

Exploring the emphasis of academic success amongst Asian families with kindergarten-aged children

Amie Frewen James Cook University, Singapore

Research into academic emphasis has revealed that Asian school children spend significantly more time on academic than non-academic activities compared with children of a western background (Larson, Richards, Sims, & Dworkin, 1998). Singapore, an educational hub for Asia has a reputation for demanding academic excellence from children (Chung et al., 1993), but do these high expectations come at any cost to the child's overall development? The objective of this study is to investigate parental beliefs and parental involvement in kindergarten-aged children living in Singapore to better understand a) the amount of time students are spending in academic versus non academic activities in a typical week, and b) to explore ethnic diversity within the Asian cultures in regards to beliefs and expectations about academic success. Approximately 300 parents will complete an online survey including the Child Rearing Beliefs Scale (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993), rating of Parental Involvement (Reynolds, 1992), and will complete a diary of a typical week for their child's academic and non academic activities. This study is surveying responses between November 2011 and January 2012. Results are expected to show that children in the Singaporean kindergarten system are spending the majority of their day engaging in school based activities (including homework, tutoring and enrichment activities). Additionally, it is expected that families of a Chinese background will have beliefs and greater involvement in their child's academic success than families from other Asian countries. Implications for an emphasis on academic excellence will be discussed.