

Extended Kindergarten Feasibility Study

Educational journals are replete with research that supports the implementation of full day kindergarten programs in the public schools. The research examines academic, developmental and social benefits for students as well as preference information from parents and teachers. A summary of some of the research and conclusions according to Early Education for All, a Boston Early Childhood Advocacy Group with citations are included below:

Full-day kindergarten benefits children academically.

- Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness than half-day kindergarteners.²
- Children in full-day kindergarten classrooms spend more time in self-initiated activities and teacher directed individual work and less time in large group instruction.³
- Children who attend full-day kindergarten learn more in reading and math over the kindergarten year than those in half-day programs.¹

Full-day kindergarten benefits children developmentally and socially.

- Children in full-day programs are more likely to approach the teacher and less likely to express withdrawal, anger, shyness or blaming behavior than half-day kindergarteners.⁶
- Full-day kindergarten allows a more consistent schedule for children and reduces the ratio of transition time to class time, reducing stress for children.^{4,5}

Full-day kindergarten helps close the achievement gap.

- At-risk students who received full-day kindergarten through Montgomery County, Maryland's Kindergarten Initiative made significantly greater progress in language proficiency than comparable children in half-day kindergarten.⁷
- 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 first, second and third grade.⁸
- 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 on average.⁹
- Research from the Minneapolis Public Schools showed that minority children in full-day kindergarten gained literacy skills faster than peers in half-day classes. School officials credit full-day kindergarten with helping to close the achievement gap between poorer and more affluent children.¹⁰

Parents prefer full-day kindergarten.

- 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.

- In one 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.^{11,2}

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Teachers prefer full-day kindergarten.

- Teachers think that full-day kindergarten
 - allows children more flexibility and more time to do activities during free choice times;
 - allows more appropriate challenges for children at all developmental levels;
 - helps ease the transition to first grade;
 - allows more time for teachers to work with children and their parents on a one-to-one basis and to discuss children's progress with parents;
 - allows more time for curriculum planning; and
 - helps teachers to incorporate a greater number of thematic units in the year and cover them more in-depth.¹²

1 Lee, Valerie E., Burkam, David T., Honigman, Joann & Meisels, Samuel. Full-Day vs. Half-day Kindergarten: Which Children Learn More in Which Program. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, CA, 2001. Revised January 29, 2002.

2 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.

3 Elicker, 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.

4 Elicker, 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.

5 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>.

6 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.

7 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

8 Viadero, Debra. Study: Full-Day Kindergarten Boosts Academic Performance. *Education Week*, April 17, 2002. Available: www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=31kinder.h21

9 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.

10 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

- 11 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>.
- 12 Elicker, 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.
- 13 Massachusetts Department of Education, Early Learning Services, FY 2003.

