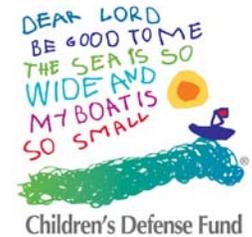


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Virginia



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

In the 2010-2011 school year, there were 1,186 elementary schoolsⁱⁱ serving 92,899 kindergartners.ⁱⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- All children are required to attend kindergarten.^{iv}
- Children must be 5 years of age by September 30th of the school year to attend kindergarten.^v
- Parents must enroll their child in a school once they reach the age of 5.^{vi}
- Instructional time for kindergarten cannot be less than 540 hours per school year. For grades 1-12, however, instructional time cannot be lower than 990 hours per school year.^{vii}
- No district is allowed to charge tuition or fees for any public school program.^{viii}

Funding

- Full-Day K is funded at the same level as grades 1-12.^{ix}

Standards

- Kindergarten standards are aligned with elementary and secondary expectations.^x

Assessment

- The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten (PALS-K) assessment is used for all students in kindergarten. The test is administered in the fall and measures a student's readiness in comparison with grade standards.^{xi}
- If the student is not on par with the kindergarten-level expectations, he/she is given additional instruction through Virginia's Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI).^{xii}

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

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

ⁱⁱ Commonwealth of Virginia. Department of Education . "Local Regional Schools & Centers 2010-2011. 2010."

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/enrollment/local_regional_schools_centers/2010_11_local_reg_sch_ctr_s_a.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Commonwealth of Virginia. Department of Education . "2010-2011 Fall Membership by Division, by Grade. 2010."

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/enrollment/fall_membership/index.shtml

^{iv} National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. "Kindergarten requirements, by State: 2010."

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

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- ^v Kindergarten Programs Suitable For Certain Children. *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-199
- ^{vi} Compulsory Attendance Required; Excuses And Waivers. *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-254
- ^{vii} Opening Of The School Year; Approvals For Certain Alternative Schedules. *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-79.1
- ^{viii} Permitted Fees and Charges. *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-6
- ^{ix} Education Commission of the States 2007. "Kindergarten Online Database."
http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/Earlylearning/KDB_intro.asp
- ^x Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- ^{xi} Virginia.gov. "Virginia Performs." <http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/indicators/education/schoolReadiness.php>
- ^{xii} Ibid