A Day in the Life of a Transitional Kindergartener







We draw and create.









We build and construct.







We examine and inspect.





We imagine and pretend.







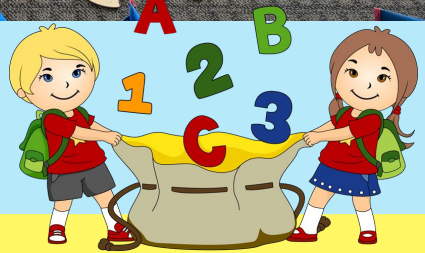




We sort and count.







We investigate letters and numbers.





We play with sensory materials.

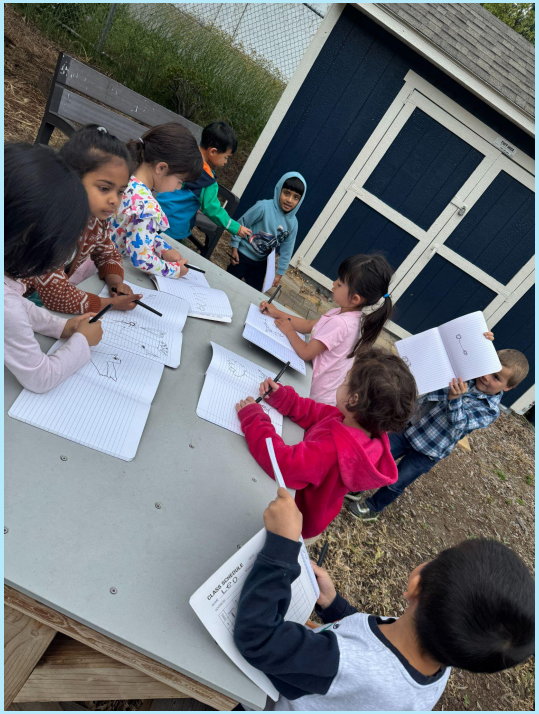








We do fun activities in small groups.









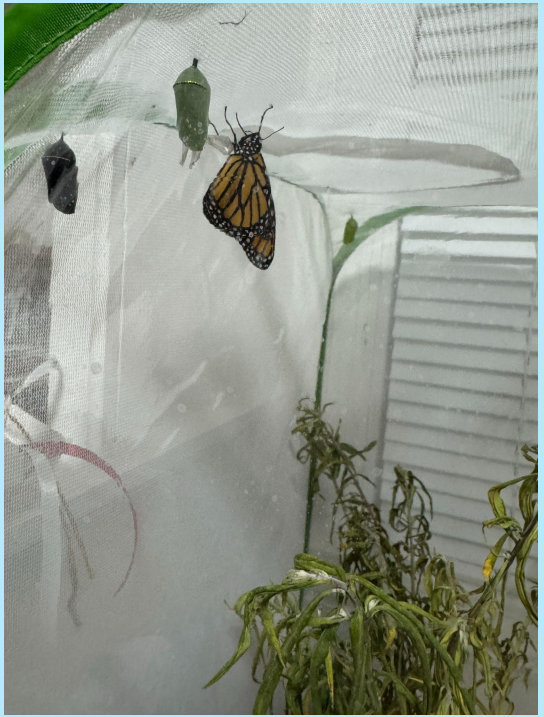


We take our learning outside.

ladybug larvae



Monarch butterflies



We observe things growing and changing.







We attend special classes, like P.E. class...

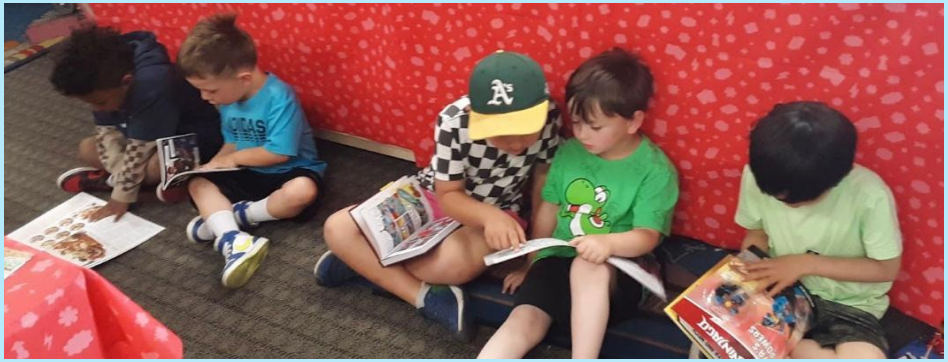




...and music class...







...and library...







...and makerspace.







We explore the school garden.







We read books with our big buddies.





We welcome family members into our classroom.





We experience in-class field trips!











We journey to off-campus field trips!







We have fun!

TK Readiness Family Workshop

Welcome to the TK Adventure

We’re so glad you are here! We can’t wait to welcome your child to TK!

Today we will share what TK is all about and how you can support your child’s transition into school.

It’s going to be a wonderful year full of learning, growing, and fun!

What is Transitional Kindergarten?

- TK is the first year of a two year kindergarten program.
- Encourages independence through play-based learning.
- Focuses on social emotional growth, motor skill development, and early academic content exposure, not mastery.
- Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations

How We Learn

TK uses a hands-on, play-based approach to learning. We focus on:

- Social-emotional development
  - Building relationships, managing emotions, and developing confidence through play, routines, and classroom community.
- Language and early literacy
  - Developing vocabulary, listening skills, and a love for books through stories, songs, and conversations.
- Early math and number sense
  - Exploring patterns, counting, shapes, and basic problem solving through play and hands on activities.
- Fine and gross motor skills
  - Strengthening hand muscles for writing and big body movements for coordination, balance, and control.
- Creativity and Curiosity
  - Encouraging exploration, imagination, and questions through open-ended play, art, and discovery.

What to Bring to School

Please send your little learner with:

- A large backpack
- A healthy snack and lunch (or use cafeteria option)
- Jacket or layers for weathers
- Reusable water bottle
- Change of clothes in a labeled ziplock bag
- Label everything!

Supporting your Little Learner at Home

Support your child at home by:

- Talking positively about school
- Establishing consistent routines for bedtime and mornings
- Reading together daily
- Practicing self-help, social skills
- Encouraging independence

Why Independent Skills Matter

- Builds confidence and self-esteem
- Helps children feel capable and successful in the classroom
- Supports smoother transitions and daily routines
- Promotes social-emotional growth and self regulation



Key Independent Skills for TK Success

- Asking for help when needed
- Managing backpack, jacket, shoes
- Washing hands properly
- Cleaning up after themselves
- Opening snack/lunch containers
- Using the restroom independently

Backpack & Jacket Independence

- Practice packing/unpacking their own backpack
- Teach how to zip/unzip and fasten buckles
- Teach the “flip trick” for easy jacket on/off Jacket Flip Trick
- Practice putting items on the right way





Shoes and Fasteners

- Encourage shoes with Velcro or slip-ons with backs
- Teach how to open shoes wide, slide in, and secure
- Bonus skill: learning to put shoes on the correct feet
    - Cut a sticker in half and put the left half in the left shoe and right half in the right shoe so when they put the shoes next to each other the sticker is complete





Handwashing and Eating Independence

- Use soap and scrub while singing ABC's or "Happy Birthday"
- Wash after bathroom, before eating, and after play
- Practice using tissues and coughing/sneezing into elbow
- Practice opening lunch containers, snack bags, water bottles
    - Pack lunch boxes together to practice
- Encourage trying to open things before asking for help
- Teach how to clean up after eating





Bathroom Readiness

We are dedicated to nurturing each student's journey in developing their toilet learning skills, ensuring that our approach is tailored to meet their unique needs

- Recognize when they need to go
- Is able to wait/hold until getting to the bathroom
- Pull down/up pants and underwear independently
- Wipe thoroughly (front to back), flush, and wash hands
- Accidents happen! Pack extra clothes in ziplock bag in backpack

Encourage Independence at Home

It’s okay if your little learner isn’t fully independent yet; every child develops at their own pace. Our goal is progress not perfection, we are a team!

- Establish consistent routines (morning, bedtime)
- Give extra time for self-help tasks (avoid doing it for them)
- Praise effort, not just success
    - It’s okay if it’s messy or slow - it’s about learning!





Helping Your Child Build Fine Motor Skills



WHAT ARE FINE MOTOR SKILLS?

Fine motor skills are the small movements we make with the muscles in our **fingers, hands, and wrists**. They are part of each child's physical development, and are essential in preparing your learner for the next step in their education.



The pincer grip is a fine motor skill.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Children's muscles grow and develop throughout childhood. Just as gross motor muscles develop through running, kicking, etc., fine motor muscles also develop through specific activities like pinching, grasping, and poking. In TK, students need strong hand, finger and wrist muscles to help them meet the expectations of school:

- zipping and buttoning pants and jackets
- opening food packages, themoses, water bottles
- cleaning up after themselves
- cutting and gluing
- drawing and coloring

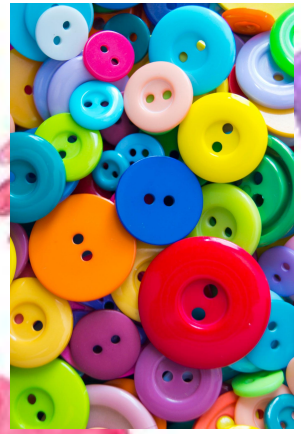


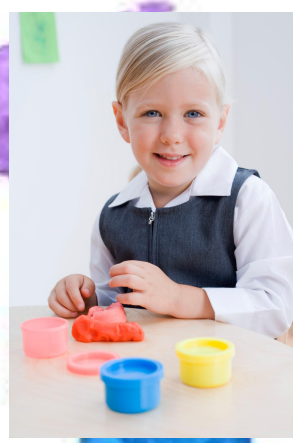
The pincer grip reduces hand fatigue when drawing.

PRACTICING FINE MOTOR SKILLS

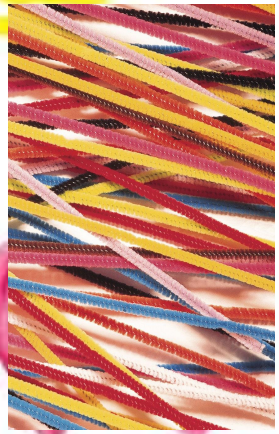
Learners can practice fine motor skills by manipulating their hands and fingers with common household items, such as:

- beads
- pipe cleaners
- playdough
- clothespins
- craft sticks
- pompoms
- buttons









FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES IN THE TK CLASSROOM

In the classroom, TK students do a variety of fine motor activities throughout our day.

- They scoop, pour, and fill containers with water, sand, dried beans and other items.*
- They pinch, squeeze, and poke things like playdough, kinetic sand, and clay.
- They grasp and hold blocks, legos, toy food, and magnetic letters and numbers.*
- They make art and crafts with shaving cream, finger paint, and sponges.*
- They sing songs and do fingerplays that focus on fine motor muscles.







Finger and Hand Play Songs









FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES AT HOME

Encourage learners to use their hands and fingers:

- play **outdoors** (climb, hang, dig)
- pretend play (**crawl** and claw like an animal)
- work with tweezers, tongs, and **chopsticks***
- **tear paper** to glue onto art projects*
- dip **Q-tips** into paint for dot painting*
- **poke holes** in cardboard with push pins or golf tees
- thread various sizes of **beads or pasta** onto string, pipe cleaners, or yarn
- use hand **fidgets** (pop-its, pop tubes, stress balls)
- **build** with legos or blocks
- play with **beanbags**, scarves, and small balls
- **pour liquid** into a cup or bowl







BUGS AND WORMS

Move bead “bugs” and pipe cleaner “worms” to a cup or bowl using a clothespin or spoon.

- Focus on one color at a time.*
- Roll a die and get only that many.*
- Move them to an ice cube tray instead of a cup or bowl.
- Decorate the clothespin with eyes and beak.*









PIPE CLEANER BRACELETS AND CATERPILLARS

String beads onto a pipe cleaner.

- Make a pattern: ab, aab, abc, etc.
- Sort by color

To make a bracelet, loop the pipe cleaner and wrap the ends around each other.*

To make a caterpillar, bend the ends and tuck them into the beads.*





PLAYDOUGH PLAY

- squeeze playdough between your fingers
- roll playdough to create meatballs, breadsticks, and other “food”*
- cut playdough with a craft stick
- form monsters by sticking pipe cleaners, beads, craft sticks, etc. into playdough*
- hide beads in playdough
- use playdough “joints” to produce craft stick structures*

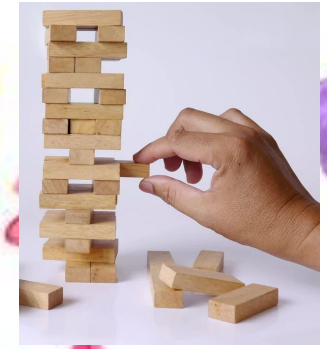






GAMES THAT ENCOURAGE FINE MOTOR SKILLS

- Jenga*
- Connect Four
- Sneaky, Sneaky Squirrel*
- Hi Ho Cherry-o
- Noodle Knockout!
- Cootie
- Ants in the Pants
- Don’t Break the Ice*









REMEMBER:

Keep it playful and fun!

Encourage independence!

Practice every day!

Make it a family activity!







Social-Emotional Learning and Self Regulation in TK





What is SEL?

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is how children learn about feelings, relationships, and solving problems peacefully.



What is Self Regulation?

- **Self-regulation** means being able to manage big emotions and body reactions (e.g., calming down after frustration)
- SEL is like teaching your child to use an ‘inner toolbox’—so when they’re upset, they don’t throw a toy, but instead take a deep breath or ask for help.

Why This Matters in TK!

1. Supports Brain Development
TK is a key age when children's brains are growing in areas that control emotions and behavior.

2. Prepares Children to Learn
Self-regulation helps kids focus, follow directions, and stay engaged in learning activities.

3. Builds Social Skills
SEL teaches children how to share, take turns, and resolve conflicts with peers.

4. Grows Emotional Vocabulary
Children learn to name and express their feelings in age-appropriate ways.

5. Leads to Long- Term Success
Strong SEL skills in early years of development is linked to better academic success and life outcomes later on.

6. Creates a Safe & Supportive Environment
When SEL is part of the daily routine, students feel secure, valued, and ready to participate.

The 5 Core SEL Competencies

SEL Competency	In the Classroom	At Home
1. Self-Awareness	Students recognize and name their emotions (“I’m feeling sad.”).	Ask your child: “How is your feeling today?” during dinner or bedtime.
2. Self-Management	Students take deep breaths to calm down or wait their turn in line.	Practice dragon breaths: “Let’s take 3 deep breaths together when we feel upset.”
3. Social Awareness	Students show empathy: “He’s sad because his toy broke.”	Read books with characters showing emotions. Ask: “How do you think they feel?”
4. Relationship Skills	Children use words to ask for help or include a classmate in play.	Role-play sharing and conflict resolution: “What can you say if someone grabs your toy?”
5. Responsible Decision-Making	Choosing kind actions like helping clean up or apologizing after a mistake.	Offer simple choices: “Do you want to clean up the blocks or books first?”

How Do We Practice This in the Classroom?

Name Feelings Daily – “I see you're feeling frustrated.”

Model Calm-Down Tools – Deep breaths, counting to 5, calm corner.

Use Storytime – Books with emotions and social problem-solving.

Role-Play Scenarios – Practice sharing, taking turns, asking for help.

Classroom Jobs & Choices – Build responsibility and decision-making.

Sing Feelings Songs – Music helps label and manage emotions.

Praise Positive Behavior – “You waited so patiently—great self-control!”



Ways You Can Practice This at Home

Talk About Feelings – “How are you feeling right now?”

Create a Calm-Down Space – A cozy spot with pillows, books, or calming toys.

Use Calming Tools Together – Deep breaths, counting, stretching.

Read Books About Emotions – Pause to ask, “What is the character feeling?”

Give Simple Choices – Builds decision-making and independence.

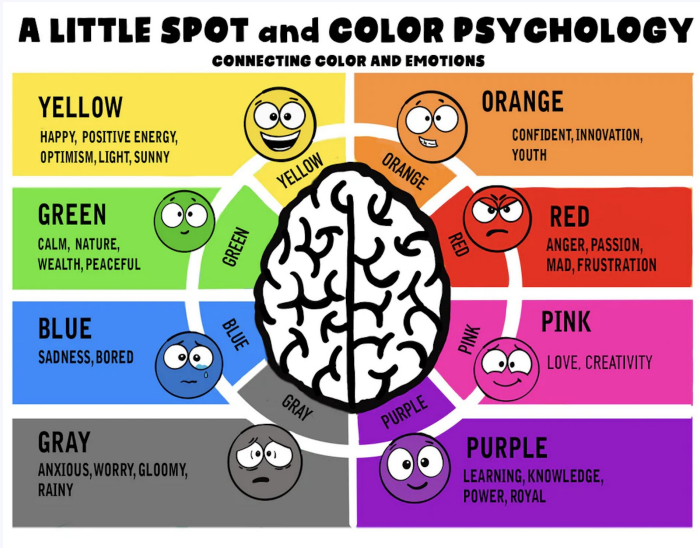
Model Your Own Emotions – “I feel frustrated, so I’m taking a breath.”

Celebrate Effort to Stay Calm – “You used your words! That was awesome!”



Naming Feelings

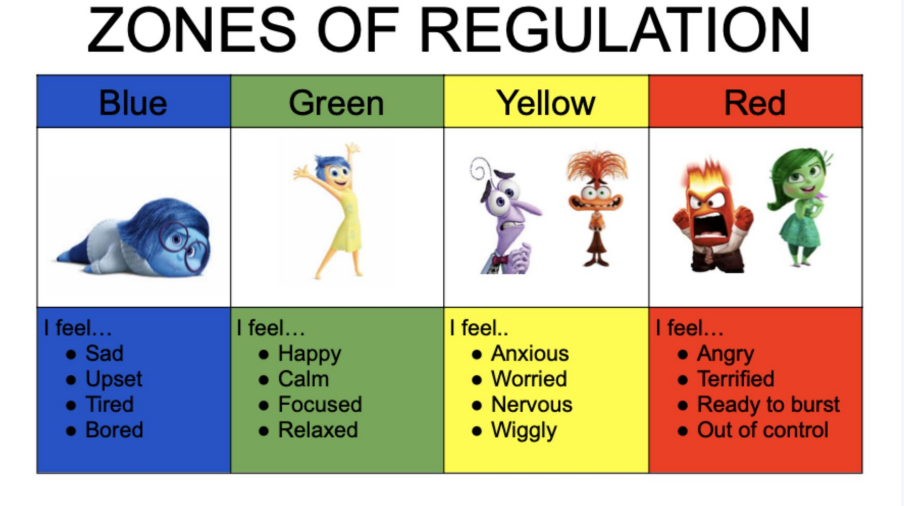
- Naming feelings is the **first step in self-regulation** — you can't manage what you can't name.
- Helps children **recognize and understand emotions**, building self-awareness.
- Visuals like **feelings charts** or **emoji faces** make emotions easier to identify and talk about.
- Visual cues support calming tools:
  "You picked the angry face — let's take deep breaths."
- Builds empathy and improves **social problem-solving** with peers.



Zones of Regulation

The **Zones of Regulation** is a simple framework that helps children:

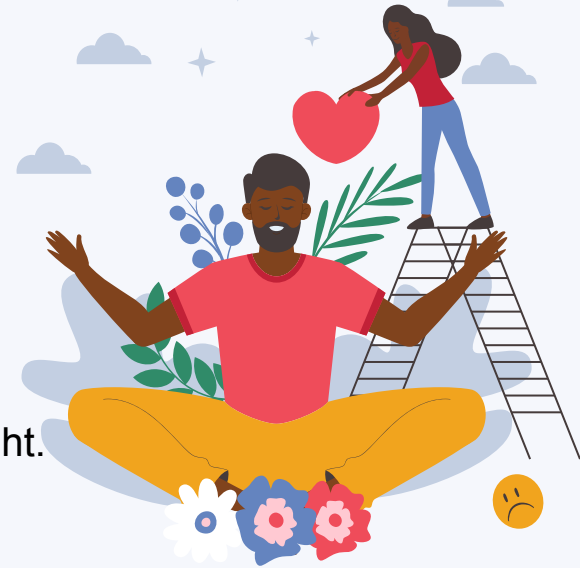
- **Identify how they're feeling**
- **Understand how emotions affect behavior**
- **Learn tools to manage their emotions and actions**



Each **zone is color-coded**, making it easy for young children (especially TK students) to recognize and talk about their feelings.

Model Self-Regulation

- **Name Your Feelings Out Loud**
  "I’m feeling frustrated, so I’m going to take a deep breath."
- **Pause Before Reacting**
  Take a moment to breathe, count, or step away.
- **Use "I" Statements**
  "I feel tired, so I need a quiet moment."
- **Apologize & Repair**
  "It's okay to make mistakes—show them how to make it right.
- **Create a Calm-Down Routine Together**
  Use breathing, stretching, or quiet time to self-soothe.
- **Your calm becomes their calm.**
  Model the behavior you want your child to learn.



How to Create a Calm-Down Corner at Home

- Have a designated space that's comfortable to go to (pillows, blankets, a chair, etc.)
- Include some type of sensory tool (a squishy, playdough, their favorite toy, a pop-it)
- Provide a Zones of Regulation chart or other positive visual cues to help them recognize and talk about their feelings
- Include emotion cards for identifying and expressing feelings
- Keep a calming book available to read
- Change the environment by going outside—physical movement helps children self-regulate.
- Listen to calming music
- Play a calming video



THANK YOU!!

