Gaining a Better Understanding of ELL Students: The Number of Languages Spoken in the Home

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Percentage of Respondents who Reported Speaking More than One Language at Home

All Survey Respondents (n=10,336)
- One Language
- Two or more Languages

68% 32%

Of the respondents who reported a first language other than English (n=1,444)
- One Language
- Two or more Languages

5% 95%

A random sample of students who took the ACT® test in April 2016 was invited to participate in an online survey evaluating different English Language Learner (ELL) indicators (N = 52,500). As part of this initiative, students, regardless of whether they were ELL, were also asked how many languages they speak in the home. A total of 10,336 students responded.

Other recent ACT Research on ELL students includes:

Key Takeaways
- At least one out of three survey respondents speak more than one language in the home, even if English is the primary language.
- The percentage of students who reported that they speak more than one language at home (95%) is substantially higher when students indicate that their first language is not English.
- Of the small number of students whose first language was not English and who reported speaking only one language at home (5%, n = 74), that language was most often Spanish (60%) or Chinese (18%).

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