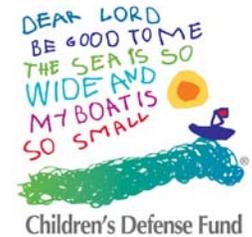


# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Maryland



January 2012

Full-day kindergarten (Full-Day K) is a necessary component of a comprehensive early learning continuum and boosts children's cognitive learning, creative problem-solving and social competence. However, Full-Day K is not part of the K-12 publicly funded school system in most states. Nationally, only 10 states and the District of Columbia require school districts to provide publicly funded Full-Day K through statute. Thirty-four states require school districts to provide at least half-day kindergarten and six have no requirement.

Are Maryland school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students?  Yes  No

### Statutory Provisions

- **Kindergarten attendance in Maryland is mandatory.**<sup>ii</sup> Parents or legal guardians can submit a one-year level of maturity waiver for a kindergarten-age child if they believe that a delay in kindergarten attendance is in the best interest of that pupil. However, the child must attend kindergarten the next school year.<sup>iii</sup>
- **Children must be 5 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year.**<sup>iv</sup> Local boards of education are also required to adopt a regulation permitting a 4-year-old child, upon the request by the parent or guardian, to be admitted to kindergarten if the local school superintendent or the superintendent's designee determines that the child demonstrates capabilities warranting early admission.
- **All kindergarten programs in the public schools are full-day programs operating for 6.5 hours a day to support the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of kindergartners.**<sup>v</sup>
- **There are no guidelines for teacher to student ratio or class size in statute in Maryland.** The National Education Association categorized Maryland as having an average teacher to student ratio below the U.S. average of 15.2 in 2009.<sup>vi</sup>

### Funding

- Kindergarten is a part of the state funding formula and is funded on the same level as first grade.<sup>vii</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in June 2010.<sup>viii</sup>
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.<sup>ix</sup>

### Assessment

- The Maryland State Department of Education developed the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) to assess the school readiness of every child entering kindergarten.<sup>x</sup> The assessment evaluates what each child knows and is able to do in the seven domains of learning: language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, physical development and social and personal development.
- The MMSR is not a "test" but a set of systematic, carefully-defined daily observations, work samples, and age-appropriate guidelines by which a teacher assesses the skills of each entering kindergartner.
- The MMSR defines three levels of school readiness: Fully Ready, Approaching Readiness, and Developing Readiness. Typically, each local school system continues the assessment of individual students throughout the remainder of the school year using the MMSR and other locally developed assessment instruments.<sup>xi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. "Kindergarten requirements, by State: 2010."

[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab5\\_3.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab5_3.asp)

<sup>ii</sup> Attendance. *Code of Maryland Regulations* § 13A.08.01.01B

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid

<sup>v</sup> Maryland State Department of Education. "Public Prekindergarten-Kindergarten Programs. *FAQ's Kindergarten.*"

[http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child\\_care/early\\_learning/PreK-K.htm](http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/early_learning/PreK-K.htm)

<sup>vi</sup> National Education Association 2009. "Rankings & Estimates Rankings of the States 2009 and Estimates of School Statistics 2010." <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/010rankings.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> National Education Association. "Great Public School Criteria." [http://www.nea.org/home/achievement\\_Maryland.html](http://www.nea.org/home/achievement_Maryland.html)

<sup>viii</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

<sup>ix</sup> Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.

<sup>x</sup> The MMSR kindergarten assessment uses a modified Work Sampling System (WSS)<sup>™</sup> as its assessment instrument.

<sup>xi</sup> Maryland State Department of Education. "The 2010-2011 Maryland School Readiness Report: Children Entering School Ready to Learn." [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/newsroom/publications/school\\_readiness](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/newsroom/publications/school_readiness)