

Why is transitional kindergarten enrollment lagging? A look at parent survey data ^[1]

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Excerpts

California's public schools have offered transitional kindergarten (TK), a school year for four-year-olds, for nearly 10 years. However, only children with birthdays shortly after the kindergarten cutoff were eligible during this initial phase. Starting with the 2022-2023 school year, California began expanding eligibility to more four-year-olds, but classroom enrollment was lower than expected. Why aren't more parents enrolling their children? Our recent study may provide some clues.

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In our survey, about one half of parents of four-year-olds said they would be signing their child up for TK. We asked parents their top reason for choosing (or not choosing) TK. As shown in Figure 1, parents most often enrolled in TK because their child had "reached the minimum age." This reason was the most common, before "it's the best option" or "it's a free program." A few parents selected "other" and wrote in their own reason. For instance, some parents said that their child was "academically ready," and others explained they were receiving special education services.

Figure 2 shows the primary reasons parents did not choose to enroll their child in TK. The most common reason mirrors Figure 1: more than one half of parents made the decision based on their understanding of TK's age requirements: "my child won't reach the minimum age to enroll."

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Figures 1 and 2 show that factors besides cost are playing an important role.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: kindergarten ^[4]

cost ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 17 Jul 2023): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/23/07/why-transitional-kindergarten-enrollment-lagging-look>

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