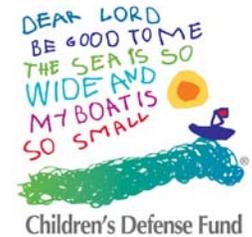


# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Florida



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. 34 states require school districts to provide at least half-day kindergarten and six have no requirement.

Are Florida school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? \_\_\_Yes X No

### Statutory Provisions

- **Kindergarten attendance is optional at age 5.** However, Florida law specifies that all children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1<sup>st</sup> of any school year are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. If a child enters public school at age 6 without a transcript documenting kindergarten completion, the child will be placed in kindergarten. The child will progress according to the district's student progression plan.<sup>ii</sup>
- **Children who are 5 on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of a school year may enter kindergarten.**<sup>iii</sup>
- **In order for a public kindergarten student to be considered a full-time student, he or she must receive a minimum of 720 hours of instruction per school year or four hours per day, based on 180 school days.**<sup>iv, v</sup>
- **Starting in 2010-2011, pre-kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms must have 18 students per class or less, except in low-performing schools which have a goal of 15 students per class.**<sup>vi</sup>

### Funding

- The Florida Education Finance Program provides funding for kindergarten at the same level as grades 1-3.<sup>vii</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted by Florida in July 2010.<sup>viii</sup>
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.<sup>ix</sup>

### Assessment

- All children in kindergarten must be screened with the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) within 30 days of the start of the school year. FLKRS combines a subset of the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and two measures from the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading - Kindergarten (FAIR-K). The ECHOS portion uses teacher observation to assess seven domains: language and literacy, mathematics, social and personal skills (approaches to learning), science, social studies, physical development and fitness, and creative arts. The FAIR-K section uses the Broad Screen Inventory (phonemic awareness, letter recognition) and the Broad Diagnostic Inventory (oral listening, vocabulary).<sup>x</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> School Attendance. *Florida Statute* 2011 §. 1003.21 (1)(a)

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- iii School Attendance. *Florida Statute 2001* §. Ch. 232.01 (2)
- iv Definition. *Florida Statutes* §1011.61, ,
- v Florida Department of Education. "Florida Education Finance Program 2011-2012." <http://www.fldoe.org/febp/pdf/febpdist.pdf>
- vi Florida Maximum Class Size Study Act. *Florida Statute* §236.687
- vii Florida Department of Education. "Florida Education Finance Program 2011-2012." <http://www.fldoe.org/febp/pdf/febpdist.pdf>
- viii Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>
- ix Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- x Statewide Kindergarten Screening; Kindergarten Readiness Rates, *Florida Statute* §1002.69