

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 74% of four-year-olds in the U.S. enrolled in some type of preschool program, kindergarten no longer serves as the

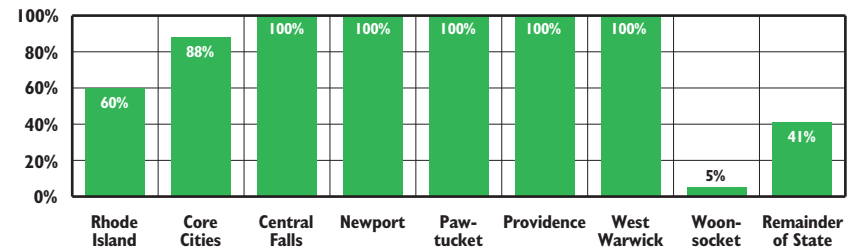
entry-point to formal, full-day school for most young children.⁴ Many parents favor full-day kindergarten as it provides continuity for children who are already accustomed to full-day preschool experiences and it reduces the number of transitions and disruptions their child experiences each day.⁵ Also, 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 and 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

In Rhode Island in the 2010-2011 school-year, 60% of the children who attended public kindergarten were in a full-day program, with 88% of students in the core cities and 41% of students in the remainder of the state attending full-day kindergarten.¹¹

Children in Full-Day Public Kindergarten Programs, Core Cities and Rhode Island, 2010-2011 School Year



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 1, 2010.

◆ In the 2010-2011 school year, 88% of public school kindergarten students in the core cities were enrolled in full-day programs. This is a decline from 100% participation in full-day kindergarten among students in the core cities last year. Due to budget issues, the Woonsocket School District eliminated all but one full-day kindergarten classroom for the 2010-2011 school year.¹²

◆ During the 2010-2011 school year, 17 school districts offered universal access to full-day kindergarten programs and another six school districts operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom. The Lincoln School District began offering universal full-day kindergarten in the 2010-2011 school year. All of the independent charter schools in Rhode Island that offer 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. 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, fall achievement level, gender and class size.¹⁵

Table 37. Children Enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2010-2011

SCHOOL DISTRICT	1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR			2010-2011 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%	177	0	0%
Bristol Warren*	255	0	0%	262	262	100%
Burrillville*	164	0	0%	169	169	100%
Central Falls*	250	44	18%	259	259	100%
Chariho	292	0	0%	180	0	0%
Coventry	381	0	0%	328	0	0%
Cranston	737	0	0%	673	1	<1%
Cumberland	373	0	0%	302	4	1%
East Greenwich*	165	0	0%	132	21	16%
East Providence*	443	0	0%	361	243	67%
Exeter-West Greenwich	129	0	0%	93	0	0%
Foster	55	0	0%	46	0	0%
Glocester	124	0	0%	86	0	0%
Jamestown*	59	0	0%	42	42	100%
Johnston*	241	0	0%	213	21	10%
Lincoln*	232	0	0%	184	184	100%
Little Compton*	38	0	0%	26	26	100%
Middletown*	258	211	82%	181	181	100%
Narragansett*	125	0	0%	90	90	100%
New Shoreham*	8	8	100%	9	9	100%
Newport*	225	206	92%	172	172	100%
North Kingstown*	313	0	0%	245	63	26%
North Providence*	211	0	0%	253	249	98%
North Smithfield*	122	55	45%	94	94	100%
Pawtucket*	788	0	0%	805	805	100%
Portsmouth	214	0	0%	151	0	0%
Providence*	2,117	1,431	68%	1,909	1,909	100%
Scituate	107	0	0%	95	0	0%
Smithfield	177	0	0%	136	0	0%
South Kingstown*	278	0	0%	235	235	100%
Tiverton	144	0	0%	125	0	0%
Warwick*	766	29	4%	630	61	10%
West Warwick*	260	0	0%	287	287	100%
Westerly*	282	10	4%	214	214	100%
Woonsocket*	522	0	0%	505	27	5%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	337	337	100%
State-Operated Schools	NA	NA	NA	6	6	100%
Core Cities	4,162	1,681	40%	3,937	3,459	88%
Remainder of State	6,907	313	5%	6,075	2,512	41%
Rhode Island	11,069	1,994	18%	10,012	5,971	60%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 1, 1999 and October 1, 2010.

* District operated at least one full-day kindergarten classroom during the 2010-2011 school year.

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

Charter schools included in this indicator are Highlander Charter School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, International Charter School, The Compass Charter School and The Learning Community. 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., Sansanelli, R. A. & Husted, J. T. (2009). *The state of preschool 2009: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, National Institute for Early Education Research.

^{5,6} 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.*

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