



Legislative Visit Guide & Talking Points

May 4, 2016

Use this outline to guide your meeting with the legislator or staff. Please remember the following tips:

- ✓ Be on time.
- ✓ Be positive, polite, and a good listener.
- ✓ Be aware of the time you've been allotted.
- ✓ Stay on topic.
- ✓ If you don't know the answer to a question, offer to follow up. It's good to have a reason to get in touch again.
- ✓ Allow everyone in the group to speak if they wish. To ensure everyone who wants one has a speaking role, assign the following stories and talking points to various members of the group.
- ✓ If you'd like to extend advocacy beyond these offices, feel free to take photos and/or post on social media. Today's event hashtag is #TKConf2016.

Topic	Time	Talking Points
Introduction	2 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for meeting with us: <i>Team leader thanks legislator or staff for taking the time to meet. We know how busy you are and are grateful for the chance to tell you how important TK is to our children, our schools and the families in our community.</i> • Introductions: <i>Team leader introduces himself/herself, then allows other group members to do the same.</i> • Purpose for visit: We are with a group of about 350 transitional kindergarten educators all here in Sacramento today for the 5th Annual TK Conference. As you consider the governor’s early learning block grant proposal that would remove the stable funding for TK, we’d like to share with you just how important TK is to our students’ success in school.
What is TK?	5 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some quick background on TK—it’s a grade offered statewide created by the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010, which required children starting kindergarten to turn 5 by Sept. 1. Prior to this, younger children could start kindergarten if they turned 5 five by Dec. 2 and were in classrooms that were increasingly geared for older children. The goal of this shift was to ensure that all children start kindergarten developmentally, socially, and academically ready. • The Legislature wisely established TK to ensure the young children born in the fall weren’t denied access to school and had a developmentally appropriate education option that would prepare them for kindergarten. • TK is a smart and impactful use of existing dollars. The Average Daily Attendance dollars that would have been used for these children in kindergarten are redirected to better serve them in TK. • And we also thank the Legislature for continuing to invest in more professional development for TK educators, approving quality improvement efforts, and clarifying just last year that schools have the option to expand TK to serve any student who turns 5 during the school year. (If asked about last point: schools can use local discretionary funds to support program for children before they turn 5).

<p>State Budget Impact</p>	<p>3 min.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Brown’s budget proposal would eliminate the TK guarantee: His proposal would take funding for TK and other state early childhood programs to create a single block grant, which would take away the guarantee of TK funding to support children’s learning. • It’s the only stable funding: This is concerning because TK is funded through Average Daily Attendance dollars, making it the only stable funding stream for early childhood education in California. • By eliminating the TK funding stream, funding for TK students would be vulnerable to cuts, and could eventually leave up to 125,000 children statewide without an early education option. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Los Angeles Members only: In LA County, there are more than 22,000 children in TK. And LA Unified is a leader in TK. Just last year LAUSD expanded TK to 117 new sites to serve nearly 3,000 additional children. In the coming school year they plan on launching 173 new sites. • It’s critical that legislators, including the [Speaker (for Assembly visits), Pro Tem (for Senate visits)] know the early learning block grant proposal’s ramifications for TK and the children it serves.
<p>Benefits of TK</p>	<p>3 min.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-month learning advantage: Children in TK make significant gains in early literacy, math, and skills like managing their behavior and thinking flexibly. The American Institutes for Research studied a large group of TK children and found that they had a five-month advantage in kindergarten compared to a control group that didn’t have the program. • Families have an early learning option for their children, helping many to earn while their kids learn. • Schools can start to narrow the achievement gap before kindergarten. Children with a high-quality early education are less likely to be placed in special education or held back in later grades. TK is also an opportune time to engage families as partners in their children’s learning and development early.

<p>Tell your stories</p>	<p>10 min.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to talk about how these programs are making a difference in our community • NOTE: <i>Please feel free to briefly tell their stories during your meetings. You can use this opportunity to showcase:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A story about a particular child who would have had to enter kindergarten unprepared but is now thriving in TK • How TK is benefitting the school – have teachers in later grades said they can tell which students had TK? • An engaging activity or interaction that demonstrates children learning early academic, social-emotional, and cognitive skills that help prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond • Positive parent feedback
<p>Questions and wrap up</p>	<p>2 min.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions: Check if the legislator or staff has any questions about anything you just discussed. • Ask: Ask if the legislator plans to protect TK in the budget. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are meeting with staff, ask them please to pass on the message: Protect TK. The state established a good program and the research shows it is working. Let's not undo it now. <i>Team leaders will note response.</i> • Materials: Packet has even more information about what we discussed today, including research findings, the history of TK, and what a TK classroom looks like. • Invitation to events: If you are in the legislator's district, please consider inviting the legislator to any local events you think he/she might be interested in attending. • Contact for follow up: <i>Team leader will provide contact info for any questions or follow up.</i> • Thank you: Thank them for their time and share contact information. <p><i>After your meetings, don't forget to fill out your feedback forms and return them to your team leader!</i></p>