

# Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Program Adoption Guide – California

## I. Overview

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program mandated by California Education Code (EC) Section 48000. By 2025–26, all school districts must offer TK to all eligible four-year-olds as part of the **Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK)** rollout.

---

## II. Program Eligibility

- **Current Eligibility Expansion:**
    - 2023–24: Children who turn 5 between September 2 and April 2.
    - 2025–26: All children who turn 4 by September 1.
  - **Requirement:** All Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must provide access to TK.
- 

## III. Staffing Requirements

### Teacher Credentials

- Valid **Multiple Subject Teaching Credential**.
- By August 1, 2025, one of the following is required:
  - 24 units in Early Childhood Education (ECE)/Child Development.
  - Child Development Teacher Permit.
  - Professional experience in a classroom setting with young children (as determined by the LEA).

### Support Staffing

- **Adult-to-student ratio:**
    - 2023–24: 1 adult per 12 students.
    - 2025–26: 1 adult per 10 students.
  - May include credentialed teachers, paraeducators, or classroom aides.
-

## IV. Classroom and Curriculum

### Curriculum

- Must be **developmentally appropriate** and aligned with the **Preschool Learning Foundations** and **Kindergarten Content Standards**.
- TK is **not preschool**—it requires modified kindergarten instruction tailored to younger learners.

### Instructional Time

- **Minimum Instructional Time:**
    - **Annual:** 36,000 minutes.
    - **Daily:** Minimum 180 minutes.
  - Districts encouraged to expand TK programs to full-day to support working families.
- 

## V. Facilities and Environment

- Classrooms should support age-appropriate learning environments:
    - Flexible seating and learning areas.
    - Access to outdoor play.
    - Materials supporting exploration and social-emotional development.
- 

## VI. Enrollment and Operations

### Immunization

- TK students must meet the same immunization requirements as those entering kindergarten.

### Enrollment Policy

- TK must be offered as a voluntary program.
  - Districts should create clear outreach and communication strategies for parents and guardians.
-

## VII. Funding and Compliance

- TK is funded through the **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**.
  - LEAs must comply with all requirements (staffing, ratios, instructional minutes, facilities) to receive full funding.
  - Noncompliance may result in fiscal penalties or funding reductions.
- 

## VIII. Implementation Timeline

School Year	Age Eligibility	Target Ratio	Credential Requirement Deadline
2023–24	5th birthday by Apr 2	1:12	In progress
2024–25	5th birthday by Jun 2	1:10 (recommended)	In progress
2025–26	4th birthday by Sep 1	1:10 (required)	<b>Required by Aug 1, 2025</b>

---

## IX. Resources for Implementation

- **California Department of Education (CDE)** TK Implementation Guide: CDE TK Resources
  - **California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)**: TK Credentialing Info
  - **TKCalifornia.org** – Best practices, planning tools, and training modules.
- 

## X. Action Steps for Adoption

1. **Conduct Needs Assessment:** Evaluate facilities, staffing, and community needs.
2. **Build a TK Planning Team:** Include curriculum coordinators, HR, facilities, and family engagement staff.
3. **Update Facilities:** Ensure classrooms are developmentally appropriate and meet safety standards.

4. **Recruit and Train Staff:** Begin credentialing process for teachers and hire support staff.
5. **Develop Curriculum:** Align with standards and integrate play-based learning.
6. **Launch Enrollment Campaign:** Inform families of eligibility and benefits.
7. **Monitor Compliance and Report:** Use CDE guidance to track and report implementation progress.