

Ryu, J-Y. (1991, December 19). Counselor for Korean Students. The Korea Times New York, p. A3.

## OVERVIEW

This daily New York City Korean American newspaper is an excellent resource for the Korean American community. There is evidenced tension between generations as Korean families immigrate to the U.S. This article covers four basic issues, but the basis of the problems seems to dissolve to how families—particularly parents—adjust to the American culture. Young Koreans blend easily. It is in the home where conflicts generally arise.

## PROBLEMS

Current problems facing the Korean American family include teen gang affiliation, parental negligence of children, parental pressure for academic excellence, and teen pregnancy.

Parental negligence is reported as the primary reason inhibiting the success of many Korean American students. Parents often do not respond to schools' request for parental participation when their children have problems in school. Many parents are not being good role models. Some gamble and watch too much TV. Often, parents show little or no involvement in sex education. There is definite division between many Korean parents and the American culture.

## SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

The article proposes several remedies:

- \* Encouraging concern and care from the parents.
- \* Sending counselors specialized for Korean American students to the school.
- \* Establishing a center for Korean American youth.
- \* Providing necessary sex education.

It is troublesome to realize that the Korean population is having such difficulty adjusting to their new cultural setting. Parental attitude is pivotal to how the Korean American youth settle into a new homeland and make positive, peaceful adjustments. It seems that the worst of the American culture is being learned by both the parents and the teens. If America is going to bridge the gap, society needs, compassionately and respectfully, to help both sides adjust.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the nature of problems facing Korean American students?
2. Why do they continue in their troubles?
3. How can anyone help to ease the troubles faced by the Korean American students?
4. How is the communication between parent and child? How can it be improved or changed?

## IMPLICATIONS

1. Korean American families are not the only families having problems. Neither are all Korean American families facing these challenges. American families of every race and ethnicity experience tension, failure, and success while raising children. This article just highlights the particular needs of many within the Korean American community.

2. Korean American students face daily pressures between their Korean background and American environment. They need relief. They are pressured to excel in their studies. They are pressured to assimilate two different cultures and unite their own background with their parents' heritage.

3. Korean American students need to be understood. Some parents of Korean American students are not able to fluently speak English, while students are often unable to speak Korean. This causes a great deal of misunderstanding, evoking a communication crisis.

4. Korean American kids need advocates to bridge the widening gap between generations. They are in a difficult situation and need maturity, wisdom, and support while facing difficult situations. They need to respect their parents and heritage while making life and reality work in a different culture than that of their parents.

5. Change is always difficult—even more so when cultures, ideas, and traditions collide.

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