

Hmong Families in the US

a look at acculturation

This infographic series summarizes the available research on parenting, parenting beliefs, and practices of Hmong families acculturating within the United States and offers important context for child welfare professionals working with this population.

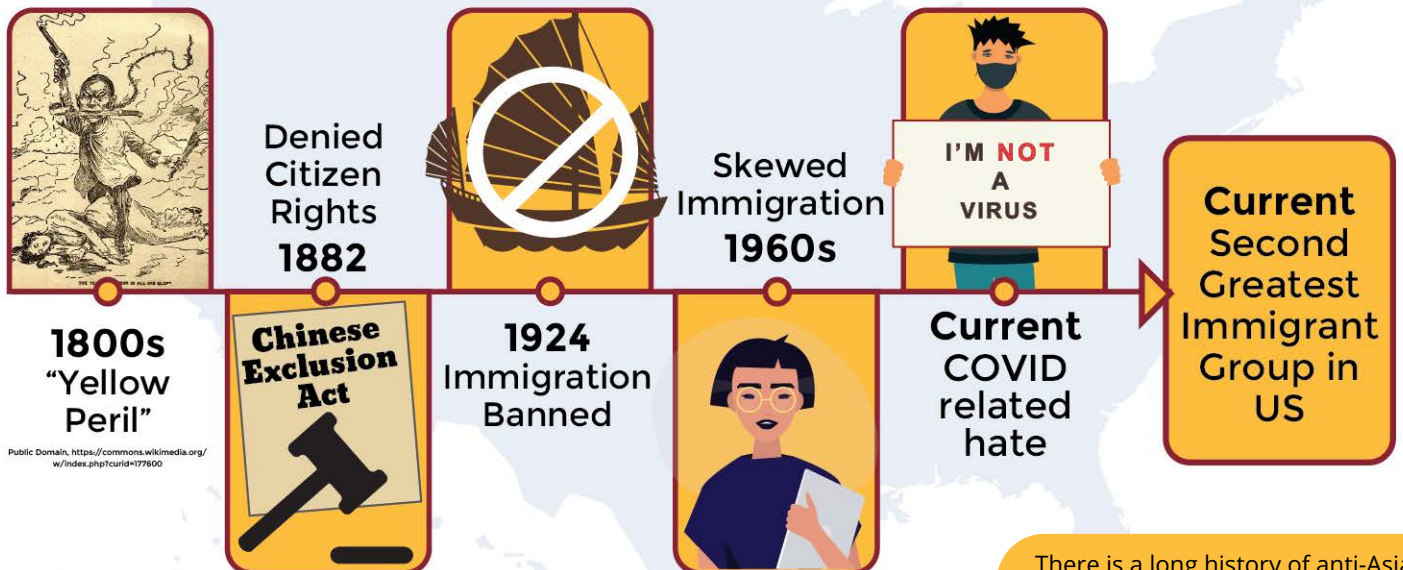
The Hmong people are relatively new to the US. In 2023 Minnesota is home to the highest concentration of Hmong.

Historical Background

- 1 Originated in China 4,000 yrs ago
- 2 Migrated in 19th Century due to Chinese Suppression
- 3 1973 forced to evacuate to Thailand due to aggressive persecution under Pathet Lao
- 4 1976 Hmong refugees from Laos began resettling to US and other parts of the world with highest US concentrations in California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin



Asian American History in the US



There is a long history of anti-Asian racial discrimination in the US which includes patterns of scapegoating, exclusion, and stereotyping.

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Hmong Parents

STRENGTHS

Provide basic necessities:
food, shelter, clothing

Value their children's
education as
survival strategy

Supportive parents
increase children's
self-esteem and
academic achievement



CHALLENGES

Limited knowledge of
community resources
and school systems

Over-reliance on relatives,
teachers, and friends to
make school decisions

Parent/child conflict
due to different rates
of acculturation



Implications

Where can we find resources to support the parenting of Hmong immigrants?



MN HMONG CONNECTIONS

- Hmong Village
- HmongTown Marketplace
- Hmong American Partnership
- the Hmong Cultural Center



CULTURAL BROKERS

Cultural brokers share the identity of service recipients, and act as a link between different cultural groups to improve communication



LOCAL EDUCATORS

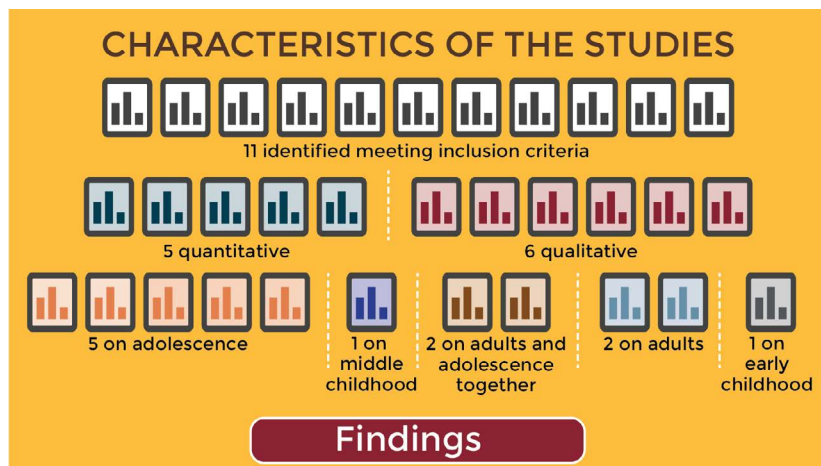
Work with local educators to help inform parents regarding US education systems and resources

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Research Details

We reviewed the available research on the parenting beliefs and practices of immigrant Hmong in the U.S. Maintaining valued aspects of their home culture while adjusting to a new culture is an acculturation challenge faced by immigrant and refugee families around the world. Families may experience acculturative stress when the parenting beliefs and practices of their country of origin and the host country differ. Understanding the acculturation strategies used by families can help social workers and educators gain a deeper understanding of cultural practices, values and attitudes, as well as the resilience of non-dominant groups. Furthermore, they need an elementary awareness of immigrant and refugee family systems and acculturative experiences in order to provide culturally responsive and effective services.



Scoping study characteristics.

We systematically reviewed the literature and identified 11 studies published in peer reviewed journals between 2000 and 2023. This literature focuses on three areas related to parenting practices and beliefs. These include:

- 1) **The child.** These studies examine the role of socialization practices and beliefs on children's behavior, and self-esteem. Parents' support and connection with their children were positively related to children's self-esteem, and negatively related to their problem behaviors.
- 2) **Parent- child relationship.** These studies describe parent-child conflict related to the rate of acculturation. Children generally acculturate more quickly, while parents remain accustomed to values and beliefs from their country of origin. This can lead to parent-child conflicts and an increase in children's problem- behaviors.
- 3) **School systems.** These studies relate parenting practices influencing a child's school and academic achievement. Hmong parents who conveyed support and connection with their child motivated them to achieve in school. Some Hmong parents also expressed a desire for children to do well in school, however, they had limited knowledge about US school systems. Thus, parents have to rely on relatives, teachers, and friends to make school decisions. Parents often expressed a desire to learn more about school systems and resources.

A basic understanding of the challenges and strengths of Hmong immigrant families in supporting their children's acculturation is foundational for the provision of culturally appropriate supports by child welfare workers. For families who are struggling, some knowledge of common strengths and challenges can serve as a starting point for determining services likely to be effective. These strengths include valuing and encouraging children's school achievement as the pathway to success in the US. Challenges include a lack of knowledge around school systems and resources. Another challenge is the different rates at which parents and children acculturate.

Limitations of this scoping study include collecting studies that were written in English and studies within the United States. This means studies of Hmong parenting practices in other countries or in other languages were missed. There is still much to learn about Hmong parenting beliefs and practices from the perspectives of parents and children, and during the early and middle childhood years. **Child welfare workers would benefit from having a deeper understanding of parenting practices in order to increase their effectiveness in working with Hmong families.**