



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Alabama

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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 a part of the K-12 publicly funded school system in most states. Nationally, only ten states and the District of Columbia require school districts to provide publicly funded Full-Day K through statute. Thirty-four other states require school districts to provide at least half-day kindergarten and six have no requirement.

Are Alabama school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ⁱ Yes No

Statutory Provisions

- Kindergarten attendance is not mandatory.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Children must be 5 years old on or before September 1st or the date on which the school year begins.^{iv}
- The beginning and ending times of the school day in kindergarten classrooms shall be the same as the schedule of the elementary schools in the systems of which students are a part.^v
- The maximum teacher to pupil ratio shall be based on the most current school board resolution regarding class size, which is currently 1 to 18.^{vi}

Funding

- State aid for public education in Alabama is primarily through a Foundation Program approved by the Legislature in 1995. Grades K-3 are given equal Average Daily Membership weight under this program.^{vii} ^{viii}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in November 2010.^{ix}
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^x

Assessment

- There are no specified assessment protocols in state statute. However, the *Alabama Kindergarten Sourcebook* distributed by the Alabama Department of Education lists the benefits of assessment before entering kindergarten and throughout the year to gauge skills that children have upon entering kindergarten and how they progress. The *Sourcebook* also suggests assessment tools that are beneficial.^{xi}

ⁱ Minimum age at which a child may enter. *The Code of Alabama* §16-28-4.

ⁱⁱ Minimum Standards for Organizing Kindergarten Programs In Alabama Schools. *State Department Of Education Administrative Code*. § 290-5-1-.01

ⁱⁱⁱ Ages of children required to attend school; exemption for church school students. *The Code of Alabama* § 16-28-3.

^{iv} Minimum Standards for Organizing Kindergarten Programs In Alabama Schools. *State Department Of Education Administrative Code*. § 290-5-1-.01

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Purposes and plan of apportionment. *The Code of Alabama* § 16-13-231.

^{viii} Determining number of teacher units and instructional support units; grade level divisors. *The Code of Alabama* § 16-13-232.
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^{ix} Common Core State Standard Initiative. "In The States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

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

^{xi} Alabama Department of Education 2003. "Alabama Kindergarten Sourcebook."

https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/54/AL_K_Source.pdf