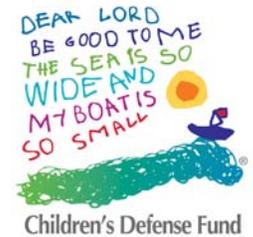


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Iowa



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 Iowa school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___Yes Xⁱ___No

In the 2010-2011 school year 333 of the 359 school districts offered only Full-Day K and 26 districts offered both half-day kindergarten and Full-Day K.

Statutory Provisions

- Children who are 5 on or before September 15th of the school year may enter kindergarten.ⁱⁱ
- The number of instructional days within the school calendar and the length of the school day for kindergarten shall be defined by the local school board.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The state has a goal of 17 students for every teacher.^{iv} The state has averaged about 19 kindergarten students for every teacher from 1998 through 2010.^v

Funding

- Beginning in fiscal year 2009-2010, the Iowa Early Intervention Block Grant Program was converted from grants-in-aid categorical funding to budgetary-allocation categorical funding.
- Appropriate uses of the block grant funding include providing programs, instructional support, and materials at the kindergarten through grade three level, including the implementation of all-day, every day kindergarten programs. This is due to be repealed in 2012.^{vi}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in July of 2010.^{vii}
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^{viii}
- Iowa currently has early learning standards that align with the Iowa Core curriculum standards.

Assessment

- The board of directors of each public school district shall incorporate into the kindergarten admissions program criteria and procedures for the identification and integration of at-risk children and their developmental needs.^{ix}

ⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. "Table 5.3. Kindergarten Requirements, By State: 2010."

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

ⁱⁱ Admission And Exclusion Of Pupils. *Iowa Code* § 282.3

ⁱⁱⁱ Definitions. *Iowa Code* § 281-12.2(6)).

^{iv} Iowa Early Intervention Block Grant Program. *Iowa Code* §256D.

^v Iowa Department of Education, 2010. "Iowa Early Intervention Block Grant Program (Class Size) 2009-2010." pg 2.

^{vi} Iowa Early Intervention Block Grant Program. *Iowa Code* § 256D.5

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

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

^{ix} Education Commission of the States. "Kindergarten Screening and Assessment Requirements."

<http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=31>