



California Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO



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California Federation of Teachers Opposes the Proposal to Eliminate Transitional Kindergarten, Blocking 125,000 Children from Public Education

120,000 Teachers Join Preschool California, California Kindergarten Teachers to Rally in Support of Transitional Kindergarten

Sacramento, CA -- Today the California Federation of Teachers, representing over 120,000 educational employees working at every level of the education system in California, voiced its opposition to the budget proposal to eliminate transitional kindergarten, which would block 125,000 children from public education.

"It is unacceptable to deny 125,000 kindergartners access to early education, and we will fight to protect these young children, 62 percent of whom are from low-income schools and 40 percent of whom are English learners," said Jeff Freitas, Secretary Treasurer of the California Federation of Teachers.

The California Federation of Teachers opposes any changes to the law or funding that would result in the denial of eligible children to participate in a transitional kindergarten program. "We must ensure that children will not miss a critical window of education opportunity and that their families will not have to bear the economic impact of providing for preschool or childcare," added Freitas.

"To deny children this educational opportunity is bad for kids, families, schools, and the communities of which they are a part," said Freitas.

The California Federation of Teachers joins a growing chorus of organizations leading the charge for kindergarten students in the state, including Preschool California and the California Kindergarten Association, who earlier this month held a rally of support for transitional kindergarten for their 6,000 members.

"Teachers understand the value of a strong start for our earliest learners," said Catherine Atkin, president of Preschool California. "We are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with teachers in making sure 125,000 kids are not locked out of classrooms."

The Kindergarten Readiness Act mandates changing the kindergarten entry date so that children enter school at age 5 and establishes transitional kindergarten, a developmentally-appropriate grade to serve those younger students with birthdays between September and December. The budget proposal would impact 1 out of 4 kindergarten-aged students, representing the largest number of students removed from public education in the nation's history.

The coalition is starting a series of visibility events, including a rally of parents and teachers in Southern California in early February.

For more information please visit www.cft.org.