

**Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK)
Frequently Asked Questions
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What is transitional kindergarten, or TK, and is it mandatory?

TK is a steppingstone between preschool and kindergarten. Both TK and kindergarten are optional. Children are only required to attend school in California once they turn 6. Until that age, it is up to parents to decide whether to enroll their children in preschool or transitional kindergarten or other childcare arrangements or keep them at home.

Is TK free? How is it paid for?

Children can attend TK at no cost because it is part of California's K-12 public school system. Districts receive funding for TK students based on average daily attendance, which is the average number of students in attendance over the course of the school year.

What is the difference between the current TK program and the new universal transitional kindergarten program?

Currently, TK serves about 100,000 children, primarily those who turn 5 between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2. These are the students who narrowly miss the cutoff for regular kindergarten. The new

\$2.7 billion universal TK program, by contrast, will gradually be made available to every 4-year-old in California, eventually serving nearly 400,000 students. It will essentially become California's version of a universal preschool program, available to all children regardless of income.

How large will the class sizes be?

Small class sizes are optimal to give smaller children the attention they need. Individual instruction is a pillar of quality early education, experts say. The ratios for TK are expected to start out at 12 students to 1 teacher or teaching assistant and transition to 10 students to 1 teacher by the 2025-2026 school year. That is about half the size of many current TK classes, many of which rely on parent volunteers to help teachers. Many preschool settings enjoy an even smaller ratio. Head Start, for instance, generally keeps an 8-1 ratio in its preschool programs.

Will TK be a full-day or a half-day program?

RDUSD is offering a full-day UTK program. More information regarding the program will be coming soon.

Do children in universal TK have to meet the same vaccination requirements as in regular kindergarten?

Yes. The same vaccination criteria apply.

What is the difference between UTK, Kindergarten and Preschool?

Though preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten all sound like the same thing, they do have their differences. The biggest difference between the three options is age. The age when you can enroll your child in preschool is as young as three, transitional kindergarten is for children who are four, but will be turning five between September 2nd and February 2nd.

Even Though transitional kindergarten is not mandatory, it will powerfully enhance your child's skill sets if they are ready for school but missed the kindergarten age cut off. Some see Transitional Kindergarten as a bridge between both preschool and kindergarten.

Preschool is more focused on exploration and play time, where children are able to use their imagination and learn through their play.

What site will my student be assigned to?

Currently Universal TK will be offered at all elementary school sites in RDUSD.