

Fund High-Quality Full-Day Kindergarten for All Children in [State]

Full-day kindergarten programs can have a significant impact on student learning. It is time to take action to make sure that high-quality full-day kindergarten programs are available to all of [state]'s children. [State] should create a comprehensive, fully funded full-day kindergarten program. We urge the governor and the state legislature to:

Make full-day programs available to all kindergartners.

Half-day kindergarten is not enough. For students to thrive, they must have access to and participate in kindergarten programs that are as long as the regular school day. The state should make full-day kindergarten mandatory for every district.

Fully fund full-day kindergarten.

Full-day kindergarten should not be an unfunded mandate. [State] should give full-day kindergarten priority for funding and provide \$[x] million over the next [y] years to ensure that every child has access to a full-day kindergarten program. This funding, however, should not be obtained at the expense of other public school programs.

Allow for flexibility in kindergarten age requirements.

While 5-years-of-age should be the uniform age of kindergarten entry, a minimum entrance age (of 5) and maximum allowed age (of 6) should not be applied rigidly. The state law should allow case-by-case exceptions in regard to age requirements.

Ensure kindergarten class sizes are kept small.

For young children, especially, small class sizes generate the greatest gains. Optimally, class sizes would not be larger than 15 students for regular programs, and smaller for programs that include students with exceptional needs.

Ensure that kindergarten programs are taught by qualified teachers and support professionals and led by quality administrators.

Teachers, support professionals and administrators who manage or teach in full-day kindergarten programs should hold a state-required license or certification.

Ensure that young learners are supervised in the classroom.

The state should require that each kindergarten teacher have the support of a full-time teacher assistant to ensure that the needs of all children are met each day.

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Offer educators professional development opportunities.

Teachers, support professionals and administrators need access to high-quality, continuous professional development to gain and improve knowledge and skills. The state should require that districts offer high-quality, on-going professional development to teachers, support professionals and administrators of full-day kindergarten programs.

Create state learning standards for kindergarten that are aligned with early learning standards and standards for first grade and beyond.

Aligning standards is a common-sense approach towards making sure children's learning experiences build on one another and move children towards success in school and life. No later than [x] years after enactment of the law, the state should develop and implement kindergarten standards across five domains: physical and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, cognitive development, and language and literacy development.

Develop assessments that address all areas of child development.

Large-scale standardized testing is inappropriate for kindergarten students. However, appropriate assessments are important tools that teachers can use to identify children with special needs, identify and help children with skills that they are struggling to learn, and develop baseline data. Kindergarten students' progress should be measured in all areas of child development: physical, social, emotional and cognitive. The state should require that kindergarten children are assessed periodically with age-appropriate, varied assessment that give children opportunities to demonstrate their skills in different ways and allow for variability in learning pace and for different cultural backgrounds.

Implement a curriculum that addresses all areas of child development.

Kindergarten grade level curriculum should foster thinking and problem solving, develop social and physical skills, and instill basic academic skills in students. The state should require that districts implement a curriculum that is aligned to kindergarten standards and assessments.

Make parent involvement a priority.

Kindergarten is the bridge to a more structured school experience, and it is essential that parents be made a part of their child's educational team as early on as possible. The law should require that districts make training available to help parents and guardians take an active role in the education of their kindergarten children.