

Transitional Kindergarten

An informational fact sheet for La Mesa-Spring Valley Schools

What are the new birthdate requirements for kindergarten?

- For the 2017-18 school year, children must turn 5 years of age on or before September 1st to enroll in kindergarten

Previously, children were eligible for kindergarten if they turned five on or before December 2nd. The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 changed the requirements for kindergarten entry and created “transitional kindergarten,” the first year of a two-year kindergarten program for students born between September and December.

Why did California change the date?

The entry date change and the creation of Transitional Kindergarten address a longstanding need in California, as our children have historically started kindergarten at a younger age than kids in almost any other state – often without the maturity, social skills and early academic skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. At the same time, kindergarten today is far more academic than it once was; similar to what first grade used to be. The youngest students in a kindergarten class risk struggling academically, emotionally and/or socially. Children at this young age may not be practiced in socializing with their peers and teachers, while others may not yet have developed the skills to be part of a classroom environment, such as listening or following a structured class schedule. Transitional Kindergarten ensures that children develop and expand on these pivotal skills which are fundamental for successful learning when they begin kindergarten.

What is Transitional Kindergarten?

Transitional Kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for children born between September 2nd and December 2nd. Classes will offer children a developmentally appropriate curriculum taught by credentialed teachers to ensure students enter kindergarten with the academic, social and emotional skills they need for success. The school hours for transitional kindergarten will be the same as the school site’s regular kindergarten program, and will be a full school year program. Transitional kindergarten is then followed by a full year of “regular kindergarten,” which constitutes the second year of this program.

Will all schools have a Transitional Kindergarten Program?

Since Transitional Kindergarten only includes a limited number of students, La Mesa-Spring Valley will offer classes strategically located throughout the District with students from nearby schools filling each class. Students in Transitional Kindergarten will return to their home school for the regular kindergarten program the following year. For the 2017-18 school year, the Transitional Kindergarten sites are: Avondale, Casa de Oro, Fletcher Hills, Highlands, Kempton, La Mesa Dale, La Presa Elem., Lemon Avenue, Maryland Avenue and Northmont Elementary Schools.

What is the difference between Transitional Kindergarten and Preschool?

Transitional Kindergarten is aligned with California's kindergarten standards and is taught by credentialed teachers. In contrast, the California State Preschool Program is aligned with California's Preschool Learning Foundations and is taught by individuals whose education background is in Child Development.

What is the difference between Transitional kindergarten and Traditional Kindergarten?

Transitional Kindergarten provides the youngest students with a readiness year that is developmentally appropriate and will better prepare them for success once they enter traditional kindergarten. The transitional kindergarten environment includes more opportunities for social-emotional development, fine- and gross-motor activities, and ongoing language development.

When and where can I register for Transitional Kindergarten?

Registration will begin March 1, 2017. Parents can pick-up and return their enrollment packets at their Transitional Kindergarten school of choice (Avondale, Casa de Oro, Fletcher Hills, Highlands, Kempton, La Mesa Dale, La Presa Elem., Lemon Avenue, Maryland Avenue and Northmont Elementary School). Applications are accepted until classes are full. Intradistrict transfers are not required for Transitional Kindergarten. Priority will be given to students residing in our attendance areas.

Students living in neighboring districts must obtain an Interdistrict transfer. Transfer forms must be returned to Student Support at the District Office. The District will begin to accept Interdistrict transfer forms on February 1, 2017. Students on Interdistrict transfers will be placed based on space.

Are Transitional Kindergarten students eligible for ESS (after-school care)?

Transitional Kindergarten students are eligible for ESS beginning on the first day of school.

Is Transitional Kindergarten a mandatory program?

Similar to Kindergarten, Transitional Kindergarten is voluntary for all children.