

California Department of Education

Executive Office

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**California State Board of Education**
**January 2023 Agenda**
**Item #10**

# Subject

Developments in the Expansion of Transitional Kindergarten: Update on Universal PreKindergarten and PreKindergarten to Third Grade Alignment.

# Type of Action

Information

# Summary of the Issue(s)

This information item provides an overview of Transitional Kindergarten (TK), including the development and purpose of TK, the expansion of Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK), the role of TK within Universal PreKindergarten (UPK), and the importance of PreKindergarten through third grade (P–3) alignment. It gives a detailed overview of TK implementation, including the current requirements for TK programs in comparison to kindergarten and other PreKindergarten (PreK) programs, as well as a discussion of the best practices, and existing efforts to support implementation.

California is poised to realize UPK by providing a free year of public PreK for all interested four-year-old children through TK by 2025–26 and serving a growing number of three-year-old children through the California State Preschool Program (CSPP).

The California Department of Education’s (CDE) vision for UPK, following the roadmap set out in the California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, is a mixed delivery system that can improve access and equity in early childhood education; supports children’s learning and development by enhancing educator competencies; incentivizes career pathways, and implements supportive program standards; and streamline early childhood governance and administration to improve equity. The UPK promise is that this strong and early start will translate into significant gains for the whole child, including academic, social-emotional, health and mental health benefits.

Universal access to TK is key to delivering on the UPK promise to provide all children with a strong and early start to education through high-quality, joyful, developmentally informed, inclusive, and rigorous PreK programs. As part of TK implementation, local educational agencies (LEAs) must consider how to integrate TK programs into the existing UPK program infrastructure operating at the local level, as well as how to apply developmentally appropriate best practices for early childhood education in TK classrooms.

As UPK and Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK) planning and implementation have begun, successes and challenges have emerged around access; class size and ratios; workforce qualifications; professional learning; instructional time and access to full day programs that meet parent needs; curriculum, assessment, and classroom quality; meeting the needs of children with disabilities, including through inclusive classrooms; serving multilingual learners; and facilities.

The CDE has already invested significant resources to address many of these challenges and to ensure UPK implementation delivers on the promise to provide high-quality early learning opportunities for the whole child. Providing equitable access to all children requires continued advocacy for and promotion of developmentally appropriate best practices, inclusive quality programs, welcoming facilities, and a well-supported workforce with a framework for serving children from PreK through third grade (P–3) will help sustain this investment and bring the promise of UPK to California’s children and families.

# Recommendation

This item is for information only and no specific action is recommended at this time.

# Brief History of Key Issues

## Background on Universal PreKindergarten

UPK is an initiative designed to ensure access for all children to a quality learning experience the year before kindergarten, by bringing together programs across early education and TK–12 settings.

Investments in UPK follow the roadmap set out in the California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (December 2020), which recommended promoting school readiness and increasing long-term school performance and educational outcomes by expanding access over time to achieve one year of free, universally available and inclusive PreK for all four-year-old children and expanding targeted access to an additional year of publicly funded PreK for all three-year-old children from income-eligible households, as well as children with disabilities. The Master Plan also recommended improving access and equity in early childhood education; supporting children’s learning and development by enhancing educator competencies, incentivizing career pathways, and implementing supportive program standards; and streamlining early childhood governance and administration to improve equity.

Providing equitable access to UPK is the first step towards meeting these goals and achieving CDE’s P–3 vision: a strong and early start to education for all children through high-quality, joyful, developmentally informed, inclusive, and rigorous PreK through third grade learning opportunities, beginning with universal access to PreK.

California is home to approximately 2.8 million children under the age of six and approximately one million three and four-year-old PreK-age children. California lacks the licensed capacity in the early learning and care system to meet children and family’s needs, with only approximately 560,000 licensed center spaces for all children from birth to age 6 and 268,000 licensed family childcare home spaces for all children from birth to 12 in 2021. In 2019–20, only 23 percent of all three- and four-year-old children in California had access to a publicly funded PreK program through the CSPP or TK.

California launched UPK in the 2021–22 State Budget in an effort to address this gap and to support improved school readiness. By 2025–26, California is poised to realize UPK by providing a free year of public PreK for all interested four-year-old children through TK and serving a growing number of three-year-old children through the CSPP. Families with four-year-old children will maintain their choice about which program to enroll their child in, but all families will have access to universal and free TK as part of California’s public education system. Additional information about UPK is available in Attachment 1: California Department of Education (CDE) PreKindergarten (PreK) Fact Sheet December 2022.

Programs under the UPK umbrella are delivered through a mixed-delivery model (see Figure 1) that provides equitable learning experiences across a range of providers (e.g., LEAs and community-based organizations [CBOs]) and setting types (e.g., family childcare homes and childcare centers). Equitable learning experiences ensure all children receive the learning supports and scaffolding they need to progress along a developmental continuum, regardless of ability, language, culture, or economic situation. *Education Code* (*EC*) Section 8320 defines a “mixed-delivery system” as a system of early childhood education services that is delivered through a variety of providers, programs, and settings, including Head Start agencies or delegate agencies funded under the Head Start Act (*United States Code,* Title 42*,* Section 9831, et seq.), public, private, or proprietary agencies, including community-based organizations, public schools, and local education agencies that offer center-based childcare and preschool programs, tribal childcare and preschool, and family childcare through a family childcare home education network.

As the only part of the system funded to be universal, TK is an essential and key part of the UPK mixed delivery system as ensures every four-year-old child—regardless of background, race, zip code, immigration status, or income level—has access to a quality learning experience the year before kindergarten.

**Figure 1. Universal PreKindergarten in California**



These programs include those offering a preschool learning experience and those that can be wrapped around the preschool program to provide full-day, full-year support:

* **TK:** As the foundational part of UPK, TK is designed to serve as a bridge between early childhood and TK–12 systems to increase students’ readiness for school and schools’ readiness for students so that all children thrive in school and in life.
* **CSPP:** The other main state-funded program, CSPP which serves income-eligible three- and four-year-old children. It complements TK by providing a targeted universalism approach to reaching three-year-old children, facilitating a continuum of early learning that sets children up for long-term success. CSPP also provides extended learning and care for TK and kindergarten enrolled students.
* **Head Start and Private Childcare, Including Family Childcare:** Federally funded Head Start, including Migrant and Tribal Head Start, and private childcare, including family childcare are all critical partners within the UPK umbrella. They support access to early learning for all PreK-age children and provide authentic choices for parents that fit their needs and circumstances.
* **Extended Learning and Care (Expanded Learning and Private):** Funding sources that can be used to provide or assist with extended learning and care services outside of the TK instructional day include, but are not limited to, the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P), part-day CSPP, the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Grant, and the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP). Additional subsidized care opportunities may be available to families who qualify, such as childcare vouchers offered through an Alternative Payment program and participation in the General Child Care program.

### The Promise of Universal PreKindergarten

Universal access to TK is key to delivering on the UPK promise to provide all children with a strong and early start to education through high-quality, joyful, developmentally informed, inclusive, and rigorous PreK programs.

In order to realize the promise of UPK and the goals set forth in the Master Plan, the CDE is relying on evidence-based practices for UPK implementation grounded in the research on promising universal PreK programs. Decades of research have demonstrated children who have effective learning opportunities before kindergarten have an advantage in school and in life over children who do not, especially children with adverse childhood experiences. Multiple years of high-quality early learning opportunities can increase the benefits for children’s school readiness and success even more.

Research has shown high-quality UPK programs can provide a strong and early start for children that will translate into significant gains for the whole child, including academic, social-emotional, health and mental health benefits. Quality PreK programs help children learn how to learn, and participation leads to increased school readiness as well as long term impacts on later school achievement, graduation, and positive life outcomes. Yet racially and historically marginalized, low-income, and multilingual children and children with disabilities have had the fewest opportunities to access effective and inclusive early education.

The 2020 Legislative Analyst’s Office report *Narrowing California’s K–12 Student Achievement Gaps* found that African American children have the worst outcomes overall, and African American and Hispanic children have lower average state standardized test scores and graduation rates than white and Asian students. Low-income students, English learners, children with disabilities, foster youth, and homeless youth also have consistently low test scores and graduation rates.

Research shows children from all racial and ethnic groups can benefit from quality PreK programs. The earliest studies of PreK programs targeted to primarily African American children from low-income families have found strong academic gains and positive life outcomes for participants. More recent studies also find positive effects in targeted and universal programs for African American and Hispanic children, as well as English learners, and are described more below. Recent research also indicates mixed-income programs may lead to even stronger gains, particularly for children from the lowest-income families. UTK, as a universal mixed-income program, offers the potential for diverse classrooms, with children from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds learning together and reaping the benefits for school readiness and future achievement.

The research also indicates high-quality PreK programs can be especially powerful for creating equitable opportunities for African American and Hispanic children and other historically marginalized learners. Studies find that while all children make learning gains in high-quality settings, the largest gains in language, literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional skills are for children from low-income families, those who are multilingual learners, and African American, Hispanic, and American Indian children enrolled in high-quality programs. Aligned with this literature, a recent study by the Learning Policy Institute, WestEd, and University of California, Berkeley analyzed data from the Quality Counts California (QCC) statewide initiative (which supports program quality in CSPP), and found that African American children, Hispanic children, children with disabilities, and multilingual learners enrolled in programs at the two highest quality rating tiers demonstrated greater gains than their more advantaged peers. When California’s children have access to high-quality programs, they thrive.

Recent studies have confirmed these findings as well as enriched our understanding of the far-reaching impact high-quality programs can have on the whole child, inclusive of academic performance as well as overall well-being. Tulsa, Oklahoma implemented UPK with program standards around teacher preparation and class size and ratios and found classrooms in the program had strong instructional activities and social-emotional environments. Studies of the outcomes of the UPK program in Tulsa, Oklahoma demonstrate short and long-term positive effects of participation in a quality PreK program. These effects include:

* Children who had attended the PreK program were ahead in pre-reading, pre-writing, and pre-math skills at kindergarten entry, and were more attentive and less timid than peers. While all children made learning gains, children from low-income families, Hispanic, African American and American Indian children, and multilingual learners had the greatest gains in school readiness skills.
* By third grade, PreK participants scored higher on standardized math tests and had higher self-regulation skills than non-participants.
* By high school, children who attended PreK in Tulsa also had better attendance, were less likely to fail courses or be retained in grade and were more likely to take an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course.
* Children who attended PreK had higher rates of on-time and overall high school graduation than non-attenders.
* Once they turned 18, children who attended PreK were more likely to register to vote and more likely to vote than peers who did attend PreK.
* Children who attended PreK were more likely to enroll in any college than peers who did not attend PreK. PreK attenders from all racial/ethnic groups were more likely to enroll in two-year college institutions than peers who did not attend PreK. African American and Hispanic children who attended PreK were also significantly more likely to enroll in four-year college institutions than peers who did not attend PreK.

Studies of the Abbott preschool program in New Jersey, which at the time of the studies offered free preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children in 31 economically disadvantaged school districts serving primarily African American and Hispanic children, also found positive effects of participation. The Abbott preschool programs are mixed delivery programs that must meet standards for program quality, including adequate funding, highly qualified teachers, and small class sizes. Children who participated in the program for one year performed better on vocabulary, print awareness, and cognitive achievement tests at kindergarten entry, and continued to have positive effects on third through tenth grade statewide achievement tests. Children who attended two years of the Abbott preschool program had even stronger positive effects at both kindergarten entry and through grade 10.

The Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K (TN-VPK) program serves approximately 18,000 children across 935 classrooms. A randomized control trial study of the program found positive initial effects of PreK, with participants gaining early literacy and early math skills across the PreK year. Effects were especially strong for dual language learners. Participants were also better prepared for kindergarten.

However, the study also identified challenges in a scaled up statewide PreK program. First, analysis of classroom practices identified frequent transitions and long wait times for young children, limiting the time spent in high-quality learning experiences. Second, differences between participants and non-participants diminished quickly, as children who did not attend PreK caught up with their peers in kindergarten that repeated many of the same skills as PreK. These findings provide evidence that the quality of the PreK experience and the transition to and alignment with elementary grades (P–3 alignment) is critical to children’s long-term success.

Research consistently finds that long-term effects of interventions vary considerably in part because of what children experience in later years of education. The TN-VPK study adds to the evidence that we cannot be lulled into thinking long-term benefits will always follow because a PreK program gets some things right, as does TN-VPK. Public investments in PreK and early education should include substantial support for both the early education programs themselves and for transition to and alignment between PreK and TK–12 systems and programs.

### Delivering on the Promise of Universal PreKindergarten Requires PreKindergarten through Third Grade Frame

The TN-VPK study and other research from early education over the last 20 years provide evidence that increasing young children’s school readiness is only one part of providing equitable opportunities for all children. Since child development is an ongoing process, once children enter school, their subsequent educational experiences can bolster their success and learning progression, if they build on what they have already learned, and support continuity for children. Children who experience continuity across PreK and elementary schools sustain their gains in elementary school.

Alignment in policies, structure, instructional content, and family involvement from PreK into the early grades (PreK to third grade) can support the desired continuity across children’s experiences in high-quality settings. This continuity, when used to intentionally scaffold progressive learning experiences, can further support progression in children’s development and learning across content areas by increasing the breadth and depth of children’s understanding and connections among topics from year to year.

The CDE’s P–3 alignment initiative in partnership with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) reflects the knowledge that delivering on the UPK promise requires alignment between the early education and TK–12 systems to support children’s development over time and ensure gains made in early years are sustained, and not lost. The CDE’s vision for P–3 alignment is to meet the following goals:

**Give children a strong start** through equitable access to effective early education programs.

Equitable access to UPK followed by systemwide support for transitions and intentionally building upon children’s skills through the early grades are key to closing opportunity gaps in children’s early years, and in turn, closing the emerging achievement gaps we see in third grade standardized testing. A continual evaluation of children’s experiences from UPK to third grade and a crosswalk to analyze the coherence of quality standards, curriculum, and assessments across programs and grades supports alignment and progressive development year over year. This will ensure children are prepared for the next grade, and that they engage in learning opportunities across grades that build on their prior learning.

CDE’s efforts through the P–3 initiative to support transitions includes design, development, and dissemination of a transitions toolkit to be used as a shared resource for families, district leadership, kindergarten teachers, early childhood education (ECE) providers and administrators, and other community partners. This toolkit is intended to foster a common understanding of developmentally appropriate expectations and practices that support continuity in transitions for young children and provide support to build and maintain local partnerships as well as share resources to support effective transition activities.

**Focus on PreK through third grade educators** to ensure schools, teachers, and staff are prepared and supported to guide every child’s social, emotional, and academic development through inclusive, joyful, and culturally and linguistically affirming programs from PreK to third grade.

Using PreK to third grade framework to inform professional development for teachers and leaders to ensure alignment and continuity in policies, structures, and instruction will support achieving the promise of UPK. Focusing on the alignment of PreK to elementary school also lifts up career opportunities for current early childhood educators doing essential work for California’s children—primarily women of color—to advance their careers. For example, creating joint professional development opportunities and connecting P–3 educators to colleagues and resources can support the local use of aligned teaching practices, developmentally appropriate instructional formats, and learning experiences that build from grade to grade within their community.

Ongoing efforts in this area include working on alignment within teacher preparation and professional learning. The CTC is in the process of developing a new PK–3 credential to prepare educators to design, implement and facilitate developmentally appropriate learning for children across P–3 (see page 28 for more information). The CDE is in the process of building on existing ECE systems of continuous improvement, such as the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), to explore alignment with the TK–12's System of Support and create the potential for joint professional learning and development across PreK and the early grades.

**Equip education leaders at the county, district, and school level** with a deep knowledge and understanding of early education and organizational strategies that support meaningful alignment from PreK to third grade.

Focusing on PreK to third grade is critical for education leaders at every level, who rarely have a background in early education and child development. Education leaders need a foundational understanding of how young children grow and develop as well as the activities that support their learning in order to empower and support the educators they oversee to implement learning experiences that reflect best practices and promote stronger outcomes. One approach that can be beneficial is developing a strategic plan for the P–3 values and activities that leaders at every level can incorporate into their local efforts and share within and across networks and communities to support shared language for parents and educators around development and learning for children across P–3.

**Empower and support families** as children’s first and most important teachers, bolster resources and opportunities for families in community programs and schools, and empower families as valued, supported, and well-informed partners.

Research indicates that family engagement consistently decreases between PreK and TK–12 settings and continues to decrease as children get older. Many families are first welcomed to campuses and empowered in their role in their child’s education in early education settings, but these same families sometimes feel intimidated or excluded by leadership in TK–12 schools. Implementing kindergarten transition strategies for children and families with the support of both the early learning and TK–12 systems can have a positive influence on both children and families. Strategies such as parent information sessions and transitions kits for families can engage families in the transition alongside educators from both early learning and TK–12 to get questions and concerns addressed. Including further family involvement and support in the policies and structures used across P–3 can support continued family engagement in the early elementary years.

The efforts to support family engagement in the early years can be leveraged and built upon within the TK–12 system. The transitions toolkit CDE is in the process of developing can be a key component of this alignment and will provide specific resources to engage families to support effective transitions into UPK and kindergarten.

Many early education programs take a whole child and whole family perspective and take responsibility for supporting the child and family in getting access to needed resources and support, including referrals to other agencies. Head Start, in particular, works to ensure both family engagement in services for children, as well as supports for the well-being of the family as a unit. This model is similar to the Community Schools approach that integrates support services for children and families into the TK–12 education setting.

## Background on Transitional Kindergarten

### History and Purpose of Transitional Kindergarten

The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 gradually changed the age cutoff for children entering kindergarten, so kindergarten would gradually serve older students than it had previously. Specifically, before the Act, children enrolling in kindergarten needed to turn five by December 2. At full implementation in 2014, children enrolling in kindergarten needed to turn five by September 1, bringing California’s age requirements in alignment with 42 other states which have a kindergarten cut-off date by September 30.

As a result of the Act, children with birthdays between September 2 and December 2, who would previously have been age-eligible, had their kindergarten entry delayed by a year. To support these children, the Act also created TK, the first year of a two-year kindergarten program and it was initially available for students born between September 2 and December 2. This historic legislation meant that annually more than 120,000 children retained access to public education and experienced an additional year of high-quality early learning and, as a result, the opportunity to be better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

A change in the 2015–16 budget allowed school districts to enroll 4-year-old children in TK if they turned five after the December 2 cutoff and before the end of the school year. Some districts took advantage of this flexibility to provide more quality early learning experiences to those who might not otherwise have had access. In 2019–20, 441 districts across California enrolled nearly 17,000 students through this Early Admittance Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) option.

### Benefits of Transitional Kindergarten for Children

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted an evaluation on the outcomes for students that have participated in California’s TK program in 2017 and found that students who had participated in TK had greater skills in literacy and math, and better learning skills, including impulse control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility (also known as executive functions) than their peers that did not attend. Gains were largest for students facing economic disadvantages and English learners.

Another California study through the 21st Century California School Leadership Academy at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education is investigating the impacts of expanded access to PreK programs on student learning and narrowing achievement gaps. Preliminary findings confirm some of the key results of the AIR study, with TK access resulting in gains in third grade reading and mathematics achievement for children from low-income families, and similar gains in reading for English learners. Notably, these gains were greatest for those children in schools with the highest number of students eligible for supplemental funding under the Local Control Funding Formula(LCFF). The next step for this study is to go beyond academic achievement results to focus on the impacts of TK participation on children’s social-emotional development using children’s self-reported self-management, growth mindset, self-efficacy and social awareness behavior, and beliefs.

### Transitional Kindergarten Access, Expansion Timeline, and Projections

In 2021, Assembly Bill (AB) 130 became law, setting a path towards UTK by requiring any school district operating a kindergarten to also offer a TK program for all children who turn four years old by September 1 by the year 2025–26. While charter schools with a kindergarten program are strongly encouraged to establish and maintain TK programs for their age-eligible students, they ultimately have flexibility in their charters to determine which grades to serve. Even when TK becomes accessible for all four-year-old children, it will remain voluntary for families and they can continue to choose to enroll their children in TK or other PreK programs that they may be eligible for (e.g., CSPP, Head Start locally funded) or in private programs or no PreK program at all.

While state law requires schools to offer TK to any eligible child, during the transition to UTK districts and charters can choose to serve children who are slightly younger but turn five before the end of the school year through ETK. However, as has been the case since the creation of ETK in 2015–16, while districts and charter schools can enroll children through ETK from the beginning of the school year, these children only generate average daily attendance (ADA) from the time they turn five. To cover a portion of costs for ETK children eligible for CSPP, the 2018–19 budget included language to allow children enrolled in CSPP to be served in the same classroom as children enrolled in TK, so LEAs could enroll ETK-eligible children also eligible for CSPP in CSPP until their fifth birthday when they would be able to start generating ADA in TK.

Table 1 outlines the timeline of the UTK implementation roll out, with incremental changes in birthdate eligibility each year through 2025–26 when all four-year-old children will be eligible to enroll in TK.

**Table 1. UTK Implementation Roll Out[[1]](#footnote-1)**

| **Birthdate** | **2021–22** | **2022–23** | **2023–24** | **2024–25** | **2025–26** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sept. 2–Dec. 2 | TK | TK | TK | TK | TK |
| Dec. 3–Feb. 2 | ETK | TK | TK | TK | TK |
| Feb. 3–Apr. 2 | ETK | ETK | TK | TK | TK |
| Apr. 3–Jun. 2 | ETK | ETK | ETK | TK | TK |
| Jun. 3–Jun.30 | ETK | ETK | ETK | ETK | TK |
| Jul. 1–Sept. 1 | Other | Other | Other | Other | TK |

TK served 68,701 children in 2020–21 and is projected to serve almost 314,000 children in 2025–26. Figure 2 illustrates the past and anticipated future trends in TK enrollment across the state.

#### Figure 2. Actual[[2]](#footnote-2) and Projected[[3]](#footnote-3) TK Eligibility and Enrollment 2013–14 to 2025–26[[4]](#endnote-1)



In addition to expanding age eligibility and providing a path towards universal access, recent legislation has modified TK program requirements, increased funding, and established fiscal penalties for not meeting program requirements. The following sections outline current TK program requirements in more detail, in addition to best practices as well as challenges to implementation.

## Transitional Kindergarten Implementation

The implementation of TK, as part of the bigger UPK mixed delivery system and P–3 vision, is supported by extensive collaboration with external partners through a “constellation model.” Created by the Centre for Social Innovation, the constellation model is a framework for effectively bringing diverse partners from multiple fields together to work through complex and pressing issues, such as UPK implementation. The UPK constellation model aims to provide cohesive and consistent support for all UPK partners with state-level support and intentional, periodic feedback regarding implementation efforts. Specifically, in the UPK constellation model:

* Thematic constellations bring leaders and practitioners from across sectors and levels within the state to work together on planning and implementation, development of processes and guidance, and elevation of important considerations to the state leadership. UPK Constellations include Workforce, Research, Local Implementation and Promising Practices, Communications, and Support Systems.
* Two leadership teams set strategic directions and help align the constellations towards overarching goals.
* These efforts engage local implementers across sectors, including both LEAs and CBOs, as well as representatives from key statewide organizations, researchers, and advocates.

As part of TK implementation, LEAs must also consider how to integrate TK programs into the existing UPK program infrastructure operating at the local level. Additionally, as described in more detail below, CBOs are also funded and supported to collaborate with LEAs and the existing mixed delivery PreK system to foster a cohesive UPK infrastructure at the local level.

Attachment 3, Program Standards Table, highlights some key TK program requirements, along with requirements for other UPK programs, as well as kindergarten. As evidenced by the table, there are a variety of choices for parents on where to enroll their 4-year-old. The expansion of CSPP and TK will provide an opportunity for California to better align quality standards across programs and define what kind of PreK experience every child should receive.

The following sections present key TK requirements and comparisons to kindergarten and CSPP. Each section details best practices for each of the topics, as well as any data the CDE has collected to indicate how well LEAs are meeting the requirements and best practices for implementation. Finally, each section ends with information about existing efforts from the CDE and its partners to support best practices and address challenges in TK implementation.

### Access

LEAs who are anticipated to have TK enrollment are already planning and implementing program structures, processes, and policies for the full implementation of TK as they prepare to serve up to 445,000 four-year-old children who will be eligible in 2025–26. (Note: as mentioned above, all school districts that serve kindergarten students must offer TK; however, TK attendance, like kindergarten, is not mandatory, as families can choose between TK and other PreK programs or choose to keep their children at home. As a result, and as shown in Figure 2 above, LPI has projected at full implementation, 70 percent of eligible four-year-old children will access TK.)

As of December 2022, 845 school districts and 658 charter schools have completed surveys about their UPK plans and submitted them to the CDE to meet the requirements of the UPK Planning and Implementation (UPK P&I) Grant funded in the 2021–22 budget and renewed in the 2022–23 budget. This represents 98 percent of school districts and 94 percent of charter schools expected to have TK enrollment based on their kindergarten enrollment in 2019–20 and 2020–21 and 69 percent of all school districts and charter schools in the state. Additionally, 58 county offices of education (COEs) have submitted surveys about their county UPK plans.

The CDE has analyzed a smaller sample of the school district and charter school responses from November 2022, and that data is reported throughout this document. The analysis sample includes 1,423 respondents, representing 829 school districts (97 percent) and 594 charter schools (85 percent). Attachment 3 details the plan data submitted from school districts and charter schools as of November 17, 2022. Attachment 4 details the county plan data submitted by 58 county offices of education as of December 22, 2022. Data from the full school district and charter school sample will be available soon.

Of those that completed the UPK P&I Grant plans by November 2022, 61 percent of districts and charter schools reported they plan on offering TK at all sites so that it will be more accessible for parents and families.

While TK data for the 2021–22 school year and the current school year is not yet available, the LPI projects that 137,000 children will be served in TK in 2022–23 as a result of the first year of TK expansion— about 30 percent of all four-year-old children in the state.

The increase in availability of TK will be a benefit for families across the state—both for the 250,000 four-year-old children who are currently eligible for CSPP but are not able to enroll due to limited program availability, and for the 155,000 four-year-old children from families whose incomes are above the threshold but may not be able to afford the high cost of private PreK.

In the UPK P&I Grant plans, 43 percent of school districts and 37 percent of charter schools indicated they are offering ETK to children with birthdays after February 3 and before the end of the school year in 2022–23. The plans also indicate while LEAs are not as confident for their plans for the out years, the majority of districts are either planning to offer ETK or considering offering ETK. See Figure 5 in Attachment 4 for more detailed data.

School districts and charter schools planning for UPK also reported extensive parent engagement as part of their UPK planning and implementation. Table 2 below shows the types of engagement activities school districts and charters planned to utilize in the 2022–23 school year.

**Table 2. School District and Charter School UPK Engagement Activities**

| **Common Engagement Activities** | **Percentage of School Districts and Charter Schools**  |
| --- | --- |
| Family or parent surveys | 70% |
| Local Control and Accountability Plan educational partners input sessions | 66% |
| Engaging with school site councils | 55%  |
| Parent teacher association meetings | 39% |
| English Learner Advisory Committees | 38% |
| District English Learner Advisory Committee | 38% |
| Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) | 31% |

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

The timeline for the expansion of UPK in California is ambitious and historic.The state has invested significant resources to support this timeline for UPK implementation, including:

* **Allocating $500 Million for UPK P&I Grants**
	+ $200 million from 2021–22 Budget:
		- Of these funds, $129.6 million went to school districts and $46.4 million went to charter schools across the state based on their kindergarten enrollment. An additional $24 million went to COEs to provide local coordination and support to school districts and charters as they planned for UPK.
		- Grant funds may be used for costs associated with creating or expanding CSPP or TK, or to establish or strengthen partnerships with other providers of PreK within the LEA, including Head Start programs, to ensure that high-quality options for prekindergarten education are available for four-year-old children.
		- Allowable costs include, but are not necessarily limited to, planning costs, hiring and recruitment costs, staff training and professional development, classroom materials, and supplies.
	+ $300 million from 2022–23 Budget:
		- CDE is currently in the process of apportioning these funds to school districts, charter schools, and COEs.
		- One intentional difference with the new round of funding is that “classroom operating costs” is an allowable expense. As a result of this addition, LEAs may use their grant funds to cover costs they have associated with expanding TK age eligibility faster than required by law and covering the costs of ETK-enrolled students who are not otherwise generating ADA.
* **Allocating $18.3 Million for UPK Mixed Delivery Planning Grant**
	+ CDE is currently in the process of allocating these funds to counties for their planning. Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils (LPCs) in each county have priority for the allocated funding, whereas the county’s Resource and Referral (R&Rs) agencies may apply for the funds if the LPC chooses not to apply.
	+ The grant funds LPCs and R&Rs to support the mixed-delivery system of UPK. The grant focus is to support the relationship building between LEAs, COE, the LPC, and the R&R, as well as expanding access to three- and four-year-old children and increasing inclusion for children with disabilities.
	+ Grant awardees for the UPK P&I Grant and the UPK Mixed Delivery Planning Grant are required to work closely together and coordinate activities for an aligned and integrated county approach to UPK implementation.
* **Funds for Workforce Development, Professional Learning, and Facilities** California has made significant investments in workforce development, professional learning, and facilities to ensure that as UPK expands, there is sufficient local infrastructure to meet the needs. The work around these investments can be found later in the Workforce Qualifications, Professional Learning, and Facilities sections respectively.
* **Engaging Practitioners, Researchers, and Experts:** Through workgroups, focus groups, and surveys, CDE has engaged practitioners, researchers, and experts to share input and collaborate on guidance issued, draft templates for UPK planning, UPK curriculum, transitions to kindergarten, serving more children with disabilities in inclusive settings, multilingual language learner identification and support, quality support systems, program evaluation, and more.
* **Support for the Field**
	+ **Planning and Implementation Guidance:** Development and publishing of district and county-wide planning templates and three accompanying volumes of guidance to assist LEA partners in development of their UPK plans, including introducing leadership to early education concepts, agencies, and structures, as well as in cultivating partnerships with CBOs in their area, and projections for local TK enrollment.
	+ **UPK Webinars:** CDE hosted four webinars in 2022 covering the UPK Planning Template for LEAs, Community Engagement and Partnerships, Local Partnership Opportunities, and TK Requirements.
	+ **UPK Office Hours:** In addition to informational webinars, CDE hosted 15 UPK Office Hour sessions since March 2022, directly engaging with a total of 2,766 implementers and practitioners to provide ongoing support and technical assistance.
	+ **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page:** The questions received in the webinars and office hours are used to inform ongoing updates of the UPK & TK FAQs page, so that the CDE can be responsive to the needs of LEAs as they evolve.
	+ **Launch of the CA UPK and P–3 Group:** The California Educators Together platform shares research, toolkits, and other resources for UPK implementation with LEAs and partners.
	+ **P–3 Alignment Webinar Series**: To date the CDE has hosted 11 P–3 webinars to share foundational knowledge and engage in growth and learning with the field on implementation of P–3 alignment strategies with a strong focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.
* **Development of Communications Resources for UPK:** Supported by philanthropy, the CDE and UPK Constellation Teams worked with Collaborative Communications and developed and released materials for communications on UPK for local implementers, leadership, and staff. These materials include a California UPK logo and brand guidelines, a two-page flyer, and a PowerPoint presentation that provides a high-level overview of UPK for LEAs and community-based partners delivering state-funded UPK services and leaders making decisions about how programs are structured. The CDE is also in the process of creating communication materials to use with families, in partnership with a communications firm, so that they understand the benefits of UPK and the different options available to meet their needs. These materials can be accessed at the UPK Resources Landing page: <https://express.adobe.com/page/OZrg3IsP1GE8b/>.

Additionally, to inform preschool standards and access for UPK, the CDE; in consultation with the Director of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the Executive Director of the State Board of Education (SBE) and the CTC; is convening a UPK mixed-delivery statewide interest holder workgroup on UPK. The workgroup is charged with making recommendations on best practices for increasing access to high-quality UPK programs across a variety of settings, and recommendations to update preschool standards pursuant to *EC* 8203 to support equitable access to high-quality preschool and transitional kindergarten programs, all while ensuring they are in alignment with the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. The workgroup meetings will be held under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, with the first meeting on January 26, 2023.

### Curriculum and Assessment

#### Curriculum

##### Current Requirements

For TK, as with other grades, no specific state curriculum is mandated. *EC* Section 48000(d) requires districts to use a “modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.” Statute also specifies that it is the intent of the California State Legislature that curriculum used in TK programs be aligned to the California Preschool Learning Foundations (PLF) developed by the CDE.

Kindergarten curriculum is based on content standards developed by the SBE, guided by curriculum frameworks adopted by the Instructional Quality Commission. Content standards define the knowledge, concepts and skills students should acquire at each grade level, and are organized into the following subjects:

* English Language Arts
* Mathematics
* English Language Development
* History-Social Science
* Health Education
* Physical Education
* Computer Science
* Science
* Arts Education
* World Languages

The PLF elaborate knowledge and skill-based outcomes children can reach in high-quality preschool programs, and as such, are used to inform preschool curricula. Aligned with domains in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Frameworks and California’s Kindergarten Common Core, the PLF outlines what development looks like at various ages within the following domains:

* Volume 1: Social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics (2008)
* Volume 2: Visual and performing arts, physical development, and health (2010)
* Volume 3: History–social science and science (2012)

The CDE is currently working on revisions to the PLF, and as part of these revisions, will add a new developmental domain: approaches to learning.

##### Best Practices

Evidence-based curricula for PreK- aged students should emphasize children’s social-emotional and oral language development, combined with hands-on, play-based curricula in literacy and mathematics that follow a specific scope and sequence.

For example, the Boston Public Schools Prekindergarten Program’s Focus on Early Learning curriculum, which has been identified by research as one of the strongest, consistently proven interventions for closing the achievement gap, uses a combination of district-developed units in literacy that builds on children’s skills, and the Building Blocks PreK math curriculum that introduces mathematics concepts in a specific learning trajectory that promotes hands-on learning and strategic thinking.

* Most importantly, Boston’s curriculum approach integrates social-emotional skills, ample time for child-directed, joyful learning experiences and play, and instruction based on individual child formative assessment.
* Children are rarely sitting for long periods of time in a whole group, or writing in workbooks or worksheets, and instead are spending most of their time engaging in hands-on small-group learning opportunities to build foundational literacy and math skills, conversing with peers, and exploring different “stations” to work on child-chosen projects that integrate and apply their learning to art, dramatic play, story-telling, engineering, science exploration, and more.
* Boston’s Focus on Early Learning curriculum requires a robust professional development model with ongoing, onsite coaching to support the implementation.

Based on the CDE’s 2022 UPK Curriculum Survey (representing 454 TK sites in 305 districts across 53 counties) about 20 percent of TK programs are adopting similar curriculum models to Boston that combines PreK hands-on math and literacy experiences with a scope and sequence and an explicit focus on social-emotional learning (SEL).

Based on the 2021–2022 UPK P&I Grant Survey, school districts and charter schools plan to employ a variety of plans to support social-emotional learning. The most common plans to support SEL instruction are:

* Designing developmentally appropriate learning environments for individual and group activities (78 percent)
* Play-based learning (78 percent)
* Developing or using targeted SEL curriculum (70 percent)
* Using daily, developmental observations (68 percent)

##### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

Based on results from a UPK Curriculum Survey highlighted in the previous section, the CDE found that a third of TK programs (30 percent) reported using curricula that do not reflect the research on effective and developmentally appropriate PreK curriculum or are not aligned to the PLF. For example, 10 percent of TK programs reported making no modifications to their existing kindergarten curriculum at all, and 20 percent of TK programs reported using a PreK version of their kindergarten curriculum (e.g., same publisher) that did not include any emphasis on social-emotional learning and offered limited hands-on experiences and opportunity for play. A TK experience that does not utilize developmentally appropriate practices, provide opportunities for play, and activities intentionally designed to support social-emotional learning could undermine the ultimate goal of preparing four-year-old children for kindergarten.

To begin to address this challenge, the CDE is working on updates to the PLF to bolster quality and ensure UPK programming is developmentally appropriate and in line with proven practices. These updates will incorporate the latest research around learning and development, broaden the age band to be inclusive of TK, and add more diverse examples to represent the experiences of multilingual learners, children with disabilities and children from different racial and cultural backgrounds. The updated PLF will be available in late 2023.

The CDE will also create a P–3 Learning Progressions document that will extend the PLF in five core domains (language and literacy, math, science, social-emotional, approaches to learning). The goal of this document is to demonstrate the bridge between preschool and K–3 standards, and what developmentally informed practice looks like in the early elementary grades. This is to ensure that with the inclusion of TK in public schools that effective preschool practices are “pushed up” into the early grades, instead of elementary school practices that may not be developmentally appropriate for younger children pushing down into TK. To achieve this goal, the document will include developmentally informed examples of the Common Core Standards in the areas of mathematics and literacy, as well as demonstrate developmental progressions of social-emotional and approaches to learning skills for students from ages three to nine. The P–3 Learning Progressions will be available in mid-2024.

#### Assessment

##### Current Requirements

For both TK and kindergarten, an English Language Proficiency assessment tied to grade-level standards is federally required for students in public schools within the first 30 days of enrollment. Currently, TK students take the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) that is based on the 2012 English Language Development Standards for kindergarten. There are four sections: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. No other assessment is required for TK and kindergarten; however, the CDE has recommended the use of the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment.

For CSPP, the DRDP assessment is required to be administered two times per year. This assessment is different from a typical one-on-one or direct assessment teachers usually administer in elementary school. For the DRDP, teachers record observations of a child demonstrating skills along a developmental trajectory, and rate a child along this trajectory based on ongoing observations, including data collection through work samples and parent conversations. The DRDP Preschool Fundamental View covers the domains of Language, Literacy, English Language Development, Mathematics, Physical Development, Health, Social-Emotional Development, and Approaches to Learning.

##### Best Practices

According to research, best practice for the assessment of young children is to ensure that the administration of the assessment is developmentally appropriate and results are used to inform curriculum planning and individualized instruction. A developmentally appropriate assessment is typically integrated into a child’s natural learning experience, covers multiple domains of children’s learning and development aligned to Preschool standards (e.g., the PLF), and children are able to respond or demonstrate skills in a variety of ways based on their language and ability.

For example, the DRDP assessment required in CSPP (and CDE recommends for TK) is an observational assessment that allows for a child to demonstrate skills in their everyday interactions and exposure to learning opportunities. A strength of this tool is that it covers all domains of child development, which helps teachers not only value academic skills, but pay attention to children’s social and emotional development as well. Additionally, because this assessment tool illustrates the developmental trajectory of learning, teachers are able to see “what comes next” and scaffold children’s learning appropriately.

Based on the 2021–2022 UPK P&I Grant Survey 29 percent of school districts and charter schools are planning to use the DRDP assessment in TK, and a majority of school districts are planning to use district-created benchmark assessments (68 percent).

##### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

Through focus groups conducted in the Spring of 2022, TK and kindergarten teachers expressed apprehension about using the DRDP tool because observational assessments are not the status quo in their district. Instead, TK–12 school leadership tends to place emphasis on benchmark assessments to document learning in math and literacy that are typically administered one-on-one with the teacher and student. In the same focus groups, many of the participating teachers indicated the desire to have a universal TK or kindergarten entry assessment statewide, and to include direct assessments supplemental to the DRDP to aid in both formative and summative assessment of their students.

The CDE is also updating the DRDP assessment. This update will include combining the Preschool and kindergarten DRDP assessments to form a single tool that would meet the developmental ranges of children in TK. Additionally, the CDE is including structured prompts in math and literacy that resemble direct assessments standardized across students but will still be embedded in a child’s learning experience to remain developmentally appropriate. This new assessment tool will be available in 2025.

As part of this update, CDE will also expand the DRDP assessment in the areas of Social-Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning to be utilized in preschool to third grade (DRDP P–3). The hope is that this assessment tool will help teachers across P–3 value student’s social-emotional skills, self-regulation, and executive functioning skills as much as their academic growth. This new assessment tool will also be available in 2025 and districts will have the option to use it.

### Class Size and Ratios

#### Current Requirements

*EC* Section 48000(g)(1) requires school districts and charter schools, starting in the 2022–23 school year, to maintain an average TK class enrollment of not more than 24 children for each school site.

Class size requirements for kindergarten are similar but slightly different to the requirements of TK. Specifically, school districts, as a condition of receiving LCFF base grant funding, must maintain an average class enrollment of no more than 24 students for each school site in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive. However, if there is a collectively bargained alternative annual average class enrollment for each school site, the district may follow that instead. (For TK classes, collective bargaining agreements cannot supersede the state rules.)

For both TK and kindergarten, school districts apportionments are reduced for ADA for each class whose enrollment is greater than 33 students, thus establishing a financial penalty for districts that exceed the maximum (*EC* Section 41378).

In addition to class size requirements, starting in 2022–23, TK classrooms are required to meet a new lower adult to child ratio of 1:12, necessitating a second adult in the classroom (*EC* Section 48000[g][2]). Contingent on additional funding appropriated by the Legislature, this ratio may reduce to 1:10 starting in the 2023–24 school year (*EC* Section 48000[g][3]). Kindergarten does not have adult to child ratios beyond the requirements around class size. CSPP programs have a required adult-child ratio of 1:8, and Head Start has a required adult-child ratio of 1:10 for four-year-old classrooms.

#### Best Practices and Successes

According to research, young children learn best through close, responsive, joyful, and intentional relationships with caring adults. Research has shown that smaller class sizes and lower adult-child ratios are associated with better classroom experiences and relationships for children which are tied to immediate and long-term outcomes for children enrolled in PreK programs.

Additionally, while co-mingling of ages may be necessary in some classrooms, research has demonstrated the importance of differentiated instruction and ensuring curriculum is developmentally appropriate for young children, which is more easily achieved in TK stand-alone classrooms. For example, the June 2017 AIR evaluation of TK found that students in stand-alone TK classrooms made more learning gains than students in TK and kindergarten combination classrooms, likely because the stand-alone classrooms were more developmentally appropriate. As such, districts should exercise caution if combining TK and K students to ensure a teacher is able to pay close attention to individual child differences and is well-versed in the Preschool Learning Foundations. Table 3 below shows the percentage of school districts and charter schools that planned to adopt each type of TK class in the 2022–23 school year.

**Table 3. Class Types Planned by School Districts and Charter Schools**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Types of TK Classes**  | **Percent of School Districts and Charter Schools**  |
| TK and K Combination Classes | 42% |
| Stand-alone TK Classes | 40% |
| TK and CSPP Combination Classes | 7% |

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

For teachers who have never taught four-year-old students before, additional support can be beneficial to balance a broader continuum of child development in a TK and kindergarten combination classrooms. The state is providing support in several ways, including:

* Providing $383 million (in the 2022–23 budget) to ensure that districts and charter schools have funding to cover the cost of the second adult in the TK classroom.
* Providing $500 million total to LEAs between the 2021–22 and 2022–23 budgets for UPK planning and implementation can help cover some of the costs associated with having separate classes, especially since the 2022–23 investments can be used to cover classroom operating costs. These funds will assist LEAs in covering costs associated with meeting the new class size and ratio requirements.
* Releasing extensive guidance to assist districts in planning for UPK, including extensive guidance about class sizes and ratios, and how existing early education programs at the local level (like CSPP) could be blended with TK to support developmentally appropriate PreK programs where TK stand-alone classes are not possible.

### Workforce Qualifications

#### Current Requirements

Both TK and kindergartenmust be taught by an educator who holds one of the following credentials:

* Multiple Subject Credential
* General Kindergarten through Primary (K–3)
* General Elementary (K–8)
* Standard Early Childhood (P–3)
* Standard Elementary (K–9)
* Specialist Instruction Credential in Early Childhood Education (this is different than the Education Specialist Instruction Credential: Early Childhood Special Education)

In addition, since rapid cognitive, social, and emotional development occurs during the first 5 years of life, and children develop along diverse, individual trajectories, specialized training in early education and child development is crucial for teachers to understand the learning needs and behaviors of 4-year-old students. Accordingly, credentialed teachers who are first assigned to a TK classroom after July 1, 2015, will also be required to have one of the following by August 1, 2023 (*EC* Section 48000[g]):

* At least 24 units in early childhood education, or childhood development, or both
* Professional experience in a classroom setting with PreK age children comparable to the 24 units of education described in bullet 1 (comparability determined and documented by the local employing agency)
* Child Development Teacher Permit or ECE specialist credential issued by the CTC

Any teacher who was assigned to teach TK, or a combination of kindergarten and TK, on or before July 1, 2015, is "grandfathered in" to teach TK without having to meet the additional requirements for TK teachers described above. These additional requirements do not apply to kindergarten teachers.

Due to the required ratio of one adult to every 12 children and an average class size of 24 students, detailed above, TK classrooms must be staffed by two adults. The first adult must be a teacher, and thus meet the requirements of *EC* Section 48000(g)(4) outlined above and hold a credential. Except for Title 1 requirements, statute does not currently specify qualifications or credentials for the second adult or aide; however, they must be at least 18 years of age, fingerprinted, and an employee of the school district.

To ensure high-quality learning environments for all TK students, districts are encouraged to employ adults from the following options to staff the second adult in TK classrooms:

* Credentialed Teachers
* Assistant Teachers and Paraprofessionals
* Registered apprenticeships participants
* Any Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing grant participant serving in any other role in the district who prefers to transfer to serving in a TK classroom
* Any teacher preparation candidate from any pathway seeking clinical practice experience
* Regional Occupational Program/Home Economics Related Occupations program/Future Teachers and Dual Enrollment participants seeking practicum experience
* Holder of any level of the Child Development Permit or a candidate seeking practicum experience for a Child Development Permit

Lead teachers in CSPP programs must have a Child Development Associate Teacher permit or higher.

#### Best Practices and Successes

One best practice for workforce qualifications is reducing barriers to workforce pathways for prospective teachers and supporting current teachers to continue developing their professional learning in early childhood education.

Data from the UPK P&I Grant plans, outlined in Table 4, indicate that some school districts and charter schools are already using or planning to use a number of strategies to support prospective and current teachers with multiple subject credentials to meet the requirements to teach TK.

**Table 4. Strategies Planned to Support Teachers with Multiple Subject Credentials**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Supportive Strategy** | **Percent of School Districts and Charter Schools Using to Support Prospective Teachers** | **Percent of School Districts and Charter Schools Using to Support Current Teachers** |
| Partner with Institutes of Higher Education | 58% | 39% |
| Advising on requirements | 47% | 53% |
| Partner with the county office of education to provide services | 31% | 37% |
| Joining an existing intern prep or mentorship program | 28% | 34% |
| Provide information on scholarship and grant opportunities | 25% | 43% |
| Offer stipends for tuition | 21% | 28% |

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

While many LEAs have begun their work to support their teachers to meet requirements, many more teachers will be needed by the time that UTK is fully implemented. The LPI estimates another 12,000-16,000 lead teachers will be needed in TK by 2025–26 with an additional estimated 16,000-20,000 assistant teachers needed to serve as the second adult in the classroom and support the 1:12 (or 1:10) class size ratio.

The CDE is working in partnership with the CTC to address the number of teachers prepared to teach in TK, as well as to support those already teaching to meet the new TK requirements. Efforts have included:

* **Investments in Workforce Development:** California has invested a substantial amount of funding to support the recruitment and retention of teachers overall, but in particular for UPK teachers. Investments include, but are not limited to:
	+ The UPK P&I Grant, mentioned above on page 16, provides a total of $500 million in one-time funding to LEAs for planning and implementation related to UPK expansion. Allowable costs include hiring and recruitment costs, along with other planning and implementation costs.
	+ The Golden State Teacher Grant Program, an ongoing grant with $100 million in funding per fiscal year between 2021 and 2026, administered by the California Student Aid Commission, provides up to $20,000 in individual grants to students in CTC-approved professional preparation programs who commit to working in high-needs fields such as TK at a priority school for four years after receiving their credential.
	+ The Early Education Teacher Development grant allocates $100 million to ensure there are enough qualified teachers in the UPK system as it expands. The main purpose of this funding is to increase the number of highly qualified TK and CSPP teachers as well as increase specific competencies for TK, CSPP and kindergarten teachers.
	+ The Teacher Residency Grant Program, administered by the CTC, provides a total of $650 million from 2021 to 2023, in ongoing funding for LEAs to develop or expand and improve teacher residency programs that support designated shortage fields such as TK and local efforts for recruitment and retention of a diverse teacher workforce that reflects an LEA community’s diversity.
	+ The CTC is administering $20 million in one-time grants to regionally accredited institutions of higher education for four-year integrated teacher preparation programs, including student teaching, and/or to adapt an existing Commission-approved five-year integrated teacher preparation program to a four-year program. These grants support programs that produce teachers in the designated shortage fields including transitional kindergarten, or kindergarten, and/or that partner with a California community college to create an integrated program of professional preparation.

A full list of recent State investments to support workforce development can be found in Attachment 5, and additional investments in professional learning for the workforce can be found below on page 30.

* **Emergency Specialist Teaching Permit:** In anticipation of the need for more teachers with early childhood education focus to teach in TK classrooms, the 2022–23 Budget permitted the CTC to issue and renew a one-year emergency specialist teaching permit in early childhood education that authorizes teaching a TK general education classroom (*EC* Section 44300). These permits must be applied for by the local employing agency on behalf of the individual in need of an emergency permit.
* **PK–3 ECE Specialist Instructional Credential:** In order to recognize and value the prior work experiences and rich background of the current ECE workforce, and building on child development instructional strategies to support candidates’ transition from the Child Development Permit system, the CTC adopted the PK–3 ECE credential standards and Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) at its October 2022 meeting. The CTC is now working on the regulations package to send to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL), and it is anticipated to be approved in January 2023.
* **UPK Workforce Accelerated Pathways Constellation (Accelerated Pathways):** This partnership includes bringing together interest holders and experts from across state agencies and sectors to concentrate efforts and strengthen cooperation through a constellation approach. The Accelerated Pathways Constellation began in October 2022 with the goal of identifying strategies to support a robust workforce pipeline for programs in California that require or recognize the Child Development Permit to meet staff qualification requirements, with a specific focus on developing accelerated pathways for existing and aspiring PreK teachers to meet and exceed current CSPP qualification requirements.
* **Teacher Preparation Programs:** The CTC, in conversation with CDE, is also working to expand integrated teacher preparation programs, including to develop preparatory programs leading to the new PK–3 credential and updating the requirements for the Child Development Permit.
* **Teacher Pipeline Workforce Compendium:** Overall, the state has invested in a little over $3.6 billion for a variety of workforce supports, at the state-wide system level, LEA level, and at the teacher level, as described above and in the following section on Workforce Professional Learning. To support LEAs in integrating the multiple investments to create coherent pathways, the CDE and CTC developed a teacher pipeline workforce compendium to centralize resources and facilitate access to the myriad of opportunities available to current and aspiring teachers.

It is the intent that the changes to permit and credentials alongside these new investments in workforce preparation will significantly improve the ease and reduce the expense for existing and aspiring educators to meet the workforce needs of the UPK system, increasing access to high-quality learning experiences for more of California’s children.

### Workforce Professional Learning

#### Current Requirements

Both TK and kindergarten teachers with multiple subject credentials are required to complete professional learning as part of their credential renewal and as part of their regular evaluation on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. These requirements do not detail the topics or types of professional learning that teachers should be able to access.

Lead teachers in CSPP must also complete professional learning and growth activities as part of their permit review. CSPP contractors must develop and implement a professional development program for their staff that details the annual professional development topics and must align with the Desired Results System. CSPP teachers may also receive professional learning and coaching support if their program site participates in QCC, the consortium of the local and regional QRIS.

#### Best Practices and Successes

To support the ongoing professional learning of TK educators and school leadership in areas of developmentally informed practice, ongoing professional development is needed in social-emotional learning, the Preschool Learning Foundations and the selection and implementation of developmentally appropriate curriculum. Research shows onsite, ongoing coaching is the most effective practice for professional development.

In their UPK Planning and Implementation surveys, school districts and charter schools reported their intention to provide professional learning to their site leaders and principals in the areas of literacy and language development (66 percent) social-emotional development (65 percent), serving children with disabilities in inclusive settings (57 percent), curriculum selection and implementation (56 percent), math and science (55 percent) and more. School districts and charter schools specifically reported they would offer learning opportunities for social-emotional learning as staff development (66 percent) or self-directed learning opportunities (54 percent).

Professional learning opportunities that bring together PreK and K-3 teachers can help communities build a shared understanding of best practices, respect, and a shared sense of mission around supporting all children to succeed. Teachers who are well-prepared and supported are better equipped to provide inclusive, individualized instruction and sustain the gains of all young children. TK teachers need opportunities to engage in joint professional learning with other UPK teachers (e.g., CSPP), as well as K-3 teachers to build community and knowledge. Building a community of P–3 educators, through joint professional learning, will also support better, more effective transitions for children as they move into and through the early elementary grades.

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

One challenge in implementing best practices for professional learning for TK teachers and site leaders is the need to align requirements, systems of support, and schedules across the PreK and TK–12 systems, as well as coordinate funding.

Approximately one-third of school districts and charter schools reported an interest in technical assistance on creating joint professional development opportunities for P–3 teachers (32 percent) and on identifying professional learning to meet their P–3 vision and the needs of their community (20 percent). This information is used to inform support provided through the UPK P&I Grant as well as within the CDE P–3 alignment initiative.

Professional learning, resources and coaching on developmentally appropriate practices for working with young children including supporting transitions, social-emotional learning, working with young children with disabilities, and supporting multilingual learners, are available for CSPP staff; specific efforts are needed to ensure they are available to all P–3 teachers.

There are a variety of investments in supporting the professional learning of teachers and support staff, including for coaching and mentoring, training to enhance competencies to support children of color, multilingual learners, children with disabilities, and other areas such as social-emotional learning and literacy, among others. These investments can be opportunities to promote P–3 alignment in professional learning.

* The Educator Effectiveness Block Grant, administered by the CDE, provides $1.5 billion in apportionments available until the end of June 2026 to school districts, COEs, charter schools, and state special schools to provide professional learning for teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals who work with students, and classified staff that interact with students. This professional learning can support TK teachers to gain competency in the key areas such as developmentally-appropriate and equitable practice. Funds can be used for, but are not limited to, the following:
	+ Coaching and mentoring
	+ Instruction and education to support implementing effective language acquisition programs for English learners
	+ New professional learning networks for educators
	+ Instruction, education, and strategies for certificated and classified educators in early childhood education or childhood development
	+ Practices to create a positive school climate, including restorative justice, training around implicit bias, providing positive behavioral support
	+ A recent adjustment allows funds to also be used for coursework that would allow existing staff to become credentialed, fully credentialed for their assignment, or meet the additional unit/experience requirements TK teachers are required to meet under *EC* Section 48000(g)
* The UPK P&I Grant, mentioned above on page 16, provides a total of $500 million to LEAs for planning and implementation related to UPK expansion. Allowable costs include staff training and professional development, along with other planning and implementation costs for UPK, including for both TK and CSPP.
* The Early Education Teacher Development Grant provides $100 million for the for workforce development, as mentioned in the previous section (Workforce Qualifications), as well as for professional learning for CSPP, TK, and kindergarten teachers to build the following competencies:
	+ Instruction in inclusive classrooms
	+ Culturally responsive instruction
	+ Supporting dual language learners
	+ Enhancing social-emotional learning
	+ Implementing trauma and healing-informed and restorative practices
	+ Mitigating implicit biases to eliminate exclusionary discipline
* To provide accelerated reading support, the 2022-23 budget allocated $15 million in one-time funding over three years to support 6,000 teachers complete the necessary coursework to receive supplementary state certification in reading and literacy.

### Instructional Time and Access to Full Day Care for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten

#### Current Requirements

Statute outlines minimum and maximum limits for instructional time for TK and kindergarten which constitute part-day programs, in addition to options for operating full-day programs.

The minimum school day in TK and kindergarten is 180 minutes (3 hours), inclusive of recess (*EC* Section 46117). Statute includes some flexibility in meeting this requirement allowing for variation in instructional minutes from day to day within certain parameters. The minimum school day requirement can still be met if the average school day within a 10-day period is 180 minutes or more, and as long as any individual school day is not less than 60 minutes. TK programs are required to offer a total of 36,000 instructional minutes per year (*EC* sections 46201 and 47612.5).

Typically, the maximum school day in TK and kindergarten is four hours, however, as the pandemic has highlighted, parents of children in all grade levels need full-day support. This has been reflected in full-day options available to parents of children in TK and kindergarten, including extending instructional time through early primary programs and combining TK and kindergarten with extended learning and care program options.

***Early Primary Programs***

TK and kindergarten programs can operate for more than four hours a day if they are operating as part of an early primary program, as defined in *EC* Section 8971, and meet certain conditions (*EC* Section 46111). An early primary program must consist of same-age pupils or any combination of CSPP or child development program, kindergarten, first, second, or third grade pupils, and provide an integrated, experiential, and developmentally informed educational program (*EC* sections 8970 to 8974). These provisions allow districts to offer extended-day TK or kindergarten, which provides a full-day program but cannot exceed the primary school day.

School districts with early primary programs provide educational continuity from PreK through kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive by:

* Establishing connections with public PreK programs, including CSPP and federal Head Start programs to create a more effective transition of children from PreK to kindergarten;
* Encouraging connections among early primary programs that provide before- and afterschool services; and
* Promoting joint activities for teachers and administrators of public PreK programs, including CSPP, state child development, and federal Head Start, and kindergarten through third grade in areas such as program planning and staff development training related to developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment practices for young children (*EC* Section 8974).

***Extended Learning and Care***

Another option for achieving a full-day TK or kindergarten program is combining TK or kindergarten with extended learning and care programs. Recent legislative changes facilitate access to full-day options, including a significant investment in the 2022–23 State Budget for expansion of the ELO-P, as well as a statutory amendment to make part-day CSPP an option for extended learning and care for children that meet CSPP eligibility requirements.

* **Supporting a Full-Day for TK: CSPP**
	+ As of July 1, 2022, children enrolled in a TK or kindergarten program may be enrolled in part-day CSPP for extended learning and care services during the hours they are not receiving educational services in a TK or kindergarten program (*EC* Section 48000 [l]). These children will beeligible for one session of less than four hours that does not overlap with but rather supplements the time spent in TK or kindergarten. When combined with the hours of TK or kindergarten, this can mean access to full-day care.
	+ In order to enroll in part-day CSPP, children in TK and kindergarten must meet CSPP eligibility requirements, outlined in *EC* Section 8208(a), and will be enrolled in priority order and according to certification procedures of part-day CSPP. Part-day CSPP contractors operating on an LEA campus have flexibility in terms of operational hours and enrollment periods in order to align with the TK–12 school year. *EC* Section 8210 outlines enrollment priorities for part-day CSPP, including that all otherwise eligible three- and four-year-old children must be prioritized for enrollment before children enrolled in either TK or kindergarten can be enrolled.
* **Supporting a Full-Day for TK: ELO-P**
	+ Districts and charter schools may combine TK or kindergarten with ELO-P, which provides afterschool and intersession enrichment programs for grades TK or kindergarten through sixth grade.
	+ LEAs receiving ELO-P funding must offer nine hours of combined instructional time and expanded learning opportunities per instructional day to at least all unduplicated children enrolled in TK and at least 30 intersession days; however, LEAs are not required to exclusively use ELO-P funding to meet the requirement. LEAs can also partner with Head Start, CSPP, After School Education and Safety (ASES) program, or other community-based childcare programs to fund and provide the additional extended learning and care hours needed to reach nine hours. (*EC* Section 46120). This would allow the LEA to use ELO-P funds to provide additional service hours or services for additional children.
	+ The combined school day must be run by qualified staff that meet the minimum qualifications of an instructional aide, as defined by the school district. (*EC* sections 8483.4 and 46120[b][2][D]).
	+ ELO-Ps are intended to develop the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs and interests of students through hands-on, engaging learning experiences. They should be student-centered, results-driven, engage community partners and complement but not replicate activities in the regular school day.

#### Best Practices and Successes

It is best practice to offer a full day of care for a TK student to best meet the needs of working families and support a child’s development with expanded learning opportunities. LEAs may choose to offer full day TK, or combine their TK program with other programs to ensure that families have access to full day care for their 4-year-old children.

State law does not require LEAs to operate a TK program that offers full-day early learning to all children the year before kindergarten; however, LEAs must articulate how they plan to offer full-day, early learning programming to all students, and how they are partnering or plan to partner with other programs, such as those listed in the statute, to ensure that every child has access to extended learning and care that, combined, equates to a full-day of programming that meets the community’s needs.

Data from the UPK P&I Grant plans on the types of TK programs school districts and charters plan to offer, outlined in Table 5, indicate that majority of school districts and charter schools are already offering, or planning to offer, full day options for TK families.

**Table 5. Types of TK Programs Planned**

| **Programs Planned** | **Percent of School Districts and Charter Schools** |
| --- | --- |
| TK and ELO-P  | 79% |
| Full Day TK | 68% |
| TK and CSPP Services | 18% |
| Full and Part Day TK | 11% |

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

While the ELO-P and CSPP extended learning and care are essential tools to assist LEAs to achieve full-day programming that meet the needs of working families, LEAs will not be required to provide all children in TK with extended learning and care by the time UTK is implemented.

Every student is eligible to participate in the ELO-P and LEAs will increase program offerings and access as TK expands, but ultimately the number of TK children served in ELO-P will depend on the availability of funding.

* In 2022–23, LEAs receiving ELO-P funding are required to offer ELO-P to at least all classroom-based students enrolled in TK through sixth grade at a school district or a charter school who are eligible for supplemental funding under LCFF and referred to as “unduplicated” (i.e., classified as an English learner, eligible for a free- or reduced-price meal, or a foster youth), and provide access to ELO-P to at least 50 percent of enrolled unduplicated students in TK through sixth grade.
* In 2023–24, LEAs with an unduplicated pupil percentage (UPP) at or above 75 percent must offer access to ELO-Ps to all students in classroom-based instructional programs in TK through grade six, and are required to provide access to any student whose parent or guardian specifically requests their placement in a program.
* LEAs with an UPP below 75 percent must offer access to ELO-Ps to at least all unduplicated students in classroom-based instructional programs in TK through grade six and shall provide access to any unduplicated student whose parent or guardian requests their placement in a program.

### Meeting the Needs of Children with Disabilities

#### Current Requirements

All children can benefit from high-quality early learning experiences. The TK classroom is intended as a place where all children can learn, including children with disabilities.

School districts already play a key role for young children with disabilities, as they support the transition from Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (infants and toddlers) to Part B (ages 3 to 21) programs. LEAs are responsible for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in a manner consistent with the requirements of IDEA and which conforms to California statutes and regulations. Children with disabilities are to be placed in the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate for their needs, including facilitating access to an inclusive early education program. For 4-year-old children, this means providing the necessary supports for children to engage in the general education setting, when appropriate, in TK and other early learning programs.

Children in TK programs may also be considered for referral for evaluation to determine if an Individual Education Program is needed. If a teacher has a concern about a child, they can initiate the consultation and referral process. Once referred, the need for more in-depth testing and observation will be examined, to explore the child’s eligibility for special education services.

Parent voice and choice are critical for all children and are an important part of the promise of UPK. Although all 4-year-old children will be eligible to attend TK at an LEA by the year 2025–26, parents may still choose to enroll their child in another UPK program such as CSPP, Head Start, or a CBO offering a PreK experience. The school district has responsibility for the special education services that the student receives, regardless of where they receive a PreK education.

#### Best Practices

To meet the needs of all children in TK, including children with disabilities, schools and teachers may need to adopt a range of strategies, including social-emotional strategies, specialized services, universal design for learning, adaptations, and providing additional staff support.

Data from the UPK P&I Grant plans demonstrates that many school districts and charter schools are using, or plan to use, many of these strategies to support their students. Table 6 below shows the strategies districts and charter schools planned to use in the 2022–23 school year to support children with disabilities.

**Table 6. Strategies Planned to Support Children with Disabilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supportive Strategy** | **Percent of School Districts and Charter Schools** |
| Adaptations | 81% |
| Specialized Services | 68% |
| Additional Staff Support | 65% |
| Universal Design for Learning | 63% |
| Social-Emotional Strategies | 59% |

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

In the fiscal year 2021–22, there were approximately 40,000 three- and four-year-old children with disabilities receiving special education services in California. CSPP served just under 4,000 (less than 10 percent) of these three and four-year-old children, primarily in part-day programs (80 percent).

In the 2021–22 school year, only 18 percent of children with disabilities ages three to five received their services in the regular PreK program, while 47 percent received services outside the regular PreK program.

In TK in Fall 2021 of the 2021–22 school year, 37 percent of children were in a regular general education classroom.

The CDE supports inclusive environments for children ages three to five by funding a number of technical assistance providers to support LEAs in identifying and implementing solutions that increase access to a regular PreK environment for children with disabilities. The CDE has identified this as a priority area for monitoring and supporting. More specifically, the CDE funds the Supporting Inclusive Practices project and the California Early Childhood Special Education Network. These technical assistance programs provide direct technical assistance to LEAs to improve the capacity, knowledge, collaboration, and implementation of evidence-based practices for children with disabilities ages three to five.

As required by *EC* Section 8490, CDE is also working to develop a process and tools for early identification of children at risk for developmental delays or learning disabilities, that will be available for and appropriate for use in CSPP, TK, and kindergarten.

Additionally, as part of the UPK Mixed Delivery Planning Grant, counties are required to coordinate with special education local and regional partners, including regional centers and LEAs, to ensure three- and four-year-old children with disabilities have access to UPK in the least restrictive environment.

For CSPP, beginning in 2022–23 CSPP contractors are required to reserve a certain percentage (5 percent in 2022–23, 7.5 percent in 2023–24, and 10 percent in 2024–25) of their funded enrollment to serve children with disabilities. By 2024–25, CSPP contractors are expected to both reserve those spaces and fill them with children with disabilities.

The Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) provides funding to LEAs to increase access to CSPP for children with disabilities, especially in low-income and high-need communities. The 2022–23 State Budget included a $200 million allocation for IEEEP that CSPP programs could use to fund facilities improvements, building or purchasing adaptive equipment, and professional development. An additional $50 million was allocated to address state-level systems building, which includes funding for professional learning, culturally and linguistically responsive resources, and regional support for early education inclusion. While these funds are focused on inclusion within CSPP, building LEA capacity in these areas can also have transferrable benefits for TK.

### Serving Multilingual Learners

#### Current Requirements

Multilingual learners are students learning English while speaking one or more other languages. Within this group, state law defines English learners as students in TK through grade twelve whose primary language is any language other than English. LEAs are required to assess the English language proficiency (ELP) of English learners and utilize designated instructional strategies to foster English language acquisition. California’s vision for English learners is that they fully and meaningfully access and participate in a twenty-first century education from early childhood through grade twelve that results in their attaining high levels of English proficiency, mastery of grade level standards, and opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages (SBE-adopted English Learner Roadmap, 2017).

For the purposes of identification and assessment, state and federal law require that LEAs administer a state test of ELP to eligible students with a home language other than English in kindergarten through grade twelve. Because state law defines TK as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, that means if the student enters the TK–12 system in TK, the state test of ELP occurs in TK, rather than kindergarten.

California administers the Initial and Summative ELPAC, and when appropriate, the Initial and Summative Alternate ELPAC for students with disabilities. The ELPAC consists of two separate ELP assessments: one for the initial identification of students as English learners, and a second for the annual summative assessment to measure a student’s progress in learning English, to identify the student's level of ELP, and to determine when students meet the first of four reclassification criteria. TK students must be administered the initial ELPAC, including the listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains, and if identified as English learners, the summative each subsequent year until reclassified.

#### Best Practices and Successes

In January 2017, the SBE adopted the English Learner (EL) Roadmap to be used as a guide for districts and education agencies to serve EL students in California schools. The Roadmap provides a shared mission for all levels from early childhood through grade twelve to ensure schools affirm, welcome, and respond to a diverse range of EL strengths, needs, and identities relying on four guiding principles:

* Assets-Oriented and Needs-Responsive Schools
* Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access
* System Conditions that Support Effectiveness
* Alignment and Articulation Within and Across Systems

The Roadmap is focused on improvement and alignment across systems, but also has guidance that can be applied specifically to TK. As an English learner’s first experience within the TK–12 system, effective support in TK can bridge the opportunity gap and ensure English learners gain school readiness and other skills they need to thrive in later grades and later in life.

Research has highlighted the benefits of supporting multilingual learners’ home language, as well as benefits of dual language immersion programs for both multilingual learners and monolingual PreK-aged children. Studies have found that multilingual PreKindergarteners who receive more instruction in their home language in high-quality, early learning programs make significant gains in school readiness skills. It is important that educators of multilingual learner children in P–3 are equipped to with practices for uplifting a child’s home language(s), and are supported to make curricular enhancements where appropriate. Best practices include incorporating home languages and cultures into instruction through reading and conversation, as well as art and other activities.

In the UPK Planning & Implementation survey, 18 percent of school districts and charter schools indicated that they would use one or more bilingual program models in at least some TK classrooms, which is one way of supporting and uplifting the home language.

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

As TK expands, the state has prior existing and additional supports LEAs can call on to increase and expand dual language immersion programs, enhance educator competencies, as well as tools and initiative to support assets-based, intellectually rich instruction and practice and system-wide recognition of biliteracy as a strength. These supports are key, since in 2019–20, 29 percent of children in TK were English learners.

* + **Dual Language Immersion Grant**: This grant allocates $10 million in funding for the expansion or establishment of dual language immersion programs, beginning in TK. Grant funding can support teacher and administrator professional development, purchase or development of instructional materials and resources, bilingual teacher recruitment, and family and student outreach.
	+ **Multilingual Learning Toolkit:** Early Edge and its partners, with support and input from CDE, developed the Multilingual Learning Toolkit, an online hub of research-based key principles, instructional practices, and accompanying resources, including resources for TK.
	+ **Dual Language Immersion Grant**: This grant allocates $10 million in funding for the expansion or establishment of dual language immersion programs, beginning in TK, at a total of 55 schools throughout California. Grant funding can support teacher and administrator professional development, purchase or development of instructional materials and resources, bilingual teacher recruitment, and family and student outreach.
	+ **Multilingual Learning Toolkit:** Early Edge and its partners, with support and input from CDE, developed the Multilingual Learning Toolkit, an online hub of research-based key principles, instructional practices, and accompanying resources, including resources for TK
	+ **Educator Workforce Investment Grant (EWIG):** The EWIG grant awarded $10 million to two grantees to support the goals of preparing educators to implement the vision, mission, and principles of the California EL Roadmap Policy for TK–12 and build system mechanisms to address the needs of English learners. The professional learning activities are designed to support system-wide implementation of the EL Roadmap Policy that align with the California Statewide System of Support. Free Multilingual California Project (MCAP) digital academies are a key element of these activities, including the Dual Language Teacher Academy and the Bilingual Teacher Pathway, which help prepare additional bilingual teachers.
	+ **Biliteracy Pathway Recognitions:** This initiative recognizes preschool, TK, kindergarten, elementary, and middle school students who have demonstrated progress toward proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. These recognitions help LEAs foster an assets-based approach toward the home language.

### Facilities

#### Current Requirements

Facility requirements for newly constructed classrooms, outlined in regulations (5 *CCR* Section 1430(h)(2)), are the same for TK and kindergarten and include:

* Minimum classroom size of 1,350 square feet inclusive of restrooms, storage, teacher preparation space, and wet and dry areas.
* Classroom & Play Yard Design
	+ Classroom design allows for supervision of play yards (unless prevented by site shape or size) and all areas of the classroom.
	+ Storage, casework, and learning stations are functionally designed for use in free play and structured activities.
	+ Play yard design provides a variety of activities for development of large motor skills.
* Classrooms are located close to parent drop-off and bus loading areas.
* Windows, marking boards, sinks, drinking fountains, and furniture are appropriate heights for kindergarten-age students.
* Restrooms are self-contained within the classroom or within the kindergarten complex.

TK and kindergarten classrooms should be comparable in size to each other, which provides flexibility for LEAs as enrollment changes over time.

#### Best Practices and Successes

Best practice for the TK classroom environment includes space for large-group instruction as well as areas for small group learning and individual exploration and play, as well as smaller-sized furniture and space for active learning and outdoor learning. In their UPK Planning & Implementation surveys, 74 percent of school districts and charter schools report that they have adequate classroom space to meet the projected enrollment of TK students. Of these school districts and charter schools, 57 percent are planning to keep their existing early learning programs on their school sites, which indicates that they have enough space to operate both TK and other early learning programs.

Several LEAs report developing early childhood centers or zones on existing sites to allow for collaboration and use of appropriate spaces for young children.

#### Existing Efforts to Support Implementation

Existing spaces have challenges for the developmental needs of young children or are already in use by other programs. For example, many classrooms do not have restrooms in or nearby, and children need to be walked to further away restrooms as a group. LEAs recognize that families often accompany young children to their classrooms, which increases the need for parking spaces and pedestrian walkways and may lead LEAs to shift the layouts of school campuses.

The California PreK, TK, and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program provided $590 million in 2021–22 and 2022–23 to construct new or retrofit existing space for CSPP, TK or full-day kindergarten programs. Classrooms and play areas receiving this funding must meet *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5 (5 *CCR*) kindergarten facility requirements for developmentally appropriate spaces for young children (5 *CCR*, Section 14030[h][2]). In April 2022, the Office of Public School Construction received 418 applications requesting more than $1.5 billion in funding. As of November 2022, the State Allocation Board has approved 72 district applications for $225 million in funding. Another round of funding is scheduled for 2023 for the remaining funds.

## Conclusion

The promise of UPK is the promise of opportunity for all and a key part of the larger vision for transforming California’s schools. This larger vision also includes initiatives for community schools, professional learning, antibias education, mental health programs, expanded learning programs and universal meals. These initiatives are designed to work together to transform schools into safe havens that support the whole child, foster a sense of belonging, and advance equitable outcomes for all children, beginning with UPK.

Through the creation of UPK and expansion of TK, California has taken the first big step to ensure that all children have access to a quality early education program in the year before kindergarten that supports the whole child and the whole family while honoring family choice and needs. The state has invested significant resources to ensure UPK implementation delivers on the promise to provide support for the whole child and whole family and align with the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care.

The work of providing equity and access to all children requires continued advocacy for and promotion of the planning and implementation of developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction, inclusive quality programs, welcoming facilities, and a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce with a framework for professional learning for teachers, staff and administrators serving children from PreK through third grade will help sustain this investment and bring the promise of UPK to California’s future.

# Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

Since TK is, for the most part, treated in statute as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, any actions the SBE has taken with regards to kindergarten applies to TK. However, there have been a limited number of SBE items specific to TK, as described below, mostly around offering TK and waivers from specific prior TK requirements.

At the beginning of TK implementation, in July 2012, the SBE conditionally approved one LEAs request for a waiver of *EC* Section 48000(c) and (d) relating to the requirement to offer transitional kindergarten for the 2012–13 school year. Nine other LEAs were denied their requests to waive portions of California *EC* sections 46300(g) and 48000(c) and (d) relating to TK for the 2012–13 school year.

As TK continued to be implemented, one barrier LEAs identified was a portion of statute that required TK programs to operate for the same length of day as kindergarten programs (known as ‘equity length of time’). Between May 2013 and November 2017, the SBE reviewed and approved 127 LEA requests to waive California *EC* Section 37202(a) with conditions. AB 99 (Chapter 15, Statutes of 2017) amended this statute to allow LEAs to maintain kindergarten or TK classes for different lengths of time during the school day, either at the same or a different school site, and waivers were no longer necessary.

The final category of actions more closely connected to TK involves charter schools offering TK. In July 2016, the SBE reviewed a consideration for material revision of a charter school that included removing TK from their grade span. The SBE recommended a public hearing and added a condition for the charter school that they offer TK in their first year of operation. In November 2019, the SBE reviewed and approved another petition for a material revision of a charter school to change admission to their TK program to be a lottery based on the same preferences as kindergarten through grade eight, rather than admission based on application date. Between July 2015 and November 2021, the SBE reviewed and conditionally approved one additional petition for material revision of charter schools, two petitions for renewal of a charter, and seven petitions for the establishment of a charter school under the oversight of the SBE which included TK as part of their grade span. Five petitions for the review or establishment of a charter school under the oversight of the SBE with TK were denied during this period.

# Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate)

The 2022–23 Budget included $997 million total for the first year of TK expansion. Of those funds:

* $614 million supported the cost provide TK to all children turning five-years-old between September 2 and February 2.
* $383 million supported the cost for LEAs to add an additional adult to reduce ratios to 1:12.

At full implementation in 2025–26, the California Department of Finance projected at the time of the completion of the 2021–22 budget that the total cost of TK annually will be $2.7 billion.

Both the 2021–22 and the 2022–23 budgets included funding to support TK implementation, including:

* 2021–22
	+ $490 million for facilities through the California Preschool, Transitional, Kindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program
	+ $200 million for UPK Planning and Implementation Grants for LEAs (described in more detail on page 16)
	+ $100 million for Early Education Teacher Development Grant
* 2022–23
	+ $100 million for facilities through the California Preschool, Transitional, Kindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program
		- The budget also included language stating the intent of the Legislature to appropriate an additional $550 million in 2023–24 for this program
	+ $300 million for UPK Planning and Implementation Grants for LEAs (described in more detail on page 16)
	+ $18.3 million for the UPK Mixed Delivery Planning Grant for Local Planning Councils and Resource and Referral agencies (described in more detail on page 17)
	+ $2 million for CDE to develop a process and tools for early identification of children at risk for developmental delays or learning disabilities, that will be available for and appropriate for use in TK, CSPP, and kindergarten

In addition, recent state budgets have included significant investments in the teacher workforce, reaching a little over $3.6 billion when combined with prior investments, which can be leveraged to support TK teachers as TK expands. The CDE has created a workforce compendium of these opportunities for LEAs to assist them as they work to recruit, train, and retain TK teachers, described in detail on page 28. For more information on the investments in this compendium, see Attachment 5: Universal PreKindergarten Teacher Pipeline and Professional Learning Resources.

# Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: California Department of Education (CDE) PreKindergarten (PreK) Fact Sheet December 2022(26 pages)
* Attachment 2: Program Standards Table (2 pages)
* Attachment 3: 2021–22 Universal PreKindergarten Planning and Implementation—Results from Countywide Planning and Capacity Building Program Plans for Districs and Charter Schools (38 pages)
* Attachment 4: 2021–22 Universal PreKindergarten Planning and Implementation—Results from Countywide Planning and Capacity Building Plans for County Offices of Education (15 pages)
* Attachment 5: Universal PreKindergarten Teacher Pipeline and Professional Learning Resources (8 pages)
1. For 2021–22 through 2024–25, children must turn five by the birthdate range. Beginning in 2025–26, all children who turn four by September 1 will be eligible for UTK. The expansion of TK eligibility will also increase the number of children served fourfold. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. TK Census Day enrollment [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Learning Policy Institute (LPI) projections from August 9, 2022, using 2019–20 uptake rate [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Long description for Figure 2: This figure shows the actual enrollment, eligibility, and percent of four-year-old children served for transitional kindergarten (TK) from the 2013–14 to 2021–22 school years, with enrollment data and percent of four-year-old children served missing for 2021–22 because it will not be available until March 2023. It also shows projected enrollment, eligibility, and percent of four-year-old children served for TK from the 2022–23 to the 2025–26 school years. The data is displayed in the table below, wherein school years are listed in the first column, enrollment in the second column, number of eligible four-year-olds in the third column, and the percent of all four-year-olds served in the fourth column. Each row shows enrollment, eligible four-year-old children, and percent of all four-year-old children served for a specified school year.

| **School Year** | **TK Census Day Enrollment** | **Eligible 4-year-old children** | **Percent of all 4-year-old children served** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2013-14  | 55,579 | 126,716 | 11% |
| 2014-15  | 77,274 | 125,260 | 15% |
| 2015-16  | 81,832 | 128,596 | 16% |
| 2016-17  | 84,266 | 125,447 | 17% |
| 2017-18  | 88,934 | 125,678 | 18% |
| 2018-19   | 90,659 | 125,334 | 18% |
| 2019-20   | 88,883 | 125,457 | 18% |
| 2020-21   | 68,701 | 122,064 | 14% |
| 2021–22 | Available in March 2023 | 120,437 | N/A |
| 2022–23  | 137,900 | 191,697 | 30% |
| 2023–24  | 164,400 | 261,958 | 37% |
| 2024–25  | 236,600 | 336,002 | 53% |
| 2025–26  | 313,900 | 444,566 | 71% |

 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)