

Korean Immigrants and Child Welfare in Minnesota

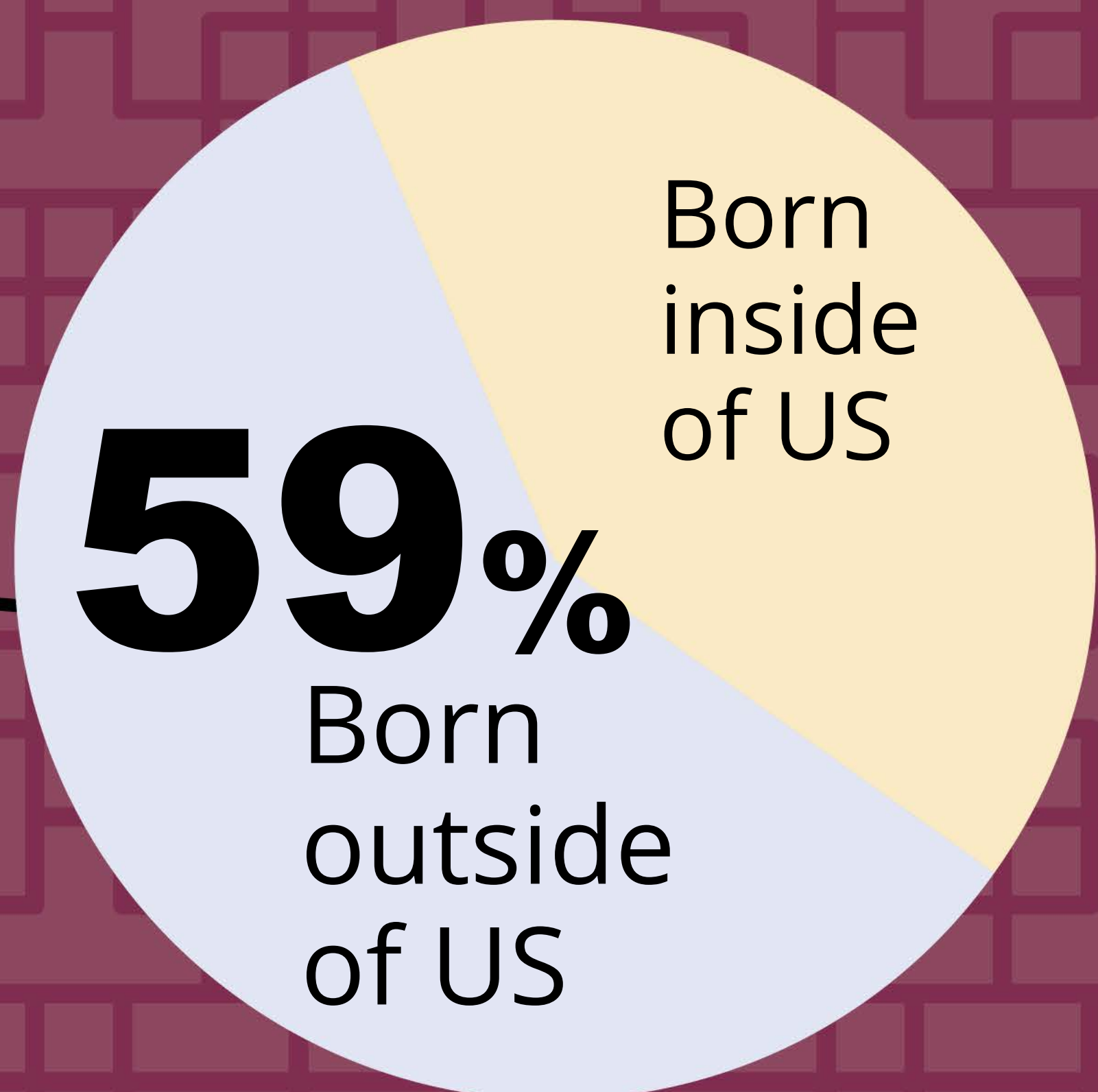


**CENTER FOR ADVANCED
STUDIES IN CHILD WELFARE**

For more information about this study, please contact park2363@umn.edu
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from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division.



1.9 Million
Koreans in US



59%
Born outside of US

Born inside of US

Demographics



Political Refugees



Picture Brides*



Korean Students / Diplomats



Merchants



Seeking Opportunities for Education & Business

Immigration 1883-1960

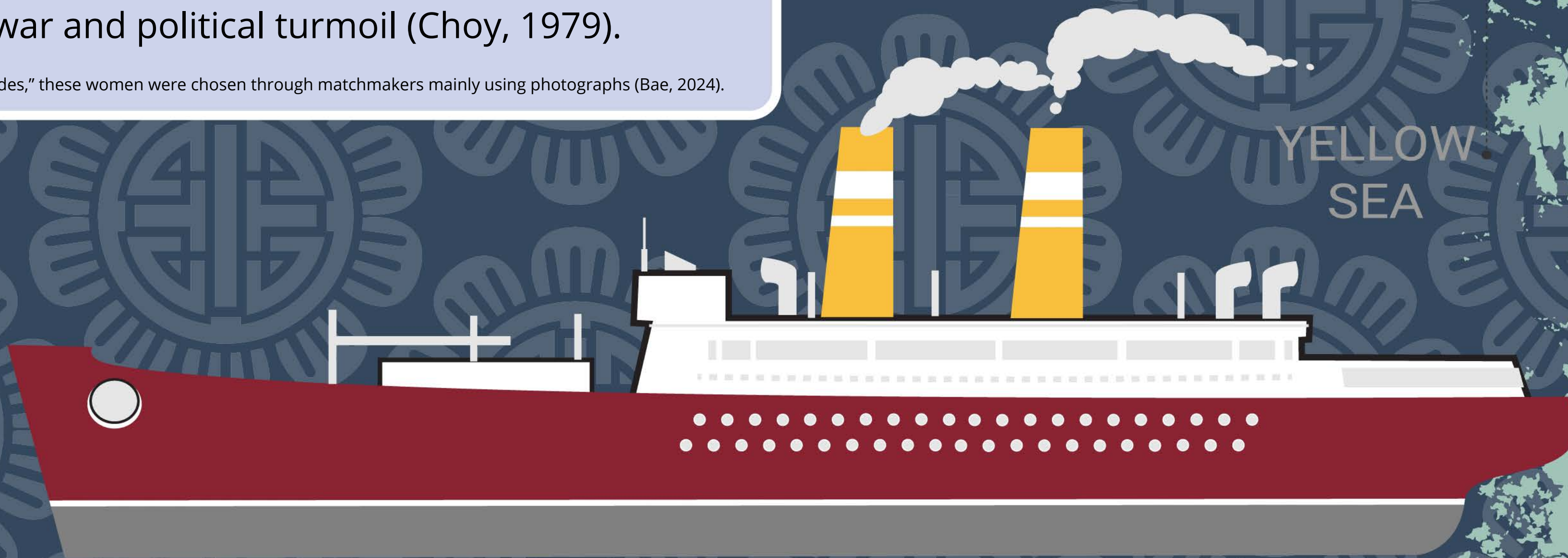
Immigration increased during the post WWII immigration period during and after the 1950s of those seeking refuge from war and political turmoil (Choy, 1979).

*Similar to "mail-order brides," these women were chosen through matchmakers mainly using photographs (Bae, 2024).

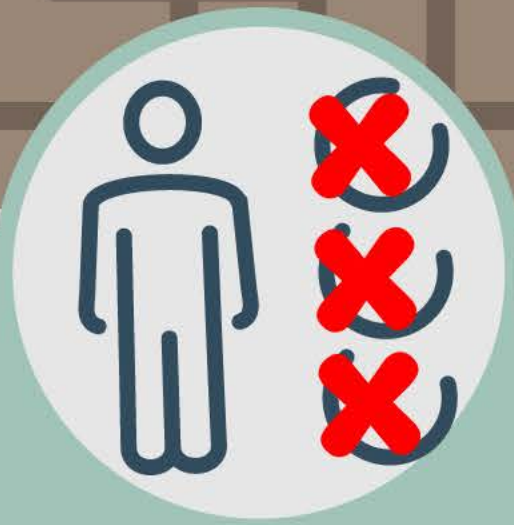
From the **1920s to the 1960s**, Minnesota experienced a steady influx of Korean students as well as Korean wives of US servicemen, and Korean orphans. By 1969 there were 157 Korean immigrants in Minnesota; by 1972, 502 (Koo, 2008). By 1990 there were anywhere between 8,000 and 10,000 Korean immigrants and 15,000 adoptees. By 2002 there were between 12,584 and 15,255 Korean Americans and 20,000 adoptees.



Today there are approximately 28,084 Koreans (Minnesota Compass, n.d.) **in Minnesota.**



History of Korean Immigration



Failure to develop culturally competent assessment, prevention, and intervention efforts



Failure to study Korean Americans



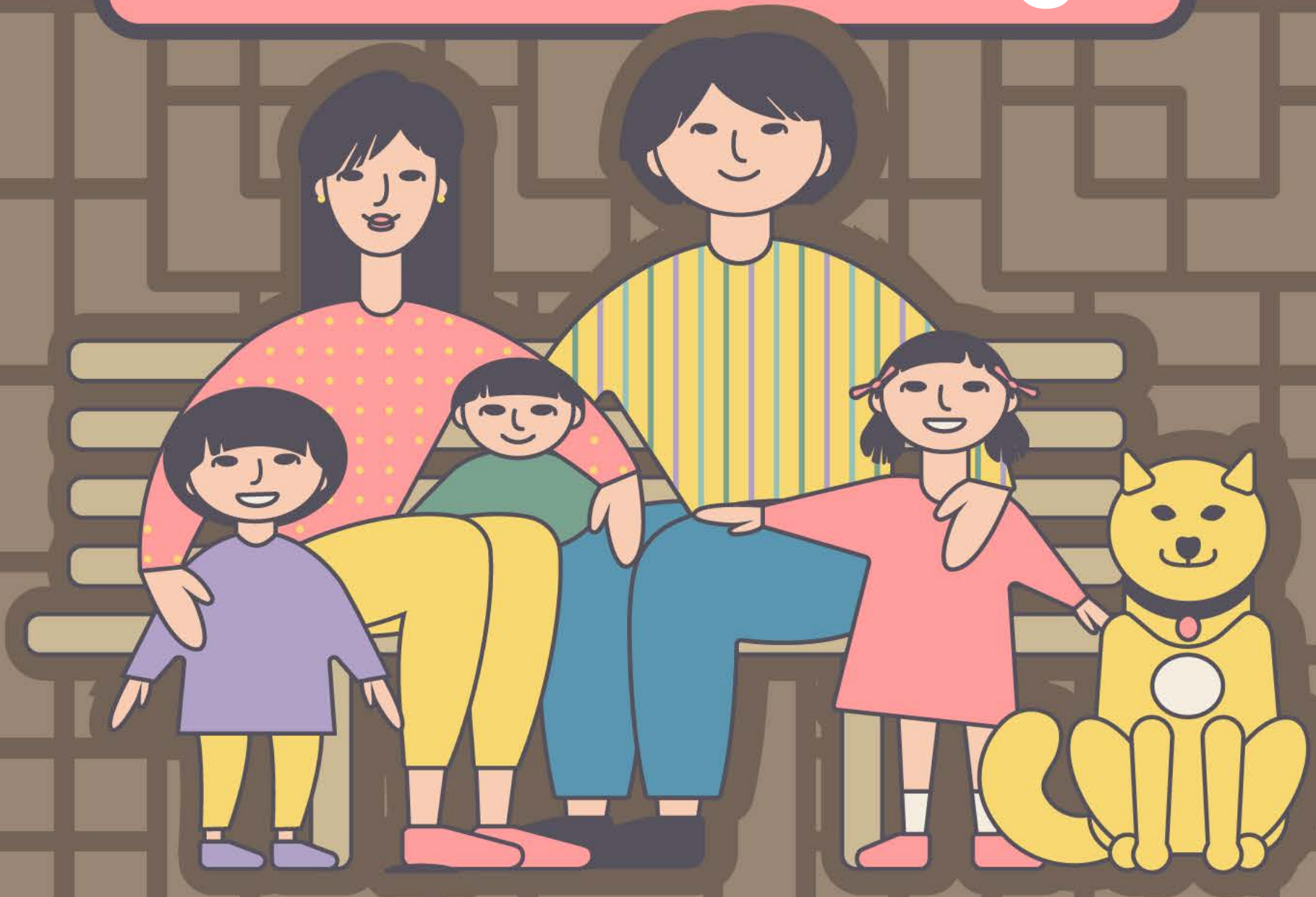
Failure to provide needed services to struggling families



Although Asian Americans including Korean Americans have **lower rates of child maltreatment** than other populations (Zhai & Gao, 2009), **physical abuse rates are higher**, compared to other types of abuse rates (Chang et al., 2006; Zhai & Gao, 2009). As a group, Korean immigrant families also have relatively higher rates of Intimate Partner Violence than other Asian immigrant groups. (Children's witnessing of Intimate Partner Violence is emotional abuse.)

Park (2001) reported Korean American mothers generally do not view physical punishment as abusive and view some degree of aggressive behavior toward children as acceptable. **When experiencing the stressors of acculturating to the US, however, such culturally normative parenting practices may become abusive, or be perceived as such by the host country.**

“Model Minority”



Failures Caused by “Model Minority” Myth

Acculturative Stressors



Language Barriers



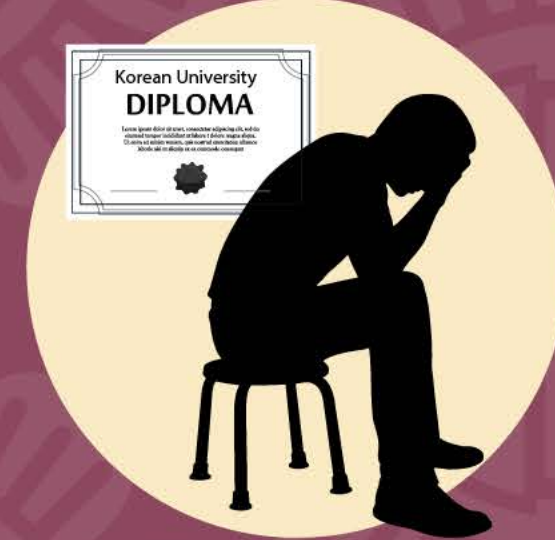
Social Isolation



Socioeconomic Adjustment Difficulties



Family Relationship Difficulties



Role Adjustment Difficulties



Marginalization

Parent-child acculturative gap stress due to children's more rapid acculturation into US Culture



FAQs

Over 70% of Korean Americans speak Korean at home.

Korean immigrants show a tendency to live in ethnic enclaves in large cities that may further a sense of social isolation.

Mothers who remain at home may experience greater linguistic and social isolation.

Fathers may struggle with economic and social status loss after immigration when their occupational skills do not equivalently transfer to jobs in the U.S.

Parenting Stress and Acculturative Stressors

1

CPS workers must understand and show cultural sensitivity towards Korean cultural norms for discipline when approaching parents who use physical punishment as a child rearing practice. Parents may experience bitter feelings, resentment, defensiveness and embarrassment when accused of physical abuse.

2

CPS workers should consider intervention strategies designed to decrease hostility towards the child welfare system, especially in initial relationship building stages (Chang, 2006).

This includes showing cultural sensitivity towards parents using physical punishment as a parenting practice. CPS workers should also strive to understand resentment and bitter feelings Korean parents may feel when being accused of child abuse. Korean parents may feel embarrassed and find it difficult to understand why the practice of using physical punishment would be considered child abuse in the US. If parents become defensive, this can potentially lead to hostile encounters with CPS workers. CPS workers therefore must make an effort to consider interventions that would decrease resistance to the child welfare system. An example of this would be to offer parent education regarding negative effects of physical punishment and providing more context appropriate methods of discipline (Chang, 2006).

3

CPS workers can provide parental education regarding U.S. laws regarding physical discipline, possible negative influences, and how it can lead to abuse.

4

Workers can familiarize themselves with strengths as well as acculturative stressors experienced by clients, and seek partners in the Korean immigrant community.

Implications

1

FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- **True Light of the Lord Church**

hellotllcmn@gmail.com

3920 Victoria St N

Shoreview, MN 55126

- **Korean Presbyterian Church of Minnesota**

kpcm@kpcm.org

5840 Humboldt Ave N

Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

763-560-6699

2

- **Korean Service Center**

www.kscmn.org

3

- **Korean American Association of Minnesota**

contact@mnkorea.org www.mnkorea.org

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Local Community Resources