

# 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 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>2</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>3</sup>
- Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness than half-day kindergarteners.<sup>4</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>5,6</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>7</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>8</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>9</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>10</sup>

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

- Eighty-one percent of Massachusetts voters support full-day kindergarten for all Massachusetts children.<sup>11</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>12</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>13</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>14</sup></b>	
Number of 5-year olds in the state <sup>15</sup>	80,281
Kindergarten enrollment	68,540
Number of children enrolled in full-day K	51,360 (75%)
Number of children enrolled in half-day K	17,179 (25%)
Number of districts offering kindergarten*	279
Districts with universal, free full-day K	152 (54%)
Districts with both half-day and free full-day K	12 (4%)
Districts charging tuition for full-day K	69 (25%)
Districts that do not offer full-day K	46 (16%)
Grant-funded districts providing universal, free full-day K	124
Districts charging tuition for full-day K	69
Grant-funded districts that charge tuition	43
Non-grant districts that charge tuition	26

\*Excludes regional school districts and charter schools

In the 2008-09 school year, 84% or 233 of the 279 school districts serving kindergarten-aged children in the state offer at least one full-day kindergarten classroom. 54%, or 152 of the 279 districts provide universal full-day kindergarten free of charge. 12 additional districts provide free full-day kindergarten and maintain half-day kindergarten as well. 25% of Massachusetts' kindergarteners still remain in half-day classrooms.

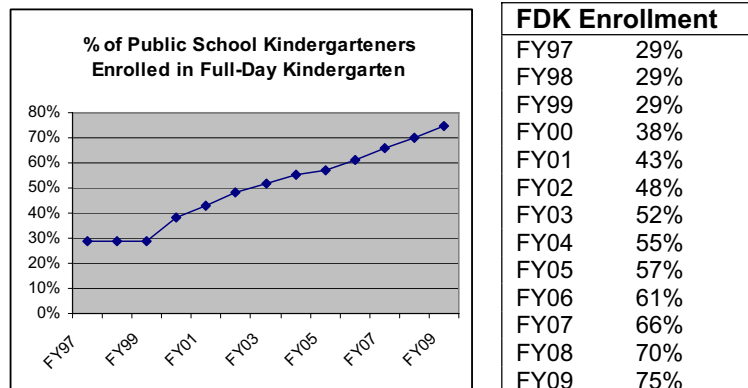
When districts offer full-day kindergarten, there is often a high demand for limited slots, requiring families to submit to a lottery or a waiting list. In 2008-09, 69 school districts require families to pay a fee for their children's participation in full-day kindergarten. Fees vary widely across the state - the average tuition for full-day kindergarten charged by districts is \$2,682.<sup>16</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.<sup>17</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>18</sup>

Since FY06, funding for the Kindergarten Grant Program has increased by \$7.8 million, to a total of \$30.80 million. The proportion of Massachusetts' children enrolled in full-day kindergarten classrooms has increased to 75% from 38% in 2000. However, additional support is needed. Transition Planning grants (about \$15,000 per projected full-day classroom) represents 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>19</sup>



Kindergarten Policies <sup>20</sup>	# of States
Districts Must Offer Kindergarten	43
Students Must Attend Kindergarten	15
Districts Must Offer Full-Day Kindergarten	10
Students Must Attend Full-Day Kindergarten	2
Compulsory School Age:	
Age 5 years	8
Age 6 years	21
Age 7 years	19
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 mandate 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>21</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 is a coalition of 54 leaders from business, early childhood, labor, religion, health care, education and philanthropy, working in partnership with parents, grassroots leaders, and state policymakers to make high-quality early childhood education available to all Massachusetts children by ensuring:

- Voluntary, universally accessible, high-quality pre-kindergarten for every child delivered through a mix of public and private programs;
- Voluntary, universally accessible, high-quality full school-day public kindergarten for every child;
- A statewide system of high-quality early education and care for all children, beginning at birth; and
- A statewide system to improve the training, education and compensation of the early childhood workforce.

For more information, contact Titus DosRemedios, EEA Research and Policy Associate,  
617-330-7387 or [tdosremedios@earlyeducationforall.org](mailto:tdosremedios@earlyeducationforall.org)

<sup>1</sup> "All-Day Kindergarten," *The Boston Globe*, August 31, 2005.

<sup>2</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>3</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>4</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>5</sup> Elieker, 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>6</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>7</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>8</sup> Viadero, Debra. "Study: Full-Day Kindergarten Boosts Academic Performance." *Education Week*, April 17, 2002. Available: [www.edweek.org/ew/cwstory.cfm?slug=31kinder.h21](http://www.edweek.org/ew/cwstory.cfm?slug=31kinder.h21)

<sup>9</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>10</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>11</sup> Opinion Dynamics Poll of MA Voters, 2005

<sup>12</sup> Opinion Dynamics Early Education Parent Survey, 2006

<sup>13</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>14</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (February, 2009). Legislative Report on Full-Day Kindergarten in Massachusetts.

<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (February, 2009). Estimates based on births in FY03, adjusted.

<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (February, 2009). Legislative Report on Full-Day Kindergarten in Massachusetts.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, Early Learning Services, FY2002.

<sup>20</sup> Education Commission of the States. State Statutes Regarding Kindergarten, September 2008. Available at: <http://ecs.org/clearinghouse/78/60/7860.doc>

<sup>21</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>