



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Colorado

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 Colorado school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___ Yes X No
In 2011, there were 66,664 children enrolled in kindergarten across the state. Of those, 44,728 attend Full-Day K and 21,936 attend half-day kindergarten.ⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- **Any child that reaches 6 years of age by August 1st is required to attend public school.**ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Half-day kindergarten is defined as 450 hours per academic year. Full-Day K is defined as 900 hours per academic year.**^{iv}
- **The school year cannot be any less than 160 days.**^v
- **While school attendance is not mandatory for children younger than 6 years, school districts are required to offer, at a minimum, half-day kindergarten programs for age eligible children.**^{vi}
- **There is no data currently available for teacher to student ratio requirements.**

Funding

- The State of Colorado has set up a funding program for Full-Day K. If a district uses the money through this program to fund Full-Day K, the state recommends that they follow the basic principles outlined for pre-school.^{vii}
- Full-Day K funding sources include:^{viii}
 - **Supplemental funding:** Distributed to districts based on the number of students enrolled in kindergarten in a school district. Kindergartners are weighted as .5 full-time equivalent (FTE) for enrollment purposes, but a factor of .58 is used for funding purposes in the School Finance Formula.^{ix}
 - **Hold-harmless funding:** Continues the Full-Day K funding support in school districts that received Full-Day K funding through the Colorado Preschool and Kindergarten Program (CPKP) in FY 2007-08. The districts receive funding based on .42 times the full-time kindergarten CPKP slots each district had in FY 2007-08 or the number of children enrolled in kindergarten in the applicable budget year (whichever is less) times the district's per pupil revenue. Funding is provided based on the difference of one minus the Full-Day K factor of .58, which was equal to .42 for FY 2011-2012.^x
 - **Parent tuition**
 - **School district general fund operating dollars**
 - **Title I funds**
 - **Voter-approved mill levy increases for override funding to cover excess Full-Day K costs and other voter approved initiatives.**^{xi}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in August 2010.^{xii}
- Kindergarten standards are aligned with elementary and secondary expectations.^{xiii}

Assessment

- The Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) was passed in 1997 to ensure that all children are reading on grade level by third grade.
 - CBLA end of the year assessments take place in kindergarten to ensure that children are reading well enough to pass into first grade.^{xiv}
 - The Colorado Reading To Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act) was passed by the Colorado Legislature during the 2012 legislative session. The READ Act repeals the CBLA as of July 1, 2013, keeping many of the elements of CBLA such as a focus on K-3 literacy, assessment, and individual plans for students reading below grade level.^{xv}

ⁱ Schools defined. *Colorado Revised Statutes* § 22-1-101.

ⁱⁱ Colorado Department of Education, Fall 2011 Pupil Membership

ⁱⁱⁱ Compulsory School Attendance. *Colorado Revised Statutes* § 22-33-104.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} *Colorado Revised Statutes* § 22-32-119.

^{vii} District total program. *Colorado Revised Statutes* § 22-54-131.

^{viii} Personal Communication – Lori Bowers

^{ix} Definitions. *Colorado Revised Statutes* § 22-54-103.

^x Hold-Harmless Full-Day Kindergarten Funding. *Colorado Revised Statutes* § 22-54-130.

^{xi} Authorization of additional local revenues for full-day kindergarten *Colorado Revised Statutes* § 22-54-108.5(1)(a).

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

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

^{xiv} Colorado Department of Education. *Colorado CBLA End-of-Year Assessment Scoring & Reporting Guidelines*.

^{xv} Colorado Department of Education. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/cbla/>