

Multicultural Parenting: A Summary of Practices and Traditions

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Ten Most Cited Cultural Family Values

- Family
- Respect for Elders
- Religion
- Education
- Harmony
- Patriotism
- Love
- Children
- Helpfulness
- Hard Work

Five Most Important Cultural Values

Five Most Important Cultural Values		Father	Mother	Grandparents	Aunts/Uncles	Children
African American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth • Goodness • Justice • Family • Achievements 	Considered head of family but day to day decisions are made by mother; struggles with concepts of tenderness and intimacy.	Seen as the salvation of Black family; mother is strong, honored and influential.	Heads of households, extend parenting role to grandchildren; especially true of grandmother.	Share in family crises; may offer place to live during crisis.	Viewed as children, except are often expected to be parents' emotional equal.
Cambodian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Virginity/Chastity • Age/Elder • Religious Values • Sons 	Head of household and decision maker, role model, disciplinarian, provider, control of children and wife.	Caregiver and homemaker, manages finances, nurture, women can be monks.	Caretakers of grandchildren, responsible for handing down history and culture through stories.	Blood relatives but also honored title, extension of parental authority.	Work on family farm or in city to help family financially, adolescents not seen as children, can become monks at age 10-12 years.
Hmong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended family and relatives • Children • Religion • Education • Generosity 	Makes decisions, role model, provides guidance, deals with business, financially responsible for family.	Nurturer, homemaker, keeps family money, cares for extended family members.	Provide child care, guidance, advisor and financial support.	Provide advise and consultation, problem solve among members.	Older children role models for younger, provide child care and household chores, uphold family reputation.
Lao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Bond • Religion • Respect for Elders • Helping • Care for Aging 	Called "middle pole," leader of family, role model for males, relationship with daughter diminishes at puberty, work outside home-fix home, and do not play with children.	Role model to daughters, homemaker, allocator of finances, treat mother-in-law with same respect as her own mother.	Usually live with daughter's family, child care (mainly grandmother), source or information, children seek them out.	Viewed as second parents, Uncle's relationship with niece less restrictive than with father.	Respect elders, obey parents, courteous and respectful behavior in school, social behavior more important than academic, care for parents in old age.
Vietnamese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect elders • Family as unit • Education • Filial Piety • Ancestor Worship • Self-reliance • National Loyalty 	Provider, morally and financially responsible, disciplinarian- especially to teenagers.	Nurturer, homemaker, serve husband and parents-in-law, provide guidance; held responsible if children are spoiled.	Provider of traditions, knowledge and wisdom, protect children, provide guidance, support and child care.	Extended family, maintain contact with family, show respect and set examples.	Adolescents expected to act in proper manner (humble and obedient to parents and elders), expected to be caring and role models for younger children, girls expected to assist mother.

Five Most Important Cultural Values	Father	Mother	Grandparents	Aunts/Uncles	Children	
Chinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zhong-loyalty, faithfulness, patriotism • Xiau-filial piety • Jie-personal integrity of an individual • Yi-justice, righteousness and brotherhood • Ren-benevolence, kindness, goodness, humanity, mercy 	Patriarch, holds ultimate authority, wife and children are subservient to him.	Hard working, virtuous, provide care of children.	Highly revered in the Chinese family.	Hold high family value.	Role is to be good children and good students, older siblings have authority over younger ones.
Japanese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Harmony • Conformity • Hard Work • Family Loyalty • Competition and Aspiration 	Family leader, decision maker, financial supporter.	Nurturer and caregiver, take charge of daily functioning of the home.	Responsible for their grandchildren.	Do not have intimate role in their siblings families.	Study hard to prepare for world of work and school.
Korean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for elders • Compassion for others • Respect for the authority of teachers • Family harmony • High moral standard 	Head of family, money maker.	Takes care of children and household.	Final decision makers.	Their authority is second only to parents.	Boys are generally treated with more favoritism than girls.
Chilean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociability and friendship • Solidarity • Family • Patriotism • Education 	Provider, models expected behavior.	Nurturer, spiritual guide, provider for basic needs.	Revered, authority figures, provide information to parents.	Support, the first that parents turn to for help.	Obey parents, study hard, accept traditional roles.
EI Salvadoran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Unity • Religion • Respect for Elders • Hard Work • Education 	Designated head of the family, breadwinner.	Loyal and obedient to her husband, keeps the home, raises the children.	Offer moral support to family.	Have close social relationship with family.	Rural area children are expected to work, all children are expected to be respectful and well-mannered.
Mexican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language • Religion • Family • Machismo • Personal and cultural beliefs 	Patriarch, final say in decisions.	Caregiver, in charge of household.	Acts as go-between for parents and grand children.	Support group and act as secondary parents.	Female children are mother's helper, boys are given the freedom to enjoy active play.

Five Most Important Cultural Values		Father	Mother	Grandparents	Aunts/Uncles	Children
Puerto Rican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La familia (the family) • Los hijos (the children) • La religion (the religion) • El trabajo (the source of livelihood) • El matrimonio (the marriage) 	Males are breadwinners, protectors and decision makers.	Housewife and mother.	Grandmother is valued as substitute parent.	Have strong roles in children's lives, serve as Godparents.	Expected to respect parents and elders.
Hawaiian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aloha-love, compassion • Kokua-helpfulness • Lokahi-harmony and unity • Aloha Aina-respect and love of nature • O'hana-the family 	Provider and head of family, disciplinarian.	Nurturer	Teachers, wise ones, and advisers, respected and revered.	Give support.	Expected to be obedient, respectful, assist in care of younger siblings.

Nurturing, Personal Responsibility, Self-Discipline, Individualism, Competition, Cooperation

	Nurturing	Personal Responsibility	Self-Discipline	Individualism	Competition	Cooperation
African American	Place high value on nurturing children, blessing to have a large family.	Synonymous with personal freedom.	Recognized as value necessary for orderly functioning of society.	Expressed in physical, social, emotional ways. High quality of dress, speech, sports.	See competition as a means to an end.	Learned to cooperate as a means of survival.
Cambodian	Up to age 5, parents physically and verbally express love, later, no touch to improve parental power.	Rural: actions and behavior are reflection on family members and future generations.	Buddhist philosophy is to moderate your behavior and avoid anything excessive, especially true for females.	City - individual is encouraged. Rural - Individual is discouraged, corporation is encouraged.	Encouraged to show you are #1.	Extremely important, especially with parents, message to children is that they must get along.
Hmong	Children are property.	Almost always share responsibility.	Believe in superstitions, most things in life impact future.	Big families and large crowds considered healthy and powerful.	Causes conflict and aggression, competing is considered jealousy.	Likes to exchange labor to get the work done.
Lao	Do not express love verbally or physically. Love is care.	Blame outside sources.	Encourage self-discipline, avoid all temptations.	Family is first, individual is second.	Pressure to do better than parents or siblings.	Cooperation is encouraged at an early age.
Vietnamese	Emphasis on parental support and encouragement	Self-discipline is foundation of learning personal responsibility.	To be responsible is to respond to values that are positive in development of personal character.	Individualism does not mean separateness, it is encouraged.	Competition is good when it is constructive.	To cooperate is to honor goals or values.
Chinese	Tradition to support, nurture and teach children proper values, parents often sacrifice their own needs so a child can grow up healthy.	Shaped by the five traditional values described earlier.	Without self-discipline a person cannot reach his goals, includes equipping oneself with knowledge, practicing self-control and exercising good judgment.	Individualism is often chided by protection of family/clan.	Only encouraged for the benefit of the family, clan or country, individual is encouraged to honor parents.	Governed by relationships but are extremely cooperative when it benefits the family or clan.
Japanese	Extends from family to employers to education.	Individuals tend to depend on the norms of society to determine responsibility.	Central principle of child-rearing, essential in order to achieve one's goals.	Discouraged in all stages of development, respect others before yourself.	Central force in achieving goals, most important approach to encouraging personal achievement.	Extremely important, especially with parent, message to children.

	Nurturing	Personal Responsibility	Self-Discipline	Individualism	Competition	Cooperation
Korean	Highly valued and treasured.	Cooperative responsibilities more important than individual responsibility.	Highly valued.	Family unit and cultural group are more strongly valued than the individual.	Educational system is extremely competitive.	Cooperation is taught to children in terms of complying with the wishes of their elders.
Chilean	Ideal philosophy, taught in education, reality of economic depression causes stress.	Prefer to follow than to lead.	Not highly regarded.	Stresses membership in community for betterment of all.	Not overly competitive.	Strong part of the typical social behavior, common goals are shared.
El Salvadoran	High value because of importance of family.	Traditional ways tend to overprotect and blame rather than encourage responsibility.	Typically observed in workplace and structured environment.	Not highly valued.	Middle and higher income families are more competitive than lower income.	Highly valued.
Mexican	Nurturing is mixed with firmness to maintain family ties.	Instilled early in young children, related to family chores.	Traditionally considered a "rite of passage" for adulthood.	Never been a trait of Mexican people.	Considered a desertion of the group.	Revolves around a father's decision.
Puerto Rican	Highly valued and traditionally the role of the mother in raising children.	Related to family rules - males breadwinners and protectors, females nurturers and housekeepers.	Children are expected to be well-behaved and obedient.	Viewed as competition which is frowned upon.	With the exception of sports, cooperation is more valued.	Highly valued.
Hawaiian	Natural function of the family.	Individual responsible for own behavior.	Control is external; strong value of respect and discipline; self-discipline centers around shame.	No "tooting one's own horn" or being boastful, family is the focus.	Accepted in sports and games only, cooperation is more important.	Strong part of the typical social behavior, common goals are shared.

Education and Learning, Religion, Chastity Until Marriage, Childbearing Within Marriage, Role of Corporal Punishment

	Education & Learning	Religion	Chastity Until Marriage	Childbearing Within Marriage	Role of Corporal Punishment
African American	Seen as great salvation.	"Rock and Salvation" of African-American spirituality is among strongest and lasting values.	Believe individual should practice chastity until marriage.	Value family - nuclear and extended, many now have children outside of marriage	Used to keep children in line with mother's rules.
Cambodian	Girls go to school until 10 years of age, should not be able to write a letter, boys go to school but encouraged to work.	Practices and beliefs interwoven into every day life.	Indirect messages - it is bad, not allowed to associate with families who have not allowed to sing, talk of love.	Children are considered insurance policies.	Usually with a stick on the buttocks, legs, back when children talk back or are disrespectful.
Hmong	Education is encouraged and expected.	Belonging is important - worship of ancestors.	Loss of virginity brings family shame.	To marry and have children.	Used to scare the child not to misbehave again. To correct a wrong. To keep child obedient.
Lao	Men are encouraged to achieve to highest degree, women are not expected to.	Buddhism often interwoven within day-to-day culture.	Difficult for female to find partner if not a virgin, not expected of males.	Purpose of marriage is to have children, childless marriages have problems.	If you love your cows you must tie them up. If you love your child you have to beat them up. Spank not only to hear you but feel you.
Vietnamese	Education is process of absorbing facts and information; learning is implementation of facts and information toward a worthy and noble goal.	Buddhism and Christianity are strongly and faithfully practiced.	Religion teaches virginity until marriage, absence of virginity brings dishonor.	Family becomes a family when there are children.	Out of love and want to discipline and teach their children.
Chinese	Viewed as the only way to promote oneself, to improve ones' life and achieve status.	Teachings of Buddhism are a philosophy, which is integrated into traditional values and virtues.	Mostly applies to women.	Children are essential to produce manpower; men allowed concubines until a son is produced.	Used to teach children to behave. "An obedient son comes from the head of a stick." Also used in court to punish people.
Japanese	Person's worth is judged by the amount of education they have.	Religion is seen as custom, attitude and lifestyle rather than as spiritual life.	Have double standard; for men, sex before marriage is okay, value chastity in future wives.	Childbearing is only acceptable within marriage, illegitimacy brings shame.	Used to stop unacceptable behavior at home and school.

	Education & Learning	Religion	Chastity Until Marriage	Childbearing Within Marriage	Role of Corporal Punishment
Korean	The educated person and education are highly valued	Confucianism and Buddhism have been the mainstay of Korean religious life for centuries.	Highly valued in traditional families, less valued in young people.	Only acceptable within marriage, if one has a child out of wedlock it may not be registered.	Used to enforce the rules, strict discipline.
Chilean	Highly valued.	Catholic church plays important role, church active in social issues.	Church encourages - many people find practice outdated.	Ideal supported by the church.	Helpful in teaching respect for parents.
El Salvadoran	Rural families place less emphasis due to economic conditions.	Extremely important in life.	Highly valued for girls, less so for boys.	Childbearing outside of marriage is unacceptable.	Common and accepted as a deterrent to bad behaviors and habits.
Mexican	Viewed as a privilege.	A central focus in daily life.	Taught directly to girls, indirectly to boys.	Childbearing is a marital duty; number of children indicates male's potency.	Whipping with a belt or twig.
Puerto Rican	More valued today than in traditional times.	An important role in life.	Double standard for girls (save yourself) and boys (be experienced).	Be fruitful and multiply is often the expected outcome of marriage.	Necessary to teach children to respect parents and elders.
Hawaiian	Traditionally admire achievement and strive for excellence.	Spirituality is highly regarded and prayer is an integral part of family life.	Promiscuity is regarded as emotional immaturity; sex and sexuality are considered a natural part of the life cycle.	Term illegitimate is an introduced concept; adoption assures a place for all children.	Used when a child is disrespectful or disobeys.