



# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Kentucky

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 Kentucky school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students?** \_\_\_ Yes X No  
In 2009-2010, there were 174 public school districts containing 669 elementary and 77 elementary/middle schools. One hundred and sixty-one districts provided Full-Day K, eight districts provided only half-day kindergarten and five provided both.<sup>ii</sup>

### Statutory Provisions

- **The compulsory age for attendance is 6 years old.**<sup>iii</sup> Children that turn 5 by October 1<sup>st</sup> are eligible to attend a primary kindergarten program.<sup>iv</sup>
- **Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, children must be 5 years old by August 1<sup>st</sup> to be eligible to attend a primary kindergarten program.**<sup>v</sup>
- **Once children are enrolled in kindergarten for two months, their attendance becomes compulsory.**<sup>vi</sup>
- **Districts must provide an academic year of at least 185 days.** The district must also provide at least 175 days with six hours of instruction per day. An exception applies to kindergarten, however, allowing districts to provide less than six hours of instruction without approval from the state board of education.<sup>vii</sup>
- **The maximum number of students allowed in a kindergarten classroom is 24.**<sup>viii</sup>

### Funding

- Kentucky funds kindergarten less than grades 1-12.<sup>ix</sup>
- According to the Kentucky Department of Education, the state board of education spent \$9,246 per pupil during fiscal year 2011.<sup>x</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in February, 2010.<sup>xi</sup>
- Kindergarten standards are aligned with the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* for 3- and 4-year-old children, as well as elementary and secondary expectations.<sup>xii xiii</sup>

### Assessment

- Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, each school that enrolls primary students shall use diagnostic assessments and prompts that measure readiness in reading and mathematics for its primary students as determined by the school to be developmentally appropriate. The school may use commercial products, products and procedures developed by the district, or develop their own diagnostic procedures. The results shall be used to inform parents and guardians of each student's skill level.<sup>xiv</sup>

---

<sup>i</sup> School month and school day—Duty-free lunch period—Nonteaching time for teachers. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 158.060.

<sup>ii</sup> Kentucky Department of Education May 8, 2012. "Kentucky Education Facts."

<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/homepagerepository/news+room/kentucky+education+facts.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> Parent or custodian to send child to school -- Age limits for compulsory attendance. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 159.010.

<sup>iv</sup> "Common school" defined—Attendance at public school and primary school program—Advancement without regard to age—Local boards to adopt policy establishing petition and evaluation process for students who do not meet age requirements. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 158.030.

<sup>v</sup> Kidwell, Karen. 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 27.

<sup>vi</sup> Entrance of Five (5) Year Olds Into Primary School Program For Compulsory Attendance Purposes. *Kentucky Administrative Regulations* § 704 KAR 5:060

<sup>vii</sup> School month and school day—Duty-free lunch period—Nonteaching time for teachers. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § KRS 158.060.

<sup>viii</sup> Base Funding Level -- Adjustment -- Enforcement Of Maximum Class Sizes. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 157.360

<sup>ix</sup> Definitions. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § KRS 157.320 (7)

<sup>x</sup> Kentucky Department of Education May 8, 2012. "Kentucky Education Facts."

<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/homepagerepository/news+room/kentucky+education+facts.htm>

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

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

<sup>xiii</sup> Kentucky Department of Education. "Kentucky Early Childhood Standards/ Kentucky Core Academic Standards Alignment."

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Elementary+School/Primary+Program/Kentucky+Early+Childhood+Standards+Kentucky+Core+Academic+Standards+Alignment.htm>

<sup>xiv</sup> Definitions—Assessment of achievement of goals—Revision of academic content standards—Components—Criterion referenced and norm referenced tests—Program assessments—High school and college readiness assessments—ACT and WorkKeys—Accommodations for students with disabilities—Assessment design—Reporting timelines—Biennial plan for validation studies—Local assessment—School report card—Individual student report—Inappropriate test preparation prohibited. *Kentucky Revised Statutes* § 158.6453.