



California's Universal Prekindergarten Implementation Progress

2023–24

Victoria Wang, Hanna Melnick, Melanie Leung-Gagné,
Shaakira Parker, and Marjorie Wechsler

Acknowledgments

The authors thank staff at the California Department of Education for sharing data and reviewing this report. We also thank Laura Pryor from the California Budget and Policy Center for her review and our Learning Policy Institute (LPI) colleagues Linda Darling-Hammond and Stacy Loewe for their contributions, insights, and review. In addition, we thank the members of the LPI Communications team for their invaluable support in designing, producing, and disseminating this report.

This research was supported by the Ballmer Group, Heising-Simons Foundation, and Kelson Foundation. Core operating support for LPI is provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Heising-Simons Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Raikes Foundation, Sandler Foundation, Skyline Foundation, and MacKenzie Scott. We are grateful to them for their generous support. The ideas voiced here are those of the authors and not those of funders.

External Reviewers

This report benefited from the insights and expertise of two external reviewers: Alix Gallagher, Managing Director and Director of Strategic Partnerships at Policy Analysis for California Education, and Erik Saucedo, Senior Policy Analyst at the California Budget and Policy Center. We thank them for the care and attention they gave the report.

Suggested citation: Wang, V., Melnick, H., Leung-Gagné, M., Parker, S., & Wechsler, M. (2025). *California's universal prekindergarten implementation progress, 2023–24*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/600.551>

This report can be found online at <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/ca-universal-prekindergarten-implementation-progress-2023-24>.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.



Document last revised June 10, 2025

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	iv
Introduction	1
Transitional Kindergarten Implementation	3
TK Service Delivery Models.....	5
TK Facilities	10
TK Instruction and Assessment.....	11
Supporting Student Needs in TK	15
Staffing TK Classrooms	18
Professional Development for TK Teachers	21
UPK Implementation in Local Education Agencies	26
UPK Service Delivery Models	26
UPK Staffing	29
Professional Development for School Leaders.....	31
Funding UPK Expansion	33
Technical Assistance Needs	34
Conclusion	36
Endnotes	38
About the Authors	42

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1	TK Enrollment, Eligible Population, and Uptake, 2019–20 to 2023–24.....	4
Figure 2	TK Delivery Models in 2022–23 and 2023–24	7
Figure 3	Percentage of LEAs Offering Full-Day and Part-Day TK in 2023–24	8
Figure 4	TK Staffing Needs in 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25.....	19
Figure 5	TK Staffing Needs and Vacancies at the Beginning of 2022–23 and 2023–24	20
Figure 6	Number of UPK Classrooms in LEAs by Type in 2022–23 and 2023–24.....	27
Figure 7	LEAs’ CSPP and Head Start Staffing Needs in 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25	30
Figure 8	Staffing Needs and Vacancies for CSPP and Head Start at the Beginning of 2022–23 and 2023–24	31
Table 1	Characteristics of Responding LEAs in 2023–24.....	2
Table 2	TK Rollout Schedule.....	3

Table 3	Number and Percentage of LEAs Offering TK at All Elementary Sites in 2023–24	6
Table 4	Expanded Learning Programs Provided to Extend the TK Instructional Day in 2022–23 and 2023–24	9
Table 5	Curriculum Used in TK in 2022–23 and 2023–24	12
Table 6	Assessments Used in TK in 2022–23 and 2023–24	13
Table 7	Strategies Used to Support Social-Emotional Learning in 2022–23 and 2023–24	15
Table 8	Instructional Practices Used to Support Children With Disabilities in 2022–23 and 2023–24	16
Table 9	Strategies to Support Toileting in 2022–23 and 2023–24	17
Table 10	Professional Development Opportunities Offered to TK Staff in 2023–24	22
Table 11	Percentage of UPK Classrooms That LEAs Reported Were Dual-Language Immersion or Inclusive of Students With Disabilities in 2023–24, by Classroom Type	28
Table 12	Percentage of UPK Classrooms That LEAs Reported Were Dual-Language Immersion or Inclusive of Students With Disabilities in 2023–24, by LEA Size	29
Table 13	Professional Development Opportunities Offered to School Leaders in 2022–23 and 2023–24	32
Table 14	Technical Assistance Topics Most Requested by LEAs in 2022–23 and 2023–24 for UPK Implementation	35

Executive Summary

California made a historic commitment to early childhood education in 2021 by providing universal prekindergarten (UPK) for all 4-year-olds by 2025–26 and expanding access for income-eligible 3-year-olds. California’s UPK initiative includes multiple early learning programs, including transitional kindergarten (TK), the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and other early learning programs such as private preschools and family child care. The state’s largest new investment in UPK is the expansion of TK, a free, district-based prekindergarten program, which is scheduled to expand to all 4-year-olds by the 2025–26 school year. California has also continued to invest in CSPP, a state-funded preschool program for children from families with low incomes and children with special needs.

The state’s investments in UPK present an opportunity for local education agencies (LEAs) to plan and implement early education programming that aligns with research-based elements of high-quality preschool. If implemented with quality, California’s UPK initiative holds potentially significant benefits for California’s young learners.

To support UPK expansion, California’s legislature and administration established the Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant, which allocated a total of \$500 million to all LEAs serving kindergarteners—this includes school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education. LEAs could use the funds to support TK and CSPP, as well as to strengthen partnerships among prekindergarten providers.

The California Department of Education surveyed all grant recipients in August 2024 about their UPK programs. This report provides an update on UPK implementation across the state through an analysis of survey responses from 1,506 LEAs—excluding county offices of education—which represent almost all (98%) public school districts and two thirds (69%) of charter schools that serve elementary grades. Findings provide insights into LEAs’ progress in universal TK expansion, including access to TK, TK classroom models, facility needs, instruction and assessment, strategies to support student needs, staffing, and professional development. Findings additionally shed light on LEA progress in UPK implementation outside of TK expansion, including service delivery models for non-TK programs, CSPP and Head Start staffing, professional development for school leaders, funding challenges, and technical assistance needs.

Key Takeaways

- **TK continues to expand quickly.** In the 2023–24 school year, almost all LEAs (94%) offered TK. Among LEAs with a TK program, 85% offered TK at all elementary sites, compared to 81% of LEAs in 2022–23. Forty-one percent of districts expanded TK faster than legislatively required through early-admittance TK, which allows children to enroll before the legislatively determined age eligibility.
- **In addition to TK, many LEAs continue to offer programs such as the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and other early learning programs.** One fourth (25%) of LEAs reported offering CSPP classrooms, 5% reported operating at least one Head Start classroom, and 18% operated another early learning program, such as locally funded or district-funded preschool.

- **Most LEAs offered full-day TK and expanded learning programs to extend the TK day.** Eighty-four percent of LEAs offered full-day TK (defined as more than 4 hours) in 2023–24, a slight increase from 82% of LEAs in 2022–23. Eighty-seven percent of LEAs provided an expanded learning option to extend the school day and year, a slight (1%) increase from the prior year.
- **Most LEAs reported having enough classroom space to meet projected TK enrollment by full expansion in 2025–26, but many LEAs still reported facilities as a top challenge in UPK implementation.** Eighty-eight percent of LEAs reported having sufficient classroom space by 2025–26, an increase from 82% the prior year. The LEAs that did not have sufficient classroom space reported needing a total of 488 additional classrooms, or about half of what LEAs reported needing in 2022–23. However, in an open-ended question on UPK challenges, LEAs continued to flag difficulties in developing age-appropriate classroom spaces, bathrooms, play structures, and outdoor learning spaces.
- **LEA staffing shortages have improved for TK classrooms when compared to the 2022–23 school year.** Only 1% of TK lead teacher positions were vacant at the beginning of the 2023–24 school year, similar to the 2022–23 vacancy rate. Additionally, the vacancy rate for TK assistant teachers at the beginning of 2023–24 was 3%, notably less than the 12% vacancy rate at the beginning of the 2022–23 school year.
- **Most LEAs have enough lead teachers to meet TK teacher requirements that will go into effect in 2025–26, although some report challenges with finding candidates who meet requirements.** By 2025–26, all TK classes receiving state funding will be required to staff lead teachers with 24 units of early childhood coursework, a Child Development Teacher Permit, or equivalent experience, as well as a Multiple Subjects or PK–3 ECE Specialist credential. Most LEAs (91%) reported that they would have enough TK lead teachers who meet these requirements; however, in open-ended responses, some LEAs—particularly those in rural areas—expressed difficulty finding and retaining qualified candidates.
- **LEAs continue to face staffing challenges for state preschool and Head Start classrooms.** At the beginning of 2023–24, LEAs reported a 5% and 11% vacancy rate for CSPP and Head Start teachers, respectively, an increase from 2022–23 vacancy rates.
- **Small LEAs face unique challenges in TK implementation.** While small LEAs were more likely than medium and large LEAs to have expanded TK to all elementary sites and provide full-day TK, findings suggest that small LEAs may benefit from targeted support and resources related to providing transportation, access to expanded learning, coaching, and developmentally appropriate curricula.
- **Funding underscored LEAs’ challenges throughout TK expansion.** In open-ended responses, LEAs noted that insufficient funding impacted their ability to update facilities, find qualified staff, acquire developmentally appropriate instructional resources, and meet upcoming adult-to-student ratio requirements for TK classrooms. Funding was a particular challenge for small LEAs with low TK enrollment and basic aid districts that do not receive additional funding for TK students.

- **LEAs continue to need technical assistance across a range of topics regarding UPK implementation.** The most common technical assistance needs were related to implementing developmentally appropriate learning environments through facilities or play-based learning; professional learning opportunities such as coaching and mentoring, early childhood knowledge for school leaders, and professional development on children’s literacy, language, math, and science development; strategies to increase UPK awareness and enrollment among families; and modifying district data systems to support access to UPK data across community and elementary settings.

Overall, UPK expansion in California—particularly universal TK—continues to progress quickly and well. LEAs have made promising progress in TK expansion, and many continue to offer preschool programs other than TK. However, the survey data highlight continued challenges related to facilities, staffing, developmentally appropriate practices and resources, and funding. As California moves forward with UPK expansion, the state can consider funding facilities upgrades and implementation of new adult-to-student ratio requirements, updating reimbursement rates to meet the cost of care for publicly funded preschool and child care programs, offering technical assistance on curriculum and assessments, supporting high-quality professional development for early educators and school leaders, and expanding supports for inclusive classrooms. California’s continued investment and targeted support will be critical to ensuring high-quality early learning opportunities for all young learners in the state.

Introduction

California made a historic commitment to early childhood education in 2021 by implementing universal prekindergarten (UPK) for all 4-year-olds by 2025–26 and expanding access to publicly funded early learning programs for income-eligible 3-year-olds. California’s UPK initiative includes multiple early learning programs, including transitional kindergarten (TK), the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and other early learning programs such as private preschools and family child care. The state’s largest new investment in UPK is the expansion of TK, a free, district-based prekindergarten program, which is scheduled to expand to all 4-year-olds by the 2025–26 school year. California has also continued to invest in CSPP, a state-funded preschool program for children ages 2 to 5 who qualify based on family need or disability status. CSPP can be operated by both local education agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations.

Research indicates that, if implemented with quality, universal prekindergarten holds potentially significant benefits for California’s young learners.¹ The state’s investments in UPK present an opportunity for local education agencies to plan and implement early education programming that aligns with research-based elements of high-quality preschool. These elements include sufficient learning time; low adult-to-student ratios; well-prepared and well-supported teachers; research-based and developmentally appropriate early learning standards, curricula, and assessments; and meaningful family engagement.²

If implemented with quality, universal prekindergarten holds potentially significant benefits for California’s young learners.

To support UPK expansion, California’s legislature and administration established the Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant in 2021, which allocated \$200 million to all LEAs serving kindergarteners. The 2022 budget added another \$300 million to the grant program. LEAs could use these funds to support TK and CSPP implementation, as well as to strengthen partnerships among prekindergarten providers.³ The California Department of Education administers annual surveys to all local education agencies receiving grant funds, which have provided important insights into LEAs’ progress and challenges regarding UPK implementation throughout TK expansion.

This report provides an update on UPK implementation and builds on previous Learning Policy Institute reports published in [April 2023](#) and [July 2024](#) examining prior years of planning and implementation data. This study analyzes data from a survey administered to all LEAs receiving a UPK Planning and Implementation Grant by the California Department of Education in September 2024.⁴ Survey questions addressed UPK implementation in LEAs during the 2023–24 school year.

A total of 1,506 LEAs responded to the September 2024 survey, including 848 school districts and 658 charter schools.⁵ These survey respondents represent 98% of the 862 elementary and unified school districts and 69% of the 876 elementary and K–12 charter schools in the state.⁶ Among the 658 charter schools, 55 self-identified as virtual, homeschool, or independent study programs in open-ended responses, and one self-identified as both in-person or homeschool. We include these 56 LEAs, whom we refer to as “non-classroom-based,” in our analyses but note where their data may or may not impact statewide calculations throughout the report.

A total of 91 survey respondents reported that their LEA did not offer TK. Only the 1,415 LEAs that did offer TK received subsequent questions about implementation; we calculated the percentages for implementation questions with this subsample of 1,415 LEAs.

For all survey questions, we examined differences between LEAs by size, using publicly available district enrollment data for the 2023–24 school year (see [Table 1](#)). We defined a large LEA as having more than 20,000 students, a medium LEA as 2,500 to 20,000 students, and a small LEA as fewer than 2,500 students. We additionally analyzed changes in LEAs’ responses to survey questions that were included in both the 2023 and 2024 surveys.⁷ Unless otherwise specified, we report differences across LEA size and between school years only when they are statistically significant.⁸

Finally, we conducted a thematic analysis of LEAs’ open-ended responses regarding the biggest challenges in UPK implementation.⁹

Table 1. Characteristics of Responding LEAs in 2023–24

Category	Number of LEAs	Percentage of survey sample
Large (> 20,000 students)	51	3%
Medium (2,500–20,000 students)	313	21%
Small (< 2,500 students)	1,142	76%
Total	1,506	100%

Sources: California Department of Education. (2024). *Cumulative enrollment data* for 2023–24; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

In this report, we first describe findings regarding LEA progress in expanding universal TK, including how LEAs structured and expanded access to TK classrooms, facility needs, instruction and assessment, supporting student needs, staffing, and professional development. We then zoom out and provide findings on LEA implementation of UPK, inclusive of both TK and early learning programs outside of TK such as CSPP, Head Start, and locally funded programs. The section on UPK implementation addresses LEAs’ UPK delivery models, CSPP and Head Start staffing, professional development for school leaders, funding challenges, and technical assistance needs. In addition to providing descriptive statistics, this report includes illustrative quotes drawn from LEAs’ open-ended survey responses.

Transitional Kindergarten Implementation

California's largest investment in universal prekindergarten (UPK) is the expansion of transitional kindergarten (TK) for all 4-year-olds by the 2025–26 school year. Unlike other state and federally funded early education programs, TK has no income-eligibility requirements and is operated exclusively by local education agencies (LEAs).

TK was initially created by the legislature in 2010, defined as the first year of a 2-year kindergarten program and intended for children who had just missed the cutoff for kindergarten eligibility.¹⁰ Only children who turned 5 between September 2 and December 2 of the school year were eligible for TK.

Following California's UPK investments in 2021, TK eligibility has been scheduled to expand between the 2022–23 and 2025–26 academic years by extending the age of eligibility by 2 or 3 additional months each year (see [Table 2](#)). The new law also set new adult-to-student ratio requirements. LEAs will be expected to have no more than 10 children per adult by full TK rollout in 2025–26, down from a maximum of 12 children per adult in 2022–23 and 2023–24.¹¹

Table 2. TK Rollout Schedule

Academic year(s)	TK eligibility (date of 5th birthday)	Percentage of 4-year-olds eligible
2011–12 to 2021–22	September 2–December 2	25%
2022–23	September 2–February 2	42%
2023–24	September 2–April 2	58%
2024–25	September 2–June 2	75%
2025–26	September 2–September 1	100%

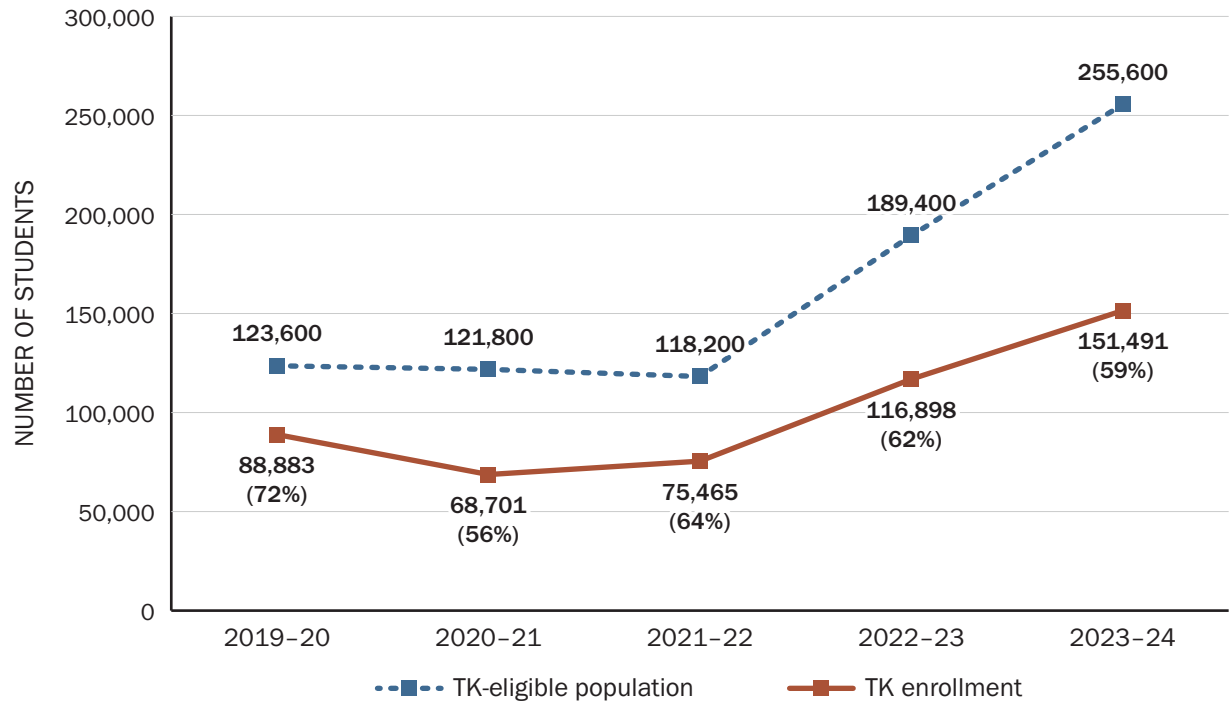
Note: To calculate the portion of children eligible by age, we assume children's birthdays are distributed evenly across months.

Sources: California Education Code § 48000 (2023); United States Census Bureau. (2021). *State population by characteristics: 2010–2019. Annual estimates of the resident population by single year of age and sex for California: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019*; United States Census Bureau. (2024). *State population by characteristics: 2020–2023. U.S. Census' annual estimates of the resident population by single year of age and sex for California: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023*.

TK funding is primarily provided through California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which distributes state funding to LEAs based on student population, with additional funding provided for high-need students. LEAs also receive a "TK add-on" entitlement for TK students to support the required adult-to-student ratios.¹² However, some LEAs are designated as "basic aid," meaning they do not receive state funding because their local property tax revenue is sufficient to meet or exceed their target funding without the need for state aid; in the 2023–24 school year, 136 LEAs received this designation.¹³ These districts are still expected to offer TK, but they do not receive additional funding for new TK students.¹⁴

Since TK expansion began, TK enrollment has increased substantially, growing from 88,883 children in 2019–20 to 151,491 in 2023–24 (see [Figure 1](#)). While the number of children enrolled in TK has risen, the proportion of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in TK has declined over the past 2 years of expansion due to an increase in eligible 4-year-olds, from 64% in 2021–22 to 59% in 2023–24.

Figure 1. TK Enrollment, Eligible Population, and Uptake, 2019–20 to 2023–24



Notes: Percentages in parenthesis represent the share of the TK-eligible population enrolled in TK. The eligible population estimates are based on the average number of individuals aged 4 and 5 each year, multiplied by the fraction of children who are age-eligible based on the program rollout schedule, and rounded to the closest 100.

Source: Adapted from Melnick, H., & García, E. (2024). *Progressing toward universal prekindergarten in California* [Brief]. Learning Policy Institute.

As LEAs continue to serve a larger number of California’s 4-year-olds during the final years of TK expansion, monitoring implementation can help ensure these young learners have access to supportive and high-quality early learning settings. This section of the report provides insights into the decisions LEAs have made regarding key components of universal TK rollout, including TK service delivery models, facilities, instructional models, staffing, and professional development. Overall, findings indicate LEAs have continued to progress in expanding and scaling TK quickly, but they still face critical challenges in facilities, developmentally appropriate practices, staffing, and meeting future TK requirements.

TK Service Delivery Models

Local education agencies make many decisions that impact children's TK access and experience, including where to offer TK, whether they will offer early-admittance TK, how to structure their TK classrooms, and how long the TK day will be. Findings indicate that LEAs continued to expand TK eligibility faster than the legislated rollout schedule. When compared to the 2022–23 school year, more LEAs offered TK at all elementary sites and full-day TK. A larger proportion of TK classrooms were stand-alone TK, and a lower proportion were TK–kindergarten combination classes.

Who offered TK in 2023–24?

All school districts that operate a kindergarten program are required to offer TK for age-eligible children; charters are not.¹⁵ Of the 1,506 responding LEAs, 94% reported offering TK in 2023–24. School districts were more likely to have offered TK than charter schools, with 96% of the 848 responding school districts having offered TK in 2023–24, compared to 91% of the 658 charter schools.

A total of 91 LEAs (57 charters and 34 school districts) did not offer TK in 2023–24. Almost all not offering TK in 2023–24 (85 LEAs) were small, with fewer than 2,500 total students enrolled. These 91 LEAs were asked in an open-ended question why they did not offer TK in 2023–24. The top four reasons for not offering TK included:

1. Low to no TK enrollment in the district
2. Lack of facility space
3. No TK grade level in their charter (for charters)
4. No funding for TK due to being a basic aid district¹⁶

Some of these LEAs had a partner district offer TK to their students, and some plan to offer TK in future school years. One LEA reported not offering TK due to a lack of qualified staff.

How many LEAs offered early-admittance TK?

California's scheduled rollout of universal TK expands children's age eligibility by 2 to 3 months each year until all 4-year-olds are eligible in 2025–26 (see [Table 2](#)). However, LEAs have the option to offer early-admittance TK, which allows 4-year-old students to enroll even if their birthdates fall after the legislatively mandated age-eligibility cutoff for TK rollout. LEAs offering early-admittance TK do not receive state funding for these students until their 5th birthday and must cover the costs of educating early-admittance TK students with funds from their existing budgets. Despite this added cost, 41% of LEAs offered early-admittance TK in 2023–24, while half (50%) had offered early-admittance TK the prior year in 2022–23.

Where did LEAs offer TK?

While all LEAs are required to offer TK, they can decide whether to offer TK at all, or only some, of the elementary sites within their service area. This decision affects TK access: Research indicates that location plays a large role in families' selections among early care and education options, and children are more likely to be enrolled in TK when it is offered at their local elementary school where they will attend kindergarten.¹⁷

In 2023–24, 85% of LEAs offered TK at all elementary sites within their service area, an increase from 81% in 2022–23. Among all LEAs, 840 had only a single elementary school, all of whom offered TK at their single elementary site. There were 575 total LEAs with more than one elementary school; of these, 62% offered TK across all elementary sites, while 38% offered TK at only some elementary sites (see [Table 3](#)).

Table 3. Number and Percentage of LEAs Offering TK at All Elementary Sites in 2023–24

Category	Number of LEAs	Number of LEAs offering TK at all sites	Percentage of LEAs offering TK at all sites
LEAs with 1 elementary site	840	840	100%
LEAs with more than 1 elementary site	575	356	62%
All LEAs offering TK	1,415	1,196	85%

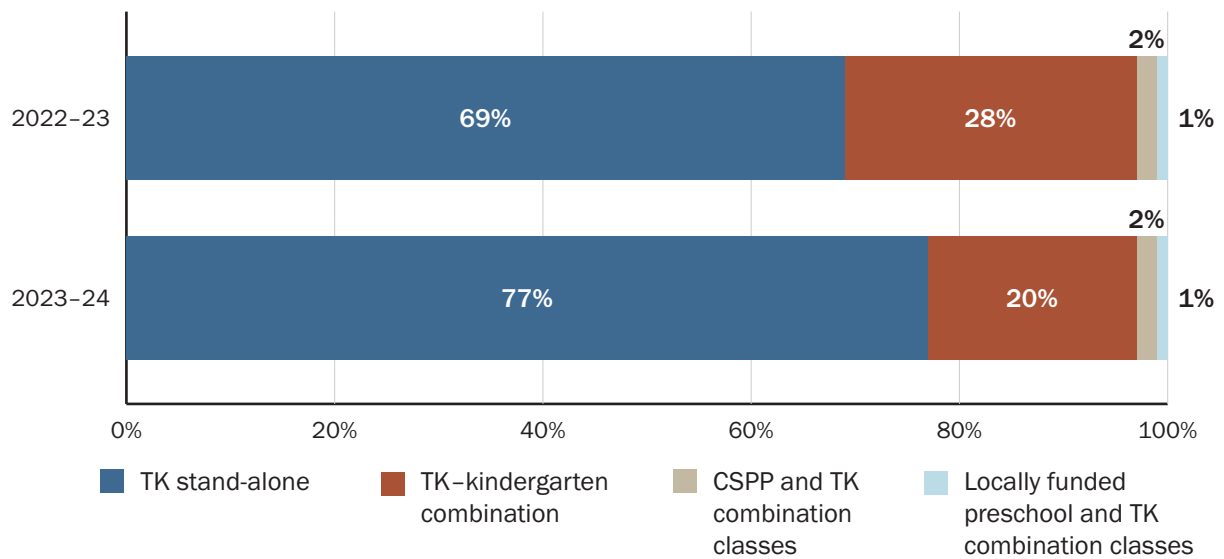
Source: California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

How did LEAs structure their TK classrooms?

LEAs can elect to structure their TK classrooms in a variety of ways. They may choose to operate stand-alone TK classes (i.e., classrooms that serve solely TK students). Alternatively, they can combine TK with another grade level such as kindergarten, or another early learning program such as CSPP or a locally funded preschool program, such as preschool funded with federal Title I funds or district general funds. Multiage classes can be developmentally appropriate with adequate differentiation and student support, and TK classrooms combined with other early learning programs such as CSPP must meet higher quality requirements for assistant teacher qualifications, class sizes, facility standards, and more.¹⁸ However, TK–kindergarten combination classes have been found to be less developmentally appropriate than TK stand-alone classes: A study on California’s TK programs prior to expansion found that TK–kindergarten combination classrooms were more likely to resemble a typical kindergarten classroom than a preschool classroom.¹⁹

In 2023–24, LEAs operated a total of 9,520 TK classrooms.²⁰ Among all TK classrooms in the state, between the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years, LEAs offered a higher percentage of stand-alone TK classrooms and a lower percentage of TK–kindergarten combination classes (see [Figure 2](#)). In 2023–24, over three fourths (77%) of TK classrooms in the state were TK stand-alone classes, compared to 69% in 2022–23. Fewer TK classrooms were TK–kindergarten combination classes, 20% in 2023–24, compared to 28% in 2022–23. The proportion of TK–CSPP combination and TK and locally funded preschool combination classrooms remained constant, at 2% and 1% of TK classrooms, respectively.

Figure 2. TK Delivery Models in 2022–23 and 2023–24



Note: Percentages represent the number of each TK classroom type among all TK classrooms in the state.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

In open-ended responses, some LEAs highlighted difficulties in delivering age-appropriate instruction in mixed-age classrooms. Several LEAs with TK-kindergarten combination classes reported it was challenging to manage the diverse developmental needs of mixed-age students in a single classroom, including differentiating instruction and managing varied attention spans. They noted that such challenges impacted instruction and reported that technical assistance and professional development tailored to mixed-age classrooms would be helpful. A respondent from a small, rural LEA shared:

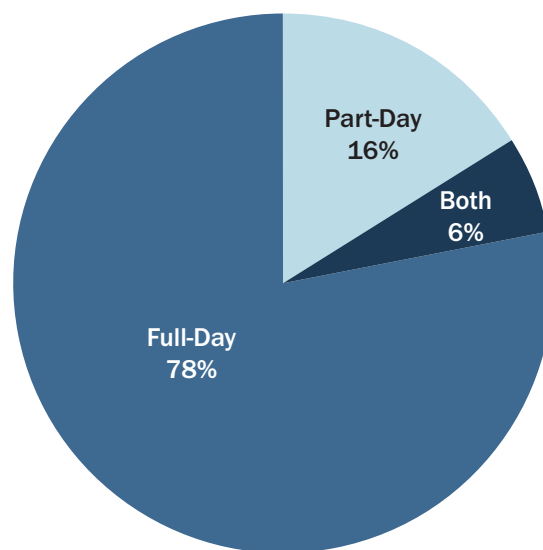
As a small district, our enrollment numbers and limited availability of teachers and classroom space make it difficult to establish separate TK classes. ... Combination TK/kindergarten classrooms present unique instructional challenges. Teachers must balance the differing developmental needs and learning levels of both age groups within the same classroom. This dynamic can impact the delivery of instruction, as educators must adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate the varying curriculum requirements and learning paces of TK and kindergarten students.

How many LEAs offered full-day TK?

Another key decision LEAs must make is whether to offer part-day (3 to 4 hours) or full-day (more than 4 hours) TK, each of which may be lengthened with other early education or expanded learning programs. A longer preschool day and year can have positive impacts on students' school readiness outcomes and may better meet the needs of working families.²¹ Expanded learning programs may also extend the school year, offering care during school breaks and summer.

Eighty-four percent of all LEAs offered full-day TK; 82% did so in 2022–23. In 2023–24, 78% of LEAs offered only full-day TK, and 6% offered both full-day and part-day options. Sixteen percent of LEAs offered only part-day TK (see [Figure 3](#)).

Figure 3. Percentage of LEAs Offering Full-Day and Part-Day TK in 2023–24



Notes: Part-day TK is defined as 3 to 4 hours. Full-day TK is defined as more than 4 hours. $N = 1,415$ LEAs.

Source: California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

To extend the TK day or year, LEAs may offer expanded learning through their own programming or through community-based organizations. Expanded learning programs vary in hours provided and program quality, and many programs serve all elementary school students and therefore may not be designed to meet the developmental needs of 4-year-olds.

In 2023–24, LEAs most commonly extended TK with LEA-operated programs: 80% offered expanded learning programs on an LEA site, while 10% extended the TK day with CSPP on an LEA site. Fewer than 1 in 10 LEAs (8%) combined TK with expanded learning programs at a community-based organization site. Notably, however, 13% of LEAs did not offer any expanded learning options for TK students (see [Table 4](#)). LEAs' expanded learning offerings did not change notably between the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years.

Table 4. Expanded Learning Programs Provided to Extend the TK Instructional Day in 2022–23 and 2023–24

Program	2022–23	2023–24
Expanded learning programs on an LEA site	78%	80%
CSPP (on an LEA site)	10%	10%
Expanded learning programs at a community-based organization site	6%	8%
LEA-funded or locally funded preschool	8%	5%
Head Start	3%	2%
Other	12%	8%
None	14%	13%

Notes: LEAs could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. *N* = 1,415 LEAs. Expanded learning programs on both an LEA and community-based organization site include After School Education and Safety (ASES), 21st Century Community Learning Center, and Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP). “Other” includes the following survey items: Other community-based preschool, state-subsidized child care (not including CSPP), LEA preschool funded with Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act funds, CSPP (at a community-based organization site), and other.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

How many LEAs offered transportation for students?

Transportation likely impacts TK accessibility, particularly for low-income families. Transportation to and from the TK program, as well as between the TK program and an expanded learning program, can improve LEAs’ ability to meet families’ needs.

California LEAs are not required to provide transportation for all students.²² In the 2023–24 school year, almost half (47%) of LEAs with TK provided transportation to and from school sites for TK students; 44% did so in 2022–23. A small percentage of LEAs offered transportation for TK students to expanded learning options: 5% provided transportation to expanded learning on another LEA site, and 2% provided transportation to expanded learning at a non-LEA site.

TK Facilities

As they expand TK, many LEAs need to update or add classrooms, bathrooms, or play areas that are developmentally appropriate for early learners. When asked if they would have sufficient space to meet projected enrollment by full TK expansion in 2025–26, most LEAs (88%) projected having enough classroom space, an increase from 82% of LEAs in 2022–23. Differences across district size were not statistically significant; 89% of small LEAs, 85% of medium-sized LEAs, and 88% of large LEAs projected having enough classroom space by 2025–26.

The LEAs that said they did not have sufficient space projected needing a total of 488 more classrooms by 2025–26, about half as many as the 946 classrooms projected when asked during the 2022–23 school year.

Although the majority of LEAs expect to have enough classroom space by 2025–26, LEAs still reported that facilities was a top challenge they faced when implementing universal prekindergarten expansion. LEAs shared that, with limited funding, it was difficult to develop age-appropriate classroom space, bathrooms suitable for young children that are close to classrooms, outdoor learning spaces to facilitate experiential and hands-on learning, and play facilities. A respondent from a small, suburban LEA stated:

LEAs still reported that facilities was a top challenge they faced when implementing universal prekindergarten expansion.

Providing developmentally appropriate TK classrooms is challenging due to the school's outdated facilities and limited funding for improvements. The current infrastructure lacks flexible spaces, restrooms in classrooms, and outdoor areas suited for young learners. With limited funding, immediate renovations are difficult, although plans to construct a new TK wing are underway in order to meet the needs of students and comply with TK requirements.

These challenges were present for LEAs in both urban and rural areas. Due to space constraints, some LEAs said they were only able to offer part-day programming. Additionally, as a consequence of making room for TK, some LEAs mentioned having to displace other grade levels. One respondent from a medium-sized, suburban LEA wrote:

There is no money (that we qualify for) to build new UPK classrooms that include bathrooms and/or build in bathrooms to existing classrooms. Therefore, we are having to displace kindergarten classrooms with bathrooms to make room for TK classrooms. More funding to support facilities development for TK would be very helpful.

Another respondent from a large, urban LEA expressed potential concerns about facility constraints causing student displacement to nearby schools:

We foresee that a challenge we may face will be lack of classroom space, causing some children [not] to be able to attend their neighborhood school. When the 1:10 ratio is mandated, sites may not have the adequate space on campus to meet this guideline, leading to transferring students to nearby schools that have available space.

TK Instruction and Assessment

A major part of TK expansion includes selecting age-appropriate curricula and assessments. Teachers additionally need training in using curricula and assessments with fidelity, as well as adapting pedagogical practices to the social and emotional needs of younger children. Overall, LEAs reported using a wide range of curricula that varied across content areas and age-specificity. In 2023–24, more LEAs assessed TK students using published preschool assessments than in 2022–23, and a higher percentage of LEAs reported using strategies to support social-emotional learning than in the previous year.

What curricula did LEAs use in TK?

Developmentally appropriate curricula and pedagogy are crucial elements of high-quality early learning.²³ California does not mandate specific curricula or assessments for all TK classrooms, but legislation does specify that TK curriculum must align with the [California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations](#) developed by the California Department of Education in 2024.²⁴

Research reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine suggests that domain-specific curricula (i.e., curricula that address a specific area of content or development, versus comprehensive curricula) are most successful in supporting child development, especially when they “include well-designed learning experiences, intentional responsive teaching strategies, well-defined objectives and outcomes, embedded formative assessments, and differentiation based on understanding children’s ability levels, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, interests, and dispositions.”²⁵ Experts suggest integrating curricula to ensure that all domains of development are addressed in the school day.

In the 2023–24 school year, LEAs reported using a variety of curricula in their TK programs, with most LEAs (72%) using more than one curriculum type. About half of LEAs used a social-emotional curriculum (49%) and/or a PreK literacy-specific curriculum (46%) (see [Table 5](#)). Just over one third used a PreK math-specific curriculum (37%). About a third used a whole-child or comprehensive PreK curriculum (34%). Use of all curricula types (except PreK math, a whole-child approach, other curricula) declined from 2022–23 to 2023–24. This change may indicate that LEAs are streamlining the total number of curricula used in TK; more research is needed to understand these trends.

LEAs’ curriculum choices also differ in the targeted age groups for which they were developed. While LEAs predominantly used PreK-specific curricula, about one fifth (20%) of LEAs used kindergarten curriculum in their TK classrooms in 2023–24. While the number of LEAs using kindergarten curriculum declined from 26% in 2022–23, the use of kindergarten curricula may still be a concern if they are not designed to support multiage and multistage approaches to teaching and learning. Repetition of a curriculum from TK to kindergarten may also result in lost opportunities for children to learn new skills.²⁶

LEAs may be using kindergarten curriculum for various reasons, including for their TK–kindergarten combination classes. Among the 288 LEAs who used a kindergarten curriculum in their TK classrooms, about half (53%) operated TK–kindergarten classrooms. The other 135 LEAs using kindergarten curriculum did not operate any TK–kindergarten classrooms, indicating that 1 in 10 LEAs in California used kindergarten curriculum in their TK classes with only 4-year-olds. These data suggest a potential need for additional guidance on best practices in finding or adapting curriculum to meet the needs of early learners.

Table 5. Curriculum Used in TK in 2022–23 and 2023–24

Curriculum approach	2022–23	2023–24
Social-emotional curriculum	56%	49%
PreK literacy-specific curriculum	52%	46%
PreK math-specific curriculum	30%	37%
Whole-child or comprehensive PreK curriculum	41%	34%
District or teacher-developed math units for TK	45%	27%
District or teacher-developed literacy units for TK	42%	24%
Kindergarten curriculum (not PreK)	26%	20%
Whole-child approach or philosophy for PreK	13%	13%
Other	6%	14%

Notes: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. Whole-child or comprehensive PreK curricula was defined as including published curricula such as Creative Curriculum and Frog Street. Whole-child approach or philosophy for PreK included unscripted curricula such as emergent curriculum, Reggio Emilia approach, Montessori, or Waldorf. *N* = 1,415 LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

The individual curricula used by LEAs varied widely. LEAs were asked to report specific curricula used within each selected curricular approach, with the option to select “Other” if their curriculum was not listed. The top three curricula used by LEAs within each category include:

- **Social-emotional curriculum:** Second Step Early Learning, Other, Kimochis
- **PreK literacy-specific curriculum:** Heggerty Phonemic Awareness PreK, Other, World of Wonders PreK
- **PreK math-specific curriculum:** Other, Eureka Math PreK, Bridges in Mathematics PreK
- **Whole-child or comprehensive PreK curriculum:** Other, Frog Street, Creative Curriculum for TK
- **Kindergarten (math or literacy) curriculum:** Other, Go Math, MyMath Kindergarten
- **Whole-child approach or philosophy:** Other, Emergent Curriculum, Montessori²⁷

What assessments did LEAs use in TK?

Utilizing early childhood assessments can support educators in implementing developmentally appropriate learning practices, instruction, and supports within TK classrooms. California does not require specific assessments in TK classrooms. In CSPP classrooms, educators are required to use the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), an observational assessment of children's learning and development in multiple domains.

In 2023–24, the most common child assessments used in TK were LEA-developed assessments (43%), the Desired Results Developmental Profile (25%), Educational Software for Guiding Instruction (18%), and STAR Early Literacy (16%). More than one tenth (13%) of LEAs did not use a common child assessment in TK (see [Table 6](#)).

Table 6. Assessments Used in TK in 2022–23 and 2023–24

TK assessment	2022–23	2023–24
LEA-based grade-level benchmarks and a report card	66%	43%
Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)	20%	25%
Educational Software for Guiding Instruction (ESGI) ^a	n/a	18%
STAR Early Literacy ^a	n/a	16%
Other	23%	15%
Work Sampling System	13%	13%
Ages and Stages Questionnaire	6%	8%
BRIGANCE Early Childhood Screen	7%	7%
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) ^a	n/a	4%
Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD	2%	3%
Unsure ^b	5%	n/a
The LEA did not use a common TK assessment	8%	13%

^a These items were not included in the 2022–23 survey.

^b This item was not included in the 2023–24 survey.

Notes: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. Respondents were prompted with an open response if they selected “Other.” Common assessments reported as “Other” included the Transitional Kindergarten Progress Report, CORE Growth Assessments, Basic Phonics Skills Test, or Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Assessment. Several LEAs also reported developing their own benchmarks and observation tools. *N* = 1,415 LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

From 2022–23 to 2023–24, the use of LEA-developed assessments declined from 66% to 43% among LEAs, while use of the Desired Results Developmental Profile increased. The percentage of LEAs that did not use a common child assessment in TK also increased, from 8% to 13%.

Language screeners were not specifically addressed in the survey. In 2023–24, LEAs were required to assess TK students' English language proficiency on the English Learner Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). However, use of the ELPAC was suspended for TK at the start of the 2024–25 school year due to concerns about its appropriateness for 4-year-olds.²⁸ As TK expansion continues, further examination of how LEAs are approaching language screeners may provide additional insight into how LEAs can best identify and support multilingual learners.

LEAs were also asked to report if they provided professional development on child assessments for TK teachers in the 2023–24 school year. Three quarters (75%) offered some form of professional development on assessments; 25% of LEAs did not. The most common assessments for which LEAs provided professional learning were:

- LEA-developed, grade-level benchmarks (32%);
- Desired Results Developmental Profile (25%);
- STAR Early Literacy (14%);
- Educational Software for Guiding Instruction (13%); and
- Work Sampling System (10%).

How did LEAs support students' social and emotional learning?

Supportive and developmentally appropriate learning environments impact early learners' social, emotional, and academic development.²⁹ LEAs used a variety of strategies in 2023–24 to create such learning environments, most commonly through promoting play-based learning (79%) and designing developmentally appropriate learning environments (70%). Notably, the percentage of LEAs reporting using each social-emotional learning strategy listed in the survey increased from 2022–23 to 2023–24 (see [Table 7](#)).

Table 7. Strategies Used to Support Social-Emotional Learning in 2022–23 and 2023–24

Strategy to support social-emotional learning	2022–23	2023–24
Play-based learning	69%	79%
Developmentally appropriate learning environments	62%	70%
Lesson plans or curriculum on social-emotional learning	34%	58%
Developmental observations	33%	55%
Staff development on social-emotional learning	22%	47%
Offered open-ended, self-directed learning opportunities	19%	46%
Provided training for staff on the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model	14%	20%
Implemented the CSEFEL Pyramid Model	5%	11%
Other ^a	3%	n/a

^a This item was not included in the 2023–24 survey.

Notes: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. N = 1,415 LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

Supporting Student Needs in TK

Local education agencies were asked several questions about how they supported specific transitional kindergarten student needs, including supporting students with disabilities and toileting needs for younger TK students. Overall, higher percentages of LEAs reported adopting instructional practices for students with disabilities and toileting strategies in 2023–24 than in 2022–23.

How did LEAs support students with disabilities?

LEAs are required by federal law to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment necessary to meet their needs and provide services outlined within students' individualized education plans.³⁰ Many students with disabilities benefit from individualized learning and inclusive practices within general education classrooms. Among the 9,520 reported TK classrooms in the 2023–24 school year, LEAs reported that 87% were inclusive of students with disabilities.

In 2023–24, most LEAs provided adaptations to instructional materials to support students with special needs, and more than half provided additional staff to support participation in instruction (see [Table 8](#)). The percentage of LEAs engaging in each listed instructional practice to support children with disabilities, except for providing adaptations to instructional materials, increased between the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years.

Table 8. Instructional Practices Used to Support Children With Disabilities in 2022–23 and 2023–24

Instructional practice	2022–23	2023–24
Provided adaptations to instructional materials	64%	66%
Provided additional staff to support participation in instruction	47%	56%
Implemented social-emotional strategies	42%	48%
Provided specialized services	42%	48%
Implemented Universal Design for Learning	40%	48%
Other	2%	4%

Notes: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. *N* = 1,415 LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

In open-ended responses regarding the biggest challenges to UPK implementation, several LEAs reported an increase in the number of young children qualifying for special education services. They noted that some children arrived with unidentified special needs, requiring additional assessments and interventions that strained existing resources. These increased needs led to a heightened demand for specialized personnel, including speech therapists, occupational therapists, special education teachers, and instructional aides. A respondent from a medium-sized, suburban LEA stated:

Our special education preschool assessment team continues to set records every year with the number of students assessed and found eligible. ... This puts a strain on the system as well as each classroom, as teachers struggle to meet the needs of all students and have increasingly more complex caseloads to manage.

A few LEAs also highlighted difficulties in providing adequate support for students with disabilities while balancing the needs of the general education population. For example, LEAs mentioned that facilities and resources were often inadequately prepared to accommodate children with disabilities. Additionally, some LEAs mentioned that their teachers lacked training in inclusive practices and differentiated instruction for students with disabilities. A few LEAs also expressed the need for more professional development opportunities for teachers and instructional aides to effectively support children with individualized education plans. A respondent from a small, rural LEA shared:

More students qualifying for special education services at younger ages ... requires not only more personnel but also intensive training for general education teachers and staff. ... Many of our general education TK teachers need additional professional development to understand how to differentiate instruction, manage classroom behaviors, and collaborate with special education teams.

How did LEAs support students' toileting needs?

With the addition of younger learners on campus, LEAs must also support students' development of life skills, including independent toileting.³¹ When asked how they adjusted policies or practices to address the increase in children needing toileting assistance as TK age-eligibility expands, LEAs reported adopting a variety of strategies. The percentage of LEAs using nearly each individual strategy, with the exception of addressing toileting at a community meeting, increased between 2022–23 and 2023–24 (see Table 9).

Table 9. Strategies to Support Toileting in 2022–23 and 2023–24

Strategy to support toileting	2022–23	2023–24
We share or will be sharing resources or information with families about how our school sites will approach toileting assistance.	50%	56%
We have adopted or will be adopting new practices to support all children having access to additional clothing and/or toileting supplies as necessary.	46%	54%
We already have dedicated staff to support toileting and communicate regularly with parents about how our school sites provide toileting assistance for children who need it.	34%	41%
We are or will be engaging in additional negotiation with our local labor organizations to assign duties related to toileting assistance to new or additional staff.	19%	24%
We are planning to address toileting with our community on an upcoming meeting agenda.	16%	16%

Notes: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. N = 1,415 LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

In open-ended responses, LEAs reported challenges with supporting younger children who were not fully toilet-trained, which presented logistical and staffing challenges. A respondent from a small, rural LEA elaborated on the multitude of challenges they faced regarding toileting support:

One of the primary challenges is the younger age group of students, some of whom are still in the phase of toilet training. Managing toilet training in a classroom setting can be difficult. It demands extra time, can disrupt class routines, and may require additional resources like sanitation supplies or even additional staff support.

Some LEAs shared staffing limitations related to contracts preventing paraprofessionals from assisting with toileting or needing additional staff with developmentally appropriate training to support toileting. A respondent from a medium-sized, suburban LEA shared:

Historically, our contracts do not allow for TK paraprofessionals to assist with toileting, but it has clearly become a need. We are finding ourselves needing to change job descriptions and systems to support with toileting. It has caused culture and morale issues among our union partners in both labor unions.

LEAs noted that toileting was especially challenging for schools without appropriate facilities, such as classrooms with attached bathrooms. A respondent from a medium-sized, urban LEA noted:

We have two classrooms that do not have bathrooms in the classroom or nearby. The second TK adult has to take the students to the bathroom throughout the day.

Staffing TK Classrooms

By the 2025–26 school year, LEAs receiving funding for TK classes must staff TK classrooms with a lead teacher who has a Multiple Subject or PK–3 ECE Specialist credential as well as 24 units of coursework in early childhood education or child development, a Child Development Teacher Permit, or LEA-determined equivalent experience. Additionally, TK classrooms will be required to have an adult-to-student ratio of 1 adult to 10 students or less, lowered from the ratio of 1 adult to 12 students required during the 2023–24 and 2024–25 school years. LEAs who do not meet the required adult-to-student ratio face funding penalties.³²

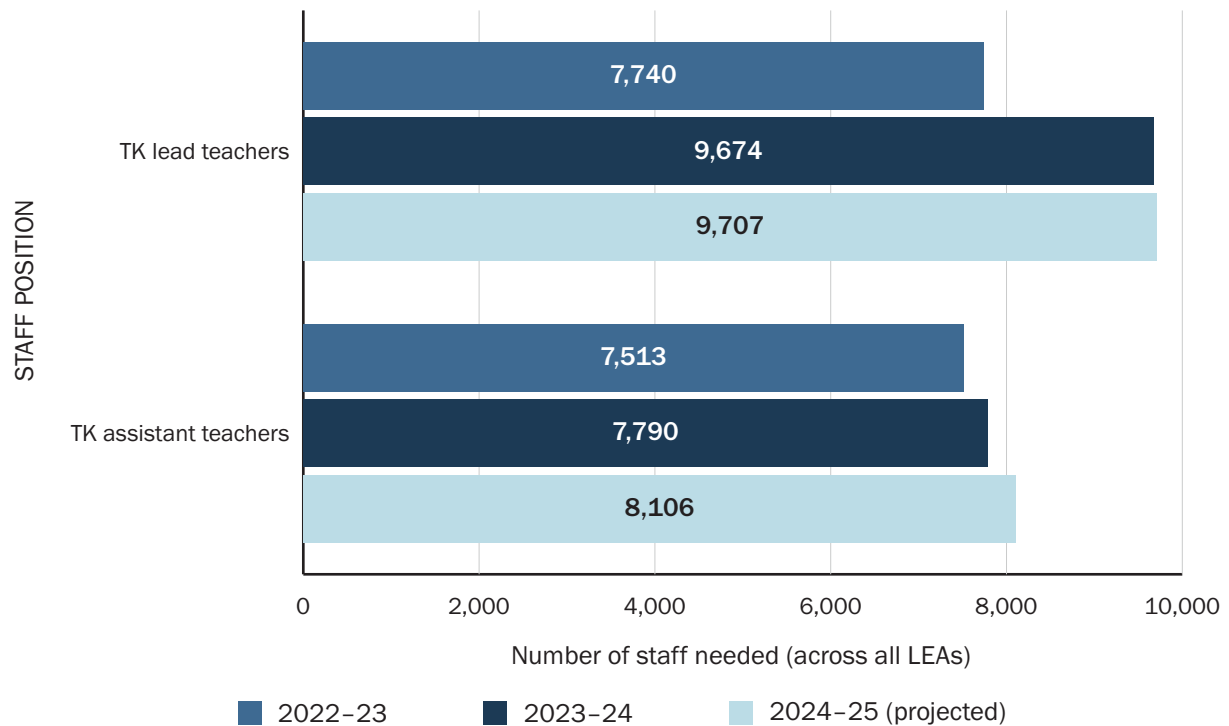
The rapid expansion of TK eligibility and the lowered adult-to-student ratios have required the addition of a substantial number of TK lead teachers and second TK adults (referred to as assistant teachers throughout this report). Overall, LEAs have maintained low TK lead teacher vacancy rates despite growing staffing needs, and they have made progress in lowering vacancy rates for assistant teachers in 2023–24.

How many TK teachers do LEAs need?

Over the course of TK expansion, LEAs have reported an increased need for both TK lead teachers and assistant teachers based on their projected enrollment. The biggest increased need for additional TK lead teachers was between 2022–23 and 2023–24, when LEAs reported needing almost 2,000 additional lead TK teachers across the state (see [Figure 4](#)).³³ The projected additional need for TK teachers in 2024–25 was comparatively small.

Staffing needs for assistant teachers have grown steadily between 2022–23 and 2024–25. The demand for additional support may increase when the new adult-to-student ratios go into effect in the 2025–26 school year.

Figure 4. TK Staffing Needs in 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25



Notes: Data for 2022–23 and 2023–24 are the LEA-reported number of staff positions needed in the 2022–23 and 2023–24 surveys to meet actual enrollment needs each year. Data for 2024–25 are LEAs' estimated staffing needs based on projected enrollment for the 2024–25 school year. TK assistant teachers were referred to on the survey as the “second adult” in a TK classroom.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

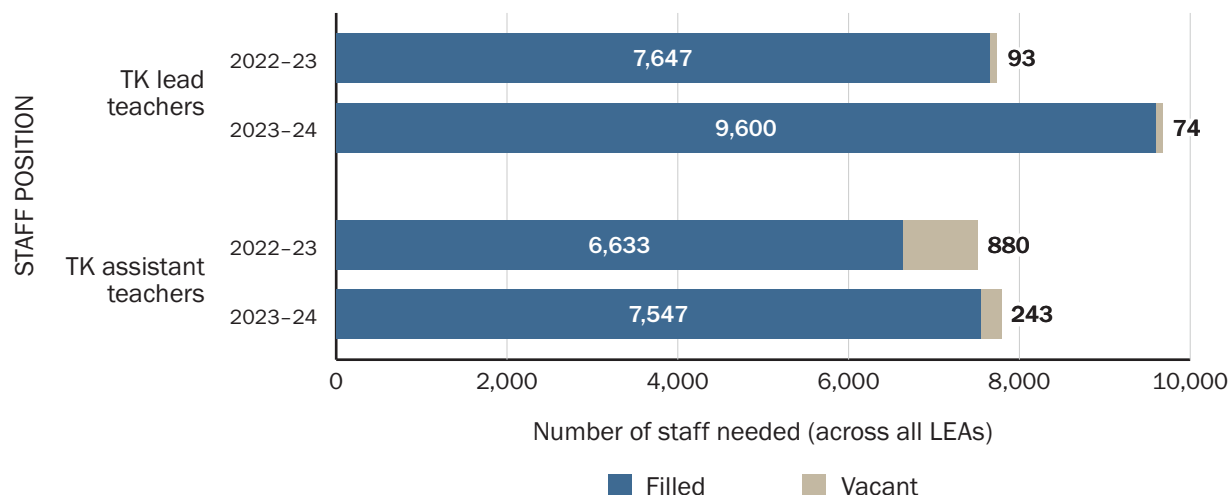
Have LEAs been able to staff TK classroom positions?

LEAs reported filling almost all TK lead teacher positions in both 2022–23 and 2023–24. In the 2022–23 school year, LEAs reported a statewide total of 7,740 TK lead teacher positions, 93 of which were vacant at the beginning of the school year; in 2023–24, LEAs reported a total of 9,674 lead teacher positions, 74 of which were vacant at the beginning of the year (see Figure 5).³⁴ In both the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years, only 1% of TK lead teacher positions were vacant at the beginning of each school year.

In both the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years, only 1% of TK lead teacher positions were vacant at the beginning of each school year.

LEAs have also made progress filling assistant teacher positions in 2023–24. The 2023–24 vacancy rate for assistant teachers in TK classrooms was 3%, with 243 unfilled positions at the beginning of the year, a notable improvement when compared to the 12% vacancy rate, or 880 unfilled positions, at the start of the 2022–23 school year.

Figure 5. TK Staffing Needs and Vacancies at the Beginning of 2022–23 and 2023–24



Note: TK assistant teachers were referred to on the survey as the “second adult” in a TK classroom.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

In open-ended responses, some LEAs noted that the upcoming adult-to-student ratio of 1 adult to 10 students would pose a large challenge. A respondent from a large, suburban LEA noted:

The biggest challenge is having the budget for the second adult to maintain the required ratio of 12:1 and 10:1. Additional funding for TK staffing is needed in these future tough budget years that we will be experiencing.

Did LEAs have enough qualified TK staff?

In 2023–24, 91% of LEAs reported having enough fully qualified TK lead teachers who met upcoming requirements that will begin in 2025–26 (i.e., they will have a valid teaching credential in addition to 24 units of coursework in early childhood education or child development, a Child Development Teacher Permit, or equivalent experience). While there were observable differences across LEA size, they were not statistically significant: 92% of small LEAs, 88% of medium-sized LEAs, and 82% of large LEAs reported having enough fully qualified TK lead teachers who met the 2025–26 requirements.

LEAs were asked to report the number of teachers who met qualification requirements to teach TK, listed below (percentages do not add up to 100% because teachers may qualify under more than one criteria). Among all 2023–24 TK teachers statewide, LEAs reported that:

- 52% had 24 units of ECE, child development, or both;
- 51% had LEA-determined professional experience;
- 39% had a Child Development Teacher Permit or higher; and
- 29% were exempt from the requirement because they taught TK prior to 2015.³⁵

LEAs can determine, based on criteria set by their governing board, whether a teacher's documented professional experience in a preschool-aged classroom setting is comparable to 24 units of early childhood education.³⁶ In open-ended responses, LEAs noted that they primarily considered prior professional experience working in a preschool or TK classroom, requiring from 1 to at least 5 years of full-time experience.

When asked about biggest challenges to universal prekindergarten implementation, recruiting and retaining qualified TK staff emerged as a common challenge. A respondent from a small, rural LEA shared:

Ensuring that there are enough properly credentialed early childhood educators to support the increased enrollment of UPK students is a significant hurdle. The district is working to recruit and retain qualified teachers, but the competition for early education staff, along with specific credentialing requirements, has added pressure.

LEAs, especially those in rural areas, noted that it was difficult to find credentialed TK teachers who meet the required qualifications that will come into effect in 2025–26. A respondent from a small, rural LEA shared:

In a time of a teacher shortage, [in a] small district, in a rural community, finding a teacher that not only has their CA teaching credential, but ADDITIONAL units in ECE, is near impossible.

Professional Development for TK Teachers

Teachers of young children need a wide range of knowledge and skills that prepare them to support children's physical, social and emotional, and academic development, including supporting language, literacy, and math development; establishing safe, caring, and positive relationships with children and families; and recognizing and effectively supporting children's culture, language, and individual needs.³⁷

This section of the report provides findings on the topics and modalities of professional development offered to TK teachers and assistant TK teachers during the 2023–24 school year. The majority of LEAs provided professional development and coaching across a range of early childhood topics for TK teachers.

What professional development did LEAs offer TK teachers and assistant teachers?

Almost all LEAs (97%) provided early childhood professional development opportunities to TK lead teachers, and 84% of LEAs provided professional development to assistant teachers (the “second adult”) in TK classrooms. For TK lead teachers, the most common professional development topics were children's literacy and language development, social-emotional development, curriculum selection and implementation, effective adult-child interactions, and children's math and science development (see [Table 10](#)). The most common professional development topics for assistant teachers were effective adult-child interactions, followed by social-emotional development, literacy and language development, and serving children with disabilities.

LEAs were also asked whether they delivered professional development jointly across TK–3 grade levels, which can contribute to instructional continuity and shared pedagogical strategies across the early grades.³⁸ The majority of LEAs offered professional development for TK staff jointly with kindergarten (87%) or K–3 educators (85%).

Table 10. Professional Development Opportunities Offered to TK Staff in 2023–24

Professional development topic	Percentage of LEAs that offered professional development to:	
	TK lead teachers	TK assistant teachers
Literacy and language development	64%	33%
Social-emotional development	59%	35%
Curriculum selection and implementation	53%	20%
Effective adult-child interactions	51%	48%
Math and science	50%	24%
Creating developmentally informed environments	48%	28%
Child assessments to inform instruction	47%	22%
Serving children with disabilities in inclusive settings	45%	31%
Playful learning across the P–3 continuum	42%	29%
Support for multilingual learners	32%	20%
Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families	27%	17%
Implicit bias and culturally and linguistically responsive practice	27%	18%
Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma- and healing-informed practice	25%	18%
Early childhood behavioral health	21%	13%
Other	4%	7%
Not offered	3%	16%

Notes: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. *N* = 1,415 LEAs.

Source: California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

When asked about biggest challenges to UPK implementation, several districts noted how staffing challenges impacted their professional development needs. A respondent from a medium-sized, suburban district stated:

We continue to welcome new teachers each year who may have limited or no experience with early learning. Training and preparing these teachers to effectively manage and teach in a TK classroom is crucial but can be demanding given the unique developmental needs of TK students. Ensuring consistency in instructional quality despite this turnover remains an ongoing effort.

Additionally, some LEAs noted they had challenges hiring substitute teachers, which made it difficult to release teachers for professional development opportunities.

Did LEAs offer coaching to TK teachers?

When implemented with quality, coaching—providing teachers with collaborative opportunities for observation, modeling, feedback, and reflection from an expert—can be an effective professional learning practice for teachers.³⁹

About four fifths (78%) of LEAs provided coaching to TK lead teachers, most commonly on:

- Literacy and language development (46%);
- Effective adult-child interactions (40%);
- Social-emotional development (39%);
- Math and science (36%); and
- Creating developmentally informed environments (35%).

TK Implementation in Small LEAs

California's small LEAs, which we define as those with fewer than 2,500 students, have unique strengths and challenges in TK implementation. Small LEAs often have strong community connections and flexibility but tend to have lower staff capacity and fewer resources. In the 2023–24 school year, 1,057 small LEAs served a total of 24,305 TK students in California. Of these small LEAs, 55% were charter schools and 45% were school districts. This section outlines trends in how small LEAs differed in TK implementation from medium-sized districts (2,500–20,000 students) and large districts (more than 20,000 students) during the 2023–24 school year. It highlights areas in which additional targeted support, guidance, or resources may be needed. We also examined differences between small school districts and small charter schools and note below where they are statistically significant.

TK Expansion on a Smaller Scale

Small LEAs were more likely to expand TK quickly and for a full day.

- **Early-Admittance TK.** Almost half (44%) of small LEAs offered early-admittance TK, expanding TK eligibility faster than the legislated rollout. In comparison, 35% of medium LEAs and 20% of large LEAs offered early-admittance TK.

- **Providing a Full-Day TK Option.** A large majority (86%) of small LEAs offered a full-day TK option to students, compared to medium LEAs (78%) and large LEAs (68%). Full-day TK is defined as more than 4 hours of instruction.

Implementation Trends of Small LEAs

Survey responses illuminated differences in TK implementation trends between small LEAs and medium or large LEAs. Some of this variability may be due to economies of scale or, in the case of small, rural LEAs, fewer local resources. When examining findings across LEA type, we also find notable differences in TK implementation between small charter schools and small districts that drive the overall trends for small LEAs.

- **TK Classroom Structure.** Small LEAs were less likely to have offered TK stand-alone classes (69%) than medium LEAs (97%) and large LEAs (100%), most likely due to low enrollment. Small LEAs (25%) were notably more likely to have only offered TK–kindergarten combination classes than medium (1%) and large (0%) LEAs. Among small LEAs, districts were somewhat more likely than charters to offer only TK–kindergarten combination classes (29% versus 22%, respectively).
- **Expanded Learning Options.** Fewer small LEAs overall (84%) combined additional early learning or expanded learning programs with TK to extend the instructional day, compared to 93% of medium LEAs and 98% of large LEAs. Small school districts were more likely than small charter schools to offer expanded learning options (91% versus 78%, respectively).
- **Transportation.** Small LEAs were overall less likely to have offered transportation for TK students (44%) than medium (61%) and large (66%) LEAs. However, this trend was mostly driven by charter schools: 79% of small school districts offered transportation, compared to 15% of small charter schools.
- **Coaching.** Small LEAs (78%) were less likely than large LEAs (88%) to have offered coaching to TK lead teachers. Small districts were less likely to offer coaching than small charters (73% versus 91%, respectively).
- **Curriculum.** Small LEAs were more likely than medium and large LEAs to use kindergarten curriculum in their TK classrooms. About one fourth (24%) of small LEAs used kindergarten curriculum in TK in 2023–24, compared to 9% of medium LEAs and 8% of large LEAs. Among small LEAs, charters (28%) were more likely than districts (20%) to have used kindergarten curriculum.
- **Assessment.** Small LEAs (44%) were more likely than large LEAs (30%) to have used LEA-developed benchmarks in TK.

Additionally, in open-ended responses about the biggest challenges with UPK implementation, small LEAs noted challenges related to staffing, facilities, and funding. Several reported difficulties in finding and retaining teachers who meet the state’s credentialing requirements. A respondent from a small, rural LEA shared:

Quite often, instructional staff are hired with out-of-state credentials. These credentials seldom meet California requirements for UPK or transitional kindergarten. Adding to the difficulty is that the closest California university is over 200 miles away.

Other small LEAs mentioned efforts to invest resources to support teachers in meeting TK teacher requirements, followed by struggles to retain these teachers. A respondent from another small, rural LEA recalled:

We had someone going through a program get the required units, and they left after the end of last year, resulting in us having to start over with a teacher to get them qualified to work with TK.

Another challenge small LEAs mentioned was the lack of adequate facility spaces that meet UPK requirements, particularly due to insufficient funds to build or retrofit existing buildings. Due to insufficient space, staff, funds, and/or low TK enrollment, several small LEAs operated combination classes where TK students were integrated with older students or younger preschool children. These mixed-age classrooms posed additional challenges to classroom management, instructional differentiation, and meeting the diverse needs of mixed-age students. A respondent from a small, rural LEA noted:

The biggest challenge is that we are a very small rural district with TK–2 combined classrooms at our two elementary schools. Thus, we have very young 4-year-olds with 7-year-olds. Developmentally, this is a big range with respect to self-control, toileting, taking care of oneself, being able to go all school day without a nap, etc.

Source: California Department of Education. (2024). [Cumulative enrollment data](#) for 2023–24; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

UPK Implementation in Local Education Agencies

Transitional kindergarten (TK) is one of multiple early learning programs that LEAs can provide within California's universal prekindergarten (UPK) system. While school districts are required to offer TK, those with qualifying students, such as students meeting program income-eligibility requirements,⁴⁰ may apply for California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and Head Start contracts or operate other locally funded early learning programs, such as district-funded or special education preschool programs.

While LEAs are just one of many early learning providers in California, they serve a significant number of preschool-aged children and play a large role in UPK expansion across the state. Examining UPK implementation across TK, CSPP, Head Start, and other locally funded early learning programs within LEAs offers valuable insights into the progress of California's UPK initiative over time, particularly regarding how LEAs may potentially be serving 3- and 4-year-olds outside of the TK–12 system. This section of the report shares findings on how LEAs have continued UPK implementation in 2023–24, including UPK service delivery models, staffing, funding challenges, and professional development.

UPK Service Delivery Models

In the 2023–24 school year, 25% of LEAs who offered TK also reported operating CSPP classrooms, whether stand-alone or combined with TK. Five percent of LEAs reported operating at least one Head Start classroom, and 18% operated another early learning program in a stand-alone classroom or combined with TK.

Altogether, inclusive of TK, CSPP, Head Start, and other early learning programs, California LEAs operated 14,709 UPK classrooms in 2023–24. The total number of UPK classrooms decreased from 15,425 in 2022–23. The biggest change between 2022–23 and 2023–24 was a decrease of 953 TK–kindergarten combination classes, while the total number of stand-alone TK and CSPP classrooms increased by 317 (see [Figure 6](#)).⁴¹

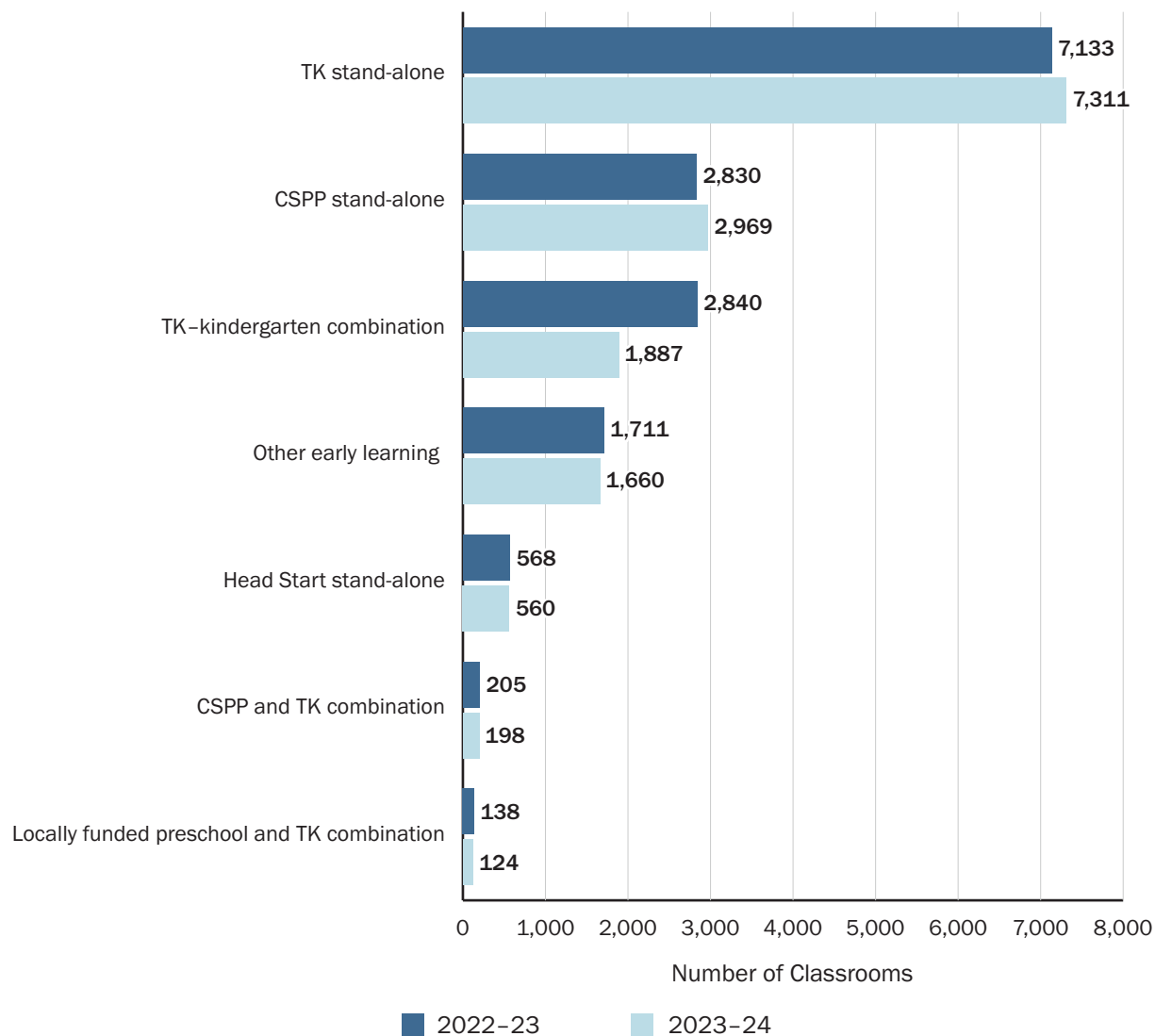
The overall composition of UPK classrooms operated by LEAs has shifted slightly between the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years. Compared to 2022–23, a higher percentage of UPK classrooms were stand-alone TK and CSPP classrooms, and a lower percentage were TK–kindergarten combination classes. In 2023–24, half (50%) of the UPK classrooms in California were stand-alone TK classes, and 20% were stand-alone CSPP classrooms, compared to 46% and 18% in 2022–23, respectively. In contrast, 13% of UPK classrooms were TK–kindergarten combination classes in 2023–24—a decrease from 18% in 2022–23.

In both 2022–23 and 2023–24, 11% of all LEA-operated UPK classrooms were other early learning classes; 4% were stand-alone Head Start classrooms; 1% were CSPP–TK combination classes; and 1% were locally funded preschool and TK combination classes. Inclusion of non-classroom-based LEAs did not markedly change the overall composition of TK delivery models statewide in both years.

In open-ended responses, a representative from a small, urban LEA noted the benefits of having multiple UPK offerings within its programming:

We have enjoyed and have experienced positive feedback from our parent community on our UPK implementation. We operate CSPP and LEA services (TK–5) at our single school site, and the pipeline of educational support provided by the UPK initiative has been a value-add.

**Figure 6. Number of UPK Classrooms in LEAs
by Type in 2022–23 and 2023–24**



Note: This graph includes classroom data from both in-person and non-classroom-based LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

How many UPK classrooms were dual-language immersion or inclusive of students with disabilities?

More than four fifths (83%) of the 14,709 UPK classrooms across all LEAs in 2023–24 were inclusive of students with disabilities, and 7% were dual-language immersion.⁴² TK classes were more likely than other early learning programs to be dual-language immersion, especially TK–kindergarten combination classes. TK, CSPP, and Head Start classes were more likely to be inclusive of students with disabilities than other early learning classes (see [Table 11](#)).

Table 11. Percentage of UPK Classrooms That LEAs Reported Were Dual-Language Immersion or Inclusive of Students With Disabilities in 2023–24, by Classroom Type

UPK classroom type	Percentage dual-language immersion	Percentage inclusive of students with disabilities
TK stand-alone classes	7%	87%
TK–kindergarten combination classes	18%	88%
CSPP and TK combination classes (CSPP funding and ADA funding)	9%	92%
Locally funded preschool and TK combination classes	2%	81%
CSPP stand-alone classes	5%	79%
Head Start stand-alone classes	4%	78%
Other early learning classes	3%	71%
Total	7%	83%

Source: California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

Some differences emerge across LEA size (see [Table 12](#)). A larger percentage (9%) of UPK classrooms in medium-sized LEAs were reported as dual-language immersion classes, compared to 6% of classrooms in both small and large LEAs. A lower percentage (78%) of classrooms within large LEAs were reported as inclusive of students with disabilities, compared to 84% of classrooms in medium-sized LEAs and 92% of classrooms in small LEAs.

Table 12. Percentage of UPK Classrooms That LEAs Reported Were Dual-Language Immersion or Inclusive of Students With Disabilities in 2023–24, by LEA Size

LEA size	Number of UPK classrooms	Percentage dual-language immersion	Percentage inclusive of students with disabilities
Large (> 20,000 students)	5,422	6%	78%
Medium (2,500–20,000 students)	6,761	9%	84%
Small (< 2,500 students)	2,526	6%	92%
Total	14,709	7%	83%

Source: California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

UPK Staffing

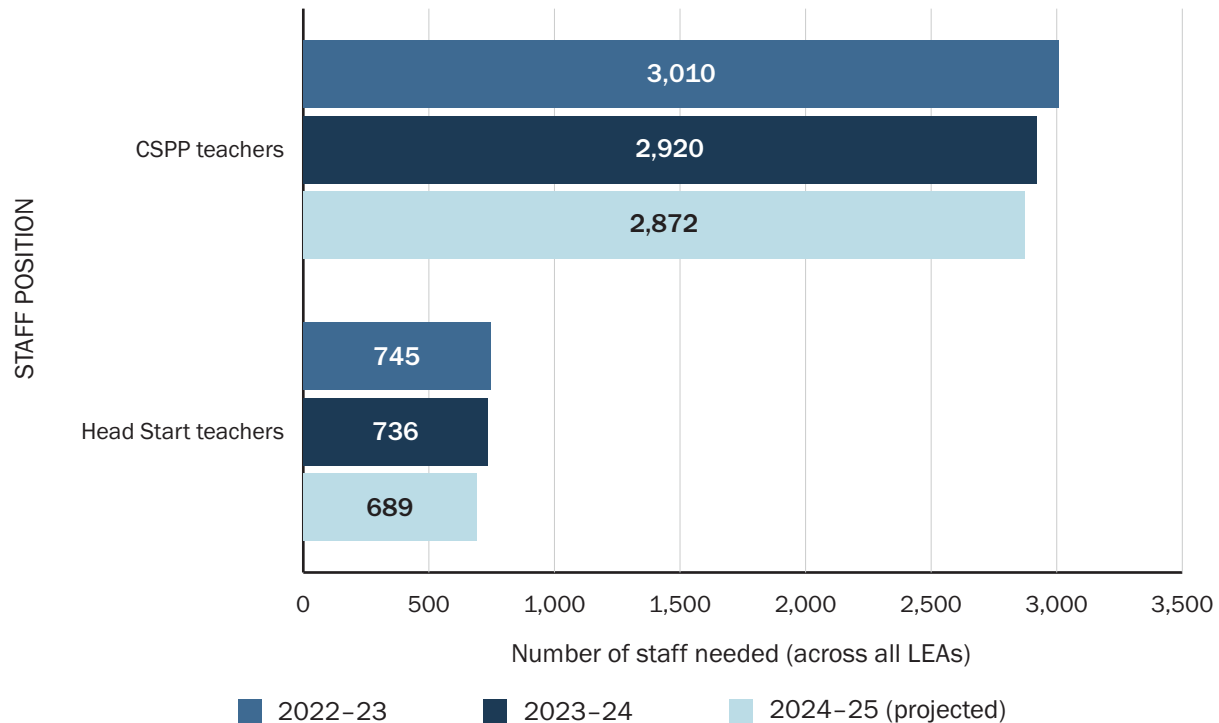
LEAs also provided staffing data for their CSPP and Head Start teachers, most of whom teach 3- and 4-year-olds on LEA campuses. CSPP and Head Start teachers have different qualification requirements than their TK counterparts. Specifically, CSPP teachers must hold at least a Child Development Associate Teacher Permit (requiring 12 units of ECE and at least 50 days of early childhood instructional experience).⁴³ Head Start teachers must have at least an associate degree in ECE, and half of teachers nationally must have a bachelor's degree.⁴⁴ Lead CSPP and Head Start teachers also earn about half the wages of lead teachers in TK.⁴⁵

In 2023–24, LEAs operating CSPP and Head Start reported slight decreases in staffing needs but higher levels of vacancy rates in both programs when compared to 2022–23.

How many CSPP and Head Start teachers do LEAs need?

Because not all LEAs operate CSPP or Head Start contracts, total staffing needs are much lower than TK. The number of CSPP and Head Start teachers needed in LEAs decreased slightly between 2022–23 and 2023–24, with LEAs likewise projecting the need for fewer teachers for the 2024–25 school year (see [Figure 7](#)).

Figure 7. LEAs' CSPP and Head Start Staffing Needs in 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25



Note: Data for 2022–23 and 2023–24 are the LEA-reported number of staff positions needed in the 2022–23 and 2023–24 surveys to meet actual enrollment needs each year. Data for 2024–25 are LEAs' estimated staffing needs based on projected enrollment for the 2024–25 school year. Non-classroom-based LEAs did not report any CSPP or Head Start staffing needs in 2022–23 or 2023–24.

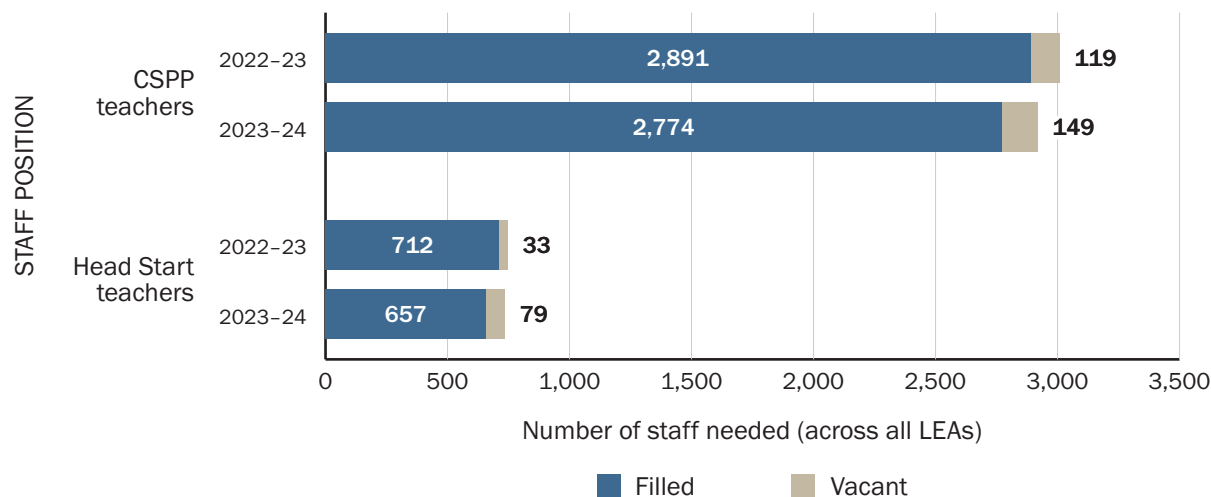
Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

Have LEAs been able to staff CSPP and Head Start classrooms?

While LEAs reported a decreasing need for CSPP and Head Start teachers (see [Figure 7](#)), the overall number of unfilled teaching positions increased in 2023–24, leading to a higher vacancy rate than the prior year.

At the beginning of 2022–23, 3% of CSPP teacher positions were vacant, increasing to 5% in 2023–24.⁴⁶ For Head Start, LEAs reported a 4% vacancy rate in 2022–23, which increased to 11% in 2023–24 (see [Figure 8](#)). The total number of vacancies is relatively low, but the increased vacancy rates indicate a growing challenge with recruiting and retaining CSPP and Head Start staff, consistent with research that identifies high rates of turnover in Head Start and CSPP centers statewide.⁴⁷ Research indicates that low pay is likely a contributing factor to these staffing challenges.⁴⁸

Figure 8. Staffing Needs and Vacancies for CSPP and Head Start at the Beginning of 2022–23 and 2023–24



Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

Professional Development for School Leaders

School leaders who oversee early childhood education programs in LEAs need specialized knowledge and skills in early childhood development and instructional alignment across preschool through 3rd grade; however, many California administrators do not have early learning–specific training or expertise and could benefit from targeted professional development.⁴⁹

What professional development did LEAs offer school leaders?

In the 2023–24 school year, most LEAs (91%) offered professional development on early childhood topics to site leaders and principals, an increase from 85% in 2022–23.

The most common professional development topics for school leaders were literacy and language development, social-emotional development, serving students with disabilities in inclusive settings, effective adult-child interactions, and curriculum selection and implementation. The percentage of LEAs offering professional development increased for all topics except “Other” from 2022–23 to 2023–24 (see [Table 13](#)).

Table 13. Professional Development Opportunities Offered to School Leaders in 2022–23 and 2023–24

Professional development topic	2022–23	2023–24
Literacy and language development	39%	47%
Social-emotional development	35%	47%
Serving children with disabilities in inclusive settings	37%	46%
Effective adult-child interactions	34%	45%
Curriculum selection and implementation	37%	42%
Child assessments to inform instruction	29%	39%
Creating developmentally informed environments	34%	38%
Math and science	28%	34%
Playful learning across the P–3 continuum ^a	n/a	34%
Support for multilingual learners	23%	30%
Implicit bias and culturally and linguistically responsive practice	25%	29%
Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families	21%	28%
Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma- and healing-informed practice	25%	26%
Early childhood behavioral health	13%	18%
Other	3%	3%
Not offered	15%	9%

^a This item was not included in the 2022–23 survey.

Notes: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. N = 1,415 LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

Professional development for site leaders is particularly important since research suggests that TK teachers do not feel their school community has sufficient early childhood expertise to support developmentally appropriate practice.⁵⁰ In open-ended responses about the biggest challenges to UPK implementation, some LEAs mentioned that their administrators lacked experience with early

childhood education, which impacted leaders' abilities to support age-appropriate learning environments, instructional practices, and routines that benefit younger children. A respondent from a medium-sized, suburban district shared:

The elementary schools still have the mindset of academic rigors in the TK grades, which might not be developmentally appropriate for many students. We need to shift the mindset of elementary school leaders and teachers to adopt a more developmental approach, where play and exploration are valued.

Funding UPK Expansion

LEAs were asked an open-ended question about their biggest challenges in universal prekindergarten implementation. As noted throughout the report, reported challenges included building new facilities or retrofitting existing classrooms for young learners; hiring, training, and retaining well-qualified staff; and acquiring age-appropriate instructional resources.

Insufficient funding for UPK implementation underscored many of these challenges. A respondent from a small, rural LEA commented on its impact:

Our small rural district does not have the facilities, nor the funding, to be in compliance with TK and K regulations for rooms. ... Teachers need to be compensated with incentives to go back to school to receive ECE units. ... We do not have adequate funding to support a TK teacher when the TK enrollment is so low.

Another respondent from a medium-sized, suburban LEA shared how funding challenges impacted staffing:

Insufficient funding and the shortage of qualified early childhood educators continues as our largest challenges with the implementation of UPK. ... Insufficient funding [contributes to] inadequate compensation for qualified early childhood educators in addition to the demanding nature of the job. ... Additional funding will help [alleviate] these challenges and help to establish mentorship programs and support networks for early childhood educators.

LEAs also reported struggling to meet state standards around facilities and adult-to-student ratios without additional funding. A respondent from a small, suburban LEA noted:

The need for increased funding to support the 1:10 ratio is crucial. The requirement to extend the day for students as well as implement a brand-new curriculum with limited funding is insurmountable in small districts like ours.

Funding challenges emerged for small LEAs with low TK enrollment, as well as "basic aid" districts that receive little state funding because their revenue from local taxes exceeds what it would receive under the state's funding formula. A respondent from a small, urban LEA shared:

We are a basic aid district and have to expand classrooms as the age requirements have changed, yet we get no extra funding. Each classroom that we add costs about \$200,000 in personnel alone, not to mention the needs for supplies, facilities upgrades, and all of the other things that come with opening new classes.

Finally, one respondent from a medium-sized, suburban LEA described efforts to address funding challenges through community partnerships but noted a need for clearer models and guidance:

The LEA has actively sought to address funding deficits through innovative solutions, partnering with community-based organizations and county offices to share costs. But as much as we value these partnerships, we know they are not a panacea. While promising in theory, the mixed-delivery models that have been explored often reveal a deeper issue: the lack of local templates for truly braided funding and shared investment. Without clear examples of how partnerships can function with equal commitment and resource sharing, LEAs are often left charting unknown territory, making implementation difficult.

Technical Assistance Needs

LEAs were required to report on the kind of technical assistance they needed to support UPK implementation. The most commonly identified technical assistance needs spanned several areas of UPK implementation, including modifying facilities and increasing enrollment; expanding professional development and coaching for teachers and site leaders; and developmentally appropriate learning environments and instruction (see [Table 14](#)).⁵¹ The top technical assistance needs remained consistent between 2022–23 and 2023–24.

Table 14. Technical Assistance Topics Most Requested by LEAs in 2022–23 and 2023–24 for UPK Implementation

Technical assistance topic	2022–23	2023–24
Guidance on how to modify an elementary school classroom to serve young children	56%	57%
Coaching and mentoring	52%	52%
Creating professional learning opportunities to provide site leaders with more early childhood knowledge	49%	50%
Increasing UPK enrollment and parent awareness of programs	47%	49%
Encouraging purposeful play, choice, social interactions, and collaboration	44%	48%
Professional development opportunities: Literacy and language development	50%	47%
Modifying district data systems	46%	47%
Professional development opportunities: Math and science development	46%	47%
Support for parent surveys	51%	47%
Practices to address the increase in children who will need toileting assistance ^a	n/a	45%
Classroom observations and demonstration lessons with colleagues	44%	45%
Professional development opportunities: Social-emotional development	45%	45%

^a This item was not included in the 2022–23 survey.

Note: Respondents could select more than one option; percentages do not add up to 100%. Respondents were asked to identify desired technical assistance from a list of about 70 items. *N* = 1,415 LEAs.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2023). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*; California Department of Education. (2024). *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey*.

Conclusion

The results of the 2023–24 Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Survey provide valuable insights into how local education agencies (LEAs) have progressed in the implementation of transitional kindergarten (TK) for all 4-year-olds in California, as well as universal prekindergarten (UPK) implementation broadly.

We find that LEAs made notable progress in TK expansion between 2022–23 and 2023–24, with a larger percentage of LEAs offering TK at all elementary sites and providing full-day TK. In addition to TK, many LEAs continue to offer programs such as California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and other early learning programs. More LEAs reported having enough classroom space to meet projected TK enrollment than in the previous year, though facilities remain a top challenge in UPK implementation. A growing percentage of LEAs adopted strategies to support social and emotional learning, students with disabilities, and toileting in TK classrooms. Staffing shortages have also improved, particularly for assistant TK teachers needed to meet adult-to-student ratios in TK classrooms. Finally, most LEAs provided professional development in early childhood education topics to TK teachers and school leaders.

To continue making progress, the survey findings identified key challenges that a number of LEAs need to overcome to ensure strong UPK implementation. LEAs need to:

- build and adapt facilities appropriate for 4-year-olds, including bathrooms and playground equipment;
- recruit, train, and retain qualified staff, particularly in CSPP and Head Start, and hire sufficient staff to meet the new 1:10 adult-to-student ratio in TK;
- establish learning environments with developmentally appropriate curriculum, assessments, and professional development, especially in TK classes that rely on kindergarten curriculum;
- provide services and equip staff to support an influx of students with special needs; and
- have sufficient funding to support new and renovated facilities, staffing, and access to developmentally appropriate instructional resources.

As California continues its UPK expansion efforts, these findings highlight opportunities for the state to further support LEAs to broaden access and improve quality across UPK programs. The state can:

- ensure adequate access to TK facilities resources from the new TK–12 facilities bond that replaced the Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program;⁵²
- provide funding for meeting the new 1:10 ratio requirements, as included in the governor’s 2025 budget proposal;⁵³
- update reimbursement rates to provide publicly funded preschool and child care programs with more resources for staff wages;⁵⁴
- offer technical assistance on the design and selection of curriculum and assessments in TK;

- support the provision of high-quality teacher professional development through targeted grants, such as the Early Educator Teacher Development Grant;⁵⁵
- provide school leaders with opportunities for targeted professional development on early childhood topics; and
- expand supports for inclusive classrooms, such as the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program.⁵⁶

Furthermore, to better understand the impact of California’s historic investment in universal prekindergarten, ongoing monitoring of its implementation is essential. A closer look at how LEAs are teaching, assessing, and supporting multilingual learners in UPK classrooms can help identify ways to enhance state support for the 40% of California students who speak a language other than English at home. While the majority of LEAs are offering expanded learning options, collecting data on expanded learning enrollment and offerings may provide additional insight into whether families of TK students have access to a developmentally appropriate full day of care. Additionally, while the survey presented in this report offers important data on UPK implementation within LEAs, gathering more information about non-LEA UPK providers—such as community-based centers, family child care, and family, friend, or neighbor arrangements—could shed light on the broader effects of UPK expansion and reveal opportunities for supporting a strong, universal system. Finally, research into how California families are navigating and experiencing the UPK system can offer valuable insights into whether the programs are meeting their needs.

Overall, UPK expansion in California—particularly transitional kindergarten—is progressing quickly and well. As California moves forward with UPK expansion, continued investment and targeted support will be critical to ensuring high-quality early learning opportunities for all early learners in the state.

Endnotes

1. Meloy, B., Gardner, M., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). *Untangling the evidence on preschool effectiveness: Insights for policymakers*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/untangling-evidence-preschool-effectiveness-report>; Phillips, D. A., Lipsey, M. W., Dodge, K. A., Haskins, R., Bassok, D., Burchinal, M. R., Duncan, G. J., Dynarski, M., Magnuson, K. A., & Weiland, C. (2017). *Puzzling it out: The current state of scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects. A consensus statement*. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/puzzling-it-out-the-current-state-of-scientific-knowledge-on-pre-kindergarten-effects/>
2. Wechsler, M., Melnick, H., Maier, A., & Bishop, J. (2016). *The building blocks of high-quality early childhood education programs* [Policy brief]. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/building-blocks-high-quality-early-childhood-education-programs>; Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M. R., Espinosa, L. M., Gormley, W. T., Ludwig, J., Magnuson, K. A., Phillips, D., & Zaslow, M. J. (2013). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. Foundation for Child Development. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED579818.pdf>
3. California Department of Education. *Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=5753>
4. California Department of Education. (2025). *2023–24 Universal prekindergarten planning and implementation—Results from program reports for school districts and charter schools*. <https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/resources/143081/2023-24-upk-program-report-data-local-educational-agencies>
5. The original survey data set received from the California Department of Education contained 854 self-reported school districts and 652 self-reported charter schools. When merging the survey data set with California’s 2023–24 cumulative enrollment data, we found 6 charter schools that had mistakenly self-reported as school districts in the survey. These 6 charter schools were recoded as charter schools within the final survey data set, resulting in a final survey sample of 848 school districts and 658 charter schools.
6. The total number of school districts (elementary and unified) and charters (elementary and K–12) was calculated from data retrieved from: California Department of Education. (2024). *Fingertip facts on education in California*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/ceffingertipfacts.asp> (accessed 03/25/2024). County offices of education were asked a different set of questions and thus not included in this analysis.
7. 1,429 LEAs responded to the survey for 2022–23; 1,506 LEAs responded in 2023–24. 1,405 LEAs took both the 2022–23 and 2023–24 surveys. In 2022–23, 40 charter schools self-reported as virtual, homeschool, or independent study programs.
8. Response differences among small, medium, and large LEAs analyzed for statistical significance using a Wald test, with findings considered statistically significant for $p < 0.1$. The Wald test was selected to identify independent differences between small LEAs and medium LEAs, and small LEAs and large LEAs. Response differences between the 2022–23 and 2023–24 surveys were also analyzed for statistical significance using a Wald test.
9. The analysis of the 1,415 open-ended responses was generated in part by ChatGPT. We first cleaned the data set by filtering responses to exclude 98 LEAs that reported they did not face any challenges or provided non-answers such as “N/A.” We also removed 139 duplicated responses exceeding 20 characters in length; these were often from charter school networks or charters and districts that shared the same name. We then provided the data to ChatGPT to identify key themes and illustrative quotes. The model used for the analyses was GPT-4o, with a low temperature setting of 0.15 to minimize randomness of the output and allow for greater precision in the generated text. The data was provided to ChatGPT in two ways. First, we randomized the survey responses and divided the data into five batches, prompting ChatGPT to analyze each batch separately and then consolidating its findings. Second, to gain deeper insights into policy-relevant themes—such as serving students with disabilities or challenges unique to rural and small LEAs—we filtered the data using keyword searches and prompted ChatGPT for additional analyses. Authors of this memo manually coded a random 10% of the data to verify that the key themes aligned with ChatGPT’s findings. Authors also verified all outputs for accuracy and identified additional salient quotes.
10. Prior to 2010, children who turned 5 by December 1 had been eligible for kindergarten. California Education Code § 48000 (2021).
11. California Education Code § 48000(g) (2021).
12. California Department of Education. *Local Control Funding Formula overview*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp> (accessed 04/11/2025).

13. California Department of Education. (2024). *2023–24 Advance apportionment ADA: Section 75.70*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/pa/ada75702324.asp> (accessed 04/11/2025); Kaplan, J. (2025). *California's Local Control Funding Formula: Next steps toward equity*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/820.131>
14. The California Department of Education states that all LEAs offering kindergarten must offer transitional kindergarten for age-eligible children and “no age-eligible child may be denied access to TK by being placed on a waiting list.” California Department of Education. (2025). *Transitional kindergarten FAQ*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp>. (accessed 04/11/2025).
15. California Department of Education. (2022). *Universal prekindergarten FAQs*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp#is-a-school-district-required-to-offer-transitional-kindergarten-tk-and-kindergarten-programs-updated-27-may-2022> (accessed 04/11/2025).
16. Basic aid districts fund their schools entirely through local property tax and do not receive general-purpose funding from the state.
17. Bipartisan Policy Center. (2019). *Nationwide child care poll: Child care costs impact families' employment, savings, and future planning*. <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/child-care-poll/>; Chaudry, A., Pedroza, J. M., Sandstrom, H., Danziger, A., Grosz, M., Scott, M., & Ting, S. (2011). *Child care choices of low-income working families*. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/child-care-choices-low-income-working-families>; Hill, L., & Prunty, E. (2022). *Setting the stage for universal preschool: Is transitional kindergarten serving students equitably?* <https://www.ppic.org/publication/setting-the-stage-for-universal-preschool/>
18. Katz, L., Evangelou, D., & Hartman, J. A. (1990). *The case for mixed-age classrooms in early education*. National Association for the Education of Young Children; California Education Code § 48000 (2023).
19. Manship, K., Holod, A., Quick, H., Ogut, B., Brodziak de los Reyes, I., Anthony, J., Chernoff, J. J., Hauser, A., Martin, A., Keuter, S., Vontsolos, E., Rein, E., & Anderson, E. (2017). *The impact of transitional kindergarten on California students: Final report from the study of California's transitional kindergarten program*. American Institutes for Research. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED609085.pdf>
20. In 2023–24, LEAs operated a total of 9,520 TK classrooms, 357 of which were reported by the 56 non-classroom-based LEAs. In 2022–23, LEAs operated a total of 10,316 TK classrooms, 362 of which were reported by 40 non-classroom-based LEAs. Inclusion of non-classroom-based classrooms did not markedly change the overall composition of TK delivery models statewide in either year.
21. Reynolds, A. J., Richardson, B. A., Hayakawa, M., Lease, E. M., Warner-Richter, M., Englund, M. M., Ou, S., & Sullivan, M. (2014). Association of a full-day vs part-day preschool intervention with school readiness, attendance, and parent involvement. *JAMA*, 312(20), 2126–2134.
22. Federal law does require public transportation for certain student populations; Legislative Analyst's Office. (2014). *Review of school transportation in California*. <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2014/education/school-transportation/school-transportation-022514.pdf>
23. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2024). *A new vision for high-quality preschool curriculum*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/27429>
24. California Education Code § 48000(c)(1) (2024).
25. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2024). *A new vision for high-quality preschool curriculum*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/27429>
26. Engel, M., Claessens, A., & Finch, M. (2011). Teaching students what they already know? The (mis)alignment between mathematics instructional content and student knowledge in kindergarten. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 35(2), 157–178. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737124618>
27. For a full list of curricula reported by LEAs, see California Department of Education. (2025). *2023–24 Universal prekindergarten planning and implementation—Results from program reports for school districts and charter schools*. <https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/resources/143081/2023-24-upk-program-report-data-local-educational-agencies> (accessed 05/05/2025).
28. California Department of Education. (2024). *Interim guidance on transitional kindergarten students and English language proficiency testing*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/tkguidanceletter.asp> (accessed 04/03/2025).

29. Broekhuizen, M. L., Mokrova, I. L., Burchinal, M. R., Garrett-Peters, P. T., & Family Life Project Key Investigators. (2016). Classroom quality at pre-kindergarten and kindergarten and children's social skills and behavior problems. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 36(3), 212–222. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2016.01.005>; Murano, D., Sawyer, J. E., & Lipnevich, A. A. (2020). A meta-analytic review of preschool social and emotional learning interventions. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(2), 227–263. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320914743>
30. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. (2004).
31. In 2024, the California Department of Education published a toileting toolkit in response to the inclusion of younger 4-year-olds in TK and increasing toileting challenges in the field. California Department of Education. (2024). *Developmentally appropriate toileting practices toolkit*. <https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/resources/124848/developmentally-appropriate-toileting-practices-toolkit-final> (accessed 04/02/2025).
32. California Department of Education. (2023). *Transitional kindergarten FAQs*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/it/tkfiscalfaq.asp#what-are-the-penalties-for-not-meeting-the-transitional-kindergarten-tk-requirements-for-class-size-adult-to-student-ratios-and-teacher-credentialing-updated-26-sep-2023> (accessed 04/08/2025).
33. The total number of positions provided includes all LEAs, including non-classroom-based LEAs. In 2022–23, 40 non-classroom-based LEAs reported needing 242 TK lead teachers. In 2023–24, 56 non-classroom-based LEAs reported needing 932 TK lead teachers, and they projected needing 880 TK lead teachers for the 2024–25 school year. Overall statewide vacancy rates for both TK lead and assistant teachers are not affected by the inclusion or exclusion of non-classroom-based LEAs.
34. In this survey, “vacant” positions were defined as necessary positions for actual enrollment that had gone unfilled. The total number of positions provided includes all LEAs, including non-classroom-based LEAs. In 2022–23, 40 non-classroom-based LEAs reported needing 14 TK assistant teachers; in 2023–24, 56 non-classroom-based LEAs reported needing 4 TK assistant teachers. These LEAs reported no vacancies in either year.
35. California Education Code § 48000(g)(4) (2024).
36. California Education Code § 48000(g)(4)(B) (2024).
37. Pianta, R., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Bryant, D., Clifford, R., Early, D., & Barbarin, O. (2005). Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: Do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interactions? *Applied Developmental Science*, 9(3), 144–159. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads0903_2
38. Stipek, D., Franke, M., Clements, D., Farran, D., & Coburn, C. (2017). PK–3: What does it mean for instruction? *Social Policy Report*, 30(2), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2379-3988.2017.tb00087.x>
39. Schachner, A., Yun, C., Melnick, H., & Barajas, J. (2024). *Coaching at scale: A strategy for strengthening the early learning workforce*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/984.909>
40. Three- and 4-year-olds may be eligible for CSPP if the child or family is a current aid recipient, income-eligible (less than 100% of the state median income), is experiencing homelessness, is a recipient of child protective services, has a disability, or meets additional eligibility circumstances, noted here: California Department of Education. (2025). *Management Bulletin 23-01*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/mb2301.asp> (accessed 04/03/2025). Three- and 4-year-olds may be eligible for Head Start if they meet income-eligibility, are experiencing homelessness, or meet additional eligibility circumstances, noted here: United States Department of Health & Human Services. (2024). *Section 645: Participation in Head Start Programs*. <https://www.headstart.gov/policy/head-start-act/sec-645-participation-head-start-programs> (accessed 04/03/2025).
41. The total number of classrooms provided includes all LEAs, including non-classroom-based LEAs. In 2022–23, 40 non-classroom-based LEAs reported 18 TK stand-alone, 337 TK–kindergarten combination, 146 other early learning, and 7 locally funded preschool and TK combination classrooms. In 2023–24, 56 non-classroom-based LEAs reported 253 TK stand-alone, 101 TK–kindergarten combination, 60 other early learning, and 3 locally funded preschool and TK combination classrooms.
42. The survey asked for the number of classrooms that were “inclusive of students with disabilities, providing the least restrictive environment for learning.” The survey also asked LEAs to report the number of classrooms that were “dual-language immersion,” but did not clarify specific models for dual-language classrooms. Respondents were prompted with an open-response question if they selected “Other early learning classes.” Common write-ins included infant and toddler classrooms, special education preschool, district or locally funded preschool, and tuition-based preschool.

43. California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2023). *Child development permits (CL-797)*. [https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/child-development-permits-\(cl-797\)](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/child-development-permits-(cl-797)) (accessed 03/06/2025); California Department of Education. (2024). *CSPP staffing qualifications*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/cspstaffqual.asp> (accessed 02/27/2025)
44. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.) *Head Start policy and regulations: Staff qualifications and competency requirements*. <https://headstart.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-91-staff-qualifications-competency-requirements> (accessed 12/27/2025).
45. Powell, A., Montoya, E., Austin, L. J. E., & Kim, Y. (2022). *Double or nothing? Potential TK wages for California's early educators*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/data-snapshot/double-or-nothing-potential-tk-wages-for-californias-early-educators/>; Head Start has recently required higher wages for teachers, but it is unclear how these changes have impacted teacher pay yet; Administration for Children & Families. (2024). *HHS strengthens Head Start by requiring higher wages for staff*. <https://acf.gov/archive/media/press/2024/hhs-strengthens-head-start-higher-wages#:~:text=The%20new%20rule%2C%20titled%20Supporting,to%20children%20furthest%20from%20opportunity>
46. In this survey, “vacant” positions were defined as necessary positions for actual enrollment that had gone unfilled.
47. Powell, A., Muruvi, W., Copeman Petig, A., & Austin, L. J. E. (2025). *2024 Profiles of California early care and education programs: Enrollment and staffing trends*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/data-snapshot/california-program-profiles-2024>
48. Powell, A., Muruvi, W., Copeman Petig, A., & Austin, L. J. E. (2025). *2024 Profiles of California early care and education programs: Enrollment and staffing trends*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/data-snapshot/california-program-profiles-2024>
49. Kauerz, K., Ballard, R., Soli, M., & Hagerman, S. (2021). *Leading learning communities: A principal's guide to early learning and the early grades (pre-K–3rd grade)*. National Association of Elementary School Principals; Stipek, D., & colleagues. (2018). *Getting Down to Facts II: Early childhood education in California*. Stanford University & Policy Analysis for California Education. https://www.gettingdowntofacts.com/sites/default/files/2018-09/GDTFII_Report_Stipek.pdf
50. Montoya, E., Powell, A., Austin, L. J. E., Kim, Y., Muruvi, W., & Copeman Petig, A. (2022). *Teaching transitional kindergarten: A snapshot of the teacher experience before UTK expansion*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/report/teaching-transitional-kindergarten/>
51. The most common technical assistance request was general support with finding workshops with external professional development providers (60%); because later items provided more specificity on professional modality and topic, this item was removed from the table. Other items listed in this table were requested by 45% or more of LEAs in 2023–24. The percentage of LEAs requesting listed technical assistance ranged from 9% to 60%.
52. In 2021, this program was expanded to fund preschool, TK, and kindergarten facilities. It was discontinued with the expectation that new bond funding for TK–12 facilities would fill the same need. California Department of Education. *Facilities for early education*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/facilitiesgrant.asp> (accessed 04/24/2025).
53. State of California. (2025). *2025–26 GB budget summary, TK–12 education*. <https://ebudget.ca.gov/2025-26/pdf/BudgetSummary/TK-12Education.pdf> (accessed 04/24/2025).
54. California Department of Social Services. *Rate reform and quality*. <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-and-development/rate-reform-and-quality> (accessed 04/24/2025).
55. California Department of Education. *Early Educator Teacher Development Grant*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=5771> (accessed 04/24/2025).
56. California Department of Education. *Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r2/ieeexpansionrfa.asp> (accessed 04/24/2025).

About the Authors

Victoria Wang is a Researcher and Policy Associate at the Learning Policy Institute (LPI). In her role, she supports research and policy initiatives on the Early Childhood Learning and Educator Quality teams. Her work focuses on policies and practices that improve early learning systems and early educator preparation in California, as well as high-quality teacher preparation pathways in Texas. Prior to LPI, Wang conducted education policy research and taught preschool and kindergarten in Austin, TX. She holds an MEd in Educational Policy and Planning and an MEd in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Texas at Austin, and a BA in Comparative Human Development from the University of Chicago.

Hanna Melnick is a Senior Policy Advisor and Director of Early Learning Policy at LPI, where she coleads the Early Childhood Learning team. Her work centers on policies that can improve early learning systems in California and other states, particularly preparing a high-quality, diverse educator workforce. She is also a member of the Deeper Learning team, with a focus on school climate and social and emotional learning. She is a coauthor of several LPI reports as well as two books. Before joining LPI, Melnick was a public school teacher in East Palo Alto and San Jose, CA, where she started as a Teach For America corps member. After leaving the classroom, Melnick consulted for PreK–12 and early childhood education organizations on issues related to California’s Local Control Funding Formula and the coordination of public preschool and subsidized child care.

Melanie Leung-Gagné is a Researcher at LPI. She is a quantitative researcher focused on school discipline and the educator workforce. Her analyses combine complex survey data sets to identify high-leverage opportunities for federal and state policy interventions that will improve education quality and equity. Her specific issue areas include discipline disparities, school climate, teacher shortages, teacher diversity, principal professional learning, and curricular access. Prior to joining LPI, she worked as an education journalist in Hong Kong and as an education researcher in India and the United Arab Emirates. She was also an English and music teacher at an elementary school for migrant workers’ children in mainland China.

Shaakira Parker is a Policy and Research Intern at LPI. She is currently a doctoral student in social policy at Brandeis University, interested in the intersection of early childhood education and early childhood mental health, the disruption of the cradle-to-prison pipeline, and disparities in exclusionary discipline practices in early childhood settings. Prior to pursuing a PhD, Parker worked at the National Academies, where she supported a study focused on improving the child and adolescent health care system. She also has experience with early childhood health policy and advocacy through her work as a policy associate at Children’s National Hospital, as well as prior experience as a preschool teacher. Parker has an MPH degree from George Washington University and a BS in Child Development from Vanderbilt University.

Marjorie E. Wechsler is the Principal Research Manager at LPI. She leads mixed-methods research studies related to early childhood learning and teacher and leader quality. Her work at LPI focuses on supporting and documenting systems change to advance equity. Wechsler was the lead author of the book *On the Road to High-Quality Early Learning: Changing Children’s Lives*. She also coauthored *Preparing Leaders for Deeper Learning* (Harvard Education Press), *Developing Expert Principals: Professional Learning That Matters* (Routledge), and *Disrupting Disruption: The Steady Work of Transforming Schools* (Oxford University Press). Wechsler received her doctorate in Education Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University, a Master of Education in Education Policy from Harvard University, and a teaching credential and bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Brandeis University.



1530 Page Mill Road, Suite 250
Palo Alto, CA 94304
p: 650.332.9797

1100 17th Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
p: 202.830.0079

learningpolicyinstitute.org

The Learning Policy Institute conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, the Institute seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the Institute connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system from preschool through college and career readiness.