

# Benefits of Full Day Kindergarten Design

Compiled by Dr. Jill Barnhardt of Whitman-Hanson

<p>Academic Achievement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Children who attend full-day kindergarten learn more in reading and math over the kindergarten year than those in half-day programs. (Lee, Burkam, Honigman, Meisels, 2002) This is after adjusting for learning differences associated with race/ethnicity, poverty status, fall achievement level, sex, class size, relative amount of time for subject area instruction, and the presence of an instructional aide. (ECLS study)</li><li>2. Children in full-day kindergarten have higher achievement test scores in all areas tested except handwriting. All other areas children attending full day programming have significantly higher total test scores (including readiness tests) at the end of kindergarten, reading tests in grades one, two, and three, and a battery of standardized tests in grades three, five, and seven. (Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, studies 1978 through 1983)</li><li>3. Children who attend full-day kindergarten have higher report card academic marks in both the primary and middle school years. (Evansville-Vanderburgh studies, 1978-1983)</li><li>4. Full-day kindergarten students have more time and opportunity to play with language, explore subjects in depth, have a more flexible, individualized learning environment, and have more individual and small-group interactions with the teacher and less time in large group instruction than is possible in most half-day classrooms. (Martinez and Snider, 2001; Elicker and Mathur, 1997; Hough and Bryde, 1996)</li><li>5. Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness than half-day kindergarteners. (Cryan, Sheehan, Wiechel, Bandy-Hedden, 1992)</li><li>6. Full-day kindergarteners are more than twice as likely as half-day kindergarteners to reach grade levels without repeating a grade. Researchers calculated a savings of \$2 million for every 1000 kindergarteners in improved retention rates. (Viadero, 2002)</li><li>7. Full-day kindergarten bridges the gap in the age of kindergarteners. Full-day kindergarten students, who were significantly younger than the half-day kindergarten group, scored significantly higher than their half-day counterparts on the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts. (Westside Community Schools, Nebraska)</li><li>8. At-risk students (low SES, English not primary language spoken at home, low maternal educational attainment, receipt of welfare now or in the past, etc.) who receive full-day instruction make significantly greater progress in language proficiency than comparable children in half-day kindergarten. (Nielsen and Cooper-Martin, 2002; Minneapolis Public Schools, 2002; Montgomery County Public Schools, 2001; Caldwell, 1989; Clark, 2001; deCosta, 2001 )</li></ol>
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9. Full-day kindergarten helps children from low-income families and minorities perform better and saves the school district millions of dollars through significantly reduced grade retention in first, second, and third grade. (Viadero, 2002)
10. For children starting out below grade level, half-day kindergarteners 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. (Wartick, 1993)
11. Long-lasting effects: a study of over 400 8<sup>th</sup> graders found full-day kindergarteners had higher achievement scores throughout school compared to half-day kindergarten. (Evansville-Vanderburgh studies, 1978-1983)
12. Children's knowledge of early literacy concepts increased during full-day kindergarten and this improved students' reading achievement for the next 4 years. (Phillips & Mason, 1996; Puelo, 1988)
13. All children, regardless of economic backgrounds, benefit academically and socially from quality full-day kindergarten experiences.
14. Sixty-eight percent of full-day kindergarten classes spent more than one hour per day on reading instruction, compared to 37 percent of half-day kindergarten classes. (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study of the Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 [ECLS-K], conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES])
15. Full-day kindergarten classes are more likely than half-day kindergarten classes to spend time every day on math (90 and 73 percent, respectively), social studies (30 and 18 percent, respectively), and science (24 and 10 percent, respectively). On days when math was taught, 81 percent of full-day kindergarten classes spent more than half an hour per day on mathematics instruction, compared to 52 percent of half-day kindergarten classes. (ECLS study)
16. Kindergarten curriculum has increased in required skills, and resembles the 1<sup>st</sup> grade curriculum of years past. (The Education Commission of the States)
17. Full day programming allows for more direct instruction and curriculum reinforcing activities than half day programming.
18. Adjustment to first grade is easier in general since socialization to the school setting and the procedures of the full day takes place in kindergarten.
19. The variety of activities in a full-day program (large group, small group, free-choice self-directed centers, one-on-one teacher time, quiet book-reading time, gross-motor skills, fine motor skills, etc.) is structured to address children's shorter attention spans.
20. Full-day kindergarteners are able to spend more time in creative classes such as art and music, literary environments such as the library, and the physical environment of physical education classes.

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	<p>The positive effects of full-day kindergarten are the same regardless of the preschool experience of the children. (Cryan, Sheehan, Wiechel, and Bandy-Hedden, 1992)</p>
Social	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Full-day kindergarteners experience significantly more social, adult-initiated, and child-initiated interactions. (Westside Community Schools, Nebraska)</li><li>2. Full-day programming allows for more opportunities for all children to develop not just academically, but socially and emotionally and take responsibility for their actions. (Harrison-McEachern, 1989)</li><li>3. School attendance of full-day kindergarten students is more regular than that of half-day kindergarteners (fewer absences). 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who attended full-day kindergarten were less likely to be absent from school compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who'd gone to half-day kindergarten. (Missouri study; Philadelphia Schools)</li><li>4. Full-day programming allows children more time in the school setting to interact socially with their peers and learn about each other.</li><li>5. Students will be exposed to more assemblies and other school functions.</li></ol>
Emotional	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Children in full-day kindergarten are more likely to approach the teacher and less likely to express withdrawal, anger, shyness or blaming behavior than half-day kindergarteners. (Cryan, Sheehan, Wiechel, Bandy-Hedden, 1992)</li><li>2. Spending a full day in class may be less stressful for youngsters than trying to cram the demands of today's kindergarten programs into the traditional half-day schedule. (Elicker and Mathur, 1997; Schuylkill Valley (Pennsylvania) Newsletter, Sept/Oct 2004)</li><li>3. Full-day kindergarten allows a more consistent schedule for children (every day, all day), eliminates adjusting to two daytime classrooms with different rules and philosophies, and reduces the ratio of transition time to class time, reducing stress for children. (Elicker and Mathur, 1997; Education Commission of the States)</li><li>4. The majority of children entering kindergarten have had some kind of pre-school experience (childcare, preschool, etc.) often for a full day making full day kindergarten part of the progression of children's adjustment to school.</li><li>5. Riding the bus or being transported to school the same way as other elementary schoolers is important to the child's emotional stability.</li><li>6. When behavioral issues arise, they can be dealt with in greater detail, with more time spent on problem solving with children so they learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully on their own.</li></ol>

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Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents who are concerned about fatigue in their full-day kindergarteners find that this is not an issue; children adjust quickly. (Clark, 2001)</li> <li>2. Children in full-day kindergarten programs have multiple recesses throughout the day to express their physical energy.</li> <li>3. Many half-day kindergarten children attend a preschool program or are in daycare for the remainder of their day, so full-day kindergarten is not more taxing for them. (Martinez and Snider, 2001)</li> <li>4. Between birth and approximately 6 years of age children's brains are the most receptive to learning, and can be exposed to a broader curriculum that can be offered in a full-day kindergarten program. (Alber-Kelsay, 1998; Holmes &amp; McConnell, 1990; Shonkoff &amp; Phillips, 2000)</li> </ol>
Other Benefits Family/Parental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents experience less difficulty and less stress scheduling childcare and transportation, especially when more than one child is enrolled in the same school, and have fewer fears of safety with their child at one location throughout the day. (Martinez and Snider, 2001; Elicker and Mathur, 1997)</li> <li>2. Parents experience increased opportunities to get involved in their children's classroom, as well as to communicate with the teacher. (Martinez and Snider, 2001)</li> <li>3. Parents and teachers of full-day kindergarteners believe full-day kindergarten better prepared their children for first grade. (Hough and Bryde, 1996; Elicker and Mathur, 1997; Housden and Kam, 1992; Towers, 1991)</li> <li>4. 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.</li> <li>5. Low-income parents of full-day kindergarten students have greater opportunity to enroll their children in a higher quality early education program than might otherwise be affordable in the private market. (Martinez and Snider, 2001)</li> <li>6. In addition to a higher level of educational exposure, parents are not financially bound to childcare costs; the money saved can feed into the local economy.</li> </ol>
Other Benefits Teacher/Teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full-day kindergarten allows teachers to spend more time with students, individually and in small groups, and explore key concepts in depth. (Egertson, 2005; Martinez and Snider, 2001)</li> <li>2. Each kindergartener comes in with different abilities, and full-day kindergarten teachers have more time to assess students and individualize instruction to their needs and interests. (Martinez and Snider, 2001; Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 1992)</li> <li>3. Teachers have more time to get to know and communicate with parents. (Martinez and Snider, 2001)</li> <li>4. Teachers have fewer total students (20-25 per year as compared to 40-50) than in two half-day classrooms. (Martinez and Snider, 2001)</li> </ol>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Teachers report significantly greater progress for full-day children in literacy, math, general learning skills, and social skills. (Indiana Department of Education)</li></ol>
Other Benefits School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. There are no detrimental effects with full-day kindergarten. (Egertson, 2005)</li><li>2. Costs associated with two midday bus routes (one to pick up afternoon kindergarteners, one to drop off morning kindergarteners) will not be incurred and need not be added to the budget.</li><li>3. Cost for crossing guards and other safety personnel for midday classroom changes will not be an issue in the budget.</li><li>4. Attendance records are easier to track, as the attendance is taken only once a day.</li><li>5. Lunch revenues will remain at their current level.</li></ol>