

Full-Day Kindergarten

DEFINITION

Full-day kindergarten is the percentage of public school children enrolled in full-day kindergarten programs on October 1. 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, regardless of family income, parental education and school characteristics. 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. Full-day kindergarten programs can be especially beneficial to poor and minority children and can contribute significantly to closing academic achievement gaps.^{1,2,3}

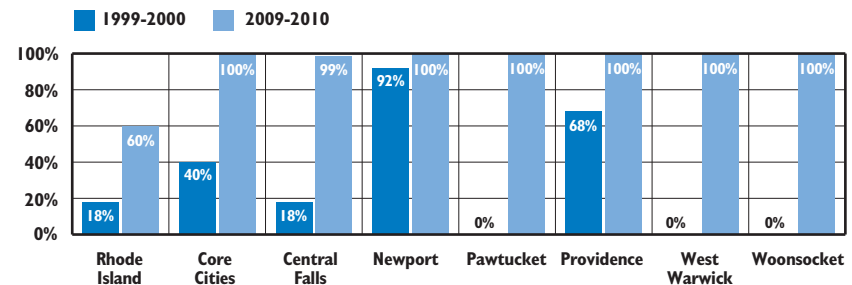
With an estimated 80% of 4-year-olds in the U.S. enrolled in some type of preschool program, kindergarten no

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 Also, 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 2008, 72% of the nation's public school kindergartners and 72% of private school kindergartners were enrolled in full-day programs.⁹

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.¹⁰

Children in Full-Day Public Kindergarten Programs, Core Cities and Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2009-2010 School Years



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 1, 1999 and October 1, 2009.

- ◆ In Rhode Island in the 2009-2010 school year, 60% of the children who attended public kindergarten were in a full-day program.¹¹
- ◆ During the 2009-2010 school year, 16 school districts offered universal access to full-day kindergarten programs and another six school districts operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom. All of the independent charter schools in Rhode Island that offer kindergarten run full-day programs.¹²

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.¹³
- ◆ 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).¹⁴
- ◆ 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, achievement level at kindergarten entry, gender and class size.¹⁵

Table 37. Children Enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2009-2010

SCHOOL DISTRICT	1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR			2009-2010 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%	233	233	100%
Burrillville*	164	0	0%	171	171	100%
Central Falls*	250	44	18%	221	219	99%
Chariho	292	0	0%	217	0	0%
Coventry	381	0	0%	342	6	2%
Cranston	737	0	0%	712	5	1%
Cumberland	373	0	0%	306	9	3%
East Greenwich*	165	0	0%	131	21	16%
East Providence*	443	0	0%	408	271	66%
Exeter-West Greenwich	129	0	0%	107	0	0%
Foster	55	0	0%	48	0	0%
Glocester	124	0	0%	74	0	0%
Jamestown*	59	0	0%	52	52	100%
Johnston*	241	0	0%	228	23	10%
Lincoln	232	0	0%	202	1	<1%
Little Compton*	38	0	0%	31	31	100%
Middletown*	258	211	82%	190	190	100%
Narragansett*	125	0	0%	103	103	100%
New Shoreham*	8	8	100%	10	10	100%
Newport*	225	206	92%	187	187	100%
North Kingstown*	313	0	0%	254	54	21%
North Providence*	211	0	0%	235	81	34%
North Smithfield*	122	55	45%	126	126	100%
Pawtucket*	788	0	0%	775	774	100%
Portsmouth	214	0	0%	153	0	0%
Providence*	2,117	1,431	68%	1,952	1,952	100%
Scituate	107	0	0%	94	0	0%
Smithfield	177	0	0%	133	0	0%
South Kingstown*	278	0	0%	241	238	99%
Tiverton	144	0	0%	122	1	1%
Warwick*	766	29	4%	650	57	9%
West Warwick*	260	0	0%	260	259	100%
Westerly*	282	10	4%	227	227	100%
Woonsocket*	522	0	0%	533	533	100%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	336	336	100%
State-Operated Schools	NA	NA	NA	5	5	100%
Core Cities	4,162	1,681	40%	3,928	3,924	100%
Remainder of State	6,907	313	5%	5,985	1,910	32%
Rhode Island	11,069	1,994	18%	10,254	6,175	60%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 1, 1999 and October 1, 2009.

*District operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom during the 2009-2010 school year.

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

Charter schools included in this indicator are Democracy Prep, Blackstone Valley Charter School, 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 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.
- ³ Lee, V. E., Burkan, D. T., Ready, D. D., Honigman, J. & Meisels, S. J. (2006). Full-day versus half-day kindergarten: In which programs do children learn more? *American Journal of Education*, 112, 163-208.
- ⁴ Barnett, W. S., Epstein, D. J., Friedman, A. H., Boyd, J. S. & Hustedt, J. T. (2008). *The state of preschool 2008: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, National Institute for Early Education Research.
- ^{5,6,8} Kauerz, K. (2005). *Full-day kindergarten: A study of state policies in the United States*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.
- 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 for Early Education Research.
- ⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2008. *Table 3: Nursery and primary school enrollment of people 3 to 6 years old, by control of school, attendance status, age, race, Hispanic origin, mother's labor force status and education, and family income: October 2008*.

(continued on page 170)