

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kendra Rogers

COMMISSIONERS

Susan Anderson
Chair

Karin Chao-Bushoven

Wilma T. Hashimoto

Howard Himes

Roseanne Lascano

Hugo Morales

Ed Moreno, MD

Lisa Nichols

Marcia E. Sablan, MD

January 11, 2012

Governor Jerry Brown
State of California
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: OPPOSE proposal to kick 125,000 kindergarteners out of the public school system.

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of First 5 Fresno County, I am writing to express our strong **opposition** to your proposal to eliminate transitional kindergarten and kick 125,000 kindergarteners out of the public school system. This is the largest number of children ever to be denied access to public education in the nation's history, and research shows these children will be more likely to fall behind.

Denying 125,000 children access to public school is a lose-lose-lose-lose for California's children, parents, teachers and schools. Without programs like transitional kindergarten, children will be more likely to be placed in special education, retained in later grades and drop out of high school. Working parents will have to scramble to find care for children who otherwise would have been in school, a particularly difficult struggle for low-income families who cannot afford the high cost of private childcare or preschool. These cuts also mean that 5,000 teachers will lose their jobs and our already struggling schools will permanently lose \$1 billion in ADA funding, including \$100 million of special education funding.

Limiting the earliest public educational opportunity for our future workforce is the wrong approach to solve the state's financial problems. Investing in California's children as early as possible makes all of us stronger. I urge you to reconsider.

Sincerely,



Kendra Rogers
Executive Director

c: Julie Henderson, Senior Advisor for Policy, Office of the Governor
Sue Burr, Executive Director, State Board of Education
Dr. Michael Kirst, President, State Board of Education