

Transitional Kindergarten in California



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CSU Center for the Advancement of Reading
(CAR; www.calstate.edu/car).

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Highlights of the History of Kindergarten in California

Information on the chart that follows was summarized from the following resource:

de Cos, P. L. (2001). *History and development of kindergarten in California*. Report prepared for the Joint Legislative Committee to Develop a Master Plan for Education—Kindergarten through University. California Research Bureau, California State Library. <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/01/03/01-003.pdf>

Date	Milestone
1860s	A few private kindergartens serving children ages three to six were established in California based on the 1837 German model. The first opened in San Francisco in 1863.
1870s	Popularity increased and “charity” kindergartens for “poor and neglected children” were privately financed.
1889	California State Superintendent of Public Instruction proposed that kindergarten be made an integral part of the public school system.
1891	The first law regarding kindergarten was enacted: Children age four and above were allowed to attend public kindergartens, where offered.
1895	City boards of education were authorized to use common school funds to establish kindergartens as part of a system of primary education.
1905	The ruling was reversed: State funds could not be used to establish kindergartens. However, cities were allowed to support kindergartens as part of local schools with non-state funds.

Date	Milestone
1913	Minimum age for entrance was raised to four and a half years.
1920	An amendment for California's Constitution permitted kindergartens to be eligible for state funding.
1933	A "Kindergarten Bill" raised the entrance age into kindergarten to age five.
1941	The entrance age law was modified to distinguish between entrance age for schools with one term and two terms.
1945	A uniform procedure was enacted: Children would be admitted at the age of four years and six months.
1946	An amendment to California's Constitution mandated state funding.
1951	Minimum age for entrance was raised to four years and nine months.
1987	December 2 became the legal birth date for admission to kindergarten.
2010	September 1 became the legal birth date for admission to kindergarten, phased in over three years.

Context

California has had one of the latest dates for kindergarten admittance in the nation: Children starting kindergarten must turn age five by December 2 of the school year.

This has meant that approximately one quarter of kindergarteners have been younger than five at kindergarten entrance.

The academic demands of kindergarten have increased over the years.

The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010

(Senate Bill 1381; Senator Simitian)

The bill

- was signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on September 30, 2010;
- amends Sections 46300, 48000, and 48010 of California's Education Code;
- changes the required birthday for admittance to kindergarten and first grade; and
- establishes a transitional kindergarten program.

Purpose

The purpose of the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (SB 1381) is to ensure that children are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.



“SB 1381 is a landmark accomplishment for early childhood developmental education in California, and I’m proud to sign this important legislation. The best investment we can make in the future of our state is to provide a quality education to California’s children, and this legislation ensures that their academic careers are built on a strong foundation.”

Governor Schwarzenegger
September 30, 2010

Minimum Age for Admittance to Kindergarten and First Grade: Phasing In

School Year	Kindergarten	First Grade
	Age 5 On or Before	Age 6 On or Before
2011-2012 and prior years	December 2	December 2
2012-2013	November 1	November 1
2013-2014	October 1	October 1
2014-2015 and thereafter	September 1	September 1

Eligibility for Transitional Kindergarten

School Year	Fifth Birthday Falls On or Between
2012-2013	November 2 and December 2
2013-2014	October 2 and December 2
2014-2015 and thereafter	September 2 and December 2

Definition of Transitional Kindergarten



From Senate Bill 1381, Chapter 705:

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

Implementation

- Every elementary or unified school district is required to offer transitional kindergarten for eligible children beginning the 2012-13 year. Some districts will establish pilot programs before the required implementation.
- Approximately 120,000 children will be eligible for transitional kindergarten annually.
- Children are not mandated to attend transitional kindergarten or kindergarten.
- The regulations that apply to kindergarten apply to transitional kindergarten.

Implementation (cont.)

- There is flexibility in the law regarding the provision of transitional kindergarten programs. Transitional kindergarten may be:
 - offered at every elementary school in a district.
 - offered only at select schools in the district.
 - offered in partnership with other districts.
 - part of a combination class with kindergarten, with differentiated instruction.
 - one in which a teacher “loops” with students from transitional kindergarten to kindergarten.

Implementation (cont.)

- Transitional kindergartens must offer 36,000 instructional minutes per year, with no fewer than 3 hours and no more than 4 hours per school day (except where extended-day kindergartens exist).
- Class size limits for transitional kindergartens are the same as for kindergartens.
- Instruction is provided by a teacher holding a California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. The teacher should have early childhood experience.



Curriculum

- Schools must provide a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.
- The California Board of Education has charged the Early Learning Advisory Council to develop standards for transitional kindergarten.
- Until the standards are available, schools will look to the following for guidance:
 - California's Preschool Learning Foundations
 - California's Common Core Content Standards (2010)
 - California's Content Standards (1997)

Anticipated Benefits

- Greater social and emotional maturity
- Higher academic achievement
- Fewer retentions
- Fewer referrals to special education
- Increased likelihood of attending college
- Increased likelihood of earning higher wages

Websites for More Information

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) California

www.tkcalifornia.org

California Department of Education—Transitional Kindergarten FAQs

www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp

Early Learning Advisory Council

www.calelac.org

Sacramento County Office of Education Early Learning

www.sacramentocountyearlylearning.org

California Preschool Instructional Network

www.cpin.org

Preschool California

www.preschoolcalifornia.org

