



EARLY EDGE
CALIFORNIA

Supporting Young Multilingual Learners and Their Families

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Who are California's young children?

Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are children, birth to age five, learning two or more languages simultaneously or learning a second language while developing their home language.



More than two-thirds of California's young children are children of color.ⁱⁱ



California is home to the nation's largest population of DLLs.ⁱⁱⁱ



60 percent of children under age six are from homes in which languages other than English are spoken.^{iv}

Focus Groups and Survey

CA Rate Reform and Quality Stakeholder Workgroup:

- **Methodology:** Families with young children from historically underserved communities
 - 14 focus groups: 110 parents with children ages 0-5
 - Statewide survey: nearly 3,900 respondents with children ages 0-12
- Families shared early learning and care needs, aspects of quality they wanted, and support their children needed.

Black Families – Bay Area & LA County

Latinx Families – Orange County & LA County

Pacific Islander Families – Bay Area & Orange County

Hmong Families – Central Valley

Indigenous/Native American Families – Statewide

Farmworker Families – Statewide

Somali Refugee Families – San Diego County

Young Parents (ages 18 to 24) – LA County

Families from Rural Communities –
Del Norte/Humboldt & San Bernardino/Riverside

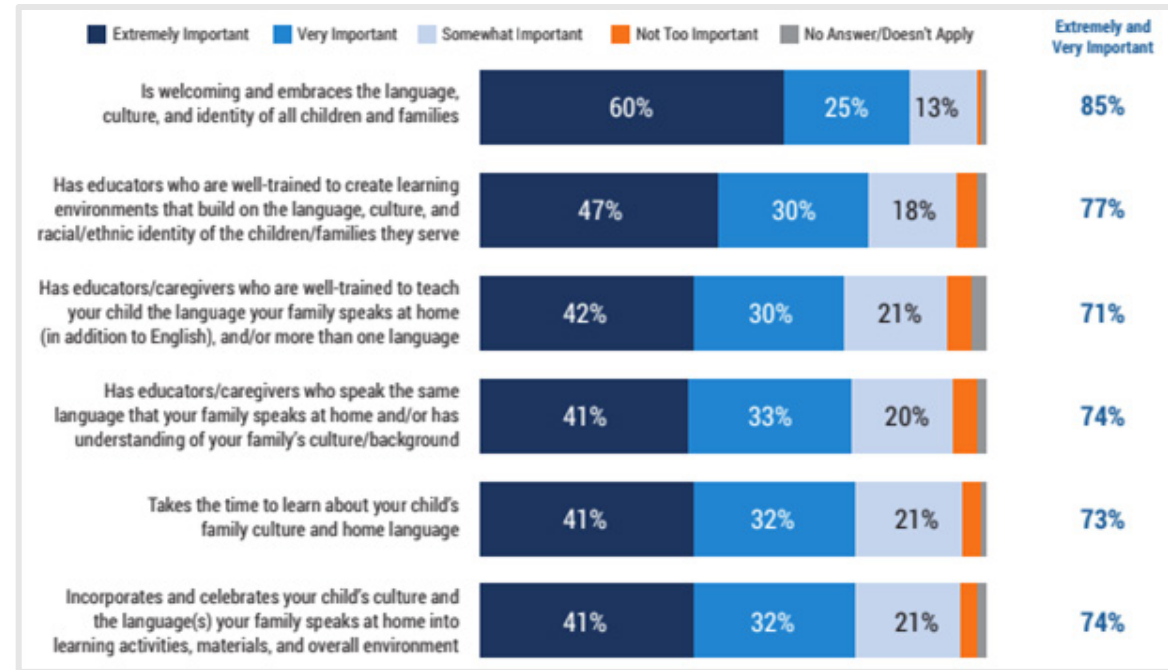
Families from San Joaquin County

Families from Central Coast

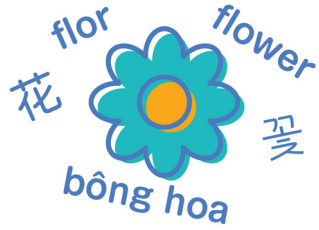


What do California's families want for their children?

- Families shared the importance of ensuring their children saw themselves reflected in their early learning environment through positive and empowering representations of their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities.
- Families also shared that teaching and learning in multiple languages, including children's home languages was important.



| Question | Extremely Important | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Too Important | No Answer/Doesn't Apply | Extremely and Very Important |
|--|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Is welcoming and embraces the language, culture, and identity of all children and families | 60% | 25% | 13% | 1% | 1% | 85% |
| Has educators who are well-trained to create learning environments that build on the language, culture, and racial/ethnic identity of the children/families they serve | 47% | 30% | 18% | 4% | 2% | 77% |
| Has educators/caregivers who are well-trained to teach your child the language your family speaks at home (in addition to English), and/or more than one language | 42% | 30% | 21% | 5% | 3% | 71% |
| Has educators/caregivers who speak the same language that your family speaks at home and/or has understanding of your family's culture/background | 41% | 33% | 20% | 5% | 2% | 74% |
| Takes the time to learn about your child's family culture and home language | 41% | 32% | 21% | 4% | 1% | 73% |
| Incorporates and celebrates your child's culture and the language(s) your family speaks at home into learning activities, materials, and overall environment | 41% | 32% | 21% | 3% | 2% | 74% |



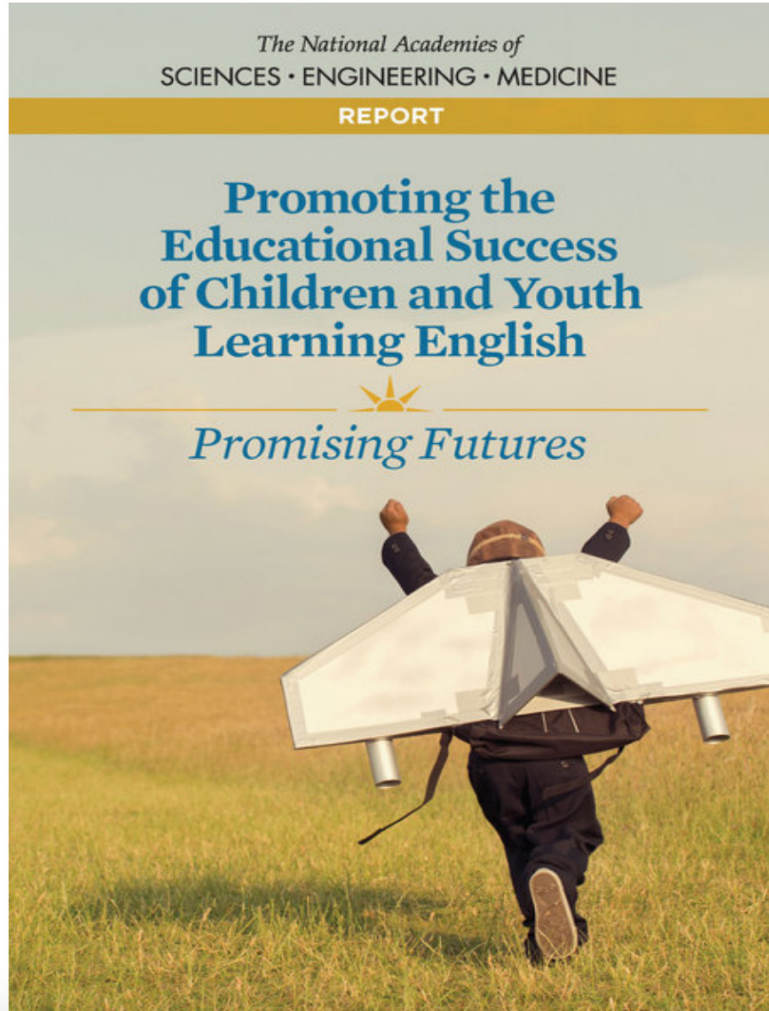
Family Voices

“It’s important for the children to speak more than one language [...] Also, their own mother tongue [...] if they learn English and their mother tongue, that will keep them to stay within their culture and learn more about other cultures and their identities too.” — Somali Parent

He likes the assistant because she is bilingual. So, he knows how to ask for help...expresses himself more with her. So, I think it is very important also for the culture so they don’t lose the language, so the teachers understand them...add a little Spanish [book] for the children that speak Spanish in the class.” — Latinx Parent

Key Research

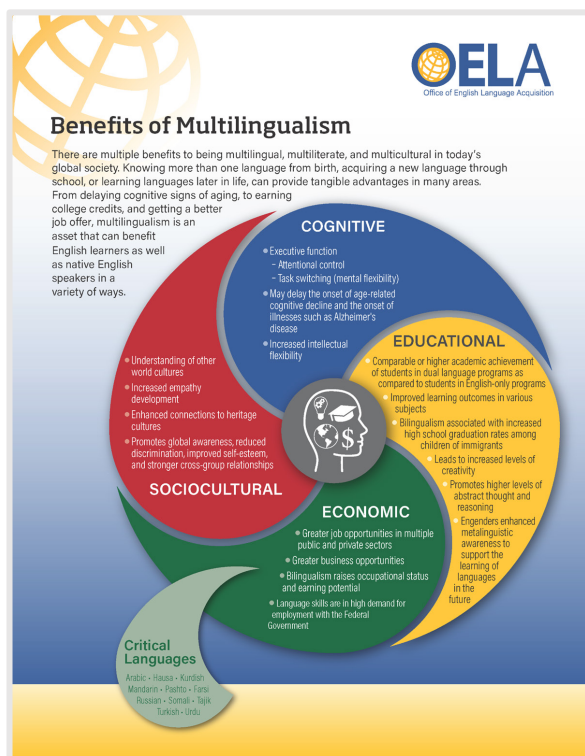
- A child's first 5 years are critical for brain and language development
- Strong home language supports learning English and academic achievement



“All the research, from birth to age 21, tells us that in order [for DLLs] to succeed in English, we have to support that first language. That is going to be the foundation upon which the second language will flourish.”

-Dr. Linda Espinosa,
National DLL Expert

Why is it important to support their home language?



[View infographic](#) ➤

Benefits of Multilingualism

COGNITIVE

- Executive function
- May delay the onset of illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease
- Increased intellectual flexibility

EDUCATIONAL

- Comparable or higher academic achievement of students in dual language programs as compared to students in English-only programs
- Improved learning outcomes in various subjects
- Increased high school graduation rates

ECONOMIC

- Better job opportunities in multiple public & private sectors
- Greater business opportunity
- Bilingualism raises occupational status & earning potential

SOCIOCULTURAL

- Enhanced connections to heritage language and cultures
- Promotes global awareness, reduced discrimination, improved self-esteem, & increased empathy

What Policies Are Needed to Support Multilingual Children?

Key Master Plan Recommendations:

- Ensure **DLLs are identified** across the mixed delivery system
- Establish an **ECE and P-3 infrastructure** that includes an explicit focus on meeting DLL children's needs
- Provide early educators with access to **training/professional development** focused on serving DLLs
- Support IHEs to **effectively prepare the ECE workforce** to support DLLs

