

Full-Day Kindergarten

DEFINITION

Full-day kindergarten is the percentage of public school children enrolled in a full-day kindergarten program as of October 2007. Full-day kindergarten is defined as a kindergarten program that operates for at least six hours per day. The numbers do not include children enrolled in private kindergarten programs or in half-day kindergarten programs that offer after-school child care.

SIGNIFICANCE

Children benefit academically from participating in full-day kindergarten. Those in full-day kindergarten are more likely to be ready for first grade than children in half-day kindergarten programs.¹ On average, the learning gains that students make in full-day kindergarten programs translate to a month of additional schooling over the course of a school year.² Full-day kindergarten programs can be especially beneficial to poor and minority children and can contribute significantly to closing academic achievement gaps.³

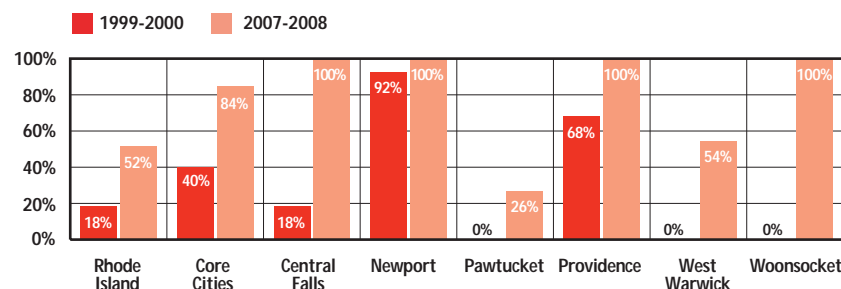
With an estimated 69% of kindergarteners in the U.S. having attended center-based early education programs, kindergarten no longer serves as the entry-point to formal, full-day

school for most young children.⁴ Many parents favor full-day kindergarten as it provides continuity for children who are already accustomed to full-day preschool experiences and it reduces the number of transitions and disruptions their child must make each day.⁵ Teachers in full-day kindergarten programs have more time to provide meaningful learning opportunities that encourage cognitive, physical and social-emotional development.^{6,7}

Nationally, enrollment in full-day kindergarten has been increasing steadily over the past 25 years. In 1979, 25% of kindergartners were in full-day programs.⁸ In 2005, 69% of the nation's public school kindergarteners and 75% of private school kindergarteners were enrolled in a full-day program.⁹

Across the U.S., 9 states require all school districts to offer full-day kindergarten and 2 states require all children to attend full-day kindergarten before entering first grade.¹⁰

Children in Full-Day Public Kindergarten Programs, Core Cities and Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2007-2008



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1999-2000 and 2007-2008 school years.

◆ In Rhode Island in 2007-2008, 52% of the children who attended public kindergarten were in a full day program.¹¹ This compares to a national rate of 69% in 2005, the latest year for which national data are available.¹²

◆ As of the 2007-2008 school year, 13 school districts offered universal access to full-day kindergarten programs and another 8 school districts operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom. Both the West Warwick School District and the East Providence School District expanded the availability of full-day kindergarten in 2007-2008. All of Rhode Island's independent charter schools offering kindergarten run full-day programs.¹³

Academic Progress in Full-Day Kindergarten

◆ According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 68% of full-day kindergarten classes spend more than one hour per day on reading instruction compared to 37% of half-day classes.¹⁴

◆ Full-day kindergarten classes are also more likely than half-day classes to spend time every day on math (90% and 73%, respectively), social studies (30% and 18%, respectively), and science (24% and 10%, respectively).¹⁵

◆ Nationally, children in full-day kindergarten classes make greater academic gains in both reading and mathematics compared to those in half-day classes, even after adjusting for differences associated with race/ethnicity, poverty status, fall achievement level, sex and class size.¹⁶

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Table 33. Children Enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2007-2008

SCHOOL DISTRICT	1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR			2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR		
	TOTAL CHILDREN IN K PROGRAMS	CHILDREN IN FULL-DAY K	% OF CHILDREN IN FULL-DAY K	TOTAL CHILDREN IN K PROGRAMS	CHILDREN IN FULL-DAY K	% CHILDREN IN FULL-DAY K
Barrington*	214	0	0%	196	49	25%
Bristol-Warren*	255	0	0%	248	248	100%
Burrillville*	164	0	0%	195	195	100%
Central Falls*	250	44	18%	245	245	100%
Charlho	292	0	0%	224	41	18%
Coventry	381	0	0%	327	2	<1%
Cranston	737	0	0%	702	11	2%
Cumberland	373	0	0%	338	16	5%
East Greenwich*	165	0	0%	108	16	15%
East Providence*	443	0	0%	388	148	38%
Exeter-W. Greenwich	129	0	0%	108	0	0%
Foster	55	0	0%	29	0	0%
Foster-Glocester	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Glocester	124	0	0%	93	0	0%
Jamestown*	59	0	0%	59	59	100%
Johnston*	241	0	0%	218	55	25%
Lincoln	232	0	0%	182	4	2%
Little Compton	38	0	0%	37	0	0%
Middletown*	258	211	82%	179	179	100%
Narragansett*	125	0	0%	73	73	100%
New Shoreham*	8	8	100%	13	13	100%
Newport*	225	206	92%	169	169	100%
North Kingstown*	313	0	0%	286	50	17%
North Providence	211	0	0%	197	0	0%
North Smithfield*	122	55	45%	125	125	100%
Pawtucket*	788	0	0%	646	165	26%
Portsmouth	214	0	0%	180	2	1%
Providence*	2,117	1,431	68%	1,888	1,888	100%
Scituate	107	0	0%	109	0	0%
Smithfield	177	0	0%	158	0	0%
South Kingstown*	278	0	0%	212	212	100%
Tiverton	144	0	0%	138	0	0%
Warwick*	766	29	4%	580	38	7%
West Warwick*	260	0	0%	248	134	54%
Westerly*	282	10	4%	205	205	100%
Woonsocket*	522	0	0%	508	508	100%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	228	228	100%
State-Operated Schools	NA	NA	NA	1	0	NA
Core Cities	4,162	1,681	40%	3,704	3,109	84%
Remainder of State	6,907	313	5%	5,907	1,741	29%
Rhode Island	11,069	1,994	18%	9,840	5,078	52%

* District operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom during the 2007-2008 school year.

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Data are as of October for the 1999-2000 and 2007-2008 school years.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

Charter schools reported for this indicator are CVS Highlander Charter School, The Compass Charter School, International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community, and Paul Cuffee Charter School. The state-operated school is the Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

References

- ^{1,3} DeCesare, D. (2004). Full-day kindergarten programs improve chances of academic success. *The progress of education reform 2004: Kindergarten*, (5)4, 1-6.
- ² Viadero, D. (2005). Full-day kindergarten produces more learning gains, study says. *Education Week*, 25(8), 1,16.
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- ⁷ Ackerman, D.J., Barnett, W.S., & Robin, K.B. (2005). *Making the most of kindergarten: Present trends and future issues in the provision of full-day programs*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, National Institute on Early Education Research.
- ^{9,12} U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 2005. Table 4.
- ¹⁰ Kauerz, K. (2005). State kindergarten policies: Straddling early learning and early elementary school. *Beyond the Journal: Young Children on the Web*. Retrieved February 6, 2006 from www.naeyc.org
- ^{11,13} Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 2007.
- ^{14,15,16} Walston, J. & West, J. (2004). *Full-day and half-day kindergarten in the United States: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences.