



*National Association of
Early Childhood Specialists in
State Departments of Education*

**The Power of Kindergarten:
10 Policies Leading to Positive Child Outcomes**

Kindergarten is a powerful and pivotal part of the educational continuum for young children, linking their home, community, and preschool experiences to the "big school" and the world of more formal educational experiences. State and local policies regarding age of entry, retention, length of day, teacher credentials, attendance, curriculum, assessment and accountability all impact the effectiveness and power of the kindergarten year. Other components of a powerful kindergarten experience include:

- Strong family engagement in their child’s education;
- Knowledgeable and systemic administrative support for appropriate classroom practices; and
- Transition practices that create a strong and ongoing connection between every child’s preschool experiences and their kindergarten and beyond learning experiences.

All children benefit from a powerful kindergarten experience. The following 10 policies support, promote, and enhance the learning and joy of learning for all kindergarten children, leading to positive child outcomes for all.

All Children in the U.S. should be provided the opportunity to:
Participate in a high quality kindergarten program with a developmentally appropriate environment, including a comprehensive curriculum that addresses all domains important for young children.
Be taught by a teacher who has received specialized training in working with and instructing young children , particularly kindergartners, and who has shown his/her competency in providing intentional and appropriate evidence-based instruction to this age child.
Be served by a program and within a system that connects with and deeply engages families in decisions about their child’s education and learning .
Receive supports as determined by their individual needs including planned transitions into kindergarten and from kindergarten to first grade.
Be allowed to attend kindergarten if they are five years old by September 1.
All Schools Should:
Assess child’s status AFTER kindergarten entry.
Require all children to attend kindergarten when age eligible.
Provide a full-day, every-day kindergarten program.
Offer a free kindergarten experience.
Not ‘red-shirt’ or recommend that parents hold out their age-eligible children, nor offer a sequenced two-year program with the intention that some children complete two years of kindergarten instruction.

#1 K-Power - High Quality Kindergarten

All Children in the U.S. should be provided the opportunity to:
Participate in a high quality kindergarten program with a developmentally appropriate environment, including a comprehensive curriculum that addresses all domains important for young children.
Definitions
<u>High quality</u> A high quality kindergarten programs supports and fosters children’s development and learning in all domains— health and physical, perceptual and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and communication development, and cognitive development.
<u>Developmentally appropriate environment</u> For kindergarten students, a developmentally appropriate environment is one in which children have the opportunity to learn through play, exploring the environment, and interacting with their peers. It takes into consideration 1) child development and learning, 2) individually appropriateness, 3) culturally appropriateness ¹
<u>Comprehensive curriculum</u> A comprehensive curriculum meets state content standards, but also takes into account children’s developmental needs, the needs and interest of the children in the class, and individual children’s needs. It also incorporates skills and concepts across content areas and builds on skills obtained before preschool, while also purposefully preparing kindergarteners to build on and expand their knowledge in first grade and beyond. ²
<u>Domains</u> Young children’s development covers five domains ³ : <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Health and physical, perceptual and motor development2. Social and emotional development3. Approaches to learning4. Language and communication development5. Cognitive development
Why does high quality matter?
Access to full-day kindergarten is important but just extending how long children are in school does not necessarily mean the quality of teaching children experience changes ⁴ . To achieve strong outcomes in early childhood programs, quality is key. Studies of Project STAR found attendance higher-quality kindergarten classrooms had long term effects, such as higher earnings and college attendance rates ⁵ . Research has suggested that kindergarten teachers who are educated on early childhood specific pedagogy and theory produce the best results ⁶ . Teachers trained in developmentally appropriate practice can effectively support a high quality classroom.
What does a high quality kindergarten look like?
Step into a high quality kindergarten classroom and you will see children excited about learning – children who are engaged and learning through their environment. You will not see children lined up in rows at desks. What

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Developmentally appropriate practice*. Accessed 02/27/13 <http://www.naeyc.org/DAP>

² Adapted from the New Jersey Kindergarten Guidelines: “Kindergarten Guidelines for Comprehensive, Standards-Based Curriculum

³ *Early learning and development standards*. <http://www.earlylearningguidelines-standards.org/issue.php?iid=8>

⁴ Hall-Kenyon, et.al., 2011

⁵ Chetty, Friedman, Hilger, Saez, Schanzenbach, & Yagan, 2011

⁶ Kauerz, 2010

you will see is a lot of activity – children participating in activity centers, literacy builders through the classroom, children’s art, math manipulatives, students engaging with one another, and a host of other resources and activities. All this is under the supervision of an intentional teacher, who has a pulse on the needs of each child and who intentionally creates a learning environment that is child-centered.

The New Jersey Department of Education has a 3-part video series that provides a look at what a high quality kindergarten looks like⁷.

How can high quality be attained?

Just instituting extended hours in and of itself will not lead to the benefits full-day kindergarten offers – teachers must be trained in and be able to use methods that evoke the most developmental benefits and “school district administrators can play important leadership roles in building comprehensive professional development systems that support PreK-3rd teachers and their efforts to create effective learning environments.”⁸

States can promote the inclusion of early childhood education theory and practices by stipulating that those teaching grades K-3 receive training in early childhood development during their credential program.

Resources

Chetty, R.C., Friedman, J.N., Hilger, N., Saez, E., Schanzenbach, D.W., and Yagan, D. (2011). Does your kindergarten classroom affect your earnings? Evidence from Project STAR. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Oxford University Press, 126(4), 1593-1660.

Gullo, D.F. (ed.). (2006). *K today: Teaching and learning in the kindergarten year*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/Play/Ktodayplay.pdf>

Hall-Kenyon, K.M., Bingham, G.E. & Korth, B.B. (2009). How do linguistically diverse students fare in full- and half-day kindergarten? Examining academic achievement, instructional quality, and attendance. *Early Education and Development*, 20(1), 25-52.

Kauerz, K. (2010). *PreK-3rd: Putting full-day kindergarten in the middle*. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (n.d.). *DAP with Kindergarteners*. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/dap/kindergarteners>

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1996). *Top 10 signs of a good kindergarten classroom*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. <http://oldweb.naeyc.org/ece/1996/12.pdf>

New Jersey Department of Education. (2011). *New Jersey kindergarten implementation guidelines*. <http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/guide/KindergartenGuidelines.pdf>

New Jersey Department of Education. (n.d.) *High-quality kindergarten today*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/k/hqktoday/>

⁷ To access these videos, go to <http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/k/hqktoday/>

⁸ Childress, Doyle & Thomas, 2009; Elmore, 2002

#2 K-Power - High Quality Teachers

All Children in the U.S. should be provided the opportunity to:
Be taught by a teacher who has received specialized training in working with and instructing young children, particularly kindergarteners, and who has shown his/her competency in providing intentional and appropriate evidence-based instruction to this age child.
Definitions
<p><i>Intentional and appropriate instruction</i></p> <p>An intentional teacher “act(s) with specific outcomes or goals in mind for children’s development and learning.⁹” To do so, a teacher must have strong content knowledge and be able to understand of where a child is in meeting the outcome or goal, use the most appropriate instructional strategies given the given, assess and readjust based on the assessment.</p> <p>Teachers who provide appropriate instruction take into account knowledge of child development and learning, the individual child, and culture when providing instruction¹⁰.</p>
Why does “specialized training” matter?
<p>Research finds that “...early childhood teachers who hold bachelor’s degrees (e.g., bachelor of arts, bachelor of science) with specialized training in early childhood education provide better quality learning experiences, which lead to better outcomes, most notably for 3- to 5-year olds (Barnett, 2003; National Research Council, 2001; Whitebook, 2003).¹¹”</p> <p>The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Foundation Task Force on Early Learning recently recommended that pre-service training “include a focus on child development, knowledge and practice to promote children’s school readiness, early childhood curricula and assessment, and approaches to family engagement as well as the interrelationship between programs that serve children up to age 5 and K-3 programs.¹²”</p> <p>In order to provide intentional instruction, a teacher must be able to call upon sound judgment, content knowledge, developmental knowledge, and knowledge of the individual child to instruct towards reaching outcomes (across all domains). Without specialized training, kindergarten teachers are less likely to be able to provide effective intentional instruction because of lack of knowledge around developmental needs of children in kindergarten and the strategies to use to support strong child outcomes. Currently, teachers who have taught higher elementary grades, such as 4th grade, can be put in charge of kindergarten classrooms, despite being unfamiliar with the needs and capacities of children in kindergarten. As a result, kindergarteners may receive instruction that is inappropriate for their age level, or not effective in reaching expected outcomes.</p>
How does a teacher demonstrate competence?
<p>NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards¹³ encompass six standards that teachers should know and be able to do when working with children from birth to age 8. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting child development and learning• Building family and community relationships• Observing, documenting, and assessing• Using developmentally effective approaches to connect with children and families• Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum• Becoming a professional

⁹ Epstein, 2007, 1

¹⁰ NAEYC, n.d.

¹¹ in Pianta, Cox, and Snow, 2007

¹² NAESP Foundation Task Force on Early Learning, 2011, p 7

¹³ NAEYC, 2009

High quality kindergarten teachers build and maintain supportive relationships with children as they learn. They must also be adept in how to teach concepts and skills that are adapted to each child's level. This combination of art and science requires pre-service training specific to early childhood as well as continue professional development once teaching in the field.

Resources

Epstein, A. (2007). *The intentional teacher: Choosing the best strategies for young children's learning*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/store/files/store/TOC/165_0.pdf

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). *NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Youth Children. Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/files/2009%20Professional%20Prep%20stdsRevised%204_12.pdf

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.). *Developmentally appropriate practice*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/DAP>

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Shore, R. (July 2009). *PreK-3rd: Teacher quality matters*. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development.

#3 K-Power - Family Engagement

All Children in the U.S. should be provided the opportunity to:
Be served by a program and within a system that connects with and deeply engages families in decisions about their child’s education and learning.
Definitions
<p><u>Family Engagement</u></p> <p>The national Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group¹⁴ defines family engagement as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to engaging families in meaningful and culturally respectful ways, and families are committed to actively supporting their children’s learning and development. • Continuous across a child’s life, spanning from Early Head Start programs to college preparation high schools. • Carried out everywhere that children learn – at home, in pre-kindergarten programs, in school, in after-school programs, in faith-based institutions, and in community programs and activities. <p>Family engagement from birth to third grade has also been described as "parents’ efforts to promote their children’s healthy development and learning through activities that can be encouraged by educators in child care, preschool and school settings.¹⁵ " Different types of involvement include: home-based parent involvement, community activities, and school-based parent involvement.</p>
Who is in the “system”?
For children in kindergarten, family engagement is imperative as children transition from preschool or other programs to kindergarten and then from kindergarten to first grade. Additionally, children in kindergarten are also engaged in a variety of programs outside of kindergarten – from child care to community activities. All programs where children learn are part of the system.
Why family engagement?
Research shows that family engagement provides a number of benefits for young children, including literacy and math skills ¹⁶ . A recent study by MDRC of nearly 100 family involvement research studies found that “parents from diverse backgrounds, when given direction, can increase their involvement with their children’s learning at home and at school and that, when parents are more involved and more engaged, children tend to do better academically and socially. ¹⁷ ”
How can families be engaged?
<p>The NAEYC Engaging Diverse Families project identified 6 principles that programs who effectively engage families use¹⁸ :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs invite families to participate in decision making and goal setting for their child • Teachers and programs engage families in two-way communication • Programs and teachers engage families in ways that are truly reciprocal • Programs provide learning activities for the home and in the community • Programs invite families to participate in program-level decisions and wider advocacy efforts • Programs implement a comprehensive program-level system of family engagement

¹⁴ Weiss & Lopez, 2009

¹⁵ Smith, Robbins, Stagman, & Mahur, 2013, 3

¹⁶ Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013; Weiss, Lopez, & Rosenberg, 2010; Smith, Robbins, Stagman, & Mahur, 2013

¹⁷ Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013 , ix

¹⁸ National Association for the Education of Young Children, nd

Capacity building through training and support is necessary for kindergarten program staff (and administrators) on how to effectively engage with parents. A recent review of family engagement programs concludes that “the existing studies, however, are clear that professional development for teachers about the transition process and time to plan and conduct transition activities would help many more preschool and kindergarten teachers to connect with parents and prepare young children to move to a new school.”¹⁹ [vi]

Resources

Henderson, A., & Mapp, K. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). Retrieved from <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (nd). *Engaging diverse families*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/familyengagement>

Smith, S., Robbins, T., Stagman, S. & Mahur, D. (2013). *Parent engagement from preschool through grade 3: A guide for policymakers*. Report. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

Van Voorhis, F.L., Maier, M.F., Epstein, J.L., and Lloyd, C.M. (2013). *The impact of family involvement on the education of children ages 3 to 8*. New York, NY: MDRC. Retrieved from http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The_Impact_of_Family_Involvement_FR.pdf

Weiss, H., & Lopez, M.E. (2009). Redefining family engagement in education. *Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) Newsletter*, 1(2). Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/redefining-family-engagement-in-education>

Weiss, H.B., Bouffard, S.M., Bridgall, B. L., & Gordon, E.W. (2009). *Reframing family involvement in education: Supporting families to support educational equity*. *Equity Matters: Research Review*, No. 5. New York, NY: The Campaign for Educational Equity. Retrieved from <http://www.equitycampaign.org/article.asp?id=7282>

Weiss, H.B., Lopez, M. Elena & Rosenberg, H. (2010). *Beyond random acts: Family, school, and community engagement as an integral part of education reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. Retrieved from http://www.nationalpirc.org/engagement_forum/beyond_random_acts.pdf

¹⁹ Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013

#4 K-Power - Kindergarten Supports

All Children in the U.S. should be provided the opportunity to:
Receive supports as determined by their individual needs including planned transitions into kindergarten and from kindergarten to first grade.
Definitions
<p><u>Individual needs</u> Children, especially young children, have their own individual needs (and strengths) across all domains – cognitive, language/literacy, social-emotional, physical, and approaches to learning. They also come from different cultural, linguistic, and other contexts. To understand a child’s individual needs, a teacher must be aware of the contexts the child comes from, child him/herself (language, culture, etc.), the child’s family, and the child’s community.</p> <p><u>Planned transitions</u> Planned transitions ensure children receive stable and consistent learning environments. For children, the classroom environment, standards they are held to, and the instructional practices they receive should be aligned as they move through different early childhood settings. Families are consulted and have relationships with educators to ensure smooth transitions. Educators are able to work across together across settings (i.e., pre-k to kindergarten) and families to plan transitions for children.</p>
How can teachers and schools provide supports to kindergarten children based on their individual needs?
Training is essential. Teachers must be prepared to assess a child’s needs and use their judgment and knowledge to adjust or change their instruction to support the child. Schools should provide an environment that supports teachers, such as professional development, and bring together parents, teachers, and others involved in children’s education environments to determine children’s needs and how to support them.
Why are transitions important time periods?
As children move from early learning experiences to kindergarten, the policies, curriculum, pedagogy, the role of parents, and what is expected of children are often disjointed. Kindergarten serves as “the ‘pivot’ year, serving as the pedagogical bridge between PreK and the early elementary grades.” ²⁰ The benefits of creating a smooth transitions across the early childhood years has been shown by research ²¹ and practice in the field ²² . Research shows that planned transitions that bridge across the different developmental contexts children experience as they move between settings are essential to building upon early learning experiences for long-term improved child outcomes ²³ .
How can policy support planned transitions?
Policy is key in creating a unified system that supports planned transitions such as aligning standards, fostering closer communication between early childhood settings and kindergarten, transition planning in teams at schools, and engaging parents in the transition process. Teacher and administrator training, through pre- and in-service training can prepare early childhood settings and schools to effectively engage with parents.
Resources
Bohan-Baker, M., & Little, P. (2002). <i>The Transition to Kindergarten: A Review of Current Research and Promising Practices to Involve Families</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. Retrieved from

²⁰ Kauerz, 2010, p. 8

²¹ Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002; National Education Goals Panel, 1998; Pianta, Cox, & Snow, 2007

²² For examples of local districts implementing birth to third grade approaches, see <http://fcd-us.org/resources/fcd-case-studies>

²³ Reynolds, Magnuson, & Ou, 2010

<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/the-transition-to-kindergarten-a-review-of-current-research-and-promising-practices-to-involve-families>

Kauerz, K. (2010). *PreK-3rd: Putting full-day kindergarten in the middle*. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development.

Ladd, G. W., & Kochenderfer, B. J. (1996). Linkages between friendship and adjustment during early school transitions. In W. M. Bukowski, A. F. Newcomb & W.W. Hartup (Eds.) *The company they keep: Friendship in childhood and adolescence*. Cambridge studies in social and emotional development (pp. 322-345). New York, NY, U.S.: Cambridge University Press.

National Education Goals Panel. (1998). *Ready schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Pianta, R. C., Cox M. J., & Snow, K. (2007). *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Reynolds, A. J., Magnuson, K. A., & Ou, S. (2010). Preschool-to-third grade programs and practices: A review of research. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32, 1121–1131.

Schulting, A. B., Malone, P. S., & Dodge, K. A. (2005). The effect of school-based kindergarten transition policies and practices on child academic outcomes. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(6), 860–871.

Tout, K., Halle, T., Daily, S., Albertson-Junkans, L., and Moodie, S. (2013). *The research base for a birth through age eight state policy framework*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=the-research-base-for-a-birth-through-eight-state-policy-framework-2>

#5 K-Power - Kindergarten Entry Age

All Children in the U.S. should be provided the opportunity to:
Attend kindergarten if they are five by September 1.
What are current policies?
<p>Policies for kindergarten entrance age (the date by which a student must be five years old in order to attend kindergarten) are not consistent across states^{24,11}:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eight states give local education agencies (LEAs) the option to choose the date by which a child must be five years of age• Five states require students to be five on or before July 31 (includes states that specify five by August 1)• 14 states require students to be five in August• 22 states require students to be five in September• One state requires students to be five on or before October 15• One state requires students to be five on or before January 1 <p>Whether or not districts must offer kindergarten also varies by state²⁵[2]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 states plus D.C. require districts to offer full-day kindergarten• 34 states require districts to offer half-day kindergarten• Five states do not require districts to offer kindergarten, leaving the decision to school districts
Why does it matter?
<p>When all states allow children who are age five by September 1st to attend kindergarten, it levels the playing field (by age) for access to kindergarten across all states. It also creates consistency for an increasingly mobile population as families will know that no matter the district or state they move to, kindergarten entrance age will be constant.</p> <p>For states that do not require districts to offer kindergarten, some children miss out on an entire year of learning, particularly children whose parents cannot afford pre-kindergarten programs in lieu of a kindergarten program.</p> <p>Furthermore, as most states' policies do not guarantee all children access to publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs, children lack guaranteed access to an enriched early learning program during the year in which they would have been enrolled in kindergarten.</p>
Resources
<p>ECS. (2013). <i>Kindergarten entrance age</i>. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbquestU?SID=a0i70000004J3cq&rep=Kq02&Q=Q3195</p> <p>Kauerz, K. (March 2005). <i>State kindergarten policies: Straddling early learning and early elementary school</i>. Young Children on the Web http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200503/01Kauerz.pdf</p> <p>Workman, E. (2013). <i>Inequalities at the starting line: State kindergarten policies</i>. Denver, CO: ECS.</p>

²⁴ ECS, 2013

²⁵ Workman, 2013

#6 K-Power - Kindergarten Assessment

All Schools Should:
Assess for developmental status AFTER kindergarten entry
Definitions
<p><u>Screening</u> Development screening “includes activities to identify children who may need further evaluation in order to determine the existence of a delay in development or a particular disability.”²⁶ It provides a snapshot of a child’s development²⁷.</p> <p><u>Assessment</u> “A term sometimes used loosely to refer to any type of appraisal of young children. In a narrower sense, assessment refers to information from multiple indicators and sources of evidence that is organized and interpreted and then evaluated to make an appraisal.”²⁸</p> <p><u>Developmental status</u> A child’s developmental status should illustrate where the child is developmentally in each of the five domains of early childhood – cognitive, social-emotional, motor skills, language/literacy, and approaches to learning</p>
Why wait until after kindergarten entry?
<p>Children entering kindergarten come from a wide variety of early childhood experiences, typically of different dosage and level of quality. Additionally, they have linguistic, cultural, and family contexts to consider. Waiting until after kindergarten entry to conduct developmental screening gives children time to adjust to their new environment. It also give kindergarten teachers the time to understand the context of the child.</p> <p>The National Research Council identified a number of risks in early childhood assessment, including not taking into account how the child’s background has shaped his/her development and learning, labeling children as “failures” , potentially denying children entry into kindergarten programs, and putting expectations on children to be ready rather than schools²⁹.</p> <p>By waiting until children are already in kindergarten, teachers will have time to gain a fuller picture of the child and his/her strengths and needs.</p>
Resources
<p>Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA). (n.d.). <i>Early identification: Screening, evaluation, and assessment</i>. Retrieved from: http://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/screeneval.asp</p> <p>Education Commission of the States. (2013). <i>Kindergarten readiness assessment</i>. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbquestU?SID=a0i70000004J3cg&rep=Kq07&Q=Q3201</p> <p>Meisels, S.J. (2006). <i>Accountability in early childhood: No easy answers</i>. Occasional Paper, 6. Chicago: Erikson Institute Herr Research Center.</p> <p>National Research Council. (2008). <i>Early childhood assessment: Why, what, and how</i>. Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children, C.E. Snow and S.B. Van Hemel, Editors. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences</p>

²⁶ ECTA, n.d.

²⁷ Office of Head Start, 2013

²⁸ National Research Council, 2008

²⁹ National Research Council, 2008

and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Office of Head Start. (2013). *What is the difference between screening and assessment? Early Head Start tip sheet No. 6*. Washington, DC: Office of Head Start. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/Health/Health%20and%20Wellness/Health%20and%20Wellness%20Children%20%28ages%20-5%29/What%20is%20the%20Difference%20between%20Screening%20and%20Assessment.htm>

Snow, K. (2011). *Developing kindergarten readiness and other large-scale assessment systems: Necessary considerations in the assessment of youth children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/Assessment_Systems.pdf.

#7 K-Power - Kindergarten Attendance

All Schools Should:
Require all children to attend kindergarten when age eligible.
What are policies in states around required kindergarten attendance?
Only 14 states and DC mandate kindergarten attendance ³⁰ . Furthermore, the compulsory school age varies state to state from age five to age eight ³¹ : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In nine states the compulsory school age is 5• In 26 states the compulsory school age is 6• In 14 states the compulsory school age is 7• In two states the compulsory school age is 8
Why should kindergarten attendance be mandatory?
All children should have equal opportunity to meet the more rigorous standards begin set in place from kindergarten onwards. When children do not attend kindergarten, they bear the risk of entering 1 st grade (and, in some cases, 2 nd grade) behind their peers - not only in math and reading, but socialization opportunities, physical development, and approaches to learning. As high-stakes tests become more commonplace, ensuring every child has equal time to learn the skills they are tested on is only fair. Furthermore, when all children attend kindergarten, teachers in the grades that follow can avoid playing catch up and, instead, work towards higher-level goals that build on the strong foundations laid by earlier learning opportunities – making classes stronger as a whole. Additionally, requiring attendance when age eligible circumvents redshirting, the practice of holding a child back a year so he/she enters kindergarten about a year older than peers and, presumably, more advantaged in skills (for more information on redshirting, see statement #10).
Resources
ECS. (2013a). <i>Child must attend kindergarten</i> . Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbquestU?SID=a0i70000004J3cq&rep=Kq03&Q=Q3198
ECS. (2013b). <i>Compulsory school age</i> . Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbquestU?SID=a0i70000004J3cq&rep=Kq01&Q=Q3196

³⁰ ECS, 2013a

³¹ ECS, 2013b

#8 K-Power - Full Day Kindergarten

All Schools Should:
Provide a full-day, every-day kindergarten program.
Definitions
<p><u>Full-day</u> A kindergarten program that is the same length of the instructional day as first grade.</p> <p><u>Every-day</u> The program runs every day from Monday through Friday (i.e., children do not attend every other day or only a few days)</p>
What are current policies and practices?
<p>The availability of a full-day, every-day kindergarten program varies by and within states. Few states require districts to offer full-day kindergarten, for instance³²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 states and DC require districts to offer full-day kindergarten • 34 states require districts to offer part-day kindergarten (usually called “half-day” kindergarten, these programs can run as few as 2.5 hours) • Five states do not require districts to offer kindergarten <p>The hours in a “full-day” kindergarten also vary, as definitions of instructional hours in a full-day kindergarten by state. Programs considered full-day range from four to seven hours a day, while part-day ranges from two hours to three-and-a-quarter hours per day³³.</p> <p>Funding policies that only provide funding for part-day program can disincentivize districts from offering full-day kindergarten. For districts that don’t have full-day funding, other funding sources, such as charging parents tuition, are used to cover the added cost.</p>
Why does it matter?
<p>Equitable access to full-day, every-day kindergarten is important more now than ever. Forty-seven (47) states and territories have taken up the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which means that each child in kindergarten will be expected to master the same standards, regardless of how much time they spend in kindergarten. A child in a 2.5 hour a day program will be expected to reach the same standards as a child in a full-day program. As states develop assessment measures for kindergarten, it is crucial to give the same amount of time to students.</p> <p>Providing full-day every day kindergarten supports continuity for children as more enter from full-day prekindergarten programs. Switching back to part-day at kindergarten and then resuming a full-day schedule at 1st grade simply does not make sense.</p> <p>A full-day program offers teachers the time to use developmentally appropriate practices with students, rather than use drills and memorization. Developmentally appropriate teaching engages children and supports lasting learning. Teachers have more time to address all domains in a full-day program³⁴. In a part-day program, time constraints may limit teachers to focusing on only math or reading.</p>
Do full-day programs benefit students more than part-day programs?
Research comparing the efficacy of full-day to part-day is limited and some was conducted prior to the Common

³² Education Commission of the States, 2013

³³ Workman, 2013

³⁴ Kauerz, 2010

Core State Standards and other measures holding all students accountable for achieving the same standards regardless of time-in-school models. That stated, the preponderance of data suggest that full-day kindergarten produces more significant academic and social benefits for students than part-day kindergarten, particularly for disadvantaged students.

Key to achieving the benefits a full day can offer is *how* the additional time is used. As Wasik et.al. (2013, 10) note, "More of a program of mediocre quality does not lead to positive effects on child outcomes. In other words, the positive impact of instruction on young children is not related solely to dosage of the intervention. Dosage needs to be considered along with other factors such as quality of the intervention and fidelity of implementation."

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#9 K-Power - Free Kindergarten

All Schools Should:
Offer a free kindergarten experience.
Definitions
<p><i>Free</i> Children attend without parents or caretakers being charged tuition or fees.</p>
What is the current landscape?
<p>Policies across states and districts are inconsistent. Some states fund kindergarten as a full-day similar to 1st grade, while others only provide funds to cover half of the day. Consequently, districts with only half-day funding have to find alternative sources to fund a full-day program. In some cases, this means charging parents for a portion of the full-day kindergarten³⁵.</p> <p>Full-day funding that is outside the funding formula is precarious and is subject to every-changing economic climates. When budget shortfalls occur, full-day kindergarten is frequently cut, or threatened to be cut³⁶. Some states incentive half-day programs by only funding half-day regardless of whether the program is full-day or not.</p>
Why does it matter?
<p>A system in which some children attend full-day for free, while others do not simply due to their zip code is not equitable. Charging tuition leaves full-day, with all its benefits, only an option for those who can afford it.</p>
Research
<p>Children’s Defense Fund. (2012). <i>The facts about full-day kindergarten</i>. Retrieved from http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/the-facts-about-full-day.pdf</p> <p>Education Commission of the States. (2013). <i>Early learning: Kindergarten online database</i>. Retrieved from http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/Kindergarten/KDB_intro_SF.asp</p> <p>Kauerz, K. (2010). <i>PreK-3rd: Putting full-day kindergarten in the middle</i>. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development. Retrieved from http://fcd-us.org/resources/prek-3rd-putting-full-day-kindergarten-middle</p>

³⁵ Kauerz, K, 2010

³⁶ Children’s Defense Fund, 2012

#10 K-Power - Kindergarten Red-Shirting

All schools in the United States should:
Not 'red-shirt' or recommend that parents hold out their age-eligible children, nor offer a sequenced two-year program with the intention that some children complete two years of kindergarten instruction.
Definitions
<p><u>Red-shirting</u></p> <p>The practice of delaying an age-eligible child's entrance into kindergarten or first grade by a year in order to give the child an extra advantage or to give the child time to develop cognitively, social-emotionally, or physically. The term comes from the sports term redshirting, in which a college athlete sits out a year of play to have more practice time.</p> <p><u>Pre-retention</u></p> <p>Pre-retention is the practice of districts not allowing age-eligible children from attending kindergarten and instead placing them in a two-year kindergarten program due to children's personal characteristics (e.g., a birthdate falling in the final three to four months of the cutoff date).</p>
Why are some children red-shirted?
Some families red-shirt their child so that he/she will have a competitive advantage when starting school as the child will be smarter, bigger, and faster than classmates. Others decide to red-shirt because they feel their child is not mature or developed enough to master kindergarten curriculum as kindergarten becomes more academic ³⁷ .
Which children are more likely to be red-shirted?
Families from higher socioeconomic status are more likely to red-shirt their child ³⁸ . For families from lower socioeconomic households, red-shirting is generally not an option as they cannot afford an extra year of paid pre-school or child care compared to free kindergarten. Boys are more likely to be red-shirted than girls ³⁹ .
What does the research base say?
<p><i>Lack of academic benefits in the long run</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some studies have found that there are some small academic benefits for older students in the early elementary grades⁴⁰, while other find no difference⁴¹. In the long run, however, this advantage fades by the time student is in 3rd grade⁴². <p><i>Lack of long-run benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deming and Dynarski (2008) note that there is "little evidence that being older than your classmates has any long-term, positive effect on adult outcomes such as IQ, earnings, or educational attainment. By contrast, there is substantial evidence that entering school later reduces educational attainment (by increasing high school dropout rates) and depresses lifetime earnings (by delaying entry into the labor market)."⁴³ Younger students have been found to earn more as adults than their peers who started kindergarten older⁴⁴.

³⁷ Diamond et al., 2000; Marshall, 2003; Shepard & Smith, 1986

³⁸ Bassok & Reardon, 2013; Deming & Dynarski, 2008

³⁹ Bassok & Reardon, 2013; Bellisimo, Sacks, & Mergendoller, 1995; Malone et al., 2006

⁴⁰ Datar, 2006; Cameron & Wilson, 1990 Shepard & Smith, 1987, Stipek & Byler, 2001

⁴¹ Graue & DiPerna, 2000; Knudert, May, & Brent, 1995

⁴² Lincove & Painter 2006; Graue & DiPerna, 2000; Shepard and Smith, 1986; Stipek, 2000

⁴³ Deming & Dynarski, 2008, p 1

⁴⁴ Angrist & Krueger, 1991; Mayer & Knutson, 1999

Red-shirting or pre-retaining children may have a negative effect on social and behavioral consequences

- Red-shirting has no social advantage and, in fact, there may be negative consequences, such as a feeling of failure for being held back or poor attitudes toward school⁴⁵.

Why children shouldn't be red-shirted or pre-retained

The NAECS/SDE statement around unacceptable trends in kindergarten states⁴⁶:

- *Delaying children's entry into school and/or segregating them into extra-year classes actually labels children as failures at the outset of their school experience. These practices are simply subtle forms of retention. Not only is there a preponderance of evidence that there is no academic benefit from retention in its many forms, but there also appear to be threats to the social-emotional development of the child subjected to such practices. The educational community can no longer afford to ignore the consequences of policies and practices which: 1) assign the burden of responsibility to the child, rather than the program; 2) place the child at risk of failure, apathy toward school, and demoralization; and 3) fail to contribute to quality early childhood education.*

Public schools cannot ethically select some children who are eligible under the law and reject others. Children subjected to delayed entry disproportionately represent racial and linguistic minorities, low-income children, and males. Denial of entrance to school, blatant or subtle, increases the disparity between social classes and could be construed as a denial of a child's civil rights. It places the financial burden for alternative schooling on parents. This is an equity problem.

Red-shirting and pre-retention programs signal that a child is not 'ready' for kindergarten. Achieving the skills and knowledge that standards promote should not be up to whether the child is 'ready' or not. Schools and teachers should be ready to ensure all children who enter their kindergarten are able to meet the standards. This requires a systemic approach that includes:

- Teachers who know how to address the individual needs of children, which are based on assessment once children are in their classrooms
- The engagement of parents in a variety of ways to support parent's their desires for their children
- Administrators and teacher leaders who support those teachers,
- Administration and a governing body (e.g., school board) that understands high quality and the rationale for practices

Resources on Red-shirting and Pre-Retention

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This position statement was adopted by the full membership of the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education in 2013.