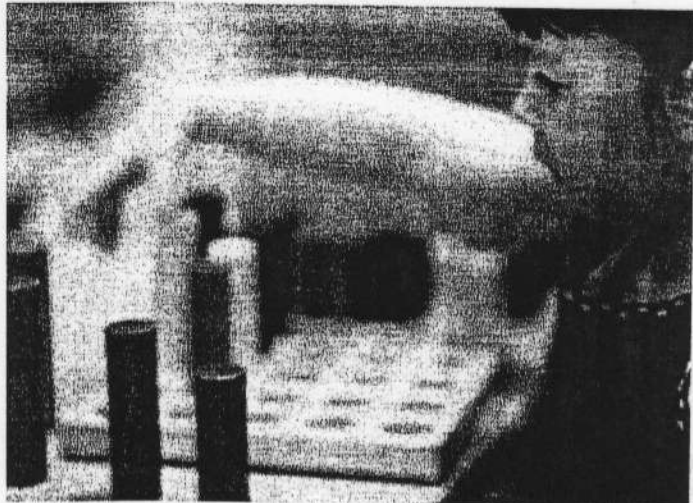




Parenting Perspectives

...ideas to help your child succeed.



Full or Half Day Kindergarten?

*Suggestions for Parents
From the National Association
of School Psychologists*

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[Full or Half Day?](#)

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Full versus Half-Day Programs

Developmentally appropriate full-day kindergarten can offer a more relaxed atmosphere and more opportunities for child-centered, creative activities, as well as more opportunities for developing social skills. Full-day programs provide more time for field trips, activity centers, projects, and free play. Students who are at-risk for school problems due to delayed development, disabilities, or limited preschool experiences, and who attend rigorous and nurturing full-day programs, are more likely to have stronger achievement in basic skill areas and generally better preparation for first grade. For all children, full-day kindergarten programs help increase academic achievement while reducing the probability that children will be retained in the early elementary grades.

On the other hand, some argue that half-day kindergarten also can provide high quality educational and social experience. Others feel that children's shorter attention spans and interest levels are more suited to a half-day program. The following summarizes results of current research comparing the effectiveness of full-day versus half-day programs.

Compared to half-day kindergarten, full-day programs are typically associated with:

- higher long-term achievement
- higher achievement for disadvantaged and low income children, and for those receiving Title I services
- higher reading scores in early grades
- fewer grade retentions
- higher test scores
- more time spent in individualized instruction

- more time spent in free play, less time in large groups
- greater progress in social skills for disadvantaged and low income children
- more reinforcement of positive social behaviors
- higher self esteem and independence
- greater creativity
- access to nutritional breakfast and lunch
- a more relaxed, less hurried school day with more varied experiences
- less parent involvement
- no evidence of more individualized or innovative curriculum
- no evidence of excessive fatigue or stress
- no evidence of negative consequences in general

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Parenting Start

article is adapted from a handout by Mary Ann Rafoth, Ph.D., Beth Buzi, and Sara A. Grimes, to appear in "Helping Children at Home and School: Handouts from Your School Psychologist, Second Edition" (National Association of School Psychologists). Dr. Rafoth is Chair of the Educational and School Psychology program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania; her co-authors are graduate students in the IUP program.
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