

Introduction

This report presents the results of a formative review of family engagement practices across the nine school districts engaging in First 5 Sacramento's School Readiness Initiative. By documenting the similarities and differences in family engagement practices across the partner sites, these data can be used to inform standardization of such practices where possible.

Study Sample and Methods

The sample included all nine school districts that participate in First 5 Sacramento's School Readiness Initiative, including:

- Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD)
- Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD)
- Galt Joint Union Elementary School District (GJUESD)
- Natomas Unified School District (NUSD)
- River Delta Unified School District (RDUSD)
- Robla Elementary School District (RESA)
- Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD)
- San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD)
- Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD)

The methods to gather data included interviews with district School Readiness staff and review of district School Readiness staff responses to a programmatic questionnaire. ASR separately interviewed School Readiness staff from each of the nine districts. All names of staff have been suppressed in this report to protect the privacy of participants.

There were commonalities and variations found among the nine school districts funded by First 5. These patterns are presented in the following tables, organized by core programmatic areas within the Initiative:

- Family Literacy
- Parenting Education
- Home Visiting
- Transition Orientation
- Parent Conferences

Family Literacy

Eight out of nine districts offer two or more family literacy categories of service.

Districts offer family literacy activities across five service categories: 1) take-home reading program, 2) varied literacy programs/events – open to all, 3) Latino family literacy/Latino student literacy, 4) parent workshop or class on literacy, and 5) English-language classes for parents.

Three districts specifically tailor their programs to be culturally responsive for their families. RDUSD invests in providing bilingual books for their Raising a Reader book bag program and EGUSD encourages families to develop their own culturally-appropriate reading routines at home, instead of prescribing a “one model fits all” routine for families to adopt. Moreover, FCUSD invests in personalizing their Latino Family Literacy Program curriculum to encourage family cultural celebrations by assigning a family storybook project that culminates in a potluck sharing celebration that honors the diversity of family cultures.

The figure below further describes Family Literacy activities across the nine districts.

Fig. 1: Family Literacy Activities

Activity or resource	# Districts Providing Activity	Promoted how? Attendance?	What curriculum? Minimum # of Sessions?	What works well and why?	What is challenging and why?	Outcomes
<p>Take home reading program</p> <p>Apple Bag - 2 Book Bags - 1 Raising a Reader – 3 Robla Reads – 1 Buzzy Bee Reader/Junior Amazing Reader - 1</p>	7	<p>Promotion: Flyers, school web site, word of mouth, Facebook, Robo calls, information in enrollment packet, information at orientation, reminder at workshop. Attendance: 50-60 bags per classroom, 315-400 parents reached through promotion.</p>	<p>Curriculum: Take-home rotating book bags with activities; classrooms have a lending library; accompanying parent orientation workshop Minimum # sessions: Rotate weekly or bi-weekly throughout year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-stop place for families to access materials Convenient for families to self-direct and schedule Child can read independently or with caregiver Focus on diversity and social-emotional learning Bilingual books available. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating the return of book bags (families forget/lose) Damaged books need replacement. <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask a parent volunteer to coordinate Home Visitor can coordinate Use incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and caregivers learn the importance of literacy Families establish culturally appropriate reading routines, have an increased exposure to books and opportunities to decrease the vocabulary gap.
<p>Varied Literacy Programs/Events – open to all</p> <p>Story Time – 1 Family Reading Nights – 1 Library Club – 1 Family Fridays – 1 Mom (1)/Dad (2) literacy engagement events First 5 Express – 1 Family Literacy Harvest Event – 1</p>	6	<p>Promotion: Flyers, school web site, word of mouth, Facebook, Robo calls, personal invite, social media posts, school newsletter, parent engagement app, posters, reminders day before and day-of, teacher-parent communication. Attendance: Programs attract 20-70 adults per site (av. 40-60); large annual events attract approximately 300 people.</p>	<p>Curriculum: On-going interactive family literacy activities utilizing librarian, or one-time classroom activities with literacy, parent meetings with librarian Minimum # sessions: Varies per program from weekly series to 3x/year to one-time large annual events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High family attendance due to interactive curriculum Parents gain understanding of the importance of reading to their children, how to engage children in the story through questions, and activities that tie back to the story Convenient and short opportunities at drop-off for families to join activities Tie literacy into family holiday celebrations (Muffins for Moms/Donuts for Dads) Food provided and book prizes add incentive to attend. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare for younger siblings Classroom space Consistent attendance for class series Parents chat instead of interacting with their child Working parents can't attend daytime events Language translation requests at events. <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design interactive activities to engage all ages Utilize School Community Workers to provide extra language support during events. 	<p>Families learn;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of establishing a family reading routine Importance of family literacy and development of pre-reading, oral language, pre-writing, and phonological awareness At-home strategies to support the development of these skills To be more comfortable accessing services/staff on school campuses.

Activity or resource	# Districts Providing Activity	Promoted how? Attendance?	What curriculum? Minimum # of Sessions?	What works well and why?	What is challenging and why?	Outcomes
<p>Latino Family Literacy</p> <p>Parent/Family Program - 4</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Promotion: Flyers, teacher-parent communication, reminders day before and day-of, Facebook, word of mouth, Robo calls, school newsletters, reminders and posters in English and Spanish, recruitment at school events.</p> <p>Attendance: 8-15 total adults per site</p>	<p>Curriculum: Parent program – Teaches early literacy and strategies for supporting dual language learners El Cielo – English classes for parents focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking .</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: Parent program – Varies 3-10 week series; El Cielo – 2x/week throughout year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnering with district Family and Community Engagement dept. to provide co-facilitator and childcare Interactive curriculum Partnering with school sites to provide space; Providing take-home activities and books to promote literacy/build at-home library Potlucks and sharing of family storybook project; Inclusion of additional interested cultural groups (i.e., Indian) 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting families to attend every class in the series Decline in district enrollment of Spanish speaking families due to fear of deportation (ICE) and district requirements for parent volunteers to be immunized and fingerprinted. <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raffles, prizes; offer as drop-in classes Investing in personal and direct teacher-parent communication to build trusting relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families learn the importance of maintaining their home language and culture Families become more comfortable accessing services/staff on school campuses Parents form connections with each other and expand their own social network
<p>Parent workshop or class on literacy</p> <p>Parent/Class Meeting on Literacy – 2 Parent Chat – 1 Junior Amazing Reader Workshop- 1</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Promotion: Flyers, teacher-parent communication, reminders day before and day-of, teacher newsletters, whiteboard outside classroom.</p> <p>Attendance: 70-80% of families, approximately 24 parents/session.</p>	<p>Curriculum: How parents can support their child’s literacy development, teachers/staff align parent class or workshop content on literacy to support classroom curriculum on literacy.</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: 3 workshops per year per classroom or one-time literacy-themed class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare is provided for all parent meetings, or are held during class time “Push-style” workshop during school time engages parents at drop-off Giveaways include individual white boards with dry erase markers, backpacks with school supplies and activity kits. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daytime events during school are hard for working parents Teacher union issues raised when teachers asked to present event in evenings during non-school hours <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage any relative to attend daytime events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents learn how to support their child’s literacy development at home Builds children’s pre-reading (and pre-math) skills Parents gain familiarity with teacher and build school/home relationship

<p>Latino Parent Literacy Ongoing, English classes for parents "El Cielo" - 1</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Promotion: Flyers, teacher-parent communication, reminders day before and day-of, Facebook, word of mouth, Robo calls, school newsletters, reminders and posters in English and Spanish, recruitment at school events. Attendance: 15 per session</p>	<p>Curriculum: English classes for parents focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking . Minimum # sessions: 2x/week throughout year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom climate is inclusive, and students feel comfortable practicing language. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families become more comfortable accessing services/staff on school campuses; Parents form connections with each other and expand their own social network Parents increase their English language skills.
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Source: School Resource Coordinator Interviews, April 2020

Parenting Education

All nine districts employ a variety of parenting education activities, and five districts specifically design these activities toward parent-identified interest and/or topical need.

While all nine districts provide parenting education activities that span multiple topics, five districts have developed parent education activities in response to parent interest or need. Playgroup and preschool teachers utilize their existing relationship with parents and children and tailor trainings according to what is currently happening in the classroom, as opposed to only relying upon standardized curriculum. This approach reflects ideal practices of responsive program improvement. SJUSD additionally encourages families to bring a cultural food dish to a concluding session to celebrate diversity and encourage social interaction. RDUSD learned to adapt the timing of their parent education activities to appeal to their families’ cultural preferences/expectations of having family dinner together by providing parent education activities in the evening that include a meal and are open to the entire family. This encourages whole-family participation (including fathers).

The figure below further describes the commonalities and variance among the nine districts’ approaches to Parent Education.



Fig. 2: Parenting Education

Activity or resource	# Districts Providing Activity	Promoted how? Attendance?	What curriculum? Minimum # of Sessions?	What works well and why?	What is challenging and why?	Outcomes
<p>One-Time Parenting Education Class or Event</p> <p>Class Meeting – 1 Family Fun Nights – 1 Behavior Management – 2 Brain Development – 1 Winter Wonderland – 1 Pedestrian Safety – 1</p>	7	<p>Promotion: Flyers, teacher-parent communication, reminders day before and day-of, Facebook, word of mouth, Robo calls, school newsletters, reminders and posters, recruitment at school events</p> <p>Attendance: Varies from 5-15 parents per site by some, noted as “highly attended” by others.</p>	<p>Curriculum: Developed by School Readiness staff, district School Psychologist/district Mental Health Specialist, Migrant Education Department</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: one-time, topics rotate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Push-style” workshop during school time engages parents at drop-off when there’s already high engagement and children are in school • Teacher already has a relationship with parent and child and can tailor the training to what is currently happening in the classroom. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is hard getting families to come if they don’t have other children attending campus, especially early in the morning • Space availability on school sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies by topic; overall parent and child having a positive interaction.
<p>Parenting Education Class Series</p> <p>Health & Nutrition – 4 Making Parenting a Pleasure– 2 Love & Logic – 1 Family Communication & Problem Solving – 1 Supporting Positive Behavior in Children – 1 You Make the Difference – 1</p>	6	<p>Promotion: Flyers, teacher-parent communication, reminders day before and day-of, teacher newsletters, whiteboard outside classroom, Facebook, Robo calls, reminders and posters in English and Spanish.</p> <p>Attendance: Varies from 3-36 parents per site, depending upon topic (Nutrition highly attended)</p>	<p>Curriculum: Developed by district health team of nurses, District Community Liaison, UC Cooperative Extension, district Social Worker, district ESL staff, La Familia Counseling Center, West-Ed, Love & Logic, Ready Rosie, Strengthening Families, Kernels, MPP</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: Varies from 3-16 week series</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding celebration for participants to talk about what they enjoyed, what they are looking forward to, and how they are using the information • Parents love hands-on cooking experience which allows them to better receive the nutritional information • Facilitators create an environment of safety to express yourself. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes in a series are more difficult, (drop in classes with topics that do not build upon each other are easier for our families) • Parents less likely to come back if they miss a class. • Culturally, women may want to be home to cook dinner for their families • Providing translation. <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timing of classes is important, and it is important to provide a meal at the classes, so that the entire family attends. This also increases the chances of fathers attending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies by topic; overall parent and child having a positive interaction.

Source: School Resource Coordinator Interviews, April 2020

Home Visiting

Three out of nine districts employ home visiting intensive support activities funded by First 5 and tailor home visits toward specific family needs to offer increased support and to encourage a school/home connection.

While three districts provide home visiting intensive support funded by First 5 Sacramento, it is important to note that the six other districts shared that they have district-level efforts in place to provide other forms of intensive support. One district noted that they utilize their First 5 Van Outreach program to provide intensive support to families in need on-site at schools, particularly during pick up, drop off, and special events.

The three districts providing home visiting services through First 5 tailor their home visits to meet the specific needs of each family. Programs are flexible about the location of where home visits take place, noting that some families in severe poverty are hesitant to invite school staff into their home (as there might be nowhere to offer the home visitor to sit), so often an alternate location is selected in the community, such as a Family Resource Center. As an example of a home visit activity, one teacher provided the materials to make pancakes with a child and a family to show parents how to incorporate their child into cooking with the family and emphasized the positive learning opportunities that can come from those family interactions and activities. Additionally, one district developed a tracking system to help log home visit follow-up and referrals to ensure that everyone in their system of support receives the assistance they need and trained staff to view home visiting as a positive opportunity for school and families to connect around areas of support, to ease tensions and increase family acceptance of services. Overall, RDUSD staff commented that *“families who participate in the Home Visiting program are more likely to get involved in preschool and elementary school, and the transition to preschool seems easier for families who have received this service.”*

The figure below further describes Intensive Support (Home Visiting) activities, and the commonalities and variance among the nine districts.

Fig. 3: Home Visiting

Activity or resource	# Districts Providing Activity	Promoted how? Attendance?	What curriculum? Minimum # of Sessions?	What works well and why?	What is challenging and why?	Outcomes
Home Visiting (HV) – light touch	2	<p>Promotion: Flyers, Facebook, word of mouth, Robocalls home through the schools, school newsletters.</p> <p>Population served: Parents who may not qualify for preschool through the district but want to prepare their child for kinder, parents who are really struggling and need help (housing, transportation, therapy, etc.).</p>	<p>Curriculum: Preschool teachers conduct HV and develop their own curriculum, district provides tips.</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: one-time visits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility about the location of the home visit • Training staff to support families to ease tension and create a more positive tone • Following up and tracking referrals so no one falls through the cracks. 	<p>Challenging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling: parents sometimes cancel with no notice or are not at home during their scheduled visit due to forgetting • Staff hesitancy to conduct home visits • Parental distrust around the purpose and tone of HVs. <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visitor sending reminder texts • Train staff on how to set a positive tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families receive information on child development, developmental screenings, activities, and support from the HV in any resource area needed to ensure children are prepared for school • Builds school/home relationship
Home Visiting (HV) – intensive	1	<p>Promotion: Flyers, Facebook, word of mouth, Robocalls home through the schools, school newsletters.</p> <p>Attendance: Home visitor has capacity for 20 families, there is a waiting list (3-4, but it moves quickly).</p> <p>Population served: Families who lack transportation to attend Playgroup sessions. 20 families annually.</p>	<p>Curriculum: Save the Children Curriculum: Early Steps to School Success.</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: Each family 2x/month</p>		<p>Challenging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling: parents sometimes cancel with no notice or are not at home during their scheduled visit due to forgetting <p>Shared tips:</p> <p>Home visitor sending reminder texts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families who participate in the HV program are more likely to get involved in preschool, elementary school, and the transition to pre-school seems easier for families who have received this service

Source: School Resource Coordinator Interviews, April 2020

Transition Orientation

The most common transition services provided by all nine districts are orientations or parent meetings to prepare for student transitions.

While all nine districts provide some form of orientation or parent meetings for various student transitions, four districts provide orientation activities for children entering both preschool and kindergarten. Moreover, seven out of nine districts provide orientation or parent meetings for preparing for kindergarten. Similarly, six out of nine districts reported providing preschool orientations. Across all districts, genuine intention, coordination, and implementation goes into each transition service provided to ensure that students and families are prepared for and supported in successful school transitions.

Four districts provide transition services beyond the categories listed below. Notably, RDUSD leverages their partnership with the PTA, who sponsors the annual Ice Cream Social at the conclusion of their transition orientations. This event deepens First 5 relationships with schools and families already in attendance by promoting First 5 kindergarten readiness resources. EGUSD additionally hosts a Kindergarten Transitional Community Collaborative (KTCC) to provide early education care providers an opportunity to collaborate and learn research-based instructional practices that prepare students for transitions from preschool through Kindergarten. RDUSD and SJUSD assist in their district's kindergarten registration events, utilizing the opportunity to promote First 5 School Readiness services. As RDUSD staff explains, *"We have a mass turn-out for registering Kinders, can give info, share about Kinder visits, meet Kinder teachers, and learn about Kinder Camp."*

The figure below further describes the commonalities and variations among the nine districts' approaches to Transition Orientation.



Fig. 4: Transition Orientation

Activity or resource	# Districts Providing Activity	Promoted how? Attendance?	What curriculum? Minimum # of Sessions?	What works well and why?	What is challenging and why?	Outcomes
<p>Orientations/ Parent Meetings</p> <p>Preschool – 6 Pre-K – 1 TK/Kindergarten – 5 Parent Meetings for Kinder Prep – 3</p>	9	<p>Promotion: Flyers, bulletin boards, announcements, teacher-parent communication, reminders day before and day-of, personal invitation, phone calls, marquee, extend invitation at other family engagement events, notified at enrollment.</p> <p>Attendance: Approximately 200-315 parents attend per district.</p>	<p>Curriculum: PPT preschool teachers can modify, kindergarten teachers present information, registration information.</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: 1 orientation day (and 1 classroom day- varies by district) before caregivers can leave their child at school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom visits/campus tours ease anxiety Providing incentives encourages attendance and excitement (books, First 5 tote bags with parent/child activities, school materials to promote fine motor skills) Teachers can tailor trainings based upon existing student/family relationships. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space large enough to manage number of participants Translation requests and heavy paper work make it feel rushed Daytime hard to attend for working parents Frequently changed contact information. <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure so that kids have outside playtime while teachers talk with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares parents and children to feel comfortable and be ready to learn, to understand school expectations, and to experience school as a support for children’s learning at home.
<p>Kinder Camp</p> <p>*While 4 districts listed camp in their interviews, 5 districts provided camp in summer 2019 (+NUSD).</p>	*4	<p>Promotion: Flyers to all schools and community organizations, district web site, flyer and application to all children enrolling in TK or K, phone calls, preschool teacher recommendations for children most in need.</p> <p>Attendance: 75-80 children per district</p>	<p>Curriculum: Frog Street curriculum, Creative Curriculum: The Flower Study</p> <p>Minimum # sessions: 4 weeks, 3-4 hours/day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Backpacks filled with school materials to promote fine motor skills and Kinder Transition Packet for parents given away at Parent Meetings excite and prepare Hold camp in kindergarten classrooms to prepare students Provide camp teachers with materials and roll over unused materials for Kindergarten teachers in the fall. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited class-room and campus spaces Translation services needed at all steps from recruitment phone calls to registration forms assistance (particularly in Farsi and Dari) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions promote academics, self-regulation, and social emotional development, allowing children to thrive and develop readiness to start Kindergarten. Parents and children feel connected to their school and ready to learn.

Source: School Resource Coordinator Interviews, April 2020

Parent Conferences

All nine districts hold parent-teacher conference activities

While all nine districts hold parent-teacher conferences, there is variance among the ways these activities are utilized. Five districts conduct standard parent-teacher conferences either once or twice a year to check in on student progress and to deepen the school-home connection. Four districts target parent conferences as a way to reassess developmental delays by either scoring and reviewing student Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDPs) at biannual parent conferences to help parents understand their child's development and to determine whether there is need to rescreen for potential developmental delays or by instituting biannual re-screenings of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire at parent conferences. Worth noting is that while other sites may not utilize parent conferences for reassessment, some do offer reassessment through other processes (see ASR Spring 2020 report on Developmental Screenings for further details). Notably, RDUSD additionally conducts one-on-one ASQ parent conferences to explain to parents the developmental screening process, results, and referrals available, while providing translation services when needed, to ensure parent awareness and understanding. Overall, the nine districts agree that parent-teacher conferences provide meaningful opportunities for families to connect with the school and to discover new ways to support their children's learning and development.

The figure below further describes Parent Conference activities, and the commonalities and variance among the nine districts.

Fig. 5: Parent Conferences

Activity or resource	# Districts Providing Activity	Promoted how? Attendance?	What curriculum? Minimum # of Sessions?	What works well and why?	What is challenging and why?	Outcomes
<p>Parent Conferences</p> <p>Parent-Teacher – 5 Parent-Teacher plus consider rescreen – 3 Parent-Teacher plus ASQ rescreen – 1</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>Promotion: Scheduled through sign-ups, flyers, personal invites, reminders, social media, newsletter, phone calls. Attendance: “Very high,” “High,” “80% of families.”</p>	<p>Curriculum: Teacher-led, review DRDPs, language support as needed. Some sites do all 1-1 meetings, others do Parent Meetings with 1-1s where needed. Minimum # sessions: 2 per year (fall and spring); fall mandatory, spring as needed; summer Parent Meeting only.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and parents connect and share experiences and resources to work in collaboration Parents have an opportunity to learn where their child is in their development and how they can support their child at home Parents are offered referrals when appropriate. 	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent availability during daytime hours. <p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can follow-up individually with parents who are unable to attend (rare). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents have an idea of where they can support their child and in what areas.
<p>ASQ Parent Conferences</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Promotion: Scheduled individually. Attendance: Responsive.</p>	<p>Curriculum: Opportunity to explain screening process, results, referral to parents. Minimum # sessions: Schedule as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-1 time to help parents understand the ASQ, areas of concern, activities to strengthen these areas, have conversations about referrals. 	<p>Shared tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide language support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are more knowledgeable about their child’s development Early intervention/ referrals can occur in a timely manner.

Source: School Resource Coordinator Interviews, April 2020

The family support and engagement activities portrayed in this report exclude developmental, hearing, vision, or dental screenings for children. In addition to the above-mentioned activities, three districts listed other district-level family support and engagement activities that did not fall within First 5's main service areas, but are still supported by First 5's services, such as Family Game Night, Parent Coffee Chats, Parent Collaboratives, Car Seat Safety class, Open House, Back to School event, Resource Fairs, school newsletters, and the Sacramento Covered Partnership (for providing families with health system referrals). Additionally, several districts deploy an annual parent survey to provide *"an opportunity for parents to voice their opinions about our program... to develop an action plan for improvement"*(FCUSD). These family support and engagement efforts strengthen the school/home connection by providing fun, informative, and needed resources directly to families and help build protective factors for families.

Other Findings

Safety Concerns of Immigrant Families

In regard to school safety and trust, EGUSD described their investment to intentionally build genuine, supportive relationships between teachers and Spanish-speaking non-citizen families to alleviate their hesitancy to be on school campuses due to fear of possible deportation. This district notes that families have shared that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) often circles around neighboring school communities and that their district has new requirements for parent volunteers to be fingerprinted and immunized; subsequently, this district has experienced a decline in enrollment of Spanish-speaking families. To ease this tension, staff invest diligently in one-on-one relationship-building with all families to create a sense of school safety and trust.



Recommendations

Based on the data gathered regarding successes and challenges with family engagement across the 9 partner school districts, the following may be considered as promising practices for each district:

Overall

- **Short-Term Engagement Incentives:** Provide parents with take-home incentives, such as books, educational materials, bags, blankets, and food in order to increase parent participation and extend the reach of First 5 Sacramento messaging.
- **Long-Term Engagement Incentives:** Consider retention strategies, such as EGUSD's *Parent Passport* incentive program, which rewards parents with a highly desired incentive after attending four School Readiness family engagement events.
- **Staff Training:** Investment in staff training leads to improved approaches and outcomes for family support and engagement. These investments could include staff certification in event facilitation (which "*greatly impacted the success of family engagement events*"), and having staff attend the National Family Engagement Conference.
 - **Shared tip:** Families are more likely to engage with facilitators who offer a less didactic, more informal hands-on presentation style. Staff should be trained on how to offer sessions in this manner. "*It's important to listen and think about how the event can be purposeful and joyful for our families.*"
- **Advanced Planning:** Each district is encouraged to establish or maintain regular internal *School Readiness Monthly Meetings*, whereby School Readiness staff can meet on a monthly basis to discuss services. Similarly, the entire team should participate in creating a *Program Plan* for each program as way to describe implementation, outline responsibilities per staff, and articulate parent engagement strategies. This *Plan* will help onboard new staff when there is turnover and avoid disruptions or inconsistencies with services. In addition, all School Readiness staff should participate in an *Annual Planning Meeting* to develop the order of events and a calendar for the entire year.
 - **Shared tip:** By incorporating the ideas of all School Readiness staff into planning, EGUSD discovered how to transform childcare at Parent Meetings from unstructured "babysitting" to *grant-funded childcare provided by playgroup teachers*, so that childcare activities mirror what the parents are learning.
- **Continuous Improvement:** After each event, invest time to re-evaluate event strategies and approaches as a team to make needed refinements for optimal success.

Family Literacy

- Ensure that family literacy events are culturally responsive in order to increase families' sense of safety and belonging at school readiness events.
- Pair up take-home literacy activities with parent workshops to strengthen literacy messages and parent awareness, understanding, and interest in participation.
- Identify at least one common element for family literacy activities across districts to strengthen evaluation and outcomes reporting.

Parenting Education

- Where possible, develop parenting education activities around parent interest or need, in order to pique parents' interest in the topics offered and increase engagement in the sessions.
- Offering parent education classes as both a series and as a one-time class provides more accessible ways for parents to engage.
- Identify at least one common element for parenting activities across districts to strengthen evaluation and outcomes reporting.

Home Visiting

- Use home visitation curricula to guide this service but allow for minor adaptations that do not compromise fidelity to increase the relevancy of support services for families.
- Develop a tracking system to help log home visiting sessions, action items and referrals to ensure that families receive the support they need.

Transition Orientation

- For those districts who are not already doing so, provide transition activities to support children's and families' readiness for entry to kindergarten.
- Establish and leverage collaborations with school and community partners (e.g., PTA, early education care providers) to increase the impact of First 5's School Readiness services and potentially provide cost savings.

Parent Conferences

- Convene conferences with parents twice a year to ensure that all students are continuously evaluated for potential developmental delays and that no student's needs go unnoticed.
- Provide one-on-one ASQ conferences with parents to explain the screening process, results, and referrals and ensure parents understand the resources available to support them in their child's learning and development.

Overall, this report is to be used to celebrate, inform, and clarify where family support and engagement efforts relate to program quality, to help inform the guidelines for the Request for Proposals for the next round of School Readiness funding.

"We believe that parents and guardians are their children's first and most influential teachers and that sustained family involvement in the education of their children contributes greatly to student achievement and a positive school environment."

– SCUSD, FCUSD, SJUSD

"It is also our goal to empower parents to be strong advocates for their child." – SCUSD
