

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



The **Kindergarten Readiness Act**, signed into law in 2010 by Gov. Schwarzenegger, is a historic reform to kindergarten education that gives California an unparalleled opportunity to ensure that our state's youngest children are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The Kindergarten Readiness Act, SB 1381 by Senator Simitian, created transitional kindergarten, the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for those students who are born between September and December. It also changed the kindergarten entry date from Dec. 2 to Sept. 1, so children enter kindergarten at age 5. The law phases in the new age requirement by moving the cutoff date one month a year for three years, beginning in the fall of 2012.

Transitional kindergarten gives our state's young learners the gift of time to help them develop the social, emotional and academic skills they need to succeed in kindergarten. About 120,000 children – including 49,000 English language learners and 74,000 who attend Title I schools – will benefit from transitional kindergarten.



## What is Transitional Kindergarten?

Transitional kindergarten is a critical reform that bridges the path from preschool to K-12 and lays an early foundation for success for our state's youngest kindergarteners.

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

For more information, visit [www.preschoolcalifornia.org/SB1381](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/SB1381)



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## Transitional Kindergarten in Local Communities

School districts throughout the state, including Long Beach, Orange County, Palo Alto and Torrance, have been offering programs similar to transitional kindergarten for years, and other districts have already become early adopters of this reform. For example, Los Angeles Unified School District launched a pilot program at 36 elementary school sites in 2010 and when adopted districtwide, it will serve more than 11,000 children. Districts in other regions, such as Fresno, Sacramento and Santa Cruz also began offering transitional kindergarten last year, and many more local communities across the state are planning to launch transitional kindergarten classes this fall.

## Preparing for Successful Statewide Implementation

As we look toward the implementation of the Kindergarten Readiness Act statewide, California must support local innovation by giving school districts the resources and information they need to ensure successful implementation of transitional kindergarten. The California Department of Education, State Board of Education and Early Learning Advisory Council are examining ways to support local implementation efforts.

There are also many other statewide efforts to bring together K-12 communities, early learning providers and parents to support successful implementation. These include the sharing of best practices and resources, regional meetings, and the development of an online resource library at [www.tkcalifornia.org](http://www.tkcalifornia.org). These efforts begin important statewide work to ensure successful implementation of this reform across California.

**Transitional kindergarten builds on existing kindergarten readiness efforts, setting children on a path to develop the skills they need to build a brighter future for California.**

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


- Sacramento County Superintendent Dave Gordon

### Transitional Kindergarten: A Winning Solution for California

- Children will be better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.
- Parents now have an additional option to ensure their children enter kindergarten with the maturity and skills they need to excel.
- Schools will be able to do more with what they have because transitional kindergarten will help ensure children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- California will ultimately save money because children will be better prepared for success in school and less likely to be placed in special education or retained in later grades.

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