

California Child Care & Early Learning Options

Birth to Kindergarten Entry

Choosing the Best Path for Your Child

This roadmap is to help you and your family see all the options when it comes to care for your child in California. From private pay preschools, to TK to Center-based care to Family Child Care Homes, there is sure to be something that meets your needs.

Once you understand your child care options, search for the child care program in your area by using your state or territory's online child care search tool. Make sure to review the information and check the quality ratings of the programs to help you make informed child care choices.

For more information, **scan the QR or click URL:**



Family Decision Toolkit



UPK Partnership Guidebook Website

CDSS Child Care Programs



A
B
C

Ages 0-12 Months (Infants)

Options

- Licensed Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)
- Licensed Child Care Centers (Infant Programs)
- Family, Friend, or Neighbor (License-Exempt) Care
- Early Head Start
- Subsidized Voucher-Based Care

Decision Considerations

- Do I need full-day care or part-day support?
- Do I qualify for subsidized care or Early Head Start?
- Do I prefer a home-based or center-based setting?



Find Licensed Care



Ages 1-2 (Young Toddlers)

Options

- Family Child Care Homes
- Child Care Centers (Toddler Programs)
- Early Head Start
- Subsidized General Child Care

Decision Considerations

- Does the program support social-emotional development?
- Are meals and developmental screenings important to my family?
- Do I need transportation-friendly hours?

Subsidized Programs Overview



Ages 2-3 (Older Toddlers/Young Preschoolers)

Options

- Family Child Care Homes
- Child Care Centers (Preschool Classrooms)
- Head Start Preschool
- Subsidized General Child Care

Decision Considerations

- Is my child ready for a group learning environment?
- Do I want a play-based or more structured approach?
- Do I qualify for state-subsidized preschool services?



CSPP for Families

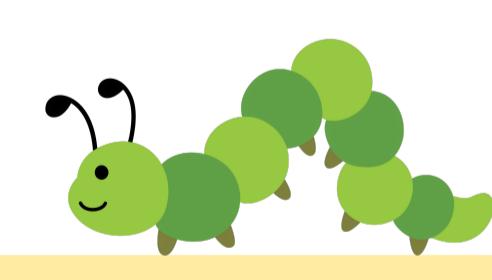
Ages 3-4 (Preschool Age)

Options

- California State Preschool Program (CSPP)
- Head Start Preschool
- Family Child Care (Subsidized or Private)
- Private Pay Preschool

Decision Considerations

- Do I qualify for CSPP or Head Start?
- Is cost, location, or curriculum my top priority?
- Do I need full-day care or school-day hours?



TK for Families



Age 4 (Universal Prekindergarten)

Options

- Transitional Kindergarten (TK / UTK)
- CSPP or Head Start
- Private or Community Preschool
- Blended TK + Wraparound Care
- Extended Learning and Care Options (ELO-P)

Decision Considerations

- Do I want my child in a school district setting yet?
- Does my family need wraparound care beyond TK hours?
- Which setting best supports my child's development?



Kindergarten Enrollment Info



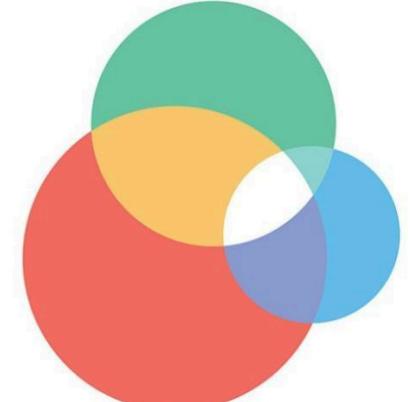
Age 5 (Kindergarten Eligible – Still Optional)

Options

- Public Kindergarten
- Remain in Preschool or Pre-K
- Private Kindergarten

Decision Considerations

- Is my child developmentally ready for kindergarten?
- Would another year of play-based learning be beneficial?
- What setting best supports my child's confidence and growth?



UPK PARTNERSHIP
GUIDEBOOK

Child Family Workforce Community