

# Transition to Kindergarten (TK) Reductions FAQs

## Fiscal Questions

**1. Can state funding and tuition revenues be "braided" so that all participants pay the same (lower) tuition amount?**

The legislation outlines a sliding scale for tuition but does not specify details. There is nothing that prohibits state funding and tuition revenues from being combined. This approach would allow all students to pay the same, lower tuition amount, except for certain groups who must be exempt from tuition fees for Transition to Kindergarten under the law.

- Children who are eligible for, but not yet placed in, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) or Head Start program are exempt.
- Children with disabilities who are entitled to a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and chapter [28A.155 RCW](#) are exempt from tuition fees.

**2. When blending Pre-Kindergarten (PK) students and TK students in the same classroom, do the developmental PK students need to also be counted as TK students, or can they be served in a TK classroom and "counted" as P4 (preschool) students?**

You are permitted to serve Developmental PK students within TK classrooms and count them as P4 (preschool) students. According to [RCW 28A.300.072\(5\)](#), school districts are allowed, and even encouraged, to blend or co-locate TK with other early learning programs. This helps maximize available funding and provides greater flexibility in how programs are structured.

**3. How should districts go about determining sliding scales and collecting fees for TK?**

The school board of the district should adopt any sliding scale tuition or fee schedule. Districts will have significant latitude in establishing the sliding fee schedule subject to the specific restrictions for waivers or exemptions provided for in law or rule. All fees and tuition collected for the program must be accounted for in accordance with a new revenue code established for this purpose as published in the School District Accounting Manual.



**4. Can TK carryover funds be used to keep our current TK enrollment level for the 2026–27 school year?**

The use of carryover funds to maintain current TK enrollment levels is an appropriate use of state funding for the 2026–27 school year.

**5. Is there a chance of allocations increasing after all programs have submitted their notice of intent surveys?**

Once all districts have submitted the TK Notification of Intent survey, OSPI will evaluate whether funding is available to increase the funding caps. While we do not expect additional funding to be available, it is theoretically possible. Any additional funds identified will be reallocated as early in the year as possible.

**6. Will we have to go through the whole entire process again to add back TK “slots” (AAFTE cap) that we lost (if funding ever increases)?**

Should the legislature increase the funding for TK in the future, OSPI will allocate funding based on statutory requirements, budget restrictions, and OSPI rules in place at that time. We cannot reasonably determine what new rules or restrictions the legislature may place on future increases.

**7. Can districts report students that are in TK as kindergarten students on the P223 once they turn five (5)?**

In accordance with [WAC 392-425-040](#), TK students must be at least four (4) years old by August 31. This language provides flexibility for districts to enroll five (5) year olds in TK, if the parents or district determine they are not yet ready for kindergarten.

The only requirement for eligibility into kindergarten is to be age five (5) as of midnight August 31 ([WAC 392-335-010](#)). If the child is not age-eligible for kindergarten at the beginning of the year, they do not become eligible later in the year when they turn five (5) and cannot be claimed as kindergarten on the P223.

## General Program Questions

**8. Can a district offer both ECEAP and a TK program? Will there be a new rule that if you have ECEAP available in your district, then you cannot offer TK?**

There is no statutory restriction preventing a school district from offering both TK and ECEAP. According to [RCW 28A.300.072\(5\)](#), school districts are allowed, and even encouraged, to blend or co-locate TK with other early learning programs. This helps maximize available funding and provides greater flexibility in how programs are structured.

**9. Will the eligibility requirements for TK change?**

The legislature did not change the student eligibility requirements outlined in [WAC 392-425-040](#), only how OSPI must prioritize allocation of funding to districts ([ESSB 6260](#)).

**10. Should we anticipate guidance from OSPI about how to make priority determinations for TK, or can we develop our own priority process based on demonstrated need? If OSPI is planning to update the guidance, do you have an anticipated date when that will be available?**

The legislature did not change the student eligibility requirements outlined in [WAC 392-425-040](#), however, it did change how OSPI prioritizes allocation of funding to districts under [ESSB 6260](#).

OSPI is currently developing emergency rules and additional guidance. In the meantime, districts should continue to follow existing student eligibility requirements and may need to establish local prioritization processes when demand exceeds available funding. We recommend that any local process be grounded in demonstrated student need and aligned with the intent of the TK program.

Additional guidance from OSPI, including any updates related to prioritization, will be shared as soon as it is available.

**11. Is there a plan to show the difference in kindergarten readiness due to the loss of TK slots?**

OSPI will continue to monitor outcomes for both TK and non-TK students, compare trends over time, and report changes in readiness gaps.

[Transition to Kindergarten: A Proven Strategy for Closing Opportunity Gaps](#)

**12. Can districts reduce the TK class size and remove the paraeducator?**

Chapter [392-425-035 WAC](#) requires that TK classrooms are staffed by certificated teachers, and that any paraeducators working in the program meet applicable qualification requirements. However, the rule does not explicitly prescribe a specific staffing ratio or require that a paraeducator be assigned to each individual TK classroom.

Decisions regarding classroom staffing models, including whether paraeducators are assigned to specific classrooms, shared across classrooms, or used in other ways, are determined at the district level, provided that all other program requirements are met. We do want to acknowledge that including a paraeducator in TK classrooms is widely recognized as a best practice. Additional adult support can be especially valuable in supporting instruction, supervision, and the developmental needs of young children. However, OSPI does not mandate specific staffing configurations beyond what is outlined in rule.

**13. The revised language now prioritizes children eligible for free or reduced-price meals ( $\leq 185\%$  FPL), precisely the same children already served by the state's ECEAP program. Why did the Legislature choose to create this overlap, rather than maintain complementary priorities that would allow districts and ECEAP providers to coordinate and maximize access for low-income families?**

Decisions regarding changes to WAC eligibility priorities for TK are made by the Legislature; OSPI implements the resulting rules and does not set this policy.

When TK was established, the legislative intent was to provide a prekindergarten option available to any child identified as needing additional support before kindergarten, similar to the K–12 system. This approach created unique classrooms where children from all socioeconomic backgrounds could learn and grow together, promoting equity and social cohesion from an early age.

As part of Washington's mixed-delivery early learning system, TK is designed to complement, not duplicate, programs like ECEAP and expand early learning options for families. Our goal at OSPI is to improve equitable access to strong foundations and move toward universal prekindergarten for all four (4) year olds.