



# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Iowa

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 Iowa school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students?** \_\_\_ Yes X<sup>i</sup> \_\_\_ No

In the 2010-2011 school year, 333 of the 359 school districts offered only Full-Day K and twenty-six districts offered both Half- and Full-Day K.

### Statutory Provisions

- **Children who are 5 on or before September 15 of the school year may enter kindergarten.**<sup>iii</sup>
- **The number of instructional days within the school calendar and the length of the school day for kindergarten shall be defined by the local school board.**<sup>iv</sup>
- **The state has a teacher to student ratio goal 1 to 17.**<sup>v</sup> The state has averaged about 19 kindergarten students for every teacher from 1998–2010.<sup>vi</sup>

### Funding

- Beginning in fiscal year 2009-2010, the Iowa Early Intervention Block Grant Program was converted from a grants-in-aid categorical funding to a budgetary-allocation categorical funding.<sup>vii</sup>
- Appropriate uses of the block grant funding include providing programs, instructional support, and materials for grades K-3, including the implementation of all-day, every day kindergarten programs.<sup>viii</sup> This program is due to be repealed in July 2013.<sup>ix</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in July of 2010.<sup>x</sup>
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.<sup>xi</sup>
- Iowa currently has early learning standards that align with the Iowa Core curriculum standards.

### Assessment

- The board of directors of each public school district shall incorporate into the kindergarten admissions program criteria and procedures for identification and integration of at-risk children and their developmental needs.<sup>xii</sup>
- Iowa schools administer a kindergarten literacy assessment to students in the first six weeks of kindergarten. These assessments are compiled at the state level as in indicator of Iowa's Early Childhood Iowa State Board goal "Children Ready to Succeed in School."<sup>xiii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Admission and exclusion of pupils. *Iowa Code* § 282.3

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- ii Definitions. *Iowa Code* § 281-12.2(6)).
- iii Admission and exclusion of pupils. *Iowa Code* § 282.3
- iv Definitions. *Iowa Code* § 281-12.2(6)).
- v Iowa early intervention block grant program established—goals. *Iowa Code* §256D.1.
- vi Iowa Department of Education, 2010. "Iowa Early Intervention Block Grant Program (Class Size) 2009-2010." pg 2.
- vii District cost per pupil—district cost. *Iowa Code* § 257.10.
- viii Program funding. *Iowa Code* § 256D.2A.
- ix Future repeal. *Iowa Code* § 256D.9.
- x Common Core State Standard 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 Plans for at-risk children. *Iowa Code* §280.19.
- xiii Sherman-Proehl, Laurabelle. 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 22.