JK vs. TK

The main difference is that Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a "bridge" year for children turning 5 with late birthdays who need extra time to build readiness, acting as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. Junior Kindergarten (JK) is typically a preschool-level program for 4-year-olds focusing on foundational social-emotional growth before the formal school journey begins.

Key Differences:

- **Target Age & Purpose:** TK is designed for children with late birthdays (often turning 5 between Sept–Dec) who need social, emotional, or academic maturity before traditional Kindergarten. JK is for younger 4-year-olds preparing for the jump to TK or kindergarten.
- **Curriculum Focus:** TK is more academic, bridging JK and kindergarten with structured, foundational work. JK is generally more play-based and focused on developmental milestones (socialization, fine motor skills).
- **Structure:** TK often operates within elementary school guidelines with higher structure, while JK follows early childhood education standards.
- **Outcome:** TK acts as a stepping stone directly into standard Kindergarten the following year.

Ultimately, TK is designed to provide an extra year for children who are age-eligible but not quite ready for the full rigor of traditional kindergarten

Quick Definitions:

- JK (age 4): A play-based, pre-academic year focused on foundation skills (language, number sense, fine motor, social-emotional growth).
- Transitional Kindergarten (Young 5s / Bridge-K): A small-class, extra year for just-turned-5s who are academically capable but need more time to grow socially, emotionally, or in stamina/independence.
- Kindergarten (WCPSS & private): Full K standards—longer days, larger groups, increased independence, and formal assessments.

Side-by-Side Snapshot

Purpose

- JK: Build readiness through play; introduce structured routines.
- TK / Young 5s: Bridge to K; deepen self-regulation, confidence, and stamina while continuing academics.
- Kindergarten: Master K standards across literacy, math, social-emotional, science, and specials.

Ideal for

- JK: 4-year-olds ready for a structured, playful classroom.
- TK / Young 5s: Late-summer birthdays; shy/slow-to-warm kids; “almost ready” learners; families with an inkling that “one more year” would help.
- Kindergarten: Children ready for a longer day, larger peer groups, and higher independence.

Class size & support

- JK-Small classes, two teachers, Conscious Discipline.
- TK-Very small classes, two teachers, extra coaching on executive function (attention, flexibility, persistence).
- Kindergarten: Varies by school; typically larger classes and higher student-to-teacher ratios.

Literacy & Math

- JK-Phonemic awareness, print concepts, early number sense through play.
- TK : Orton Gillingham, emergent writing, number composition, patterning, simple graphing—still play-based.
- Kindergarten: Full WCPSS standards and formal assessments.

Independence & SEL

- JK: Routines, sharing, following directions, feelings language.
- TK: Big growth in self-advocacy, conflict resolution, classroom jobs, stamina (end-of-day regulation).
- Kindergarten: Higher expectations for self-management, collaboration, and problem-solving.

How TK Differs from JK (and Why It Works)

- Same academics, deeper mastery: Kids practice Letters and math in richer, longer projects.
- Extra time for the whole child: Confidence, voice, leadership opportunities.
- Stamina builder: A gentler on-ramp to the length and pace of K.
- Right-sized support: Small class sizes mean more coaching, feedback, and wins.

FAQs Parents May Ask:

“My child is academically ready. Why consider TK?”
Readiness is also emotional stamina, independence, and confidence in groups. TK strengthens those so academics stick.

“Does TK mean my child is being held back?”
No. TK (Young 5s Bridge Year) is about choosing the right next step, not delaying indefinitely. By spring, we share a readiness summary and recommendation—most likely kindergarten.

“Will they be bored?”
We differentiate. Children stretch academically while building executive function, language, and social skills.

“Is TK the same as private kindergarten?”
No. TK is a bridge year before kindergarten; the emphasis is readiness + growth with continued academics.

Why Brookstone for TK / Young 5s?

- Accredited, play-based program with small classes and two teachers.
- Orton Gillingham literacy
- Singapore Math
- Conscious Discipline for self-regulation and social problem-solving.
- A warm, inclusive community that partners closely with families.
- A Faith-based education