

## **Expanded Transitional Kindergarten: A State-Funded Kindergarten Readiness Option for Districts and Charters**

Expanded Transitional Kindergarten (ETK), like Transitional Kindergarten (TK), provides school districts and charter schools valuable state resources to prepare children for success in school, narrow achievement gaps, and offer additional early learning choices for families. Statutory changes made in the 2015-16 state budget clarify that school districts and charter schools may draw down state dollars (known as average daily attendance, or “ADA”) to support TK programs for any child as soon as he or she turns 5. This allows districts to expand TK beyond the original eligible cohort of fall birthday children to provide a kindergarten readiness experience to more children, if local capacity exists and families wish to enroll. (See Assembly Bill 104 of 2015 and California Education Code Section 48000 (c))

**How it Works:** ETK offers a flexible and cost-effective way for school districts to use a combination of local and ADA dollars to offer school readiness opportunities to children who might not otherwise benefit from a quality preschool program. Districts can use local general fund, federal Title I, or Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) supplement and concentration dollars (as appropriate) to pay for ETK for the part of the school year before children turn 5. After the fifth birthday, these children will generate district ADA funds from the state through the LCFF.

**Why it Matters:** This new development offers school districts and charters a chance to get the most out of available state funding for early learning and lay a stronger foundation for children to thrive in K-12. The case for taking advantage of this opportunity is strong:

- A compelling body of research confirms that high-quality early learning can substantially improve children’s success in K-12.
- Early learning programs begin to address achievement gaps *before* kindergarten, when research shows they can reduce the need for—and high cost of—later interventions such as special education and grade retention.
- As a first point of entry to the K-12 system, ETK is an opportune time for districts to engage more families early in the education of their children and the life of the school community.
- TK programs are aligned to the California Preschool Learning Foundations and curriculum frameworks, providing socialization, language development and an important foundation in early literacy and numeracy.

**Local Context:** ETK can augment existing early learning programs, including the California State Preschool Program and Head Start, and expand options to children who might not have access to any other prekindergarten program. Districts pioneering ETK include Black Oak Mine Unified, Bonsall Union, Jefferson Elementary, La Mesa-Spring Valley Unified, and Los Angeles Unified. Given the inequities in access to early education across California, ETK gives school districts and charters the chance to reduce opportunity gaps by expanding school readiness programs for the children they serve.

The California State Superintendent of Public Instruction has provided details about the new ETK opportunity in a July 17 letter here: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr15ltr0717.asp>

For more information, visit [www.TKCalifornia.org](http://www.TKCalifornia.org), or contact State Director of Policy and Practice, Vickie Ramos Harris at [vramos@earlyedgecalifornia.org](mailto:vramos@earlyedgecalifornia.org) or (323) 254-1411 x22 or Araceli Sandoval-Gonzalez, Statewide Field Director at [asandoval@earlyedgecalifornia.org](mailto:asandoval@earlyedgecalifornia.org) or (323) 254-1411 x23.