

# Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Implementation Progress and Opportunities

Updated Fall 2025

## MILESTONES

*What we've achieved together*

**Passage of Universal Transitional Kindergarten:** In the 2021-22 State Budget, California committed to providing universal access to TK, which means all California 4-year-olds will have access to a free preschool option by the 2025-26 school year.

**Full Implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten:** In the 2025-2026 school year, TK reached full implementation with every 4-year-old in the state being able to access and enroll in TK.

**Lower Adult-to-Child Ratios:** In the 2025-26 budget, California has committed to fully funding 10:1 ratios for TK.

**TK ML Screener:** With the passage of [AB 2268](#) and the 2025-26 budget, the legislature has committed to ensuring that children in TK are screened for ML status and needed supports in a way that is developmentally appropriate.

**Before- and after-care access provided through the creation and additional investments of the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP):** ELOP provides before- and after-care opportunities for families enrolled in TK-Grade 6 and offers up to 9 hours of care a day. This is critical to supporting working families. The 2025-26 budget increases funding to support expanded ELOP services.

## ROADBLOCKS

*Some current challenges*

**Dual Language Programs:** Dual language programs are essential for supporting both home language and English development. They strengthen cognitive skills such as problem-solving and creativity, and research shows that students in these programs often outperform their monolingual peers. Despite these benefits, access to bilingual TK programs remains limited.

**Family Awareness and Engagement:** Even with the full implementation of TK, some families remain unaware of TK eligibility or are choosing not to enroll their child in TK for various reasons.

**Professional Development:** In some cases, school administration or other staff have not received adequate training on developmentally appropriate practice for 4-year-olds. A lack of adequate training for all school personnel could result in classroom expectations that are misaligned with children's developmental needs.

**Before and after school care:** Although many families have access to ELOP to help with before and after school care, TK hours are a deterrent for enrollment for some families. Families may be unaware of ELOP or other before/after school programs.

**Facilities:** Schools and districts have made progress in creating learning environments that are appropriate for all four year olds. However, due to the cost of upgrading and making changes to facilities, some schools are still struggling to accommodate new classrooms, provide adequate toileting facilities, and overall ensure that young children have the adequate space to learn in a developmentally appropriate way.

## SOLUTIONS

*Some priorities for action*

**Dual Language Programs:** California can expand the availability of dual language programs by: 1. Providing stipends to educators to earn a Bilingual Authorization, funding ongoing professional development, and recruiting bilingual educators from local communities, 2. Offering financial incentives for LEAs to establish dual language programs and funding start-up costs, in addition to appropriate resources and materials so every child can receive the benefits of multilingualism.

**Family Awareness and Engagement:** The State and LEAs should consider effective communication campaigns to ensure that every family with a 4-year-old or soon-to-be 4-year-old understands their enrollment eligibility and what they need to do to enroll.

**Professional Development:** Require and fund school districts to provide annual professional development to teachers, aides, and site school leadership to ensure that all educators are grounded in PreK-TK Learning Foundations and other best practices that create a developmentally appropriate learning experience and environment for 4-year-olds, including Dual Language Learners.

**Before and after school care:** Similar to awareness about TK enrollment, the State and LEAs should conduct a communications campaign to help families understand the availability, eligibility, and enrollment process for all available before and after school care options.

**Facilities:** Establish dedicated funding for schools and districts to update or build facilities to meet the needs of four-year-olds. This can be done through local bonds, measures to increase funding through grants or other programs at the state level.