



Transitional Kindergarten

A strong start for young learners

Starting school is a very exciting time for children and their families. It begins a new chapter in their lives and sets the tone for children's future. California's kindergarten standards and curriculum have changed over the years, and many of the skills children were once taught in first grade are now expected in kindergarten. This can make the transition into kindergarten difficult for some children, and the youngest children entering the kindergarten classroom often struggle to adjust.

In 2010 the state of California passed the Kindergarten Readiness Act changing the entry age to kindergarten. Under this new law, children must turn 5 years old on or before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten. Previously children could be enrolled in kindergarten if they turned 5 years old by December 2. While this change of a few months may seem small, it can mean a significant difference during these early years when children are rapidly growing and developing.



The good news is that the law also created transitional kindergarten, so children who will be affected by this change will have an opportunity to continue building their skills and abilities prior to entering kindergarten. Their time in transitional kindergarten will help them succeed in kindergarten, become leaders in the classroom, and confidently navigate the school day routines.

In our district and throughout the state, transitional kindergarten will be offered to children turning 5 years old between September 2 and December 2 to give them the opportunity to develop the social, emotional, and academic skills and the confidence that will help them succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

California's New Kindergarten System: Preparing Children to Succeed



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What is Transitional Kindergarten?

The state of California defines Transitional Kindergarten as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. It is a bridge between preschool and kindergarten for children turning 5 years old between **September 2 and December 2**. It provides young learners with an opportunity to learn and grow in an environment that is tailored to meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.

Transitional Kindergarten in RUSD

Transitional Kindergarten is a school readiness program that purposefully prepares TK students both socially and emotionally for the academic rigor of kindergarten and beyond. Children will be provided a consistent program which includes a continuum of instruction that is developmentally appropriate. Our program embodies learning through structured play, multi-sensory experiences, strong oral language development, role-playing and problem solving with a focus on student success skills.

- **Just like kindergarten, transitional kindergarten enrollment is voluntary.**
- **It is part of the public school system and is free for families.**
- **Uses a curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate based on the CA Preschool Learning Foundations and the CA kindergarten standards.**
- **Meets the social, emotional, and academic needs of students.**
- **In RUSD, it is a full-day program and available at all elementary sites.**



What Happens in a Transitional Kindergarten Classroom?

Teachers help all children develop social-emotional skills through activities that build confidence and communication. Teachers provide a print rich environment with set routines that are adaptable and match the learning needs of students. They also engage students in reading, writing, and math activities that are exciting and interactive by purposefully planning and delivering lessons through structured play, multi-sensory experiences, role-playing, and strong oral language development. In addition teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of their students based on on-going assessments and performance on daily tasks.

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Classroom facility and teachers: At many school sites, Transitional Kindergarteners have their own classroom with their own highly-qualified teacher.

Activities: TK students participate in activities such as music, art, and physical education throughout the year.

Curriculum and Learning: TK students experience a curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate that purposefully prepares them to succeed in kindergarten. Students have opportunities to engage in learning through structured play, multi-sensory experiences, strong oral language development, role-playing and problem solving with a focus on student success skills.

Learning Environment: TK classroom environments set the stage for learning and interactions between students and adults. It establishes classroom routines and expectations for behavior in the classroom.



To learn more about transitional kindergarten in RUSD, contact Carolina Michel in Instructional Services at cmichel@rusd.k12.ca.us or call (951) 788 -7135.

For answers to some frequently asked questions on transitional kindergarten, visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp>

