

The preschool and kindergarten years are a magical time for children and their families – the wonder and excitement of learning, the power of reading and writing, and the joys and challenges of working and playing together well with others.

For young children to grow and thrive, we know they need:

- care and attention from well prepared early educators,
- developmentally appropriate activities that capture their attention,
- well planned and implemented learning opportunities that match their current development and engage them in moving to the next learning milestone,
- time to process information,
- and practice, practice, practice.

Quality full-day kindergarten can set the stage for children to have the time and attention they need from their teachers to be successful learners.

### **What does the research say are:**

#### Academic Benefits:

- Positive academic outcomes for all children in all day kindergarten have been demonstrated since the 1990s (Clark, 2001; Rothenberg, 1995).
- Better prepared children for the expectations of first grade making a better transition to first grade (Clark, 2001; Stofflet, 1998; Villegas, 2005).
- Show faster gains on literacy and language measures when compared to half-day kindergartners (Villegas, 2005).
- Longitudinal data demonstrates that children in full-day classes show greater reading and mathematics achievement gains than those in half-day classes. (Ackerman, Barnett, & Robin, 2005; Walston, & West, 2004).
- Academic progress made in kindergarten tends to decline if upper grade curricula are not adjusted to reflect kindergarten improvements (VanFleet, 2002).

#### Social Benefits:

- Higher social skills, more independent learning, and active engagement in classroom routines and activities when compared to half-day kindergartners (Rothenberg, 1995).
- Have better attendance in kindergarten and through the primary grades when compared to half-day kindergartners (Ackerman, Barnett, & Robin, 2005; Hough, 1996; Walston, & West, 2004).
- Have reduced retention and remediation rates when compared to half-day kindergartners (Villegas, 2005).

#### Why Important?

- Large body of evidence going back to the 1960s demonstrating the positive and lifelong benefits including both academic and social of high quality early childhood programs especially for those children most at risk for school failure.
- Teachers know students better; they are able to develop a richer understanding of students' needs and, in turn, to develop activities and lessons to meet those needs

when compared to half-day kindergarteners (Elicker, & Mathur, 1997).

- Full-day kindergarten enables teachers to assess students' needs and abilities more effectively, leading to earlier support (Plucker, Eaton, Rapp, et. al., 2004).

What are the differences?

- More in-depth instruction - Children have time to learn and explore at a slower pace and in more depth (Plucker, Eaton, Rapp, et. al., 2004).
- Closer relationships with children resulting in more individualized instruction (Elicker, & Mathur, 1997).
- Time available in the afternoons for lesson follow-up and re-teaching makes the pace of learning much more relaxed than in half-day (Education Commission of the State, 2004).
- Full-day kindergarten saves families' time and energy. Children do not have to be shuffled between school and child care."
- Kindergartners are taught by highly qualified teachers who specialize in the needs and learning styles of young children.

#### References:

- Ackerman, D. J., Barnett, W. S., & Robin, K. B. (2005). *Making the Most of Kindergarten: Trends and Future Issues in the Provision of Full-day Programs*. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/docs/?DocID=118>.
- Clark, P. (2001). *Recent Research on All-Day Kindergarten*. ERIC Digest. Retrieved from <http://ericece.org>;
- Education Commission of the States. (2004). *Full-Day Kindergarten Programs Improve Chances of Academic Success. The Progress of Education Reform*, ECS, 5 (4).
- 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.
- Hough, D., & Bryde, S. (1996). *The effects of full-day kindergarten on student achievement and affect*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, NY.
- Plucker, J. A. et. al. (2004). *The Effects of Full Day Versus Half Day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data*. Center for Evaluation and Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/fulldaykreport.pdf>.
- Rothenberg, D. (1995). What should parents know about full-day kindergarten? Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/archives/kinder.html>.
- Stofflet, F.P. (1998). *Anchorage school district full day kindergarten study: Follow-up of the kindergarten classes of 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990*. Anchorage, AK.
- VanFleet, W. (2002). *All-day kindergarten report*. Muncie, IN: Muncie Public Schools, Office of the Director of Elementary Instruction.
- Villegas, M. (2005). *Full-day Kindergarten: Expanding Learning Opportunities*. WestEd. Retrieved from [http://ww.wested.org/online\\_pus/po-05-01.pdf](http://ww.wested.org/online_pus/po-05-01.pdf).
- Walston, J. & West, J. (2004). *Full-Day and Half-Day Kindergarten in the United States: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/web/2004078.asp>.