



WELCOME TO TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

This exciting year is your child's first step into school that helps them learn, grow, and build the foundation for success in kindergarten and beyond!



WHAT IS TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN (TK) ?

Transitional Kindergarten is the year between preschool and kindergarten for children aged 4 years old. It focuses on developing strong early learning skills in areas such as reading, literacy, math, communication, and self-regulation through purposeful play and learning. TK helps children become familiar with classroom settings, build confidence, and most importantly, **develop an early love for learning**.

Why TK matters!?

TK is a powerful start to your child's learning journey. Early childhood years (2-7) are a critical time for brain development and are when children learn rapidly and form habits that support long-term success. As more families choose TK, we see children perform stronger and more proficiently in kindergarten, first grade, and beyond!



GRADE-LEVEL STANDARDS FOR TK

That's right! TK includes learning standards!

What are Grade-Level Standards?

Grade-level standards, also known as "learning standards", are standards set by the **State of California**. Standards are skills that outline what your child is expected to learn by the end of the school year. Your child's teacher will teach, measure progress, and celebrate success toward these standards in each subject area.

TK Learning Standards

The learning standards below are a few that will appear on your child's Standards-Based Report card. These are foundational skills that will build toward next year's Kindergarten standards.

Language and Literacy:

Write first name correctly; identify upper- and lower-case names; recognize letter sounds; early reading; knowledge of main characters and events in a story; clear and understandable speaking.



Physical Development:

Increasing ability and body coordination in a variety of locomotor skills; using fine motor skills to write and cut; directional awareness, and physical activity.



Mathematics:

Count numbers up to thirty; sort and classify objects; make and describe primary shapes.



History Social Studies:

Play familiar adult roles and occupations; relate past events and current experiences.



Science:

Record observations with adult assistance; demonstrate curiosity and questioning about the environment.



Visual & Performing Arts:

Engage in art activities using tools and materials; singing repetitive patterns and parts of a song from memory.



Habits of Success:

Demonstrate concern for others; impulse control, self-regulation; engages in meaningful relationships with adults; positive interactions and sharing with peers, group participation; takes initiative in seeking adult support.



Health Habits:

Practices personal hygiene skills

Goal Setting Conferences

In Manteca Unified, we do Goal Setting Conferences! These conferences replace the age-old "Parent-Teacher Conferences" and take place before your child's report card is released.

Families and teachers meet twice a year to talk about learning and set clear goals together, working as a team to track growth and celebrate learning across the school year.

A DAY IN TK

TK days are full of learning and big moments! The day is structured around how young children learn best... through play! Play isn't just fun. At this age, it is the primary way children learn and develop. The teacher integrates important learning skills through play – we call this play-based learning.

Here's a look at a typical day in the classroom, plus quick tips to help your child succeed at home.

Welcome to Your New School!

We encourage all families to attend the TK orientation before the first day of school. This is an important opportunity to ask questions and learn about classroom expectations. Attending orientation is important, even if you have had a child in TK before, as each school year may look different.

TK Classroom

TK teachers are experts in early learning. They fill each school day with important lessons designed to teach learning standards, incorporating both self-directed and guided play.



During the school day, your child will participate in:

- Classroom breakfast
- Classroom instruction time
- Recess
- Lunch Time
- Storytime and circle time
- Hands-on activities
- Walking Trips
- School-wide activities

Bathroom Breaks

Bathroom breaks are a normal and expected part of the day, and students are encouraged to use the bathroom whenever they need to.

Teachers do not go into the bathroom with students but are available to support them as they learn and recognize when they need to go.



Help your child feel confident by practicing using public restrooms, pulling clothes on and off independently, and washing hands.

Lunch Time

Students enjoy a free lunch in the school cafeteria and can choose from different menu options each day. Support staff are available to help students as needed with lunch and opening items. **Please be sure to inform your child's teacher of any allergies.**



Encourage independence by letting your child make choices, practice opening food items, and feeding themselves.

Walking Trips

Throughout the day, students may walk around different areas of the campus, including the cafeteria, playground, and library. Students learn to stay with their class and teacher, walk safely in line, and listen for directions.



Practice staying together with your child by playing "follow the leader" or having your child hold your hand in busy places like the grocery store.

End-of-Day Rituals

At the end of the school day, your child may come home excited to share stories about their day and new friends. Taking the time to listen and celebrate these moments helps build confidence.

Please arrive on time (or earlier) for pick-up and wait for teachers to safely release students. Please inform your child's teacher if you have someone new picking them up.

TK READINESS AT HOME

TK begins with practice! As your child begins TK, families begin the school journey, too. Children grow by practicing small skills over time, and families play an important role in helping them get ready.

Daily Routines

Consistent routines help children feel secure and prepared for a full day of learning. Predictable patterns can help build stamina and ease transition.



Ways to support routine at home:

- Establish regular morning and bedtime routines.
- Pack your child's backpack together each night.
- Create consistent eating and meal times.
- Read together before bedtime.

At Home Learning

At this age, children learn best by exploring. Try "exploring" at home through everyday activities!

At Home Learning Tips:

- Involve your child in household routines and chores. For example, when matching socks, talk about patterns and sorting.
- Ask your child to help pick out fruit at the grocery store.
- Assisting you with baking or cooking.
- Dancing – children love to dance!
- Singing – did you know that singing is a valuable brain activity for children?
- Play outside! Kick a ball back and forth with your child or practice playing catch to build hand-eye coordination.
- Ask your child's teacher for recommended activities you can do at home!



The Power of Reading

When children are read to often, they are exposed to new words, richer language, and meaningful conversations that build a strong foundation for learning. Studies have shown that children who know more words when they enter kindergarten tend to read better and have higher academic achievement throughout school.

Children who cannot read by third grade struggle academically in later grades and face long-term challenges (this is known as the "learning to read" to "reading to learn" transition).

Did you know? Young children whose parents read to them five times daily will hear nearly 1.5 million more words by the time they turn five than children who are not read to at all. This is known as the “million-word gap.”

That’s why reading everyday matters, so grab a book and make reading part of your routine!

Building Literacy Skills at Home:

- Read together every day.
- ☆ Talk to your child about the story before, during, and after reading.
- All reading counts!
- ☆ Picture books, graphic novels, magazines, recipes, directions, signs, and even subtitles help build literacy.
- Talk to your child often.
- ☆ Oral language is the foundation of reading and writing. Speaking with your child helps develop vocabulary.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Encourage your child to describe things they see, retell parts of their day, or explain what happened in a story.
- Take turns reading sentences, paragraphs, and switching pages.
- Have your child make letters with Play-Doh, pasta, Legos, or any other toys to form letters and words.
- Go on a “sound hunt” around the house. Look for items that start with a specific letter sound.
- Audiobooks count, too! Listening helps improve vocabulary and comprehension.
- Multilingual families: Read and talk in your first/home language. Building knowledge in the primary language builds a strong language foundation that can be transferred to their English development.

Sharing and Social Skills

Sharing is caring! Starting TK means making new friends and learning how to work with others. Sharing and using kind words are important skills that your child will practice every day.



Ways to practice at home:

- Encourage your child to use kind words.
- Role play introductions: have your child introduce themselves by sharing their name and something they like.
- Practice taking turns with items such as toys, games, and art supplies.
- Have your child practice saying their teacher’s name and asking for help.

PLEASE
THANK
YOU

Emotional Skills and Self-Regulation

Starting school can bring many emotions for your child, and that is completely normal. Families play a key role in helping children understand and manage their feelings.

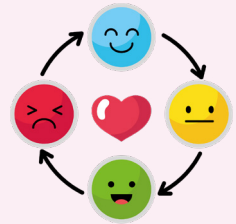
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):

Social-emotional learning, often called SEL or emotional intelligence, helps children learn how to manage their feelings, set goals, work with others, and so much more. Learning how to handle emotions during early childhood years is important, as lifelong behavior patterns are being formed.

Play supports social-emotional development as children learn to make friends, share, compromise, handle frustration, build confidence, and develop resilience. Having a healthy relationship with yourself and others supports attention, memory, learning, and decision-making.

Through SEL, children learn to:

- Identify and name their feelings.
- Cope with their feelings and emotions.
- Set goals and problem solve.
- Work in teams.
- Gain a sense of identity and self-esteem.



Our TK teachers use a SEL program called **Kimochis**. Throughout TK, students learn to explore their emotions and understand healthy, appropriate ways to express their feelings.



HAPPY



SAD



MAD



SCARED



BRAVE



SHY

Ways to Support Emotional Development:

- Acknowledge and validate your child's feelings.
- Let them know that their feelings are normal and important!
- Be a good listener.
- Help your child label their emotions and why they feel that way ("I feel sad because...")
- Refer to the Kimochis!
- Offer calming activities like reading and coloring.



Ways to Support Emotional Development:

- Provide a safe space your child can go to express their emotions.
- Show and teach kindness, empathy, and teamwork.
- Give your child responsibilities and allow them to make their own choices.
- Avoid comparisons with siblings, friends, or other children.



As children learn to understand their own emotions, teachers can help them consider others' feelings.



Building Confidence

Learning is about effort and growth, and families play an important role in helping children develop confidence as they start school.

Ways to Encourage Confidence and a Healthy Mindset:

- Remind your child that mistakes are a normal part of learning.
- Praise effort, not perfection or results.
 - ☆ "You worked really hard on that!"
- Encourage your child not to give up when tasks feel challenging.
- Let your child be their own critic and assign their own values.
 - ☆ Ask them how they think they did on a project/activity and what they learned.
- Celebrate small successes (or "wins") and show excitement in their progress. Little "wins" add up in your child's confidence bank.



TEAMWORK MAKES TK WORK

Families and teachers are essential partners in student success. You know your child best, and when families are informed and involved in their child's education, students are better positioned to succeed. When families and teachers work together as a team, children feel supported and ready to grow.

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important role model. Children pay close attention and absorb how the adults around them talk about topics like school. Showing excitement about school and speaking positively about learning sends a powerful message to them.



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Showing up to school every day matters, ESPECIALLY in TK! When a child misses school, they miss an important standard being taught.

Why Attendance is Important:

- **Regular attendance builds strong future habits.** Consistently showing up helps children learn routines and develop responsibility, skills linked to success in school and the workplace.
- **Absenteeism affects learning.** Students who miss too many days of preschool and TK often enter kindergarten with weaker early literacy and numeracy skills.
- **Early patterns continue.** Children who are frequently absent in early grades are more likely to struggle with attendance in later grades.
- **Absence affects emotional and social growth.** Being in class daily helps children build friendships, confidence, and independence.





RESOURCES

Get Involved and Attend:

- Orientation/Back to School
- Parent Teacher Association/Clubs
- Goal Setting Conferences
- District and School Events

Early Literacy Resources:

- **Take Library Visits:** Libraries play an important role in supporting early literacy and a love for reading.
- **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library:** A book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth until the month they turn five, no matter the family's income.

Families can receive English or bilingual English/Spanish book.

Register now at:

<https://imaginationlibrary.com/check-availability>

See how MUSD is teaching Early Literacy

At Manteca Unified, meeting grade-level standards starts with learning how to read.

Our Early Literacy initiative helps TK–3 students break down words (even those tricky words!) so they can read any word that comes their way.

Watch our "[Building Readers & Lifelong Learners](#)" YouTube Video and see the strategies our District is using to keep young learners reading, growing, and ready to achieve grade-level success!



Please feel free to contact your child's school or the Community Relations & Engagement team (community@musd.net) at anytime with questions.



Our Mission:

Through smart actions and decisions, MUSD will work together using meaningful, measurable and aligned data for all students to achieve mastery of grade level standards in all subjects based on their unique educational pathway in a safe environment inclusive of design, security and climate.