

AB 22 (Assemblymembers McCarty, Bonta, Burke, Carrillo, Chiu, Friedman, E. Garcia, Gonzalez, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Santiago, Ting, and Wicks; Senators Dodd, Gonzalez, Limón, Rubio): Universal TK

AB 22 expands access to transitional kindergarten (TK) for all four-year-olds

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

NEED

1. Why now? Given the COVID-19 crisis, is this the right time to expand TK?

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone light on the critical importance and the fragility of California's early childhood education (ECE) system. While it is crucial to address the immediate needs of families and ECE providers, it is equally important to use this opportunity to be bold and plan for a stronger future.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have enduring impacts on young children including gaps in early childhood development, increased trauma and social-emotional needs, and economic insecurity for families -- and California needs an ECE system that is up to the task of mitigating the harms of the pandemic and preparing our youngest learners for success in kindergarten and beyond.

With Proposition 98 (the education system's constitutionally guaranteed funding) increasing, K-12 enrollment declining across the state, and the promise of one-time ECE funding from the federal government under the Biden administration, California is in a unique position in 2021 to lay the groundwork for a more robust ECE system. Expanding TK will provide relief to K-12 schools experiencing declining enrollment while freeing up funds to bolster California's early care system for infants and toddlers – both of which will be crucial to California's long-term recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

FUNDING

1. Will serving four-year-olds in TK take money away from other early learning and care providers that serve four-year-olds?

No. Serving four-year-olds in TK will free up nearly \$1 billion that is currently used to serve four-year-olds in state preschool. AB 22 works in conjunction with other 2021 legislation (including SB 50) to ensure that these funds are used to support California's early learning and care system for 0 through three-year-olds.

2. How does AB 22 affect school district funding under the LCFF?

Although the LCFF is a complex formula, funding for school districts is determined largely by the number of students a district enrolls and the average number of days students attend school, or their average daily attendance (ADA).

As districts' enrollment increase by serving more TK students, their LCFF funding will also increase. Districts that are currently experiencing declining enrollment are seeing their annual

funding levels decrease. AB 22 can help a district maintain or increase its state funding. Additionally, all new TK students with special needs would be included in districts' Special Education funding from the state.

3. Will AB 22 require districts to serve more students without additional funding?

No. Proposition 98 – education's constitutionally guaranteed funding – is projected to continue to increase through at least 2024-2025. Due to unexpectedly rapid recovery in some sectors of the economy despite the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020-21 tax revenues were significantly higher than predicted. As a result, the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee is estimated to increase by \$13.1 billion over the enacted 2020-21 budget, bringing the total funding in 2021-22 to \$84.6 billion.

This increase in funding is happening at the same time that there are increasingly less school-age students in California. We can afford to serve more students.

4. How many four-year-olds will be impacted by this new law?

The LAO estimates that approximately 266,000 additional four-year-olds would be served when universal TK is fully implemented. The LAO approximates that with every additional month of TK expansion, the state would serve nearly 30,000 more 4-year-olds.

5. Does a family have to pay out-of-pocket for TK?

No. TK is provided by California's K-12 public school system and is free for families.

PROGRAM QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

1. Developmentally, four-year-olds are very different from five-year-olds. Will the curriculum be age-appropriate for four-year-olds?

Yes. Existing law requires school districts and charter schools operating transitional kindergarten programs to use a modified kindergarten curriculum. AB 22 will require the state to adopt a standard, developmentally appropriate TK curriculum for the state.

2. What will the max number of TK students be per class? Does AB 22 change the student-teacher ratios?

Current law requires school districts and charter schools to cap class sizes at 24 students for TK classrooms. AB 22 establishes the following student-teacher ratios.

- 24 students to 3 adults: with 1 credentialed teacher and 2 paraprofessionals, or teacher aides, or
- 20 students to 2 adults, with at least 1 credentialed teacher in the classroom.

3. Will these ratios negatively impact available facilities for school districts?

A significant majority of school districts and charter schools across the state are experiencing historic declines in student enrollment. As a result, they will have increasing facilities capacity to serve more transitional kindergarten students. Furthermore, AB 22 gradually expands TK over a number of years to allow school districts the time they need to expand facilities if necessary. Finally, other 2021 legislation has been introduced that would place a new

statewide school bond on the ballot in 2022. TK students would count toward districts' eligible funding under the state school construction program.

4. California has a teacher shortage already – how will this change impact the shortage?

California is in an era of steep declining enrollment, with a decrease of over 20,000 students each year. AB 22 will phase-in Universal TK at a rate that will offset this decline, saving jobs for teachers without exacerbating the existing teacher shortage. TK teachers are required to have a multiple-subject credential plus 24 credits in early childhood education or development, or both, or the equivalent of 24 credits as determined by their employer agency.

5. Will TK still be part-day?

AB 22 requires districts to operate full school-day programs. Full school-day TK programs align with elementary school schedules to support working families, and allow time for developmentally appropriate, meaningful learning.

6. If a family cannot pick up a four-year-old at the end of the school day, will afterschool services be provided? What about services in the summer?

Yes. Eligible four-year-olds will have access to state-subsidized extended-day and full-year services if needed.

PUBLIC PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. Preschool serves four-year-olds – will AB 22 replace the California State Preschool Program (CSPP)?

No, universal TK will not replace the CSPP. CSPP programs will continue to receive their full contract. Moving four-year-olds to TK will open up funds that CSPP providers can use to serve more eligible three-year-olds, and to serve TK students with wrap-around services to provide full-day, full-year care. Proposed legislation will outline changes to CSPP to support programs in this transition, and allow CSPP funds to serve low-income infants and toddlers with high-quality child care.