
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: SB 837 **Hearing Date:** April 11, 2018
Author: Dodd
Version: January 8, 2018
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

Subject: Transitional kindergarten: enrollment for 4-year-olds

SUMMARY

This bill expands eligibility for transitional kindergarten to all four-year olds, phased in over a two-year period beginning in the 2020-21 school year.

BACKGROUND

Transitional Kindergarten

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes compulsory education, requiring children to attend school from age 6-18. (Education Code § 48200)
- 2) Requires a child to be admitted to kindergarten if the child will have his or her fifth birthday on or before one of the following dates:
 - a) December 2 of the 2011-12 school year.
 - b) November 1 of the 2012-13 school year.
 - c) October 1 of the 2013-14 school year.
 - d) September 1 of the 2014-15 school year and each year thereafter. (EC § 48000)
- 3) 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. (EC § 48000(d))
- 4) Requires a school district or charter school that maintains a transitional kindergarten program, as a condition of receiving apportionments for transitional kindergarten, to:
 - a) Admit to transitional kindergarten in the 2012-13 school year a child who will have his or her fifth birthday between November 2 and December 2.
 - b) Admit to transitional kindergarten in the 2013-14 school year a child who will have his or her fifth birthday between October 2 and December 2.

- c) Admit to transitional kindergarten in the 2014-15 school year, and each year thereafter, a child who will have his or her fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2.

State Preschool

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California State Preschool Program for purposes of providing part-day and full-day developmentally appropriate programs designed to facilitate the transition to kindergarten for three- and four-year old children in educational development, health services, social services, nutritional services, parent education and participation, evaluation, and staff development. (EC § 8235)

- 2) Provides that three- and four-year old children are eligible for State Preschool if the family meets one of the following:
 - a) Current CalWORKs recipient.

 - b) Income eligible.

 - c) Children are recipients of protective services (abused, neglected or exploited or at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited). (EC § 8235)

- 3) Provides that three- and four-year olds are eligible for wraparound child care services to supplement part-day State Preschool if the family is eligible for State Preschool and the parents need care for at least one of the following reasons:
 - a) The child is a recipient of protective services, or at risk.

 - b) The parents are engaged in vocational training, as specified, employed or seeking employment, seeking permanent housing, or are incapacitated. (EC § 8239)

Other state-funded programs for four-year olds

	License-Exempt Providers	Title 22 FCCHs	Title 22 Centers	Title 5 Centers^b
Staff Qualifications	None.	15 hours of health and safety training.	Child Development Associate Credential or 12 units in ECE/CD. ^c	Child Development Teacher Permit (24 units of ECE/CD plus 16 general education units). ^d
Staffing Ratios	None.	1:6 adult-child	1:12 teacher-	1:24 teacher-child

		ratio.	child ratio or 1 teacher and 1 aide per 15 children.	and 1:8 adult-child ratio.
Health and Safety Standards	Criminal background check. Self-certification of certain health and safety standards.	Staff and volunteers are finger printed. Subject to health and safety standards.	Same as Title 22 FCCHs.	Same as Title 22 FCCHs.
Content Standards	None.	None.	None.	Requires developmentally appropriate activities.
Monitoring	None.	Unannounced visits by CCL every five years or more frequently under special circumstances.	Same as Title 22 FCCHs.	Same as Title 22 FCCHs, but also onsite reviews by CDE every three years (or as resources allow) and annual outcome reports.
Applicable Programs	CalWORKs, AP Program	CalWORKs, AP Program	CalWORKs, AP Program	General Child Care, Migrant Child Care, State Preschool

^a Standards for children of other ages similar to those displayed here.

^b Same standards apply to Title 5 family child care network homes.

^c The Child Development Associate Credential is issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition.

^d The Child Development Teacher Permit is issued by California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

FCCHs = family child care homes; ECE/CD = Early Childhood Education/Child Development; CCL = Community Care Licensing; CDE = California Department of Education; and AP = Alternative Payment.

ANALYSIS

This bill expands eligibility for transitional kindergarten to all four-year-olds, phased-in over a two-year period beginning in the 2020-21 school year. Specifically, it:

- 1) As a condition of receipt of apportionments for pupils in a transitional kindergarten program, requires a school district or charter school that offers a

transitional kindergarten program, beginning 2020-21 school year, to include children who have their fifth birthday after the existing September 1 cutoff date as follows:

- a) September 2, 2020, to February 28, 2021, for 2020-21 school year.
 - b) September 2, 2021, to May 31, 2022, for the 2021-22 school year.
 - c) September 2, 2022, to September 1, for the 2022-2023 school year and thereafter.
- 2) Authorizes, from the 2015-16 to the 2021-22 school year, a four-year-old not required to be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program to be admitted to a program, with the approval of a parent, provided that conditions established under current law are met.
 - 3) States legislative findings and declarations relative to the state's commitment to high quality and accessible pre-kindergarten education.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "California has, in the past decade, reinforced its commitment to high quality and accessible pre-kindergarten education. Research shows that children enrolled in transitional kindergarten experience higher test scores, are equipped with better social skills and more confidence, and are less likely to be held back a grade. Given the persistent inequities in access to early education across California, expanding transitional kindergarten gives school districts and charter schools the change to reduce opportunity gaps by expanding school readiness programs for the children they serve." This bill seeks to expand access for transitional kindergarten for younger four-year-olds.
- 2) ***Transitional Kindergarten.*** Transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. Transitional kindergarten currently serves "older" four-year-olds and "young" five-year-olds who have their fifth birthday after the cut-off date for kindergarten (between September 2 and December 2). Eligibility for transitional kindergarten is limited to this cohort of students because they would have been eligible for kindergarten under the previous entry-age.

Most local educational agencies provide a four-hour or longer Transitional Kindergarten program. A recent report submitted by the California Department of Education, "*Kindergarten in California: Implementation Evaluation of Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten Public School Programs in California*," approximately 69 percent of California's five-year-olds with birthdays between September 2 and December 2—and who were thus eligible for Transitional Kindergarten—were enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten during the 2015-16 school year. More than half of the state's Transitional Kindergarten students (57 percent) were categorized as socioeconomically disadvantaged and 36 percent were English learners. Unlike, preschool or early education programs, transitional

kindergarten teachers must meet the same requirements as kindergarten teachers to teach. They are required to hold a teaching credential.

- 3) **California State Preschool Program also serves 4-year-olds.** State Preschool provides both part-day (at least 3 hours per day) and full-day (at least 6.5 hours per day) services to eligible three- and four-year-olds, including: developmentally appropriate curriculum, parent education, meals and snacks, and referral to social and health services for families. State Preschool can be offered in various settings, including child care centers, family child care network homes, school districts, or county offices of education. Approximately two-thirds of children in State Preschool are served by local education agencies, and the remaining one-third are served by community-based organizations. State Preschool programs must have a 1:8 adult-to-child ratio, and a 1:24 teacher-to-child ratio (*compared to 1:33 teacher-to-child ratio for Transitional Kindergarten*); teachers must have a Child Development Teacher Permit, which includes 24 units in early childhood education and/or child development and 16 general education units. According to the Legislative Analyst Office, of all subsidized preschool slots for four-year-olds in California in 2014-15, 52 percent were in State preschool, 31 percent in Transitional Kindergarten, and 18 percent in Head Start.

This bill would extend eligibility for transitional kindergarten to children who may be currently attending state preschool or other programs described in the background section of this analysis. *Will programs currently serving these children lose funding by serving fewer four-year olds? How will loss of funding affect those programs?*

- 4) **Wraparound services?** This bill does not require transitional kindergarten to provide a full-day program, nor does this bill ensure that students who attend transitional kindergarten will have access to full-day programs. *Will providers of transitional kindergarten also provide full-day programs or services? Will low-income four-year-olds continue to be eligible for State Preschool or Head Start, even if only for wraparound services provided through State Preschool or Head Start? Will students who are not eligible for subsidized programs have access to early learning or care programs for the portion of the day those students are not attending transitional kindergarten? Will families find it difficult to piece together part-day transitional kindergarten and part-day wraparound services, particularly since transitional kindergarten is not required to be offered on every schoolsite?*
- 5) **Is the offering of Transitional Kindergarten required?** A verbal opinion by legislative counsel provides that under existing law, the offering of Transitional Kindergarten by school districts is not required in the same manner as traditional kindergarten. The author may wish to consider amending current law to ensure that the existing cohort of four-year-olds (those turning five between September 2 and December 2) can access Transitional Kindergarten, before expanding the program.

SUPPORT

American Academy of Pediatrics, California
AVID Center

California Kindergarten Association
California State PTA
Commission on the Status of Women of Sonoma County
Common Sense Kids Action

OPPOSITION

KinderCare Education
Numerous individuals
The Goddard School
Young World of Learning, Inc.

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