



Follow-Up Questions from California Early Childhood Special Education (CalECSE) Network's Kindergarten Transition Assessments Training

Here are answers to the questions raised during the January 30, 2025, CalECSE Zoom training on Kindergarten Transition assessments. As with any guidance, we recommend consulting with your district's special education administrative team as you review the recommendations provided below.

Timing of Transition Assessments

1. **Q:** Is there official guidance on whether the Kindergarten (K) transition assessment must take place before Transitional Kindergarten (TK) or K?

A: There is no legal requirement, as Education Code 56445 was written before TK was established in California. The code does not specify when a kindergarten transition assessment should occur—whether before a child transitions to TK, K, or first grade. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams can determine the appropriate timing on a case-by-case basis based on the child's individual needs. Please refer to [the slideshow](#) for additional guidance.



2. **Q:** Do parents need to be informed about when the TK or K transition evaluation will take place?

A: **Yes**, parents/guardians must be involved in discussions about the type and timing of assessments, as they are essential members of the IEP team. Parental involvement is a fundamental component of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Parents can be informed of the transition process during the initial IEP and no later than the annual IEP meeting before the transitioning year.

Parents/guardians should receive written notice in the winter or early spring before their child is to transition to TK or K with the school team's recommendation for either an abbreviated Transition/Records Review Assessment or a Full Reevaluation (early triennial). An example of a [Notice of Proposed Action](#) can be found here: Notice of Proposed Action.

3. **Q:** If a parent decides to keep their TK-age-eligible child in preschool, is a transition IEP meeting or assessment required?

A: **No**. In this case, the IEP team should document the parent's plan to keep their child in preschool rather than enroll them in TK in the IEP meeting notes or via an amendment form and indicate that the transition assessment will take place in the spring before the child transitions to kindergarten.



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4. **Q:** If a comprehensive triennial evaluation is planned for the TK-to-K transition the following year, is a preschool-to-TK transition assessment required?

A: **No**, if there are no significant changes in placement, eligibility, services, or the child's present levels of performance, an additional assessment before TK is not required. Instead, the kindergarten transition assessment can be conducted as part of a Full Reevaluation (early triennial) the following year. Only one transition assessment is needed to meet the obligations under Education Code 56445.

5. **Q:** If a child is assessed before transitioning from preschool to TK, do they need another assessment before moving to K?

A: **No**. A kindergarten transition assessment is only required once to document the child's exit from preschool services and the need for continued special education eligibility under Education Code 56445. It can happen either at the transition from preschool to TK or at the transition from TK to K.

6. **Q:** Can a TK/K transition meeting be combined with an annual IEP meeting?

A: **Yes**. Aligning dates and holding a single IEP meeting is ideal, as annual IEP meetings already involve a comprehensive review of the child's progress and needs. The team should be sure to document in the notes the discussion of the kindergarten transition assessment and plan for supporting the transition.

7. **Q:** If a child has a triennial due in kindergarten, can we wait until they start kindergarten to complete it and count it toward the transition assessment?

A: **No**. In this instance, the IEP team may consider moving the triennial/eligibility review evaluation up to the spring before the child transitions to K to meet the required kindergarten transition assessment. This ensures all necessary evaluations are completed before the child begins kindergarten. The IEP meeting in the spring will cover the early triennial/eligibility review, kindergarten transition assessment, and new annual/plan review, resetting all relevant dates.

8. **Q:** What if a child was assessed less than a year ago for their initial evaluation?

A: If there are no significant changes anticipated in placement, eligibility, services, or the child's present levels of performance and no additional assessment is needed, then the IEP team can conduct an abbreviated Records Review for the kindergarten transition assessment and schedule an amendment IEP in the spring prior to the child's transition to TK or K. Parents should still receive written notice of this plan. An example of a Notice of Proposed Action can be found here: [Notice of Proposed Action](#). The IEP meeting should include a review of the previous initial assessment, updates to present levels, discussion around continued eligibility, and discussion of TK or K services. The reevaluation/triennial date does not reset.



Transition Meeting Timelines

1. **Q:** When is the recommended time frame to hold TK/K transition IEP meetings?

A: The ideal time to hold TK/K Transition IEP meetings is in the spring before the child's transition, typically between February to June. This allows for a thorough review of assessments and planning for placement, goals, and services with parents and the receiving teams. Young children make rapid developmental progress, so holding a TK or K transition IEP meeting too far in advance is not recommended.

2. **Q:** Is there a time that is considered "too early" for a transition meeting?

A: Yes. Young children make rapid developmental progress, so holding a TK or K transition IEP too far in advance is not best practice. The recommended time frame is February through June before the transition to TK/K.

3. **Q:** Should a TK/K transition be included in an initial IEP meeting if the child is qualifying for services in the same year they transition?

A: It depends on when the initial IEP is held:

- If the initial IEP occurs five or more months during the school year before the TK/K transition, separate meetings should be held for the initial and transition process.
- If the initial IEP is held closer to the child's transition to TK or K (February–June), it often makes sense to combine meetings and write services through a full year, incorporating TK/K placement and services into the discussion.
- If the IEP team is not prepared to discuss TK/K services at the time of the initial, an amendment IEP meeting can be scheduled later.

4. **Q:** How late can TK/K transition assessments be held? What if a child has already started TK/K without a transition assessment?

A:

- If the child is already in TK, the transition assessment meeting should be held before they transition to K.
- If the child is already in K, the IEP team has missed the kindergarten transition assessment obligation under Education Code. The IEP team can decide if an early triennial should be conducted to assist with the transition to kindergarten, but a reevaluation should be conducted no later than the next triennial date.





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Assessment Types and Requirements

1. **Q:** Why do we need a full assessment to prove that preschool children are still eligible prior to kindergarten? IEP teams do not always need to do a full Reevaluation (early triennial) to meet the obligations for kindergarten transition assessments set forth under Education Code 56445. A records review assessment may be sufficient if:

- A:**
- The team is in agreement that the child still requires special education services
 - There is no substantial change of placement being considered
 - There is no significant need to address changes in present levels
 - No change in eligibility categories are being considered

If a records review assessment is used the family should be included in the discussion and provided prior written notice indicating how this decision was made and assessment plan should be signed indicating Records Review. An amendment IEP meeting should be held in the spring prior to the transition to review present levels and discuss services in TK or K and transition supports. Please refer to [the slideshow](#) for additional guidance.

2. **Q:** If the IEP team conducts a Full Reevaluation as part of the K transition assessment, should it be marked as an early triennial?

- A:** Yes. It should be labeled as an Eligibility Review on the assessment plan and the IEP meeting should be designated as an "Annual," "Eligibility Review" (early triennial), and "Other" noting TK or K Transition. The triennial date resets if all assessments were conducted for each area of service provided.

3. **Q:** Does a Records Review assessment reset the triennial/reevaluation timeline?

- A:** **No.** Only a full Reevaluation/Triennial with comprehensive assessments resets the timeline. A records review assessment does not alter the existing triennial date.

4. **Q:** Do all transition assessments require an "Eligibility Review IEP" label, even if only a records review is conducted?

- A:** **No.** If only a records review is conducted, the IEP meeting should be marked as an "Other" Amendment IEP, with "Kindergarten Transition" noted. Marking "Eligibility Review" meeting is only appropriate when a full Reevaluation/triennial (with a comprehensive assessment) is completed. The Eligibility Review title of a meeting is the new wording for what used to be called a triennial assessment and refers to when a comprehensive assessment would be conducted.

5. **Q:** What assessment tools are recommended for preschool cognitive evaluations?

- A:** Some of the common standardized assessments used to assess preschool-age children's cognitive abilities include:

- WPPSI-IV: Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition
- DAS-2 Early Years: Differential Ability Scales, Second Edition – Early Years
- Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI)

Follow your local guidance related to cognitive standardized tests and overall Ability score used with Black/African American children given the Larry P case injunction in California.



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6. **Q:** Can we use the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) as part of our assessment information?
A: Yes, DRDP information is useful to include as part of a TK/K transition assessment.
7. **Q:** Should a transition assessment/records review be presented/included as a separate report attached to the IEP, or is adding information in the present levels adequate?
A: A separate records review assessment showing how the team determined that the child remained eligible for special education for the purposes of Education Code 56445 should be attached to the IEP. Sample Template of TK/K Transition Records Review Assessment can be found at this link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q632IGC_LLbYER2hDh0BQEYaoZdKqblc/copy

This abbreviated report does not take the place of a full triennial and does not reset the triennial date. The IEP team should plan to conduct a full Eligibility Review/Triennial on schedule.

Parent Choices and Legal Considerations

1. **Q:** Is there a state-mandated form for parents to sign if they choose to keep their child in preschool instead of enrolling in TK?
A: No. This decision is at the discretion of the parent/guardian, as TK attendance is not mandated by California law.
2. **Q:** Can parents of children with IEPs choose a self-contained preschool class instead of a self-contained TK class if child is TK-age-eligible?
A: The IEP should consider parent request to remain in self-contained preschool classroom and discuss the request in an IEP meeting. It is considered the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to be placed with same-age peers and therefore, matriculating to the next grade-level with same-age peers is generally considered the best and most appropriate practice. However, if parents are requesting that their child remain in preschool an IEP team should consider it. It is recommended that an IEP meeting is held and a discussion should occur documenting the risks and benefits to the child in the IEP meeting notes. The IEP team should make the decision on a case-by-case basis.
3. **Q:** What if a family refuses an assessment and wants to wait until the original triennial date?
A: An assessment must be completed before transitioning to TK or K under Education Code 56445. The IEP team should meet with the parents to discuss their concerns. If necessary, an abbreviated records review assessment can be conducted instead of a full reevaluation. However, if the team feels strongly that a full evaluation is warranted due to lack of progress on goals, they believe that the child may present with an additional disability, or other concerns or recommendations then the team may need to take other steps in addressing the parent's request.
4. **Q:** Can TK-age students who choose to keep their child in private or state preschool another year still receive special education services (e.g., drop-in speech) or do they need to enroll in public TK to access them?
A: This should be handled on a case-by-case basis as it depends on the LEAs offer of FAPE and many other variables specific to each child. Consult with your LEA's administrator on how to approach this situation.



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Additional Questions

1. **Q:** Does federal law require kindergarten transition assessments?

A: No. This requirement is specific to California Education Code.

2. **Q:** What should be done if a child cannot complete a vision or hearing screening?

A: The child should be referred to their pediatrician for further evaluation.

3. **Q:** Who is responsible for sending prior written notice for transition assessments?

A: This is a staffing decision determined by the LEA and could be the case manager, preschool program director, or school psychologist. Notices are often sent with the proposed assessment plan.

4. **Q:** What about students who are Visually Impaired or Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)?

A: Kindergarten transition assessments for students with visual impairments or who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing should include specialists such as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments or a DHH teacher, as appropriate. As with all students, IEPs teams should consider the continuum of placement options including regional programs and the California Schools for the Deaf and Blind as part of the discussion, if appropriate.

5. **Q:** Can you reshare the 60-day calculator?

A: It can be found on High Quality IEPs website here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WoQFfINWg54ut4hBwpQuuppbGhRVYzo33dVbsZgETik/template/preview>



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