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## FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN STUDIES

Below is a sampling of recent studies on full-day kindergarten. Consult the entire study for more detailed information about methodology and results.

**Elicker, J., & Mathur, S. (1997).** What do they do all day? Comprehensive evaluation of a full-day kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12(4), 459-480.

Elicker and Mathur's two-year study of four full-day and eight half-day kindergarten classes in a middle-class suburb of Wisconsin found that children in full-day classrooms spent more time "engaged in child-initiated activities (especially learning centers), more time in teacher-directed individual work, and relatively less time in teacher-directed large groups.... Kindergarten report card progress and readiness for first grade were rated significantly higher for full-day children" (p. 459). Elicker mentions that this study employed a true experimental design as children were randomly selected for the class, and preexisting differences were statistically controlled (p. 6).

**Hildebrand, C. (2001).** Effects of three kindergarten schedules on achievement and classroom behavior (PDK Research Bulletin No. 31). Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa International. Retrieved October 24, 2002, from [www.pdkintl.org/pdk/res/research.htm](http://www.pdkintl.org/pdk/res/research.htm)

A study of 147 students in a Midwestern school district that compared full-day, half-day, and alternating full-day kindergarten found "no clear differential effects of kindergarten schedules" on either academic achievement or classroom social behaviors. Although the full-day kindergartners in the study did score "significantly higher" in reading than the other students, it was unclear whether this was related to the scheduling difference or to the teachers' approach to reading instruction.

**Nielsen, J., & Cooper-Martin, E. (2002).** Evaluation of the

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Portland,  
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Chehalis,  
Washington

Montgomery County Public Schools Assessment Program:  
Kindergarten and grade 1 reading report. Rockville, MD:  
Montgomery Public Schools, Office of Shared Accountability.  
Retrieved October 24, 2002, from  
[www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/dea/pdf/Kinden2002.pdf](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/dea/pdf/Kinden2002.pdf)  
(pdf file)

This study of Montgomery County, Maryland, Public Schools looked at the effects of the second year of the kindergarten initiative, which expanded full-day kindergarten, reduced class size, and revised the curriculum. These schools were selected because they had the highest concentration of disadvantaged and low-income students. The full-day schedule was enhanced by a strengthened kindergarten curriculum including the extended time for "balanced literacy instruction," a strengthened instructional program in other academic areas, with specific blocks of time for "sustained high quality teaching." The student-teacher ratio for full-day classes was also reduced to 15:1. The study that compared the progress of students in the full-day program with those in half-day classes, included these key findings:

Fifty-one percent of African American students from the full-day kindergarten class achieved first-grade benchmarks, compared to 49 percent of all first-grade African American students.

Forty-eight percent of students in free and reduced-price lunch programs from the full-day program achieved grade benchmarks as compared with 45 percent of all free and reduced-price lunch students.

The second year of full-day kindergarten confirmed that children in free and reduced-price lunch and ESOL programs had the greatest rate of improvement compared to the half-day kindergarten program.

This study did not appear to control for the variability of class size. The student-teacher ratio in full-day classes was 15:1, where in half-day classes the ratio was 22:1. Therefore, it might be hard to isolate full-day as the main factor for higher achievement.

**Stofflet, F.P. (1998).** Anchorage School District full-day kindergarten study: A follow-up of the kindergarten classes of 1987-88, 1988-89, and 1989-90. Anchorage, AK: Anchorage School District. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED426790)

Anchorage School District's (1998) study of the long-term

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Acknowledgments

Previous Issues

effects of full-day kindergarten found no major long-term effects related to the length of the kindergarten day. The researchers claim that it "is likely that, over the years, family background, individual study habits, and other school programmatic factors outweigh the 'kindergarten' factor." They did find, however, that students from Title I schools who attended full-day kindergarten were generally "better prepared for first grade than were their counterparts" who had attended half-day kindergarten (Stofflet, 1998, p. 24).

**Weiss, A.M.D.G., & Offenber, R.J. (2002, April).** Enhancing urban children's early success in school: The power of full-day kindergarten. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

This study tracked 17,600 Philadelphia students from kindergarten into fourth grade. They found that students who had attended full-day kindergarten were 26 percent more likely than former half-day kindergartners to make it to third grade without repeating a grade. Full-day kindergarten students also had "significantly higher achievement scores in reading, math, and science, higher report card marks and better attendance" by third grade (p. 2), although by fourth grade they had higher achievement in science only, and higher attendance. The authors acknowledge that more research is needed on the content of the curriculum—how the additional time is used, and other variables—parent education levels, and pre-kindergarten education experience (p. 17).

**Welsh, J. (November 13, 2002).** Full-day kindergarten a plus. Pioneer Press. Minneapolis Public Schools (2002). All-day kindergarten narrows the gap in early literacy. [News release]. Retrieved November 14, 2002, from

[www.mpls.k12.mn.us/news/news\\_release/all\\_day\\_k.html](http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/news/news_release/all_day_k.html).

Minneapolis Public Schools released a study showing that Native American, Hispanic, and African American full-day kindergarten students have made significant gains in literacy achievement compared with their peers in half-day programs. In particular, these full-day students had accelerated performance in vocabulary, rhyming, onset phonemes, oral comprehension, letter sounds, and print concepts. For example, gains in letter sounds were 30 percent higher than that for half-day students. [For more detailed information, review new assessment data on the Web site.]

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