

Full-Day Kindergarten

DEFINITION

Full-day kindergarten is the percentage of public school kindergarten children enrolled in a full-day kindergarten program as of October 2003. 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

Research shows that many children benefit academically from participation in full-day kindergarten and are more likely to be ready for first grade than children in half-day kindergarten programs.^{1,2} Full-day kindergarten programs are especially beneficial to children from low-income and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.³

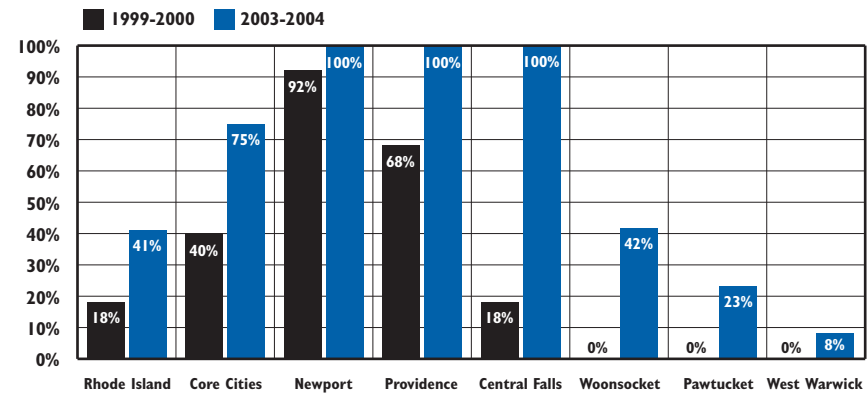
The increase in single parent families, the increase in the number of families with both parents working and the fact that most children have experience with full-day preschool or child care programs have increased the demand for full-day kindergarten. Studies show that parents favor a full-day program that reduces the number of transitions that their

kindergarten child must make each day.⁴

Teachers and parents report that children who participate in full-day kindergarten have more time to discover at a relaxed pace, more opportunities to choose activities and develop their own interests and more time for creative activities.⁵ The longer school day allows children and teachers time to explore topics in depth and provides an environment that supports a child-centered, developmentally-appropriate approach. Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more positive behaviors than half-day kindergartners, including: independent learning, classroom involvement, and productivity in work with peers.^{6,7} Children in full-day programs are more likely to understand a broader range of letter-sound relationships, recognize words by sight, learn more in reading and math and understand words in context.^{8,9}

In a full-day program, teachers and school staff have more opportunities to recognize a child's learning style, assess progress and identify problems or behavioral issues. This allows for more timely intervention and the potential to reduce costs associated with remedial education and special education costs in later school years.^{10,11}

Children in Full-Day Public Kindergarten Programs, Core Cities and Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2003-2004



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1999-2000 and 2003-2004 school years.

◆ In Rhode Island in 2003-2004, 41% of children who attended kindergarten were in a full-day kindergarten program. Seventy-five percent of full-day kindergarteners live in the core cities. Of Rhode Island's thirty-six school districts, eight offer universal access to full-day kindergarten programs in 2003-2004.¹²

Kindergarten Entry Age

◆ On January 1, 2004, Rhode Island's new kindergarten entry age policy went into effect. Children must now be 5 years old by September 1, rather than December 31 to enter kindergarten.¹³ Rhode Island is one of 35 states that have changed their kindergarten cut-off date.¹⁴

◆ A child's school readiness is based upon his or her maturity and the skills they have mastered. Regardless of the age at school entry, it is critical that a child's education address all domains of child development including: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, and cognition and language development.¹⁵

Table 28. Children Enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2003-2004

SCHOOL DISTRICT	1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR			2003-2004 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%	189	0	0%
Bristol-Warren	255	0	0%	234	75	32%
Burrillville	164	0	0%	160	76	48%
Central Falls	250	44	18%	305	305	100%
Chariho	292	0	0%	264	40	15%
Coventry	381	0	0%	306	0	0%
Cranston	737	0	0%	690	0	0%
Cumberland	373	0	0%	373	0	0%
East Greenwich	165	0	0%	144	9	6%
East Providence	443	0	0%	404	55	14%
Exeter-W. Greenwich	129	0	0%	110	0	0%
Foster	55	0	0%	49	0	0%
Foster-Glocester	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Glocester	124	0	0%	116	0	0%
Jamestown	59	0	0%	48	48	100%
Johnston	241	0	0%	253	61	24%
Lincoln	232	0	0%	246	1	<1%
Little Compton	38	0	0%	30	0	0%
Middletown	258	211	82%	209	209	100%
Narragansett	125	0	0%	87	87	100%
New Shoreham	8	8	100%	13	13	100%
Newport	225	206	92%	244	244	100%
North Kingstown	313	0	0%	289	51	18%
North Providence	211	0	0%	198	0	0%
North Smithfield	122	55	45%	137	137	100%
Pawtucket	788	0	0%	631	144	23%
Portsmouth	214	0	0%	193	0	0%
Providence	2,117	1,431	68%	2,140	2,140	100%
Scituate	107	0	0%	134	16	12%
Smithfield	177	0	0%	158	0	0%
South Kingstown	278	0	0%	235	0	0%
Tiverton	144	0	0%	148	0	0%
Warwick	766	29	4%	750	42	6%
West Warwick	260	0	0%	274	22	8%
Westerly	282	10	4%	284	252	89%
Woonsocket	522	0	0%	543	230	42%
State Run Schools	NA	NA	NA	3	2	67%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	133	133	100%
Core Cities	4,162	1,681	40%	4,137	3,085	75%
Remainder of State	6,907	313	5%	6,451	1,172	18%
Rhode Island	11,069	1,994	18%	10,724	4,392	41%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Data are as of October for the 1999-2000 and 2003-2004 school years.

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

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

References for Indicator

- ¹⁵ Clark, P. (June 2001). "Recent Research on All-Day Kindergarten." ERIC DIGEST. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- ²⁴ Hildebrand, C. (Fall 2000). Effects of All-Day, and Half-Day Kindergarten Programming On Reading Writing, Math, and Classroom Social Behaviors. *National FORUM of Applied Educational Research Journal*, Volume 13E, No.3. Lake Charles, LA: The College of Education and Human Development, University of Louisiana at Monroe.
- ³¹¹ *Learning to Learn: Full-Day Kindergarten for At-Risk Kids*. (Revised, October 2000). Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Partnership for Children.
- ⁶ Miller, A. Full-Day Kindergarten. *Parent News for January-February 2001*. (2001). Champaign, IL: National Parent Information Network, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- ⁷⁹ Early Education for All. *Full-Day Kindergarten*. Boston, MA: Strategies for Children. www.earlyeducationforall.org.
- ⁸ *Narrowing the Gap in Early Literacy: Evidence from Minneapolis Public Schools Kindergarten Assessments*. (November 2002). Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis Public Schools.
- ¹⁰ West, J. et al. (2000). *The Kindergarten Year: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99*.
- ¹³ State of Rhode Island General Assembly, Title 16 Education, Chapter 16-2 School Committees and Superintendents, section 16-2-27.
- ^{12,13,14} Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- ¹⁵ *School Readiness: Helping Communities Get Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children*. (October 2001). Research Brief. Washington, DC: Child Trends.