

# Student explains role of being first generation American



**Claudia Martinez**  
Reporter

Knowing your roots is something that usually is taught to us by our parents or guardians at a young age. We are told stories of how our family members before us struggled through oppression and fought for their freedom. How they came here with an idea to make their future family be their successor.

My parents, like many other immigrant parents, have worked

hard to build a home for their kids and to give their children the things they did not have the privilege of having. They went through many hungry sleepless nights wondering was it all worth it to leave a place they've known their entire life to a country where they know nothing but how to work.

Being a first generation American in today's society can be rough. At a very early age Hispanic children born in America become young translators. Because of this, anywhere we go we automatically become protective of

our parents. We do not want somebody to ridicule our parents because of their accent or their broken English. At the end, it hurts us because we know what the other person is doing and we know our parents are trying really hard to get their point across.

It can be harsh in situations like grocery shopping due to our only means of communication is speaking a different language. Society around us then believes that we are talking about them and then we get the common phrase, "We are in America, speak English". We

should not have to feel ashamed or be ashamed to speak our first language. A language that rolled off our tongues so fluently is now being forgotten by younger generations.

Education is something my parents have drilled into my siblings and my head that it is the most important thing that no one could ever take from us. My parents did not have the opportunity to have a proper education because from a young age they were put to work or they were taking care of their younger siblings. They have always instilled

into us that school, as much as we hate it is our ticket to amazing opportunities and to be and do greater than them.

Though it may be difficult our parents always taught us to stay humble to wait for the blessing because they are coming for people who work for it. My parents, even through these especially rough times we are living in the moment, have always stayed positive. My dad tells me that the best way to beat a person who spews hate is to stay silent and prove that you are better than them.

43% of first-generation Latino children, 21% of those in the second generation and 5% in the third generation or higher are not fluent in English.

69% of first-generation Latino children live in married-couple families, compared with 73% of second-generation children and just 52% in the third generation or higher.