



## Children's Defense Fund Full-Day Kindergarten in Illinois

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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 states require school districts to provide at least half-day kindergarten and six have no requirement.

Are Illinois school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? \_\_\_ Yes X No

### Statutory Provisions

- **School districts may provide students either a half-day or a full-day of kindergarten.**<sup>ii</sup> A school district which chooses to establish a full-day program must also establish a half-day program.<sup>iii</sup>
- **Kindergarten attendance is optional.**<sup>iv</sup>
- **In order to attend kindergarten, students are required to be 5 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year.**<sup>v</sup>
- **Full-Day K must be a minimum of four hours per day, and half-day kindergarten must be a minimum of two hours per day.**<sup>vi</sup>
- **Teacher to student ratios are not specifically mentioned in statute.** In 2005, the average kindergarten class size in Illinois was 21.<sup>vii</sup>

### Funding

- More funding is provided for Full-Day K than for half-day.<sup>viii</sup> Full-day K is counted at the same level as first-grade when calculating Average Daily Attendance for funding purposes.<sup>ix</sup>
- Some Illinois districts charge parents tuition to fund Full-Day K.<sup>x</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in June 2010.<sup>xi</sup>
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.<sup>xii</sup>

### Assessment

- The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has established an advisory committee comprised of early childhood experts who will guide the Board as it moves forward with recommendations for developing a comprehensive kindergarten readiness assessment process.
- The advisory committee submitted a report to guide the initial planning to the ISBE in April of 2011.<sup>xiii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Kindergartens. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/10-20.19a

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>iii</sup> Kindergartens. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/10-22.18

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- <sup>iv</sup> Kindergartens. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5
- <sup>v</sup> School Year - School Age. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/10-20.12
- <sup>vi</sup> Basis for apportionment of general State financial aid and supplemental general State aid to the common schools for the 1998-1999 and subsequent school years. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/18-8.05 (F)(2)(f).
- <sup>vii</sup> Office of the Governor 2006. "Gov. Blagojevich signs law to reduce kindergarten through third grade class sizes."  
<http://www.illinois.gov/pressreleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?SubjectID=2&RecNum=4992>. Accessed January 2013.
- <sup>viii</sup> National Education Association. "Great Public Schools Criteria for Illinois."  
[http://www.nea.org/home/achievement\\_Illinois.html](http://www.nea.org/home/achievement_Illinois.html)
- <sup>ix</sup> Basis for apportionment of general State financial aid and supplemental general State aid to the common schools for the 1998-1999 and subsequent school years. *Illinois School Code* § 105 ILCS 5/18-8.05.
- <sup>x</sup> Community Consolidated School District 46. "Full Day Kindergarten." <http://ww2.d46.org/district/fulldayk.asp>. Accessed January 2013.
- <sup>xi</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>
- <sup>xii</sup> Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Illinois State Board of Education, Early Childhood Education. "Kindergarten Corner."  
[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/html/kindergarten\\_corner.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/html/kindergarten_corner.htm)