



# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Ohio

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 10 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 Ohio school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students?** \_\_\_ Yes X<sup>i</sup> No  
During fiscal year 2012, 131,236 students attended kindergarten in 1,813 elementary schools.<sup>ii</sup>

### Statutory Provisions

- **All districts are required to offer at least half-day kindergarten.**<sup>iii</sup>
- **Currently, districts must provide at least two and a half hours of kindergarten for each enrolled student.**<sup>iv</sup>
- **The compulsory age of attendance is 6 years old.** However, if a child enrolls in kindergarten at age 5, they are considered to be of compulsory school age.<sup>v</sup>
- **A child must be 5 by September 30<sup>th</sup>, or the first day of a term or semester other than one beginning in August or September, in order to enroll in kindergarten.** Parents can enroll their child earlier if he/she meets the standards determined by a district generated standardized test or other assessment for early entry.<sup>vi</sup>
- **Full-Day K is defined as being in session five days a week for the same amount of hours as grades 1-6.**<sup>vii</sup>
- **The school year is defined as being no less than 182 days.**<sup>viii</sup>
- **Any school district can operate Full-Day K.** However, no school district can mandate that a child attend more than the minimum two and a half hours required by state statute. Districts must accommodate parental requests for a child to attend half-day kindergarten.<sup>ix</sup>
- **The teacher to student ratio is no greater than 1 to 25 calculated district-wide for grades K-4.**<sup>x</sup>

### Funding

- Beginning in fiscal year 2012:
  - School districts may operate Full-Day K or extended-day kindergarten, but school districts are no longer required to provide Full-Day K to all students.
  - School districts that did not receive poverty based assistance for Full-Day K in fiscal year 2009 may charge tuition or fees for students enrolled in Full-Day K.
  - If a district charges fees or tuition for Full-Day K, the district shall develop a sliding fee scale based on family incomes.<sup>xi</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in June 2010.<sup>xii</sup>
- Kindergarten standards are aligned with elementary and secondary expectations.<sup>xiii</sup>
- The State Board of Education is required to adopt statewide standards and a model curriculum for instruction in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.<sup>xiv</sup>

### Assessment

- Districts are required to administer the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy to all children in public kindergartens.<sup>xv</sup>
- The State Board of Education adopt a diagnostic assessment “aligned with the academic standards and model curriculum” for grades K-2 in mathematics and English language arts.<sup>xvi</sup>
- A kindergarten diagnostic assessment must be administered to kindergarten transfer students if they were not administered in the previous school or district.
- Prior to November 1<sup>st</sup>, students enrolled in kindergarten for the first time must be screened for hearing, vision, speech, health, and developmental issues.<sup>xvii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Educational programs and support. *Ohio Administrative Code* § 3301-35-06

<sup>ii</sup> Siddens, Stephanie. 2012. E-mail correspondence. July 10.

<sup>iii</sup> Educational programs and support. *Ohio Administrative Code* § 3301-35-06

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid

<sup>v</sup> Compulsory school age. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3321.01

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid

<sup>vii</sup> All-day or extended kindergarten. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3321.05

<sup>viii</sup> Free Education To Be Provided - Minimum School Year. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3313.48

<sup>ix</sup> All-day or extended kindergarten. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3321.05

<sup>x</sup> Faculty and staff focus. *Ohio Administrative Code* § 3301-35-05

<sup>xi</sup> Ohio Department of Education. “Education and Learning Supports.”

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=778&ContentID=78128&Content=107522>. Accessed January 2013.

<sup>xii</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative. “In the States” <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

<sup>xiii</sup> Chance for Success. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 44.

<sup>xiv</sup> Academic Standards - Model Curriculum. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3301.079

<sup>xv</sup> District Board to Administer Diagnostic Assessments - Intervention Services. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3301.0715

<sup>xvi</sup> Academic Standards - Model Curriculum. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3301.079

<sup>xvii</sup> Screening Of Beginning Pupils For Special Learning Needs. *Ohio Revised Code* § 3313.673