

Important Questions to Ask

- ♥ Does your family and child feel valued, respected and included in the school community?
- ♥ Does your child have access to all learning opportunities & materials, regardless of their abilities?
- ♥ Are relationships between children & teachers loving and nurturing?
- ♥ Is the environment safe & healthy?
- ♥ Are teachers, providers & administrators trained in child development?
- ♥ How many children are in the classroom and how many adults are there to support them?
- ♥ Is there a daily plan to guide learning? How is it shared with families?
- ♥ How is play integrated into daily learning activities?
- ♥ Are teachers using observational assessment to determine children's progress on the continuum of development?
- ♥ What are the opportunities for families to be involved in the classroom and school?
- ♥ How do teachers support the child's home language?
- ♥ How does the outdoor play environment support learning & physical development?
- ♥ Are teachers & children engaged in conversation?
- ♥ Does the learning environment include art, dramatic play, blocks, reading, math, science, & writing areas?
- ♥ Do children find joy in learning?
- ♥ Do children have opportunities to move freely in their learning environments?
- ♥ Is your child able to communicate their personal needs, such as using the bathroom?

Other Considerations

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cost of program | Expectations for Child |
| Before & After school care | Readiness of your Child |
| Hours/Months of Operation | Transportation |
| Student Support Services | Meals Provided |

PARTNERS for Pre-K & TK resources

PRESCHOOL - Resource & Referral

Marin Child Care Council 415.472.1092

TK -School Districts

Bolinas Stinson Union 415.868.1603

Kentfield 415.458.5140

Laguna Joint 707.762.6051

Lagunitas 415.488.4118

Larkspur-Corte Madera 415.927.6960

Miller Creek Elementary 415.492.3700

Mill Valley 415.389.7700

Nicasio 415.662.2184

Novato Unified 415.897.4201

Reed Union 415.381.1112

Ross 415.457.2705

Ross Valley 415.454.2162

San Rafael 415.492.3200

Sausalito Marin City 415.332.1024

Shoreline Unified 415.878.2266

CONTACT US

Marin County Office of Education

Early Childhood Education

1111 Las Gallinas Avenue

San Rafael, CA 94903

UPK@marinschools.org

415.499.5889



Pre-K or TK?

Finding the best educational
program for your 4 or 5 year old

Play is the highest form of research.

-Albert Einstein

Families of four year olds face a unique range of educational options for their child in California. Attending a high-quality early education program prepares children to learn and succeed by developing social emotional, pre-reading and math skills, helping them to be ready for kindergarten and beyond!

Finding the best option for your child takes time and research. You know your child best. This guide will support you in determining which program will best meet your child's needs.



Differences between Programs for 4 & 5 year olds

| Name | California State Preschool Program (CSPP) | Head Start | Private Centers, FCCH, FFN | Transitional Kindergarten (TK) |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Ages | 3- and 4-year-olds | 3- and 4-year-olds | 3- and 4-year-olds | 4-year-olds, depending on birthday |
| What it is | Preschool program run through contracts from the State of California | Federally-funded preschool program. | Variety of half-day and full-day preschool and childcare programs | Part of the public elementary school system that takes place the year before kindergarten |
| Schedule | Full-day options available | Full-day options available | Hours determined by individual preschool providers | Part-day & Full-day options available depending on local decisions |
| Cost | Free or low-cost, based on income eligibility and other factors | Free, based on income eligibility | Fees determined by individual preschool providers | Free, regardless of income |

4 & 5 year olds need...

- To see themselves and their families reflected in the learning environment
- Learning environments that recognize each child's unique strengths and supports full inclusion
- Age appropriate learning experiences informed by children's developmental level
- Teachers who recognize, understand & respond to children's cultural & linguistic needs
- Respectful interactions with caring adults
- Active and engaging hands-on learning through play
- Opportunities to connect new ideas and skills to what they already know and do.
- Opportunities to explore, experiment, discover, be curious, ask questions & reflect

Information for families on Children's Early Development:

<https://allaboutyoungchildren.org/>

- Teachers who guide & extend play to help children learn
- Opportunities to learn how to play, work together and make friends
- Learning experiences in small and large groups
- Flexibility to move around the environment
- Time to practice developing skills
- Engaging materials and activities that promote creativity, choices and problem solving
- Work and play experiences that support understanding of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies & social-emotional competencies.
- Rich language experiences that support development of vocabulary and oral language