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Parental Involvement of Chinese International Students in Regards to Their Children's School Selection and Communication with Teachers

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This research explores two broad areas in relation to the experiences of international students located in Ontario. The first area explores how international students, who are also parents, selected schools for their children. The second area explores how they communicated with their child's teacher. Six participants were recruited to participate in this study. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. This small-scale study reveals that participants considered five key factors when selecting schools for their children, including peers' family background, school ranking, language of instruction, impression of the teachers and school staff, and parents' religious background. These factors are shaped by the Chinese culture, the participants' class identity, and their anxiety towards their children's future. In relation to the second area explored in this study, participants communicated with teachers in different ways with a preference of written form. More parent-teacher communication took place among participants who had younger children or children with behavioural issues. Participants viewed attending parent-teacher meeting as their responsibility. Their expectations of parent-teacher communication were to obtain information about their children's school performance and to share their parental concerns and care. The major challenges in parent-teacher communication included unfamiliarity of the schooling system and cultural differences. Suggestions were given to the universities so that they will fully address the needs of such a unique group of graduate students.