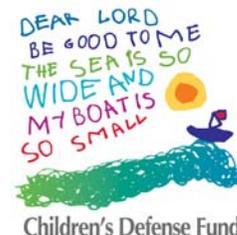


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Connecticut



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 Connecticut school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___Yes ___Xⁱ___ No

Districts are not mandated to provide Full-Day K, but they have the option. In 2010, according to the Connecticut State Department of Education which oversees the 167 school districts:

- 65 school districts offered Full-Day K to all children
- 28 offered Full-Day K to some children,
- 16 offered extended-day kindergarten to all children
- 58 provided half-day kindergarten to all children.ⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- **Kindergarten attendance is mandatory at age 5.** However, parents of a child who is 5 can opt out of sending their child to kindergarten by completing school district paperwork.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Children who are 5 on or before January 1st of the school year may enter kindergarten. Local school districts can decide to admit a child before they are age-eligible.**^{iv}
 - Multiple bills have been unsuccessfully proposed over the past decade to change the cut-off date from January 1st of the school year to September 1st.
- **By state statute:**
 - **Half-day kindergarten must have 450 hours of instructional time during a 180-day school year.**^v
 - **Full-Day K has a minimum of 900 hours of instructional time during a 180-day school year.**^{vi}
 - **Extended-day kindergarten has between 450 and 900 hours of instructional time during a 180-day school year.**^{vii} The extended-day classroom often has non-traditional hours and days, with some offering classes full-day for only three days a week, others offering daily classes for five hours per day, etc.^{viii}
- **There are no guidelines for teacher to student ratio or class size in statute.** In 2010, the Connecticut Department of Education reported that from 2004-2008, the average number of students in a kindergarten class was approximately 18.^{ix}

Funding

- Full-Day K is funded at the same level as first grade.^x

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in July 2010.^{xi} Content area standards are in various stages of revision and new early learning and development standards are currently being developed that align birth through age 5 standards with K-12 standards.
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^{xii}

Assessment

- In 2007, an amendment to the Connecticut General Statute (Sec. 10-14n) created the Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory to be used by the state as a means to collect data on students' skills through teacher observations. Teachers rate students on three performance levels across six domains: language, literacy, numeracy, physical/motor, creative/aesthetic, and personal/social. The assessment is aligned with the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework.

ⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. "Kindergarten requirements, by State: 2010."

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab5_3.asp

ⁱⁱ Connecticut State Department of Education, 2010. "Kindergarten Enrollment By School Districts, School Year 2010-2011."

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Early/KindergartenProgs.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Duties of parents. School attendance age requirements. *Connecticut General Statutes* §10-184.

^{iv} Towns to Maintain Schools. *Connecticut General Statutes* § 10-15c.

^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} Extended-Day Kindergarten. *Connecticut General Statutes* § 10-16m.

^{viii} Connecticut State Department of Education, 2010. "Kindergarten Enrollment By School Districts, School Year 2010-2011."

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Early/KindergartenProgs.pdf>.

^{ix} Connecticut Department of Education 2010." The Condition of Education in Connecticut 2010."

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/ConditionofEd_08_09.pdf.

^x National Education Association. "Great Public Schools Criteria for Connecticut"

http://www.nea.org/home/achievement_Connecticut.html.

^{xi} Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

^{xii} Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.