



CHARTER FACT: TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has identified five “pillars” that describe the required elements of Transitional Kindergarten:

- **PILLAR I**

TK programs meet the requirements of full-day kindergarten, including administration of the “WaKIDS” whole-child assessment, within the first ten weeks.

- **PILLAR II**

Classrooms are staffed by certificated teachers and paraeducators who provide a curriculum that offers a rich, varied set of experiences in learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and address the whole child. It is recommended that teachers have Early Childhood and/or Early Childhood Special Education Endorsements.

- **PILLAR III**

Transitional Kindergarten programs are inclusive, socioeconomically diverse, and responsive to the needs of children who qualify for participation.

- **PILLAR IV:** Programs must be fully integrated into school buildings, with access to transportation, specialists, recess, lunch in the school cafeteria, and all aspects of the school day available to regular kindergarten students. Attention must be given to the developmental capabilities and needs specific to young children in these settings.

- **PILLAR V:** Transitional Kindergarten programs work in collaboration with and do not adversely impact enrollment in community-based preschool programs, including Head Start, ECEAP (the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program), tribally-led early learning programs, and those operating in licensed child care centers and licensed family homes. School districts and charter public schools participate in coordinated outreach, referral, and placement to assure best fit and appropriateness of services based on each child and family’s need.

For more information about Transitional Kindergarten, please visit:

[Transitional Kindergarten | OSPI \(www.k12.wa.us\)](http://www.k12.wa.us)

[Transitional Kindergarten | WA Charter School Commission](#)



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Excerpt from the WA State Charter School Commission [Transitional Kindergarten Policy](#)

A NOTE ON EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The Commission believes that Kindergarten readiness is critical for short and long-term student academic achievement. Additionally, research indicates that students who are cognitively and behaviorally ready to enter Kindergarten have better long-term career and life outcomes.¹ As such, the Commission believes that TK has the potential to support student readiness in ways that could significantly improve student outcomes and narrow the opportunity gaps currently seen in public education. The Commission has chosen to allow charter public schools to offer TK programs in alignment with its Educational Equity Policy* which states:

The Commission is committed to closing opportunity gaps between the state's most and least privileged groups of students within the educational system. It has a moral obligation and legal obligation to cultivate charter schools where socio-economic status and protected groups status such as race, gender, language, sexual orientation, national origin, and disability cease to be a predictor of academic and life outcomes. Educational equity benefits all students and our entire community.

Given the importance of Kindergarten readiness and the impact it can have on a student's long-term life outcomes, the Commission is obligated to only approve proposals from operators who are prepared to offer high-quality TK programs. This includes, but is not limited to, the hiring of highly qualified teachers, the use of developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction, the provision of social-emotional supports, and adherence to the additional requirements and expectations outlined below.

¹ Magnuson, K., Duncan, G., Lee, K. & Metzger, M. "Early School Adjustment and Educational Attainment." 2016. Reardon, S. and Portilla, X. "Recent Trends in Income, Racial, and Ethnic School Readiness Gaps at Kindergarten Entry." 2016.