

THE BENEFITS OF HIGH-QUALITY PRE-K

Studies have demonstrated that high-quality Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) experiences like Transitional Kindergarten (TK) help children succeed. Children in [Georgia](#), [Oklahoma](#), [West Virginia](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Washington, DC](#) who attended publicly-funded Pre-K programs were more prepared for kindergarten than their peers who did not attend Pre-K programs.



The benefits of high-quality Pre-K can last long past kindergarten. Children who attended [Georgia Pre-K](#) demonstrated significant increases in math scores as late as eighth grade. Middle school students who participated in [Oklahoma's Universal Pre-K](#) program, which is administered through the school system and very similar to TK, have higher math test scores, are more likely to enroll in honors courses, and are less likely to have been retained in grade. A [comprehensive review](#) of Pre-K programs across the nation found similar results: significantly fewer children who attended Pre-K were retained a grade, significantly fewer children were placed in special education, and children showed significant gains in both math and literacy.

The benefits of Pre-K can last into adulthood. Researchers evaluated the [Perry Preschool Program](#), which served high-risk Black children in the 1960s, fifty years after program participation. The evaluation showed that Perry Preschool alumni were more likely

to have graduated from high school, less likely to have been a teen parent, less likely to have ever been incarcerated, and more likely to be employed and own a home than were similar children who did not attend the Perry Preschool Program. Similarly, the [Abecedarian Project](#), which provided high-quality Early Learning to disadvantaged children in North Carolina in the 1970s found that alumni were more likely to graduate high school and attain a bachelor's degree, less likely to be a teen parent or use drugs at age 21, and more likely to have been consistently employed at age 30.

Many California parents know their child would benefit from Pre-K, but are unable to afford a high-quality program: [2 in 5](#) California 4-year-olds are currently not enrolled in Pre-K. [According to the Getting Down to Facts II report](#), a large part of the achievement gap in academic success experienced by children of color in California would be erased by greater access to high-quality Pre-K programs.

California can ensure that every child has an opportunity to enter kindergarten prepared to learn by offering Transitional Kindergarten (TK) to all 4-year-olds, through California Assembly Bill (AB) 22 authored by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento). AB 22 would expand TK to all 4-year-olds at no cost to families. TK is an optional program, so parents who wish to keep their 4-year-old at home or enroll them in a private child care setting, California State Preschool Program or Head Start program will still have the option to do so.

[Learn more about AB 22](#)