



# *Transitional* **Kindergarten**

## *Supporting Students with the Gift of Time*



**S**tarting school is an exciting time for children and their families. It begins a new chapter in their lives and sets the tone for their future. Yet, kindergarten has changed over the years and many of the skills children once learned in first grade are now taught in kindergarten. This makes the transition into kindergarten difficult for some children. Transitional Kindergarten helps the youngest children get the best start possible, with a curriculum created just for them!

Transitional Kindergarten is open to children who turn five years old between September 2 and December 2. It is specifically designed for these students and uses developmentally appropriate practices for children in this age span.

### **What is Transitional Kindergarten?**

Transitional Kindergarten is a bridge between preschool and kindergarten for children with Fall birthdays. It gives our youngest children an opportunity to learn in an interactive, hands-on environment that supports their development.

Transitional Kindergarten is:

- The first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for students born between September and December
  - Part of the public school system and free for families
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- An engaging learning environment that meets the social-emotional and cognitive needs of young children
- Taught by credentialed teachers who understand how to teach young kindergarteners
- A “gift of time” that allows students to develop at their own pace, setting them up for school success in kindergarten and beyond



### **What happens in a Transitional Kindergarten classroom?**

In Transitional Kindergarten, teachers help children develop social and academic skills through activities that build confidence and communication. They expose children to reading and math in exciting, interactive ways—teaching them about words and sentences and helping them understand math concepts like counting and patterns.

- Students participate in classroom activities that respond to their interest levels and learning modalities.
- New skills build on what the students already know so that each child experiences learning success. This helps students adjust to the elementary school environment.
- Rich language experiences are provided so that students expand their vocabulary and develop oral language skills.
- A warm, nurturing approach builds positive teacher-student relationships. Peer relationships are enhanced through small and large group interactions, while opportunities for independent exploration build self-sufficiency.
- Classes follow the same schedule as the daily traditional kindergarten programs that are offered at the school. Some schools may also offer before- and after-school programs.

### **What is the parent’s role in Transitional Kindergarten?**

Communication between home and school is essential in helping children succeed. Transitional Kindergarten teachers meet with parents on a regular basis to discuss student progress and ways to support learning at home. Assessments and teacher observations are used to monitor student growth and progress throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in their child’s learning both at home and in school.

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## Is Transitional Kindergarten good for children?

Research shows that children who attend kindergarten readiness programs like Transitional Kindergarten are more likely to do well in school and attend college. The program benefits young children who need additional time to develop socially, emotionally, physically, and/or intellectually. It acts as a bridge between a flexible developmental environment and the more structured academic setting of kindergarten.

Parents across California recognize the benefits of Transitional Kindergarten. In fact, many have been enrolling their children in similar public and private programs for years. Transitional Kindergarten helps young children get the best start possible, with a curriculum designed just for them!



## Who attends Transitional Kindergarten?

The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 changed the age that children begin kindergarten. Under this law, children must be five years old on or before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten. Previously, children could be enrolled in kindergarten if they turned five by December 2. While this change may seem small, a few months makes a big difference during the early years when children are growing and developing at different rates.

The children affected by this change—those born between September and December—have the opportunity to attend Transitional Kindergarten prior to entering kindergarten, giving them extended school time to build their skills and abilities. This additional schooling is designed to help them succeed in kindergarten, become leaders in the classroom, and confidently navigate the school-day routine.

You've watched your children grow and develop. You've noted their height and weight and kept track of when they crawled, stood, walked, and spoke those first words. We know that all children develop at their own pace and are pleased to offer Transitional Kindergarten to meet the needs of **your child**.

### Children entering K-12 schools in the fall

