



Johnstonville Elementary School District

ALL Grizzlies are Engaged, Empathetic, Empowered, and Educated!

Frequently Asked Questions: Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Why has California changed the Kindergarten cutoff date?

In 2010, California enacted the Kindergarten Readiness Act (SB 1381). Prior to that time, California's cutoff date of Dec. 2 for Kindergarten entry was one of the latest in the nation. In most states, children must turn five by Sept. 1 in order to start Kindergarten. California's late Kindergarten cutoff allowed children as young as 4 years and 9 months to be in classes with children more than one year older. Rolling back the Kindergarten entry date a few months can make an enormous difference in the early years when children are rapidly growing and developing.

What is Transitional Kindergarten?

Transitional Kindergarten, often referred to as TK, is an exciting educational opportunity for children who turn five between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2. It is the first phase of a two-year Kindergarten program that uses age-appropriate curricula aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Transitional Kindergarten acts as a bridge between preschool and Kindergarten and is designed to provide our youngest learners with the pivotal skills and experiences needed for success in Kindergarten.

What are the benefits of Transitional Kindergarten?

Transitional Kindergarten offers an additional year of school to our younger students. It provides opportunities to learn in an academically challenging and enriching environment. Children who attend Transitional Kindergarten are more likely to acquire the academic skills, confidence and maturity they need to succeed in school.

What does the research say about Transitional Kindergarten?

Research is clear that high-quality education for young learners is vitally important in assuring school success and plays a key role in closing the present achievement gap among groups of students. According to a study conducted by the RAND Corporation in 2007, the readiness gap mirrors the achievement gap of students in the primary grades. The RAND report demonstrates "that there are sizable gaps in the extent to which children in California enter school ready to learn, gaps that persist when student performance is measured in Kindergarten through the third grade (Cannon & Karoly, 2007, p. 59).

Data synthesized by long-term preschool studies found that children who participated in high-quality early childhood programs tended to have higher scores on math and reading achievement tests, greater language abilities, and fewer grade retentions. These data show that there was less need for special education intervention, remedial support, and there were lower dropout rates (Lynch, 2005).

Entering Kindergarten at an older age is an important early predictor for student success. Some studies indicate that students who are older when they enter Kindergarten demonstrate a significant boost in academic achievement, self-confidence, and healthful attitudes about school and learning (RAND, 2007)



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If my child attends Transitional Kindergarten, is he/she being held back?

No, Transitional Kindergarten is not a remedial program. It is designed as the first of a two-year Kindergarten program.

What are the eligibility requirements for Transitional Kindergarten?

Beginning the 2014-15 school year and beyond, children who have their fifth birthday between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2 are eligible for Transitional Kindergarten.

Is Transitional Kindergarten mandatory?

While the Transitional Kindergarten program is not mandatory. However, student enrollment is strongly encouraged.

Is Transitional Kindergarten free or fee-based?

Transitional Kindergarten is part of California's K-12 public school system and is free to all age-eligible children.

How is Transitional Kindergarten different from preschool?

The standards, curricula and teacher credentialing requirements in Transitional Kindergarten are different than those in preschool. Transitional Kindergarten is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, is an academic program, and is taught by fully credentialed teachers. Transitional Kindergarten builds on the skills children may have learned in preschool and serves as the first of a two-year Kindergarten program.

How is Transitional Kindergarten different from Kindergarten?

The curricula in Transitional Kindergarten is modified to meet the needs of younger students. Transitional Kindergarten includes an emphasis on oral language development, literacy immersion, number sense, and it provides collaborative experiences that promote cooperation, self-confidence, self-regulation and healthy attitudes about school and learning.

Are there academic standards for Transitional Kindergarten?

The Common Core State Standards provide end-of-year standards for Kindergarten. Johnstonville Elementary School has used the Common Core Standards to design end-of-year expectations for Transitional Kindergarten that are appropriately modified to reflect the first of a two-year Kindergarten program.

What is the curriculum for Transitional Kindergarten?

While no state curriculum is mandated, Johnstonville Elementary School provides curricula and resources that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

Are the attendance requirements in Transitional Kindergarten the same as in grades K - 8?

Yes, regular attendance is required at all grade levels.



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Do students in a Transitional Kindergarten program receive a report card?

Transitional Kindergarten students receive a report card three times a year.

Can students who turn five years old after December 2 start Transitional Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year?

No, pursuant to law (EC 48000[c]), a child is eligible for Transitional Kindergarten if he/she will have his/her fifth birthday between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2.

Can students who are age-eligible for Kindergarten attend Transitional Kindergarten?

Parents of Kindergarten age-eligible students, in consultation with the school principal and staff, may request enrollment in a Transitional Kindergarten program. Parents must sign a Kindergarten Continuance Form verifying their understanding that they are enrolling their child in a two-year Kindergarten program.

Can students enroll in grade 1 upon completion of Transitional Kindergarten?

Transitional Kindergarten is the first of a two-year Kindergarten program. A student who participates in Transitional Kindergarten are automatically enrolled in their second year of the Kindergarten program.

Can students be retained in Transitional Kindergarten?

Students will not be retained in Transitional Kindergarten.

How will Transitional Kindergarten impact students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

All services identified in the student's IEP will continue.

Are students in Transitional Kindergarten required to meet Kindergarten immunization requirements?

All children are required to provide proof of immunizations before admission to Transitional Kindergarten.

How is Transitional Kindergarten funded?

California views Transitional Kindergarten as the first of a two-year Kindergarten program, and funds Transitional Kindergarten in the same way and at the same amount as traditional Kindergarten, which is determined through Average Daily Attendance (ADA). There is no special funding dedicated to Transitional Kindergarten.