



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Connecticut

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 Connecticut school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___ Yes Xⁱ No
Districts are not mandated to provide Full-Day K, but they have the option. In 2011, according to the Connecticut State Department of Education which oversees the 167 school districts:

- 73 school districts offered Full-Day K to all children;
- 29 offered Full-Day K to some children;
- 13 offered Extended-Day K to all children;
- and 52 provided Half-Day K to all children.ⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- **Kindergarten attendance is mandatory at age 5.** However, parents of 5-year-old children can opt out of sending them to kindergarten by completing school district paperwork.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Children who are 5 on or before January 1st of the school year may enter kindergarten. Local school districts can decide to admit children before they are age-eligible.**^{iv}
 - Multiple bills have been proposed, and rejected, over the past decade to change the cut-off date from January 1st of the school year to September 1st.
- **The state statute mandates that a half-day kindergarten program has 450 hours of instructional time during a 180 day school year. Full-Day K has a minimum of 900 hours of instructional time during a 180 day school year.**^v
- **There are no guidelines for teacher to student ratio or class size in statute.** The Connecticut Department of Education's report on education in 2010 states that from 2004-2008, the average number of students in a kindergarten class was approximately 18 students.^{vi}

Funding

- Full-day K is given equal weight to all other grades when calculating average daily membership in the state funding formula.^{vii}
- The early reading success grant program provides funds to certain "priority" school districts. An allowable use of the funds provided through this grant is the establishment of Full-Day K programs.^{viii}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in July 2010.^{ix} Content area standards are in various stages of revision and new early learning and development standards are currently being developed that align birth through age 5 with K-12.
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^x

Assessment

- In 2007, an amendment to the Connecticut General Statute (Sec. 10-14n) created the Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory to be used by the state as a means to collect data on students' skills based on teacher observations. Teachers rate students on three performance levels across six domains: language, literacy, numeracy, physical/motor, creative/aesthetic, and personal/social. The assessment is aligned with the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework and will be revised once new early learning and development standards are in place.^{xi}

ⁱ Length of school year. *Connecticut General Statutes* § 10-16.

ⁱⁱ Levy, Michelle 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 27.

ⁱⁱⁱ Duties of parents. School attendance age requirements. *Connecticut General Statutes* §10-184

^{iv} Discrimination in public schools prohibited. School attendance by five-year-olds. *Connecticut General Statutes* § 10-15c

^v Length of school year. *Connecticut General Statutes* § 10-16.

^{vi} Connecticut Department of Education 2010." The Condition of Education in Connecticut 2010."

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/ConditionofEd_08_09.pdf

^{vii} Definitions. *Connecticut General Statutes* § 10-261.

^{viii} Early reading success grant program. *Connecticut General Statutes* §10-265f.

^{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} Levy, Michelle 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 27.