

Perspectives of First Generation Asian American Parents towards Children with Disabilities and Their Educational Programs

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The aim of this descriptive study was to examine the perspectives of first generation Asian American parents of children with disabilities regarding causes, meaning of disabilities, level of educational involvement and self-advocacy in their children's special education school programs. Using convenience sampling, 18 Asian American parents from the San Francisco Bay area participated in this study. The major findings in this study were interesting ones in that some were similar and others different from those previously reported in the past for Asian American families. First, the majority of the parents did not believe their past wrong doings caused their child's disability. Secondly, the majority of parents reported that they relied on the help and guidance of family members, friends, and family resource agencies over their religious or spiritual community. In addition, academic achievement was still held in high regard in their families and was the responsibility and obligation of the children with disabilities to achieve it and even pursue higher education degrees. Lastly, the levels of parent's involvement and self- advocacy were higher compared to previous studies. Implications for professionals working with Asian-American families and their children with disabilities are discussed.