

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 2, 2002. 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

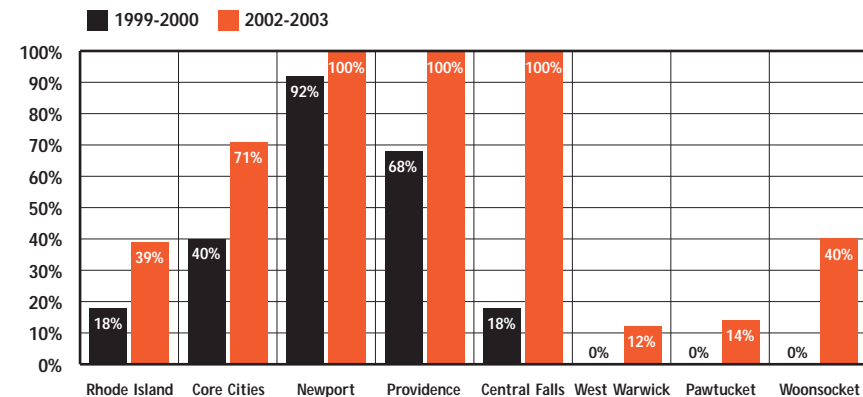
Research shows that many children benefit academically from participation in full-day kindergarten and are more likely to be ready for first grade than children in half-day kindergarten programs.^{1,2} Full-day kindergarten programs are especially beneficial to children from low-income and educationally 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 in full-day programs 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; reduces the ratio of transition time to class time; provides for greater continuity of daily activities; and provides an environment that supports a child-centered, developmentally-appropriate approach. Full-day kindergartners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers, and reflectiveness than half-day kindergartners.⁶ Children in full-day programs are more likely to understand a broader range of letter-sound relationships, recognize words by sight, and understand words in context.⁷

Teachers in full-day programs are better able to assess children's progress.⁸ In a full-day program, teachers and school staff have more opportunities to recognize a child's learning style 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.⁹

Children in Full-Day Public Kindergarten Programs, Core Cities and Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2002-2003



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 school years.

- ◆ In Rhode Island in 2002-2003, 39% of children who attended kindergarten were in a full-day kindergarten, up from 33% in 2001-2002 and 18% in 1999-2000.¹⁰ Nationwide, approximately 50% of kindergartners attend a full-day program.^{11,12}
- ◆ Almost three-quarters (71%) of children in the six core cities attended full-day kindergarten programs in 2002-2003, an increase from 69% in 2001-2002, 56% in 2000-2001, and 40% in 1999-2000.¹³
- ◆ Of Rhode Island's thirty-six school districts, six offer universal access to full-day kindergarten. The remaining school districts with full-day kindergarten select children for the full-day program by residence, lottery or based on special needs or risk categories.¹⁴
- ◆ Full-day kindergarten helps to level academic disparities among students as they enter the first grade. Research indicates that children who attend full-day kindergarten score higher on first grade reading readiness tests and on reading and achievement tests in the elementary grades.^{15,16}

Table 27. Children Enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, Rhode Island, 1999-2000 and 2002-2003

| SCHOOL DISTRICT | 1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR | | | 2002-2003 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% | 203 | 5 | 2% |
| Bristol-Warren | 255 | 0 | 0% | 241 | 35 | 15% |
| Burrillville | 164 | 0 | 0% | 142 | 83 | 58% |
| Central Falls | 250 | 44 | 18% | 284 | 284 | 100% |
| Charlho | 292 | 0 | 0% | 265 | 46 | 17% |
| Coventry | 381 | 0 | 0% | 367 | 0 | 0% |
| Cranston | 737 | 0 | 0% | 695 | 0 | 0% |
| Cumberland | 373 | 0 | 0% | 391 | 15 | 4% |
| East Greenwich | 165 | 0 | 0% | 148 | 0 | 0% |
| East Providence | 443 | 0 | 0% | 414 | 52 | 13% |
| Exeter-W. Greenwich | 129 | 0 | 0% | 120 | 0 | 0% |
| Foster | 55 | 0 | 0% | 49 | 0 | 0% |
| Foster-Glocester | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Glocester | 124 | 0 | 0% | 101 | 0 | 0% |
| Jamestown | 59 | 0 | 0% | 41 | 39 | 95% |
| Johnston | 241 | 0 | 0% | 218 | 0 | 0% |
| Lincoln | 232 | 0 | 0% | 246 | 0 | 0% |
| Little Compton | 38 | 0 | 0% | 33 | 0 | 0% |
| Middletown | 258 | 211 | 82% | 234 | 234 | 100% |
| Narragansett | 125 | 0 | 0% | 120 | 98 | 82% |
| New Shoreham | 8 | 8 | 100% | 266 | 266 | 100% |
| Newport | 225 | 206 | 92% | 17 | 17 | 100% |
| North Kingstown | 313 | 0 | 0% | 312 | 45 | 14% |
| North Providence | 211 | 0 | 0% | 174 | 0 | 0% |
| North Smithfield | 122 | 55 | 45% | 138 | 138 | 100% |
| Pawtucket | 788 | 0 | 0% | 678 | 94 | 14% |
| Portsmouth | 214 | 0 | 0% | 176 | 0 | 0% |
| Providence | 2,117 | 1,431 | 68% | 2,002 | 2,002 | 100% |
| Scituate | 107 | 0 | 0% | 124 | 15 | 12% |
| Smithfield | 177 | 0 | 0% | 124 | 0 | 0% |
| South Kingstown | 278 | 0 | 0% | 207 | 22 | 11% |
| Tiverton | 144 | 0 | 0% | 127 | 0 | 0% |
| Warwick | 766 | 29 | 4% | 720 | 47 | 7% |
| West Warwick | 260 | 0 | 0% | 269 | 205 | 76% |
| Westerly | 282 | 10 | 4% | 253 | 30 | 12% |
| Woonsocket | 522 | 0 | 0% | 618 | 248 | 40% |
| State Run Schools | NA | NA | NA | 5 | 5 | 100% |
| Charter Schools | NA | NA | NA | 167 | 132 | 79% |
| Core Cities | 4,162 | 1,681 | 40% | 4,101 | 2,924 | 71% |
| Remainder of State | 6,907 | 313 | 5% | 6,588 | 1,233 | 19% |
| Rhode Island | 11,069 | 1,994 | 18% | 10,689 | 4,157 | 39% |

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1999 and 2002. Data are as of October 1999 and 2002 and are for the 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 school years.

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

References for Indicator

- ^{1,5,16} Clark, P. (June 2001). "Recent Research on All-Day Kindergarten." in *ERIC DIGEST*. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- ^{2,4} 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.
- ^{3,8,15} *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.
- ^{7,12} West, J. et al (2000). *The Kindergarten Year: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99*.
- ⁸ *Narrowing the Gap in Early Literacy: Evidence from Minneapolis Public Schools Kindergarten Assessments* (November 2002). Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis Public Schools.
- ^{10,11,13,14} Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.