

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

In keeping with Charlotte Latin's dedication to the needs of each child, our Transitional Kindergarten is designed with the “young kindergartner” in mind. It is a structured, organized academic program that both challenges and nurtures our students. Like all grade levels at Latin, TK has a charted curriculum with defined expectations for each child. Typically, TK students have birthdays that fall between March and October, with a large majority of students turning five in June, July, and August. Placement, however, is solely dependent upon the developmental age of a child rather than the chronological age. In other words, there are exceptions to the birth date.

When we describe, or define, a child as a TK candidate, it means several things. The TK candidate exhibits an excellent aptitude for learning and is already meeting many objectives necessary for Kindergarten. To be accepted into Latin's TK, a child must demonstrate school readiness, as well as emerging skills in an academic classroom. A child will not be accepted into Latin's TK if aptitude and ability are not evident.

Some parents have described Latin's TK program as being more “K” than “T,” implying that the program is more akin to Kindergarten than to nursery school. While our TK program is a balance of academics and play, the primary focus is on academics. Latin's TK is not to be confused with pre-school; Latin's Kindergarten and TK programs are designed for children who are academically and socially ready for a traditional school setting.

In the course of the TK year, students will begin phonemic awareness through the study of sound and letter patterns, will begin their math foundation through number recognition, grouping, addition and subtraction, and will further develop visual, auditory, and motor skills. Socially, students will learn to share ideas in a group setting without prompting and will move from parallel play to peer interaction. Additionally, TK students will spend time developing attention span and learning how to transition throughout the day. Attention span and transitioning, challenging for most five-, six- and seven-year-olds, remain important milestones throughout Kindergarten and first grade.

The TK student distinguishes himself/herself by depicting a slightly younger persona than a Kindergartner. TK children have had success in pre-school and reveal important cognitive development necessary for school. Some children at this age are especially verbal and are even reading and writing. When we talk about a younger persona, we mean that through the course of our testing process, the child has demonstrated behaviors that an older, more ready child does not demonstrate.

While there is not one specific type of TK student, there are subtle indicators, which reveal that a child is a good candidate for TK. One example might be that a TK child can successfully complete each task a teacher asks of him/her in a one-on-one setting. On command, he/she can cut a square out of red paper, paste it on a green background, and draw two windows and a door on the square. The child may even complete the task by saying, “This looks like a house without a roof.” However, when you ask this child to perform the same task at a table of new children, he/she often becomes distracted and unable to complete all the steps in the allotted amount of time. The observations drawn from this example are significant. When the child is working individually with the teacher, he/she is fully engaged. The child follows directions, works steadily, responds to the teacher, and successfully cuts, pastes, draws, and identifies colors and numbers. In addition, the student draws conclusions and speaks confidently to the teacher, an adult he/she has never met before.

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These behaviors are good indicators that the child is bright, capable, confident, and in all likelihood, will be a sound student. The fact that the child is less engaged in the task when sitting with a group of children is also significant. While the child may have simply been fascinated by his or her neighbor's light-up tennis shoes, something made it challenging for the child to complete the expected task. A child with a slightly older persona might have noticed the shoes, but thought to study them more carefully after the job was completed.

The above example illustrates many important factors in the decision to accept a TK student. While there is no typical TK candidate, Latin seeks to enroll children who, in more ways than not, are ready for an academically challenging program, yet present a slightly younger persona. Because Latin focuses on the individual success of each child, we firmly believe that the developmental age is critical in a child's early education, and the most conducive setting for learning is one where a child feels ready to succeed. In order to support that success, TK embraces the younger child's eagerness, ability, and readiness to learn.