

Transitional Kindergarten: Preparing California's Children to Succeed in Kindergarten



The **Kindergarten Readiness Act**, which will be implemented in more than 700 school districts throughout California next fall, is a historic reform to kindergarten education that gives our state an unparalleled opportunity to ensure our young learners are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Authored by Senator Joe Simitian and Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, and signed into law in 2010 by Gov. Schwarzenegger, the Act created transitional kindergarten. It is the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for students who are born between September and December. It also changed the kindergarten entry date from Dec. 2 to Sept. 1, so children enter kindergarten at age 5. The law phases in the new age requirement by moving the cutoff date one month a year for three years, beginning in the fall of 2012.



Transitional kindergarten supports our children's love of learning and gives them the gift of time to help them develop the social, emotional and academic skills they need to succeed in kindergarten. Approximately 130,000 children – including more than 52,000 English language learners and about 79,000 who attend Title I schools – will benefit from transitional kindergarten.

What is Transitional Kindergarten?

Transitional kindergarten is a critical reform that bridges the path from preschool to K-12 and gives our kids a head start that will yield huge payoffs in future academic success.

- Transitional kindergarten will offer children developmentally appropriate curriculum that is aligned with kindergarten standards. Classes will be taught by credentialed teachers from the K-12 system.
- Existing funding for these children with fall birthdays will be redirected to transitional kindergarten and will be used to employ existing teachers and classroom facilities.
- Transitional kindergarten is part of the public school system and is free for families.
- The law allows for a child born after Sept. 1 to still be admitted to kindergarten on a case-by-case basis if the parent or guardian applies for early admission and the school district agrees it would be in the best interest of the child.

For more information, visit www.preschoolcalifornia.org/tk



414 13th Street, Suite 500
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 271-0075 T
(510) 271-0707 F

Transitional Kindergarten in Local Communities

Transitional kindergarten will be implemented statewide in fall 2012. Other school districts throughout the state have offered programs similar to transitional kindergarten for years, and more than 20 have already implemented transitional kindergarten. These include Los Angeles Unified School District, San Diego Unified School District, Fresno Unified School District, Sacramento City Unified School District, Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District and Gilroy Unified School District.

Preparing for Successful Statewide Implementation

As the Kindergarten Readiness Act is implemented statewide, California can support local innovation by giving school districts the information they need to ensure successful implementation. This includes promoting best practices and models in curriculum, professional development, and family engagement, as well as showing where transitional kindergarten fits in relation to preschool and kindergarten standards. Some of this work has already begun and is available at www.tkcalifornia.org.

Transitional Kindergarten: A Winning Solution for California

- Research shows that children who attend kindergarten readiness programs like transitional kindergarten are more likely to do well in school and attend college.
- **Children** will be better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.
- **Parents** now have an additional option to ensure their children enter kindergarten with the maturity and skills they need to excel.
- **Schools** will benefit because children will be better prepared for success in school and less likely to be placed in special education and retained in later grades.
- **California's** economy will be strengthened by a well-educated, globally competitive workforce.

History is being made for California's young learners. The creation of transitional kindergarten marks the first time since kindergarten began in 1891 that a new grade has been introduced in California schools. Transitional kindergarten builds on existing kindergarten readiness efforts, setting children on a path to develop the skills they need to build a brighter future for California.

“Transitional kindergarten gives California a tremendous opportunity to increase kindergarten readiness. It will lay the foundation for reading proficiency in the early elementary years and help our state build a more seamless education system for children birth to age 8.”

- Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools Dave Gordon

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