

What is San Francisco's Mixed Delivery System for Early Learning?

Early Learning For All provides financial support for early care and education that is available across a wide variety of small businesses, community-based organizations, and school district service providers. We call the combination of all of these high-quality program options our mixed delivery system for early learning. The mixed delivery system recognizes that families know what's best for their children by offering access to a wide range of high-quality early education options, including center-based programs, family child care homes, Head Start, SFUSD Preschool, and TK. Together, these programs work to provide families with meaningful choice and high-quality early learning.

What it Means for Families

Many Choices for Early Care & Learning

You can choose from a variety of programs that best fit your needs, including center-based programs, family child care homes, and TK classrooms.

Support for Every Child

All educators have access to training on how to support every child, including children with disabilities, helping close long-standing gaps in learning and development.

Aligned & High-Quality Learning

Programs across the city share common goals and teaching practices, so no matter where your child learns, they'll experience consistent, high-quality education.

Financial Help for Families

Most San Francisco families qualify for free or reduced-cost early learning through Early Learning for All, so cost will not stand in the way of your child's success.

A Strong Citywide Network

There are already over 500 early care and education sites across the city, making it easier than ever to find a trusted program near you.



Centers

Program Type	Program Description	Best for Families Who Want	Ages of Children
Center-Based Programs	Child care and early education in dedicated facilities like nursery schools and preschools.	A “school-like” environment where children are typically grouped in classes by age.	Infants– Kindergarten age
Head Start	A federally funded program operating in specific center-based settings offering educational, nutritional, health, and other services to children in low-income households to promote school readiness.	Structured educational environment as part of a publicly funded program with supports and resources.	Birth to age 5
SFUSD Preschool	Preschool programming, aligned with ELFA standards, that operates in SFUSD facilities.	Preschool curriculum in a public school environment and opportunities for children to get used to their potential future school.	Preschoolers (2.9 - 5)

Family Child Care Homes (FCCs)

Program Type	Program Description	Best for Families Who Want	Ages of Children
Family Child Care Homes (FCCs)	Family Child Care (FCC) programs are licensed by the State of California to provide child care services in the program owner’s home or residential setting.	Home-like setting with smaller group sizes, mixed-age learning experiences, and consistent personalized care.	Infants– Kindergarten age

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Program Type	Program Description	Best for Families Who Want	Ages of Children
Transitional Kindergarten	Transitional kindergarten (TK) bridges the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten years. It is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that has been implemented in California for children who are not old enough yet for kindergarten, but want to build their social, developmental, and academic skills. TK is offered at select SFUSD early education and elementary schools.	Structured part-day programming offering transition into an elementary school location and priority for continued enrollment at that school or a feeder location.	Kids must be at least 4 by 9/2 of the school year they wish to enroll

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**More Information About
Early Learning For All**
sf.gov/early-learning-for-all