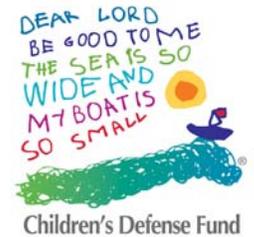


# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Missouri



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

Ninety-four percent of Missouri children attend Full-Day K.<sup>ii</sup>

### Statutory Provisions

- **Attendance is not mandatory.**<sup>iii</sup>
- **The compulsory school age for 1<sup>st</sup> grade is 7.** Any student who completes the kindergarten year shall not be required to meet the age requirements of a district for entrance into 1<sup>st</sup> grade.<sup>iv</sup>
- **If a child reaches the age of 5 before August 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year, the student is eligible for kindergarten.**<sup>v</sup>
- **The "minimum school day" for Full-Day K consists of three hours for schools with a five-day school week or four hours for schools with a four-day school week.**<sup>vi</sup> Statutes do not define minimum or maximum school day for half-day kindergarten programs. The Missouri Department of Education states that a logical extension of the minimum three-hour-day requirement to half-day programs would require them to be in session at least one and one-half hours to be counted as a day of school.<sup>vii</sup>
- **The student to teacher ratio or class size is 10-to-1 or 20-to-2 (with no more than 20 children per classroom).**<sup>viii</sup>

### Funding

- Kindergarten is provided the same level of funding as grades 1-12.<sup>ix</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in June 2010.<sup>x</sup>
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.<sup>xi</sup>

### Assessment

- Districts currently select assessment instruments used for screening and other purposes.<sup>xii</sup>
- The state will pilot various assessment instruments in 2012-2013 to determine what can be used for children ages 3 through kindergarten to help inform instruction, as well as to determine kindergarten readiness.<sup>xiii</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> Personal Communication. Dr. Kathy Thornburg, Missouri Department of Education via e-mail. November 13, 2011.

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- <sup>iii</sup> Public School System Established; Child Attains Age Five, When; Board Shall Provide Free Instruction For Children Between Ages Of Five And Six Years; Literacy Programs; Summer School For Prekindergartners. *Missouri Revised Statutes* §160.051
- <sup>iv</sup> Child Eligible For Kindergarten And Summer School, When--Child Eligible For First Grade, When--State Aid Exception. *Missouri Revised Statutes* §160.053
- <sup>v</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>vi</sup> Minimum School Day, School Month, School Year, Defined; Reduction Of Required Number Of Hours And Days, When. *Missouri Revised Statutes* §160.041
- <sup>vii</sup> Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. "School Calendar and School Term."  
<http://dese.mo.gov/schoollaw/freqaskques/calendar.htm>.
- <sup>viii</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>ix</sup> National Education Association. "Great School Criteria for Missouri." [http://www.nea.org/home/achievement\\_Missouri.html](http://www.nea.org/home/achievement_Missouri.html)
- <sup>x</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>
- <sup>xi</sup> Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- <sup>xii</sup> Personal Communication. Dr. Kathy Thornburg, Missouri Department of Education via e-mail. November 13, 2011.
- <sup>xiii</sup> *Ibid*