

10th Conference on Health Care of the Chinese in North America

Working with Chinese Children with Disabilities: Overview

Peter Ng, MD, Pediatrician, Chinatown Public Health Center (San Francisco)



One of the more difficult things I've had to deal with as a pediatrician is how to manage children with either physical and/or mental disabilities. Caring for children with disabilities is a long-term process, a long-term relationship with a family in stress. I've had difficulties finding experienced professionals, especially those who work with extensively Chinese families. I've had difficulties finding resources and supportive organizations I could refer to and work with.

Here in the Bay Area, we are very fortunate to have California Children's Services (CCS) and the Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) to assist us. But aside from CCS and GGRC - who are the experts? Where else can we turn to? Where else can we send Chinese families to get support?

CCS and GGRC care for the medical needs. But there are other concerns. How can we improve the quality of these children's lives? How can we support the parents in their long-term daily difficult tasks? Dealing with the disability problems in itself is difficult enough, but there are frequently additional social and cultural parenting concerns (The problems of Chinese parenting is a topic upon itself, for which there will be another panel discussion tomorrow afternoon).

I suspect my experiences and frustrations are similar to those of many other primary care providers. We have about 1 hour to cover this topic. Obviously we cannot cover everything. What we hope to do during this time is to:

1. Introduce you to some S.F. Bay Area professionals, who because of their many years of experience can be considered experts in their fields.
2. Introduce to you some local S.F. Bay Area organizations that deal mainly with Chinese children with disabilities.
3. To share with you an exciting project we have started.
4. To encourage you to support these agencies, to learn from them, to network with them. There is still much work to be done.