



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Florida

January 2013

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 Florida school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___ Yes Xⁱ ii No

Statutory Provisions

- **Kindergarten attendance is optional at age 5.** However, Florida law specifies that all children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. If a child enters public school at age 6 without a transcript as evidence of kindergarten completion, the child will be placed in the first program of study, which is kindergarten. The child will progress according to the district's student progression plan.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Children who are 5 on or before September 1st of a school year may enter kindergarten.**^{iv}
- **In order for a public kindergarten student to be considered a full-time student, he or she must receive a minimum of 720 net hours of instruction, or four hours per day, based on 180 school days.**^v ^{vi}
- **Classrooms in grades pre-kindergarten through third must have 18 students or fewer per class.**^{vii}

Funding

- The Florida Education Finance Program provides funding for kindergarten at the same level as grades 1-3.^{viii}

Standards

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

Assessment

- All children in kindergarten must be screened with the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) within 30 days of the start of the school year. FLKRS combines a subset of the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and two measures from the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading- Kindergarten (FAIR-K). The ECHOS portion uses teacher observation to assess seven domains: language and literacy; mathematics; social and personal skills (approaches to learning); science; social studies; physical development and fitness, and creative arts. The FAIR-K section uses the Broad Screen Inventory (phonemic awareness and letter recognition).^{xi} ^{xii}

ⁱ School attendance. *Florida Statute* §. 1003.21

ⁱⁱ Definition. *Florida Statutes* §1011.61.

ⁱⁱⁱ School attendance. *Florida Statute* §. 1003.21

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Definition. *Florida Statutes* §1011.61.

^{vi} Florida Department of Education. "Florida Education Finance Program 2012-2013." <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/pdf/fefpdist.pdf>. Accessed January 2013.

^{vii} Maximum class size. *Florida Statute* §1003.03,

^{viii} Florida Department of Education. "Florida Education Finance Program 2012-2013." <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/pdf/fefpdist.pdf>

^{ix} Common Core State Standards 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} Statewide kindergarten screening; Kindergarten readiness rates, *Florida Statute* §1002.69

^{xii} Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener. *Florida Department of Education*. <http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/sruss.asp>. Accessed January 2013.