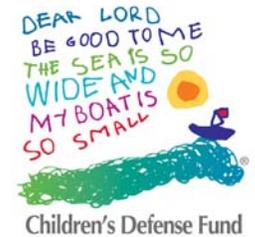


# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Kentucky



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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 Kentucky school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_X<sup>i</sup>\_\_\_ No

In 2009, there were 174 public school districts containing 684 elementary and 57 elementary/middle schools. One-hundred-sixty districts provided Full-Day K, 11 districts provided only half-day kindergarten and three provided both. <sup>ii</sup>

### Statutory Provisions

- **The compulsory age for attendance is 6 years old.** Children that turn 5 by October 1<sup>st</sup> are eligible to attend a primary kindergarten program. <sup>iii</sup>
- **Once children are enrolled in kindergarten, their attendance becomes compulsory.** <sup>iv</sup>
- **Districts must provide an academic year of at least 185 days.** The district must also provide at least 175 days with six hours of instruction. However an exception applies to kindergarten, allowing districts to provide less than six hours without approval from the state board of education. <sup>v</sup>
- **The maximum number of students allowed in a kindergarten classroom is 24.** <sup>vi</sup>

### Funding

- Kentucky funds kindergarten at a lower rate than grades 1-12. <sup>vii</sup>
- According to the Kentucky Department of Education, during FY 2010 the state board of education spent \$9,144 per pupil. <sup>viii</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in February 2010. <sup>ix</sup>
- Kindergarten standards are aligned with the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* for three- and four-year-old children, as well as elementary and secondary expectations. <sup>x, xi</sup>

### Assessment

- The Kentucky state legislature passed SB 1 in the 2009 session. <sup>xii</sup> This bill reforms the ways in which the Kentucky Department of Education (KDOE) assesses public school students. Schools must use diagnostic assessments that measure readiness in reading and mathematics for its primary students. <sup>xiii</sup> Schools are allowed to use commercial tools or develop their own. The KDOE has provided guidelines for districts.

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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> Kentucky Department of Education 2011. "Kentucky Education Facts."  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/homepagerepository/news+room/kentucky+education+facts.htm>
- <sup>iii</sup> Parent Or Custodian To Send Child To School -- Age Limits For Compulsory Attendance. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 159.010
- <sup>iv</sup> Entrance of Five (5) Year Olds Into Primary School Program For Compulsory Attendance Purposes. *Kansas Administrative Regulations* § 704 KAR 5:060
- <sup>v</sup> School Month and School Day. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § KRS 158.060-.070
- <sup>vi</sup> Base Funding Level -- Adjustment -- Enforcement Of Maximum Class Sizes. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 157.360
- <sup>vii</sup> Definitions. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § KRS 157.320 (7)
- <sup>viii</sup> Kentucky Department of Education 2011. "Kentucky Education Facts."  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/homepagerepository/news+room/kentucky+education+facts.htm>
- <sup>ix</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>
- <sup>x</sup> Chance for Success. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 44.
- <sup>xi</sup> Kentucky Department of Education. "Kentucky Early Childhood Standards/ Kentucky Core Academic Standards Alignment."  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Elementary+School/Primary+Program/Kentucky+Early+Childhood+S tandards+--+Kentucky+Core+Academic+Standards+Alignment.htm>
- <sup>xii</sup> Definitions *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 158.6453(9)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Kentucky Department of Education. "Primary Diagnostic Assessment."  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/instructional+resources/elementary+school/primary+program/primary+diagnostic+assessment.htm>