parents who do not motivate are irresponsible, impatient, and have unrealistic expectations for adolescents. Across the four groups, adolescents wanted their parents to help them to access resources that would enhance their chances of success. The resources that were most frequently mentioned included soliciting assistance from older siblings or other relatives and connecting them to other "good children" and positive role models.

Another motivating theme that appeared in all focus groups was the important linkage between education and the quality of life in the United States. These adolescents believed their parents wanted them to "do better than them [the parents]" (CFG). Some adolescents discussed how their parents used their own low paying jobs as an example to motivate them. Others talked about the very real lessons they learned from observing their own parents struggle month after month trying to make ends met. Direct experience with poverty provided a powerful motivation to succeed in school. The following statements summarize well what the adolescents said about motivation:

What really motivates me is to see how hard they [parents] have to work and very little to bring home. It is a hard life, and I don't want that kind of life when I have my own family because I don't want to make what my parents are making right now. As you can see, I don't have a lot. I just don't want my kids to grow up the way I do. (VFG)

Sometimes they [parents] said, 'If you don't go to school, you will end up working hard like me, trying to make a living. Then I go to school because I don't want to work as hard as my mom. (CFG)

### *How Adolescents Perceive Parents Advocating for Them*

Parents who advocate are well informed and involved. To become involved parents must be well informed about the adolescent and the environment that surrounds them so that they can make appropriate adjustments and find resources when needed. Some examples of involvement discussed by the adolescents included finding tutors or, if necessary, sending the adolescent to live with relatives in a safer environment. To be an advocate for their children, parents must be familiar with the resources available in the larger community beyond the ethnic groups' resources. Examples of strategies for learning about resources that were discussed included involvement with other parents, attending organization meetings and conferences to learn about various systems, and seeking help from relatives or others when necessary. One of the Vietnamese girls said that it was important for parents "to know your community well and what is out there because you never know what you really need until something happens" (VFG). Another said, "To advocate means that parents sometimes have to understand the school system" (VFG). Adolescents in these groups believed their parents frequently lacked knowledge about schools and other resources that are available in the community. One adolescent stated, "There is very little to say about parents who advocate for their teens because sometimes they just don't know what is going on themselves" (VFG). Some parents only knew a few ethnic organizations that served their own groups, and these organizations might not be the best place to find solutions to the problem. As a result of parents not knowing, adolescents felt strongly that they were at a disadvantage because their parents were socially and systemically isolated.

Our parents sometimes when we are involved in something big...they don't know what to do...they don't know our rights or where to get help from the professional people. As much as I hate to say it, but it is true, they don't admit when they really need help. How can they, as parents, help us when they can't help themselves? (VFG)

Overall, the adolescents believed that their parents should be more proactive and learn something about their community, their schools, and other systems so that they can be in a position to be able to advocate for their children.

### **Discussion**

The results of this study indicate that there is a wide discrepancy between how the adolescents expect their parents to behave and what they actually experience from their parents. Adolescents expected their parents to be warm, supportive, flexible, adaptive, and communicative. Instead of concentrating on protecting adolescents from exposure to adverse events and "bad" friends, parents should educate themselves about the availability of the diverse community resources and systems, become involved in their children's lives so that they understand what it is like to grow up in America, and set appropriate boundaries and directions for their adolescents to explore their environment and experience natural consequences. Not only did adolescents not seem to receive the types of parental behaviors that they hoped for, they perceived their parents to be inflexible, overprotective, controlling, and isolated from community resources. These results are consistent with previous findings concerning Southeast Asian immigrant parental behaviors (Dinh et al. 1994; DuongTran et al., 1996; Herz & Gullone, 1999).

Two explanations for the negative perceptions that adolescents assigned to their parents' practices are proposed. First, adolescence is a stage in the life cycle that characterizes by the transition from childhood to adult status and therefore the parent-child relationship undergoes significant changes during this time in the West (Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998). Thus, the way in which these adolescents perceive their parents negatively can be attributed more towards a developmental issue rather than a pathological problem because most adolescents want more autonomy than their parents are willing to grant

(Holmbeck, 1996). Next, this type of perception can be attributed to the adolescents' frustration over the incongruence between their idealized and actual parents. Earlier studies have found parents and adolescents to differ significantly in their ideas about what constitutes a good parent (Shek & Chan, 1999; Xiong et al., in press). Although we did not include any questions on acculturation, the stories shared by the adolescents in the present study suggest that their exposure to the mainstream middle class ideals of parenting, as portrayed in the NEPEM model, by the media may mean that they have certain criteria against which they can compare and judge their parents' behaviors. This type of negative view attributed to parents is rarely found in their home countries because they only have their own parents, extended families, and other families with similar parenting practices to compare parental behaviors.

From the parents' perspective, on the other hand, the prevalence of gangs in high-crime, low-income Southeast Asian neighborhoods (Zhou & Bankston, 1998) means that parents may be justifiably concerned about the safety of their children without attending to their need to individuate. This natural reaction of parents to protect their children in unfamiliar and unsafe environments is undoubtedly perceived by autonomy-seeking adolescents as controlling, restrictive, and overprotective. We speculate that because of the discrepancy between what is considered ideal parenting and what is actually experienced by the adolescents, Southeast Asian adolescents failed to perceive the good qualities of their parents. Future studies need to examine the relationships between environmental contexts, parental fears, and parenting practices to broaden our understanding of Southeast Asian and other immigrant parenting.

The results also suggest that when the adolescents perceive their parents to be weak in one parenting area, they are also more likely to be perceived as weak in other parenting areas as well. For example, if the adolescents believe that their parents fail to acknowledge their thoughts, feelings, and ideas, they are also more likely to report a failure to communicate, to become involved in their activities, to establish reasonable boundaries, and to support them. These findings are based on a limited number of adolescents' reports, and speculation about this covariation is based on a global impression. Future studies should try to measure these variables together based on both the perspectives of the adolescents and parents to examine the correlation among these variables.

Although adolescents perceived several positive parenting practices as well as the many negative ones we have discussed, it was not clear which positive parenting practices were the most salient. There were some instances where adolescents in the same focus group agreed with one another about specific practices but it was impossible for us to detect what positive practices were most prevalent or important to the adolescents who experienced them. Future studies should elicit more in-depth understanding of these parenting practices using a structured interview with a larger sample from the four cultural groups.

Adolescents reported that they wanted to connect to positive role models in the community and to programs and services that would benefit their own developmental and educational needs. Findings from the present study found parents lacking the appropriate knowledge to connect their children to these community resources. Educators, human service providers, and others who work with these populations should develop culturally appropriate programs that link these parents and adolescents to resources. Parents who become more familiar with the resources in the community and the activities of their children will gain credibility with their adolescents and be empowered by their knowledge. We believe that by linking adolescents to positive programs and resources, they will become connected to other motivated adolescents, mentors, and caring adults (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). At the same time, programs should also be delivered to help parents connect to the resources in the community as well as to other parents who experience similar parenting issues. Such programs could benefit parents in two ways. First, when parents can share with other parents, they are more likely to feel that their problems are not pathological and unique (Detzner et al., 1999). They may realize that other parents encounter similar problems; this may empower them to attend parenting groups to pursue further knowledge and alternative parenting strategies to manage their everyday parenting problems.

As the number of new immigrants from developing countries continues to increase, more adults will find themselves parenting in a foreign environment, and more adolescents will find themselves caught between differing cultural expectations. It is important that simplistic solutions or adult perceptions alone do not become the driving force behind educational, human service, and other programs

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designed for immigrant parents or their children. Adolescent voices need to be heard by parents as well as by those who seek to assist families with the multi-level long-term processes of adaptation.



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**Appendix: Table 1 - The National Extension Parent Education Model**

PARENTING CATEGORY	PRIORITY PRACTICE
CARE FOR SELF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage personal stress.</li> <li>• Manage family resources.</li> <li>• Offer support to other parents.</li> <li>• Ask for and accept support from others when needed.</li> <li>• Recognize one's own personal and parenting strengths.</li> <li>• Have a sense of purpose in setting child-rearing goals.</li> <li>• Cooperate with one's child-rearing partners.</li> </ul>
UNDERSTAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe and understand one's children and their development.</li> <li>• Recognize how children influence and respond to what happens around them.</li> </ul>
GUIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model appropriate desired behavior.</li> <li>• Establish and maintain reasonable limits.</li> <li>• Provide children with developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn responsibility.</li> <li>• Convey fundamental values underlying basic human decency.</li> <li>• Teach problem solving skills.</li> <li>• Monitor children's activities and facilitate contacts with peers and adults.</li> </ul>
NURTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Express affection and compassion.</li> <li>• Foster children's self-respect and hope.</li> <li>• Listen and attend to children's feelings/ideas.</li> <li>• Teach kindness.</li> <li>• Provide for nutrition, shelter, clothing, health, and safety needs of children.</li> <li>• Celebrate life with one's children.</li> <li>• Help children feel connected to family history and cultural heritage.</li> </ul>
MOTIVATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach children about themselves, others, and the world around them.</li> <li>• Stimulate curiosity, imagination, and the search for knowledge.</li> <li>• Create beneficial learning conditions.</li> <li>• Help children process and manage information.</li> </ul>
ADVOCATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find, use, and create community resources when needed to benefit one's children and the community of children.</li> <li>• Stimulate social change to create supportive environments for children and families.</li> <li>• Build relationships with family, neighborhood, and community groups.</li> </ul>