Top 10 general questions about Transitional Kindergarten

(From CDE website at www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp)

Q. Will transitional kindergarten be mandatory for children with birthdays between September and December?

A. Just like kindergarten, transitional kindergarten enrollment will be voluntary.

Q. How is transitional kindergarten different from preschool?

A. The standards, curriculum and teaching requirements in transitional kindergarten will be different from preschool. Transitional kindergarten will be part of the K-12 public education system and it will be based on the kindergarten standards. It will build on the skills children may have learned in preschool to ensure they will be able to begin kindergarten with confidence.

Q. How is transitional kindergarten different from traditional kindergarten?

A. Although the curriculum in transitional kindergarten will be based on the kindergarten standards, it will be modified to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of younger children. The transitional kindergarten environment will include more opportunities for social-emotional, language development and communication through dramatic play; small group instruction; and intentional teaching through hands-on activities.

Q. Will transitional kindergarten provide support for children who do not speak English?

A. English learners in transitional kindergarten will have the same level of services as those in kindergarten.

Q. Will transitional kindergarten be free or will I have to qualify based on income?

A. Transitional kindergarten will be free and open to all age-eligible children.

Q. What kinds of qualifications will transitional kindergarten teachers have?

A. Transitional kindergarten teachers will be required to have a teaching credential, just like kindergarten teachers.

Q. What age will transitional kindergarteners be as they enter first grade?

A. Transitional kindergarteners will typically be 6 years old when they start first grade and turn 7 years old during the first few months of the school year.

Q. Will children in transitional kindergarten be 19 years old when they graduate from high school?

A. No, they will be 18 years old when they graduate and will turn 19 years old several months after graduation.

Q. How will this affect children in special education?

A. Districts will be required to offer the same services to transitional kindergarteners with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) as they currently offer to children in kindergarten.

Q. What grade will children go into after transitional kindergarten?

A. Transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience. Children will go on to traditional kindergarten after completing one year of transitional kindergarten.