# The Ethnic/Racial and Linguistic Diversity of Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP): Implications for Supporting Cultural Competency

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## Los Angeles Universal Preschool
- Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) is an independent public benefit corporation created in 2004 and funded by First 5 LA— the commission established by Proposition 10.
- LAUP’s goal is to make voluntary, high-quality preschool available to every 4-year-old child in Los Angeles County, regardless of their family’s income, by 2014.
- LAUP is guided by a 10-year Master Plan developed by hundreds of educators, parents, government officials, and business and community leaders.
- LAUP works to continuously improve quality of preschool programs through quality coaching, support, and the development of exemplary practices in a number of important areas.
- One of LAUP’s core values is to develop the capacity to be responsive to different cultural and language needs of families and children.

## Diversity and Cultural Competency
- Diversity is defined as variety or heterogeneity; in populations, variety based on cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic differences (among others) (Trumbull & Pachico, 2005).
- Supporting cultural diversity is defined by “recognizing the differences among students and families from different cultural groups, responding to those differences positively, and being able to interact effectively in a range of cultural environments” (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003).
- Research has shown the importance of supporting teacher cultural diversity and some states and national education organizations have developed teaching standards that incorporate cultural competencies (Trumbull & Pachico, 2005).

## Teacher-Student Ethnic/Racial Match
- Saft and Pianta (2001) found that preschool and kindergarten teachers’ ratings of teacher-student relationships were more positive for students of the same race as their teacher than for those who were a different race.
- Murray, Murray, and Waas (2008) found that kindergarten teachers’ ratings of emotional support, companionship, and overall teacher support were higher for students who were of the same race as their teacher than for those who were a different race.

The majority of LAUP classrooms have an ethnic match between Hispanic students and teachers. However, there is a high rate of mismatch between students and teachers for White, Asian, and African American students:
- In 108 LAUP classrooms with over 50% of Hispanic children, 92 (85%) have at least one Hispanic teacher.
- In 64 LAUP classrooms with one or more White children, 27 (42%) have at least one White teacher.
- In 53 LAUP classrooms with one or more Asian children, 6 (11%) have at least one Asian teacher.
- In 82 LAUP classrooms with one or more African American children, 39 (48%) have at least one African American teacher.

## Teacher-Student Linguistic Match
- Language percentages equal more than 100% because teachers could check all that apply.

Note: Data from both tables came from LAUP’s Classroom Demographic and Staff Information Surveys. LAUP teachers completed both surveys between October 2006 and April 2007. The Classroom Demographic Survey collected aggregated information from teachers about children in their classroom groups. Overall, 235 of 350 (68%) LAUP groups returned the survey covering 4,346 children. The Staff Information Survey was completed by all paid LAUP staff. Overall, 890 of 857 (81%) of LAUP staff members completed the survey.

## Language Spoken by LAUP Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>N=2173</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language percentages equal more than 100% because teachers could check all that apply.

## Teacher-Student Ethnic/Racial Match

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>N=316</th>
<th>N=489</th>
<th>N=325</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 108 LAUP classrooms with over 50% of Hispanic children, 92 (85%) have at least one Hispanic teacher.

## Teacher-Student Linguistic Match

- Studies have shown that bilingual students have higher academic achievement in English and other subjects when they are proficient in their first language (California Department of Education, 2007).

In LAUP classrooms, the majority of children who speak Spanish are likely to have a teacher who speaks Spanish. However, there is no relationship between staff ELL training and having ELL students.

In 63 LAUP classrooms with over 50% Spanish-speaking children, 56 (89%) have at least one teacher who speaks Spanish.

In 12 LAUP classrooms with over 50% children who speak only Spanish, all classrooms 12 (100%) have at least one teacher who speaks Spanish.

## Conclusions
- LAUP classrooms have a high rate of ethnic/racial and linguistic teacher-student match for Hispanic and Spanish-speaking students but not for other students.
- Given the ethnic/racial and linguistic diversity of LAUP, LAUP should continue to support and promote cultural competency among our providers.
- LAUP supports the cultural competency of providers through coaches.
- LAUP also provides professional development to coaches and providers to increase their knowledge and skills related to supporting Dual Language Learners and children with special needs.
- Results suggest that the need of professional development opportunities regarding cultural competency for providers to ensure that teachers are sensitive to the cultural diversity of children in their classrooms.