D-Diversity Artifact 1

How do differing sociocultural customs affect the manner in which parents become involved at school?

People of diverse cultural backgrounds have perspectives and beliefs regarding illness, disability, and specialized services that differ from those of the mainstream American culture. For example, some cultures have great difficulty accepting disabilities because of religious beliefs and values. The Asian culture has a great deal of shame regarding a special needs child, almost a cursed belief. The extended family structures common in African American and Latin cultures can cause hesitation about accepting care from outside the family. This distrust results in anxiety about special education services. Parents of children who are from lower socioeconomic levels, which have a minority background, and primary language is not English face enormous disadvantages in interaction with the special education system. The meaning and interpretation of certain facial expressions, the expression of emotions, manners, and behaviors indicating respect vary greatly among cultures. For example, a Native American child may not respond to some questions in a testing situation because his cultural custom is not to speak of such matters. The facilitator of the test may see the lack of response as meaning that the child does not know the answer.

Immigration status of some families may affect the way they react to attempts from the school to provide services for their children. A family that resides illegally or feels uncertain about its residency status may avoid interacting with an educational system.

Although intellectual disability is recognized by all cultures, its conceptualization, social interpretation, and treatment are cultural specific (Drew & Hardman, 2007; Webb 2004)

The condition may be regarded as negative or may be viewed favorably, depending on the cultural context. This 'world view' will affect the parent's willingness to become involved in special education services at school.

These are just a few examples of how sociocultural customs will affect the manner in which parents will hesitate to become involved in the special educational system.

Describe some of the characteristics/issues that occur with the parents of a child with disabilities.

"An infant with a chronic health condition or disability may require immediate and prolonged attention from the mother for feeding, treatment, and general care, and her attention may become riveted on the life of the child. The balance that once existed between being a mother and being a partner no longer exists. The mother may become so involved with caring for the child that other relationships lose their quality and intensity." Page 141

The mother will also face a unique dilemma, how to balance between nurturing without becoming too over protective. This can also cause strife between the parents as the child grows and develops.

Describe some of the characteristics/issues that occur to the siblings of a child with disabilities.

The response of siblings to a brother or sister with disabilities greatly varies. Siblings generally want to know and understand as much as they can about the disability of their sibling. They want to know what the family's game plan is going to be. How is this going to affect their life personally? If these and other issues can be addressed sufficiently, their response with be much more positive. However, negative feelings do exist among siblings, loneliness, envy, jealousy and anxiety are common. Parents need to be aware of sibling's emotions as well as their own, so there can be open communication. Also siblings will tend to mirror the attitude and behaviors of their parents toward a child with disabilities

What support is available to parents/families of children with disabilities?
There are five major goals of family support systems:

- Enhance the care giving capacity of the family
- Giving parents and other family members respite from the demands of caring for a child with a disability
- Assisting the family with persistent financial demands related to the child's disability
- Providing valuable training to families, extended family members, concerned neighbors, and caring friends
- Improving the quality of life for all family members