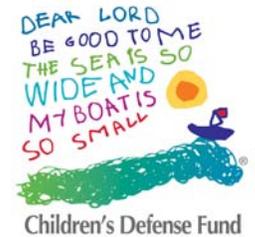


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Illinois



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 Illinois school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___ Yes X No

Statutory Provisions

- **School districts may provide students either a half-day or a full-day of kindergarten.**ⁱⁱ A school district which chooses to establish a full-day program must also establish a half-day program.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Kindergarten attendance is optional.**^{iv}
- **In order to attend kindergarten students are required to be 5 years old on or before September 1st of the school year.**^v
- **Full-Day K must be a minimum of four hours per day, and half-day kindergarten must be a minimum of two hours per day.**^{vi}
- **Teacher to student ratios are not specifically mentioned in statute.** In 2005, the average kindergarten class size in Illinois was 21.^{vii}

Funding

- More funding is provided for Full-Day K than for half-day kindergarten.^{viii}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted in June 2010.^{ix}
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^x

Assessment

- The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has established an advisory committee comprised of early childhood experts who will guide the Board as it moves forward with recommendations for developing a comprehensive kindergarten readiness assessment process.
- The advisory committee submitted a report to guide the initial planning to the ISBE in April of 2011.^{xi}

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

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

ⁱⁱ Kindergartens. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/10-20.19a

ⁱⁱⁱ Kindergartens. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/10-22.18

^{iv} Kindergartens. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5

^v School Year - School Age. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/10-20.12

^{vi} Compilation of Average Daily Attendance. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/18-8.05 (F)(2)(f).

^{vii} Office of the Governor 2006. "Gov. Blagojevich signs law to reduce kindergarten through third grade class sizes."

<http://www.illinois.gov/pressreleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?SubjectID=2&RecNum=4992>

^{viii} National Education Association. "Great Public Schools Criteria for Illinois."

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

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

^x Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). *Education Week, Quality Counts*. 30 (16) pg 50.

^{xi} Illinois State Board of Education, Early Childhood Education. "Kindergarten Corner."

http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/html/kindergarten_corner.htm