

## **Learning in Mother Tongue: Language Preferences in South Africa**

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**ABSTRACT** This study is based on the findings conducted to investigate children and parents' preferences of language of learning and teaching in grades 1 – 3. This study is a survey in which interviews and questionnaires were used to gather data from pupils, parents, school heads, Foundation Phase teachers and teachers in Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs). The sample consisted of fifty learners, forty parents, thirty school heads, hundred and fifty Foundation Phase teachers and twenty ECDs. Respondents were purposively selected from metropolitan, township and rural schools in Motheo district in Free State province in South Africa. The findings were that learners and parents preferred English as the language of instruction at Foundation Phase. It is recommended that there is a need for attitude change and thus a serious campaign for all stakeholders to appreciate the role played by the mother tongue in the early years of schooling.