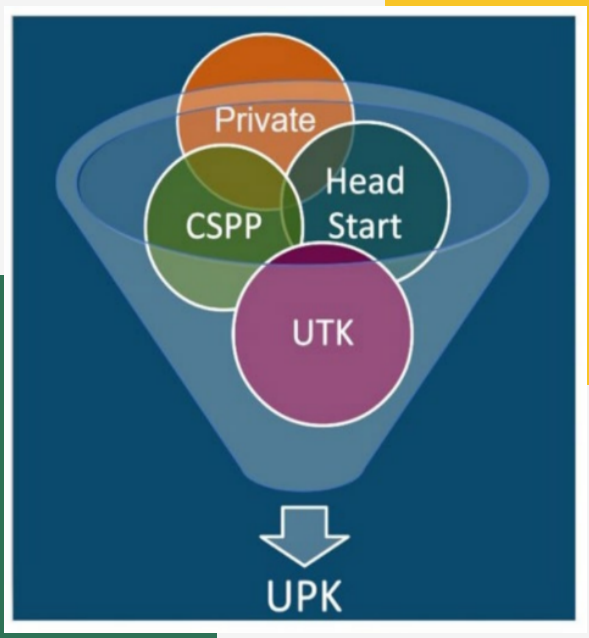
Early Childhood Education

ECE

March 2023 Newsletter

WHAT IS UPK?

Universal Pre Kindergarten (UPK) brings together programs across early learning and K-12, relying heavily on **Universal Transitional Kindergarten** (UTK) and **California State Preschool Program** (CSPP), as well as other community based organizations, and private preschool to ensure every four-year old child regardless of background, race, zip code, immigration status, or income level - has **access to a quality learning experience** the year before kindergarten.



EXPANSION FOR UTK IMPLEMETATION

Prior to this school year, only a small group of students who turned 5 between September 2nd and December 2nd were eligible for TK. Due to recent legislation:

- Full implementation of **Universal TK** is slated for the **2025-26 school year**.
- Expansion will incrementally increase eligibility for TK based on children's birth dates until Universal TK is achieved.
- **Universal TK** will eventually include all children who turn **4 years old before September 1st** of the current school year.

✗ Expansion began in 2022-23. Full Implementation by 2025-26
✗ Average class size across the Local Education Agency is 24.

Year	TK Eligibility	Ratio
2021-22	Turns 5 between Sept. 2 & Dec. 2 (April 15th)	Not specified Class size 24
2022-23	Turns 5 between Sept. 2 & Feb. 2 (April 15th)	1:12 Class Size 24
2023-24	Turns 5 between Sept. 2 & April 2 (April 15th)	1:10* Class Size 24
2024-25	Turns 5 between Sept. 2 & June 2	1:10* Class Size 24
2025-26	Turns 4 by Sept. 1	1:10* Class Size 24

*1:10 Ratio subject to future legislative appropriation

**Beginning in 2021-2022 COJUSD extended TK eligibility to April 15th.

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TK TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

As our UTK students are progressively beginning school younger **requirements** for TK teachers have changed. TK teachers must be credentialed and meet one of the following:

- Assigned to TK prior to July 1, 2015 and be "grandfathered" as qualified.
- Hold a valid Commission-issued Child Development Permit at the teacher level or higher.
- Completed 24 units of Child Development with a grade of C or better.
- LEA determined experience as teacher in the classroom setting with preschool age children (36-60 months) comparable to 24 units of Child Development.

UNIVERSAL TK

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a **bridge between preschool and kindergarten** for children turning five-years old. It provides young learners a **head start** and the opportunity to learn and grow in an **environment that is tailored to meet their academic and social needs.** With UTK **ALL** 4 year olds will have one full year of **high quality early childhood education** prior to Kindergarten, which will improve every child's academic trajectory.

TK CURRICULUM

TK curriculum is a blend of **California Common Core Kindergarten standards** and the **CA Preschool Foundations** for four and five-year olds. The TK program gives students an additional opportunity to continue to build skills and abilities. Time in TK will help students succeed in Kindergarten, become leaders in the classroom, and confidently navigate the school day routine. COJUSD has adopted a curriculum designed to facilitate language and content acquisition.

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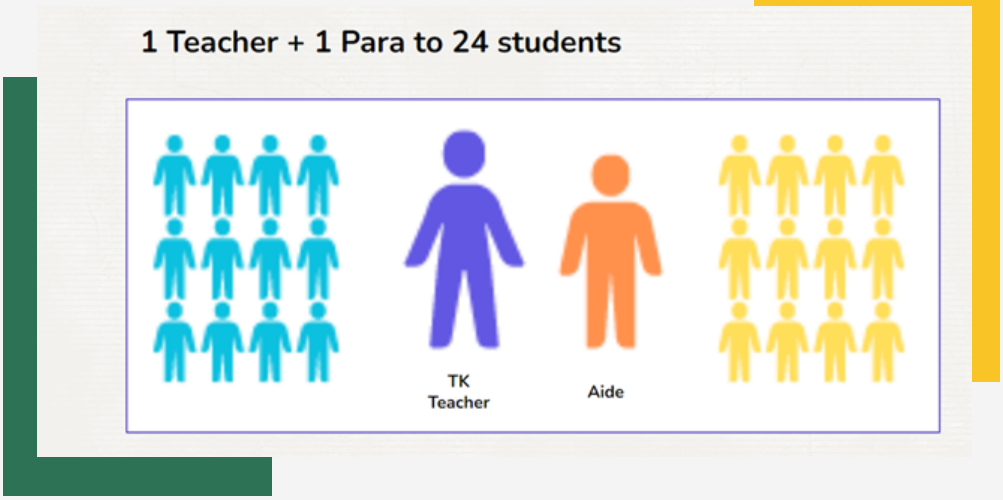
CURRENT TK STAFFING

Currently TK requires one adult to every 12 students during instruction.

Pending future legislative appropriation the state may require districts to maintain a 1:10 ratio in Transitional Kindergarten.

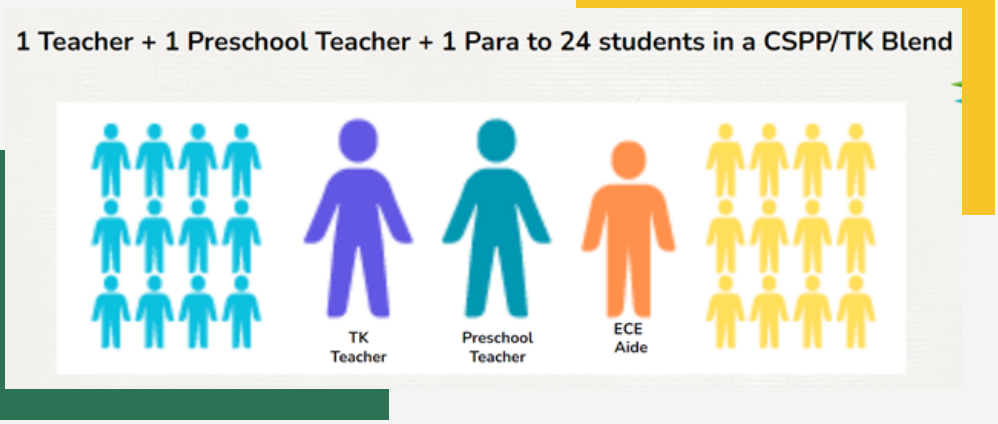


WE CAN ACHIEVE CSPP RATIO, ENROLLMENT AND FUNDING!!!

All 4 year olds within Title 1 boundaries are eligible for California State Preschool Program (CSPP). COJUSD will offer a **part day CSPP as part of a Full Day TK program.** This is considered a **Blended UTK model**. The blended UTK model allows districts the opportunity to leverage resources and increase support. COJUSD will follow Title 5 regulations, including an 8:1 student to adult ratio, bi-annual assessments using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), and CSPP facilities standards unless exempted.

BLENDED UTK MODEL

This model allows COJUSD to decrease the **ratio of students to 1:8** by staffing a class of 24 students with 1 teacher, 1 preschool teacher, and one ECE aide. Aides will have 6 Early Childhood Education or Child Development units.



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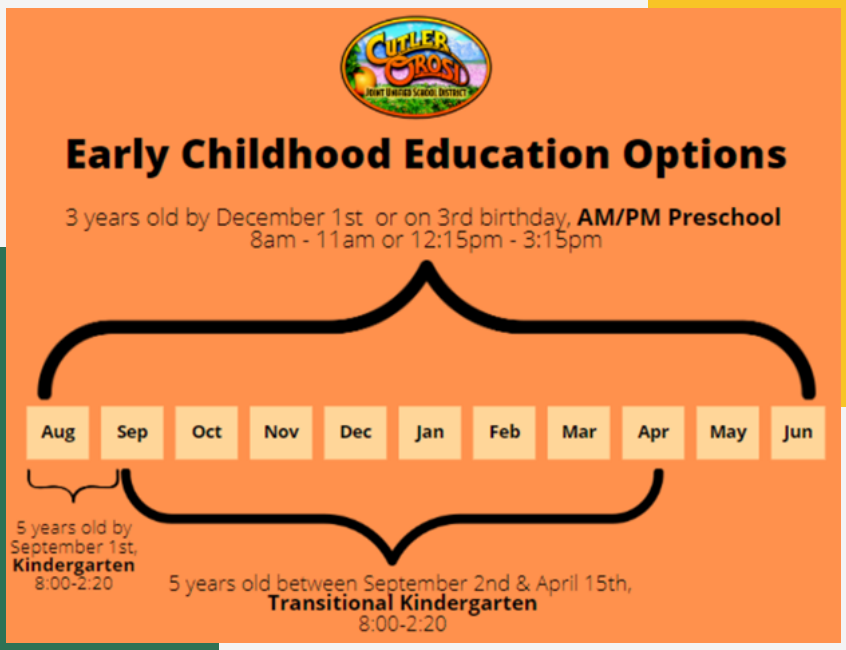
COJUSD ECE OPTIONS FOR 2023–2024

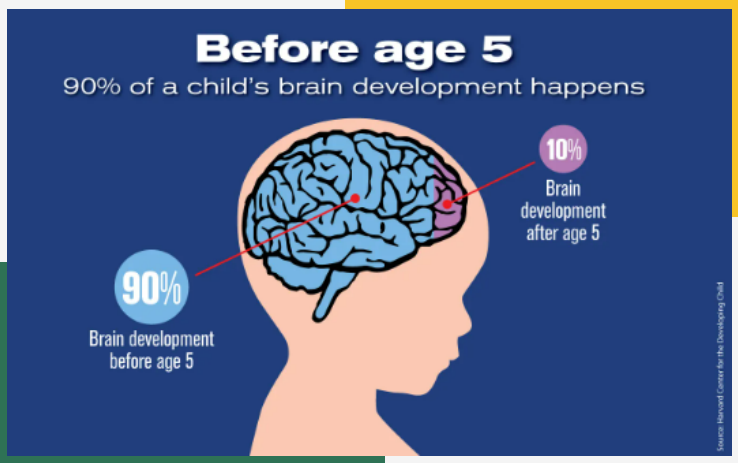
- **AM/PM Preschool** for 3 year olds (3 hour program)
- **TK** for children who turn 5 years old between September 2nd and April 15th (8:00-2:20)
- **Kindergarten** for children who turn 5 years old by September 1st (8:00--2:20)



TK & K students will have access to extended learning opportunity until 5pm.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRST FIVE YEARS

Children's brains develop connections faster in the **first five years** than at any other time in their lives. This is the time when the **foundations** for learning, health and behavior throughout life are laid down. Babies are born ready to learn and their brains develop through use. What a great **opportunity** we have to provide **all 4 year olds** with a strong foundation which will benefit them for the rest of their lives.



~ Leanne Cerda

Administrator of Early Childhood Education

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