



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Report on California's Transitional Kindergarten Program Provides Data on Classroom Structure, Teachers, and Instruction

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The latest [brief](#) from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) provides new information on classroom make-up, structure, and teacher characteristics in California's groundbreaking Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program.

Karen Manship, Principal Researcher with AIR states, "We are learning more about what TK classrooms look like, in terms of their structure, teachers, and instructional approaches." Ms. Manship adds, "Our study has already established that California students who attended TK are more advanced than their peers in language, literacy, mathematics, and executive function, enabling them to be better prepared to enter kindergarten. Our next step will be to understand which of these characteristics are driving the program's positive impact."

AIR collected surveys of 200 TK teachers and observed 184 TK classrooms in 2015 to provide a snapshot of what TK classrooms look like across California:

- 63% of TK classrooms provide full-day instruction
- 76% of TK classrooms are stand-alone TK classes, enrolling only TK students
- Average TK class sizes (20 students) are lower than are required by law for kindergarten classrooms (33), and show an average adult – student ratio of 1:17
- 96% of TK teachers have experience teaching kindergarten
- 23% of TK teachers have experience teaching preschool, with a large number of teachers reporting ongoing TK-specific professional development

"Full-day programs with high adult – student ratios and high-levels of professional preparation and instruction, along with age-appropriate instruction are research-based hallmarks for high-quality early learning programs," says Camille Maben, Executive Director of First 5 California, a co-funder of this study. Ms. Maben adds, "The fact that local schools are voluntarily meeting these quality standards is a great success story."

AIR, based in San Mateo, California, has been studying the state's TK program since 2011. Funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and First 5 California, these series of reports continue to inform the policy debate about the future of TK and the state's early learning system.

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About First 5 California

First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, which added a tax on tobacco products to fund education, health, childcare, and other services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. Its programs and resources are designed to educate teachers, parents, grandparents, and caregivers about the critical role they play during a child's first five years – with the overarching goal of helping more California kids grow up healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit www.cafc.ca.gov.