

August 13, 2014

Dear First 5 Alameda,

I am writing to let you know about the positive impact First 5 Pre-K Summer Program has had on my children in preparing them for Kindergarten. Living in Castro Valley has given my children many opportunities for educational growth, yet resources for socioeconomic disadvantage and/or bilingual families can be very challenging at times. Your program has provided families, like my own, with support in our children's learning and development bringing a positive outlook in our school community.

I am currently a stay at home mom while my husband works full-time. Unfortunately, our income did not allow for our children to attend a year-around Preschool. In addition, my husband and I have made a conscious decision to raise our children in a Bilingual home (Spanish is our primary language). It became necessary for our children to receive English Language Skills in order to make a smooth transition into Kindergarten. Thankfully, we found First 5 by searching 'no-cost preschools' online.

My expectations were exceeded by what our children learned in a matter of weeks with First 5 Pre-K Summer Program. Your teachers, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Koeller, and Mrs. Souza were extremely patient, warm and nurturing. My kids immediately gained confidence. They learned how to write, spell, use fine motor and social skills, rhythm and dance and improved their English vocabulary. In all, they overcame their fears and showed so much growth. In addition, your staff was understanding and supportive with our children speaking Spanish at home. It was the support and encouragement we needed as Parents to know that everything was going to be okay in Kindergarten.

Not only have our children benefited from your program but I, as well. I also attended your Parent Workshops. I believe it is necessary for First 5 Summer Pre-K to be funded and approved in our districts. The fundamentals of your program are crucial to our preschoolers and, if not equally, even more so beneficial to our EL Students in reaching English proficiency.

I plan to speak at the next CVUSD Board Meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm, to share what I have expressed to you in this letter with our community. I want to thank you for your dedication and wish you continuous success.

Sincerely,

Erika Camacho Barrera (Parent of Aiden & Nathalia Camacho)