

# First 5 San Joaquin Preschool Program

## Manteca Unified School District

### Supporting Dual Language Learners



The Manteca Unified School District (MUSD) receives funding from First 5 San Joaquin to invest in preschool in partnership with Creative Child Care, Inc. and Kids Academy to serve vulnerable children and families. This includes children who are learning English as a second language (i.e., dual language learners).

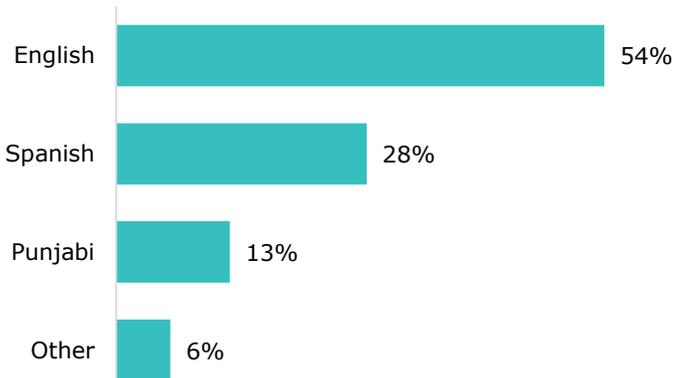
The purpose of this brief is to highlight the key strategies used across First 5 San Joaquin funded preschool programs to support and engage dual language learners and their families. It also presents data specific to MUSD First 5 Preschools. This includes the diversity of languages spoken by children in their care as well as the impact of their engagement efforts on participating dual language learners, their families, and classroom quality.

## Strategies to Engage Dual Language Learners and their Families

First 5 San Joaquin preschools implement a number of strategies to welcome, support, and engage dual language learners and their families. They include:

- **Materials in multiple languages** to support children's early literacy and language development in English and their primary language.
- **Parent Advisory Meetings** with translation services to keep families informed and engaged.
- **Staff** that represent the different cultures and languages of children and families in their care.
- **Professional development** to help teachers increase their capacity to support dual language learners and their families.
- **Asset-based approaches** to recognize all home languages as contributing to the learning environment.

## Languages Spoken by Preschool Children



Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding of decimal places.

In Fiscal Year 2018-2019, Creative Child Care and Kids Academy First 5 Preschools served 350 children ages 3-5 across seven sites: Great Valley, Joshua Cowell, Kids Academy, Lathrop, Lincoln, Sequoia, and Widmer Elementary Schools. Of the children who participated, slightly more than half (54%) spoke English as their primary language, 28 percent spoke Spanish, 13 percent spoke Punjabi, and six percent spoke another language such as Tagalog, American Sign Language, Farsi, Laotian, and Arabic.

## Supporting Dual Language Learner's Early Literacy Development

MUSD First 5 Preschools include several strategies to help dual language learners develop their early literacy skills. These strategies include:

**Hiring Spanish speaking staff** - In addition to hiring Spanish speaking teachers, many staff (while they don't speak multiple languages) understand the language well enough to communicate with their students.

**Including experience-based learning** - Using real world examples and physical objects during lessons helps children attach meanings to their senses and experiences.



**100%** of MUSD First 5 classrooms met quality standards for using practices that promote diversity



**100%** of MUSD First 5 classrooms were rated as meeting quality standards related to emotional support, classroom organization, or instructional support



**93%** of dual language learners were "building" or "integrating" English into their language at the end of the program, compared to just 39 percent at the start of the program

“*There are pictures and real items brought into the classroom. I saw a book being read the other day about acorns and the teachers had a whole bag of acorns they passed around to the children. That approach supports English language learners.*”

- MUSD School Readiness Staff

## Engaging Parents of Dual Language Learners

Of the parents of dual language learners who completed a parent satisfaction survey...

**100%**

reported their MUSD preschool communicates with them in a language they feel comfortable



**93%**

reported their MUSD preschool respects all cultures and diversity



**83%**

reported their MUSD preschool involves them in their child's education



MUSD First 5 Preschools highlight its strong engagement with parents of dual language learners as key to the effectiveness of its program. Staff primarily engage parents of dual language learners through the following:

**Connecting with parents early on** - At the start of the program, school readiness staff develop a flyer with available parent involvement activities. They also call and follow up with parents who indicate interest in participating.

**Offering parent involvement activities, such as Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, to empower parents** - In addition to offering parent advisory meetings and book clubs in Spanish, MUSD offers the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors program in the fall and spring. Abriendo Puertas/Opening Door aims to build parent leadership skills and knowledge through in-person trainings. It is led by a bilingual parent, which has helped to build trust among the group of parents.

**Providing child care** - MUSD offers child care during parent involvement activities so parents can more fully participate.

“*[We aim to] empower parents to advocate for themselves and their children. We want them to leave preschool understanding the [school] system.*”

- MUSD School Readiness Staff