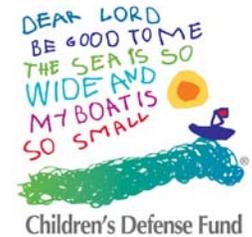


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Washington



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

In 2011-2012, 89 of 295 school districts offer Full-Day K.ⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- **Kindergarten attendance is not mandatory.** The compulsory school age is 8. However, upon enrollment in kindergarten, a child is required to attend school and parents have the responsibility to ensure attendance.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **A child must be 5 years of age as of midnight August 31st to attend kindergarten.**^{iv}
- **For K-3, full-time school constitutes 20 hours each week, or four hours (240 minutes) for each scheduled school day.**^v
- **Districts must use a specific formula when computing teacher to student ratios.** The teacher to student ratio in K-3 classrooms shall not be greater than the ratio of the full time equivalent (FTE) students to FTE classroom teachers in grades 4-12.^{vi}

Funding

- Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, funding for voluntary full-day kindergarten programs shall be phased in beginning with schools with the highest poverty levels, defined as those schools with the highest percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch support in the prior school year.^{vii}
- During the 2011-13 biennium, funding shall continue to be phased in each year until full statewide implementation of full-day kindergarten is achieved in the 2017-18 school year.^{viii}
- Once a school receives funding for a Full-Day K program, that school shall remain eligible for funding in subsequent school years regardless of changes in the school's percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch as long as other program requirements are fulfilled.^{ix}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in July 2010.^x
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^{xi}
- Schools must meet program standards outlined in statute in order to receive funds.^{xii}

Assessment

- Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, kindergarten teachers may administer the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Kids and report the results to the superintendent.^{xiii}

- The comprehensive assessment solicits information on all domains of learning from parents and early care and education providers as well as kindergarten teachers. The superintendent shall share the results with the director of the department of early learning.^{xiv}
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ⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. "Kindergarten requirements, by State: 2010."

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

ⁱⁱ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. "State Funded Full-Day Kindergarten in Washington."

<http://www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/FullDayKindergartenResearch.aspx>

ⁱⁱⁱ Attendance Mandatory; Six or Seven Year Olds; *Revised Code of Washington* § 28A.225.015

^{iv} Uniform Entry Age for Kindergarten. *Washington Administrative Code* § 392-335-010

^v Definition — Full-Time Equivalent Student. *Washington Administrative Code* § WAC 392-121-122

^{vi} Kindergarten through Grade Three Students to Classroom Teacher Ratio Requirement. *Washington Administrative Code* § 180-16-210

^{vii} Voluntary All-Day Kindergarten Programs; Funding; Identification Of Skills, Knowledge, And Characteristics; Washington Kindergarten Inventory Of Developing Skills; Waivers; Alternative Assessments. *Revised Code of Washington* § 28A.150.315

^{viii} Ibid

^{ix} Ibid

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

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

^{xii} Voluntary All-Day Kindergarten Programs; Funding; Identification Of Skills, Knowledge, And Characteristics; Washington Kindergarten Inventory Of Developing Skills; Waivers; Alternative Assessments. *Revised Code of Washington* § 28A.150.315

^{xiii} Ibid

^{xiv} Ibid