



TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN (TK) PLANNING GUIDE

A Resource for Administrators of
California Public School Districts



**California County Superintendents
CCSESA Educational Services Association**

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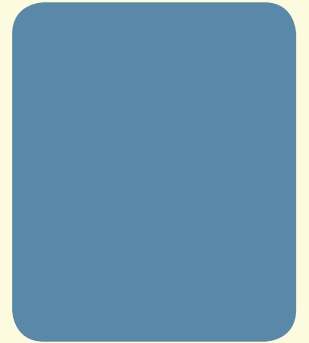
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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

This guide for a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program is a resource to assist California school districts in the development of the first year of their two-year kindergarten programs. Various types and names for similar kindergarten programs are not new to our state or nation, but the current emphasis on the importance of early education for students and the passage of recent California legislation, The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (Senate Bill 1381), has catapulted the topic to the high priority list for school districts.

Senate Bill 1381 changes California's entry-age for kindergarten from five years of age, and for first grade from six years of age, by December 2nd to September 1st. To allow local districts time to prepare for implementation, the new age requirement will be phased-in over three years beginning in the 2012-13 school year (CDE, 2011b, 2011c).

For those "young fives" (children turning five between September 2nd and December 2nd) the bill creates transitional kindergarten to build a bridge between early learning and kindergarten. Transitional kindergarten is defined as "the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate" (*Education Code* Section 48000[d]). School districts are required to begin phasing in transitional kindergarten in the 2012-13 school year.

This planning guide focuses on the first kindergarten year, referred to as TK. Specific information about the requirements of The Kindergarten Readiness Act is included in the guide along with more general recommendations that apply to the early years of schooling.

A review of the history of kindergarten in the United States demonstrates that educators have been working for years to answer many of the questions that have been discussed recently. What ages of children should be included? How many years should children spend in kindergarten? How can we best balance children's development in all domains? How should kindergarten be connected to preschool and to first grade and beyond? What is an appropriate environment for kindergarten? What are the most appropriate instructional approaches? What should be taught? How should student readiness and learning be assessed?

Learning about the history of the kindergarten movement in the United States can contribute to our collective knowledge as we plan and implement effective TK programs. Kindergarten began in the United States as an approach to address social issues. However, a number of factors impacted the evolution of kindergarten as an integral part of the educational system. The kindergarten movement in the United States in the 1850s was based on a philosophy of learning introduced by Friedrich Froebel in Germany. It was seen by many as a radical new approach to education. Froebel's work, which he referred to as early childhood, resulted in a new social institution of education that served as a transition between infancy and childhood. He created the term kindergarten or "child garden" to emphasize the idea of a safe, protective environment where children's development would be nurtured by teachers who had expertise in child development (Shapiro, 1983). Early American programs focused on general child development and socialization into school culture for children ages three to six years. The programs were frequently operated by private organizations (de Cos, 2001).

Kindergarten was eventually integrated into the public school system. However, in the early stages, there was tension between the child-centered approach inspired by Froebel's philosophy and new educational theories about children's learning, curricula, and teaching methods that were emerging (Ross, 1976). Approaches to integrate kindergarten into the public elementary school system included changing the supervision of kindergarten teachers so that they would be under the primary grade structure, increasing educational requirements for kindergarten teacher training programs that were more aligned with elementary teachers, and aligning the curriculum between kindergarten and the primary grades (Cuban, 1992). In the late 1950s, kindergarten was beginning to be viewed as an early opportunity to introduce academic concepts. Since the 1960s, a stronger focus on developing academic skills emerged in kindergarten education (de Cos, 2001).

Because of these early efforts, kindergarten is now a well-established part of the educational system across the nation. The importance of the early years was evident with the passage of Senate Bill 1381 (see Appendix A for SB 1381 text). The new law is generating renewed discussions about the need to balance an academic program with an approach that is developmentally appropriate. The law requires that elementary and unified public school districts offer transitional kindergarten programs (the first year of two-year kindergarten) for children born between September 2nd and December 2nd. The new age requirements and transitional kindergarten will be phased in throughout California starting in the fall of 2012. SB 1381 changes the kindergarten entry date from December 2nd to September 1st, so that children enter kindergarten at the age of five and first grade at age 6. The law phases in the new age requirement by moving the cutoff date back one month each year for three years to begin in the 2012 school year (see Appendix B for Transitional Kindergarten FAQs released by the California Department of Education).

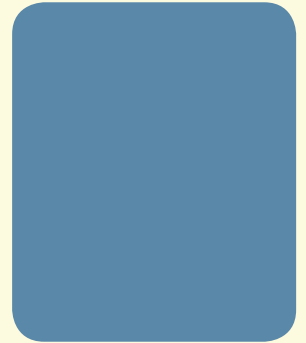
California was one of only four states that had a December cutoff date for kindergarten entry. According to Preschool California, the transitional kindergarten year is intended to be an opportunity to provide the early foundations for school success for children who turn five years old between September 2nd and December 2nd. The new law is an effort to address school readiness for young five year olds upon their entry to kindergarten. During the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, the TK year will serve as a bridge between preschool and traditional kindergarten by offering a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.

Research is clear that high-quality education for young learners is vitally important to assuring school success and closing the present achievement gaps among groups of students. According to a study conducted by the RAND Corporation in 2007, the readiness gap mirrors the achievement gap of students in the primary grades. The RAND report demonstrates “that there are sizeable gaps in the extent to which children in California enter school ready to learn, gaps that persist when student performance is measured in kindergarten through third grade” (Cannon & Karoly, 2007, p. 59).

Data synthesized by long-term preschool studies found that children who participated in high-quality early childhood programs tended to have higher scores on math and reading achievement tests, greater language abilities, and less grade retention. These data show that there was less need for special education, children’s nutrition and health improved, remedial support lessened, and there were higher graduation and lower dropout rates. As students got older, they were less likely to become teen parents, and when they became parents, there was less child abuse and neglect. As adults they had higher employment and earnings and higher tax contributions. There was less dependency on welfare, lower rates of alcohol and other drug use, fewer criminal acts (both as juveniles and adults), and lower incarceration rates (Lynch, 2005).

A 2008 analysis by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) of fourteen recent rigorous studies on how entrance age affects student outcomes in the short and long term found that “increasing California’s entry age will likely have a number of benefits, including boosting student achievement test scores” (Cannon & Lipscomb, 2008, p. 1). Several studies in the PPIC review also suggest that changing the kindergarten cut-off date would affect student outcomes including grade retention, special education enrollment, high school completion rates, and higher wages as adults. Based on these benefits, the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the California Performance Review, and the Governor’s Committee on Education Excellence called for an earlier kindergarten cut-off date.

It is estimated that over 120,000 California children will be eligible for the TK program each year (once the September 1st cut-off date for kindergarten enrollment is fully implemented). This includes 49,000 English learners and 74,000 who will attend Title I schools. California has a unique opportunity to develop and provide quality two-year kindergarten programs that help to jumpstart successful school careers and experiences for students who begin school as young learners. The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 should be beneficial for those children who would otherwise be attending traditional kindergarten even though they were not academically, socially, emotionally, or developmentally ready.



Section I
Getting Started:
Program Structure and Design

GETTING STARTED: PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DESIGN

Senate Bill 1381 provides school districts with a great deal of flexibility in how to implement the TK program to best meet the needs of their students. It is important to note, though, that the regulations that apply to kindergarten also apply to the TK program. Children are not mandated to attend TK as the existing statute does not require parents to enroll children in kindergarten. But, elementary and unified public school districts must offer TK to children born between September 2nd and December 2nd based on the phase-in schedule in SB 1381. TK is voluntary for children to attend, but mandatory for districts to provide (*Education Code* Section 48000).

California state law and information pertaining to admission to kindergarten (CDE, 2011b) can be found at CDE's Web site (see Appendix C for Kindergarten in California which describes state law and information regarding admission to kindergarten). School districts should review current policies and procedures to see if revisions and/or new ones are needed for TK and/or early admission of children to kindergarten.

CDE's Web site includes important information regarding the required use of the Kindergarten Continuance Form (see Appendix D for continuance form) for parents who agree that a child may continue in a second year of kindergarten (CDE, 2009b). The use of this form will not be required for age-eligible children, as defined in SB 1381, who are enrolled in transitional kindergarten once the law goes into effect in 2012. However, the use of the Kindergarten Continuance Form will continue to be required for children whose birthdates do not meet the criteria for transitional kindergarten per SB 1381 and who attend two years of kindergarten.

Also, in order to provide flexibility for children with late birthdays who are ready for kindergarten, SB 1381 protects an important provision in existing law which allows for a child born after September 1st to be admitted into kindergarten on a case-by-case basis, if the parent or guardian applies for early admission and the school district agrees that it would be in the best interest of the child (*Education Code* Section 48000[b]). Furthermore, it is important to note that a district can only claim ADA funds for children who are admitted under an early admission process after the children have attained the age of five.

As districts develop their plans for implementation, there are key considerations that need to be addressed. Communication with stakeholders should take place within the district with district and school administrators, school staff, and the board of education. Communication should also be initiated with parents and family members, providers of preschool and afterschool programs, and community-based organizations that serve young children.

Other important areas that districts will need to consider when planning include the organization and daily schedule of a TK program, funding, facilities, transportation, teaching assignments, professional development, and articulation meetings. Board policies and district procedures may need to be updated to reflect SB 1381. (The California School Boards Association is developing a sample policy for SB 1381 scheduled to be released in late fall 2011.)

While many school districts will begin implementing transitional kindergarten in the fall of 2012 as required by SB 1381, some school districts are currently offering two-year kindergarten programs. Preschool California (2011) conducted a series of conference calls with a number of school districts offering this option. During these conference calls, staff also gathered feedback from school districts about the planning and implementation of a two-year kindergarten program. Administrators and teachers representing large/small and rural/urban school districts throughout California provided information regarding issues that a district should consider as they plan and prepare a TK program. Reflections from these districts are highlighted throughout this planning guide.

Communication

Communication about the TK program should include the rationale and the benefits that will result. The main message to the community should be that the two-year program provides the opportunity for young children to be successful in school and that it will build a solid academic foundation by providing developmentally appropriate experiences. Regular communication with the community will be best accomplished through a variety of events, meetings, and activities that enhance relationships among preschool providers, parents, teachers, and the schools. The leadership of the site principal is a key factor in helping to achieve successful and productive communication within the school and between the school and the community. Resources are available in a Transitional Kindergarten Parent Engagement Toolkit available on the Preschool California Web Site (see Appendix E for online resources).

Teachers, principals, and support staff, who serve as the direct links to the education system for parents and families, should be well informed about SB 1381. Ideally, TK provides a seamless transition from preschool to the second year of kindergarten. Information, resources, and related professional development should be made available to all district and site staff, board members, union representatives, teachers and principals. Designated staff members, at the site and district levels, can address parents' questions, particularly during the height of school registration.

In order to ensure the success of the TK program, it is essential to develop an effective communication plan to inform parents about transitional kindergarten to elicit their support and involvement. Family outreach activities can include convening small group meetings, providing classroom tours, designating a parent help line, designating a staff member to serve as school liaison, and providing a resource table at district events such as Back-to-School Night, Open House, and orientation for kindergarten registration. Other communication strategies include providing written materials such as brochures, fliers, banners and Web site links.

Providing the information in languages to meet community needs is essential. Using media to reach out to the community is another effective approach highlighted in the Transitional Kindergarten Parent Engagement Toolkit developed by Preschool California. Its Web site includes The Transitional Kindergarten Library, which can be utilized for articles and video footage that showcase the benefits of the TK program.

It is also very important to reach out to Early Care and Education (ECE) providers, who may fear that TK will encroach upon their own programs. SB 1381, once it is fully implemented, provides TK for those children (born between September 2nd and December 2nd) who are eligible for kindergarten now; it offers the youngest children an extra year of a developmentally appropriate program. Implementation of TK could be seen as an opportunity for school districts and ECE providers to communicate regularly regarding programs that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for young children.

Organizing the TK Program

Funding. Districts will receive the same California average daily attendance (ADA) rate of funding that is provided for kindergarten, since TK is considered as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. ADA will be based on the number of children enrolled in transitional kindergarten and kindergarten. On a case-by-case basis, a five-year-old child who does not meet the age requirement under Senate Bill 1381 may be enrolled in transitional kindergarten based on CDE guidelines for kindergarten enrollment (see Appendix C). For children enrolled in a transitional kindergarten class under these circumstances, districts must have parents sign the Kindergarten Continuance Form at the end of the year if they agree to have their child continue in kindergarten for an additional year (see Appendix D).

Reflections from Districts*

A comprehensive communication plan that included outreach to parents, the preschool community and elementary principals was an important component for effective recruitment and enrollment. Districts shared the importance of emphasizing the value of parent involvement in a communication plan. Use of media to provide accurate information about the program was an effective approach to ensure broad outreach.

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

Reflections from Districts*

Districts currently offering a two-year kindergarten program expressed the value of maintaining a manageable class size of 20 students. District representatives also expressed the importance of designing a program to meet the developmental needs of young learners and clarified that these classes were not designed for remediation or intervention. Some districts experienced higher rates of enrollment of male students in these classes and cautioned for the need to balance enrollment by gender.

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

Children participating in TK are also included in state and federally funded programs that districts receive for kindergarten such as K-3 Class Size Reduction, Title I, Economic Impact Aid and any other revenue that applies to kindergarten students. Districts may find other funds to utilize with the TK program especially if federal funds or private grants become available for early learning.

Facilities and Transportation. School districts have flexibility when planning for the location, structure, and schedule for the implementation of the TK program. While the law mandates that a TK program be offered by each elementary and unified school district, it is not required to be offered at every elementary school site in a district.

The facilities for TK must be the same as what is required for kindergarten. According to Title 5 of the California Building Codes (Article 4, § 14030), play yard design must provide a variety of activities for development of large motor skills and restrooms need to be self-contained within the classroom or within the kindergarten complex. Most districts will be able to use kindergarten classrooms for TK. The TK facilities should be considered part of the school's K-3 program.

Districts may provide transportation, but it is not a requirement. According to *Education Code* Section 39800(a), "The governing board of any school district may provide for the transportation of pupils to and from school whenever in the judgment of the board the transportation is advisable and good reasons exist therefore."

Scheduling. Transitional kindergarten, just like traditional kindergarten, must have a required 36,000 instructional minutes per year. The minimum length of instructional time that must be offered to constitute a school day is 180 minutes (*Education Code* Sections 46117 and 46201). By statute, the maximum school day in kindergarten is four hours (*Education Code* Section 46110). An exception to this statute allows schools that have adopted an early primary program (extended-day kindergarten) to exceed four hours (*Education Code* Section 8973).

Class Configuration. A school site may consider a TK/kindergarten combination classroom. It is challenging to teach any combination class and a two-year kindergarten class may be more demanding than most. If a district implements combination classrooms, it must provide differentiated instruction with a modified kindergarten curriculum for the TK students to ensure that the individual needs of both groups of students are academically and developmentally met. It must be remembered that the first year, the TK program, is not a replication of preschool, nor is it intended to be the same as the second year of kindergarten. Further discussion of this arrangement can be found in Section II of this document.

The TK Teacher and Professional Development

The TK teacher must meet the same credential requirements as are currently required of kindergarten teachers. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2011) recently released a Credential Information Alert (see Appendix F for credential requirements) that specifies the credentials that authorize instruction in a TK classroom. In addition, in TK classrooms that serve students identified as English learners, the teacher must be authorized to provide appropriate services, such as instruction in English Language Development (ELD) or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). TK programs may include an instructional assistant and the use of parent/family volunteers is encouraged. Furthermore, all staff, especially the classroom teachers, should have prior experience in early childhood education.

Professional development needs for TK staff will vary depending on the teaching experience and knowledge necessary for creating a developmentally appropriate approach that meets the academic, social, and emotional needs of each child. Staff needs should first be identified and then addressed through in-service workshops, institutes, and/or classes offered by the district, county office of education, or other agency. Important areas for training could include how

Reflections from Districts*

Districts emphasized that selecting a credentialed teacher who has a background in child development was a key to the success of the program. Also, it was shared that it was very important to select a teacher who understands the need to differentiate instruction for the range of developmental abilities and who understands the essential skills that children need to have in order to successfully transition into the second year of kindergarten.

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

to: utilize *California Preschool Learning Foundations (2008b)*, *California's Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics (2010a)*, and the other kindergarten *Content Standards for California Public Schools* when modifying the kindergarten curricula; utilize developmentally appropriate instruction for young students; differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students; support the social-emotional development of young students; employ best practices for working with English learners; and to assess and report student progress over time.

In spring 2011, the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association sent out a survey to all school districts in California that offer kindergarten programs. Based on feedback from the electronic survey, the following is a list of the highest topic areas of interest (CCSESA, 2011):

- TK classroom models
- Guidelines for appropriate curricula
- Potential program models
- Sample funding examples
- Sample board policies
- Sample community outreach/parent and family communications
- Professional development for staff
- Information about *California Preschool Learning Foundations* and *California's Common Core State Standards*
- Staffing qualifications



Reflections from Districts*

District representatives also emphasized the importance of articulation. Some teachers who taught the first year of a two-year kindergarten felt that they were isolated. The need to build articulation opportunities for these teachers to meet with both traditional kindergarten and preschool teachers was a common theme. In school districts that offered a two-year kindergarten program at multiple sites, the need for the TK teachers to meet as a team was an important system of support. Administrators recognized the possibility for these teachers to be isolated or marginalized if systems are not established for vertical and horizontal articulation. Besides providing opportunities for joint planning, articulation meetings can help to establish understanding of the important contributions that TK can have for the youngest kindergarten students. Furthermore, joint professional development and meetings with TK and preschool teachers helped promote a better understanding of the role of each in supporting children's development and resulted in more successful outreach and recruitment efforts that were coordinated between preschool and elementary school staff members.

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

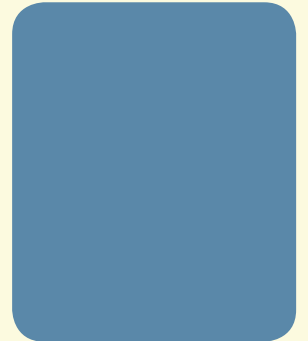
District Articulation of TK with PreK and K-3

It is important for school districts to reach out and connect with local early childhood education providers since they have direct access to and frequent interaction with families. The children who receive early care and education by private and/or other public providers located in a district's neighborhood will likely become students of the district. It is in the best interest of children if each group of adults that care for and educate them over time communicates with each other to produce common goals and accurate information about past and future practices.

In districts that have morning and afternoon half-day kindergarten, TK and kindergarten teachers can support each other by team teaching. By working together in TK and kindergarten classrooms, teachers can provide more individualized support for students and gain better understanding of each program.

School districts should leverage the focus on the TK program to enrich all of preschool through grade three and increase opportunities for vertical articulation at school sites and early education centers. Monthly, or at a minimum, quarterly articulation meetings among these grade levels should be established in an effort to support this transition. In addition, regularly scheduled staff development that includes training in assessment, curriculum, and developmentally appropriate practices should be held to address the ongoing needs of the two-year kindergarten program.





Section II
Effective Instruction,
Curriculum, and Assessment

District representatives shared the importance of developing a clear vision and focus regarding program outcomes to ensure that the focus and vision drives the development of curriculum. A key recommendation was to involve a variety of stakeholders in the early planning phase that include kindergarten teachers, principals, district administrators, preschool staff and parents. Many districts emphasized the importance of focusing on both social-emotional and cognitive development in the first year of a two-year kindergarten program.

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION, CURRICULUM, AND ASSESSMENT

Learning experiences that occur in children's early years are important to their lifelong success. Children can learn and acquire knowledge at a very fast pace. To support early learning and in consideration of the diverse backgrounds of students, educational experiences must be high quality and individually and age appropriate. A TK program provides children with extended opportunities to meet expectations outlined in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations*, *California's Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics*, and the other kindergarten *Content Standards for California Public Schools*.

The TK year should include a modified kindergarten program based upon evidence-based practices, such as the following (California Department of Education, 2008a, 2008b; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2008):

- Teaching staff who actively facilitate social, emotional, physical, linguistic, and cognitive development of all students;
 - Building positive and meaningful relationships between teacher and student, student and student, and teacher and family;
 - Teaching approaches that enhance each student's learning and development and the meeting of curricular goals;
 - High-quality learning environments that are different from the kindergarten learning experience (for example, a modified curriculum or curriculum that is different from what is used in kindergarten, the rhythm and pacing of the day, the integration and focus on oral language and concept development, and exposure while working towards mastery of kindergarten standards);
 - Programs that are designed to include children with special needs as well as those who have diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds;
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessments that are research-based and that are engaging, yet playful and appropriate for young students;
 - Ongoing systematic, formal, and informal approaches for gathering data about students' learning and development; and
 - Assessment information that guides instruction and is shared with support staff and families.

How to Teach in a TK Program – The Instruction

A body of research has emerged in the past decade regarding not only what to teach the young learner, but how to teach it as well (CDE, 2008a, 2010b; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Epstein, 2007; NAEYC, 2008). Both are extremely important in the TK classroom and it is critical that teachers increase their knowledge of effective instruction for all learners. It is important that professional development is supported in an on-going manner.

The TK Environment. TK teachers support the development of students by creating room environments that are engaging, age appropriate, responsive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students, and accessible to students with disabilities or special needs. Classroom environments should have clearly defined spaces and predictable routines. Environmental planning may be necessary to address the special needs that some students may have and to ensure accessibility to indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. Throughout the day, students should engage in active, playful activities that are focused and integrated.

Within the TK classroom environment, routines and transitions should be structured to promote interaction, communication, and learning. To facilitate smooth transitions from one activity to another, visual or verbal cues may be necessary for some children prior to transitions. Visual schedules are very helpful in assisting children with learning and adhering to classroom routines. Along with a consistent routine, the use of consistent terminology or directions by teaching staff will support the young learner's success throughout the day. Such consistency will minimize confusion for the child who relies on familiar words.

Learning centers that subdivide the environment may be beneficial in the TK classroom. Well-defined learning spaces accommodate small groups of students where they can actively engage individually or with peers and adults. Centers may include, but not be limited to (CDE, 2000, 2008a, 2008b; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2002): art; dramatic play; language and literacy including listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities; mathematics and manipulatives including puzzles and objects that encourage interactive play; science; and technology and computer use. Rotations among centers can promote exploration and bring a balance between teacher-directed and child-directed learning. Not all centers require the same pacing or timing to encourage a focus on student accomplishment. (See Appendix G for examples of ideas and strategies appropriate for TK classrooms.)

Instruction in a TK Classroom. The TK program provides each student with learning experiences based on their individual needs. As described by Gregory and Chapman (2007) in *Differentiated Instructional Strategies – One Size Doesn't Fit All*:

Effective teachers believe that all students can learn and be successful. Effective teachers consciously create a climate in which all students feel included. Effective teachers believe that there is potential in each learner and commit to finding the key that will unlock their potential.

Developmentally appropriate practices for the young student have been defined in many ways. Research (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Epstein, 2007; NAEYC, 2008) suggests that teacher-planned and guided experiences that focus on areas such as oral language and vocabulary development, are appropriate and valuable. TK teachers must keep in mind that a balanced approach of child-initiated experiences and teacher-guided experiences best promotes the development of students. With balance, young learners can be highly engaged in learning experiences that incorporate these three essentials: learning must be planned, purposeful, and it must be playful.

A wide range of teaching strategies is essential for the TK classroom (Epstein, 2007; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; NAEYC, 2009). It is important for teachers to maintain high expectations as they engage students in instructional activities and connect the learning to their individual experiences. Teachers should:

- Acknowledge what students do and say, encourage their persistence and effort, and give them specific feedback;
- Ask thoughtful questions and use open-ended questions;
- Use multiple approaches to learning and provide opportunities for problem solving and decision making;
- Frequently provide concrete and personalized recognition, and acknowledge and reinforce the efforts of the students; and
- Provide multiple opportunities for TK students to talk and be engaged in practices that deepen their understanding of skills and content.

It is valuable for teachers to know the families of all TK students and build warm positive relationships with them. Each student's home culture and language should be honored in the learning environment. Teachers should support the diversity represented in the classroom and continually seek and plan ways that students can work and play together collaboratively so that all are active participants (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; NAEYC, 2008).

The TK teacher's role is a critical factor in the classroom. Daily schedules and routines "can foster children's learning and initiative; active exploration of materials and concepts; and sustained engagement with other children, adults, and activities" (CDE, 1999, pg. 19). Teachers should also combine their understanding of grade-level standards and learning expectations with their knowledge of child development principles, individual characteristics and experiences of children, and social and cultural contexts.

The domains of children’s development – social-emotional, physical, and cognitive – are interrelated; therefore, TK learning experiences must help the young learner make meaningful connections across all subject areas. The daily schedule should include opportunities for students to “initiate, play, experiment, reason, collaborate socially, and have predictable routines and patterns as well as to complete teacher-directed activities” (CDE, 1999, pg. 19).

While active learning should be given priority, small group instruction and opportunities for the TK student to work in interest learning areas or centers (see Appendix G) for TK learning environment ideas and strategies) should be “long enough for children to handle and observe materials, have in-depth intellectual experiences, negotiate problems, and use language” (CDE, 1999, pg. 9). Learning centers should be introduced to TK students for short periods of time at the beginning of the school year and extended as the year progresses. The learning activities that occur throughout the day should be balanced between active and quiet, large and small groups, teacher directed and child initiated, predictable and flexible, familiar and novel, indoor and outdoor, and a reflection of natural patterns of daily living (for example, preparing snacks or caring for the environment).

In addition to this balanced approach, the teacher must determine the appropriate pacing for young learners while working towards success with the kindergarten standards. Careful observations, flexibility for extended learning opportunities that occur in large blocks of time, and integrated content to teach important concepts will enhance the overall development and functioning of the TK student. Individualized support, differentiated instruction, and on-going communication with families are key elements for students’ success.

Effective TK classroom strategies include the development and use of specific, daily instructional plans, flexible goals and objectives to establish the direction of instruction and learning, specific feedback to enhance student achievement, and the use of flexible grouping and cooperative learning strategies (Epstein, 2007; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). The careful use of a variety of questioning strategies helps students to think critically. Use of effective questioning strategies creates an environment that supports student sharing of their thinking about what they are learning. They also provide insight into the student’s level of understanding of the task at hand. Building a safe and risk-free environment in a TK classroom encourages students to freely participate in the learning that is taking place.

A classroom culture of acceptance and mutual respect is essential for all learners in a successful TK classroom. This includes a focused time for content instruction that provides high-quality experiences in a variety of instructional approaches (Richardson, 1997).

- Whole group instruction is appropriate for the following activities in a class setting: introduction or review of activities, ongoing activities that are part of the daily routine, and shared experiences.
- Independent work time requires that students assume responsibility for the work they do and that they receive the practice and experiences they need. These tasks can be assigned by the teacher or something the student chooses from a set of tasks centering on a common concept.
- Small group work time allows the teacher to observe, instruct, interact, and respond to individual students. This instructional model can be used to introduce activities that may be difficult to introduce to the whole group, to closely observe and assess student needs and, to provide differentiated opportunities for particular groups of students.

Integrated instruction. Effective learning takes place when curriculum is integrated in a way that allows students to build on their strengths, expand their interests, and participate in meaningful activities. Young learners use their experiences to build knowledge and learn through exploration. Learning through an integrated program can increase motivation of students and improve their learning since they are more likely to make connections to new knowledge (CDE, 2000).

Providing students with opportunities to make connections across the curricula through exploration makes learning more meaningful. A curriculum that integrates science, art, social studies, the visual arts, technology, and math creates opportunities for a high-quality instructional program. When the content areas are fully integrated into the instructional program, students learn in an environment that is more likely to be based on real life experiences.

Differentiated instruction. Effective first teaching and learning are critical for all students. In California, the recommended approach to meeting the unique needs of a diverse group of students is Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) – a framework that focuses on prevention, intervention with increased intensity, and enrichment to support the success of every student. Integration of academic and behavioral systems and resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education, supports a comprehensive three-tiered approach for every student: Tier 1 (80-90% of students) that provides high-quality “core” and differentiated instruction; Tier 2 (10-15% of students) that provides strategic support such as more time, more individual attention, and more frequent progress monitoring; and Tier 3 (5-10% of students) that provides additional intensive services and supports (CDE, 2009a).

Differentiating the instruction of students in the TK program is critically important to the short term and long term success of all the learners. All young learners are not alike, and each one has his/her own experiences and understanding of the world. Each student will learn at his/her own rate. A differentiated classroom includes variations in learning, content, assignments and tasks, and strategies that give students meaningful learning experiences. Examples include flexible grouping that considers the strengths and weaknesses of all students; exploration/hands-on centers or stations where students are responsible for their learning; directions that are short and concise; questioning techniques that enable the teacher to ask questions based on each student’s readiness and comprehension; and student as well as teacher initiated tasks and projects that provide for hands-on learning. Teachers may need to look at varying the time for individual students to complete tasks, varying the content and degree of support and scaffolding based on the student’s assessed need. At this age, self help skills and social skills may need to be taught directly to the students. It may also be useful to break skills into small sequential steps to scaffold learning (CDE, 2000).

Instruction in a TK/Kindergarten Combination Classroom. A school district may offer a TK/kindergarten combination class to maximize the enrollment of students who are eligible for its two-year kindergarten program. In such cases, administrators and teachers must focus on ensuring the TK and kindergarten educational programs are in fact different.

Children enter school with varying abilities. Mixed-age classrooms provide opportunities to address the individual needs of each student; thus, the management of such a class is critical. Differentiated instruction must serve as a means for ensuring the educational needs of each student enrolled in the combination class are met and that appropriate measures are taken to monitor each student’s progress and to modify the instruction accordingly.

Combination classrooms have been implemented throughout the United States for many years. Students in mixed-age settings have demonstrated academic achievement, leadership and organizational abilities, greater complex levels of play, and longer sustained periods of peer interaction. These positive results (CDE, 1999) can occur with the modification of the curriculum, learning experiences where students work together in small mixed group settings, and where each student can contribute to the learning experience. Within this setting, students still receive the individualized support to achieve basic skills required for their level. Although schools often offer traditional mixed-age or multi-grade combination classes, they may also consider “looping” practices in which the students remain with the same teacher for a consecutive year or years.

Successful implementation, as described by Bruce Miller, a researcher on multi-age education (Walser, 1998), should include great forethought by doing the research before implementation, intensive planning to determine the model to be used, and inclusion of key stakeholders in the development process. Implementation should also include dedicated teachers who have the support and teamwork from the school principal, parents, and school staff. Teachers should be knowledgeable about student abilities and their development, grade-level standards and expectations, and effective teaching strategies (CDE, 1999).

Districts also shared several cautions when planning and implementing a two-year program by emphasizing the importance of developing a distinct program for each of the two years of kindergarten. To meet the range of developmental needs, administrators and teachers expressed the value of adding aides or additional staff members in the classroom to enhance individualized support for children.

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

Reflections from Districts*

Teachers teaching in the first year of a two-year kindergarten program shared the importance of developing benchmarks for learning. Important aspects of these classrooms were the ability to slow down and re-teach concepts as needed, provide children with extra support and offer extended learning opportunities for children.

*Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

Students with Special Needs in a TK Classroom. Because of the diverse population of California, students in a TK program may include students with different cultural experiences, different cognitive needs, specific disabilities, and a variety of languages other than English. Meeting their social, emotional, and academic needs will be critical to their success as they begin their K-12 education.

Students with Disabilities. All TK students can benefit from high-quality experiences and may develop at different rates. School districts have the responsibility for utilizing the state's comprehensive child find system (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2006) to actively identify and assess students to determine their eligibility for support services and individualized education plans (IEPs). For TK students with specific disabilities, school districts need to provide the same services as they do for students in kindergarten.

Students with disabilities must receive support and services within the least restrictive environment and can be included in the general education TK curriculum and classroom. It is possible that some students will require modifications and accommodations to meet their individualized needs and to support their access to curriculum, participation, and full involvement in learning opportunities. Each student's IEP should guide the teacher's plan for support as developed through a multidisciplinary team of general and special education staff. For example, a child with disabilities who is not developing at the same rate as peers may need assistance with self-help skills. Direct support by prompting or modeling self-care skills such as hand washing, cleaning up for themselves, or assistance with toileting, dressing,

or feeding may be required. Students may need closer supervision both in the classroom and on the playground. Program components that are especially important for students with disabilities include playing with other children and participating in excursions and sensory experiences, interacting with typically developing peer role models, completing tasks that have been broken into smaller steps with clearly defined scope and sequence, and immediate recognition of successful small steps as a means of reinforcement.

Students who are English Learners. Research identifies several key concepts that address the teaching of young English learners. Students enter school with different degrees of knowledge and experiences. Students learn from others, including adults and other students. The environment most conducive to learning is one where students are social and engaged in activities that allow them to explore. Early reading and writing experiences should be meaningful, concrete, and connected to the experiences of students with consideration of their home language and cultural background.

Reading and writing instruction should be provided in a manner that is explicit and should follow the developmental level of each student. A rich language environment is an essential building block for future literacy, regardless of the language spoken. Activities that provide students with opportunities to communicate with adults and other students, participate in read-alouds, and recite can help to ensure that English learners are interacting and engaged in learning. A print rich environment allows students to learn and interact from different forms of print including labeled areas, wall stories, word displays, labeled pictures, bulletin boards, and other printed materials. A student's home culture should be supported to ensure a partnership between parents and teachers. Effective communication between parents and teachers engages parents in the education of their child.

Effective strategies for English learners should be based on several concepts: the student learns best through meaningful experiences; the student learns best when instruction is experienced in different modalities; the student learns best in a community of learners; and the student must be able to transfer knowledge and skills learned in his/her primary language.

TK students who speak a language in addition to English and/or who are learning English should be recognized as contributing positively to their own development and enriching the classroom learning experience for other students.

What to Teach in a TK Program – The Curriculum

TK, the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, should have a curricular program that extends students' learning beyond preschool experiences. A modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate must be used. TK students should not experience two years of a traditional kindergarten. They need to participate in an educational experience based on the kindergarten standards with an extended opportunity to master them.

California Preschool Learning Foundations and *California's Common Core State Standards* for kindergarten are critical resources to develop the TK curriculum and its learning expectations. Together, these sources provide the basis for a kindergarten curriculum that prepares students to meet the expectations that are specified in the kindergarten standards.

Students achieve more with well-planned and coherent learning experiences and curricula that include a sequenced progression and meaningful connections for students. Curriculum content should be presented in an integrated manner and adapted to meet individualized needs. In the TK program, the teacher should focus on the critical skills to be developed for success in kindergarten.

Positive early relationships are vital to the foundation of healthy development and greatly influence a child's ability to achieve later in life (Cohen, Onunaku, Clothier, & Poppe, 2005). As a consequence of early relationships, young children seek to understand the feelings, thoughts and expectations of others and the importance of cooperation and sharing. The identity of young children is shaped by the interactions they have with others who are significant in their lives – parents, family members, child care providers, and teachers. Interacting with young children, communicating with families, arranging the physical space in the learning environment, and planning and implementing curriculum can have a positive influence on social-emotional development of young children (Shonkoff, 2004).

Social-Emotional Development. This component includes children's experiences, their expression, management of emotions, and their ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others. Children are more likely to succeed if they can: accurately identify emotions in themselves and others; relate to teachers and peers in positive ways; and manage feelings of anger, frustration, and distress when faced with an emotionally charged situation. They are more likely to enjoy learning and approach it enthusiastically, pay attention, and work independently and cooperatively in a well organized classroom environment (Cohen et.al, 2005).

Language Arts. Children display an inherent interest in language arts and communication, which allows TK teachers many opportunities to enrich and extend students' language and literacy. The TK teacher should support students' language by showing an interest in their conversations, listening carefully and responding to statements, extending conversations, providing opportunities to read and discuss books, and introducing specific vocabulary on topics of interest. The TK teacher needs to encourage students to generate ideas, solve problems, and predict outcomes. The early years are a critical time when students develop and learn important skills for academic success. Learning to speak, read, and write is a gradual process that is developed over time. The TK program provides teachers with opportunities to give students the additional instruction and support they may need that will continue to prepare them successfully for kindergarten. During this critical developmental time, TK teachers play an important role in observing the progress of the young students and responding to them with encouragement, support, and guidance, along with systematic and explicit instruction.

The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) released findings based on the results of more than 500 research studies that identified essential early abilities and skills that are correlated with reading achievement in later grades. Based on the findings in the report, teachers need to pay special attention to every student's development in oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge. The report identified important variables correlated with the development of literacy skills. Similar areas of focus are identified in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* and the *California's Common Core State Standards* for kindergarten. These important variables include the following:

- Knowing the names of printed letters
- Knowing the sounds associated with printed letters
- Being able to manipulate the sounds of spoken language
- Being able to name a sequence of letters, numbers, objects, or colors

Reflections

from Districts*

Districts emphasized the importance of developing a curriculum that is distinctly different from traditional kindergarten. Staff emphasized the importance of developing a curriculum that considers intersections between the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* with the *California's Common Core State Standards* for kindergarten. Teachers and administrators also emphasized the importance of pacing lessons and developing benchmarks for learning. The opportunity to individualize instruction by providing more time for the development of skills and concepts and extended learning opportunities were also expressed. Another important consideration was to maintain a balance between structured learning experiences and opportunities for children to learn through hands-on activities that are playful and purposeful. Differentiating instruction with an emphasis on exposure to kindergarten standards rather than mastery was an important theme expressed by districts.

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

- Being able to write one's own name or isolated letters
- Being able to remember the content of spoken language for a short period of time
- Knowing how to put concepts, thoughts, and ideas into spoken words and understand others when they talk
- Being able to see similarities and differences between visual symbols

The goal of an effective TK language arts program is to ensure that all students have access to high-quality curriculum and instruction that enables them to be successful during the second year of kindergarten. This must be balanced against the reality that TK students vary in age and demonstrate a wide variety of skills. They will likely have different language and life experiences and develop at very different rates. TK teachers must carefully select resources with student age and development in mind, and they must use differentiated instructional approaches to make the content accessible to every student.

In order to design an appropriate instructional plan for language arts, the following strategies may be useful:

- At the beginning of the year, the TK teacher needs to formally assess the literacy skills of letter naming, letter sound correspondence, segmenting and manipulating sounds, and letter writing to determine if modifications to the long-range learning plans for each student are required.
- The TK teacher needs to keep a strong focus on oral language development, which is critical in students' early years. Teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions support the development of more complex language, thinking and extend students' vocabulary knowledge.
- At the start of each lesson and at key intervals throughout the lesson, the TK teacher needs to check for student understanding and adjust instruction as needed. Teachers should utilize ongoing and frequent formative assessments. Data from these assessments may result in required changes in the materials, in how the materials are used, in the level of teacher support, or in the amount of time spent practicing.

Creating a home/school partnership and family support are essential parts of a successful TK language arts program. When families and teachers work in partnership, the student's learning is supported in a number of ways. Family members can provide insight into their child's learning and share expectations they have of their child, while teachers can serve as a resource for extending the learning that has taken place at school into the home environment (CDE, 2008a, 2008b).

Mathematics. Instruction in mathematics builds the solid foundation that students need in order to become successful learners. Important aspects of a quality mathematics program include consideration of the learning environment, the instructional time, and the inclusion of questioning strategies such as, "Is there another way to show the number 10?" or "How many different ways can you make the number 8?" The use of number talks in which the teacher uses numbers in everyday speech is another important strategy (Parrish, 2010). For example, a teacher might ask, "We have 24 students here today. How many napkins do we need for our snack?" (see Appendix G) for TK learning environment ideas and strategies.)

Instructional time should focus on two critical mathematical areas. One area is representing, relating, and operating on whole numbers. Young students work initially with sets of objects focusing on the topics of subitizing (instantly seeing how many objects are in a small group without counting) (Clements, 1999); counting and cardinality (knowing the number names and the count sequence, understanding that the last number name said when counting a set of objects tells the number of objects counted, and comparing numbers); and operations and algebraic thinking (understanding addition as putting together and adding to, and subtraction as taking apart and taking from). The second important area is geometry with a focus on identifying and describing shapes and space; and analyzing, comparing, creating, and comparing shapes. These two areas are intricate and complex and build the foundation for future learning in mathematics. While both prepare the young learner for more formal mathematics instruction, learning time should be devoted to number sense more than any other topic in mathematics.

The Mathematical Practice Standards (CDE, 2010a) are focused on what educators should develop in students and are a critical component of the *California's Common Core State Standards*. They include: making sense of problems and persevering in solving them, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others, modeling with mathematics, looking for and making use of structure, using appropriate tools strategically, attending to precision, and looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning. When introduced in concert with content instruction, teachers can help students gain a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught.

Science. Including science in the TK classroom provides an opportunity to expose students to key primary science concepts and skills in the areas of physical science, life science, earth science, and investigation and experimentation. These four areas of the *Science Content Standards for California Public Schools* for kindergarten (CDE, 1998b) focus on: observing, measuring, and predicting the properties of materials; knowing about and observing various types of plants and animals that inhabit the earth; knowing the characteristics, changes, and resources of the earth, including the land, air, and water; and asking meaningful questions and conducting experiments to understand the physical, life, and earth sciences.*

Science for TK students helps develop their innate curiosity about their environment; broaden their critical thinking skills to investigate, solve problems, and make decisions; and, increases their knowledge about physical, life, and earth sciences (CDE, 1999). Integrating science concepts with mathematics, language arts, history/social science, physical development, and visual and performing arts is an effective instructional approach for teaching science to the TK student. Additionally, students should have access to simple science equipment and numerous books surrounding the themes of science.

History/Social Science. Focusing on history/social science helps students understand themselves and their place in the world (CDE, 1998a, 2005). Prior to entering TK, young learners will have developed important space, time, and causal understandings from their families and communities. These understandings help students develop a sense of place within their world. To extend these understandings, TK teachers must recognize the critical role of previous learning that is anchored in the student's language, family, and immediate world.

TK teachers should provide activities that focus on each individual's uniqueness—home and family, classroom community, and neighborhood. Dramatic play allows children opportunities to explore and experiment with many roles from society. Additionally, a focus on self-help skills, being part of a group, and classroom responsibilities are essential in helping children to become contributing members of society.

Physical Education. A critical component of the TK educational program to support students' health and motor skill development is physical education. It is also important for combating childhood obesity, a national concern. Physical education that supports students' knowledge and skills will ultimately contribute to improved health outcomes and promote physically active lifestyles through adulthood (CDE, 2010b, 2011a).

* Recent legislation (Senate Bill 300) that was signed by Governor Brown in October 2011 requires new science content standards to be presented to the State Board of Education by March 30, 2013 and acted upon by July 30, 2013.

Through physical education, TK students develop important physical skills while they also learn to engage with other students, explore, play and learn. Research indicates that, without adult encouragement and intervention, many students may not fully develop their physical skills. The early years are a critical time for physical development and instruction is important for students to gain fundamental movement skills that develop in an orderly sequence (CDE, 2010b). Besides gaining important physical skills, daily opportunities for physical activity also may help to improve overall learning outcomes.

Visual and Performing Arts. The arts offer opportunities for creative expression in the four domains of dance, music, theater, and visual arts (CDE, 2004). TK students learn the vocabulary of the media and form while experimenting with expression. It is essential that they are able to express their ideas creatively through verbal and nonverbal ways. Including the arts in the TK curriculum does not take away from developing students' learning in language arts or mathematics, but it can add to that learning.

An effective TK program should include collaborative performances such as retellings, tableaux, movements and music. Students need time to investigate and utilize a variety of materials such as clay, paint, instruments, and costumes. Learning through play and opportunities to express learning through multiple ways opens doors to higher levels of self-esteem and life-long creativity. Varied media and small group tasks support language development for all TK students especially those who are English learners. Music, rhythm, singing, and chanting enhance language development.

Integrating the arts into the content areas allows for multiple pathways into learning. Connections can be built around reading and writing in the disciplines when the arts are infused. Integrated instruction provides opportunities for student led inquiry and choice in learning about topics that are motivating and of interest to the early learner. Utilizing a variety of materials and art objects give the TK student the opportunity to explore both the natural and human-made worlds while developing an appreciation for the variations and variety in both.

How to Know if Students are Learning – The Assessments

Preparing for assessment in a TK kindergarten program demands a well-defined plan and should be supported by clearly defined principles, guidelines, and procedures for assessing students. The purpose of assessment is to monitor the progress of students and then to organize an effective instructional program that meets their needs. TK teachers must make informed instructional decisions regarding the teaching and learning of the students in a TK program.

In *Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments* (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz, 1998), assessing young children is based on specific principles regarding assessments. They should be developmentally appropriate, tailored for a specific purpose, and they must be reliable, valid, and fair. Assessments should be age appropriate in both content and methodology, and they should be linguistically appropriate.

The National Association of Early Childhood (NAEYC, 2008) states that assessment should benefit the student and accomplish three purposes: plan instruction and communicate with parents; identify young children with specific needs; and evaluate programs. Adherence to these principles provides a focus on the teaching and learning of TK students.

Assessment in today's age of accountability is a critical component in teaching and learning. Using appropriate assessments effectively enables the TK teacher to provide an instructional program that is aligned to the developmental needs of every student. The assessments must include all content areas and should utilize a variety of methods, procedures and tools in order to be in the best interest of all the students. If implemented properly, the teacher will consistently have a clear picture of each learner and an identification of his/her needs.

A variety of assessments used by kindergarten teachers can be used with students in a TK classroom. District assessments can determine what the student knows as he/she enters the TK classroom. Assessments should be used to monitor development and learning and guide program and lesson planning and decision-making. They can also be used to identify students who need additional support, or other students who are ready to move onto another group or even to the second year of kindergarten. Assessment information should help teachers to communicate with other teachers and family members.

Reflections from Districts*

The need to incorporate new assessment tools was another underlying theme based on feedback from districts. As each district developed its curriculum that was unique to the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, staff discussed the need to realign assessment tools that were appropriate for this age group. The addition of new assessment tools that includes social-emotional development was also suggested

* Feedback from school districts offering/piloting a two-year kindergarten program.

It is important to determine how and when assessments will be administered and how the results will be documented. Having a well-defined assessment plan provides direction for teachers in a TK program. The following consideration should be given to the assessment of students in a TK classroom:

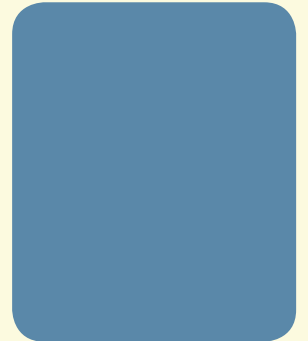
- Formative assessments should be used regularly for instructional planning.
- Assessments should support the student's development along all areas of learning.
- Assessments should use a variety of measurement tools and approaches including analysis of student work, teacher observation, and records of individual progress.
- Assessments should allow students to show what they know so language and cultural biases must be avoided.
- Assessment results should identify the strengths, needs, and progress of individual students and facilitate flexible groupings.
- Assessment results should identify students who need more individual attention or assistance, as well as those who may need more challenging work.
- Assessments should prepare students for meeting the *California's Common Core State Standards* for kindergarten.

Informal or authentic assessments that are performance based provide the teacher with information to use in tailoring the instructional program to meet individual needs. Observations and teacher-made or published checklists can provide the TK teacher with information regarding the students' abilities. They can be used informally as the teacher observes the student's behavior. Setting up the environment so that it supports observations of students should be implemented. Anecdotal records, in which the teacher makes brief notes about students as they learn, can provide important information about learning. These records can be used to assess behavior

and social skills as well as development in content areas (CDE, 2000).

Student work/portfolios are collections of actual student work that can provide meaningful information about the progress of the student as well as planning information for the teacher. This type of assessment focuses on the student's strengths and demonstrates the skills and knowledge that have been learned. Portfolios allow teachers to examine the student's progress over time. Diagnostic assessments identify a range of strengths and weaknesses and provide feedback that can be used for instructional planning. They also provide teachers with information about student's prior knowledge and misconceptions before beginning a learning activity. They also provide a baseline for understanding how much learning has taken place after the learning activity is completed. Retell/narratives determine the comprehension abilities of the student. Through retelling activities, the teacher can assess whether the student comprehends the story and is able to organize his/her thoughts by responding to questions.

Writing samples at various stages are an appropriate assessment for young learners. By examining their responses teachers can identify progress in skill areas such as spelling and comprehension. Instructional conversations with young learners are an authentic way to assess language, comprehension, self-perception and motivation. This can be done in a formal or informal manner. Home surveys and/or checklists are ways to collect important information about a student's learning progress. It also provides a way for families to be involved in the student's learning experience by collecting this information at home. District benchmarks are an effective way to determine whether students are learning the expected and/or required content.



Next Steps

NEXT STEPS...

CREATING A TK PLAN FOR A LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Planning Guide provides district administrators with guidance towards next steps to plan and implement TK in their school districts. Because of the wide range in the size of California school districts, a “one size fits all” plan will not meet the needs of all districts. However, there are some common areas that will need to be addressed in developing a district plan. The following suggestions highlight the next steps for district administrators as they move forward to design a two-year kindergarten program.

Getting Started

Create a TK communication team. The district should create a TK team for communicating information about the program and the plan development within the district and between the district and the community. On the team should be a district administrator, a principal, a kindergarten teacher, a preschool teacher from the district or community, a parent, a representative from the district’s state and federally funded programs, and a fiscal person. In larger districts, each school or region could have its own team. In medium sized districts, the team could have several members from each group. In small districts, one person may have responsibility for several areas and the team will be much smaller.

Define the TK message for the district. It is likely that the TK message will vary depending on the particulars of the school district and in regard to the audience. Board members, district staff, kindergarten teachers, union representatives, and the community need to know what is happening with TK within the district. These are the basic areas that need to be addressed with each group:

- Explain the new law and how it will affect the district’s kindergarten program and the anticipated long range benefits for children and their futures
- Indicate the changes that will take place in 2012 and in succeeding years
- Provide the basics of the district’s plan to implement the new TK program

Determine what funds are available for a TK program. As noted in the TK guide, funding for TK will be the same as kindergarten funding through average daily attendance (ADA). However, if the district chooses to add other funds, such as Title I, to the TK program, a decision could be made to add an instructional assistant/paraprofessional to the TK classroom. For small districts that have to resolve teacher-student ratios, additional funding may help solve that problem as well.

Identify the facilities that are available for TK classrooms. TK classrooms must meet the requirements of a kindergarten classroom. Ideally, the TK students should be at the same site as the kindergarten students from that neighborhood. The law does not require every elementary school to have the TK program, but the district must offer TK. Yet having to bus children away from their home school may be a complicated option. The facilities issue may pose a difficult challenge for a district and it may require creative problem solving.

Design the organization and structure of the TK program. The first place for a district to start is with the numbers. How many TK students are anticipated? Efforts need to be made to determine how many children with October, November and December birth dates will be affected by the new law in 2012, 2013, and 2014. The best way to do this is to look at present kindergarten children and group them by their birth dates of the three months. Unless the district has seen major increases or decreases in kindergarten enrollments, or reasons to anticipate them in the coming years, this will provide a set of numbers that will allow planning to proceed.

Other important considerations include the development of class schedules and configuration. It is possible that some small districts will design the TK program with a combination TK/kindergarten classroom.

Determine staffing and professional development needs. TK teachers must have appropriate credentials to teach TK. Selection criteria should include education and experience in working with young children. A professional development plan should include a focus on how best to meet the developmental needs of students in the areas of social-emotional, academic, and physical development.

Plan for articulation for PreK – grade 3. School districts should reach out and connect with local early care and education providers. Connections should also be made between kindergarten and grades 1 – 3 by convening joint meetings and professional development across various grade levels. Each grade level should be encouraged to share information and assessments of student.

Planning Effective Instruction, Curriculum, and Assessment

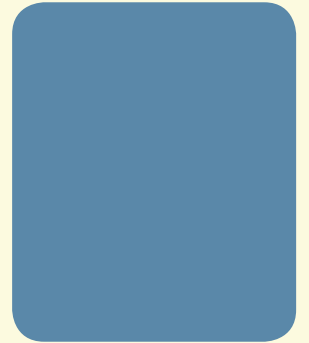
Assess the environment of the TK classroom. An engaging and playful classroom that is designed in an intentional way can support the curricular goals while also being developmentally appropriate for students. The classroom should be organized to allow for large group, small group, and individual student activities. The use of centers can facilitate implementing a variety of activities that support the diversity of activities and curricular goals.

Determine how to teach in a TK classroom. Instruction should make connections across content areas and be differentiated to meet individual student needs. Variations can be made in time, type of learning tasks, and systems of support for students.

Decide what to teach in a TK classroom. The curriculum should be a modified kindergarten curriculum that continues to prepare students for school success. The *California Preschool Learning Foundations*, the *Content Standards for California Public Schools*, and *California's Common Core State Standards* are important resources. Areas of the curriculum include social-emotional development, language arts, mathematics, science, history/social science, physical education, and visual and performing arts.

Determine how to know if students are learning. Assessments should be developmentally, age, and linguistically appropriate. They need to be reliable, valid, and tailored for specific purposes. A variety of methods can be used to identify students' needs and progress, and assist teachers with modifying instruction and communicating with families.



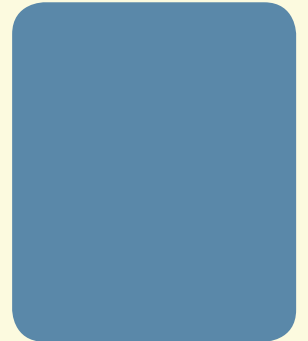


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Appendices

Appendix A



Senate Bill 1381 (SIMITIAN)

Bill Version: (Version: 90 – Approved by the Governor 09-30-2010, Filed with the Secretary of State 09-30-2010, Chapter 705, Statutes of 2010)

Subject: Kindergarten: age of admission.

*Entire bill as amends the law – deletions are in ~~strikethrough~~ / insertions are in **underline***

An act to amend Sections 46300, 48000 and 48010 of the Education Code, relating to kindergarten.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1381, as amended, Simitian. Kindergarten: age of admission.

(1) Existing law requires that a child be admitted to kindergarten at the beginning of a school year, or at any time later in the same year if the child will have his or her 5th birthday on or before December 2 of that school year. An elementary school is required to admit a child to the first grade during the first month of a school year if the child will have his or her 6th birthday on or before December 2 of that school year.

This bill would change the required birthday for admission to kindergarten and first grade to November 1 for the 2012–13 school year, October 1 for the 2013–14 school year, and September 1 for the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter, and would require a child whose admission to a traditional kindergarten is delayed to be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program, as defined. The bill would require pupils who are participating in transitional kindergarten to be included in computing the average daily attendance of a school district in accordance with specified requirements. To the extent those changes establish new administrative duties on the governing boards of school districts in implementing the changes, they would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: MAJORITY Appropriation: NO Fiscal Committee: YES Local Program: YES Urgency: NO Tax Levy: NO

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 **SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Kindergarten**
2 **Readiness Act of 2010.**

3 **SEC. 2.** Section 46300 of the Education Code is amended to read:

4 **46300.** (a) In computing average daily attendance of a school district or county office of
5 education, there shall be included the attendance of pupils while engaged in educational
6 activities required of those pupils and under the immediate supervision and control of an
7 employee of the district or county office who possessed a valid certification document,
8 registered as required by law.

9 (b) (1) For purposes of a work experience education program in a secondary school that
10 meets the standards of the California State Plan for Career Technical Education,
11 “immediate supervision,” in the context of off-campus work training stations, means
12 pupil participation in on-the-job training as outlined under a training agreement,
13 coordinated by the school district under a state-approved plan, wherein the employer and
14 certificated school personnel share the responsibility for on-the-job supervision.

15 (2) The pupil-teacher ratio in a work experience program shall not exceed 125 pupils per
16 full-time equivalent certificated teacher coordinator. This ratio may be waived by the
17 state board pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 33050) of Chapter 1 of Part
18 20 of Division 2 under criteria developed by the state board.

19 (3) A pupil enrolled in a work experience program shall not be credited with more than
20 one day of attendance per calendar day, and shall be a full-time pupil enrolled in regular
21 classes that meet the requirements of Section 46141 or 46144.

22 (c) (1) For purposes of the rehabilitative schools, classes, or programs described in
23 Section 48917 that require immediate supervision, “immediate supervision” means that
24 the person to whom the pupil is required to report for training, counseling, tutoring, or
25 other prescribed activity shares the responsibility for the supervision of the pupils in the
26 rehabilitative activities with certificated personnel of the district.

27 (2) A pupil enrolled in a rehabilitative school, class, or program shall not be credited with
28 more than one day of attendance per calendar day.

29 (d) (1) For purposes of computing the average daily attendance of pupils engaged in the
30 educational activities required of high school pupils who are also enrolled in a regional
31 occupational center or regional occupational program, the school district shall receive
32 proportional average daily attendance credit for those educational activities that are less
33 than the minimum schoolday, pursuant to regulations adopted by the state board;
34 however, none of that attendance shall be counted for purposes of computing attendance
35 pursuant to Section 52324.

1 (2) A school district shall not receive proportional average daily attendance credit
2 pursuant to this subdivision for a pupil in attendance for less than 145 minutes each day.

3 (3) The divisor for computing proportional average daily attendance pursuant to this
4 subdivision is 240, except that, in the case of a pupil excused from physical education
5 classes pursuant to Section 52316, the divisor is 180.

6 (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, travel time of pupils to attend a regional
7 occupational center or regional occupational program shall not be used in any manner in
8 the computation of average daily attendance.

9 (e) (1) In computing the average daily attendance of a school district, there shall also be
10 included the attendance of pupils participating in independent study conducted pursuant
11 to Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 51745) of Chapter 5 of Part 28 for five or more
12 consecutive schooldays.

13 (2) A pupil participating in independent study shall not be credited with more than one
14 day of attendance per calendar day.

15 (f) For purposes of cooperative career technical education programs and community
16 classrooms described in Section 52372.1, “immediate supervision” means pupil
17 participation in paid and unpaid on-the-job experiences, as outlined under a training
18 agreement and individualized training plans wherein the supervisor of the training site
19 and certificated school personnel share the responsibility for the supervision of on-the-job
20 experiences.

21 (g) **(1)** In computing the average daily attendance of a school district, there shall be
22 included the attendance of pupils in kindergarten after they have completed one school
23 year in kindergarten **or pupils in a transitional kindergarten program after they have**
24 **completed one year in that program** ~~only if the school~~ **if one of the following**
25 **conditions is met:**

26 **(A) The school** district has on file for each of those pupils an agreement made pursuant
27 to Section 48011, approved in form and content by the department and signed by the
28 pupil’s parent or guardian, that the pupil may continue in kindergarten for not more than
29 one additional school year.

30 **(B) The pupils participated in a transitional kindergarten program pursuant to**
31 **subdivision (c) of Section 48000.**

32 **(2) A school district may not include for apportionment purposes the attendance of**
33 **any pupil for more than two years in kindergarten or for more than two years in a**
34 **combination of transitional kindergarten and kindergarten.**

35 **SEC. 3.** Section 48000 of the Education Code is amended to read:

1 **48000.** (a) A child shall be admitted to a kindergarten **maintained by the school district**
2 at the beginning of a school year, or at ~~any a~~ later time in the same year if the child will
3 have his or her fifth birthday on or before ~~December 2 of that school year.~~ **one of the**
4 **following dates:**

5 **(1) December 2 of the 2011–12 school year.**

6 A ~~(2)~~ ~~-child who will have his or her fifth birthday on or before December 2 may be~~
7 ~~admitted to the prekindergarten summer program maintained by the school district for~~
8 ~~pupils who will be enrolling in kindergarten in September.~~ **November 1 of the 2012–13**
9 **school year.**

10 **(3) October 1 of the 2013–14 school year.**

11 **(4) September 1 of the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter.**

12 (b) The governing board of ~~any a~~ school district maintaining one or more kindergartens
13 may, on a case-by-case basis, admit to a kindergarten a child having attained the age of
14 five years at any time during the school year with the approval of the parent or guardian,
15 subject to the following conditions:

16 (1) The governing board determines that the admittance is in the best interests of the
17 child.

18 (2) The parent or guardian is given information regarding the advantages and
19 disadvantages and any other explanatory information about the effect of this early
20 admittance.

21 **(c) As a condition of receipt of apportionment for pupils in a transitional**
22 **kindergarten program pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 46300, a school district**
23 **or charter school shall ensure the following:**

24 **(1) In the 2012–13 school year, a child who will have his or her fifth birthday**
25 **between November 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional**
26 **kindergarten program maintained by the school district.**

27 **(2) In the 2013–14 school year, a child who will have his or her fifth birthday**
28 **between October 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten**
29 **program maintained by the school district.**

30 **(3) In the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter, a child who will have**
31 **his or her fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to**
32 **a transitional kindergarten program maintained by the school district.**

33

1 **(d) For purposes of this section, “transitional kindergarten” means the first year of**
2 **a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum**
3 **that is age and developmentally appropriate.**

4 **(e) A transitional kindergarten shall not be construed as a new program or higher**
5 **level of service.**

6 **SEC. 4.** Section 48010 of the Education Code is amended to read:

7 **48010. (a)** A child shall be admitted to the first grade of an elementary school during the
8 first month of a school year if the child will have his or her sixth birthday on or before
9 ~~December 2nd of that school year. For good cause, the governing board of a school~~
10 ~~district may permit a child of proper age to be admitted to a class after the first school~~
11 ~~month of the school term.~~ **one of the following dates:**

12 **(1) December 2 of the 2011–12 school year.**

13 **(2) November 1 of the 2012–13 school year.**

14 **(3) October 1 of the 2013–14 school year.**

15 **(4) September 1 of the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter.**

16 **(b) For good cause, the governing board of a school district may permit a child of**
17 **proper age to be admitted to a class after the first school month of the school term.**

18 **SEC. 5. The Legislature finds and declares that pupils participating in transitional**
19 **kindergarten are to be included in computing the average daily attendance of a**
20 **school district for purposes of calculating school district apportionments and the**
21 **funding requirements of Section 8 of Article XVI of the California Constitution.**

22 **SEC. 6. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs**
23 **mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for**
24 **those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of**
25 **Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.**

Appendix B

California Department of Education Transitional Kindergarten FAQs

Frequently asked questions regarding California state law relating to kindergarten.

- 1. What is the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010?**
Senate Bill (SB) 1381 (Chapter 705, Statutes of 2010) amended California Education Code (Section 46300, 48000, and 48010) to change the required birthday for admission to kindergarten and first grade and established a transitional kindergarten program beginning in the 2012–2013 school year.
- 2. What is the minimum age for admittance to kindergarten in California?**
A child shall be admitted to a kindergarten maintained by the school district at the beginning of a school year, or at a later time in the same year if the child will have his or her fifth birthday on or before one of the following dates (EC 48000[a]):

For the 2010–11 school year the date is December 2
For the 2011–12 school year the date is December 2
For the 2012–13 school year the date is November 1
For the 2013–14 school year the date is October 1
For the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter the date is September 1.
- 3. What is transitional kindergarten?**
A transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. Pursuant to law, (EC 48000[c]), a child is eligible for transitional kindergarten if a child will have his or her fifth birthday between:

For the 2012–13 school year November 2 and December 2
For the 2013–14 school year October 2 and December 2
For the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter September 2 and December 2.
- 4. Will transitional kindergarten continue after 2014?**
Yes.
- 5. Must children attend transitional kindergarten or kindergarten?**
Parents and guardians are currently not required to enroll children in transitional kindergarten or kindergarten (EC Section 48200).
- 6. Is a district required to offer transitional kindergarten and kindergarten programs?**
Each elementary or unified school district must offer transitional kindergarten and kindergarten classes for all children eligible to attend.
- 7. Can transitional kindergarten and kindergarten students be enrolled in the same classrooms?**
Although the intent of the law is to provide separate and unique experiences for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten students, districts have flexibility to determine how best to meet the curricular needs of each child.
- 8. How many years can a district claim apportionment for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten?**
Pursuant to law (EC 46300[g]), districts may claim apportionment for a child for not more than two years in kindergarten or two years in a combination of transitional kindergarten and kindergarten.
- 9. Can a district claim apportionment for transitional kindergarten if it does not use a modified curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate?**
In order to claim apportionment for transitional kindergarten, districts must use a modified curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. California law (EC 48000) defines transitional kindergarten as “the

first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.”

10. How does transitional kindergarten affect basic aid districts?

The laws apply equally to all districts, whether they receive State revenue limit funding or are basic aid.

11. How many minutes does a transitional kindergarten program have to offer?

The number of required instructional minutes for transitional kindergarten is 36,000 minutes per year. The minimum length of instructional time that must be offered to constitute a school day is 180 minutes. (*Education Code sections 46117 and 46201*)

12. How long is the transitional kindergarten day?

Pursuant to law (EC 48000), a transitional kindergarten shall not be construed as a new program or higher level of service. By statute, the maximum school day in kindergarten is four hours (EC 46110). An exception to this statute allows schools that have adopted an early primary program (extended-day kindergarten) to exceed four hours (EC 8973).

13. Is there a parental permission form to continue a child from transitional kindergarten into kindergarten?

Children enrolled in transitional kindergarten do not need a signed parental permission form to continue in kindergarten.

14. Are standards available for transitional kindergarten?

While recommended standards at all grade levels are not mandatory but voluntary. Local Education Agencies will make the decision of what standards or learning foundations are to be part of the local course of study. For guidance in creating a transitional kindergarten course, local education agencies may look at California’s Preschool Learning Foundations (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>) California Academic Content Standards (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>), and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Art and Mathematics (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cc/>).

15. What is the curriculum for transitional kindergarten?

California law (EC 48000) defines transitional kindergarten as “the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.” While no state curriculum is mandated, local education agencies must modify the local course of study in order to provide age and developmentally appropriate curriculum for transitional kindergarten.

16. How will the needs of English learners be addressed in transitional kindergarten?

Local educational agencies will provide a Home Language Survey to be completed by the parent or guardian which will aid the school in determining whether or not the student should be administered the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Students who are English learners in a transitional kindergarten will have the same level of services as those in kindergarten.

17. How will the needs of parents of English learners be addressed in transitional kindergarten?

California law (EC 48985) requires that “all notices, reports, statements, or records sent to the parent or guardian of any such pupil by the school or school district shall, in addition to being written in English, be written in the primary language, and maybe responded to either in English or the primary language.” This applies to parents of English learners in transitional kindergarten.

18. What are the William’s requirements for students in transitional kindergarten?

While instructional materials must be provided to all pupils, the governing board of a school district determines standards-aligned instructional materials and how those materials are to be modified and age-appropriate for transitional kindergarten. Education Code 60119 states “sufficient textbooks or instructional materials’ means that each pupil, including English learners, has a standards-aligned textbook, instructional materials, or both, to use in class and to take home. This paragraph does not require two sets of textbooks or instructional materials for each pupil. The materials may be in a digital format as long as each pupil, at a minimum, has and can access the same materials in the class and to take home, as all other pupils in the same class or course in the district and has the ability to use and access them at home.”

19. **Can students who are age eligible for kindergarten attend transitional kindergarten?**
The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 does not change the established procedures of early admittance for students who do not meet the age eligibility requirement (EC 48000[b]).
20. **What type of facility should be used for transitional kindergarten?**
Facility requirements will be the same as they presently are for kindergarten.
21. **Will transitional kindergarten enrollment generate eligibility under the State School Facility Program (changes in kindergarten enrollment have a dramatic impact on the 5 year enrollment projections for calculating new construction eligibility)?**
Eligibility for this program should remain unchanged because transitional kindergarten ADA would be included in the kindergarten ADA that is currently used to calculate eligibility.
22. **Will transitional kindergarten have the same statutory class size limits as regular kindergarten (33 maximum/31 average)? What about Class Size Reduction for transitional kindergarten?**
The same requirements that apply to kindergarten also apply to transitional kindergarten.
23. **What is the teacher-student ratio for transitional kindergarten?**
This is a local district decision and will most likely be impacted by budget and contract agreements.
24. **Does the transitional kindergarten teacher need a teaching credential?**
The teacher must be properly credentialed as is currently required of kindergarten teachers.
25. **Does the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 provide funding for any other staffing?**
No, although other available funding may be used.
26. **Are districts required to use DataQuest to report information about transitional kindergarten?**
Yes, districts are required to use DataQuest to report data and statistics in order to identify trends and educational needs of transitional kindergarten students.
27. **Does the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 provide funding for professional development?**
No, although other available funding may be used.
28. **Can a transitional kindergarten teacher “loop” with his/her students to kindergarten?**
The decision to “loop” a teacher with their students from the transitional kindergarten to the kindergarten year would be a local decision.
29. **Can the same federal funds used to fund kindergarten be used to fund transitional kindergarten (for example Title 1, Title III, EIA, etc.)?**
Yes. The same funds and compliance requirements associated with the use of the funds apply.

Related Content

[Extended-Day Kindergarten](#) - Assembly Bill 2407 (Chapter 946, Statutes of 2004) amending the CA *Education Code* Section 37202 pertaining to extended-day kindergarten classes.

[Kindergarten in California](#) - California state law and information regarding admission to kindergarten.

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Last Reviewed: Friday, June 24, 2011

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp>

Appendix C

California Department of Education Kindergarten in California

California state law and information regarding admission to kindergarten

There is a growing interest in a number of kindergarten issues: e.g., enrollment age, retention, and extended-day kindergarten. This guidance material is designed to address many of these issues. Since many private schools also adhere to the state *Education Code*, this guidance may be of assistance to them. This information may also be helpful to parents and guardians, as well as teachers of preschool, kindergarten, and first grade.

Kindergarten Enrollment

Parents and guardians are currently not required to enroll children in kindergarten (*Education Code* [EC] Section 48200) (Outside Source). If parents/guardians choose to enroll their children, schools must admit children who are of legal age (EC Section 48000[a]). Admission of age-eligible children must occur at the beginning of the school year or whenever the students move into the school district. (See *Barajas, et al. v. Board of Trustees, et al.*, Sup. Ct. Sonoma County, 1990, No. 80963.)

While local education officials may need a day or two to identify the particular assigned kindergarten classroom, no age-eligible child may be denied access to school by being placed on a waiting list. Although demographics and class size reduction restrictions may prevent parents/guardians from enrolling their children in the neighborhood school, the district must provide the name(s) of available schools. Parents/guardians may discuss school choice options with district officials. To help make placement decisions, parents/guardians may compare schools online at either [Ed-Data](#) (Outside Source) or [Data and Statistics](#). Both sites offer information on schools' demographics and characteristics.

- A. **Age-Eligible Children:** Districts must admit children at the beginning of the school year (or whenever they move into a district) if they will be five years of age on or before December 2 for the 2010-11 school year, December 2 for the 2011-12 school year, November 1 for the 2012-13 school year, October 1 for the 2013-14 school year and September 1 for the 2014-15 school year and each school year thereafter. (EC Section 48000[a]). Children who are age-eligible for kindergarten may attend any prekindergarten summer program maintained by the school district. Information about items constituting proof of age supplied by parent or guardian is found in EC Section 48002. Immunization requirements are found in *Health and Safety Code* Section 120325 and Section 120335 and on CDE's [Factbook](#) Web page.
- B. **Under-Age Children:** Districts and CDE staff are frequently requested by parents/guardians to enroll children who are not age-eligible in kindergarten and first grade. CDE has no authority to require districts to admit or accelerate under-age children. The information below is regarding enrollment of under-age children in either kindergarten or first grade.
 1. **Early Admission to Kindergarten.** In addition to the laws mentioned above (in [A. Age-Eligible Children](#)), there is an additional—but rarely used—option for admitting children to kindergarten once they turn five years old. Districts may admit to kindergarten those children whose birthdays occur after December 2. These children may not begin school at the beginning of the school year, but they must wait until their fifth birth date occurs (EC Section 48000[b]). Districts that admit these children to kindergarten prior to their turning age five jeopardize their apportionments, as auditors may take fiscal sanctions through an audit process (see pages 68 through 70 of the state Controller's Office [attendance accounting procedures](#) [PDF; Outside Source] for auditors). While EC Section 48000(b) allows a child to be admitted early on a case-by-case basis, districts offering this option to families would be wise to have local governing board-adopted criteria by which students are accepted. Districts that base early admissions on test results, maturity of the child, or preschool records may risk being challenged by parents/guardians whose children are denied admission. If these children continue in kindergarten past the anniversary dates of their admission, the school would be well advised to have signed Parental Agreement Forms on file to continue the children in kindergarten to the end of the school year.
 2. **Acceleration to First Grade.** California law requires a child to be six years old on or before December 2 for the 2010-11 school year, December 2 for the 2011-12 school year, November 1 for the 2012-13 school year, October 1 for the 2013-14 school year and September 1 for the 2014-15 school year and each

school year thereafter to be legally eligible for first grade (*EC* Section 48010). A child who was legally enrolled in an out-of-state kindergarten (using that state's requirements), but who does not meet California age eligibility for first grade, may be enrolled by the district in first grade (*EC* Section 48011). A child who was not age-eligible for kindergarten (that is, the child turned five after December 2 in the school year) and who attended a California private school kindergarten for a year is viewed by the CDE as not legally enrolled in kindergarten, pursuant to *EC* Section 48000 requirements. Therefore, this child, upon enrollment in public school, is enrolled in kindergarten, assessed, and may (but is not required to) be immediately promoted to first grade if the child meets the following State Board of Education criteria, pursuant to Title 5, Section 200:

- The child is at least five years of age.
- The child has attended a public school kindergarten for a long enough time to enable school personnel to evaluate the child's ability.
- The child is in the upper 5 percent of the child's age group in terms of general mental ability.
- The physical development and social maturity of the child are consistent with the child's advanced mental ability.
- The parent or guardian has filed a written statement with the district that approves placement in first grade.

A statement, signed by the district and parent/guardian, is placed in the official school records for these five-year-olds who have been advanced to first grade (*EC* Section 48011). This action prevents a subsequent audit exception for first grade placement of an age-ineligible student.

3. **Alternatives for Placement of Under-age Children.** Districts may offer alternatives for later placement of children whose parents/guardians wanted them to be admitted before they were of legal age. These options should best suit the children's educational and social needs:

- The child may be assigned to a kindergarten teacher who uses developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction that is unique to the individual child's pattern of growth. In this type of classroom, differences in children's interests and development are expected and used to differentiate curriculum and enable children to be accelerated within the kindergarten classroom. (For more information, see *First Class: A Guide for Early Primary Education* [1999]; *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* [1997]).
- The child may be enrolled in a multi-age program in which grade-level distinctions are blurred and a student completes assignments and projects based on his or her abilities, needs, or interests rather than on assigned grade level. Thus, a kindergarten child who has accomplished kindergarten standards may have some first grade assignments. The *California Kindergarten Association* (Outside Source) has research summaries in its *Fact Sheet on Kindergartners in Mixed-Aged Classes*. The *Harvard Education Letter* of January/February 1998 also has information on multi-age classrooms.
- A child may be assigned to one teacher but also attend another teacher's class for a particular subject area. For example, a child who has completed kindergarten mathematics standards may attend a first grade classroom for mathematics instruction.

Young children who are accelerated to kindergarten or first grade may feel stress as they try to achieve academic expectations and relate to older children. Parents/guardians and early childhood educators are the best judges about what may be gained by acceleration and whether it is worth the price. CDE recommends that educators and district employees explain to parents/guardians of under-age children the following information:

- The academic, social, physical, and emotional readiness required for kindergarten and first grade
- The rigorous nature of the academic standards
- The potential for harming a child's disposition to learn by inappropriate acceleration, and
- The important concepts, skills, and knowledge imparted at each stage of a child's education, including preschool

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderinfo.asp>

Often it is helpful if school or district staff members arrange for parents/guardians to read kindergarten through first grade standards, visit classrooms, and observe instruction. Districts may provide additional information for parents/guardians, such as:

- The CDE documents, *Continuity for Young Children: Positive Transitions to Elementary School; and/or Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines*
- The National Research Council document, *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*
- "School Readiness: Helping Communities Get Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children" by Child Trends
- *Getting Ready for Kindergarten: A Guide for Parents* by the San Mateo County Office of Education, and
- *Helping Your Child Get Ready for School* by the U. S. Department of Education.

C. **Private School Considerations:** Private schools do not necessarily operate under the same requirements as public schools, but representatives of the California Association of Private Schools Organizations (CAPSO) indicate many private schools do follow *Education Code* sections referenced in this document. If children have been admitted as three- or four-year olds to private school kindergarten, it is their parents'/guardian's responsibility to monitor their children's emotional and physical responses to the accelerated curriculum.

Public school officials do not automatically enroll in first grade those students who attended a private school kindergarten (see B.2. Acceleration to First Grade above for guidance).

Kindergarten Continuance

Continuance is defined as more than one school year in kindergarten. *EC* Section 48011 requires a child who has completed a year of kindergarten to be promoted to first grade, unless the parent or guardian and the district agree that the child may continue in kindergarten not more than one additional school year.

A parent/guardian who agrees the child is to continue in kindergarten must sign the Kindergarten Continuance Form, which is available on CDE's Pupil Promotion & Retention Web page. Failure to have signed forms on file may jeopardize audit findings and result in a loss of apportionment.

EC sections 48070-48070.5 set forth requirements for pupil promotion and retention (PPR). While kindergarten was not a grade level included by legislators, *EC* Section 48070.5(j) enables local boards to adopt additional PPR policies. Districts considering continuance of kindergartners may want to consider:

- Reviewing current research
- Developing a plan to reduce the rate of continuance
- Improving the instructional program for students at risk of continuance, and
- Monitoring the progress of schools in reducing continuance rates, including the differential effects of continuance for different ethnic groups, non-English-speaking children, and gender

Section 3934, subdivision (b), located in Title 5 of the *California Code of Regulations*, states:

(b) No program utilizing consolidated application funds shall:

- Create special tracks for the educationally disadvantaged;
- Establish adjustment, pregrade, or junior grade classes for the educationally disadvantaged.

Current literature reveals that retention may have a negative effect on student achievement, school attendance, attitude toward school, and student dropout rates. On the other hand, social promotion also may have a negative effect on student achievement. The U.S. Department of Education provides guidance for state and local leaders to prevent, and intervene to reduce, student failure in *Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion*. This document may assist schools and districts to adopt a comprehensive approach to retention. All CDE guidance points to the need for districts and school staff to provide interventions for students who are at risk of failure to prevent the need for retention. Although kindergarten is not currently a mandated grade, appropriate interventions should not be delayed.

Transitional Kindergarten

Transitional Kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. Each elementary or unified school district must offer transitional kindergarten classes for all children eligible to attend. A child who completes one year in a transitional kindergarten program, shall continue in a kindergarten program for one additional year. A kindergarten continuance form is not needed for transitional kindergarten. A child is eligible for transitional kindergarten if they have their fifth birthday between (EC 48000[c]):

- November 2 and December 2 for the 2012–13 school year.
- October 2 and December 2 for the 2013–14 school year.
- September 2 and December 2 for the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter.

Extended-Day Kindergarten

Extended-day kindergarten (EDK) is defined as a class, taught by the same certificated staff member, that exceeds the four-hour maximum. In some districts EDK is the same length of day as that for older elementary students. While California districts do not receive additional apportionment funds to lengthen the kindergarten day, there is a growing interest in this topic. Nationally, about two thirds of U.S. kindergarten children attend full-day classes. In California, the percentage of students in full-day classes has increased dramatically. For further information, visit The Public Policy Institute of California Web site on [Full-Day Kindergarten in California](#) (Outside Source; PDF). Educators may wish to extend the kindergarten day for a number of reasons, including the following:

- To improve the educational program for children
- To provide more time for the teacher to get to know each child
- To encourage children's maximum social, emotional, physical, and academic growth
- To address transportation issues related to district bus schedules, and
- To address parents'/guardian's needs for child care

EC sections 46110-46119 detail the minimum and maximum lengths of the school day for kindergarten and other elementary grade classrooms. The maximum number of minutes for kindergarten is four hours, (EC Section 46111), excluding recess. However, recess time may be counted as instructional minutes, at the district's discretion, if teacher supervision occurs.

Another portion of the *Education Code* (EC sections 8970-8974) authorizes EDK if the local school board adopts a policy establishing an Early Primary Program, in keeping with the 1988 recommendations of the School Readiness Task Force, found in *Here They Come: Ready or Not!* (1988). EC Section 8973 allows schools to offer EDK if both of the following conditions are met:

- The kindergarten program does not exceed the length of the primary school day, and
- The extended-day kindergarten program takes into account ample opportunity for both active and quiet activities with an integrated, experiential, and developmentally appropriate educational program.

To establish EDK, districts should adopt a formal policy in keeping with an Early Primary Program, EC sections 8970-8974. They may also consider the implications of curriculum and instruction changes, class size reduction, facilities, parents'/guardian's issues, potential bargaining unit agreements, and fiscal considerations. Districts may also carefully evaluate lengthened programs to determine if children are benefiting in all domains (academic, social, emotional, and physical).

While lengthening the day affects the organization of kindergarten classrooms, the most long-lasting and far-reaching change will involve what goes on inside the kindergarten classroom. The [National All-Day Kindergarten Network](#) (Outside Source) contains research findings, resources, a discussion group, and contact people on all-day kindergarten.

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderinfo.asp>

Transitions to Elementary School

Helping children get off to a good start in school is important to families, teachers, and children. Transition plans are required by the federal, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Title I, Part A, Section 1114(b)(1)(G) of the act requires Schoolwide Projects to plan children's transitions from early childhood programs to local elementary school programs. Section 1115(c)(1)(D) of the Act requires Targeted Assistance programs to assist preschool children in their transitions to elementary school. Head Start programs are also required to plan transitions and share relevant child-centered information (Section 642A of 42 U.S.C. 9837A). Students with exceptional needs are also provided appropriate transitions, pursuant to *EC* Section 56445.

A state law offers an additional opportunity for preschool and elementary educators to help children transition to school. The California Preschool Transfer Act of 2001 (Assembly Bill 1539, Chapter 629, Statutes of 2001) requires state-funded preschools to provide to the parent/guardian(s) developmental and any other information deemed beneficial to the child and public school teacher (see *EC* sections 56435, 56449, and 58930). If parents/guardians authorize it, preschools may provide this information directly to the schools.

Note: The guidance in this document is not binding on local education agencies or other entities. Except for the statutes, regulations, and court decisions that are referenced herein, this document is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)

California Department of Education Resources

Name	Phone	Topic
Literacy, History, & Arts Leadership	916-323-6269	Enrollment age; curriculum; instruction; extended-day kindergarten
Child Development Division	916-322-6233	Preschool standards; Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines
Educational Demographics	916-327-0219	Comparison data on schools' demographics, characteristics
Literacy, History, & Arts Leadership	916-323-6269	Kindergarten continuance/retention policy and forms
Kim Clement	916-327-0857	Average daily attendance; fiscal reports; apportionment

Resources Cited

California Department of Education. 1988. *Here They Come: Ready or Not!* Sacramento, CA: Author.

_____ 1997. *Continuity for Young Children: Positive Transitions to Elementary School*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

_____ 1999. *First Class: A Guide for Early Primary Education*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

_____ 2000. *Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, Rev. Ed. 1997. Sue Bredekamp and Carol Copple, Eds. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers - Executive Summary. 2000. Washington, DC: National Research Council.

Fact Sheet on Kindergartners in Mixed-Aged Classes. 1995. Doris Smith, Ed. San Mateo, CA: California Kindergarten Association.

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderinfo.asp>

Getting Ready for Kindergarten: A Guide for Parents. 2001. Redwood City, CA: San Mateo County Office of Education (in English and Spanish).

Harvard Education Letter (Outside Source). *Research Online*. Jan/Feb 1998.

Rothenberg, D. 1995. "Full-Day Kindergarten Programs" in *ERIC Digest*. Urbana, IL: Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

_____ 1997. "What Should Parents Know About Full-Day Kindergarten?" brochure prepared by ACCESS ERIC. Urbana, IL: Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

"School Readiness: Helping Communities Get Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children." Executive Summary of *Background for Community-Level Work on School Readiness: A Review of Definitions, Assessments, and Investment Strategies* by Halle, Zaslow, Zaff, & Calkins. 2000. Child Trends.

Slavin, R, Karweit, N., & Wasik, B. 1994. *Preventing Early School Failure: Research, Policy, and Practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

U.S. Department of Education. 1992. *Helping Your Child Get Ready for School* (Outside Source). Washington, D.C. Author.

_____ 1999. *Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion: A Guide for Educators and State and Local Leaders*. Washington D.C.: Author.

Related Content

- [Transitional Kindergarten FAQs](#) - Frequently asked questions regarding California state law relating to kindergarten.

Questions: Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office | 916-323-6269

California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Last Reviewed: Thursday, September 15, 2011

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderinfo.asp>

Appendix D

California Department of Education

Kindergarten Continuance Form Parental Agreement for Pupil to Continue in Kindergarten

Reflects amendments to California *Education Code* sections 46300 and 48011, effective Jan. 1, 1992

Name of Pupil _____

Kindergarten Attendance Anniversary Date _____

Name of School Official Approving for District _____

Information for parent or guardian

California law provides that after a child has been lawfully admitted to a kindergarten and has attended for a year, the child shall be promoted to the first grade unless the school district and the child's parent/guardian agree to having the child continue to attend kindergarten for not longer than one additional year. This rule applies whether a child begins kindergarten at the beginning of a school year or at some later date, so that a child who begins kindergarten in January, for example, shall be promoted the following January unless there is formal agreement to have him or her continue in kindergarten. Because kindergarten-age children often do not develop at steady or predictable rates, the California Department of Education recommends that approval for a child to continue not be given until near the anniversary of a child's admittance to kindergarten.

I agree to having my child (named above) continue in kindergarten until _____
(date)

(may not be more than one year beyond anniversary)

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date: _____

Printed/typed name of Parent/ Guardian _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number _____

Revised: 5/20/2009

Appendix E

Transitional Kindergarten Online Resources and Web Sites



ONLINE RESOURCES FOR TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

California Department of Education Web Site & Resources

California Department of Education (CDE) The California Department of Education home page	http://www.cde.ca.gov/index.asp
California's Common Core State Standards Resources Information about the new academic standards in California	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cc/
Content Standards Content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education	http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/
Kindergarten Continuance Form Parental Agreement for Pupil to Continue in Kindergarten	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/documents/parentagreeform.pdf
Kindergarten in CA (September 15, 2011) California state law and information regarding admission to kindergarten	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderinfo.asp
Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1 Aligned with the foundations, the curriculum framework provides guidance on planning learning environments and experiences for young children	http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psframeworkkvol1.pdf
Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning A resource guide to educate preschool English learners	http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psenglearnersed2.pdf
Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1 The foundations for preschool-age children identify key domains of learning and guide instructional practice	http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/preschoollf.pdf
Title 5, California Code of Regulations An excerpt of the California Code of Regulations, Title 5 related to school facilities construction	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/title5regs.asp
Transitional Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions Frequently asked questions regarding California state law relating to kindergarten	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp

Transitional Kindergarten Web Sites & Resources

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association - Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee Spring 2011 Transitional Kindergarten School District Survey	http://www.tkcalifornia.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/TK-SD-Survey-7-26-11-2.pdf
California School Board Association (CSBA) Transitional Kindergarten Issue Brief - July 2011	http://www.csba.org/en/LegislationAndLegal/Legislation/LegislativeNews/~media/329F556301074B41AF5235C4A5A182D4.ashx
California State Senator Joe Simitian □ SB 1381: Kindergarten Age (2010) Summary of SB 1381 and resources	http://www.senatorsimitian.com/entry/sb_1381_kindergarten_age
Commission on Teacher Credentialing Credential Information Alert □ August 25, 2011 Appropriate credentials for transitional kindergarten	http://www.siacabinetreport.com/admin/uploads/articleresources/8312011825536943.pdf
SB 1381 Legislative Counsel's Digest Senate Bill 1381 □ Chapter 705	http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb_1351-1400/sb_1381_bill_20100930_chaptered.pdf
Transitional Kindergarten (TK) California Online resources to support the successful implementation of transitional kindergarten	http://www.tkcalifornia.org/

Additional Online Resources

<p>California County Superintendents Educational Service Association (CCSESA) Information and resources for early education are posted on the CCSESA Web site under School Readiness</p> <p><i>Ready for K...with ESEA – The A B C’s of How to Use Title I, Part A ESEA Funds for Preschool in California</i></p> <p><i>Ready for K...Promising Preschool Practices – A Report of Selected California Public School Districts</i></p>	<p>http://www.ccsesa.org/index/sp_prek.cfm</p> <p>http://www.ccsesa.org/index/documents/Ready_for_K_with_ESEA.pdf</p> <p>http://www.ccsesa.org/index/documents/ReadyforK_10_21_10Web.pdf</p>
<p>California Law California Education Code</p>	<p>http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=edc&codebody=&hits=20</p>
<p>California Kindergarten Association An association to support kindergarten teachers</p>	<p>http://www.californiakindergartenassociation.org/transitional-kindergarten/</p>
<p>California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN) CPIN, funded by CDE, conducts professional development on CDE publications such as the Preschool Learning Foundations and Framework</p>	<p>http://www.cpin.us</p>
<p>California School Boards Association (CSBA) A collaborative group of school governing boards, school districts, and county offices of education that advocates on behalf of school districts and county offices of education in California</p>	<p>http://www.csba.org/</p>
<p>Preschool California A non-profit advocacy organization to increase access to high quality early care and education</p>	<p>http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org</p>
<p>Preschool California: Transitional Kindergarten Library A shared learning space to find documents, information and other resources regarding Transitional Kindergarten implementation</p>	<p>http://www.tkcalifornia.org/</p>

Appendix F



CREDENTIAL INFORMATION ALERT

DATE: August 25, 2011

NUMBER: 11-08

SUBJECT: Transitional Kindergarten Assignments

Summary:

The Legislature adopted the *Kindergarten Readiness Act* in 2010 in an effort to provide more age-appropriate services as the entry age for kindergarten is moved to September 1 over the next several years. Senate Bill (SB) 1381 (Chap. 705, Stats. 2010) amended Education Code (EC) sections 46300, 48000, and 48010 to change the required birth date for admission to kindergarten and established a transitional kindergarten program beginning in the 2012–2013 school year. The bill also changed the required birth date for admission to first grade. This Credential Information Alert (CIA) is limited to addressing the appropriate credentials and teaching permits for serving in transitional kindergarten assignments.

Key Provisions and Important Dates:

According to the amended EC sections, transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a developmentally and age appropriate modified kindergarten curriculum. SB 1381 requires that students entering kindergarten be at least five years old by November 1 for the 2012-2013 school year; by October 1 for the 2013-2014 school year; and by September 1 for the 2014-15 school year and each year thereafter.

EC section 48000(c) provides information on students that are eligible for transitional kindergarten. According to statute, a child is eligible for transitional kindergarten if the student will have his or her fifth birthday between November 2 and December 2 beginning in the 2012-2013 school year; between October 2 and December 2 beginning the 2013-2014 school year; and between September 2 and December 2 beginning the 2014-2015 school year and each year thereafter.

The California Department of Education (CDE) is the agency with authority over these sections of statute and additional information is available through their website as noted in the References section. According to the referenced *Transitional Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions*, each elementary or unified school district must offer transitional kindergarten and kindergarten classes for all children eligible to attend.

CERTIFICATION, ASSIGNMENT AND WAIVERS DIVISION
1900 CAPITOL AVENUE, SACRAMENTO, CA 95811-4213 (888) 921-2682



Transitional kindergarten classrooms, as defined in EC section 48000(d), are appropriately staffed by the holder of a teaching credential or permit that authorizes general education instruction in a self-contained classroom for the grade level of Kindergarten. Transitional kindergarten classrooms as defined in statute are not preschool classrooms or child development programs; therefore, holders of Children’s Center Instructional or Child Development Permits including those with the school-age emphasis will not be authorized to teach transitional kindergarten. Employing agencies should distinguish between those transitional preschool programs intended to support kindergarten readiness from the transitional kindergarten classrooms mandated and delineated in statute.

Credentials that authorize instruction in transitional kindergarten classrooms are provided below.

General:

Kindergarten-Primary (grades K-3)

Elementary (grades K-8)

Standard:

Early Childhood (grades preschool-3)

Elementary (grades K-9)

Ryan/SB 2042:

Multiple Subject (grades preschool, K-12 and adults)

Multiple Subject University Intern (grades preschool, K-12 and adults)

Multiple Subject District Intern (grades K-8)

Specialist Instruction Credential in Early Childhood Education

A Multiple Subject General Education Limited Assignment Permit (GELAP), Multiple Subject Short-Term Staff Permit (STSP) or Multiple Subject Provisional Internship Permit (PIP) authorizes the same service as a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential.

Students identified as English learners in a transitional kindergarten classroom must have the same level of services as those in kindergarten. Therefore, students identified as English learners that require instruction in English Language Development (ELD) or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) services must have a teacher authorized to provide the appropriate English learner instructional services indicated.

It is important to note that transitional kindergarten assignments as defined in statute are subject to assignment monitoring and reporting by the county offices of education under the provisions of EC §44258.9. The Commission’s Administrator’s Assignment Manual will be updated to include information on transitional kindergarten assignments.



Source:

EC sections 46300, 48000, and 48010

References:

Transitional Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions (California Department of Education)
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp#E1>

Kindergarten in California (California Department of Education)
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderinfo.asp>

Contact Information:

For questions regarding transitional kindergarten programs or implementation:

California Department of Education at 1-916-323-4629, or by email at MAutry@cde.ca.gov.

For questions regarding appropriate assignment and authorization:

Commission's Assignment Unit at 1-916-322-5038 (voicemail line), or by email at cawassignments@ctc.ca.gov.

Appendix G

The Transitional Kindergarten Learning Environment

An essential component of designing the learning environment for transitional kindergarten is to carefully plan an environment and schedule that creates a learning space that is intentionally designed to align with curricular goals while meeting students' developmental needs. Teaching staff must keep in mind that a TK program will provide children with extended opportunities to meet the expectations outlined in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations*, *California's Common Core State Standards*, and *California's Content Standards* for kindergarten. The environment should reflect these teaching and learning expectations and experiences.

A wide range of learning centers should be carefully planned to provide a balance of activities where students initiate and engage in activities that are: active and quiet; individual, small group and large group experiences guided by teachers and initiated by children; predictable and flexible; familiar and novel; indoor and outdoor; and that draw upon the natural patterns of daily routines (for example, preparing snacks or caring for the environment). The environment should be arranged to maximize and organize students' learning and experiences, facilitate access to learning materials, and promote movement. English language development instruction and adaptations for students with disabilities should be included in daily learning experiences.

Within the TK classroom environment, routines and transitions should be structured to promote interaction, communication, and learning. To facilitate smooth transitions from one activity to another, visual or verbal cues may be necessary for some children prior to transitions. Visual schedules are very helpful in assisting children with learning and adhering to classroom routines. Along with a consistent routine, the use of consistent terminology or directions by teaching staff will support the young learner's success throughout the day. Such consistency will minimize confusion for the child who relies on familiar words.

The environment should be arranged to provide designated areas to promote opportunities for cooperative learning among students. Cooperative learning experiences encourage students to interact with each other while making sense of new information. This collaborative manner also allows English Learners to be a part of a common learning experience with their peers as they learn English, practice new skills, and learn in a supportive environment. Providing enriching and engaging environments that provide opportunities for students to make meaningful connections through an integrated approach enables them to develop socially, emotionally, linguistically, physically, and cognitively.

An extended amount of time, approximately 30 minutes, should be devoted to learning centers or time where students freely choose their learning experiences. This time

should promote experiential learning opportunities and be incorporated into the daily routine. These learning times should include specific materials that students can readily and independently access. Areas can include materials and “real-life” objects that represent the diverse cultures of families and be adapted to ensure accessibility of students with disabilities. These areas may be used independently or integrated with specific teaching and learning concepts. Teachers can label areas and materials in the environment to assist students with making choices and to identify how specific areas and objects are organized. Learning center ideas and strategies, which may be indoors and/or outdoors, are described below. These ideas and strategies are not typically displayed in a kindergarten environment, but can provide excellent opportunities to integrate learning in all content areas, including the development of fine and gross motor skills; provide greater decision making and independent skill development for students; and facilitate multiple opportunities for small group and individualized teaching and learning. Teachers must carefully plan and design activities that extend and reinforce key curricular goals and concepts that students are learning.

Learning Center Ideas and Strategies

Art experiences encourage creative expression and help refine small muscle development and eye-hand coordination. Students who make art are presented with multiple opportunities to creatively express their ideas and feelings through a variety of media and to experiment with and value art forms and techniques. Students who look at and talk about artworks—their own, their peers, and adult artists—can enrich and expand their visual awareness, develop new vocabulary, and expand their ideas about what art is and what art can be. Although art should be integrated across the TK curriculum, during these learning center experiences, students make choices, explore, experiment, and talk about their process of creating their unique artwork.

The art area should be located near a sink or water. Colored photos, paintings, and artwork should be displayed nearby. Students' work should prominently be displayed throughout the classroom environment.

Materials may include: An assortment of crayons, markers, and chalks; papers of various textures, weights, and colors; paints and paintbrushes; adhesives; stamps and stamp pads; small objects and textures such as feathers, pipe cleaners, buttons, wood, and ribbon; tools for cutting and shaping; and materials for molding such as playdough and clay.

Dramatic play promotes social emotional development through multiple negotiations involved to determine the context of the play and the roles to be used in the pretend situations. Students must also cooperate with each other to play out each scene. While students engage in their pretend roles, they develop small muscle skills by utilizing dress-up clothing and theme-based props. Students actively engage with their peers and adults by expressing themselves and listening to others. They solve problems, ask questions, explore topic areas, and share ideas while playing cooperatively.

The dramatic play area should be located near the block area so that instructional materials can be shared. The furniture included in this area should create a secluded space.

Materials may include: Dress-up clothing, theme-based props, real-life objects that represent diverse ethnic groups, photographs, books, and writing tools.

Language and literacy experiences foster students' development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and comprehension activities prepare students to be ready to engage in the activity or lesson. Multiple strategies will enhance the language and literacy experiences of students. A few include: using pictures and illustrations to convey meaning and to make predictions about stories; using words, models, questioning strategies to help students tap into their prior knowledge, make personal connections, and express their thoughts. Story retelling is not only a way to get children talking and using language but also a way to reinforce syntax, comprehension, and vocabulary. In addition to developing language and comprehension, retelling develops the concepts used in narrative formats and storytelling. Story retelling also allows for children to use their primary language in a way that promotes cognitive development. Moreover, exposure to print and print concepts (for example, directionality including left to right and top to bottom progressions; meaning including the relationship of letters to sounds and the meaning of print; print awareness including letter and word concepts; and the mechanics of print such as letter characteristics and punctuation), and writing are critical for all students.

Language and literacy activities may incorporate drama, student conversations, vocabulary development, as well as reading and writing instruction in a non-threatening manner. Literature serves as a way for English learners to make cultural connections to themselves and to others.

The literacy area should be located in a quiet area away and out of the line of traffic. It should be an inviting area that includes soft materials for seating and organized bookcases that house a broad selection of books. This area should also include writing and listening areas.

Materials may include: a wide variety of books that reflect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of families and cultures; writing materials that include pencils, markers, and an assortment of paper products, whiteboards, magnetic boards, and clipboards. This area may also include alphabet letters and numbers in a variety of forms (for example, magnetic, individual cards, stamps, and strips), name cards, puppets, felt and magnetic boards for retelling stories, a CD or tape player with headsets.

Mathematics and manipulatives facilitate opportunities for students to practice eye-hand coordination, build, design, experiment, construct and create representation, invent, cooperate with one another, and problem solve. While manipulating objects, such as puzzles, games, blocks, and assorted objects, students often describe their

actions that may include: matching, comparing, sorting, and arranging objects in an order. They expand their cognitive development through their analysis of sizes, shapes, numbers, lengths, patterns, and weight. While more learning time should be devoted to number sense than any other topic in mathematics, instructional time for the young learner should focus on: knowing number names and the counting sequence; counting (one-to-one correspondence) to tell the number of objects; comparing numbers; understanding addition as putting together and adding to, and understanding subtraction as taking apart and taking from; identifying and describing shapes; and analyzing, comparing, creating, and comparing shapes.

Using higher-level thinking questioning strategies helps students to think mathematically. They also provide insight into the student's level of understanding. Teachers can use questioning strategies during whole group instruction but they are particularly effective during small group and independent work times. Some examples include: How many are there? Is there another way to show 10? How is this number/group different from that one? Which has more or fewer? How do you know? Which is taller, longer or shorter? How do you know? How many different ways can you make the number 8? Additionally, the use of number talks, that is using numbers in everyday speech (i.e., We have 24 students here today, how many napkins will we need for snack time?) encourages students to investigate and apply mathematical relationships, clarify their own thinking, make decisions about the efficiency of various strategies, and consider other strategies to see if they are mathematically logical.

The mathematics and manipulatives area should have low shelves with labeled containers to provide an organizational structure and student accessibility.

Materials may include: assortment of puzzles, unifix cubes, Cuisenaire rods, attribute blocks, unit blocks, geometric shapes, geoboards, objects for patterning and matching, magnetic and felt boards, magnetic letters and numbers, collections of objects, and games;

Science experiences promote exploration, experimentation, and discovery. They provide students with opportunities to observe, ask questions, think critically while investigating their world, make predictions, work together, make decisions, and problem solve. Students take care of living things and learn to use materials and tools safely. During science experiences, students develop fine motor and large motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and oral language skills.

The science area should be located near natural light and include shelves, trays, and baskets to display objects that represent the life sciences (i.e., plants, animals, senses, body), physical sciences (i.e., magnets, light), and earth sciences (i.e., rocks, weather, recycling) and science equipment. Objects should be changed frequently and invite students to fulfill an innate curiosity to observe, explore and investigate.

Materials may include: Collections of natural objects such as rocks, shells, leaves; magnets, gears and levers, and an assortment of objects that reflect light and transmit sound; tools for discovery such as eyedroppers, magnifying glasses, a microscope, tongs, tweezers, and balance scales; containers for classifying, measuring, mixing, pouring, and sorting; small living things; and informational books, pictures, and writing materials.

Technology and computer use expands students' opportunities to explore, create, develop their understanding of concepts, seek information, solve problems, and familiarize themselves with tools they may not have access to in their home environment. The use of technology and computers facilitates shared learning and interactive experiences, cooperation amongst peers, and leadership. Students develop fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and engage in activities that develop language and literacy skills.

The technology and computer area should be located near the language and literacy area.

Materials may include: cameras; computers; keyboards; variety of software; printer; computer assistive devices to adapt the mouse, keyboard or screen; speakers; and headphones.

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