

Full-Day Kindergarten: Why Does it Matter?

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Full-Day Considerations

- Common Core Standards

- Research

- Changes in Children's Experiences

Research

- Information is from studies with the best research designs
 - Only one was experimental
 - Four were closely matched
 - Two used large databases and control
- Seven fairly recent studies

Overall Findings

- Children, and especially at-risk children, benefit from developmentally appropriate, full-day kindergarten programs, most notably in terms of academic achievement.
 - Gains most significant when programs focus on whole child and not just academics

Leads to Higher Academic Achievement

- More growth than in half-day programs for all children
- More dramatic increases for at-risk children
- Helps prevent grade retention
- Differences appear to persist over time

Supports Literacy and Language Development

- Faster gains on literacy and language measures
- Particularly important for ELL students
- Gains have been documented to last through at least middle school
- Also see math gains—more for children above poverty level

Benefits Children Socially and Emotionally

- Children in full-day programs receive higher conduct marks
 - Obeys rules, works well with others, uses best effort
- Parents and teachers cite improved school socialization, less stress and frustration

Provides More Time for Individualization

- Smaller percentage whole group, higher percentage small group and individual activities in full-day programs
- Trend that struggling and advanced children make more progress than those progressing as expected

Other findings

- Children are no more fatigued in full-day than half-day programs after settling in period
- Children in full-day programs have better attendance in kindergarten and primary grades
- Parents prefer full-day programs

Common Core Standards

- Should be fully implemented in most states by 2014-2015
- Based on full-day kindergarten attendance as this is norm in U.S.
- Curriculum materials being developed for full-day programs
- Kindergarten is no longer mostly about socialization

Kindergarten Standards

- Mathematics Examples

- Solve addition and subtraction word problems, and add and subtract to 10
- Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes, in different sizes and orientations, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, and other attributes

Kindergarten Standards

- Reading/Writing Examples
 - Participate in shared research and writing projects
 - Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs describing the same general action (e.g., *walk*, *march*, *strut*, *prance*) by acting out the meanings

Changes in Experience

- Children have changed
 - Even when demographics haven't
 - Oral language development, fine motor skills often less-developed than previously
 - Related to increased screen time, less time for talk and play
- Research finds these are related to later academic achievement

In Summary

- Full-Day Kindergarten will make a difference for students in the era of Common Core Standards
- Developmentally appropriate kindergartens with time for purposeful play, creative activities and attention to social emotional development as well as academics will make the most difference.