Frequently Asked Questions: Transitional Kindergarten

Beginning the 2012-13 school year, the San Juan Unified School District provides a full academic year of Transitional Kindergarten (TK) instruction to eligible children, building a stronger bridge between early learning and kindergarten and preparing students for success in the years ahead.

Enrollment begins in February, following Open Enrollment, for the following school year.

Why did the District implement TK?
The Kindergarten Readiness Act gives California an opportunity to ensure that children are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The new law created Transitional Kindergarten, the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for students whose fifth birthday falls between September 2nd and December 2nd. This new law impacts the TK program by changing the kindergarten birthday cut-off date for enrollment.

The intent behind providing children an extra year of kindergarten is to give students two years to develop the important skills that will help them excel academically and socially in elementary school. Research suggests that starting kindergarten at an older age can boost children’s test scores, and such students are less likely to be retained or placed in special education.

What are the Transitional Kindergarten eligibility requirements?
The age eligibility requirement for kindergarten is changing with gradual implementation of the new law over the next three years as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Child must turn 5 by:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>November 1, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>October 1, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15*</td>
<td>September 1, 2014</td>
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</tbody>
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*For each school year thereafter the date is Sept. 1

How is Transitional Kindergarten different from the Kick Start Kindergarten?
Transitional Kindergarten – which replaced Kick Start – is a full academic year of kindergarten instruction. It is the first of a two-year program that will follow the same academic calendar as all other grades.

Is Transitional Kindergarten mandatory?
No. Just like traditional kindergarten, it is voluntary for parents to enroll their child in Transitional Kindergarten. Compulsory education begins with 1st grade. However, when parents bring their child to enroll him/her in Transitional Kindergarten, we must enroll and serve the child.

How do families enroll in Transition Kindergarten?
Families should contact our San Juan Central enrollment facility at (916) SAN-JUAN or (916) 726-5826, and select the option for “enrollment information and appointments.”
What if a child’s birthday falls after December 2nd but prior to the end of the school year?
As of the student’s 5th birthday, the student may be enrolled in TK if space is available. If space is not available, the parent may have the student placed on a wait list for the requested TK school site and SJC will contact them if space becomes available. (See FAQ for Principals and Teachers for additional information regarding this.)

Can Transitional Kindergarten and traditional kindergarten students be enrolled in the same classrooms?
Although the intent of the law is to provide separate and unique experiences for Transitional Kindergarten students, districts have the flexibility to determine how best to meet the curricular needs of each child. K/TK combination classes may be formed in order to meet the needs of all students considering enrollment numbers, facility usage, staffing, and regional needs.

How is Transitional Kindergarten funded?
Districts receive the same California average daily attendance (ADA) rate of funding that is provided for kindergarten, because transitional kindergarten is considered the first year of a two-year kindergarten program.

How many minutes does Transitional Kindergarten have to offer?
The number of required instructional minutes for transitional kindergarten is 36,000 minutes per year.

Is the length of the Transitional Kindergarten school day different than regular kindergarten?
No, the maximum school day is four hours (excluding early primary programs exempted under EC 8973). To ensure equity for students and staff, the length of the Transitional Kindergarten day mirrors the length of the kindergarten day at a site. Full day Transitional Kindergarten will be offered at sites that implement a full day kindergarten program.

Do Transitional Kindergarten teachers need to meet different credential requirements?
No, the Transitional Kindergarten teacher must meet the same credential requirements as kindergarten teachers. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing recently released a Credential Information Alert that specifies the credentials that authorize instruction in a Transitional Kindergarten classroom. Additionally, in Transitional Kindergarten classrooms that serve English learners, teachers must be authorized to provide appropriate services.

Which schools offer Transitional Kindergarten?
Currently, parents may choose from the following sites: Cameron Ranch, Citrus Heights, Cottage, Coyle, Thomas Edison Language Academy, Howe Avenue, LeGette, Oakview, Thomas Kelly, Twin Lakes, and Whitney Elementary Schools. Additional sites may be added in future school years.

Where can I get more information?
- [http://www.sanjuan.edu/departments.cfm?subpage=116597](http://www.sanjuan.edu/departments.cfm?subpage=116597)
- [California Department of Education](http://www.sanjuan.edu/departments.cfm?subpage=116597)

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