

Full-Day Kindergarten

DEFINITION

Full-day kindergarten is the percentage of public school children enrolled in a full-day kindergarten program as of October 2004. 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

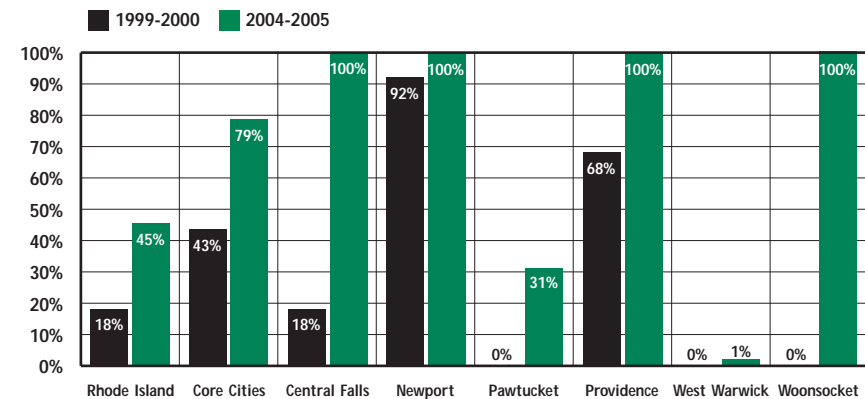
Research shows that many children benefit academically from participation in full-day kindergarten and are more likely to be ready for first grade than children in half-day kindergarten programs.^{1,2} Full-day kindergarten programs are especially beneficial to children from low-income and educationally 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. Full-day kindergarteners are also more likely to approach their teachers and experience fewer feelings of anger, shyness and withdrawal.^{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 full-day programs, 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 2004-2005



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1999-2000 and 2004-2005 school years.

- ◆ In Rhode Island in 2004-2005, 45% of the children who attended kindergarten were in a full day program.¹²
- ◆ As of the 2004-2005 school year, eleven school districts offered universal access to full-day kindergarten programs.¹³
- ◆ Sixty-two percent of full-day kindergarteners attend public school in one of the six core cities, 32% in the remainder of the state and the remaining 6% were served in a state run or charter school.¹⁴
- ◆ Since the benefits of full-day kindergarten are closely related to the quality of curriculum and instruction, the most effective full-day kindergarten programs spend time assessing the school readiness and curricular needs of their kindergarten population, create specific program goals and design programs based on developmentally appropriate practices.¹⁵
- ◆ Cost is a major consideration for most districts considering full-day kindergarten. Some research suggests that districts can save money over the long term because full-day kindergarten programs are more effective and reduce the need to retain students.¹⁶

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Table 30. Children Enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2004-2005

SCHOOL DISTRICT	1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR			2004-2005 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%	180	22	12%
Bristol-Warren	255	0	0%	223	222	100%
Burrillville	164	0	0%	162	162	100%
Central Falls	250	44	18%	224	224	100%
Chariho	292	0	0%	246	43	17%
Coventry	381	0	0%	304	0	0%
Cranston	737	0	0%	587	0	0%
Cumberland	373	0	0%	326	6	2%
East Greenwich	165	0	0%	91	3	3%
East Providence	443	0	0%	282	42	15%
Exeter-W. Greenwich	129	0	0%	108	0	0%
Foster	55	0	0%	33	0	0%
Foster-Glocester	0	0	NA	0	0	NA
Glocester	124	0	0%	85	0	0%
Jamestown	59	0	0%	47	0	0%
Johnston	241	0	0%	128	1	1%
Lincoln	232	0	0%	221	0	0%
Little Compton	38	0	0%	46	0	0%
Middletown	258	211	82%	203	203	100%
Narragansett	125	0	0%	92	92	100%
New Shoreham	8	8	100%	10	10	100%
Newport	225	206	92%	155	155	100%
North Kingstown	313	0	0%	265	38	14%
North Providence	211	0	0%	147	0	0%
North Smithfield	122	55	45%	134	134	100%
Pawtucket	788	0	0%	648	204	31%
Portsmouth	214	0	0%	167	0	0%
Providence	2,117	1,431	68%	1,480	1,480	100%
Scituate	107	0	0%	107	16	15%
Smithfield	177	0	0%	126	0	0%
South Kingstown	278	0	0%	211	21	10%
Tiverton	144	0	0%	120	0	0%
Warwick	766	29	4%	606	38	6%
West Warwick	260	0	0%	216	2	1%
Westerly	282	10	4%	216	216	100%
Woonsocket	522	0	0%	399	399	100%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	221	221	100%
State Run Schools	NA	NA	NA	8	8	100%
Core Cities	4,162	1,681	40%	3,122	2,464	79%
Remainder of State	6,907	313	5%	5,473	1,269	23%
Rhode Island	11,069	1,994	18%	8,824	3,962	45%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Data are as of October for the 1999-2000 and 2004-2005 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-run school is the Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

Note: In large part as a result of the change in the kindergarten entry age enacted in the 2004-2005 school year, there is a 1,900 child difference in the number of children in kindergarten programs between the 2003-2004 school year and the 2004-2005 school year.

References for Indicator

¹⁵ Clark, P. (2001). Recent research on all-day kindergarten. *ERIC DIGEST*. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

²⁴ Hildebrand, C. (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. (2001). Full-day kindergarten. *Parent News for January-February 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. Retrieved February, 2004 from www.earlyeducationforall.org.

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