

Early Childhood Education and Care



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Three Angels Preschool/Infant Center—A Success Story

I visited a center recently, and I was blessed by what I saw and what I experienced: A friendly, knowledgeable, calm director, Mary Wiggins, smiling teachers and children peacefully napping.

I walked into the infant's room and I heard the calm, quiet rendition of "Amazing Grace" being played over a small sound system. I thanked the teacher for



playing hymns for our young infants; hymns that will carry them for their entire life; that will attach themselves to the child's memory and souls; hymns that will attach themselves to not only the cognitive memories of the children but to the emotional memories of the children.

The teacher said, "Some parents complain that we're playing the same CDs over and over". I replied: "Don't you worry about that... Tell the parents that you are building the child's memory by playing these CDs repeatedly:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"
Philippians 4:13.

Sensorial memory; emotional memory; spiritual memory. Keep up the good work."

Mary and I walked into the toddler and preschool classrooms. The children were quietly resting. Again, the sound of soothing classical music drifted across the classroom. The classroom was clean, tidy. It was orderly. Everything was in its place. Beautiful displays were on the wall as well as along the shelves. Adequate activities were obvious, but their presentation was calming.

Next, we visited the school-age classroom and saw the children sitting on their naptime mats. A few were kneeling on their mat while one or two were lying down. As I walked in, the teacher introduced me to the children. The children greeted me and then continued with their naptime rituals. I had walked into the classroom just as the children were preparing to have prayer before nap. After prayer, every single child lay down on their mat, quietly covered up and peacefully closed their eyes. A few waved good-bye to me as I left.

We then went out to the playground. The playground that

"I pray as I walk down these hallways and... it... happens."

had been an expensive structure on a dirt mound surrounded by dead grass was gone. In its place was a grassy area, a large sand-play area and some play structures surrounded by wood chips. Nicely defined play areas. Plenty of room and space; plenty of shade; plenty of running space; plenty of large motor activities as well as small motor activities as well as social activities. This was indeed a relaxed and enjoyable outdoor play space.

I looked at Mary, who has been at the center for only 3 ½ years and asked, "How have you been able to do this? Playgrounds are expensive to build and renovate!"



She looked at me and said, "I pray as I walk down these hallways and... it... happens. At a time when enrollment is

(Continued on page 4)

Transitional Kindergarten

Thousands of 4-year-olds will be held back from entering California's kindergartens under a bill approved by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The law moves up the cutoff date by one month each year for three years, from the current December 2 deadline to September 1.

The law, signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger last month, will require California school districts to offer a kind of preparatory kindergarten for children who turn 5 after the cutoff date for entering kindergarten in the fall, and the beginning of the second semester.

Transitional kindergarten would provide **two years** of preparation for the first grade, which supporters say would boost test scores and reduce special education placements and the number of students held back a grade.

The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates the state could save \$700 million per year by reducing enrollment. The money will go to fund "transitional kindergarten" programs for 4-year-olds who are no longer eligible for kindergarten. The state Department of Education says about 100,000 of California's 430,000 kindergartners start before their 5th birthday.

The unfortunate and inaccurate perception among K-12 educators is that most preschool programs concentrate on helping kids socialize with their peers and interact in groups. Transitional

kindergarten will go a step further by teaching more sophisticated concepts, such as pronouncing the sounds of the alphabet, identifying shapes and colors, and learning the values associated with numeric symbols.



Transitional Kindergarten "... is an opportunity to help these children get a better preparation for kindergarten in the fall," says Abe Doctolero, assistant superintendent for education services for the Pittsburg (CA) district.

According to Pittsburg (CA) Superintendent Linda Rondeau, "Children, with the right amount of support, could either be ready for first grade or more than ready for kindergarten," she said. "It's another opportunity for having a child in an academic environment."

How does this new law impact private and faith-based early childhood programs? It will depend on how young the age limit is set for Transitional Kindergarten enrollees. Private and faith-based early childhood programs could find themselves

with fewer preschool and pre-kindergarten children as a result.

The State is requiring public school districts to create another grade - a Transitional Kindergarten classroom. So a child would graduate from Pre-Kindergarten and move directly into a Transitional Kindergarten room. From there, it would be an administrative decision as to whether or not the child would enter Kindergarten or move directly into the first grade.

How should we respond to this new law and its wake?

Well, we've gone from educators thinking that young children needed preschool in order to succeed in school to educators deciding that young children needed Pre-Kindergarten in order to succeed in school. Now, educators have decided that



young children need a Transitional Kindergarten in order to succeed in school. So far, early childhood professionals have accommodated the changes honorably and still remained true to developmentally appropriate best practices.

Perhaps the best way to respond is to establish a new classroom within your existing early childhood program specifically for Transitional Kindergarten. School-based pre-kindergarten classrooms should consider doing

Tuition Assistance Fund



Louise Stoney of the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance (Oct. 2010), recently presented the concept of the "iron triangle of ECE."

When seeking to balance their budgets, early childhood program directors typically focus on their rate... (tuition). Rates are indeed important; however early care and education program income is also profoundly influenced by two other factors: enrollment and fee collection. These three factors form the “iron triangle” of early care and education finance. Paying close attention to the three sides of the iron triangle is key to sound fiscal management....

Both enrollment and fee collection impact actual per-child costs. If a program is not fully enrolled, the per-child cost increases. If bad debts go up (fees are not being collected), the per-child cost increases. In some cases, a budget gap can be addressed by boosting enrollment and/or lowering bad debt rather than raising fees. The three factors are interrelated. In tough fiscal times, when third-party funders are cutting budgets and parents are squeezed financially, ECE programs often face a difficult choice: keep fees high and risk increased vacancy rates and higher bad debt, or lower fees to boost cash flow. Unfortunately, the right answer is not simple or obvious, and it may vary from center to center based on the services offered and the families served. (*Read the entire article at <http://www.earlychildhoodfinance.org/finanace/finance-strategies>*)

One solution to the “iron triangle” scenario is to purposefully develop and maintain a Tuition Assistance Fund (TAF). Sure, companies, corporations and individuals are willing to donate to a worthy cause such as TAF, but really, the easiest way to create a TAF is to place the option in the center’s enrollment package. In each enrollment package, place a brief explanation of the Tuition Assistance Fund and how clientele can contribute to the fund through several options. Because Adventist early childhood programs are part of the Seventh-day Adventist church, donations to a TAF can be charitable contribution tax deductions.

Scenario 1: A client pays the full time rate but only uses part time care for their child. The tuition difference is placed in the Tuition Assistance Fund.

Scenario 2: Tuition fees for part time care are elevated by 15-25%. The additional amount is placed in the Tuition Assistance Fund.

Tuition Assistance Fund monies should never be used for annual budget expenditures or other special projects. It is only used for tuition assistance. Clientele (or potential clientele) can apply for tuition assistance. Eligibility can be based on the family’s stated need and should only assist them for a specific period of time. Long term assistance can be applied for from local, state and federal agencies. Eligible families can receive a discounted rate for child care. The discounted rate is then subsidized through the Tuition Assistance Fund. In that way, the center retains clientele without losing tuition because of the discounted rate.

Need more information on how to develop and use a Tuition Assistance Fund? Call or e-mail our office: (805) 413-7342, Christine@puconline.org.



Three Angels

Continued from page 1

decreasing, our enrollment is increasing. Tuition is coming in. And so we are blessed and can make the changes we need to make. We can make the improvements that we need to make."

This director told me that she prays for not only the center, but for her individual teachers and the children. She has begun hosting parent programs and special Bible



programs, most recently, a Vacation Bible School for not only

the preschool children, but also for the children who attend the host-church.

It is an amazing feat. You see, I was there when that center started and I know the struggles and trials that have beset the center's leadership. Would it stay open? Would it have to close? Can quality staff be found? In Christ and through prayer – much prayer – they are rising and conquering.

As I walked out the door, I was excited and praising God. I hugged Mary and sincerely said, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

"If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" 1 Peter 4:11.

T-Kindergarten

Continued from page 2

the same. Hire or assign a college -degree early childhood teacher who is certified (permitted) either through the State of California, Pacific Union Office of Education Early Childhood Division, or both. Use an established curriculum from a reputable curriculum company, especially if it is on the State's approved curriculum list. Be sure to have an assessment component in place to monitor each child's progress throughout the school year.

Whatever you do, don't ignore California's new Transitional Kindergarten law. It's not going away and it will be followed by other laws pertaining to even younger children. Most importantly, it will also impact other state legislatures who will follow the California model.



The insert enclosed in this newsletter gives further information regarding this new law. Take time to read it. Get acquainted with the new demands placed on early childhood education. The better prepared you are the easier it will be for the children and parents to transition.

[www.preschoolcalifornia.org/
SB1381](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/SB1381)

Job Openings

Discoveryland Preschool in St. Helena is looking for qualified individuals to fill the following positions. [Assistant Director, Staff Support Assistant, Two's Teacher](http://paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org/job-openings)

paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org/job-openings

Early Childhood Directors in Adventist Centers:

SAVE THE DATE!

**Director's Workshop
October 9 & 10, 2011**

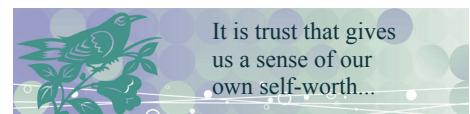
Radisson Hotel Ontario, California

Don't miss this opportunity to learn and network with other directors of Adventist centers.

Young Child Ministries

The mission of Young Child Ministries is to assist families with young children in understanding the Biblical principles of child rearing and child guidance.

www.youngchildministries.com



It is trust that gives us a sense of our own self-worth...

Office Center

One of the most important aspects of running a business is managing the money. Emerging Technologies offers a wide array of management software services. See the enclosed insert for more details.

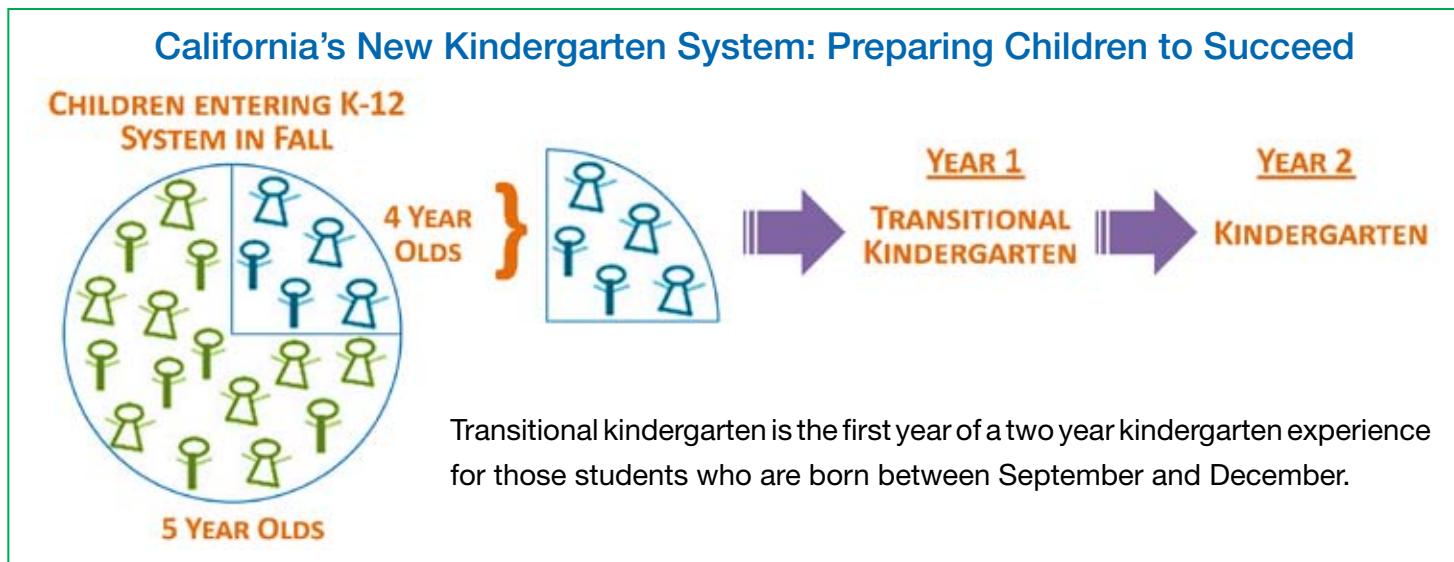
Visit Emerging Technologies at:
www.etwebsite.com.

Transitional Kindergarten: Preparing California's Children to Succeed in Kindergarten



The Kindergarten Readiness Act, a historic reform to kindergarten education, gives California an unparalleled opportunity to ensure that 120,000 more children each year are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

- The legislation creates transitional kindergarten, the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for those students who are born between September and December.
- SB 1381 changes the kindergarten entry date from Dec. 2 to Sept. 1, so children enter kindergarten at age 5.
- The legislation¹ will phase in the new age requirement by moving the cutoff date one month a year for three years, beginning in 2012.



What is Transitional Kindergarten?

- Transitional kindergarten programs will offer children developmentally appropriate curriculum that is aligned with kindergarten standards. Classes would be taught by credentialed teachers from the K-12 system.
- About 120,000 children – including 49,000 English language learners and 74,000 who attend Title I schools – will benefit from this reform.
- Existing funding for these children with fall birthdays will be redirected to transitional kindergarten and will employ existing teachers and classroom facilities.
- Parents now have an additional option to ensure their children enter kindergarten with the maturity and skills they need to excel.
- Transitional kindergarten is voluntary – a child born after Sept. 1 may still be admitted to kindergarten on a case-by-case basis if the parent or guardian applies for early admission and the school district agrees it would be in the best interest of the child.

What is transitional kindergarten?

These changes to the state's education code are critical because California's children start kindergarten at a younger age than kids in almost any other state, often without the maturity and the social, early literacy and pre-math skills they need to meet the challenges of kindergarten. At the same time, California has some of the highest standards for what we expect our children to learn in kindergarten.

Transitional Kindergarten Success Stories

School districts across California have already been implementing a similar reform. Los Angeles Unified School District this fall launched a pilot program at 36 elementary school sites; when adopted districtwide, it will serve more than 11,000 children. Sacramento, Fresno, Palo Alto, Torrance and Orange County are also offering similar programs to their youngest learners.

As other districts begin their own transitional kindergartens, Preschool California is committed to working with them, the community and other partners to ensure they are developmentally appropriate and allow children to realize their highest potential.

Transitional kindergarten builds on existing kindergarten readiness efforts, setting children on a path to develop the skills they need to build a brighter future for California.

"Today's kindergarten classroom is a much different place than most of us experienced. We're placing real academic demands on our kids, and the youngest are struggling to keep up. The evidence shows that giving these younger kindergarteners an extra year can make a big difference in their long-term success."

- Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto)

Research Shows Early Learning Programs Like Transitional Kindergarten Deliver Excellent Return on Investment

High-quality early childhood programs like transitional kindergarten are a critical component of K-12 reform in the early elementary years.

- Without the strong, early start that high-quality early learning provides, children may not develop the skills they need to read proficiently in third grade. This critical milestone predicts whether a student will graduate from high school.²
- Research shows beginning kindergarten at an later age improves children's social and academic development and provides a significant boost to their test scores, especially for children from low-income families. Children are also more likely to attend college and earn higher wages, according to a Public Policy Institute of California review of 14 recent studies.³
- Transitional kindergarten will ultimately save the state money because children will be better prepared to succeed in school and less likely to be placed in special education or retained in later grades.⁴

Endnotes

1. Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010, SB 1381, 2010 State Legislature, (2010). http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb_1351-1400/sb_1381_bill_20100930_chaptered.html
2. KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters. Annie E. Casey Foundation. http://www.aecf.org/~/media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/123/2010KCSpecReport/AEC_report_color_highres.pdf
3. Cannon, J. & Lipscomb, S. (2008). Changing the Kindergarten Cutoff Date: Effects on California Students and Schools. Public Policy Institute of California.
4. Committee for Economic Development. (2006). The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool: Using Early Education to Improve Economic Growth and the Fiscal Sustainability of States and the Nation. Committee on Economic Development Statement.

For more information, visit www.preschoolcalifornia.org/SB1381