

# Full-Day Kindergarten

## DEFINITION

*Full-day kindergarten* is the percentage of public school children enrolled in full-day kindergarten programs as of October 2008. Full-day kindergarten is defined as kindergarten programs that operate for at least six hours per day. Children enrolled in private kindergarten programs or in half-day kindergarten programs that offer after-school child care are not included.

## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> Full-day kindergarten programs can be especially beneficial to poor and minority children and can contribute significantly to closing academic achievement gaps.<sup>3</sup>

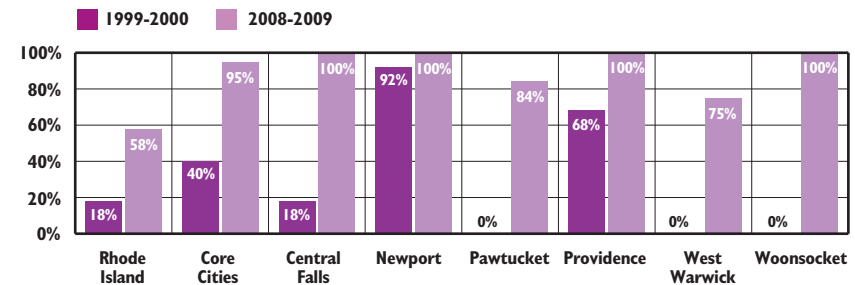
With an estimated 69% of kindergarteners in the U.S. having attended center-based early education programs, kindergarten no longer serves as the entry-point to formal, full-day

school for most young children.<sup>4</sup> 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 children must make each day.<sup>5</sup> Teachers in full-day kindergarten programs have more time to provide meaningful learning opportunities that encourage cognitive, physical and social-emotional development.<sup>6,7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> In 2006, 72% of the nation's public school kindergarteners and 74% of private school kindergarteners were enrolled in full-day programs.<sup>9</sup>

Across the U.S., nine states require all school districts to offer full-day kindergarten and two states require children to attend full-day kindergarten before entering first grade.<sup>10</sup>

**Children in Full-Day Public Kindergarten Programs, Core Cities and Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2008-2009 School Years**



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 1999 and October 2008.

◆ In Rhode Island in the 2008-2009 school year, 58% of the children who attended public kindergarten were in a full-day program.<sup>11</sup>

◆ As of the 2008-2009 school year, 13 school districts offered universal access to full-day kindergarten programs and another eight school districts operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom. The East Providence, North Providence, Pawtucket and West Warwick school districts significantly expanded the availability of full-day kindergarten in 2008-2009. All of Rhode Island's independent charter schools offering kindergarten run full-day programs.<sup>12</sup>

## 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.<sup>13</sup>

◆ Full-day kindergarten classes are 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).<sup>14</sup>

◆ 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, gender and class size.<sup>15</sup>

# Full-Day Kindergarten

Table 33. Children Enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2008-2009

SCHOOL DISTRICT	1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR			2008-2009 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	% OF CHILDREN IN FULL-DAY K
Barrington*	214	0	0%	185	0	0%
Bristol-Warren*	255	0	0%	261	261	100%
Burrillville*	164	0	0%	197	197	100%
Central Falls*	250	44	18%	279	279	100%
Chariho	292	0	0%	219	0	0%
Coventry	381	0	0%	302	6	2%
Cranston	737	0	0%	683	10	1%
Cumberland	373	0	0%	300	6	2%
East Greenwich*	165	0	0%	138	27	20%
East Providence*	443	0	0%	385	219	57%
Exeter-W. Greenwich	129	0	0%	111	0	0%
Foster	55	0	0%	32	0	0%
Foster-Glocester	0	0	0%	0	0	NA
Glocester	124	0	0%	91	2	2%
Jamestown*	59	0	0%	42	42	100%
Johnston*	241	0	0%	203	15	7%
Lincoln	232	0	0%	192	0	0%
Little Compton	38	0	0%	27	0	0%
Middletown*	258	211	82%	179	179	100%
Narragansett*	125	0	0%	90	90	100%
New Shoreham*	8	8	100%	13	13	100%
Newport*	225	206	92%	156	156	100%
North Kingstown*	313	0	0%	234	52	22%
North Providence*	211	0	0%	228	116	51%
North Smithfield*	122	55	45%	128	127	99%
Pawtucket*	788	0	0%	735	616	84%
Portsmouth	214	0	0%	157	1	1%
Providence*	2,117	1,431	68%	1,909	1,909	100%
Scituate	107	0	0%	92	0	0%
Smithfield	177	0	0%	123	0	0%
South Kingstown*	278	0	0%	236	236	100%
Tiverton	144	0	0%	115	1	1%
Warwick*	766	29	4%	642	17	3%
West Warwick*	260	0	0%	262	196	75%
Westerly*	282	10	4%	230	230	100%
Woonsocket*	522	0	0%	482	482	100%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	249	249	100%
State-Operated Schools	NA	NA	NA	4	4	100%
Core Cities	4,162	1,681	40%	3,823	3,638	95%
Remainder of State	6,907	313	5%	5,835	1,847	32%
Rhode Island	11,069	1,994	18%	9,911	5,738	58%

\* District operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom during the 2008-2009 school year.

## Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Data are as of October 1999 and October 2008.

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

- <sup>1,3</sup> DeCesare, D. (2004). Full-day kindergarten programs improve chances of academic success. *The progress of education reform 2004: Kindergarten*, (5)4, 1-6.
- <sup>2</sup> Viadero, D. (2005). Full-day kindergarten produces more learning gains, study says. *Education Week*, 25(8), 1,16.
- <sup>4,5,6,8</sup> Kauerz, K. (2005). *Full-day kindergarten: A study of state policies in the United States*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.
- <sup>7</sup> 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.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 2006. Table 3.
- <sup>10</sup> Kauerz, K. (2005). State kindergarten policies: Straddling early learning and early elementary school. *Beyond the Journal: Young Children on the Web*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- <sup>11,12</sup> Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 2008.
- <sup>13,14,15</sup> 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.