

Transitional Kindergarten: Getting Kids Ready for Success in School

California's children begin kindergarten at a younger age than kids in almost any other state, often before they have the maturity and the social, early literacy and pre-math skills they need to meet the challenges of kindergarten. California is only one of four states that set a cutoff date as late as Dec. 1, yet we have some of the highest standards for what we expect our children to learn in our kindergarten classrooms. Furthermore, the children with the largest school readiness gaps, including low-income 4 year olds, are the least likely to have access to high-quality pre-k that prepares them to succeed in kindergarten. Just 13 percent of low-income children attend high-quality pre-k, according to research by the RAND Corporation.

Preparing Children for Success in Kindergarten

Giving our children a year of transitional kindergarten would allow them to mature socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically, and help them develop the skills they need to succeed in the year before kindergarten. Transitional kindergarten provides 4 year olds who have birthdays between September and December, and are currently eligible for kindergarten, with a year of early education.

Benefits for Our Children and Communities

Children, families and schools all benefit from transitional kindergarten. Research shows high-quality early childhood education can narrow the achievement gap and offers one of the highest returns of any public investment – more than \$7 for every dollar spent. Additionally, children who attend high-quality early learning programs are less likely to drop out of high school, be held back a grade or placed in special education, and more likely to score better on reading and math achievement tests.

Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District

Beginning this fall, Washington Elementary School in Kingsburg will open a new classroom for 25 of the district's youngest kindergarteners, providing them with an extra year of preparation before kindergarten to develop the skills that will help them succeed in elementary school and beyond. The program at Washington Elementary, called Transition Kindergarten, is part of a pilot program being offered through the Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District in Fresno County, and will allow children additional time to mature socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically in the year before kindergarten.

Children in the Transition Kindergarten class will benefit from focused instruction and hands-on activities that encourage them to develop skills and concepts at their own pace. The new class will emphasize language, pre-literacy and early math instruction to build a foundation for future learning.

Transitional kindergarten prepares our children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond, setting them on a path to develop the skills they need to be college and career ready, building a brighter future for California.

414 13th Street, Suite 500 Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 271-0075 t (510) 271-0707 f

Visit www.preschoolcalifornia.org/SB1381