



The Power of Our Voice: Advocating for TK at the School, District, and State Level





**Ana Moreno,
New Teacher Center**

**Araceli Sandoval-Gonzalez,
Early Edge California**

Overview

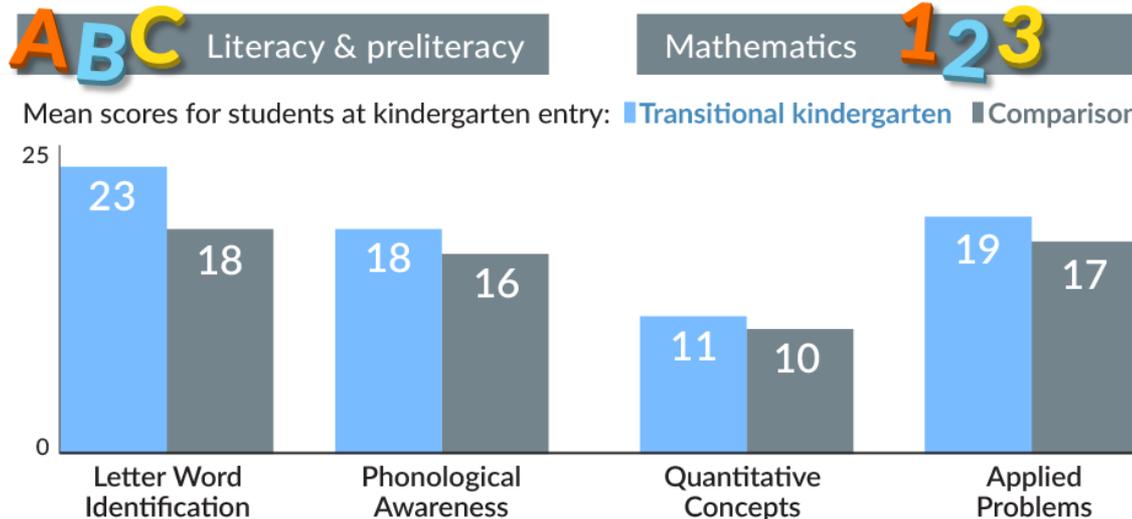


Why do we need transitional kindergarten advocacy?

The Benefits of TK

Children in TK make significant gains in early literacy, math, and skills like managing their behavior and thinking flexibly.

Transitional Kindergarten Improves Literacy and Math Skills



Source: *Impact of California's Transitional Kindergarten Program* (2015)

American Institutes for Research | www.air.org

AIR studied a large group of TK children and found they had a five-month advantage in kindergarten compared to a control group that didn't TK.

The Benefits of TK (continued)



- **Families** have an early learning option for their children, helping many to earn while their kids learn.
- **Schools** can 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.

The Reason for TK

- TK serves children who've always been in the K-12 system, and would have been denied access to school without it.
- The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 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 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 Policy Landscape

Transitional Kindergarten Advocacy Wins

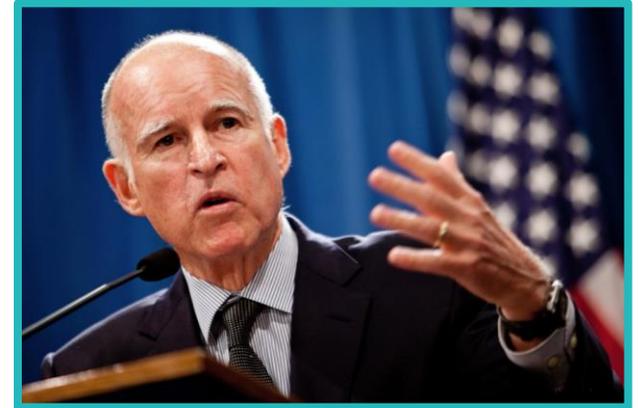
- **Quality Curriculum and Practices:** It is the intent of Legislature that TK curriculum be aligned to the California Preschool Learning Foundations developed by the State Department of Education
- **Professional Development:** Specific investments for quality improvements and professional development for transitional kindergarten and preschool teachers
- **Expanded TK:** Thanks to a clarification in the 2015-16 state budget, schools have the local option to serve children in TK if they turn 5 any time during the school year. This helps serve more students and creates more standalone TK classes.

Governor's 2016-17 Budget Proposal Would Dismantle Stable TK Funding

The Proposal: Consolidate TK, State Preschool Program, and preschool quality improvement funding into a targeted block grant for districts—eliminating the TK guarantee for young children.

The Concern: TK, funded based on Average Daily Attendance, is the only protected funding stream for children in early education.

Without it, the more than 125,000 kids that could be served in TK could be left without an early learning option. These are children who, before the 2010 kindergarten entry date change, were in K-12. We want to provide options for all children and families, and maintain the stability of the TK funding model.



Governor's 2016-17 Budget Proposal Would Dismantle Stable TK Funding

The Advocacy Goal:

Protect TK. The state established a good program and the research shows it is working. Let's not undo it now.

Political Climate

- New Assembly Leadership:
Speaker Anthony Rendon

- represents 63rd assembly district
- early learning champion & former executive director of county wide early childhood program



- Legislative Women's Caucus proposal for additional \$800 million primarily for child care rate increase and additional slots

- The Governor's Proposal

- Outline released in January; Stakeholder sessions
- More detailed proposal in mid-May
- Senate and Assembly push-back
- Need to promote Legislative support for TK

Taking Action Today: Advocacy Tips

The Power of Your Voice As an Educator or Administrator

- Opportunity to educate legislators and staff
- Articulate the benefits of TK – it's developmentally appropriate and not just an extra year of kindergarten – and the reason TK was created for young 4's.
- Implications for closing the achievement gap
- Share student stories and outcomes
- Supports school districts goals to prepare students for high school graduation

What stories and observations do you have from your students?

Educators' stories and outcomes illustrate to legislators the impact of TK. Think of...

- **A story about a 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**

Advocacy Tips

- Research policymakers' committee assignments, interests, and priorities. Thank them for any early childhood support.
- Bring allies to the conversation – teachers, parents, administrators, business leaders, etc.
- Tell compelling stories
- Have an advocacy goal that you want to impart on policymakers:
Protect TK
- Be sure to follow up
- Extend advocacy beyond these offices –take photos and/or post on social media. Today's event hashtag is #TKConf2016



THANK YOU!

Araceli Sandoval-Gonzalez

asandoval@earlyedgecalifornia.org

Ana Moreno

amoreno@newteachercenter.org

Sign up for email updates at
www.earlyedgecalifornia.org