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December 21, 2011

Governor Jerry Brown
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support and excitement for transitional kindergarten

Dear Governor Brown:

Transitional kindergarten (TK), which will be implemented in more than 700 school districts throughout California next fall, is a historic opportunity to lay the foundation for proficiency in the early elementary years and help our state build a more seamless education system for children from birth to age 8.

TK provides schools an opportunity to bridge the path from preschool to K-12 and give our kids a head start that will yield huge payoffs in future academic success. Research shows that children who attend kindergarten readiness programs like transitional kindergarten are more likely to do well in school and attend college, and we know that schools will benefit because children will be better prepared and less likely to be placed in special education and retained in later grades. TK will offer a more developmentally appropriate extra year of education for approximately 50,000 English Learners and 75,000 children who attend Title I schools, many of whom have not have the benefit of kindergarten readiness programs. Programs like TK help to close our growing achievement gap, and begin to level the playing field for vulnerable populations in our state.

School districts have a lot of work in the year ahead, but we are confident that with the right support and resources districts can implement transitional kindergarten in a high-quality and efficient way. AARP members care deeply about issues impacting children and their education. As parents and grandparents, AARP members are engaged in efforts to strengthen and support our public schools.

On behalf of AARP California's 3 million plus membership we thank you for your continued support of transitional kindergarten implementation efforts in local school districts across the state.

Sincerely,
Ernie Powell

Manager of Advocacy, AARP California

cc: Nick Schwiezer, Manager, Department of Finance
Carl Cohn, Member, State Board of Education
Sue Burr, Executive Director, State Board of Education

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