

# Full-Day Kindergarten Fact Sheet

*"Kindergarten should be offered on a level playing field: as an enriching, free, full-day experience for all of the state's children."*  
- *Boston Globe Editorial*<sup>1</sup>

## **Benefits of Full-Day Kindergarten**

- Children who attend full-day kindergarten learn more in reading and math over the kindergarten year than those in half-day programs.<sup>2</sup>
- Children in full-day kindergarten programs receive 40-50% more instruction than children enrolled in half-day kindergarten programs. More instructional time in full-day kindergarten allows for increased learning activities and strategies such as: group read-aloud, peer tutoring, mixed-ability grouping, and child-initiated activities.<sup>3</sup>
- Children who attend full-day kindergarten spend 30% more time on reading and literacy instruction and 46% more time on mathematics than children in half-day programs.<sup>4</sup>
- Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness than half-day kindergarteners.<sup>5</sup>
- Full-day kindergarten allows for a more consistent schedule for children and reduces the ratio of transition time to class time, reducing stress for children.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Parents of children in full-day kindergarten report higher levels of satisfaction with their children's schedule and curriculum and the program's support for working families.

## **Full-Day Kindergarten Helps Close the Achievement Gap**

- At-risk students who received full-day kindergarten through the Kindergarten Initiative in Montgomery County, Maryland made significantly greater progress in language proficiency than comparable children in half-day kindergarten.<sup>8</sup>
- A study of 17,600 Philadelphia children found that full-day kindergarten helps children from low-income families perform better and saves the school district millions of dollars through significantly reduced grade retention in the first through third grades.<sup>9</sup>
- Research from Lowell Elementary School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the average entering kindergartener was already 22 months below grade level, showed that children in the school's half-day kindergarten made an average gain of 5.4 months during a 9 month period, while children in the full-day classes made a 16 month gain.<sup>10</sup>
- Studies of Minneapolis Public Schools showed that minority children in full-day kindergarten gained literacy skills at a faster pace than peers in half-day classes.<sup>11</sup>

## **Strong Public Support for Full-Day Kindergarten**

- Eighty-one percent of Massachusetts voters support full-day kindergarten for all Massachusetts children.<sup>12</sup>
- Among parents who report that their communities do not offer full-day kindergarten, 61% say they would rather send their child to full-day than half-day kindergarten.<sup>13</sup>
- In one national study, after the second year of a full-day kindergarten pilot, 100% of the full-day parents and 72% of the half-day parents indicated that, if given a choice, they would have selected the full-day program for their child.<sup>14</sup>

## **Kindergarten Policy in Massachusetts**

The mandatory school age for children in Massachusetts is six. Current Massachusetts regulations mandate that 425 hours – 2.5 hours per day for the academic school year – of kindergarten be provided by all public school districts and be made available to all children. However, there is wide variation as to how kindergarten is implemented from district to district.

<b>Massachusetts Public School Kindergarten<sup>15</sup></b>	
Number of 5-year olds in the state <sup>16</sup>	80,281
Kindergarten enrollment	67,496
Number of children enrolled in full-day K	54,216 (80%)
Number of children enrolled in half-day K	13,280 (20%)
Number of districts offering kindergarten*	306
Districts with 100% full-day K	192
Districts with only some full-day K	84
Districts with half-day K only	30
*Includes charter schools	
Grant-funded districts at 100% full-day K	140 (out of 164)
Districts charging tuition for full-day K	80
Grant-funded districts that charge tuition	38
Non-grant districts that charge tuition	42

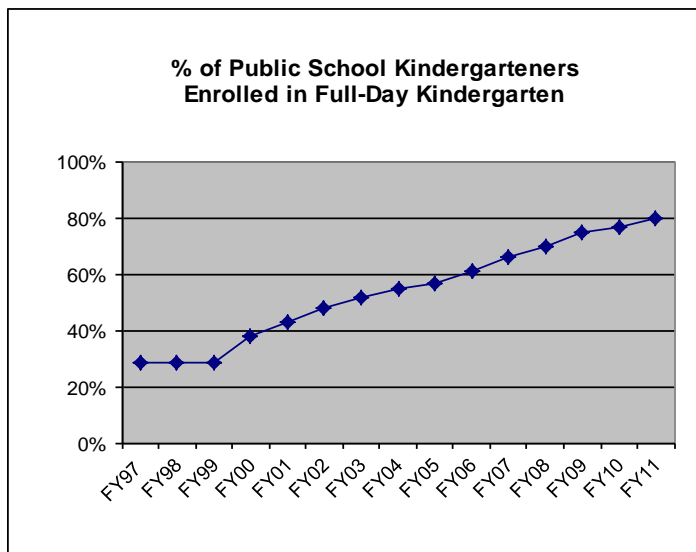
In the 2010-11 school year 90% or 276 of the 306 school districts serving kindergarten-aged children in the state offered at least one full-day kindergarten classroom. 71%, or 197 of these 276 districts, provide full-day kindergarten free of charge. Still, 30 districts still do not offer full-day kindergarten and 20% of Massachusetts' kindergarteners still remain in half-day classrooms.

When districts offer full-day kindergarten, there is often a high demand for limited spaces, requiring families to submit to a lottery or a waiting list. In 2010-11, 80 school districts require families to pay a fee for their children's participation in full-day kindergarten, up from 77 and 69 districts the previous two years. Fees vary widely across the state – for districts charging tuition for full-day kindergarten, average tuition is \$2,857 for grantee districts and \$3,338 for non-grantee districts.<sup>17</sup> In February 2007, the Department of Education placed a \$4,000 cap on the tuition charged to parents whose children attend kindergarten classrooms funded by the Massachusetts Kindergarten Development Grants. There are no tuition caps in other school districts.

**Massachusetts Kindergarten Development Grants**

In FY00, the Commonwealth began a long-term plan to support cities and towns in the transition to full-day kindergarten with the creation of the Massachusetts Department of Education's Kindergarten Development Grant program. Public school districts can receive two types of Kindergarten Development Grants:

1. *Transition Planning for Full-Day Kindergarten* grants helps districts transition half-day classes to full-day, providing start up costs, professional development, and curriculum development the year prior to implementation of full-day kindergarten. The grant program has supported the transition of approximately 850 classrooms to full-day status. Due to budget constraints, there has been no funding for this grant since FY09.<sup>18</sup>
2. *Quality Full-Day Kindergarten* grants have provided more than 2,200 classrooms with support for quality improvements, including: increased staff; special needs inclusion; transition planning between preschool, kindergarten, and first grade; expanded professional development opportunities for teachers and staff; National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation support, and curriculum development based on the state curriculum frameworks.<sup>19</sup>



Funding for the Kindergarten Development Grant line item peaked at \$33.8 million in FY08 and has since been reduced to \$22.95 million in FY11 and FY12. The proportion of Massachusetts' children enrolled in full-day kindergarten classrooms has increased to 80% from 38% in 2000. However, additional support is needed. Transition Planning grants (about \$15,000 per projected full-day classroom) represent only about 18% of the total cost of converting a half-day classroom to a full-day program, while Quality grants (up to \$14,900 per classroom) cover only about 15-25% of the ongoing costs of the program.<sup>20</sup> In the absence of state support, districts will continue to pass on the cost to families through tuition increases.

Kindergarten Policies <sup>21</sup>	# of States
Districts Must Offer Kindergarten	45
Students Must Attend Kindergarten	19
Districts Must Offer Full-Day Kindergarten	10
Students Must Attend Full-Day Kindergarten	2
Compulsory School Age:	
Age 5 years	11
Age 6 years	24
Age 7 years	16
Age 8 years	2

### **Kindergarten Policy in Other States**

Kindergarten offerings and attendance requirements vary widely by state and even by district within some states.

- Every state pays for kindergarten in at least some districts for a portion of the school day.
- Ten states require school districts to offer full-day kindergarten: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and West Virginia.
- Ten states, including Massachusetts, provide more funding for full-day kindergarten than half-day.<sup>22</sup>
- Eighteen states do not provide different funding for full- and half-day kindergarten and fund kindergarten at a lower level than 1st grade.

### **The Early Education for All Campaign**

The Early Education for All Campaign works to ensure that children in Massachusetts have access to high-quality early education and become proficient readers by the end of third grade. EEA is a broad-based coalition of leaders from business, early childhood, labor, religion, health care, education and philanthropy, allied with parents, grassroots leaders and policymakers on behalf of children and families. To realize this vision, EEA seeks:

- Language-rich home environments
- High-quality infant/toddler supports
- High-quality pre-kindergarten
- High-quality full-day kindergarten
- PK-3 systems alignment and support
- High-quality instruction and professional development

For more information, contact Titus DosRemedios, EEA Research and Policy Associate,  
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<sup>1</sup> "All-Day Kindergarten," The Boston Globe, August 31, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, Valerie E., Burkam, David T., Honigman, Joann & Meisels, Samuel. (2006). Full-Day vs. Half-Day Kindergarten: Which Children Learn More in Which Program. *American Journal of Education*, 112.; Votruba-Drzal, E., Li-Grining, C. P., & Maldonado-Carreño, C. (2008). A developmental perspective on full- versus part-day kindergarten and children's academic trajectories through fifth grade. *Child Development*, 79, 4, pp. 957-978.

<sup>3</sup> Plucker, J.A. et al. "The Effects of Full Day Versus Half Day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data." Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> "Full-Day vs. Half-Day Kindergarten: Which Children Learn More in Which Program?" Valerie E. Lee, David T. Burkam & Joann Honigman, University of Michigan; Samuel J. Meisels, The Erickson Institute. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, CA, 2001. Revised January 29, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Cryan, John R.; Sheehan, Robert; Wiechel, Jane; & Bandy-Hedden, Irene G. "Success Outcomes of Full-Day Kindergarten: More Positive Behavior and Increased Achievement in the Years After." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 7 (2): 187-203, June 1992. As cited in: "What Should Parents Know About Full-Day Kindergarten?" ACCESS ERIC Parent Brochure, based on the 1995 ERIC Digest Full-Day Kindergarten Programs by Dianne Rothenberg. Available: [www.eric.ed.gov/archives/kinder.html](http://www.eric.ed.gov/archives/kinder.html).

<sup>6</sup> Elcker, James, & Mathur, Sangeeta. "What do they do all day? Comprehensive evaluation of a full-day kindergarten." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12(4), 459-480, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> "What Should Parents Know About Full-Day Kindergarten?" ACCESS ERIC Parent Brochure, based on the 1995 ERIC Digest Full-Day Kindergarten Programs by Dianne Rothenberg. Available: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/archives/kinder.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Nielsen, Jennifer & Cooper-Martin, Elizabeth. Evaluation of the Montgomery County Public Schools Assessment Program: Kindergarten and Grade 1 Report, Montgomery County Public Schools Office of Shared Accountability, September 2002. Available: [www.mcps.k12.md.us/info/press/Kinder-Grade1Report.pdf](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/info/press/Kinder-Grade1Report.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Vuadero, Debra. "Study: Full-Day Kindergarten Boosts Academic Performance." *Education Week*, April 17, 2002. Available: [www.edweek.org/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=31kinder.h21](http://www.edweek.org/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=31kinder.h21)

<sup>10</sup> Warrick, Sandra. "A Three Year Study of the Effectiveness of Full-Day Kindergarten at Lowell Elementary School," October 1993; as cited in *Think New Mexico, Increasing Student Achievement in New Mexico: The Need for Universal Access to Full-Day Kindergarten*, Santa Fe, NM: Author, Fall 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Minneapolis Public Schools. "Narrowing the Gap in Early Literacy: Evidence from Minneapolis Public Schools Kindergarten Assessments." November 2002. Available: [http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/news/news\\_release/all\\_day\\_k.shtml](http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/news/news_release/all_day_k.shtml)

<sup>12</sup> Opinion Dynamics Poll of MA Voters, 2003

<sup>13</sup> Opinion Dynamics Early Education Parent Survey, 2006

<sup>14</sup> West, Jerry, Denton, Kristin, & Germino-Hausken, Elvira. "America's Kindergartners." Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000. Available: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2000/2000070.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education. (2011). Correspondence with Elementary School Services staff.

<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (February, 2009). Estimates based on births in FY03, adjusted.

<sup>17</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education. (2010). Legislative report: Kindergarten Development Grants. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/0310kindergarten.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, Early Learning Services, FY2002.

<sup>21</sup> Education Commission of the States. State Statutes Regarding Kindergarten. September 2008. Available at: <http://ecs.org/clearinghouse/78/60/7860.doc>; Kauerz, Kristie. "PreK-3rd: Putting Full-Day Kindergarten in the Middle." June 2010.

Available at: [http://www.fcd-us.org/ur\\_docs/FINAL\\_Kinderergarten\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.fcd-us.org/ur_docs/FINAL_Kinderergarten_Brief.pdf). From Education Commission of the States. StateNotes: Kindergarten. December 2009. Denver, CO: Author.

<sup>22</sup> Education Commission of the States, How States Fund Full-Day Kindergarten, August 2005. Available at: <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/63/10/6310.htm>

<sup>23</sup> Bush, Molodtse, Education Commission of the States, State Characteristics: Kindergarten, May 2011. Available at: <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/90/21/9021.pdf>.

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