



FAQ

Transitional Kindergarten

An informational fact sheet for Sonoma County

What is the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010?

The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (Senate Bill 1381) changed the requirements for kindergarten entry from five years old on December 2 to five years old on September 1, so that all children enter kindergarten at age five. It also established Transitional Kindergarten programs, the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for four-year-olds with Fall birthdays, between September 2 and December 2.



Over the past three years, each school district has developed policies and procedures to implement Transitional Kindergarten. Parents should contact their school or district for specific information about the Transitional Kindergarten offered in their district.

In 2014-15 and each school year thereafter, children who have their fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2 are admitted to a Transitional Kindergarten program.



Can children with fall birthdays be enrolled in kindergarten instead of Transitional Kindergarten?

Children must turn five on or before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten for the current school year, so children with fall birthdays (September 2-December 2) must enroll in Transitional Kindergarten. To provide flexibility for children with late birthdays who are ready for kindergarten, the legislation protects the provision in existing law that allows children born after September 1 to be admitted to kindergarten on or after their fifth birthday, on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with district policies and assessment criteria.



Will this mean increased costs for schools?

Districts receive per-pupil funding for children in Transitional Kindergarten, as is the case for all students in K-12 public education. Schools may have minimal additional expenses at the outset of the program as they create a developmentally appropriate learning environment and make optional purchases of curriculum materials.

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What about smaller school districts that have only a few children in a Transitional Kindergarten class?

Sonoma County has many small, single-school districts. Most of these districts have chosen to offer combination or multi-age Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten classes that provide instruction and scheduling in ways that meet the needs of mixed-age groups.

What is the difference between Transitional Kindergarten and preschool?

Transitional Kindergarten is aligned with California’s Kindergarten Standards and offers children a developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is taught by credentialed teachers from the K-12 system. In contrast, the California State Preschool Program is aligned with the Preschool Learning Foundations and taught by individuals who have Child Development Teacher Permits from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.



What is the difference between *Transitional Kindergarten* and *Traditional Kindergarten*?

Transitional Kindergarten provides the youngest kindergartners with a readiness year that is developmentally appropriate and prepares them for success once they enter traditional kindergarten. The Transitional Kindergarten environment includes more opportunities for social-emotional development, fine- and gross-motor activities, and ongoing language development. This is accomplished through dramatic play, small group instruction, and teaching using hands-on activities.



Transitional Kindergarten gives children a “gift of time” to build the skills for success in kindergarten and beyond

What does the research say?

Research shows that starting kindergarten at an older age improves children’s social and academic development and provides a significant boost to their test scores, especially for children from poverty. Children are also more likely to attend college and earn higher wages, according to a Public Policy Institute of California review of 14 studies. By ensuring that more children are prepared for school, Transitional Kindergarten gives students the gift of time. It also generates savings to the education system through reduced special education and grade retention costs.