

# First 5 San Joaquin Preschool Program

## Stockton Unified School District

### Supporting Dual Language Learners



The Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) receives funding from First 5 San Joaquin to support preschools that 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 SUSD 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, SUSD First 5 Preschools served 72 children ages 3-5 across three sites: Fillmore, Henry, and Hong Kingston Elementary Schools. Of the children who participated, about half (51%) spoke Spanish as their primary language, 47 percent spoke English as their primary language, and one percent spoke Punjabi.

## Supporting Dual Language Learner's Early Literacy Development

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

**Using interactive instructional approaches -** SUSD curricula incorporates several approaches such as Total Physical Response and Realia that emphasize experience-based language learning. A focus on oral language distinguishes students who are still focused on acquisition from those who are language producers themselves.

**Providing flexible professional development -** SUSD preschool teachers improve their knowledge of supporting dual language learners literacy through the summer learning institute, monthly in-person workshops through the county, and online instruction.

**Offering adult learning classes -** Children's learning is bolstered by additional language support for parents who are given the opportunity to attend ESL (English as a Second Language) classes at the same time their children attend preschool.



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



**100%** of SUSD First 5 classrooms were rated as meeting quality standards related to emotional support



**78%** of dual language learners were "building" or "integrating" English into their language at the end of the program, compared to 59 percent at the beginning of the program

*"We use an interactive approach in the classroom so children are immersed in the learning and can understand even if they might not have the vocabulary quite yet to express themselves."*

*- SUSD Administrator of Early Childhood Education Department*

## Engaging Parents of Dual Language Learners

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



**100%**

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



**100%**

reported their SUSD preschool respects all cultures and diversity



**100%**

reported they have a positive relationship with their child's SUSD teacher



**100%**

reported their child gets exposed to their home language(s) at their SUSD preschool

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

**Offering multiple levels of parent engagement -** In addition to district-wide planning through the parent engagement department, SUSD has monthly Parent Advisory Committee meetings and on-site translation for registration and enrollment needs.

**Providing a bilingual social service case manager -** This dedicated position serves to help communicate information to parents, whether through parent-teacher conferences or in delivering the results of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (a developmental screening tool). The case manager also helps with referrals to services for families in need.