

SB

41

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
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Mail Stop 3101

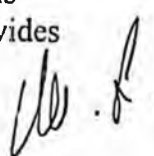
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

February 2, 2001

SUBJECT: Sectional Summary of SB 41 - relating to kindergarten.

TO: Senator Bettye Davis
Attn: Richard Benavides

FROM: Michael F. Ford 
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

Section 1. Requires each school district to offer a kindergarten program.

Section 2. Changes the legal school age from six to five years old.

Section 3. Requires that a five year old must attend kindergarten unless exempt under AS 14.30.010(b).

Section 4. Changes the compulsory attendance law to require a five year old to attend school, except as provided under AS 14.30.010(b).

Section 5. Effective date.

MFF:glc
01-093.glc

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate
Health, Education &
Social Services
Committee

Senate
Labor & Commerce
Committee

Senate
State Affairs
Committee

While in Session
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-3822
Fax: (907) 465-3756

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Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS

Memorandum

To: Senator Lyda Green, Chair
Senate HESS Committee

From: Senator Bettye Davis

Date: January 30, 2002

RE: Request for Hearing, SB 41

I respectfully request a hearing for Senate Bill 41, Kindergarten and School Age.

The aim of a Kindergarten program is to provide a strong foundation from which students can grow to become active participants in life-long learning. Children's early learning experiences have a profound effect on their development. In Kindergarten, children's receptivity to new influences and capacity to learn are at their peak. During this period, they acquire a variety of important skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will affect their ability to learn, their personal development, their relationships with others, and their future participation in society.

I have attached the following:

- Current version of the bill
- Sponsor Statement
- Sectional Analysis
- Background Information

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate
Health, Education &
Social Services
Committee

Senate
Labor & Commerce
Committee

Senate
State Affairs
Committee



SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS

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Senate Bill 41

"An Act Kindergarten programs and compulsory education; funding grants for public schools; and providing for an effective date."

Sponsor Statement

The aim of a Kindergarten program is to provide a strong foundation from which students can grow to become active participants in life-long learning. Children's early learning experiences have a profound effect on their development. In Kindergarten, children's receptivity to new influences and capacity to learn are at their peak. During this period, they acquire a variety of important skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will affect their ability to learn, their personal development, their relationships with others, and their future participation in society. The learning experienced in Kindergarten provides the basis for the acquisition of literacy skills (including technological and computer literacy), mathematics skills, and science skills, and prepares them for successful learning experiences in later grades.

This bill would require that all children be enrolled in a kindergarten program. This legislation is based on the belief that early learning and preparation for all students who enter the first grade should be a major focus.

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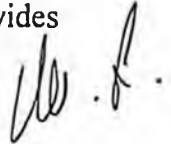
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Section 5. Effective date.

MFF:glc
01-093.glc

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



NEWS

FOR RELEASE:
December 1, 2000

Contact: David Thomas
(202) 401-1579

READING AND MATH GAINS MEASURED AFTER YEAR OF KINDERGARTEN

Education Study Finds All Children Improve, At-risk Children Close Gaps for Basic Skills

Speech

Children from all backgrounds significantly improve their reading and math performance during kindergarten and increase their readiness for future schooling, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). And the gains reported in *The Kindergarten Year* are about the same regardless of the child's background. Significant gaps remain, however, in more advanced skills between at-risk children and their peers.

"This report clearly shows that kindergarten benefits all children," U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said. "But it also reminds us that a half-day of kindergarten and regular school cannot do everything. The challenge for at-risk students raises compelling questions. Would universal pre-school reduce the gaps in skills that appear before children even enter kindergarten? Would all-day kindergarten make a difference? Would after-school programs in elementary and middle schools be especially beneficial to at-risk students in closing the gap? What can parents do long before their children enter kindergarten? How can community-based organizations give parents more support?"

"There's certainly mixed news in the report," said Gary Phillips, acting commissioner of education statistics. "The good news is that during kindergarten, all types of students improve their readiness for school. On the other hand, the pattern of group differences entering kindergarten is still there at the end of kindergarten. Furthermore, the gap between at-risk and more advantaged students is reduced for more basic skills, but widened for more complex skills."

The Kindergarten Year provides national data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, which included a representative sample of 22,000 children, their families, schools and classrooms. The study is the second in a series of planned reports from the longitudinal study, which provides first-time data on children attending public and private kindergartens.

The study found that children increased their specific knowledge and skills in reading from when they first entered kindergarten. After a year of kindergarten, those who could recognize their letters increased from 65 percent to 94 percent; children who could understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words rose from 29 percent to 72 percent; and those who could understand the letter-sound relationship at the end of words increased from 17 percent to 52 percent.

By the end of kindergarten, nearly all children recognize shapes and numbers (99 percent) and a majority understand the relative size and order of objects. Also, almost five times (18 percent) as many children could solve simple addition and subtraction problems at the end of kindergarten as at the beginning.

The Kindergarten Year identifies four risk factors for kindergartners: single-parent households, welfare recipients, mother with less than a high school education, and homes where English is not the primary language. Students with two or more risk factors enter kindergarten with much lower reading and math skills, but by the end of the year have virtually erased the gaps for the most basic skills. At-risk children remain behind in the more advanced skills such as recognizing words by sight or solving simple math problems.

The study found that patterns at the beginning of the school year persist and that by the end of the kindergarten year:

- Older children have higher specific reading and math knowledge and skills than their younger counterparts;
- According to teachers, children whose mothers who have more education are more likely to persist at tasks, seem more eager to learn, and pay closer attention than children whose mothers have less education;
- Teachers also report that kindergartners with fewer risk factors are more likely to accept peer ideas and form friendships, and less likely to argue, fight, or get angry than children with more risk factors.

Future studies will continue to follow the same sample of children through fifth grade, regularly gathering data on their reading and math achievement, social skills, physical development, and school experiences. The study will reveal the extent to which differences that exist when children enter school persist or change over time and how schooling influences progress.

The full text of *The Kindergarten Year* is available on the NCES Web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/>. A copy of the report can be ordered by calling toll free 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) TTY/TDD 1-877-576-7734; via e-mail at edpubs@inet.ed.gov; or through the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html>.

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Executive Summary

The kindergarten year marks a period of rapid change in the ways children think about themselves and the world around them (Bredekamp and Copple 1997; Sameroff and McDonough 1994). This change is influenced by both developmental factors (e.g., age, maturation) and environmental factors (e.g., schooling, home educational activities, family resources). Across this first year of schooling, children will acquire the knowledge and skills that will prove integral to their future success in school and in life.

Children enter school demonstrating a vast array of knowledge and skills, some children further along than others (West, Denton, and Germino Hausken 2000). The kindergarten year serves multiple purposes and is geared toward the development of both cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills (Seefeldt 1990). And, depending on the child, knowledge and skills develop in different areas and at different rates across this year of school.

To enrich the picture of children's first experience in formal education—the kindergarten year—we need to understand the knowledge and skills children possess as they enter kindergarten and we need to gain insight into how these develop across the kindergarten year. This report attempts to answer two basic sets of questions about children's knowledge and skill acquisition during the kindergarten year.

1. What gains are children making from the fall of their kindergarten year to the spring of their kindergarten year in their reading and mathematics knowledge and skills? Do these gains differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? As children are exiting kindergarten and preparing for first grade, how do their knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, family risk factors)?
2. What gains are children making in specific knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing letters, recognizing numbers, paying attention)? Do children's gains in specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? At the end of their kindergarten year when children are preparing for first grade, do their

specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, mother's education)?

The findings in this report come from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K). The ECLS-K, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), selected a nationally representative sample of kindergartners in the fall of 1998 and is following these children through the end of fifth grade. The full ECLS-K sample is comprised of approximately 22,000 children who attended about 1,000 kindergarten programs during the 1998-99 school year. The children attended both public (85 percent) and private (15 percent) kindergartens that offered full-day (55 percent) and part-day (45 percent) programs. All kindergarten children within the sampled schools were eligible for the sampling process, including language minority and special education students. The sample includes children from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the fall of 1998, about 95 percent of kindergartners were entering school for the first time. This report focuses on these first-time kindergartners. When information on children's cognitive knowledge and skills is presented, this report focuses on the children in the sample who received the cognitive assessment in English in both the fall and the spring of their kindergarten year.¹

Findings

Question 1: Gain, Differences in Gain, and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Knowledge and Skills

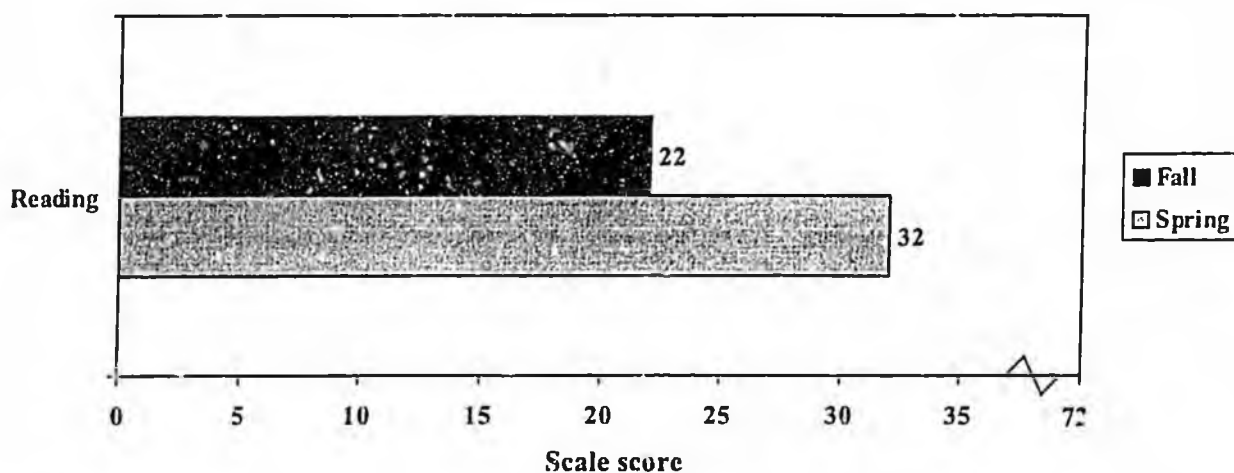
To address the first set of questions, the change from the fall of kindergarten to the spring of kindergarten in children's reading and mathematics scale scores was examined. These scores reflect children's overall performance in these domains. The possibility that particular groups of children might demonstrate more or less gain over the kindergarten was also explored

¹ Approximately 30 percent of Hispanic children and 19 percent of Asian children were not assessed in English and are not included in the estimates related to cognitive knowledge and skills. The Hispanic children who were proficient in Spanish were assessed in Spanish (for details see *Methodology and Technical Notes, Constructs, and Variables Used in Analysis*). The Hispanic and the Asian children not assessed in English are included in the estimates related to noncognitive knowledge and skills. And, due to specific instructions listed in the child's school record, about one-half percent of children were excluded from the cognitive assessment based on a disability.

(e.g., children at risk for later school difficulty might not acquire reading knowledge and skills at the same rate as children not at risk for later school difficulty).

As their kindergarten year comes to a close, children demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than they demonstrated as they entered school for the first time. Children's reading scale scores increased by 10 points from the fall to the spring (figure A). Therefore, the gain from fall to spring is about one standard deviation (an appreciable increase).

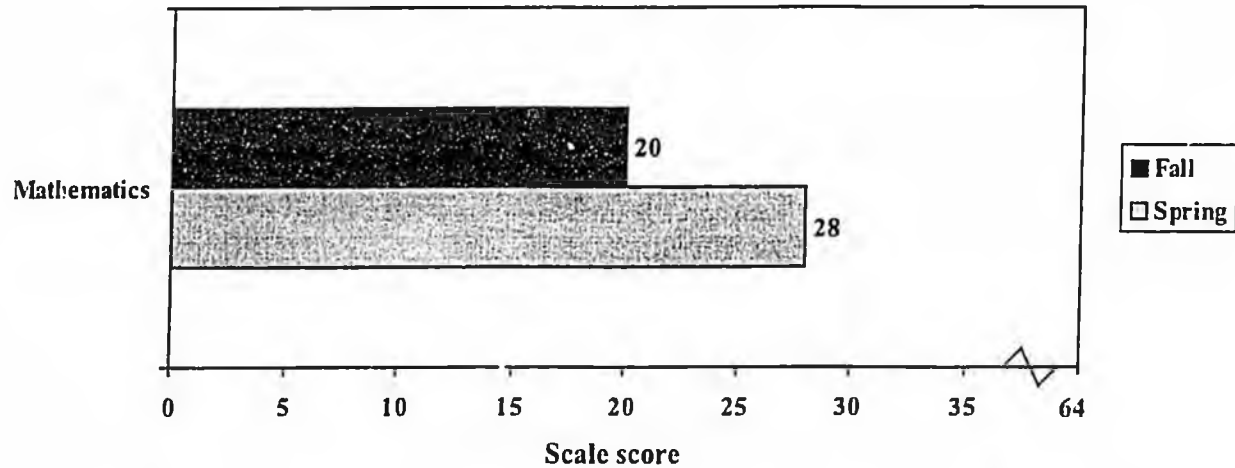
Figure A.—First-time kindergartners' mean reading scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Children's mathematics scores increased by eight points from the fall to the spring (figure B). Thus, children's mathematics knowledge and skills increased about one standard deviation during the kindergarten year. For the most part, the gains children demonstrate in their overall reading and mathematics knowledge and skills do not differ markedly by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics. For example, there is not more than a two-point difference in the gains children demonstrate in reading and mathematics by mother's education.

Figure B.—First-time kindergartners' mean mathematics scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

The absence of a substantial differential gain in children's general reading and mathematics knowledge and skills is seen again when we consider other characteristics of children, their families, and their kindergarten programs, such as children's age as they enter school and family risks for later school difficulty. The same is true when we look at school type and kindergarten program type. However when we consider the specific knowledge and skills children are acquiring (e.g., letter recognition, addition and subtraction, making friends, paying attention), children are developing particular cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills at different rates.

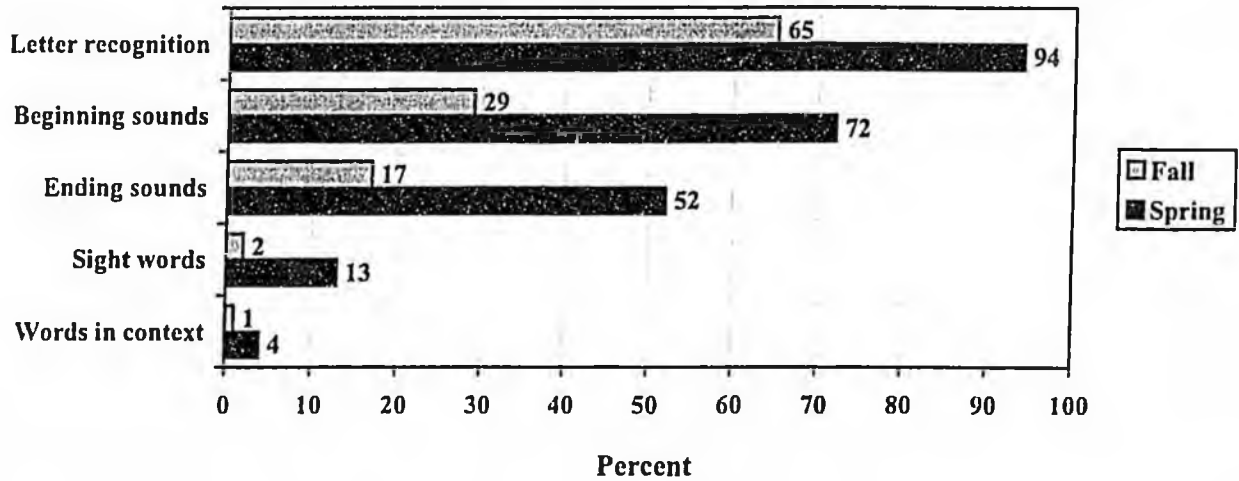
Question 2: Gain, Differences in Gain and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Specific Knowledge and Skills

To address the second set of questions, children's specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills were examined. Furthermore, the question of whether certain groups of children were more likely to acquire specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills than others was explored (e.g., does the probability that children acquire the reading skill of sight-word recognition vary by the level of their mother's education?). Finally, information is presented on the specific knowledge and skills children demonstrate in the spring of their kindergarten year as they are preparing for first grade.

In addition to the overall reading and mathematics scale scores, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on specific proficiencies. In the reading domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on: letter recognition; understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words; understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words; sight-word recognition; and understanding of words in context. In the mathematics domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on: recognizing single-digit numbers and basic shapes; counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns, and comparing the relative size (dimensional relationship) of objects; recognizing two-digit numbers, identifying the next number in a sequence, and identifying the ordinal position of an object; performing simple addition and subtraction; and performing basic multiplication and division.

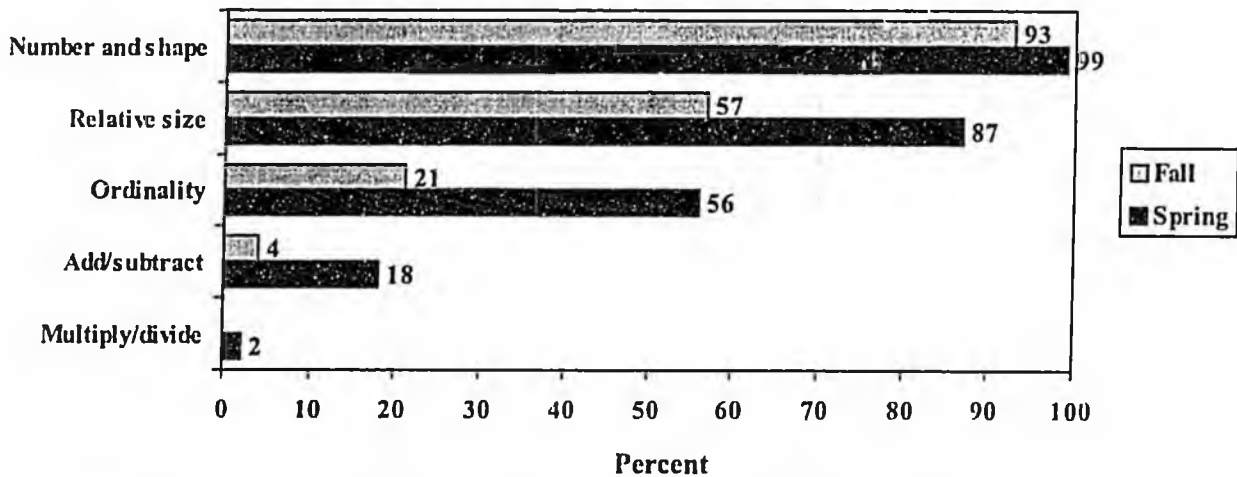
Across the kindergarten year, children acquire specific knowledge and skills in reading and mathematics (figures C and D). By the end of their kindergarten year, nearly all children recognize their letters, their numbers and their shapes. The percent of children who can recognize words by sight and demonstrate an understanding of words in context, though still relatively low, increased from kindergarten entry to kindergarten exit. And the numbers of children adding and subtracting also increased from kindergarten entry to kindergarten exit. We see less dramatic changes in children's social skills and approaches to learning across the kindergarten year, with a large percentage of children exhibiting prosocial behaviors and positive approaches to learning.

Figure C.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific reading knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure D.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific mathematics knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

When we examined children's overall gains in reading and mathematics knowledge and skills, as measured by their reading and mathematics scale scores, by child, family and kindergarten program characteristics, we found little evidence of differential gains from fall to spring. Based on those findings, the conclusion might be that from fall to spring of kindergarten, all children are acquiring knowledge and skills at approximately the same rate, and that they are learning the same things. However, this is not completely accurate. We see a very different picture when we look at children's acquisition of specific knowledge and skills.

To illustrate, children from the more disadvantaged backgrounds (those with at least one risk factor) are closing the gaps in basic skills (i.e., recognizing their letters and counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns and comparing the relative size of objects). However, these same children lag further behind their more advantaged classmates when it comes to gaining more sophisticated reading and mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., recognizing words by sight or solving simple addition and subtraction problems). In fact, the gap has widened. The same basic patterns we see when we consider cumulative family-risk factors are present when we consider other child characteristics, such as race/ethnicity.

Furthermore, to illustrate, we see some evidence of differential gain in the frequency with which children demonstrate specific social skills. According to their teachers, younger children are more likely to acquire the skill of paying attention than their older counterparts during the kindergarten year.

As children are completing kindergarten and preparing for first grade, almost all (94 percent) children know their letters, and 72 percent understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words, while 52 percent understand the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words. In fact, 13 percent demonstrate a proficient understanding of words by sight and 4 percent, words in context (figure C). In mathematics, 99 percent of children recognize their numbers and basic shapes, and the majority (87 percent) demonstrate understanding of dimensional relationships among objects (relative size). Just over half (56 percent) of children demonstrate an understanding of the mathematical concept ordinality. Moreover, 18

percent show they can add and subtract, and 2 percent are successfully performing multiplication and division (figure D).

Summary

Young children need knowledge and new experiences to develop and thrive. Schools offer a plethora of learning and development opportunities for children. Consequently, it is not surprising that across the kindergarten year children are rapidly acquiring the knowledge and skills integral to succeed in school and life.

This report presents a simple picture of the gains children make across the kindergarten year. The ECLS-K will follow these children through the fifth grade. We will be able to track children's performance and the differences in their performance, not only by child and family characteristics but also by teacher and school characteristics. This report represents only the beginning of understanding the role of the kindergarten year in children's development. Future analyses, based on the information from the ECLS-K, will help us understand the role of such things as child care, home educational environment, teachers' instructional practices, class size and the general climate, and facilities and safety of the schools.



ERIC Digests

ERIC Identifier: ED382410

Publication Date: 1995-05-00

Author: Rothenberg, Dianne

Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education Urbana IL.

Full-Day Kindergarten Programs. ERIC Digest.

THIS DIGEST WAS CREATED BY ERIC, THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ERIC, CONTACT ACCESS ERIC 1-800-LET-ERIC

Changes in American society and education over the last 20 years have contributed to the popularity of all-day (every day) kindergarten programs in many communities (Gullo, 1990). The increase in single parent and dual employment households, and the fact that most children spend a significant part of the day away from home, also signal significant changes in American family life compared to a generation ago. Studies show that parents favor a full-day program which reduces the number of transitions kindergartners experience in a typical day (Housden & Kam, 1992; Johnson, 1993). Research also suggests that many children benefit academically and socially during the primary years from participation in full-day, compared to half-day, kindergarten programs (Cryan et al., 1992).

Families who find it difficult to schedule both kindergarten and a child care program during the day are especially attracted to a full-day program (Housden & Kam, 1992). In many areas, both public and private preschool programs offer full-day kindergarten (Lofthouse, 1994). Still, some educators, policymakers, and parents prefer half-day, everyday kindergarten. They argue that a half-day program is less expensive and provides an adequate educational and social experience for young children while orienting them to school, especially if they have attended preschool. Many districts thus offer both half-day and full-day kindergarten programs when possible, but the trend is clearly in the direction of full-day kindergarten.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Well over 3.3 million children attend kindergarten in the United States, nearly as many children as attend first grade (Smith et al., 1994, p. 54). In 1993, about 54% of kindergarten teachers taught full-day classes, and about half of kindergartners attended full-day programs. Two-thirds of full-day kindergarten teachers taught in high-poverty areas, while fewer than one-third (29%) taught in schools with a low incidence of poverty (Heaviside et al., 1993). Teachers of classes with high minority enrollments were also more likely to teach full-day classes than were teachers of classes with low minority enrollments (67% versus 43%). State aid for all-day students is often used to fund full-day kindergarten. One reason for the high ratio of full-day to half-day kindergarten programs in high-poverty and high-minority schools is that state and federal funding for at-risk students is often used to supplement all-day funding, since all-day programs typically require extra classroom space, increased staffing for special services and programs, and additional classroom kindergarten teachers (Fromberg, 1992; Housden & Kam, 1992).

Full-day kindergarten is also popular because it eliminates the need to provide buses and crossing guards at mid-day. A higher proportion of kindergarten teachers taught full-day classes in rural areas in 1993 (66%)

than in city schools (59%), in towns (53%), or in schools in the urban "fringe" (39%) (Heaviside et al., 1993).

RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Research studies confirm that attendance in full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits for students, at least in the primary grades (Cryan et al., 1992; Karweit, 1992). Early studies seemed to offer little reliable evidence one way or the other because they used small samples or unique populations, failed to use rigorous standards, or concentrated almost exclusively on academic outcomes (as opposed to children's attitudes toward school, for example).

Cryan et al. (1992), however, are among the researchers who have found a broad range of effects, including a positive relationship between participation in full-day kindergarten and later school performance. After comparing similar half-day and full-day programs in a statewide longitudinal study, Cryan et al. found that full-day kindergartners exhibited more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers, and reflectiveness than half-day kindergartners. They were also more likely to approach the teacher and they expressed less withdrawal, anger, shyness, and blaming behavior than half-day kindergartners. In general, children in full-day programs exhibited more positive behaviors than did pupils in half-day or alternate-day programs.

Results similar to those of Cryan et al. have been found in other studies (Holmes and McConnell, 1990; Karweit, 1992). These positive effects and the academic gains in the first years of school support the value of developmentally appropriate full-day kindergarten.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Observers of trends in kindergarten scheduling argue that changing the LENGTH of the kindergarten day begs the underlying issue: creating developmentally and individually appropriate learning environments for ALL kindergarten children, regardless of the length of school day (Karweit, 1992; Katz, 1995).

Full-day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics in depth; reduces the ratio of transition time to class time; provides for greater continuity of day-to-day activities; and provides an environment that favors a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach. Recent research indicates that, compared to children in didactic programs, children in child-centered kindergarten programs rated their abilities significantly higher, had higher expectations for success on academic tasks, and were less dependent on adults for permission and approval (Stipek et al., 1995).

Experts urge teachers, administrators, and parents to resist the temptation to provide full-day programs that are didactic rather than intellectually engaging in tone. Seat work, worksheets, and early instruction in reading or other academic subjects are largely inappropriate in kindergarten. By contrast, developmentally appropriate, child-centered all-day kindergarten programs:

- * integrate new learning with past experiences through project work and through mixed-ability and mixed-age grouping (Drew & Law, 1990; Katz, 1995) in an unhurried setting;
- * involve children in first-hand experience and informal interaction with objects, other children, and adults (Housden & Kam, 1992);
- * emphasize language development and appropriate preliteracy experiences;

- * work with parents to share information about their children, build understanding of parent and teacher roles, emphasize reading to children in school and at home, and set the stage for later parent-teacher partnerships;
- * offer a balance of small group, large group, and individual activities (Katz, 1995);
- * assess students' progress through close teacher observation and systematic collection and examination of students' work, often using portfolios; and
- * develop children's social skills, including conflict resolution strategies.

CONCLUSION

Recent research supports the effectiveness of full-day kindergarten programs that are developmentally appropriate, indicating that they have academic and behavioral benefits for young children. In full-day programs, less hectic instruction geared to student needs and appropriate assessment of student progress contribute to the effectiveness of the program. While these can also be characteristics of high-quality half-day programs, many children seem to benefit, academically and behaviorally, from all-day kindergarten. Of course, the length of the school day is only one dimension of the kindergarten experience. Other important issues include the nature of the kindergarten curriculum and the quality of teaching.

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The Kindergarten Year

Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study,
Kindergarten Class of 1998–99

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Executive Summary

The kindergarten year marks a period of rapid change in the ways children think about themselves and the world around them (Bredekamp and Copple 1997; Sameroff and McDonough 1994). This change is influenced by both developmental factors (e.g., age, maturation) and environmental factors (e.g., schooling, home educational activities, family resources). Across this first year of schooling, children will acquire the knowledge and skills that will prove integral to their future success in school and in life.

Children enter school demonstrating a vast array of knowledge and skills, some children further along than others (West, Denton, and Germino Hausken 2000). The kindergarten year serves multiple purposes and is geared toward the development of both cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills (Seefeldt 1990). And, depending on the child, knowledge and skills develop in different areas and at different rates across this year of school.

To enrich the picture of children's first experience in formal education—the kindergarten year—we need to understand the knowledge and skills children possess as they enter kindergarten and we need to gain insight into how these develop across the kindergarten year. This report attempts to answer two basic sets of questions about children's knowledge and skill acquisition during the kindergarten year.

1. What gains are children making from the fall of their kindergarten year to the spring of their kindergarten year in their reading and mathematics knowledge and skills? Do these gains differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? As children are exiting kindergarten and preparing for first grade, how do their knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, family risk factors)?
2. What gains are children making in specific knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing letters, recognizing numbers, paying attention)? Do children's gains in specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? At the end of their kindergarten year when children are preparing for first grade, do their

specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, mother's education)?

The findings in this report come from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K). The ECLS-K, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), selected a nationally representative sample of kindergartners in the fall of 1998 and is following these children through the end of fifth grade. The full ECLS-K sample is comprised of approximately 22,000 children who attended about 1,000 kindergarten programs during the 1998–99 school year. The children attended both public (85 percent) and private (15 percent) kindergartens that offered full-day (55 percent) and part-day (45 percent) programs. All kindergarten children within the sampled schools were eligible for the sampling process, including language minority and special education students. The sample includes children from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the fall of 1998, about 95 percent of kindergartners were entering school for the first time. This report focuses on these first-time kindergartners. When information on children's cognitive knowledge and skills is presented, this report focuses on the children in the sample who received the cognitive assessment in English in both the fall and the spring of their kindergarten year.¹

Findings

Question 1: Gain, Differences in Gain, and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Knowledge and Skills

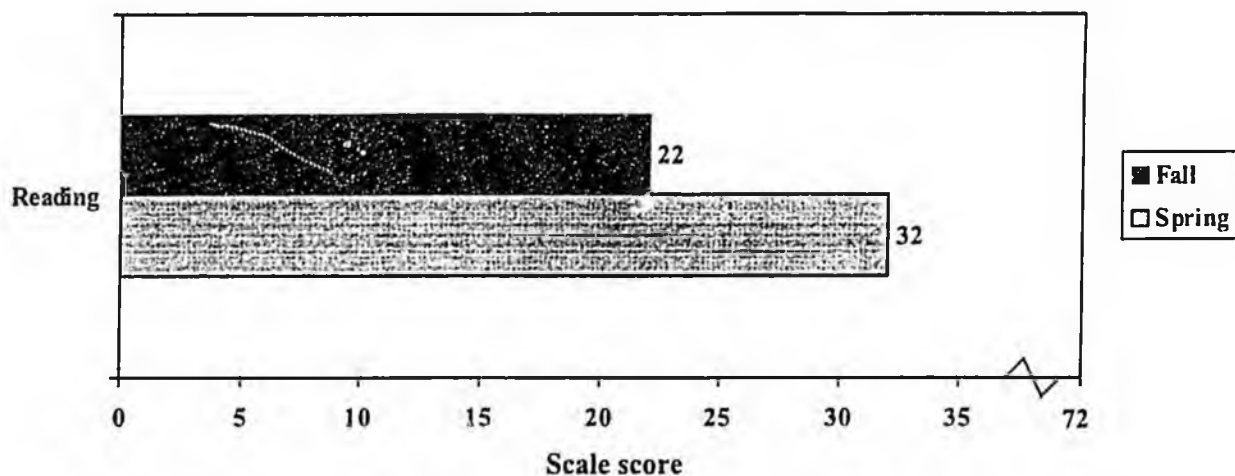
To address the first set of questions, the change from the fall of kindergarten to the spring of kindergarten in children's reading and mathematics scale scores was examined. These scores reflect children's overall performance in these domains. The possibility that particular groups of children might demonstrate more or less gain over the kindergarten was also explored

¹ Approximately 30 percent of Hispanic children and 19 percent of Asian children were not assessed in English and are not included in the estimates related to cognitive knowledge and skills. The Hispanic children who were proficient in Spanish were assessed in Spanish (for details see *Methodology and Technical Notes, Constructs, and Variables Used in Analysis*). The Hispanic and the Asian children not assessed in English are included in the estimates related to noncognitive knowledge and skills. And, due to specific instructions listed in the child's school record, about one-half percent of children were excluded from the cognitive assessment based on a disability.

(e.g., children at risk for later school difficulty might not acquire reading knowledge and skills at the same rate as children not at risk for later school difficulty).

As their kindergarten year comes to a close, children demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than they demonstrated as they entered school for the first time. Children's reading scale scores increased by 10 points from the fall to the spring (figure A). Therefore, the gain from fall to spring is about one standard deviation (an appreciable increase).

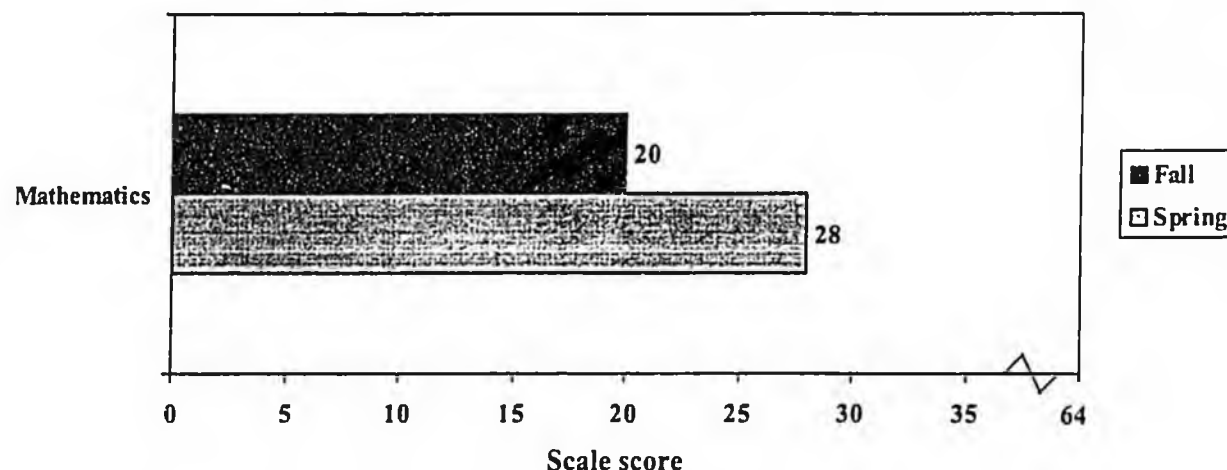
Figure A.—First-time kindergartners' mean reading scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Children's mathematics scores increased by eight points from the fall to the spring (figure B). Thus, children's mathematics knowledge and skills increased about one standard deviation during the kindergarten year. For the most part, the gains children demonstrate in their overall reading and mathematics knowledge and skills do not differ markedly by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics. For example, there is not more than a two-point difference in the gains children demonstrate in reading and mathematics by mother's education.

Figure B.—First-time kindergartners' mean mathematics scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

The absence of a substantial differential gain in children's general reading and mathematics knowledge and skills is seen again when we consider other characteristics of children, their families, and their kindergarten programs, such as children's age as they enter school and family risks for later school difficulty. The same is true when we look at school type and kindergarten program type. However when we consider the specific knowledge and skills children are acquiring (e.g., letter recognition, addition and subtraction, making friends, paying attention), children are developing particular cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills at different rates.

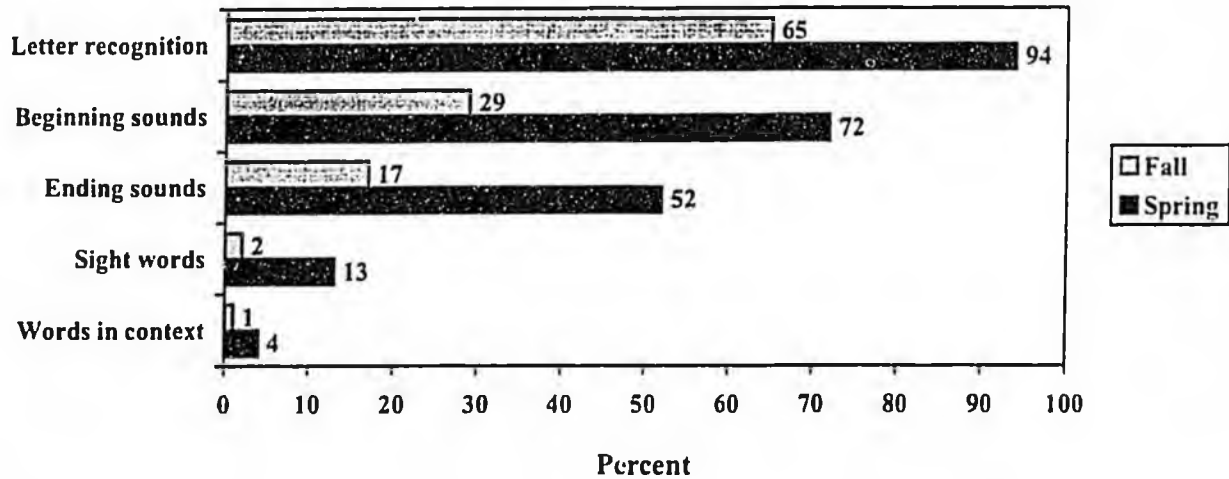
Question 2: Gain, Differences in Gain and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Specific Knowledge and Skills

To address the second set of questions, children's specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills were examined. Furthermore, the question of whether certain groups of children were more likely to acquire specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills than others was explored (e.g., does the probability that children acquire the reading skill of sight-word recognition vary by the level of their mother's education?). Finally, information is presented on the specific knowledge and skills children demonstrate in the spring of their kindergarten year as they are preparing for first grade.

In addition to the overall reading and mathematics scale scores, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on specific proficiencies. In the reading domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on: letter recognition; understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words; understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words; sight-word recognition; and understanding of words in context. In the mathematics domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on: recognizing single-digit numbers and basic shapes; counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns, and comparing the relative size (dimensional relationship) of objects; recognizing two-digit numbers, identifying the next number in a sequence, and identifying the ordinal position of an object; performing simple addition and subtraction; and performing basic multiplication and division.

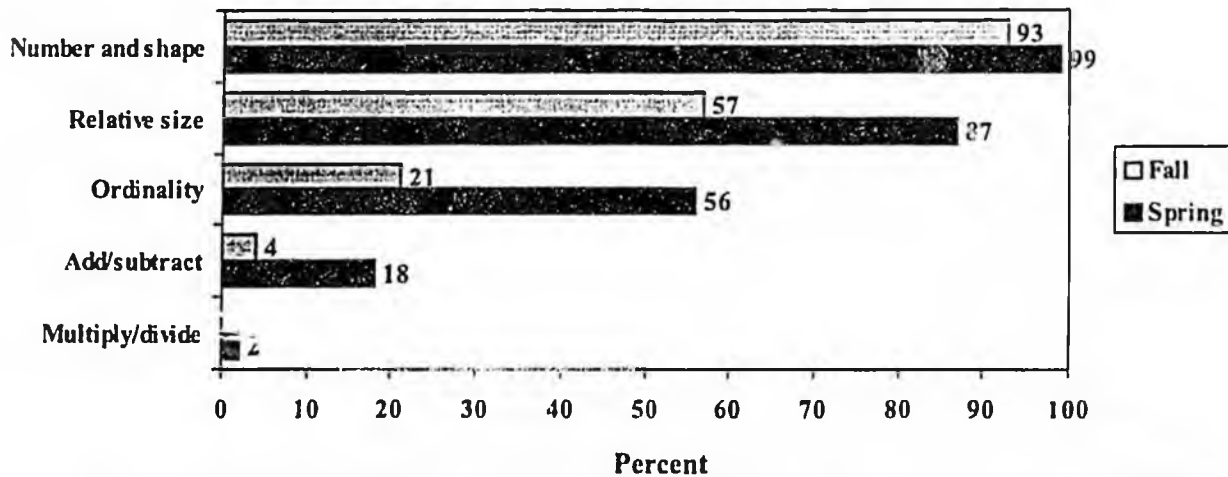
Across the kindergarten year, children acquire specific knowledge and skills in reading and mathematics (figures C and D). By the end of their kindergarten year, nearly all children recognize their letters, their numbers and their shapes. The percent of children who can recognize words by sight and demonstrate an understanding of words in context, though still relatively low, increased from kindergarten entry to kindergarten exit. And the numbers of children adding and subtracting also increased from kindergarten entry to kindergarten exit. We see less dramatic changes in children's social skills and approaches to learning across the kindergarten year, with a large percentage of children exhibiting prosocial behaviors and positive approaches to learning.

Figure C.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific reading knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure D.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific mathematics knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

When we examined children's overall gains in reading and mathematics knowledge and skills, as measured by their reading and mathematics scale scores, by child, family and kindergarten program characteristics, we found little evidence of differential gains from fall to spring. Based on those findings, the conclusion might be that from fall to spring of kindergarten, all children are acquiring knowledge and skills at approximately the same rate, and that they are learning the same things. However, this is not completely accurate. We see a very different picture when we look at children's acquisition of specific knowledge and skills.

To illustrate, children from the more disadvantaged backgrounds (those with at least one risk factor) are closing the gaps in basic skills (i.e., recognizing their letters and counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns and comparing the relative size of objects). However, these same children lag further behind their more advantaged classmates when it comes to gaining more sophisticated reading and mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., recognizing words by sight or solving simple addition and subtraction problems). In fact, the gap has widened. The same basic patterns we see when we consider cumulative family-risk factors are present when we consider other child characteristics, such as race/ethnicity.

Furthermore, to illustrate, we see some evidence of differential gain in the frequency with which children demonstrate specific social skills. According to their teachers, younger children are more likely to acquire the skill of paying attention than their older counterparts during the kindergarten year.

As children are completing kindergarten and preparing for first grade, almost all (94 percent) children know their letters, and 72 percent understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words, while 52 percent understand the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words. In fact, 13 percent demonstrate a proficient understanding of words by sight and 4 percent, words in context (figure C). In mathematics, 99 percent of children recognize their numbers and basic shapes, and the majority (87 percent) demonstrate understanding of dimensional relationships among objects (relative size). Just over half (56 percent) of children demonstrate an understanding of the mathematical concept ordinality. Moreover, 18

percent show they can add and subtract, and 2 percent are successfully performing multiplication and division (figure D).

Summary

Young children need knowledge and new experiences to develop and thrive. Schools offer a plethora of learning and development opportunities for children. Consequently, it is not surprising that across the kindergarten year children are rapidly acquiring the knowledge and skills integral to succeed in school and life.

This report presents a simple picture of the gains children make across the kindergarten year. The ECLS-K will follow these children through the fifth grade. We will be able to track children's performance and the differences in their performance, not only by child and family characteristics but also by teacher and school characteristics. This report represents only the beginning of understanding the role of the kindergarten year in children's development. Future analyses, based on the information from the ECLS-K, will help us understand the role of such things as child care, home educational environment, teachers' instructional practices, class size and the general climate, and facilities and safety of the schools.

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The Kindergarten Year

The kindergarten year marks a period of rapid change in the ways children think about themselves and the world around them (Bredekamp and Copple 1997; Sameroff and McDonough 1994). This change is influenced by both developmental factors (e.g., age, maturation) and environmental factors (e.g., schooling, home educational activities, family resources). Across this first year of schooling, children will acquire the knowledge and skills that will prove integral to their future success in school and in life.

Children enter school demonstrating a vast array of knowledge and skills, with some children further along than others (West et al. 2000). The kindergarten year serves multiple purposes and is geared toward the development of both cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills (Seefeldt 1990). And, depending on the child, knowledge and skills develop in different areas and at different rates across this year of school.

Classically, kindergarten has represented a place where children are given the opportunity to explore their world through play. Over the last 100 years, this idea has been refined to stress the importance of opportunity for active engagement and exploration in real-world settings (Dewey 1976, 1944; Roopnarine and Johnson 1993; Seefeldt and Barbour 1994). In the United States, kindergarten took root as an agent for change to help enrich the lives of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, with education seen as an important tool for social reform (Roopnarine and Johnson 1993; Seefeldt and Barbour 1994). Early childhood education continues today to be seen as an important influence on young children's development and learning, and most children regardless of their backgrounds attend kindergarten programs.

The original purpose of kindergarten—to “support children's social and emotional adjustment to group learning”—has been expanded to include support for children's cognitive development and preparation for the academic instruction to come (Bredekamp and Copple 1997, p. 142). While the cognitive benefits seem apparent, the effect of kindergarten on socioemotional development is less clear. Though historically the role of kindergarten was focused on socialization, a majority of children today have experience in early care and group settings prior to entering kindergarten (Bredekamp and Copple 1997; West et al. 2000;

West et al. 1992). Consequently, the role of kindergarten may be evolving toward a more cognitive purpose.

Over the years, research on our nation's children suggests that, by late elementary school, children are demonstrating differences in their knowledge and skills by characteristics such as socioeconomic status, level of maternal education, and race/ethnicity (Donahue et al. 1999; Reese et al. 1997). We are now beginning to document that some of these differences exist as children are just entering kindergarten (West et al. 2000).

To enrich the picture of children's first experience in formal education—the kindergarten year—we need to understand the knowledge and skills children possess as they enter kindergarten and we need to gain insight into how children's knowledge and skills develop across the kindergarten year. This report attempts to answer two basic sets of questions about children's knowledge and skill acquisition during the kindergarten year.

1. What gains are children making from the fall of their kindergarten year to the spring of their kindergarten year in their reading and mathematics knowledge and skills? Do these gains differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? As children are exiting kindergarten and preparing for first grade, how do their knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, family-risk factors)?
2. What gains are children making in specific knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing letters, recognizing numbers, paying attention)? Do children's gains in specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? At the end of their kindergarten year when children are preparing for first grade, do their specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, mother's education)?

To address the first set of questions, the change from the fall of kindergarten to the spring of kindergarten in children's reading and mathematics scale scores will be examined.² These

² The calculation of the reading and mathematics scale scores is described in the *Methodology and Technical Notes*.

scores reflect children's overall performance in these domains. The possibility that specific groups of children might demonstrate different rates of gain (e.g., children at risk for later school difficulty might not be acquiring reading knowledge and skills at the same rate as children not at risk for later school difficulty) will also be explored.

To address the second set of questions, specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills will be examined, and whether certain groups of children acquire specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills at different rates will be explored (e.g., do children's rates of acquiring the reading skill of sight-word recognition vary by the level of their mother's education?).

When group differences are discussed, children's knowledge and skills are examined by a common set of child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics. Children's knowledge and skills are examined in terms of children's sex, their age when they enter school, and their race/ethnicity. Characteristics of the family consist of the educational level of children's mothers and a composite index of family risks, which is comprised of children having a non-English primary language in the home, children living in a single-parent family, children's mothers having less than a high school education, and children's families having received welfare assistance (i.e., Aid to Families with Dependent Children). Consequently, the risk index ranges from 0 risks to 4. In this report, we collapsed the index into 3 categories, 0 risks, 1 risk, and 2 or more risks. The index provides information on the potential related effects when these risks exist in concert. Finally, children's knowledge and skills are explored by whether the children are enrolled in full- versus part-day kindergarten programs and in public versus private kindergarten programs. The characteristics examined in this report are likely to be highly interrelated. For example, the number of first-time kindergartners with different numbers of family risk factors varies by race/ethnicity. About 72 percent of Hispanic and black children come from families with one or more risk factors, as compared with 61 percent of Asian children, and 29 percent of white children (Zill and West 2000). While acknowledging this, this report looks at each characteristic separately when describing the children's knowledge and skills.

Organization of Report

The remainder of this report is organized into four sections. The findings are presented in two sections followed by a summary, and a methodology and technical notes section. The first findings' section pertains to the overall gains children make during the kindergarten year in reading and mathematics. Findings in this section are based on children's overall reading and mathematics scale scores. The second section of findings describes the extent to which children acquire specific reading and mathematics knowledge and skills during the kindergarten year. This section also includes information about children's acquisition of various social skills over the school year. In this section, findings are reported in terms of the probabilities that children demonstrate specific reading and mathematics proficiencies, and the percent of children who demonstrate specific social skills. Each of the two sections on findings presents information in three basic areas. First, each section begins with a description of the gains children make from fall of kindergarten to spring of kindergarten. Second, differences in the gains children make are examined for different groups of children defined by a set of child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics. Third, differences in children's status at the spring of kindergarten or as they are about to enter first grade are examined for these same groups of children. Comparisons made in the text were tested for statistical significance to ensure that the differences are larger than might be expected, due to sampling variation. All differences described are significant at the .05 level.

National Data on Kindergartners in the United States

The findings in this report come from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K).³ The ECLS-K, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), selected a nationally representative sample of kindergartners in the fall of 1998 and is following these children through the end of fifth grade. The full ECLS-K sample is comprised of approximately 22,000 children who attended about 1,000 kindergarten programs during the 1998-99 school year. The children attended

³ Detailed information on the base-year design of the ECLS-K is presented in the *ECLS-K User's Manual* (NCES 2001-029). The data set related to this report may be obtained through NCES upon request (e-mail: ECLS@ed.gov).

both public (85 percent) and private (15 percent) kindergartens that offered full day (55 percent) and part day (45 percent) kindergarten programs. All kindergarten children within the sampled schools were eligible for the sampling process, including language minority and special education students. The sample includes children from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the fall of 1998, about 95 percent of kindergartners were entering school for the first time. This report focuses on these first-time kindergartners.⁴ When information on children's cognitive knowledge and skills is presented, this report focuses on the children in the sample who received the cognitive assessment in English in both the fall and the spring of their kindergarten year.⁵

This report includes information that was captured through direct one-on-one child assessments, parent interviews, and teacher questionnaires administered in the fall and the spring of the children's kindergarten year. The *Methodology and Technical Notes* section provides more detail on the instrumentation and operations.

Question 1: Gain, Differences in Gain, and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Knowledge and Skills

During the early elementary school years, children are rapidly acquiring both cognitive and social knowledge and skills (Bredenkamp and Copple 1997; Sameroff and McDonough 1994). In this section, gain in children's reading and mathematics knowledge and skills will be addressed. The ECLS-K directly assessed children's cognitive skills with a reading and mathematics battery.⁶ The reading assessment captured information on children's basic literacy skills, such as understanding the directionality of print, recognizing letters, identifying sounds, word reading, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The mathematics

⁴ See table 1 for the sample demographics.

⁵ Approximately 30 percent of Hispanic children and 19 percent of Asian children were not assessed in English and are not included in the estimates related to cognitive knowledge and skills. The Hispanic children who were proficient in Spanish were assessed in Spanish (for details see *Methodology and Technical Notes, Constructs, and Variables Used in Analysis*). The Hispanic and Asian children not assessed in English are included in the estimates related to noncognitive knowledge and skills. Due to specific instructions listed in the child's school record about one-half percent of children were excluded from the cognitive assessment based on a disability.

⁶ In addition to reading and mathematics, the ECLS-K also assessed children's general knowledge. These data are not included in this report.

assessment measured children's conceptual understanding of numbers, shapes, patterns, mathematical operations, and processes for problem solving.

To address children's social knowledge and skills, teachers were asked to assess individual behaviors exhibited by the children. For this report, these teacher-rated items were not scaled. Instead, children's individual behaviors will be reported on in the next section, where developmental gain in relation to specific knowledge and skills is addressed.

To understand how children's reading and mathematics knowledge and skills are changing across the kindergarten year, their overall gains in their knowledge and skills will be described. Next, differences in these gains by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics will be explored. And finally, information about their status and the differences in their status in the spring of their kindergarten year, as they are preparing for first grade, will be presented.

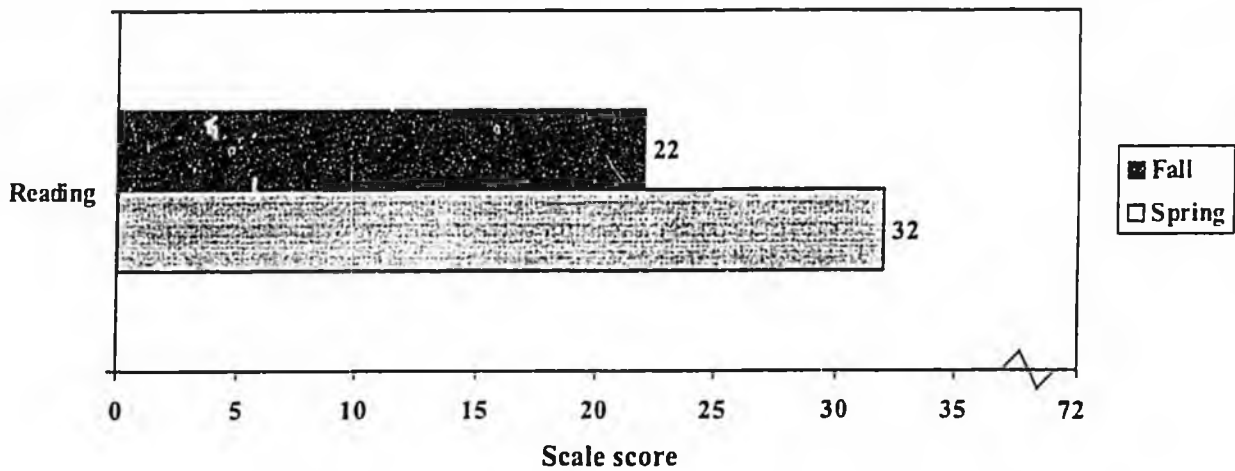
Gain in Knowledge and Skills from Fall to Spring

As their kindergarten year comes to a close, children demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than they demonstrated as they entered school for the first time (figures 1 & 2, table 2).⁷ Children's reading scale scores increased by 10 points from the fall to the spring. Consequently, the gain from fall to spring is about one standard deviation (an appreciable increase). Children's mathematics scores increased by eight points from the fall to the spring. Thus, children's mathematics knowledge and skills increased about one standard deviation during the kindergarten year.⁸

⁷ The reading scale ranged from 0-72, with fall scores ranging from 10-70 and spring 10-71. The math scale ranged from 0-64, with fall scores ranging from 6-60 and spring scores 7-60.

⁸ A standard deviation provides information on the spread of the distribution of scores. In a normal distribution, approximately 68 percent of scores fall within plus or minus one standard deviation of the mean, and approximately 95 percent fall within plus or minus two standard deviations of the mean. The means and standard deviations for children's overall reading and mathematics performance in this report are as follows—Mean (standard deviation): fall reading—22 (8), fall mathematics—20 (7), spring reading—32 (10), spring mathematics—28 (9), change in reading—10 (6), and change in mathematics—8 (5).

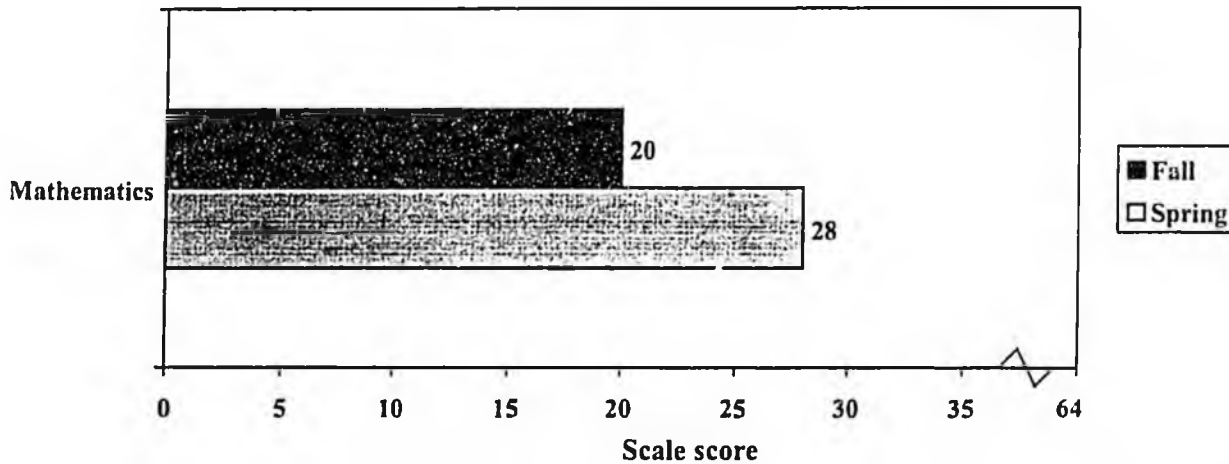
Figure 1.—First-time kindergartners' mean reading scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure 2.—First-time kindergartners' mean mathematics scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.

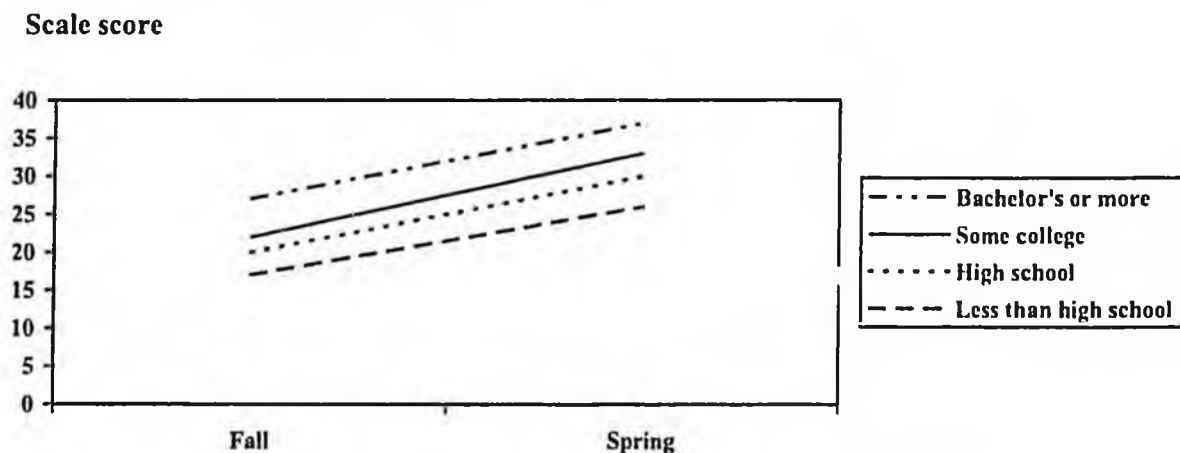
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Differences in Gain of Children's Knowledge and Skills by Child, Family and Kindergarten Program Characteristics

Children gain reading and mathematics knowledge and skills during the kindergarten year; and, for the most part, these gains do not differ markedly by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (table 2). For example, there is not more than a two-point difference in the gains children demonstrate in reading and mathematics by mother's education (figure 3).

This absence of a substantial differential gain in children's general reading and mathematics knowledge and skills is seen again when we consider other characteristics of children, their families, and their kindergarten programs, such as children's age as they enter school and family risks for later school difficulty. The same is true when we look at school type and kindergarten program type. Thus, the differences we see in the fall have not diminished over the school year. However, as we will see in the next section, when we consider the specific knowledge and skills children are acquiring (e.g., letter recognition, addition and subtraction, making friends, paying attention), children are developing particular cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills at different rates.

Figure 3.—First-time kindergartners' reading mean scale scores, by mother's education: Fall 1998 and Spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Differences in Children's Knowledge and Skills by Child, Family and Kindergarten

Program Characteristics: Spring of Kindergarten

As children are just beginning school, their knowledge and skills already differ (West et al. 2000; Zill and West 2000). This begs the question—at the end of their kindergarten year as they are preparing to enter first grade, do children's knowledge and skills still differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? In other words, as children enter school for the first time, their reading and mathematics knowledge and skills differ by their age at entry, the level of their mother's education, their race/ethnicity, and risk factors associated with school success, such as primary language in the home or living in a single-parent household. Do we find these same differences after a year of formal schooling?

Age: Since kindergarten attendance is not mandatory in all states, parents have some flexibility in deciding when to enroll their children. Most states have age of entry guidelines that require children to have turned age 5 sometime between August 31 and January 1. Therefore, the majority of children entering kindergarten in the fall of 1998 were born between September 1992 and December 1993 (West et al. 2000). When considering the variation in children's knowledge and skills by their age, we focus our comparisons on children born between September 1992 through December 1993 (i.e., the "mainstream" ages). We present some limited information on children who are slightly older than the mainstream—those born January through August of 1992. These children represent a unique and diverse group (e.g., those whose parents may have delayed them to provide them with an advantage or due to developmental concerns, or whose schools may have a kindergarten readiness requirement), so we do not focus on them in our analysis.

In the spring of their kindergarten year, older children possess higher reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than their younger counterparts⁹ (table 2). Thus, the slight advantage older children possessed as they entered kindergarten persists across the school year.

⁹ Reaney, West, and Denton (2000) found that children's age at school entry accounts for a minimal amount of variance in their beginning knowledge and skills (2–3 percent), once factors such as SES and mother's education are taken into consideration.

Maternal Education: Similar to when they entered kindergarten, at the end of their kindergarten year, children's reading and mathematics knowledge and skills differ by the level of their mother's education. Kindergartners whose mothers have higher levels of education demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than kindergartners whose mothers have less education (table 2).

Race/Ethnicity: Children who are white and Asian demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than their black and Hispanic classmates (table 2). Again, this is a pattern we observed at the start of the kindergarten year.

Risk: When considering family risks for later school difficulty (e.g., low maternal education, non-English primary language in the home), it is important to understand how these factors behave cumulatively. Consequently, we consider the impact of multiple risks on children's knowledge and skills. To do this, we constructed an index which consists of the following risk factors: mother's education less than high school, family utilization of AFDC and/or food stamps, single-parent family, and primary home language other than English. The index is scored zero, one or two or more—meaning the presence of none of the risk factors, the presence of one of the risk factors, or the presence of two or more of the risk factors.

The fewer the risk factors present, the better kindergartners seem to be doing in reading and mathematics. At the end of the kindergarten year, just as they did at the beginning, children who have fewer risk factors demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than those with two or more risk factors (table 2).

School Type and Kindergarten Program Type: The type of school children attend and the type of kindergarten program in which children are enrolled have been associated with their academic school performance. Consequently, we explore children's knowledge and skills by the type of school (i.e., public or private) and the type of kindergarten program they attend (i.e., full day or part day). In the spring, children who attend private kindergartens demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills. The differences by school type should be interpreted with caution, for children demonstrate different levels of knowledge and skills by their school type at the beginning of their kindergarten year (i.e.,

when schools have not had the opportunity to have an effect on children's performance) (table 2). In terms of kindergarten program type (i.e., all day or part day), there is little meaningful difference in the level of children's end-of-year reading and mathematics knowledge and skills.

Question 2: Gain, Differences in Gain, and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Specific Knowledge and Skills

Previously, we described the overall gains children experience across the kindergarten year. Seemingly, all children are gaining knowledge and skills at similar rates; however, a different picture emerges when we explore the specific areas in which children are gaining knowledge and skills. When we do this, we find specific groups of children are gaining certain knowledge and skills at different rates. To illustrate this, we look at how children's specific knowledge and skills change from the fall of kindergarten to the spring of kindergarten. Further, we explore whether the gains in children's specific knowledge and skills vary by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., those at risk for later school difficulty). Finally, we examine whether the differences in children's specific knowledge and skills by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., children's age, their mother's education, their race/ethnicity) persist across the kindergarten year (for more information on such differences at school entry, see West et al. 2000).

Gain in Specific Knowledge and Skills from Fall to Spring

Cognitive Knowledge and Skills

In addition to the reading and mathematics scale scores, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on specific proficiencies. Additional information on the cognitive assessment battery is provided in the *Methodology and Technical Notes* section.

In the reading domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on:

- letter recognition;
- understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words;
- understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words;

- sight-word recognition; and
- understanding of words in context.

In the mathematics domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on:

- recognizing single-digit numbers and basic shapes;
- counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns, and comparing the relative size (dimensional relationship) of objects;
- recognizing two-digit numbers, identifying the next number in a sequence, and identifying the ordinal position of an object;
- performing simple addition and subtraction; and
- performing basic multiplication and division.

For simplicity, we will refer to these sets of mathematical skills by the most sophisticated skill in the set (i.e., number and shape, relative size, ordinality, add/subtract, multiply/divide). The addition, subtraction, multiplication and division items are presented in the form of word problems with picture support and in numerical statements.

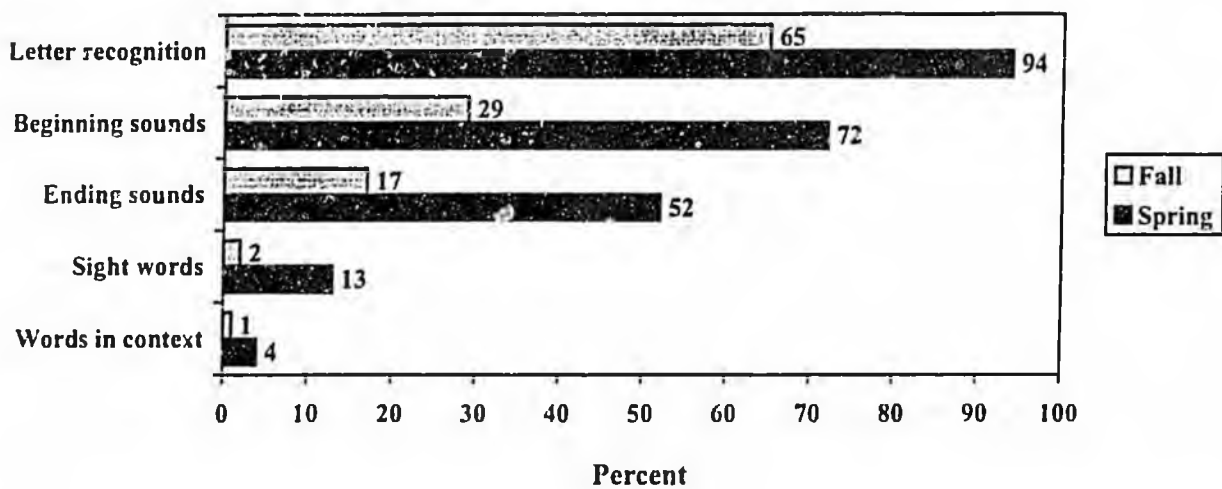
In terms of specific knowledge and skills in reading, at kindergarten entry, two-thirds of children (65 percent) can recognize their letters and some understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning and ending of words (29 percent and 17 percent, respectively).¹⁰ When we look at these skills at the end of kindergarten, the picture is very different. As they are finishing kindergarten, nearly all first-time kindergartners are recognizing their letters (94 percent), and nearly three out of four children (72 percent) understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning and about half (52 percent) understand the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words (figure 4, table 3).

We also see that children are gaining in terms of recognizing words and understanding words in context. At kindergarten entry, very few children recognize words by sight (2 percent) and understand words in context (1 percent). These numbers increase by the end of kindergarten.

¹⁰ The estimates in this report do not exactly match those found in *America's Kindergartners* (a previous report based on the same data). This report utilizes both fall and spring child assessment scores, therefore a different weight was used in making the estimates. The weight in this report is based on children with both fall and spring assessment scores, whereas the weight used in *America's Kindergartners* was tailored to children with only fall assessment scores. The weight in this report is stricter in its response requirements and utilizes a slightly smaller sample of children.

As children are completing the first year of school, 13 percent recognize words by sight and 4 percent understand words in context (figure 4, table 3).

Figure 4.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific reading knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



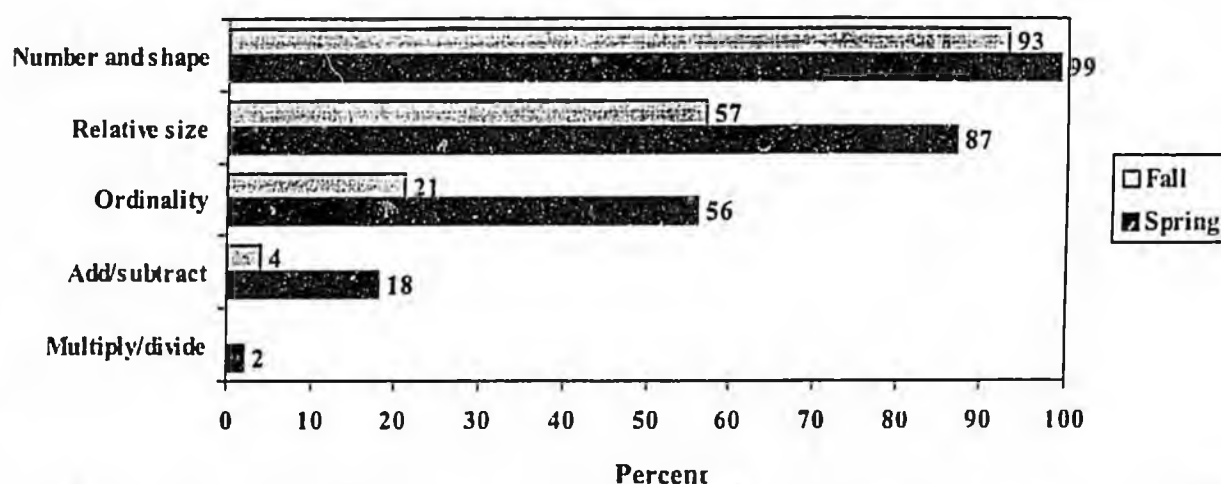
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Regarding children’s mathematical knowledge and skills, when children enter kindergarten for the first time, most are familiar with basic numbers and shapes (93 percent). By the end of kindergarten, nearly all children can demonstrate these skills (99 percent). In terms of the skills represented by relative size, 57 percent of children demonstrate these skills at the beginning of kindergarten, increasing to 87 percent of children at the end of kindergarten. The number of children able to demonstrate the skills represented by ordinality more than doubles from fall (21 percent) to spring (56 percent) (figure 5, table 4).

Though few children (4 percent) demonstrate the ability to solve simple addition and subtraction problems at the beginning of kindergarten, almost five times as many demonstrate these skills at the end of kindergarten (18 percent). A similar pattern is found for multiplication and division—few (less than 1 percent) demonstrate an understanding of

multiplication and division at the beginning of kindergarten and the number approximately doubles by the end of kindergarten (2 percent) (figure 5, table 4). We may not expect kindergarten children to have these higher mathematical knowledge and skills, but some kindergarten children demonstrate these higher level mathematical knowledge and skills.

Figure 5.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific mathematics knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Noncognitive Knowledge and Skills

Along with their cognitive knowledge and skills, children's social skills and approaches to learning are important for school success (Kagan et al. 1995; Meisels et al. 1996). The ECLS-K assesses children's social skills and approaches to learning by asking their teachers to rate the frequency with which children exhibited certain behaviors, such as making friends, arguing with others and persisting at tasks. Three behaviors exemplify children's prosocial interactions: accepting peer ideas, making friends, and comforting others. Three behaviors exemplify children's problem behaviors: arguing with others, fighting with others, and getting angry easily. Finally, three behaviors capture how children approach learning: persistence at tasks, eagerness to learn, and paying attention in class. Teachers were asked to

rate these behaviors as occurring *never*, *sometimes*, *often*, or *very often*. In this report, we collapse the categories into *never/sometimes* or *often/very often*.

Similar to children's cognitive knowledge and skills, we see change in children's social skills and in how they approach learning (tables 5, 6, and 7). According to their teachers,¹¹ in the spring of their kindergarten year, a majority of children often or very often accept peer ideas in cooperative activities (77 percent), form friendships easily (82 percent) and comfort others (62 percent). This is a slight increase from when these same children entered kindergarten, when 74 percent often or very often accepted peer ideas in cooperative activities, 77 percent formed friendships easily, and 52 percent comforted others (table 5). Similar to the fall, in the spring of kindergarten relatively few children show problem behaviors often or very often. For example, in the spring, teachers reported 13 percent of children often or very often argue with others, 8 percent fight with others, and 9 percent get angry easily (table 6). In terms of how children approach learning, across the kindergarten year, we see slight increases in how often they persist at tasks (fall, 71 percent—spring, 75 percent), demonstrate an eagerness to learn (fall, 75 percent—spring, 79 percent) and pay attention well (fall, 66 percent—spring, 70 percent) (table 7).

Summary: Gain in Specific Knowledge and Skills, Fall to Spring

Across the kindergarten year, children are gaining specific reading and mathematics knowledge and skills. By the end of their kindergarten year, nearly all children recognize their letters, their numbers and their shapes. The percent of children who can recognize words by sight and demonstrate an understanding of words in context, though still relatively low, increased across the kindergarten year. And the numbers of children adding and subtracting also increased across the kindergarten year.

We see less dramatic changes in children's social skills and approaches to learning across the kindergarten year, though we do see that for the most part, children are gaining in prosocial interaction and in their approaches to learning. It should be noted that the gains children make in the cognitive area cannot truly be compared to the gains children make in the social

¹¹ In most cases, the same teacher rated the child at both points in time. Therefore, gains in these areas should be interpreted with this in mind.

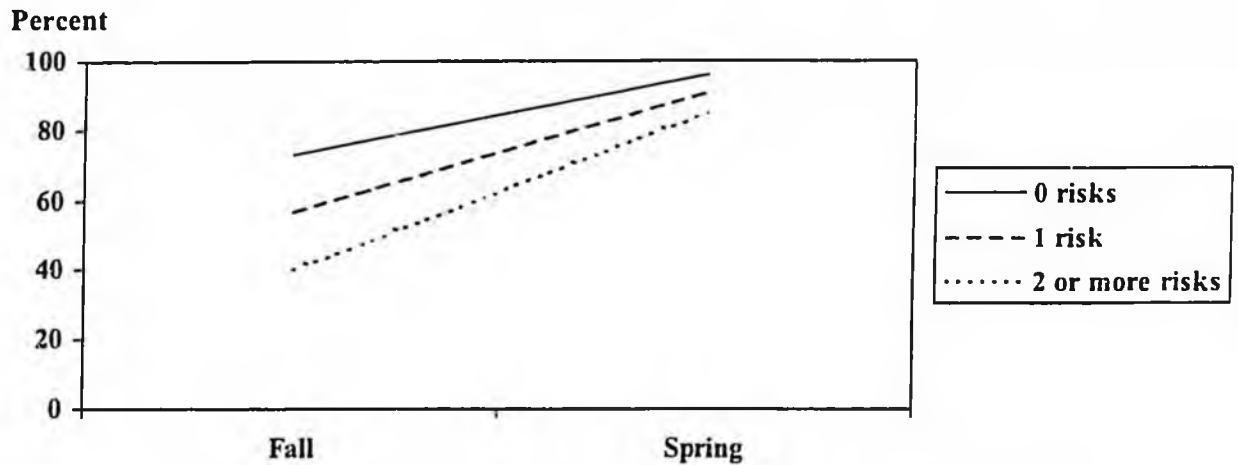
areas. For the cognitive assessment, we were able to administer a more comprehensive direct assessment. In the social area, for these very young children, we relied on the teacher's report. Therefore, the less dramatic changes we report in social skills and approaches to learning may be, in part, attributed to how well we are able to measure these different developmental domains.

Differences in the Gain of Children's Specific Knowledge and Skills by Child, Family, and Kindergarten Program Characteristics

When we examined children's overall gains in reading and mathematics knowledge and skills, as measured by their reading and mathematics scale scores, by child, family and kindergarten program characteristics, we found little evidence of differential gains from fall to spring. Based on those findings, the conclusion might be that from fall to spring of kindergarten all children are acquiring knowledge and skills at approximately the same rate and that they are learning the same things. However, this is not completely accurate. We see a very different picture when we look at children's acquisition of specific knowledge and skills.

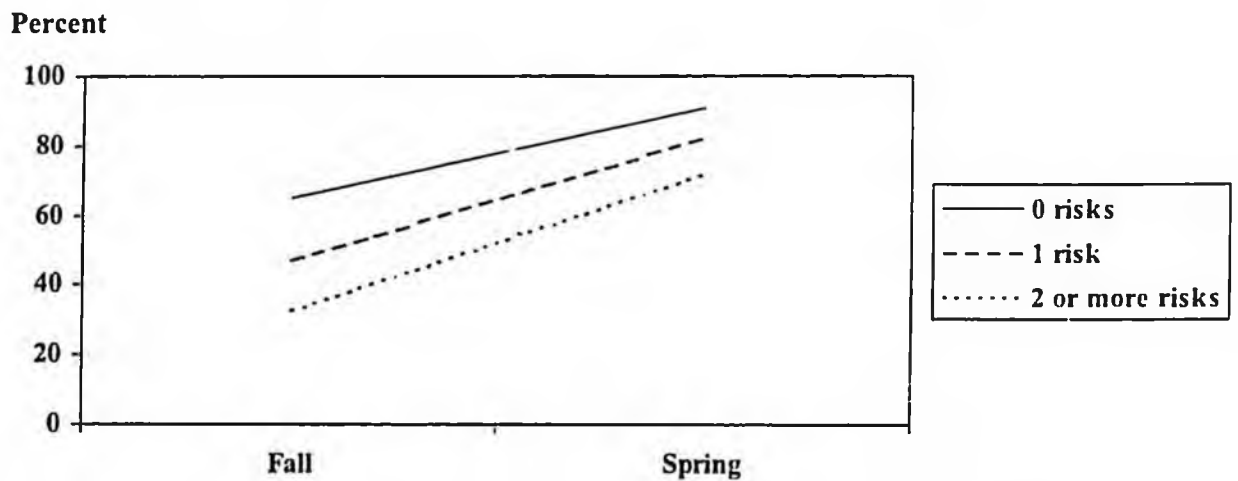
To illustrate, children from the more disadvantaged backgrounds (those with at least one risk factor) are closing the gaps in basic skills (i.e., recognizing their letters and counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns, and comparing the relative size of objects) (figures 6 and 7). However, these same children lag further behind their more advantaged classmates when it comes to gaining more sophisticated reading and mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., recognizing words by sight or solving simple addition and subtraction problems) (figures 8 and 9). In fact, the gap has widened.

Figure 6.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners recognizing their letters, by number of risk factors: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



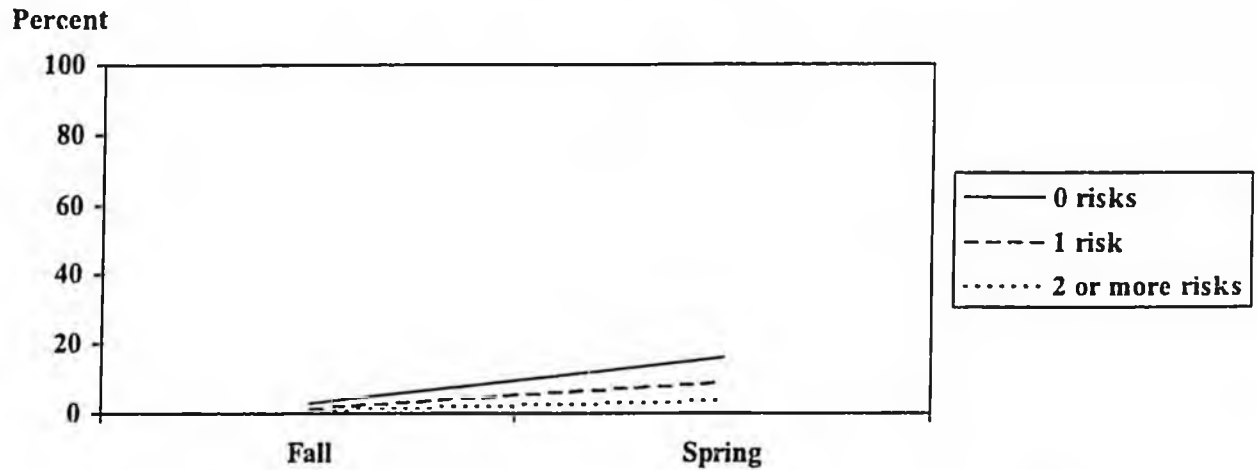
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure 7.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns and comparing the relative size of objects, by number of risk factors: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



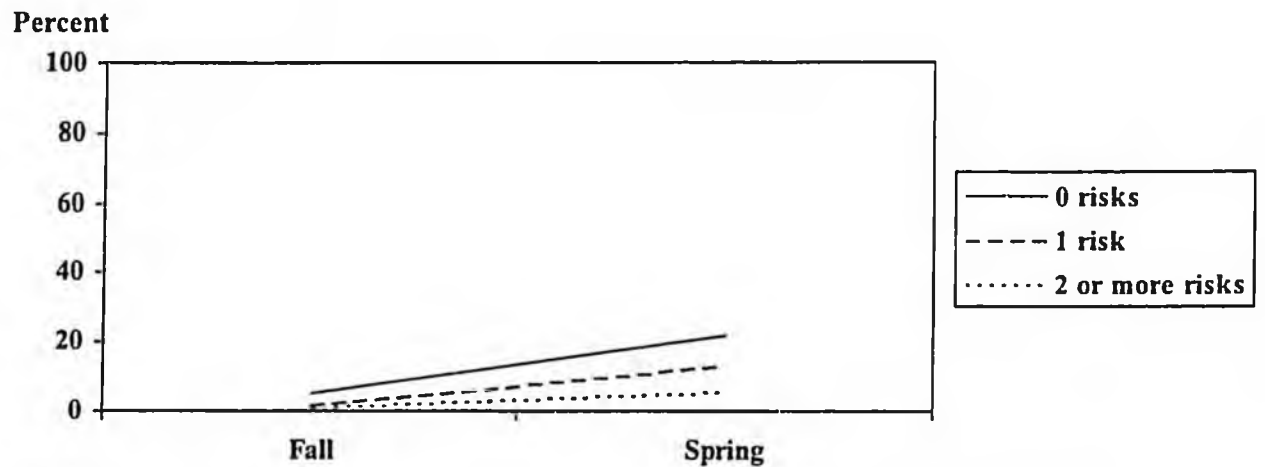
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure 8.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners recognizing words by sight, by number of risk factors: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure 9.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners adding and subtracting, by number of risk factors: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

The same basic patterns we see when we consider cumulative family risk factors are present when we consider other child characteristics, such as race/ethnicity (tables 3 and 4). For example, during the kindergarten year, black and Hispanic children closed the gap with white and Asian children in basic reading and mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., recognizing letters and relative size). Yet, they are not acquiring the more advanced knowledge and skills (i.e., sight words and addition) at the same rate as their white and Asian counterparts.

Furthermore, to illustrate, we see some evidence of differential gain in the frequency with which children demonstrate specific social skills (tables 5, 6, and 7). According to their teachers, younger children are more likely to acquire the skill of paying attention than their older counterparts during the kindergarten year (table 7).

*Differences in Children's Specific Knowledge and Skills by Child, Family, and
Kindergarten Program Characteristics: Spring of Kindergarten*

Kindergartners acquire specific knowledge and skills across the school year. As children enter school, differences exist in their knowledge and skills by child and family characteristics (West et al. 2000). We see similar differences as children are finishing kindergarten and preparing for first grade (tables 3 and 4).

Age:¹² In the spring of their kindergarten year, older children possess higher specific reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than their younger counterparts. For example, older first-time kindergartners are more likely to demonstrate emergent literacy skills and knowledge (i.e., recognizing their letters and understanding the letter-sound relationship at the beginning and ending of words) than younger kindergartners (table 3). Older kindergartners are also more likely than younger kindergartners to be reading (i.e., recognizing words by sight and understanding words in context) (table 3).

We see a similar pattern in children's specific mathematics knowledge and skills. Almost all kindergartners know their basic numbers and shapes; however, older kindergartners are more

¹² Similar to the discussion on children's reading and mathematics knowledge and skills, when we make comparisons by age, we are comparing the children born in the mainstream age groups, those born between September 1992 and December 1993.

likely than younger kindergartners to demonstrate other early mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., relative size; ordinality) (table 4). Older kindergartners are also more likely to do simple addition and subtraction problems and even to do simple multiplication and division problems (table 4).

Overall, the frequency with which children, in the spring of their kindergarten year, engage in prosocial behaviors, such as accepting peer ideas, making friends and comforting others, does not differ by their age. However, we see a difference between the older kindergartners (those just turning 6 as they enter school—born September through December 1992) and the youngest kindergartners (those just turning 5 as they enter school—born September through December 1993). How children approach learning differs by their age. Older kindergartners are more likely to persist at tasks, seem more eager to learn and to pay attention than their younger counterparts (table 7).

Maternal Education: Similar to when they entered kindergarten, at the end of their kindergarten year children's specific reading and mathematics knowledge and skills differ by the level of their mother's education. Children whose mothers have higher levels of education, do better in specific reading and mathematics areas than children whose mothers have less education. For instance children whose mothers have higher levels of education are more likely to demonstrate emergent literacy knowledge and skills than children whose mothers have less education (table 3). Moreover, children whose mothers have higher levels of education are more likely than children whose mothers have less education to be reading (i.e., recognizing words by sight and understanding words in context) (table 3). The same basic pattern is evident in mathematics. Children whose mothers have higher levels of education are more likely to demonstrate mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., relative size, ordinality, addition/subtraction, and multiplication/division) than children whose mothers have less education (table 4).

How often children exhibit prosocial interactions and problem behaviors at the end of their kindergarten year differs by the level of their mother's education. Children whose mothers have higher levels of education are more likely to often or very often accept peer ideas in play, make friends, and comfort others (table 5). In terms of their problem behaviors,

children whose mothers have less education are more likely to argue with others, fight with others, and get angry easily than children whose mothers have more education (table 6). How children approach learning also differs by their mother's education. Children with mothers who have more education are more likely to persist at tasks, seem eager to learn, and pay attention than children whose mothers have less education (table 7).

Race/ethnicity: Children's reading and mathematics knowledge and skills differ by their race/ethnicity. White and Asian children tend to have higher specific reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than their black and Hispanic classmates. White and Asian children are generally more likely to demonstrate reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than black and Hispanic children (tables 3 and 4).

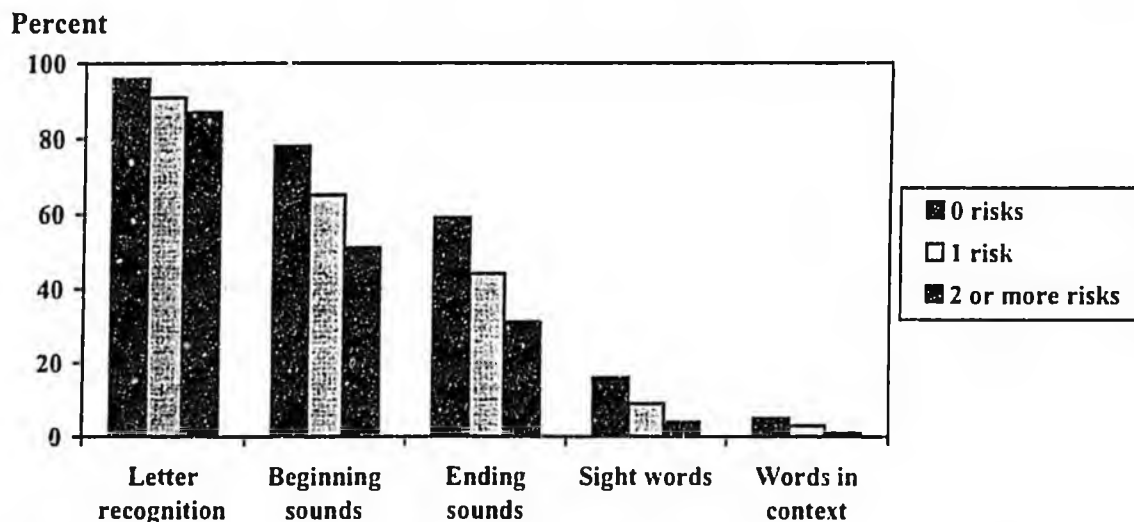
According to their teachers, in the spring of their kindergarten year, children's social skills and how they approach learning differs by their race/ethnicity.¹³ White and Asian children are more likely to accept peer ideas and form friendships than black children (table 5). Black children are more likely to get angry easily, argue with others, and fight with others than white, Asian and Hispanic children (table 6). Also according to their teachers, Asian children are the most likely to persist at tasks, seem eager to learn, and pay attention and white children are more likely to exhibit these behaviors than black or Hispanic children (table 7).

Risk: To explore children's specific knowledge and skills by family risk factors, we utilize the risk factor index (discussed earlier in this report). At the end of the kindergarten year, children who have fewer risk factors are doing better than children with more risk factors in each of the specific areas of reading and mathematics measured in the ECLS-K (tables 3 and 4). This is true in terms of kindergartners' specific reading (figure 10) and mathematics (figure 11) knowledge and skills. For example, children who have fewer risks are more likely than children with more risks to recognize their letters and understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning and ending of words. A similar pattern is evident in terms of children's ability to understand the mathematical concepts of relative size and ordinality.

¹³ Information on children's social skills and how they approach learning is provided by their teachers. Consequently, there may be an interaction between the teacher's race/ethnicity and the race/ethnicity of the child that is not accounted for in this analysis. For example, teachers whose race/ethnicity matches that of the children may rate children differently from teachers whose race/ethnicity is different from other children.

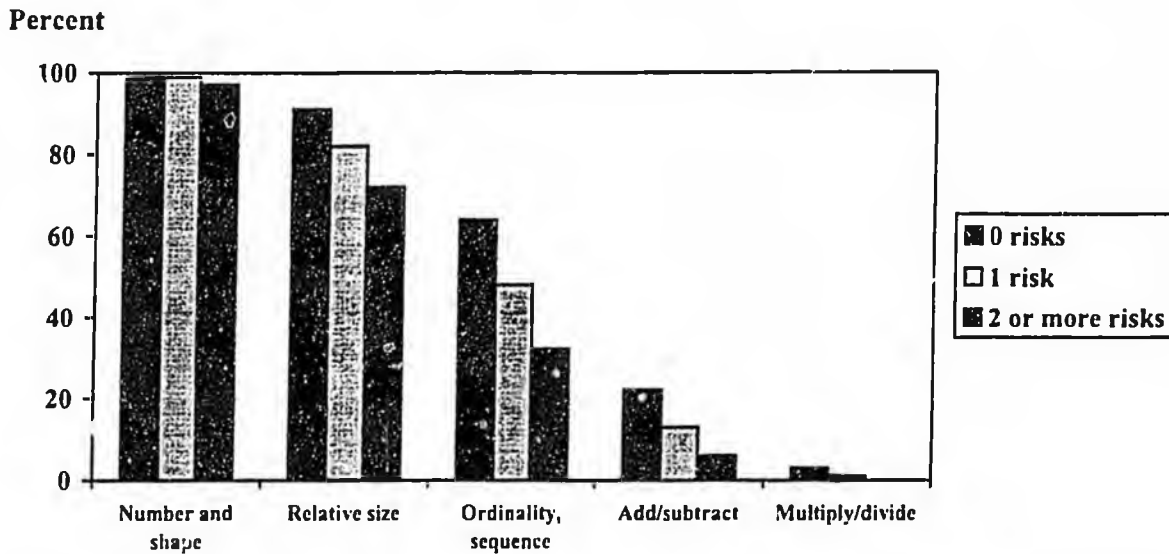
In the spring, teachers report that kindergartners with fewer risk factors are more likely to often or very often accept peer ideas and form friendships, and less likely to argue with others, fight with others, and get angry easily than children with more risk factors (tables 5 and 6). How children approach learning is also associated with the number of family risk factors. According to their teachers, children with fewer risk factors are more likely to persist at tasks, to seem eager to learn, and to pay attention well than children with more risk factors (table 7).

Figure 10.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific reading knowledge and skills, by number of family risk factors: Spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure 11.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific mathematics knowledge and skills, by number of family risk factors: Spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

School Type and Kindergarten Program Type: In the spring of their kindergarten year, children who attend private kindergartens are more likely to demonstrate, in specific areas, the various reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than children in public school kindergartens.¹⁴ However, any differences in the spring of kindergarten in children's specific cognitive knowledge and skills by school type need to be interpreted with caution. These differences also exist in the fall, as children are entering kindergarten for the first time (tables 3 and 4). In the spring of their kindergarten year, there are no differences by kindergarten program type in children's basic reading knowledge and skills (i.e., letter recognition, beginning sounds) and no difference in any of their specific mathematics knowledge and skills. Children in full-day programs are more likely to understand the letter-sound relationship at the end of words, recognize words by sight, and understand words in

¹⁴ Differences in school type may reflect, in part, differences in socioeconomic status of the families whose children attend public and private schools (Zill & West forthcoming).

context than children in part-day kindergartens (table 3).

Though no clear pattern emerges in children's prosocial behaviors (e.g., accepting peer ideas and forming friendships) by their school type or their program type, there are some interesting differences when we examine children's problem behaviors by kindergarten program type (i.e., how often they argue with others and fight with others) (tables 5 and 6). According to their teachers, children in full-day kindergarten programs are more likely than children in part-day programs to exhibit these problem behaviors. Once again, caution should be used in interpreting differences, as the same differences are observed at kindergarten entry. In terms of kindergarten program type, it is interesting to note that children in full-day programs may demonstrate slightly higher cognitive knowledge and skills, but they also are more likely to exhibit a higher frequency of some problem behaviors.

Summary

Young children need knowledge and new experiences to develop and thrive. Schools offer a plethora of learning and development opportunities for children. Consequently, it is not surprising that across the kindergarten year, children are rapidly acquiring the knowledge and skills integral to succeed in school and life.

Across the kindergarten year, children's reading and mathematics scores increase by about a standard deviation. Often, it is difficult to interpret what this type of gain means. Therefore, in this report we provide information on the specific reading and mathematics knowledge and skills children are gaining. For example, we know that as children enter kindergarten for the first time about two-thirds know their letters, while by the end of kindergarten almost all (94 percent) children know their letters. We know that the number of children who understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words more than doubles across the kindergarten year; and the number of children who understand the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words triples. In mathematics, by the end of kindergarten, nearly all children (99 percent) recognize their numbers and basic shapes, and the majority demonstrate understanding of dimensional relationships among objects (relative size). Furthermore, the number of children who demonstrate understanding of the mathematical concept ordinality more than doubles across the kindergarten year; the number of children who demonstrate that they can do basic addition and subtraction increases. We see less dramatic changes in children's social skills and approaches to learning. A large percentage of children exhibit prosocial behaviors and positive approaches to learning as they are ending kindergarten and preparing for first grade.

When we look at which children are demonstrating gains in reading and mathematics knowledge and skills, we find an interesting picture. As children enter kindergarten, they demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and skills. At kindergarten entry, children at risk for later school difficulty (as indicated by the risk-factor index we formed) are less likely to know their letters, understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning and ending of words, know their numbers, demonstrate an understanding of relative size and of ordinality (West et al. 2000). Across the kindergarten year, we see that these same children (those at

risk) are gaining, in terms of basic reading and mathematical knowledge and skills (i.e., letters, relative size), on their more advantaged counterparts—in other words, the gap is closing. However, at-risk children are falling further behind in terms of the more sophisticated reading and mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., recognizing words by sight, addition/subtraction)—in other words, the gap is widening. As a result, by the end of kindergarten, we see many of the same differences in knowledge and skills that we saw at the beginning of the school year. After a year of formal schooling, we still see differences in children's knowledge and skills by child and family characteristics (e.g., children with mothers who have higher levels of education demonstrate higher reading and mathematics knowledge and skills, children with fewer risks for later school difficulty demonstrate higher reading and mathematics knowledge and skills).

This report presents a simple picture of the gains children are making across the kindergarten year. The ECLS-K will follow these children through the fifth grade. We will be able to track children's performance and the differences in their performance, not only by child and family characteristics but also by teacher and school characteristics. This report represents only the beginning of understanding the role of the kindergarten year in children's development. Future analyses, based on the information from the ECLS-K, will help us understand the role of such things as child care, home educational environment, teachers' instructional practices, class size and the general climate, facilities, and safety of the schools.

Methodology and Technical Notes

Survey Methodology

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K), is being conducted by Westat for the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). It is designed to provide detailed information on children's early school experiences. The study began in the fall of the 1998–99 school year. The children participating in the ECLS-K are being followed longitudinally through the fifth grade. Estimates in this report are based on children entering kindergarten for the first time in the fall of 1998.

Sample Design

A nationally representative sample of 22,782 children enrolled in 1,277 kindergarten programs during the 1998–99 school year were sampled to participate in the ECLS-K. The children attended both public and private kindergartens that offered full-day and part-day programs. The sample includes children from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and includes oversamples of Asian children, private kindergartens, and private kindergartners.

Sampling for the ECLS-K involved a dual-frame, multistage sampling design. The first stage of sampling involved the selection of 100 primary sampling units (PSU) from a national sample of PSUs. The PSUs were counties and county groups. Public and private schools were then selected within the PSUs, and children were sampled from the selected schools. Public schools were selected from the Common Core of Data, a public school frame, and private schools were selected from a private school frame developed from the Private School Survey.¹⁵ Approximately 23 kindergartners were selected on average in each of the sampled schools.

¹⁵ During the spring of 1998, Westat identified new schools that were not found on either frame. A sample of these schools was included in the ECLS-K school sample.

Fall kindergarten data were obtained from September to December 1998. Spring kindergarten data were obtained from March to June 1999.

Response Rates

A total of 944 of the 1,277 originally sampled schools participated during the base year of the study. This translates into a weighted response rate of 74 percent for the base year of the study. The school response rate during the spring of the base year (74.2 percent) was higher than during the fall (69.4 percent), due to some of the schools that originally declined to participate changing their minds and participating in the spring. Nearly all (99.4 percent) of the schools that participated in the fall of the base year also participated in the spring.

The child base-year completion rate was 92 percent, i.e., 92 percent of the children were assessed at least once during kindergarten. The parent base-year completion rate was 89 percent (i.e., a parent interview was completed at least once during kindergarten). Thus, the overall base-year response rate for children was 68.1 percent (74 percent x 92 percent) and the base-year response rate for the parent interview was 65.9 percent (74 percent x 89 percent). About 95 percent of the children and 94 percent of the parents who participated in the fall of kindergarten also participated in the spring.

A nonresponse bias analysis was conducted to determine if substantial bias is introduced due to school nonresponse. Five different approaches were used to examine the possibility of bias in the ECLS-K sample. First, weighted and unweighted response rates for schools, children, parents, teachers, and school administrators were examined to find large response rate differences by characteristics of schools (e.g., urbanicity, region, school size, percent minority, and grade range) and children (e.g., sex, age, race/ethnicity). Second, estimates based on the ECLS-K respondents were compared to estimates based on the full sample. The distributions of schools by school type, urbanicity, region, and the distributions of enrollment by kindergarten type (public versus private), race/ethnicity, urbanicity, region and eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch were compared for the responding schools and all the schools on the sampling frame. Third, estimates from the ECLS-K were compared with estimates from other data sources (e.g., Current Population Survey, National Household Education Survey, Survey of Income and Program Participation). Fourth, estimates using the

ECLS-K unadjusted weights were compared with estimates using the ECLS-K weights adjusted for nonresponse. Large differences in the estimates produced with these two different weights would indicate the potential for bias after nonresponse adjustments. Fifth, and last, simulations of nonresponse were conducted. The results of these analyses are summarized in the *ECLS-K User's Manual* and reported in detail in the *ECLS-K Methodology Report*. Findings from these analyses suggest that there is not a bias due to school nonresponse.

Data Reliability

Estimates produced using data from the ECLS-K are subject to two types of error, sampling and nonsampling errors. Nonsampling errors are errors made in the collection and processing of data. Sampling errors occur, because the data are collected from a sample rather than a census of the population. A detailed discussion of these types of errors can be found in *America's Kindergartners* (West et al. 2000).

Standard Errors and Weights

In order to produce national estimates from the ECLS-K data collected during the fall and spring of the 1998-99 school year, the sample data were weighted. Weighting the data adjusts for unequal selection probabilities at the school and child levels and adjusts for school, child, teacher, and parent nonresponse. The first stage of the weighting process assigns weights to the sampled primary sampling units (PSUs) equal to the inverse of the PSU probability of selection.¹⁶ The second stage of the weighting process assigns weights to the schools sampled within PSUs. The base weight for each sampled school is the PSU weight multiplied by the inverse of the probability of selecting the school. The base weights for eligible schools are adjusted for nonresponse. These adjustments are made separately for public and private schools.

The base weight for each child in the sample is the school nonresponse adjusted weight for the school the child attends, multiplied by a post-stratified within-school student weight

¹⁶ The approach used to develop weights for the ECLS-K is described in the *ECLS-K User's Manual* and the *ECLS-K Methodology Report*.

(total number of students in the school, divided by the number of students sampled in the school). The child-parent panel weight (BYCOMW0), which is the weight used to produce the estimates found in this report, is the base child weight adjusted for nonresponse to the parent interview at each round of data collection. Only those cases with completed child assessments in both fall and spring of kindergarten are included in these weighting procedures. Again, these adjustments are made separately for public and private schools.

In addition to properly weighting the responses, special procedures for estimating the statistical significance of the estimates were employed, because the data were collected using a complex sample design. Complex sample designs, like that used in the ECLS-K, result in data that violate the assumptions that are normally required to assess the statistical significance of the results. Frequently, the standard errors of the estimates are larger than would be expected, if the sample was a simple random sample and the observations were independent and identically distributed random variables. WesVarPC was used in this analysis to calculate standard errors.

Replication methods of variance estimation were used to reflect the actual sample design used in the ECLS-K. A form of the jackknife replication method (JK2) using 90 replicates was used to compute approximately unbiased estimates of the standard errors of the estimates in the report. The jackknife methods were used to estimate the precision of the estimates of the reported national percentages and means.

Statistical Procedures

Comparisons made in the text were tested for statistical significance to ensure that the differences are larger than might be expected due to sampling variation. For reference, standard errors for tables 2 and 3 are included in the appendix.

When comparisons in estimates at one point in time (e.g., fall kindergarten) were made between categorical groups (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, school type and program type), *t* statistics were calculated. The formula used to compute the *t* statistic was:

$$t = \text{Est}_1 - \text{Est}_2 / \text{SQRT}[(\text{se}_1)^2 + (\text{se}_2)^2]$$

Where Est_1 and Est_2 are the estimates being compared and se_1 and se_2 are their corresponding standard errors.

When comparing the gains of groups of children on the social rating scale items where frequencies are reported (e.g., change in the frequency with which males persist at tasks versus change in the frequency with which females persist at tasks), the following formula was used:

$$t = (\text{Est}_{11} - \text{Est}_{21}) - (\text{Est}_{12} - \text{Est}_{22}) / \text{SQRT}[(\text{se}_{11}^2 + \text{se}_{21}^2) + (\text{se}_{12}^2 + \text{se}_{22}^2)]$$

Where Est_{11} and Est_{21} are the estimates being compared within a category (e.g., male fall reading and male spring reading) and Est_{12} and Est_{22} are the estimates being compared within the other category (e.g., female fall reading score, female spring reading score). And se_{11} , se_{21} , se_{12} , and se_{22} are their corresponding standard errors.

To guard against errors of inference based on multiple comparisons, the Bonferroni procedure to correct significance tests for multiple contrasts was used in this report. The Bonferroni procedure divides the alpha level for a single t test (e.g., .05) by the number of critical pairwise comparisons, in order to provide a new alpha that adjusts for the number of comparisons being made.

When comparisons with continuous or ordinal independent variables were made (i.e., age at entry, mother's education, and the risk index), regression analysis was used. When the analyses involved continuous dependent variables—all of the cognitive scores—linear regression was used; with dichotomous dependent variables—social skills, problem behaviors, and approaches to learning—logistic regression was used.

Constructs and Variables Used in Analysis

Children's Cognitive Knowledge and Skills

The ECLS-K direct child cognitive assessment was administered using a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI), administered one-on-one with each child. The assessment included two cognitive domains (reading and mathematics). The ECLS-K battery was a two-stage assessment approach, in which the first stage in each domain contained a routing test that determined a child's approximate skills. According to the child's performance on the routing test, the child was administered the appropriate skill level assessment for that domain (the second stage). The reading and mathematics assessments had three skill levels. Children were administered the routing stage and the appropriate skill level stage in the fall of kindergarten, and again in the spring of kindergarten.

To be sensitive to the needs and capabilities of the children in the sample, an English language proficiency screener, called the Oral Language Development Scale (OLDS), was administered if school records indicated that the child's home language was not English. The child had to demonstrate a certain level of English proficiency to be administered the cognitive assessment in English. In terms of first-time kindergartners, about 93 percent were assessed in English in the fall of kindergarten. The 7 percent of children excluded from the English assessment represents 19 percent of the Asian children and 29 percent of the Hispanic children. The cognitive knowledge and skills estimates in this report are based on those first-time kindergartners who were assessed in English in both the fall and the spring of kindergarten, therefore the 7 percent of children who were excluded from the English assessment in the fall of kindergarten were not included. Less than .5 percent of children in the fall and the spring of kindergarten were excluded from the assessment based on a disability.

Scale score. Item Response Theory (IRT) was employed to calculate scores that could be compared regardless of which second stage form a student took. The items in the routing test, plus a core set of items shared among the different second stage forms, made it possible to establish a common scale. IRT uses the pattern of right, wrong, and omitted responses to the items actually administered in a test, and the difficulty, discriminating ability, and "guess-

ability" of each item, to place each student on a continuous ability scale. It is then possible to estimate the score the student would have achieved if all of the items in all of the test forms had been administered. The reliability of the estimates of reading and mathematics, fall and spring scores, are as follows (IRT-based theta): reading = .9, mathematics = .9.

Proficiency Level Probability Scores. Proficiency scores provide a means of distinguishing status or gain in specific skills within a content area from the achievement measured by the IRT scale scores. Clusters of four test questions having similar content and difficulty were included at several points along the score scale of the reading and mathematics tests. A student was assumed to have mastered a particular level of proficiency, if at least three of the four items in the cluster were answered correctly, and to have failed at this level, if two or more items were wrong. Clusters of items provide a more reliable test of proficiency than do single items, because of the possibility of guessing. It is very unlikely that a student who has not mastered a particular skill would be able to guess enough answers correctly to pass a four item cluster. These scores are computed using performance in each subject. The nature of the two-stage test is that not all children receive all items. To calculate proficiency estimates for all children, an IRT model was employed. For the purpose of IRT calibration, the item clusters were treated as single items. The hierarchical nature of the skill sets justified the use of the IRT model in this way. Gains in probability of mastery at each proficiency level allow researchers to study not only the amount of gain in total scale score points but also where along the scale different children are making their largest gains in achievement during a particular time interval.

In reading, the proficiency levels are named as follows: (1) letter recognition, (2) beginning sounds, (3) ending sounds, (4) sight words, and (5) words in context. *Letter recognition* is as it sounds—the ability of children to recognize their letters. *Beginning sounds* and *ending sounds* refer to children's ability to understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning and at the ending of words. *Sight words* refer to children's ability to recognize whole words by sight and read them aloud. And, *words in context* refer to children's ability to read simple short passages of text with a missing word, and insert the correct missing word.

In mathematics, the proficiency levels are named as follows (their names reflect the most complex mathematical construct contained in the proficiency): (1) number and shape, (2) relative size, (3) ordinality and sequence, (4) add/ subtract, and (5) multiply/divide. *Number and shape* refers to children's ability to recognize single-digit numbers and basic shapes. *Relative size* refers to children's ability to count beyond 10, recognize the sequence in basic patterns, and compare the relative size of objects. *Ordinality and sequence* means that children can recognize two-digit numbers, identify the next number in a sequence, and identify the ordinal position of an object. *Addition and subtraction* means children can perform simple addition and subtraction problems. *Multiplication and division* refers to children's ability to perform simple multiplication and division operations. The addition, subtraction, multiplication and division items are presented in the form of word problems with picture support and in numerical statements.

Children's Social Knowledge and Skills

All kindergarten teachers with sampled children in their classrooms were asked to fill out three self-administered questionnaires. The first two pertained to their own educational backgrounds, teaching practices, experiences, and the classroom settings where they taught. For each of the sampled children they taught, the teachers also completed a child-specific questionnaire that collected information on the child's social knowledge and skills. Teachers reported on the frequency with which children demonstrated particular behaviors (e.g., accept peer ideas, fight with others, persist at tasks). Teachers rated the frequency of children's behaviors as *never*, *sometimes*, *often*, or *very often*. To present the behaviors in terms of their basic frequency (e.g., frequent versus infrequent), the categories were collapsed into *never/sometimes* and *often/very often*.

Family and Child Characteristics

Parents/guardians were asked to provide key information about their children on subjects such as family demographics (e.g., age, relation to child, race/ethnicity), family structure (household members and composition), parent involvement, home educational activities, child care experience, child health, parental education and employment status, and child's social skills and behaviors. Most of the data were collected through a computer-assisted

telephone interviewing (CATI), though some of the interviews were collected through a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), when respondents did not have a telephone or were reluctant to be interviewed by telephone.

Derived Variables

A number of variables used in this report were derived by combining information from one or more questions in the ECLS-K parent questionnaire or from other study sources. The derivation of key variables is described in this section.

Children's age at entry to kindergarten. This variable was constructed using two variables: month and year of birth. These variables were combined to form five categories: children born prior to September 1992 (age 6 when they entered kindergarten), born between September–December 1992 (turning age 6 when they entered kindergarten), January–April 1993 (age 5 when they entered kindergarten), May–August 1993 (age 5 when they entered kindergarten) and September–December 1993 (age 4 when they entered kindergarten).

Maternal education. This variable was constructed using the questions on the highest grade the child's mother or female guardian had completed, and whether the mother or female guardian had obtained a high school equivalency degree if she did not complete high school. This information was collapsed into four categories: less than high school, high school or equivalent, some college including vocational/technical training, and bachelor's degree or higher.

Children's race/ethnicity. The race/ethnicity composite was constructed from two parent-reported variables: ethnicity and race. New Office of Management and Budget guidelines were followed under which a respondent could select more than one race. Thus each respondent had to identify whether the child was Hispanic, and then select one or more races. The following are the five composite race/ethnicity categories we present in this report: white non-Hispanic, black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, Asian and Other (which includes Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multiracial children). When race/ethnicity

differences are presented in this report. white refers to white, non-Hispanic and black refers to black, non-Hispanic.

Risk factor index. The risk factor index uses information on the following family characteristics: mother with less than a high school diploma, family utilized AFDC and/or food stamps, single parent family, and primary language other than English (as identified by the respondent in the parent interview). The index is a cumulative count of the individual factors, with each factor counting as 1. The cumulative count was collapsed into: 0, 1, and 2 or more—meaning the presence of none of the risk factors, the presence of one of the risk factors, or the presence of 2 or more of the risk factors.

School type. The type of school in which children attended kindergarten was collapsed into two broad categories: public and private. Private schools include those with both religious affiliations and nonreligious affiliations. Information from the school administrator questionnaire, along with school sample frame data, was used to create this variable. If there was no school administrator questionnaire, then school sample frame data were used to create the composite.

Kindergarten program type. This report refers to two types of kindergarten programs: full day and part day. This variable was constructed from information provided by teachers on the time(s) of day that they taught kindergarten (e.g., AM only, PM only, AM and PM, all day). Children whose teachers reported teaching AM only, PM only, or both AM and PM classes were classified as part day, and children whose teachers reported teaching all-day kindergarten classes were classified as full day. In cases where the information provided by the teachers was inconsistent (e.g., teachers who reported that they taught AM only classes and all-day classes, information from the field management system that was used by field staff to schedule in-school child assessments) was used to resolve the inconsistency.

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Tables

Table 1.—Population percentages of first-time kindergartners: 1998–99

Characteristic	Population percentage
Total	100
Child's sex	
Male	51
Female	49
Child's age at entry	
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	9
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	32
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	32
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	24
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	4
Mother's education	
Less than high school	15
High school diploma or equivalent	31
Some college ¹	32
Bachelor's degree or higher	22
Child's race/ethnicity	
White, non-Hispanic	58
Black, non-Hispanic	15
Asian	3
Hispanic	19
Other	5
Risk index ²	
0 risk factors	60
1 risk factor	25
2 or more risk factors	15
School type	
Public	85
Private	15
Program type	
All day	55
Part day	45

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Table 2.—First-time kindergartners' reading and mathematics mean scale scores, by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

Characteristic	Reading			Mathematics		
	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change
Total	22	32	10	20	28	8
Child's sex						
Male	21	31	10	20	28	8
Female	23	33	10	20	28	8
Child's age at entry						
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	20	29	9	17	24	7
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	21	31	10	18	26	8
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	22	33	10	20	28	8
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	24	34	10	22	30	9
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	25	34	10	24	32	8
Mother's education						
Less than high school	17	26	9	15	23	7
High school diploma or equivalent	20	30	10	18	26	8
Some college ¹	22	33	10	20	28	8
Bachelor's degree or higher	27	37	10	24	33	9
Child's race/ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	23	33	10	21	30	9
Black, non-Hispanic	20	29	9	17	24	7
Asian	26	38	12	23	31	9
Hispanic	19	30	11	17	25	8
Other	20	29	9	17	25	8
Risk index ²						
0 risk factors	24	34	10	21	30	9
1 risk factor	20	30	10	18	26	8
2 or more risk factors	18	27	9	15	23	7
School type						
Public	21	31	10	19	27	8
Private	26	36	10	23	31	8
Program type						
All day	22	33	10	20	28	9
Part day	22	31	10	20	28	8

* Less than .5 percent.

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: Due to rounding, spring scores minus fall scores may not equal the change score. Estimates are based on first-time kindergartners who were assessed in English in both the fall and the spring (approximately 19 percent of Asian children and approximately 30 percent of Hispanic children are not included in these estimates). In the table heading, Spr = spring and Ch = change from fall to spring.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Table 3.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific reading knowledge and skills, by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

Characteristic	Letter recognition			Beginning sounds			Ending sounds			Sight words			Words in context		
	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch
Total	65	94	29	29	72	42	17	52	35	2	13	11	1	4	3
Child's sex															
Male	61	92	31	26	68	42	15	48	34	3	12	9	1	4	3
Female	69	95	26	32	76	43	18	56	37	2	15	12	1	5	4
Child's age at entry															
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	57	89	32	21	61	40	11	40	30	1	9	7	1	3	2
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	60	93	33	24	67	43	13	47	34	1	10	9	1	3	3
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	66	94	28	31	73	43	17	54	37	2	13	11	1	4	3
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	72	96	24	36	8	42	22	59	37	4	17	13	2	6	5
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	75	96	21	39	77	39	25	59	35	4	18	14	2	6	4
Mother's education															
Less than high school	38	8	46	9	49	40	4	29	25	(*)	3	3	(*)	1	1
High school diploma or equivalent	57	92	34	21	66	45	11	45	34	1	9	8	(*)	2	2
Some college ¹	68	95	27	30	75	44	17	55	38	2	13	11	1	4	3
Bachelor's degree or higher	84	99	14	49	86	37	31	69	38	6	24	18	2	9	7
Child's race/ethnicity															
White, non-Hispanic	71	96	25	34	77	43	20	57	38	3	15	12	1	5	4
Black, non-Hispanic	57	90	33	20	59	40	10	39	29	1	8	7	(*)	2	2
Asian	79	98	20	43	85	42	28	68	40	9	29	20	5	14	9
Hispanic	50	90	40	20	65	45	11	45	34	1	10	8	(*)	3	2
Other	51	89	38	21	61	39	12	41	29	2	9	7	1	3	2
Risk index ²															
0 risk factors	73	96	23	36	78	42	21	59	38	3	16	13	1	5	4
1 risk factor	57	91	34	21	65	44	11	44	33	2	9	8	1	3	2
2 or more risk factors	40	85	45	11	51	40	5	31	25	1	4	4	(*)	1	1
School type															
Public	62	93	31	26	70	43	15	49	34	2	11	9	1	4	3
Private	82	97	15	45	83	38	28	66	38	5	22	17	2	8	6
Program type															
All day	66	94	28	30	73	43	17	54	37	3	15	12	1	5	4
Part day	64	93	29	28	70	41	16	50	34	2	11	9	1	4	3

* Less than .5 percent.

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: Due to rounding, spring scores minus fall scores may not equal the change score. Estimates are based on first-time kindergartners who were assessed in English in both the fall and the spring (approximately 19 percent of Asian children and approximately 30 percent of Hispanic children are not included in these estimates). In the table heading, Spr = spring and Ch = change from fall to spring.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Table 4.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific mathematics knowledge and skills, by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

Characteristic	Number & shape			Relative size			Ordinality, sequence			Add/subtract			Multiply divide		
	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch
Total	93	99	6	57	87	30	21	56	36	4	18	14	(*)	2	2
Child's sex															
Male	92	99	6	55	86	31	22	56	34	4	19	14	1	3	2
Female	94	99	5	58	87	30	20	57	37	3	17	14	(*)	2	1
Child's age at entry															
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	88	98	10	41	78	37	10	39	29	1	9	8	(*)	1	1
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	91	99	8	49	84	35	15	50	35	2	13	11	(*)	1	1
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	94	99	5	59	88	29	21	59	37	4	18	15	(*)	2	2
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	96	100	4	66	91	25	30	67	37	6	25	19	1	4	3
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	97	99	2	73	91	18	38	70	32	9	31	21	2	6	5
Mother's education															
Less than high school	83	97	14	31	72	41	6	32	26	1	6	6	(*)	1	1
High school diploma or equivalent	91	99	8	48	83	35	14	49	35	2	13	11	(*)	1	1
Some college ¹	95	99	4	59	89	30	21	59	38	3	18	14	(*)	2	2
Bachelor's degree or higher	99	100	1	76	95	19	38	75	37	9	31	23	1	5	4
Child's race/ethnicity															
White, non-Hispanic	96	99	4	64	91	27	26	64	38	5	22	17	(*)	3	3
Black, non-Hispanic	89	98	9	41	76	35	9	37	28	1	8	7	(*)	(*)	(*)
Asian	97	100	3	68	92	24	32	68	36	9	28	19	1	6	5
Hispanic	90	99	9	43	81	38	12	46	33	2	12	10	(*)	1	1
Other	88	99	11	45	81	37	13	45	32	2	11	9	(*)	1	1
Risk index ²															
0 risk factors	96	99	4	65	91	26	27	64	37	5	22	17	(*)	3	3
1 risk factor	91	99	8	47	82	35	14	48	34	2	13	11	(*)	1	1
2 or more risk factors	84	97	14	33	72	39	7	32	25	1	6	5	(*)	(*)	(*)
School type															
Public	92	99	7	54	85	32	19	54	35	3	16	13	(*)	2	2
Private	97	100	2	72	93	22	33	70	37	7	27	20	1	4	3
Program type															
All day	93	99	6	56	87	31	21	57	37	4	19	15	(*)	2	2
Part day	94	99	6	57	86	29	21	55	34	4	17	13	(*)	2	2

* Less than .5 percent.

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: Due to rounding, spring scores minus fall scores may not equal the change score. Estimates are based on first-time kindergartners who were assessed in English in both the fall and the spring (approximately 19 percent of Asian children and approximately 30 percent of Hispanic children are not included in these estimates). In the table heading, Spr = spring and Ch = change from fall to spring.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Table 5.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific prosocial behaviors, by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

Characteristic	Accept peer ideas			Form friendships			Comfort others		
	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change
Total	74	77	4	77	82	5	52	62	10
Child's sex									
Male	71	75	4	73	79	6	43	52	8
Female	77	80	3	81	84	4	61	72	11
Child's age at entry									
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	68	76	7	73	78	4	47	59	11
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	73	76	3	74	80	6	50	60	9
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	75	78	3	77	83	6	53	63	11
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	75	79	4	80	83	3	55	64	8
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	75	78	3	78	81	3	55	63	8
Mother's education									
Less than high school	70	75	5	70	75	5	43	54	11
High school diploma or equivalent	73	77	4	75	80	5	51	61	11
Some college ¹	75	78	3	78	83	5	54	63	9
Bachelor's degree or higher	76	79	3	81	86	4	58	66	8
Child's race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	76	80	4		83	4	56	65	9
Black, non-Hispanic	68	69	1		75	3	45	53	8
Asian	75	82	6	74	86	12	52	63	11
Hispanic	73	77	5	74	82	8	47	59	12
Other	71	73	2	70	76	7	49	58	9
Risk index ²									
0 risk factors	76	80	3	80	85	4	56	66	10
1 risk factor	71	75	4	72	78	5	48	57	9
2 or more risk factors	68	72	4	69	75	6	43	52	10
School type									
Public	73	77	4	76	81	5	51	61	10
Private	76	78	1	80	85	5	57	66	9
Program type									
All day	72	75	3	77	81	5	53	62	9
Part day	76	80	4	77	82	5	51	62	11

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: Due to rounding, spring scores minus fall scores may not equal the change score. Estimates based on first-time kindergartners. Estimates based on teacher report of how frequently children demonstrate behavior; the ratings presented in this table are the percentage of children who demonstrate the behavior *often* or *very often*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Table 6.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific problem behaviors, by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

Characteristic	Argue with others			Fight with others			Easily gets angry		
	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change
Total	11	13	2	8	8	(*)	10	9	-1
Child's sex									
Male	13	15	2	10	10	(*)	12	12	-1
Female	8	10	1	6	5	-1	7	6	-1
Child's age at entry									
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	11	13	2	9	7	-1	12	10	-2
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	11	14	2	9	8	-1	11	10	(*)
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	10	11	1	8	7	-1	10	8	-1
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	10	12	2	7	8	1	9	8	(*)
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	11	12	2	8	8	(*)	11	9	-2
Mother's education									
Less than high school	12	14	2	11	9	-2	11	10	-2
High school diploma or equivalent	12	14	2	8	9	(*)	10	10	(*)
Some college ¹	10	13	3	7	7	(*)	10	9	(*)
Bachelor's degree or higher	9	9	(*)	6	6	-1	9	7	-2
Child's race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	10	11	1	7	6	-1	9	8	-1
Black, non-Hispanic	17	22	5	12	14	2	13	16	3
Asian	6	5	-1	5	4	-1	8	4	-4
Hispanic	9	10	1	9	7	-2	11	8	-3
Other	13	13	(*)	10	9	-1	11	11	-1
Risk index ²									
0 risk factors	10	10	1	6	6	(*)	9	8	-1
1 risk factor	12	16	4	10	10	(*)	11	11	(*)
2 or more risk factors	13	16	3	11	11	(*)	12	12	-1
School type									
Public	11	13	2	8	8	-1	10	9	-1
Private	10	11	1	7	7	(*)	9	9	(*)
Program type									
All day	13	15	2	10	9	-1	11	11	(*)
Part day	8	9	(*)	7	6	-1	9	7	-2

* Less than .5 percent.

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: Due to rounding, spring scores minus fall scores may not equal the change score. Estimates based on first-time kindergartners. Estimates based on teacher report of how frequently children demonstrate behavior; the ratings presented in this table are the percentage of children who demonstrate the behavior *often* or *very often*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Table 7.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific approaches to learning behaviors, by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

Characteristic	Persists at tasks			Seems eager to learn			Pays attention		
	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change
Total	71	75	4	75	79	3	66	70	4
Child's sex									
Male	65	69	4	72	75	3	58	62	4
Female	77	82	4	79	83	3	74	78	4
Child's age at entry									
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	62	67	5	67	73	6	56	62	6
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	65	70	4	71	75	4	61	65	4
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	73	77	4	78	80	3	68	72	4
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	78	81	4	81	83	3	73	75	2
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	81	79	-2	81	83	3	72	73	1
Mother's education									
Less than high school	60	64	4	63	68	5	54	59	6
High school diploma or equivalent	69	72	3	73	76	4	64	66	2
Some college ¹	73	77	4	78	81	3	68	71	3
Bachelor's degree or higher	79	84	5	84	87	2	75	79	4
Child's race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	75	78	4	79	82	3	70	73	3
Black, non-Hispanic	61	65	4	66	69	3	56	59	3
Asian	81	89	8	82	88	6	70	80	10
Hispanic	67	72	5	72	76	4	62	68	6
Other	68	72	4	72	76	4	61	64	3
Risk index ²									
0 risk factors	76	80	4	81	83	3	72	75	3
1 risk factor	68	71	4	70	75	4	61	65	4
2 or more risk factors	58	63	4	64	67	3	53	58	5
School type									
Public	70	74	4	74	78	4	65	69	3
Private	77	80	3	81	83	2	70	75	5
Program type									
All day	69	72	3	75	78	3	64	67	3
Part day	73	78	5	76	80	4	68	73	4

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: Due to rounding, spring scores minus fall scores may not equal the change score. Estimates based on first-time kindergartners. Estimates based on teacher report of how frequently children demonstrate behavior; the ratings presented in this table are the percentage of children who demonstrate the behavior *often* or *very often*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Appendices

Table 2a.—Standard errors for first-time kindergartners' reading and mathematics mean by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

Characteristic	Reading			Mathematics		
	Fall	Spring	Change	Fall	Spring	Change
Total	0.16	0.22	0.13	0.14	0.19	0.09
Child's sex						
Male	0.17	0.22	0.15	0.17	0.21	0.10
Female	0.18	0.26	0.13	0.15	0.20	0.11
Child's age at entry						
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	0.27	0.36	0.21	0.22	0.29	0.16
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	0.18	0.28	0.18	0.15	0.22	0.13
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	0.19	0.25	0.13	0.15	0.20	0.11
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	0.24	0.26	0.18	0.23	0.27	0.13
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	0.41	0.53	0.35	0.36	0.44	0.32
Mother's education						
Less than high school	0.18	0.28	0.22	0.18	0.28	0.18
High school diploma or equivalent	0.17	0.24	0.17	0.14	0.22	0.12
Some college ¹	0.19	0.25	0.14	0.15	0.17	0.11
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.22	0.28	0.17	0.20	0.23	0.13
Child's race/ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	0.20	0.24	0.15	0.17	0.20	0.11
Black, non-Hispanic	0.28	0.39	0.22	0.21	0.29	0.17
Asian	0.63	0.63	0.34	0.49	0.53	0.32
Hispanic	0.29	0.43	0.31	0.22	0.32	0.22
Other	0.88	1.00	0.23	0.74	0.72	0.19
Risk index ²						
0 risk factors	0.19	0.22	0.14	0.15	0.18	0.1
1 risk factor	0.21	0.28	0.15	0.17	0.25	0.13
2 or more risk factors	0.21	0.29	0.23	0.19	0.27	0.15
School type						
Public	0.15	0.23	0.15	0.14	0.21	0.11
Private	0.42	0.48	0.23	0.32	0.34	0.15
Program type						
All day	0.25	0.36	0.19	0.22	0.30	0.13
Part day	0.23	0.27	0.14	0.22	0.27	0.11

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: In the table heading, Spr = spring and Ch = change from fall to spring.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Table 3a.—Standard errors for percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific reading knowledge and skills, by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics: Fall 1998 to spring 1999

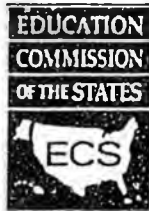
Characteristics	Letter recognition			Beginning sounds			Ending sounds			Sight words			Words in context		
	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch	Fall	Spr	Ch
Total	0.73	0.35	0.56	0.74	0.82	0.62	0.51	0.86	0.61	0.13	0.45	0.41	0.07	0.19	0.16
Child's sex															
Male	0.83	0.44	0.69	0.75	0.87	0.69	0.50	0.85	0.66	0.16	0.44	0.37	0.09	0.21	0.18
Female	0.85	0.38	0.67	0.89	0.93	0.71	0.64	0.98	0.66	0.15	0.60	0.54	0.08	0.24	0.21
Child's age at entry															
Age 4: Born Sep.—Dec. 1993	1.60	1.00	1.28	1.06	1.38	1.06	0.72	1.28	0.96	0.29	0.80	0.72	0.17	0.39	0.36
Age 5: Born May—Aug. 1993	0.97	0.44	0.82	0.78	1.07	0.92	0.52	1.08	0.87	0.17	0.58	0.50	0.09	0.28	0.23
Age 5: Born Jan.—Apr. 1993	0.92	0.48	0.74	0.91	0.95	0.71	0.63	0.97	0.67	0.23	0.54	0.47	0.13	0.27	0.21
Age 6: Born Sep.—Dec. 1992	1.04	0.42	0.99	1.11	0.86	0.98	0.84	0.97	0.81	0.29	0.69	0.58	0.20	0.39	0.29
Age 6: Born Jan.—Aug. 1992	1.95	0.88	1.83	1.77	1.42	1.71	1.34	1.70	1.41	0.71	1.53	1.29	0.55	0.97	0.69
Mother's education															
Less than high school	1.39	0.62	1.17	1.38	0.35	1.26	1.09	0.09	1.05	0.34	0.03	0.33	0.10	0.85	0.08
High school diploma or equivalent	0.98	0.57	0.83	0.80	1.03	0.92	0.52	0.96	0.80	0.14	0.44	0.40	0.08	0.20	0.17
Some college ¹	0.93	0.41	0.78	0.90	0.92	0.82	0.63	0.95	0.70	0.23	0.62	0.54	0.12	0.29	0.24
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.77	0.20	0.72	0.99	0.66	0.75	0.80	0.90	0.69	0.33	0.86	0.72	0.19	0.48	0.39
Child's race/ethnicity															
White, non-Hispanic	0.90	0.34	0.74	0.94	0.85	0.77	0.66	0.93	0.68	0.17	0.55	0.49	0.09	0.24	0.21
Black, non-Hispanic	1.40	0.85	1.06	1.24	1.59	1.03	0.83	1.45	0.99	0.26	0.75	0.66	0.12	0.30	0.24
Asian	1.84	0.48	1.72	2.28	1.45	1.76	1.83	1.76	1.48	1.32	1.83	1.45	0.85	1.28	0.85
Hispanic	1.66	0.91	1.43	1.24	1.64	1.38	0.76	1.68	1.37	0.23	0.80	0.77	0.14	0.32	0.26
Other	5.02	2.09	3.24	3.07	4.29	1.71	1.99	3.69	2.00	0.64	1.48	1.02	0.34	0.73	0.48
Risk index ²															
0 risk factors	0.77	0.23	0.67	0.91	0.72	0.74	0.65	0.83	0.63	0.18	0.56	0.50	0.09	0.25	0.22
1 risk factor	1.14	0.61	0.89	0.86	1.14	0.80	0.56	1.09	0.75	0.19	0.49	0.40	0.11	0.23	0.18
2 or more risk factors	1.60	1.17	1.34	0.74	1.32	1.18	0.44	1.08	1.01	0.19	0.45	0.41	0.11	0.18	0.11
School type															
Public	0.74	0.40	0.57	0.72	0.91	0.70	0.49	0.93	0.69	0.12	0.45	0.41	0.07	0.17	0.15
Private	1.29	0.37	1.08	1.84	1.11	1.21	1.44	1.41	0.82	0.57	1.46	1.11	0.28	0.78	0.64
Program type															
All day	1.07	0.54	0.78	1.15	1.28	0.91	0.81	1.32	0.86	0.20	0.80	0.59	0.11	0.33	0.28
Part day	1.19	0.49	0.87	1.03	1.06	0.64	0.67	1.12	0.69	0.17	0.47	0.38	0.08	0.20	0.17

¹Some college includes vocational and technical education.

²Risk index consists of a non-English primary home language, single-parent family, less than high school maternal education, and the family having received welfare assistance.

NOTE: In the table heading, Spr = spring and Ch = change from fall to spring.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.



ECS StateNotes

Kindergarten

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State Statutes Regarding Kindergarten

Compiled by Jessica McMaken, research assistant

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KEY:

M = Mandatory

P = Permissive

LEA = Local Education Agency

State	Compulsory School Age ¹	Kindergarten Entrance Age ²	District Offering of Kindergarten	Pupil Attendance In Kindergarten	District Offering of Full-Day Kindergarten	Year Full-Day Law Enacted	Pupil Attendance In Full-Day Kindergarten
Alaska ³	7	5 on or before 8/15	P	P	P		P
Alabama	7	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	M	1990	P
Arkansas	5	5 on or before 9/15	M	M	M ⁴		P
Arizona	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	P		P
California	6	5 on or before 12/2	M	P	P ⁵		P
Colorado	7	LEA Option	P	P	P		P
Connecticut	5	5 on or before 1/1	M	M	P		P
Delaware	5	5 on or before 8/31	M	M	P		P
Florida	6 ⁶	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	P		P
Georgia	6	5 by 9/1	M	P	M ⁷	1985	P
Hawaii	6	5 on or before 12/31	M	P	P		P
Iowa	6	5 on or before 9/15	M	P	P		P
Idaho	7	5 on or before 9/1	P	P	P		P
Illinois	7	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	P ⁸		P
Indiana	7	5 on or before 7/1	M	P	P		P
Kansas	7	5 on or before 8/31	M	P	P		P
Kentucky	6	5 by 10/1	M	P	P		P
Louisiana	7	5 on or before 9/30	M	M	M	1990	M ⁹
Massachusetts	6	LEA Option	M	P	P ¹⁰		P
Maryland	5	5 by 12/31	M	M	P		P
Maine	7	at least 5 on 10/15	M	P	P ¹¹		P
Michigan	6	at least 5 on 12/1	P	P	P		P
Minnesota ¹²	7	at least 5 on 9/1	M	P	P		P
Missouri	7	5 before 8/1	M	P	P		P
Mississippi	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	M		P
Montana	7	5 on or before 9/10	M	P	P		P
North Carolina	7	5 on or before 10/16	M	P	M	2000	P
North Dakota	7	5 before 9/1	P	P	P		P

State	Compulsory School Age	Kindergarten Entrance Age ²	District Offering of Kindergarten	Pupil Attendance in Kindergarten	District Offering of Full-Day Kindergarten	Year Full-Day Law Enacted	Pupil Attendance in Full-Day Kindergarten
Alaska	7	5 on or before 10/15	M	P	P		P
New Hampshire	6	LEA Option	P	P	P		P
New Jersey	6	LEA Option	P	P	P		P
New Mexico	5	5 before 9/1	M	M	P ¹³	2000-05	P
Nevada	7	5 on or before 9/30	M	P	P		P
New York	6	LEA Option	P	P	P		P
Ohio	6	5 by 9/30	M	P ¹⁴	P		P
Oklahoma	5	5 on or before 9/1	M	M	P ¹⁵	2005	P
Oregon	7	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	P		P
Pennsylvania	8	LEA Option	P	P	P		P
Rhode Island	6	5 on or before 12/31	M	M	P		P
South Carolina	5	5 on or before 9/1	M	M	M ¹⁶	1998	P
South Dakota	6	5 on or before 9/1	P ¹⁷	P	P		P
Tennessee	6	5 on or before 9/30	M ¹⁸	M	P		P
Texas	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	P		P
Utah	6	5 before 9/2	M	P	P		P
Virginia	5	5 on or before 9/30	M	M	P		P
Vermont	6	5 on or before 1/1 ¹⁹	M	P	P		P
Washington	8	LEA Option	P	P	P		P
Wisconsin	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P	M ²⁰	1987	P
West Virginia	6	5 before 9/1	M	M	M	1996	M ²¹
Wyoming	7	5 on or before 9/15	M	P	P		P

¹ Most states allow parents to apply for a waiver if they do not wish for their children to attend kindergarten. In Rhode Island, Tennessee and West Virginia the compulsory school attendance age is 6. Kindergarten attendance is mandatory, thereby allowing parents to hold children out of kindergarten until they reach 6 years of age.

² Children may begin kindergarten in the school year that they reach the specified age by the specified date. For example, in Hawaii, a child may begin kindergarten at age 4 as long as his 5th birthday is during the school year and prior to December 31.

³ Alaska has no state law regarding district offering of kindergarten.

⁴ The Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools section of Arkansas's Rules and Regulations requires that districts offer a full-day kindergarten.

⁵ In California, full-day kindergarten is prohibited by one Education Code section and allowed in another. Education Code Section 46111 prohibits kindergarten from exceeding four hours (excluding recesses) unless children are participating in an Early Primary Program as allowed under Education Code Section 8970-8974. Ed. Code Section 8973 specifically says that kindergarten may exceed four hours if the program is not longer than the rest of the primary program and if there are opportunities for both active and quiet activities.

⁶ In Florida, children are not required to attend school until they are 6 years old. If a child does not attend kindergarten at age 5, however, she will be required to attend kindergarten when she starts school at age 6.

⁷ In Georgia, full-day kindergarten is defined as 4.5 hours per day.

⁸ In Illinois, if a district offers full-day kindergarten it also must provide a half-day kindergarten. Parents are not required to send their children to kindergarten.

⁹ In Louisiana, kindergarten is mandatory for entrance to 1st grade unless parents request their children be tested for readiness to enter 1st grade. Readiness criteria are established by each parish.

¹⁰ In Massachusetts, a state grant program allows districts to apply for a grant to fund a full-day kindergarten.

¹¹ In Maine, the Department of Education encourages districts to offer full-day kindergarten.

¹² In Minnesota, districts may establish an earlier school entrance age. Districts may apply for an exemption from offering kindergarten if it would cause "extraordinary hardship." Districts are permitted to offer full-day kindergarten.

¹³ In New Mexico, full-day kindergarten is being phased in from 2000-05. Beginning in the year 2000 and each subsequent year until 2005 one-fifth of New Mexico's school districts will be eligible to apply to the state for full-day kindergarten funding. Establishment of full-day kindergarten programs shall be voluntary on the part of school districts, and student participation shall be voluntary on the part of parents.

¹⁴ In Ohio, students must complete kindergarten, or by parent request, must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Pupil Personnel Services Committee that they possess the social, emotional and cognitive skills necessary for 1st grade.

¹⁵ In Oklahoma, mandatory district offering of full-day kindergarten will be phased in by July 1, 2005. Parents still will be able to opt for half-day programs for their children.

In South Carolina, districts are required to offer full-day kindergarten unless they apply for a waiver due to lack of space and prohibitive cost. Parents may choose a half-day program for their children.

¹⁷ In South Dakota, if districts choose to offer kindergarten, they may set the minimum hours of program provision.

¹⁸ In Tennessee, kindergarten programs must offer a minimum of four hours per day.

¹⁹ In Vermont, districts may set the entrance age cut-off date anywhere between August 31 and January 1 of the same school year.

²⁰ In Wisconsin, districts are required to offer full-day kindergarten for low-income students.

²¹ In West Virginia, students must attend full-day kindergarten unless, under extraordinary circumstances, a readiness test is passed for entrance into the 1st grade.

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Recent State Legislation

Kindergarten

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The following summary includes policies enacted since 1999. Summaries are collected from *StateNet*, *Lexis-Nexis*, state Web sites and state newsletters. *StateNet* and *Lexis-Nexis* descriptions reflect the content of bills as introduced and may not reflect changes made during the legislative process. To assure that this information reaches you in a timely manner, minimal attention has been paid to style (capitalization, punctuation) or format.

State	Status/Date	Level	Summary
CA	Signed by governor 07/2001	pre-K-12	Authorizes a pupil in a kindergarten in a school operating on a program of multitrack year-round scheduling to be kept in school on any day for 265 minutes of instruction, exclusive of recesses. Title: A.B. 764 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
OK	Signed by governor 05/2001	pre-K-12	Every school district must provide and offer a full six-hour day of kindergarten free of tuition for every child residing in such district who attains the age of five (5) years on or before the first day of September during the school year such kindergarten is offered, provided that this duty may be satisfied by transferring kindergarten children to other school districts which will accept them and can provide kindergarten for such children. or by contracting for classroom space with a licensed public or licensed private child care provider based upon selection criteria established by the district. The requirement to offer a full six-hour day of kindergarten as provided for in this subsection shall not become effective until three (3) years after the provisions of this subsection are implemented as provided for in subsection G of this section. Implementation this section is to be delayed until the current expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance in public elementary and secondary schools in unadjusted dollars for the 1998-99 school year or any school year thereafter for Oklahoma, as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics annually in the Digest of Education Statistics, reaches at least ninety percent (90%) of the regional average expenditure for that same year, and funds are provided. Title: H.B. 1499--Multiple Components Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
AR	Signed by governor 04/2001	pre-K-12	Allows six-year olds that did not attend kindergarten the opportunity to enroll in either kindergarten or first grade; allows school principals to approve the enrollment of four-year olds into kindergarten. Title: H.B. 1092 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
AR	Signed by governor 04/2001	pre-K-12	Requires the Department of Education to develop and conduct readiness testing for children who are entering kindergarten. Title: H.B. 2195 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
NM	Vetoed 04/2001	pre-K-12	Creates public school reading proficiency fund to help train teachers to teach reading and writing to students below grade level; sets up "enterprise centers" to provide fee-for-service assistance to districts;

creates "probationary school intervention funds" for grants to probationary schools; requires colleges of education to form a consortium to develop criterion-referenced end-of-course tests for high schools (to be administered during 2002-2003); makes appropriations for professional development days for teachers, teacher mentorship programs, etc.; appropriates dollars to summer programs, bilingual, art/music, full-day kindergarten; appropriates dollars to standards/assessment alignment, development of new assessments and early literacy interventions.

Title: S.B. 307

Source: New Mexico Legislative Web Site

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>NM Signed by governor
03/2001</p> | <p>pre-K-12 Full-day kindergarten programs shall be phased in over a five-year period as follows with priority given to those school districts that serve children in schools with the highest proportion of students most in need based upon indicators in the at-risk [factor] index or that serve children by means of grade-level schools that serve an entire school district. (By 2004-2005, all kindergartens in New Mexico may be full-day programs.)
Title: H.B. 246
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet</p> |
| <p>OH Signed by governor
11/2000</p> | <p>pre-K-12 Phases in over two years a requirement that by the 1st day of August, instead of the 13th day of September, a child must be five years of age to be admitted to kindergarten and six years of age to be admitted to 1st grade.
Title: H.B. 383
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet</p> |
| <p>NH Signed by governor
06/2000</p> | <p>pre-K-12 Relates to the establishment of an alternative kindergarten program within a school district; provides that school districts operating an approved alternative kindergarten program shall be eligible to receive adequate education grant distributions; provides for programs which were approved and in effect before a set date may continue to operate and receive per pupil adequate education grant amounts.
Title: H.B. 1188
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet</p> |
| <p>NH Signed by governor
06/2000</p> | <p>pre-K-12 Makes an appropriation from the Education Trust Fund to the Department of Education for the funding of public kindergarten programs; adjusts the Adequate Education Grant amount for the Town of Orange for the fiscal year 2000; adjusts the property tax warrant in the Town of Orange.
Title: S.B. 397
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet</p> |
| <p>NY Signed by governor
05/2000</p> | <p>pre-K-12 Relates to state aid for school districts; funds a workforce education program in New York City; creates the Universal Prekindergarten Reserve Fund; provides State aid for conversion to full day kindergarten; relates to administration of the School Tax Relief Program; relates to 1997 and later assessment rolls; relates to tuition assistance program awards; relates to allowances for members of the Legislature, funding for the Legislature and legislative commissions.
Title: A.B. 9291
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet</p> |
| <p>IN Signed by governor
03/2000</p> | <p>pre-K-12 Requires the mailing, instead of publishing, of the school corporation performance report; provides that a child must be at least five years of age on July 1 of the 2000-2001 school year or any subsequent school year to officially enroll in a kindergarten program offered by a school corporation; provides that an assessment for early entry must consist of</p> |

more than an intelligence test; states that \$ 25 is the maximum fee a parent must pay to obtain a waiver for early entry.

Title: S.B. 489

Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| GA Signed by governor
03/2000 | pre-K-12 There is created an Early Intervention Program in kindergarten and a Primary Grades Early Intervention Program in grades 1-3. These programs are for students performing below grade level. The Office of Education Accountability and the State Board of Education both have responsibility for administering and setting the definitions for who qualifies for the Early Intervention Programs. The Education Coordinating Council also must adopt the standards and definitions for these programs. Special education students are eligible for this program, but may only be counted for funding for either the early intervention program or a special education category. The school must provide timely notice and an opportunity for a conference with the student and his or her parents or guardians to discuss the student's developmental deficiencies and options for addressing those deficiencies. Delivery models may include, but are not limited to, class augmentation, pull-out or self-contained classes, and the Reading Recovery Program.
Title: H.B. 1187
Source: Georgia Department of Education |
| GA Signed by governor
03/2000 | pre-K-12 There is created an Early Intervention Program in kindergarten and a Primary Grades Early Intervention Program in grades 1-3. These programs are for students performing below grade level. The Office of Education Accountability and the State Board of Education both have responsibility for administering and setting the definitions for who qualifies for the Early Intervention Programs. The Education Coordinating Council also must adopt the standards and definitions for these programs. Special education students are eligible for this program, but may only be counted for funding for either the early intervention program or a special education category.
Title: H.B. 1187
Source: Georgia Department of Education |
| NM Signed by governor
02/2000 | pre-K-12 Relates to full day kindergarten programs; provides funding.
Title: H.B. 211
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet |
| NJ Signed by governor
01/2000 | pre-K-12 Provides additional State aid to support full-day kindergarten programs in charter schools located in the Abbott districts.
Title: A.B. 2773
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet |
| OH Signed by governor
07/99 | pre-K-12 Requires a child under the age of 6 who attends kindergarten to be considered of compulsory school age.
Title: H.B. 281
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet |
| MO Signed by governor
07/99 | pre-K-12 Amends existing law to add that child whose fifth birthday is before August 1 or is 5 at the commencement of the summer school session immediately prior to the beginning of the school year, whichever is earlier, is eligible for entry to kindergarten.
Title: H.B. 889
Source: |
| VA Signed by governor
01/99 | pre-K-12 Clarifies in standard 1 of standards of Quality (SOG) that school divisions offering half-day kindergarten programs are to adjust their |

average daily membership (ADM) for kindergarten to reflect 85% of the total kindergarten ADM, as in appropriation act.

Title: H.B. 2141

Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

HI Died 10/98

pre-K-12 Amends the age requirement for a child to attend kindergarten to be at least 5 years of age, to be more specifically determined by the Board of Education.

Title: S.B. 2871

Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

OK Signed by governor
05/98

pre-K-12 Intended to deal with increasing numbers of 4-year olds in kindergarten. Removes authority for underage children to attend kindergarten and first grade, eliminates income eligibility criteria for early childhood programs, and increases financing for districts offering early childhood programs.

Title: H.B. 1657

Source: Research Division, Oklahoma House of Representatives

Background Information

SB 41

Bill introduced in State of Hawaii

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that studies have confirmed the importance of quality early childhood education. The Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children concluded that a child's early years are crucial to brain development and help to prepare the child for formal learning and academic achievement.

There is additional research showing that full-day kindergarten programs are preferable to half-day programs because developmentally appropriate full-day kindergarten programs offer additional benefits, especially for children from low socioeconomic or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, a full-day kindergarten teacher has the needed time to individualize the curriculum and to accommodate the individual differences of the children.

The legislature believes that early learning and preparation for all students to enter the first grade should be a major focus. While mandatory statewide kindergarten carries some expense, it is one of the best investments for the education of future generations of Hawaii children.

The purpose of this Act is to lower the compulsory education age from six years to five years, making attendance in kindergarten mandatory.

SECTION 2. Section 302A-411, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) The department shall establish and maintain kindergartens with a program of instruction as a part of the public school system[; provided that attendance shall not be mandatory]. No child shall attend any kindergarten unless the child will be at least five years of age [on or before December 31] before January 1 of the school year; provided that [a]:

(1) A child attending a school that convenes after the regular school schedule shall be five years of age [on or before one hundred twenty-five] before one hundred twenty-six days following the date the school convenes; and [provided further that the]

(2) The board shall develop informational guidance to promote the understanding of a child's readiness for kindergarten."

SECTION 3. Section 302A-1131, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[~~§~~302A-1131] Public schools; attendance. (a) Except as authorized by section 302A-411, no child shall attend any public school unless the child will be at least [six] five years of age before January 1 of the school year; provided that:

(1) A child attending a school that convenes after the regular school schedule shall be [six] five years of age [on or before one hundred twenty-five] before one hundred twenty-six days following the date the school [shall convene;] convenes; and

(2) The department may establish procedures and criteria to determine the psychological and physiological readiness of children for public school and may grant an exception in the case of a child who is found to be ready.

(b) All teachers who teach [in] kindergarten, and the first and second grades, and all principals of public schools shall enforce this section and require proof of age by birth certificates or certificates of registration, or if none can be obtained, then by satisfactory evidence."

SECTION 4. Section 302A-1132, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) Unless excluded from school or excepted from attendance, all children who will have arrived at the age of at least [six] five years, and who will not have arrived at the age of eighteen years, [by] before January 1 of any school year, shall attend either a public or private school for, and during, the school year, and any parent, guardian, or other person having the responsibility for, or care of, a child whose attendance at school is obligatory shall send the child to either a public or private school. Attendance at a public or private school shall not be compulsory in the following cases:

(1) Where the child is physically or mentally unable to attend school (deafness and blindness excepted), of which fact the certificate of a duly licensed physician shall be sufficient evidence;

(2) Where the child, who has reached the fifteenth anniversary of birth, is suitably employed and has been excused from school attendance by the superintendent or the superintendent's authorized representative, or by a family court judge;

(3) Where, upon investigation by the family court, it has been shown that for any other reason the child may properly remain away from school;

(4) Where the child has graduated from high school;

(5) Where the child is enrolled in an appropriate alternative educational program as approved by the superintendent or the superintendent's authorized representative in accordance with the plans and policies of the department, or notification of intent to home school has been submitted to the principal of the public school that the child would otherwise be required to attend in accordance with department rules adopted to achieve this result; or

(6) Where:

(A) The child has attained the age of sixteen years;

(B) The principal has determined that:

(i) The child has engaged in behavior [which] that is disruptive to other students, teachers, or staff; or

(ii) The child's non-attendance is chronic and has become a significant factor that hinders the child's learning; and

(C) The principal of the child's school, and the child's teacher or counselor, in consultation with the child and the child's parent, guardian, or other adult having legal responsibility for

or care of the child, develops an alternative educational plan for the child. The alternative educational plan shall include a process that shall permit the child to resume school.

The principal of the child's school shall file the alternative educational plan made pursuant to subparagraph (C) with the child's school record. If the adult having legal responsibility for or care of the child disagrees with the alternative educational plan, then the adult shall be responsible for obtaining appropriate educational services for the child."

SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2001-2002 and the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2002-2003 to lower the compulsory education age from six years to five years.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2001.

Hawaii State Legislature

2001 Legislative Session

Bill Status

HB99

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Measure Title: RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Report Title: Mandatory Kindergarten (\$)

Description: Lowers the compulsory education age from 6 years to 5 years, making attendance in kindergarten mandatory.

Package: Keiki

Companion: SB93

Introducer(s): ARAKAKI, TAKAI, THIELEN, KAHIKINA, MOSES, LUKE, AHU ISA, CASE, B. OSHIRO, MORITA, KAWAKAMI, M. OSHIRO, ABINSAY, TAKAMINE, MAGAOAY, CABREROS

Current Referral: EDN, JHA, FIN

Date	H	Status Text
1/18/01	H	Introduced and Pass First Reading
1/22/01	H	Referred to the committees on EDN, JHA, FIN, referral sheet 1.

\$ = Appropriation measure

ConAm = Constitutional Amendment

By Zaffirini
77R71 BDH-D

S.B. No. 30

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1-1
1-2 relating to mandatory kindergarten attendance in public schools.
1-3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
1-4 SECTION 1. Sections 25.085(b) and (c), Education Code, are
1-5 amended to read as follows:
1-6 (b) Unless specifically exempted by Section 25.086, a child
1-7 who is at least five [~~six~~] years of age on the first day of
1-8 September of the school year, or who is younger than five [~~six~~]
1-9 years of age and has previously been enrolled in kindergarten
1-10 [~~first-grade~~], and who has not yet reached the child's 18th
1-11 birthday shall attend school.
1-12 (c) On enrollment in prekindergarten [~~or kindergarten~~], a
1-13 child shall attend school.
1-14 SECTION 2. Section 29.009, Education Code, is amended to read
1-15 as follows:
1-16 Sec. 29.009. PUBLIC NOTICE CONCERNING PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR
1-17 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Each school district shall develop a
1-18 system to notify the population in the district with children who
1-19 are at least three years of age but younger than five [~~six~~] years
1-20 of age and who are eligible for enrollment in a special education
1-21 program of the availability of the program.
1-22 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately and applies
1-23 beginning with the 2001-2002 school year.

State of Alaska
Department of Education
Office of Data Management

District Enrollment as of October 1, 2000
FY2001

District	Pre- Elem.	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Ungraded	Total KG-12	Total PE-12
Alaska Gateway Schools	0	27	40	28	37	43	38	46	47	44	49	32	32	27	0	490	490
Aleutian Region Schools	4	5	5	2	8	4	4	3	4	3	5	8	4	2	0	57	61
Aleutians East Borough Schools	0	24	18	19	19	29	24	19	21	28	30	21	25	24	0	301	301
A'yeeska Central School	0	34	18	31	29	22	33	46	52	63	140	110	100	363	0	1041	1041
Anchorage Schools	403	3572	3808	3794	4115	3997	4103	3951	4142	3842	3763	3577	3263	3196	0	49123	49526
Annette Island Schools	6	23	28	20	24	24	32	20	26	23	29	25	22	29	0	325	331
Bering Strait Schools	1	210	119	154	158	126	132	157	144	137	130	102	79	86	0	1734	1735
Bristol Bay Borough Schools	34	16	19	24	15	14	26	21	20	18	20	15	18	17	0	243	277
Chatham Schools	0	12	18	12	26	23	20	19	19	34	24	18	12	11	0	248	248
Chugach Schools	11	26	16	8	9	16	7	12	13	12	15	14	10	10	0	168	179
Copper River Schools	3	54	53	41	66	59	57	52	59	64	57	50	55	30	0	697	700
Cordova City Schools	13	19	35	36	44	35	42	41	47	38	41	37	24	26	0	465	478
Craig City Schools	6	43	45	46	42	48	37	50	49	42	36	38	38	23	0	537	543
Delta/Greely Schools	0	50	39	50	48	33	56	72	100	109	70	104	48	71	0	850	850
Denali Borough Schools	2	20	16	22	18	25	22	20	25	38	27	19	26	32	0	310	312
Dillingham City Schools	11	47	40	40	45	42	50	54	50	34	49	50	37	29	0	567	578
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools	104	1061	1188	1140	1245	1298	1266	1258	1241	1189	1670	1235	927	837	0	15555	15659
Galena City Schools	0	0	285	296	276	281	298	280	240	251	221	185	181	137	409	3340	3340
Haines Borough Schools	0	24	24	22	31	29	40	23	35	42	30	39	35	28	0	402	402
Hoonah City Schools	0	13	12	15	17	13	17	18	20	22	16	19	24	20	0	226	226
Hydaburg City Schools	0	5	6	7	4	9	8	8	4	5	10	7	11	7	0	91	91
Ikroavik Area Schools	4	50	55	37	54	58	48	52	51	65	62	56	31	33	0	652	656
Juneau Borough Schools	31	321	376	431	427	419	485	415	424	421	518	462	428	336	0	5463	5494
Kake City Schools	1	8	6	12	11	9	11	23	13	12	21	20	9	10	0	165	166
Kashunamiut Schools	0	24	35	25	27	28	28	23	25	26	23	21	16	12	0	313	313
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools	9	631	634	670	716	757	733	777	864	821	891	865	837	720	0	9916	9925
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools	48	142	186	159	211	177	207	203	207	207	278	189	152	151	0	2469	2517
Klawock City Schools	1	11	9	19	15	22	17	15	13	16	14	14	14	11	0	190	191
Kodiak Island Borough Schools	8	201	190	203	185	236	240	249	210	202	227	229	210	153	0	2735	2743
Kuspuk School District	0	30	37	34	42	36	54	43	35	32	40	34	32	25	0	474	474
Lake & Peninsula Borough Schools	48	45	33	42	34	45	32	41	38	45	32	37	22	34	0	480	528
Lower Kuskokwim Schools	17	372	344	328	405	301	226	290	316	263	293	208	174	158	0	3678	3695
Lower Yukon Schools	0	162	178	162	166	179	151	157	153	143	207	99	70	71	0	1898	1898
Mat-Su Borough Schools	84	809	837	853	957	1049	1031	1027	1019	1009	1327	1105	1040	861	0	12924	13008
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	94	89	90	57	0	330	330

District	Pre- Elem.	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Ungraded	Total KG-12	Total PE-12	
Nenana City Schools	0	204	158	160	178	156	154	180	151	157	147	111	77	56	0	1889	1889
Nome City Schools	0	59	57	52	86	80	54	51	57	51	63	72	38	41	0	761	761
North Slope Borough Schools	230	135	118	155	149	193	193	169	143	149	199	152	116	86	0	1957	2187
Northwest Arctic Borough Schools	42	255	161	164	192	197	174	180	193	151	166	118	100	95	0	2146	2188
Pelican City Schools	0	3	3	0	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	0	3	2	0	23	23
Petersburg City Schools	0	50	30	59	44	56	52	48	62	59	64	50	60	44	0	678	678
Pribilof Schools	0	10	13	6	16	17	9	12	11	9	15	9	10	7	0	144	144
Saint Mary's District *	4	10	10	16	8	14	12	13	12	8	9	6	9	4	0	131	135
Sitka Borough Schools	25	112	133	129	117	115	137	133	142	121	120	147	118	91	0	1615	1640
Skagway City Schools	0	13	9	11	11	9	15	5	9	8	7	12	10	13	0	132	132
Southeast Island Schools	0	29	16	16	18	18	27	28	20	22	18	26	27	20	0	285	285
Southwest Region Schools	0	98	77	53	71	58	67	70	68	60	40	31	42	36	0	771	771
Tanana Schools	0	7	4	5	6	7	5	11	6	3	7	8	8	3	0	80	80
Unalaska City Schools	3	28	39	27	32	22	28	31	27	23	28	25	20	22	0	352	355
Valdez City Schools	0	53	59	48	79	59	77	52	80	79	91	64	48	67	0	856	856
Wrangell Public Schools	6	36	36	34	41	40	43	33	41	41	50	38	27	31	0	491	497
Yakutat City Schools	1	10	12	16	14	14	12	18	11	13	12	13	16	6	0	167	168
Yukon Flats Schools	34	14	22	18	25	33	35	24	28	27	29	32	12	10	0	315	349
Yukon/Koyukuk Schools	0	28	32	44	46	33	41	53	47	54	33	24	24	36	0	495	495
Yup'it Schools	0	30	39	30	34	39	32	26	30	39	26	35	26	18	0	404	404
Statewide Totals:	1194	9275	9780	9825	10694	10648	10743	10624	10865	10376	11586	10106	8893	8325	409	132149	133343

* Saint Mary's did not report enrollment data for FY2001. These numbers are estimates based on the FY2000 enrollments.

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Indiana Department of Education
2001 Legislative Agenda
 Dr. Suellen Reed, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Appendix B

State Kindergarten Survey Results

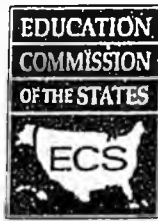
The Indiana Department of Education conducted a survey of the states to identify policies related to kindergarten issues. These survey results were combined with data from the Council of Chief State School Officers to provide a complete picture of the 50 states. The results are:

- Kindergarten attendance is mandatory in 15 states.
- In 42 of the states, including Indiana, school districts must offer kindergarten classes even if attendance is not mandatory.
- Half day classes are required in 12 states, 11 require full day, while 27 states offer a combination of both programs, leaving the decision to the local school districts.
- All 50 states provide at least partial state funds for kindergarten.
- Most states (31) require a student to be at least age 5 by August or September before being allowed to enter kindergarten. In one state, a child can be as young as 4 years old. Six states allow local school districts to set age requirements.
- Indiana's enrollment cut-off date of June 1 is the earliest cut-off date in the nation.

	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
Alabama	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Alaska	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 8/15		No
Arizona	Yes	Half day some full-day	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Arkansas	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/15		Yes
California	No	max of 4 hours	Yes	5 by 12/2	6 by 12/2	Yes
Colorado	No	Local option	Yes	Local Option		No
Connecticut	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 1/1		Yes
Delaware	Yes	Half day	Yes	5 by 8/31	5 by 8/31	Yes
Florida	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Georgia	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Hawaii	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 12/31		Yes
Idaho	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		No, but all districts do.
Illinois	No	State funds full-day, but, Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes

	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
Indiana	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 6/1		Yes
Iowa	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/15	6 by 9/15	Yes
Kansas	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 8/31	6 by 8/31	Yes
Kentucky	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 10/1		Yes
Louisiana	Yes/or test for 1st grade	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/30	6 by 9/30	Yes
Maine	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 10/15		Yes
Maryland	Yes	Local option	Yes	Local Option		Yes
Massachusetts	No	Full day	Yes	Local Option		Yes
Michigan	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 12/1		No
Minnesota	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Mississippi	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Missouri	No	Local Option/Almost all full day	Yes	5 by 8/1	6 by 8/1	Yes
Montana	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/10		Yes
Nebraska	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 10/15		Yes
Nevada	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/30		Yes
New Hampshire	No	Half day	Yes	Local Option		No
	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
New Jersey	No	Local option	Yes	Local option		No, but all offer.
New Mexico	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
New York	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 12/1	6 by start of school	Yes
North Carolina	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 10/16	6 by 10/16	Yes
North Dakota	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 8/31		No
Ohio	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/30		Yes
Oklahoma	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Oregon	No	Half day funded	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Pennsylvania	No	Local option	Yes	Local Option Ages 4 to 6	At least 5 years, 7 months.	Yes
Rhode Island	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 12/31		Yes
South Carolina	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
South Dakota	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Tennessee	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/30		Yes
Texas	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes

	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
Utah	Yes	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/2		Yes
Vermont	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 1/1		Yes
Virginia	Yes	Local option	State and Local	5 by 9/30	6 by 9/30	Yes
Washington	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 8/31		No
West Virginia	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Wisconsin	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Wyoming	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/15		Yes



ECS StateNotes

Kindergarten

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Kindergarten: State Characteristics

ECS Information Clearinghouse
March 2000

KEY:

M = Mandatory

P = Permissive

LEA = Local Education Agency

State	Compulsory Age	Kindergarten Entrance Age	District Offering	Pupil Attendance
AL	7	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
AK	7	5 on or before 8/15	P	P
AS	6	5 by 9/1	M	M
AZ	6	5 before 9/1	M ¹	P
AR	5	5 on or before 9/15	M	M ²
CA	6	5 on or before 12/2	P	P
CO	7	LEA option	P	P
CT	7	5 by 1/1	M	P
DE	5	5 on or before 8/31	M	M
DC	5	5 by 12/31	M	M
FL	6	5 by 9/1	M	M ³
GA	7	5 by 9/1	M	P
HI	6	5 by 12/31	P	P
ID	7	5 by 9/1	P	P
IL	7	5 on or before 9/1	M ⁴	P
IN	7	5 by 6/1	M	P
IA	6	5 on or before 9/15	M	P
KS	7	5 on or before 8/31	M	P
KY	6	5 on or before 10/1	M	P
LA	7	5 by September 30 ⁵	M	M ⁶
ME	7	5 on or before 10/15	M ⁷	P
MD	5	5 by 12/31	M	M
MA	6	LEA option	M	P
MI	6	5 on or before 12/1	P	P
MN	7	5 by 9/1	M	P
MS	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
MO	7	5 as of 7/1 ⁸	P	P
MT	7	5 on or before 9/10	M	P
NE	7	5 on or before 10/15	M ⁹	P
NV	7	5 by 9/30	M	P
NH	6	LEA option	P	P

State	Compulsory Age	Kindergarten Entrance Age	District Offering	Pupil Attendance
NJ	6	LEA option	P	P
NM	5	5 by 9/1	M	P
NY	6	5 on or before 12/1	M	P
NC	7	5 on or before 10/16	M	P
ND	7	5 as of midnight 8/31	P	P
10				
OH	6	5 on or before 9/30	M	M
OK	5	5 on or before 9/1	M	M
OR	7	5 on or before 9/1	P	P
PA	8	LEA option	P	P
PR	5	5 by 8/1	M	M
RI	6	5 on or before 12/31	M	M
SC	5	5 on or before 9/1	M	M ¹¹
SD	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
TN	7	5 on or before 9/30	M	M
TX	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
UT	6	5 on or before 9/2	M	P
VT	7	5 on or before 1/1 ¹²	M	P
VI	5	5 ¹³	M	M
VA	5	5 on or before 9/30	M	M
WA	8	5 on or before midnight 8/31	p ¹⁴	P
WV	6	5 prior to 9/1	M	p ¹⁵
WI	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
WY	7	5 on or before 9/15	P	P

NOTES:

1. Each school district shall establish a kindergarten program in Arizona, unless the governing board of the school district files an exemption claim with the department of education.
2. In Arkansas, pupil attendance is mandatory, but parents can request a waiver.
3. In Florida, the compulsory school age is 6; however, successful completion of kindergarten is mandatory and if it is not successfully completed a child may be older than 6 when entering first grade.
4. Illinois permits districts to offer full-day kindergarten programs and receive full state aid.
5. The kindergarten entrance age for the Orleans Parish, Louisiana School District is 5 by December 30.
6. Louisiana specifies mandatory half-day attendance or test for first-grade readiness.
7. In Maine, schools shall either operate a kindergarten program or otherwise provide for students to participate in such a program.
8. As of July 1, 1997, the kindergarten entrance age in Missouri is 5 before August 1. In addition, beginning with the 1997-98 school year, St. Louis and Kansas City may require that child is 5 on or before any date between August 1 and October 1.
9. Kindergarten is required for accreditation of districts in Nebraska, thus all LEAs offer it.
10. In North Dakota, children with special talents/abilities born between 9/1 and 12/31 can be enrolled early, upon passing State Department of Education approved screening tests.
11. The South Carolina Education Improvement Act of 1984 specifies that "5-year-olds shall attend kindergarten" but parents may obtain a waiver from this requirement.
12. In Vermont, a school district may establish and enforce a regulation which requires that students admitted to kindergarten have attained the age of five on or before any date between August 31 and January 1.

13. In order to be eligible for kindergarten in the Virgin Islands, a child must reach the age of 5 during the calendar year in which they enter kindergarten.
14. LEAs in Washington can permit early entrance up to 3 months.
15. Kindergarten attendance in West Virginia is permissive, but prior to entrance into the first grade each child must successfully complete kindergarten. Under extraordinary circumstances a child may pass a county school board approved readiness test in lieu of kindergarten attendance.

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ECS Selected State Policies

Kindergarten

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The following summary includes policies enacted since 1998. Summaries are collected from *StateNet*, *Lexis-Nexis*, state Web sites and state newsletters. *StateNet* and *Lexis-Nexis* descriptions reflect the content of bills as introduced and may not reflect changes made during the legislative process. To assure that this information reaches you in a timely manner, minimal attention has been paid to style (capitalization, punctuation) or format.

State	Status/Date	Level	Summary
-------	-------------	-------	---------

NH	Signed by governor 06/2000	pre-K-12	Relates to the establishment of an alternative kindergarten program within a school district; provides that school districts operating an approved alternative kindergarten program shall be eligible to receive adequate education grant distributions; provides for programs which were approved and in effect before a set date may continue to operate and receive per pupil adequate education grant amounts. Title: H.B. 1188 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
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NH	Signed by governor 06/2000	pre-K-12	Makes an appropriation from the Education Trust Fund to the Department of Education for the funding of public kindergarten programs; adjusts the Adequate Education Grant amount for the Town of Orange for the fiscal year 2000; adjusts the property tax warrant in the Town of Orange. Title: S.B. 397 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
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NY	Signed by governor 05/2000	pre-K-12	Relates to state aid for school districts; funds a workforce education program in New York City; creates the Universal Prekindergarten Reserve Fund; provides State aid for conversion to full day kindergarten; relates to administration of the School Tax Relief Program; relates to 1997 and later assessment rolls; relates to tuition assistance program awards; relates to allowances for members of the Legislature, funding for the Legislature and legislative commissions. Title: A.B. 9291 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
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IN	Signed by governor 03/2000	pre-K-12	Requires the mailing, instead of publishing, of the school corporation performance report; provides that a child must be at least five years of age on July 1 of the 2000-2001 school year or any subsequent school year to officially enroll in a kindergarten program offered by a school corporation; provides that an assessment for early entry must consist of more than an intelligence test; states that \$ 25 is the maximum fee a parent must pay to obtain a waiver for early entry. Title: S.B. 489 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
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NM	Signed by governor 02/2000	pre-K-12	Relates to full day kindergarten programs; provides funding. Title: H.B. 211 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
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NJ	Signed by governor 01/2000	pre-K-12	Provides additional State aid to support full-day kindergarten programs in charter schools located in the Abbott districts. Title: A.B. 2773 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
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OH Signed by governor 07/99 pre-K-12 Requires a child under the age of 6 who attends kindergarten to be considered of compulsory school age.
Title: H.B. 281
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

MO Signed by governor 07/99 pre-K-12 Amends existing law to add that child whose fifth birthday is before August 1 or is 5 at the commencement of the summer school session immediately prior to the beginning of the school year, whichever is earlier, is eligible for entry to kindergarten.
Title: H.B. 889
Source:

VA Signed by governor 01/99 pre-K-12 Clarifies in standard 1 of standards of Quality (SOG) that school divisions offering half-day kindergarten programs are to adjust their average daily membership (ADM) for kindergarten to reflect 85% of the total kindergarten ADM, as in appropriation act.
Title: H.B. 2141
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

HI Died 10/98 pre-K-12 Amends the age requirement for a child to attend kindergarten to be at least 5 years of age, to be more specifically determined by the Board of Education.
Title: S.B. 2871
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

KS Died 05/98 pre-K-12 Relates to school districts; authorizes the collection of fees for maintenance of kindergarten for full school dyus; imposes certain limitations.
Title: H.B. 2853 Kindergarten
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

OK Signed by governor 05/98 pre-K-12 Intended to deal with increasing numbers of 4-year olds in kindergarten. Removes authority for underage children to attend kindergarten and first grade, eliminates income eligibility criteria for early childhood programs, and increases financing for districts offering early childhood programs.
Title: H.B. 1657
Source: Research Division, Oklahoma House of Representatives

TN Signed by governor 05/98 pre-K-12 BECAME LAW WITHOUT GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE . Requires children entering kindergarten to be five years of age 7/31, rather than present date of 9/30.
Title: S.B. 2787 Kindergarten Requirement
Source: Information for Public Affairs, Inc.

WA Died 05/98 pre-K-12 Establishes the full-day kindergarten grant program in the 1998-99 school year to qualify school districts; may increase the time in kindergarten from one half-day to one full-day for each annual average full-time equivalent kindergarten student enrolled.
Title: H.B. 2318 & H.B. 2329 Full-Day Kindergarten Program
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

WA Died 05/98 pre-K-12 Funds full day kindergarten programs.
Title: H.B. 2329 Full-Day Kindergarten Programs
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

NV Signed by governor 07/97 pre-K-12 Makes kindergarten attendance mandatory in Nevada effective July 1, 1999. Children age 6 on or before 9/30 must be admitted to kindergarten or, if he or she has completed kindergarten, be admitted to the first grade.
Title: A.B. 6
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

**ANCHORAGE
SCHOOL
DISTRICT****Anchorage School Board**

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Debbie Osmainder

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E-mail: Osmainder_Debbie@mcimail.asd.k12.ak.us

To the Honorable Bettye Davis,

I am so pleased to see your efforts to support the education of young children through Senate Bill 41. As you know the Anchorage School Board believes in the importance of a strong kindergarten program for all children. It is becoming more and more important that our youngest children have a firm foundation because performance standards and high academic content in primary grades can be a considerable challenge for many of them.

State and local performance standards set high expectations in mathematics, reading and writing for children age 5 through 7. Among other skills we are expecting our young children to learn to read, to distinguish between common genres of text, know basic phonics and be able to retell stories. We are expecting these children to write complete stories, with paragraphs and good sentence structure. We are expecting our children to be familiar with simple addition and subtraction, recognize and understand the concept of fractions as well as know some estimation skills, geometry and basic statistics. That can be quite a tall order for a child without adequate preparation.

Our district believes so much in the importance of kindergarten that we are switching to full day kindergarten on a district-wide basis. In doing so we are joining with the majority of school districts throughout the United States. Our School Board would like to thank you again for your efforts.

Respectfully,

Debbie Osmainder



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
125 WEST EVERGREEN
PALMER, ALASKA 99645
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March 29, 2001

Senator Bettye Davis
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol (MS 3100)
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Davis:

Thank you for addressing the Alaska Association of School Administrators on Monday, March 26, 2001. I appreciated hearing your thoughts and concerns about accountability and the exit exam. It is encouraging to note that legislators, educators, and the general public are all speaking about the importance of essential learning for our students. We seem to disagree only in the implementation details. I think the committee substitute for SB 133 goes a long way in addressing important issues for students and testing.

I commend your unrelenting support of public education and especially emphasis on the importance of early entry into school. As you know, there are many children who need the enriched environment of schools to enhance their learning potential.

My 26 years of service in public education in Alaska convinces me that we have a strong school system. I am confident that the joint efforts of legislators, educators, and the public will strengthen our work with our children as we ensure that all have essential skills while nurturing their individuality.

Sincerely,

Patricia R. Chesbro
Superintendent

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Alaska

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January 25, 2001

Senate Bill 41: Compulsory School Age

Author:
Davis

Summary:
This bill would lower the compulsory attendance age from 7 to 5. It would also require every school district to offer a kindergarten program.

Status:
This bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services.

HSLDA's Position:
This bill should be opposed.

Other Resources

Bill History

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Study: Kindergarten Aids Young Minds



December 5, 2000

WASHINGTON (AP) - Like most kindergartners, Daniel Hartman is learning his letters, words and numbers. As evidence of the potential for learning in formal schooling before the mandatory first grade, the 6-year-old also recites his lessons in English and Spanish.

Kindergarten, says his father Andrew, a literacy expert, is more than just kids' stuff. A six-year federal study of 22,000 children backs him up with a glimpse of just how much children learn in public and private kindergartens.

"Learning can't start too early," Hartman said.

Tracking the same 22,000 students for a second year, the Education Department study shows that five times as many could do simple addition and subtraction as a year earlier. Twice as many could recognize letters of the alphabet.

The Education Department-funded study offers no comparison with children who do not attend kindergarten, but officials said the first-ever look attempts to show what children know when they enter school and how that knowledge is shaped throughout their early school years.

Results of the study, which will follow the same children through the fifth grade, also could help advocates make a case for allocating to early childhood education more money for research and better programs.

"Kindergarten is doing exactly what it's supposed to do," Education Secretary Richard Riley said in releasing the study last week. "It's helping (all) children ... pick up basic verbal and math skills."

Under the project, pupils will be tested regularly in math and reading and observed for physical well-being, social development and other factors that researchers say affect learning. The cost was not immediately available.

While poor children did worse than others on academics and readiness for school, results showed that all kindergartners increased their knowledge and skills regardless of how much they knew at enrollment.

By the end of kindergarten, 94 percent could recognize their letters, compared to 65 percent when they entered. Children who could recognize simple words rose from 2 percent to 13 percent. Math test scores rose eight points; reading scores increased 10 points.

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study focuses on children who attend full or half-day kindergartens, covering children from about 1,000 public and private

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schools across the country. Education Department researcher Jerry West said the kindergarten group's scores on future standardized tests can be compared to children who skipped kindergarten, although the study uses no formal control group.

Future studies will chart the same children's reading and math skills, cooperation with others and physical development. Their families, schools and classrooms also will be examined. Previous studies have surveyed teachers or followed smaller groups of students.

In the current study, children who are poor, non-English speaking or living with single or poorly educated parents had trouble catching up in their first year of school. They did not improve so much as better-off peers in advanced skills, like solving math problems, the study said.

Kindergarten still deserves more respect, say advocates like Hartman, whose son attends Rolling Terrace Elementary School in Takoma Park, Md.

"It's like a relay race," he said. "The low-performing group of kindergartners could be the class of 2010 for the adult education system."

Hartman said some parents in his son's suburban school district were resistant to full-day programs, emphasizing learning over play.

Though the German-born kindergarten program of developmental play, song and stories dates from the 1800s, it is far from universally embraced. All states provide kindergarten, and even pay for half a day of it, but just 12 states and the District of Columbia require kindergarten before allowing a child to enter regular school.

Four million children are eligible each year for preschool or kindergarten, the department said. Only two-thirds of them are enrolled.

Riley fought the battle of getting children into kindergarten when he was governor of South Carolina. "I saw many of the children who didn't attend kindergarten were the ones who need it most," he said.

He won. South Carolina now has mandatory kindergarten.

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Saturday, April 12, 1997

Teachers seek to make kindergarten mandatory

By Jane Ann Morrison
Review-Journal

A bill making kindergarten mandatory drew philosophical opposites to Friday's Assembly Ways and Means Committee in Las Vegas.

Assemblywoman Chris Giunchigliani asked the committee to pay to hire more kindergarten teachers, at a cost estimated at between \$3 million and \$5 million, and require all children attend.

Nevada Concerned Citizens' Kris Jensen called the bill an encroachment on parental rights and said parents should decide when and if a child is ready to go to kindergarten.

Jensen said 98 percent of Nevada's children already go to kindergarten.

Giunchigliani, D-Las Vegas, a special education teacher who since 1991 has introduced bills that would make kindergarten mandatory, estimated that as many as 10 percent don't attend kindergarten.

Her bill also would allow parents to home-school their children of kindergarten age.

Children who are 5 by Sept. 30 of the school year would be allowed to enter kindergarten and those who are 6 by Sept. 30 of the school year would have to attend, unless parents or guardians request waivers, under Assembly Bill 6.

Giunchigliani touted the benefits kindergarten brings to children and said the committee should be willing to spend on children an amount "equal to what we spent on an auto museum in Reno last session."

She estimated her bill would mandate that about 2,800 additional students attend kindergarten and get a better foundation for their education.

Kindergartens now have about 32 students in a class, and the assemblywoman argued that those classes are too large, particularly when compared with university classes "where it's policy for professors to teach adults in a 1-to-15 class-size ratio. There's something wrong here."

About 10 more people testified in favor of the bill, including kindergarten teacher Peggy Spencer, who said

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she supported the bill on behalf of students who came to her class without ever having held a crayon or a pair of scissors or having touched Play -Doh.

Jensen said the bill would take parents' rights away from them. Although she put her own son in kindergarten, she said, she did it "when he was ready and I felt he was ready, not when the school district said he was ready."

Giunchigliani's bill is expected to pass out of the Assembly, where Democrats are the majority, and she expects it will face opposition in the Senate, where Republicans hold the majority. It died in the Senate last session.

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Background Information

Arguments for and against Mandatory Kindergarten

Mandatory Kindergarten, Kindergarten or No Kindergarten: The Debate

There is a great deal of debating going on about half-day vs. full day kindergarten. The real problem that needs to be addressed is some type of kindergarten vs. no kindergarten. Should kindergarten be mandatory?

Most of the articles concerning this issue and according to my survey, many teachers are in favor of mandatory kindergarten. Both teachers working with children living in poverty and middle class children voiced this as an issue currently facing them. Munsil (Munsil, 1998) wrote, "Many children do benefit from a preschool or kindergarten setting if they live in poverty, abusive or neglectful conditions or are in other ways developmentally or socially disadvantaged". Unfortunately, many of these children are also not of the dominant white culture. Therefore, what the dominant culture values may not be what another culture values, thus putting them at a disadvantage. And if they never attend kindergarten or only come 50 of the 100 some days, as some of the children in my district do, when do they have time to make up the things that some children already come to school with knowing?

In Texas, "Bill 01 emphasizes early detection of reading problems, beginning in kindergarten, along with intensive remediation for those with problems. Imagine the huge advantage that the first-graders who attend kindergarten have over first-graders who do not"(Ramos, Pilarczyk Rinehart-Morgan & Briscoe). How do the children and the school districts then compete with children so obviously far ahead? I know from experience that most children of poverty are able to learn as well as any other children, but they are starting from a different point. As long as districts and their children are going to be compared at the same age levels to other districts, all children need to go to kindergarten to have a closer starting point.

The people who are opposing mandatory K-5 oddly are the ones who are most likely to send their children to school. Most often, they provide a learning environment and even send their children to preschool or an academically structured day care. However, some of these educated people will voice their opposition to mandatory k-5 because it is no longer a choice. Another section of the dominant culture whom would oppose mandatory k-5 are the people most likely to home school or people whom feel the government is trying to take over. Mandatory K-5 would be, "...the biggest anti-family education reforms in our state's history, effectively taking control of a 5 year-old's educational, destiny from his parents and giving it to the state"(Munsil, 1998). On the other side, many uneducated parents may not understand the need for kindergarten and not send them, and unfortunately they are the ones that need to go so they are able to become viable competitors in our society.

So here we are left with this dilemma, do we say that only some parents have a choice or for the best interest of most children do we make it mandatory? I believe that some type of kindergarten should be mandatory whether it is half or a full day, so that all children have the opportunity to be successful in school and become a productive member of their community. Should some type of 5 year-old kindergarten (half vs. full day) continue to go non-mandatory we will continue to condemn a population of our society to the poverty cycle they are in. And portions of society and the government will continue to blame large urban school districts for the ills of their communities and ultimately society.

Full-day kindergarten? Best option is keeping it optional: By Tracy F. Munsil

In this article, the author, was debating the issue of half day vs. full day kindergarten. The author reported that full day kindergarten, "if adopted, it could constitute one of the biggest anti-family education reforms in our states history, effectively taking control of a 5 year-old's educational destiny from his parents an giving it to the state"(Munsil, 1998). Although the author does admit that children in poverty or that are

neglected do benefit from early childhood programs such as preschool or kindergarten, it is the author's position that it should be a parental choice, and not the rationale for mandatory kindergarten. The author also felt that the push for all day kindergarten comes from the new tougher academic standards and the number of both parents having to work outside of the home.

Social Promotion: Letters to Governor George W. Bush

Most of the letters written by a number of teachers from Texas, felt that social promotion bill that their governor wanted to pass, was not the answer or should not be passed alone without added reforms. The one most pertinent, reoccurring request, to my research was to make kindergarten mandatory. The teachers felt that if the children who didn't attend kindergarten had the benefits of it and of the early reading detection program there would be little need for social promotion and less retention.

Teachers seek to make kindergarten mandatory: By Jande Ann Morrison

In this article, Morrison talked about the need for mandatory K-5 in Las Vegas. Many of the children come into kindergarten or even 1st grade without having colored, held a pencil or played with play-doh. Thus starting them at a huge disadvantage. The opposition again felt it is the parents right to decide when and if their child should go to kindergarten.

All-Day kindergarten: Dissenting Voices (Section Summarized) by Raymond and Dorothy Moore

This article was broken into sections with different authors but it essentially has the same view point. The authors felt that by making kindergarten mandatory, parents were relinquishing their control over their children and giving them to the government. They felt, if the government had control of their 5 year olds, it could carry out its master plan to eventually control all of the public and do its bidding. A "re-engineering of society in the interest of the state"(Moore, R. & D., 1981). Instead they feel, "five and six year olds need to run free as lambs, guarded and shepherded by their parents and fenced in where necessary to train and protect them. They should not be regimented into school-type task..."(Moore, R.& D 1981), such as reading readiness workbooks, etc.

Sources

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St. Edwards: Social Promotion [On-line]. Available World Wide Web: <http://www.stedwards.edu/educ/eanes/promotion.htm>

The Center for Arizona Policy: Full-day kindergarten? Best option is keeping it optional[On-line]. Available World Wide Web: http://www.cenazpol.org/citizen/ctzn_nov98.htm

www.edweek.com/001-17/07delay.r17

Read "Grade Retention Doesn't Work," a Sept. 17, 1997 commentary.

Trouble Ahead for Older Students,
Study Finds

By Jessica Portner

Age matters. That, in a nutshell, is the conclusion of a new study about delaying children's entry into school or retaining them in the same grade once they get there.

The study, published last week in *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, could lend credence to educators who oppose holding children back. It could also give pause to parents who postpone enrolling their children in school in the hope of giving them an academic edge.

Because down the road, the study says, separating these children from others their own age may set them up for problems.

Researchers at the University of Rochester found that students who are older than their classmates because they started school late tend to have more behavioral problems in adolescence than students who are the average age for their grade.

"Parents want to keep kids out to give them a leg up on tests," said Dr. Robert S. Byrd, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester school of medicine in Rochester, N.Y. "But holding children out of school may not give them any advantage, and may cause problems."

Since the 1970s, the proportion of students who have delayed entering kindergarten has doubled, owing in part to holding children back to give them a competitive academic and social advantage, the report says. This and other trends, including a rise in the number of special education students who are

allowed more time to complete high school, as well as immigrant students who may need more time to catch up on coursework, have contributed to an aging school population in the United States.

The percentage of 12th graders in U.S. public schools who are 19, 20, or 21 has nearly doubled in recent years, from 4 percent in 1984 to 7 percent in 1994. ("Older Students Make Presence Felt in Classes," Sept. 18, 1996.)

For the study, Dr. Byrd and his colleagues at Rochester General Hospital analyzed interviews with parents of more than 9,000 children, ages 7 to 17, collected for the federal National Health Interview Survey in 1988.

Of the 26 percent of children in that sample who were old for their grades relative to their peers, about half had been retained a year. The other half had been held back from entering school by their parents, or because a child's birthday fell near a school's cutoff date.

Conduct Unbecoming

The researchers found that students who repeated a year were more likely than their younger classmates to manifest behavioral problems, such as crying excessively, cheating, lying, and losing their tempers. In addition, the study found, students who started school later had more behavioral difficulties than average-age students, especially when they reached adolescence.

At age 17, 7 percent of the average-age students in the study exhibited extreme behavioral problems. In comparison, 16 percent of the students who started kindergarten late displayed similar inappropriate conduct, while 31 percent of the students who had failed a grade for academic reasons showed extreme behaviors, the researchers found.

"Early on, children who have been delayed look like normal age-for-grade kids, whereas when they reach adolescence, they look more like kids who've failed a grade," Dr. Byrd said.

No Social Promotion

In general, older students may exhibit improper behavior because separation from students their own age might make them feel self-conscious and stigmatized, the study says.

But just because students who are older than their peers may have more behavioral problems should not be an argument for promoting children who aren't academically ready to advance to the next grade, some education groups said last week. ("Promote or Retain? Pendulum for Students Swings Back Again," June 11, 1997.)

"To pass kids along when they can't read--to socially promote them--is an outrage," said Bella Rosenberg, an assistant to the president of the American Federation of Teachers. The 950,000-member union published a national report last month that decried so-called social-promotion policies, but cautioned against conventional retention as well. ("AFT Report Assails Schools' Promotion, Retention Policies," Sept. 17, 1997.)

While overworked instructors rarely want to shoulder the unfinished work of another teacher, the question shouldn't be social promotion vs. retention, Ms.

Rosenberg argued. "The issue is getting these kids the academic help they need in a timely way so they can turn things around," she said.

While education researchers found the study intriguing, they said it should come with some caveats. "This is an important study in that it reiterates the importance of early intervention," said Nancy Karweit, a research scientist at the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, located at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

But Ms. Karweit said that because the Rochester study uses a decade-old survey, it may not accurately reflect current trends. More districts have halted the practice of retaining students in recent years, she said.

Ms. Karweit also noted that the study fails to distinguish between children who were held back from starting school by their parents to give them an academic boost and those who were retained by their kindergarten teachers because of learning disabilities, for example.

If this "early retention" were counted, Ms. Karweit said, it might shed more light on how problematic delaying a child's entry into school really is.

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SCHOOL ISSUES ARTICLE
All Kids Make Progress in Kindergarten

After tracking 22,000 kindergartners for a full year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports mixed findings. Although most children who start school without basic school-readiness skills catch up by the end of the school year, their more-advantaged classmates continue to move further ahead to master more-complex skills.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported some good news and some bad news about the nation's kindergartners this week.

The good news is that most children who start school without basic school-readiness skills catch up by the end of the school year. The bad news is that they spend the entire year catching up; in the meantime, their more-advantaged classmates gain further mastery of more-complex reading and math skills, said Jerry West, one of the authors of the NCES report. The gap widens in more-sophisticated skill areas as children who have basic skills at kindergarten entry move on to more-advanced skills, West said.

"There's certainly mixed news in the report," said Gary W. Phillips, acting commissioner of education statistics for NCES, at a press conference this week. "The good news is that during kindergarten, all types of students improve their readiness for school. On the other hand, the pattern of group differences entering kindergarten is still there at the end of kindergarten. Furthermore, the gap between at-risk and more-advantaged students is reduced for more basic skills but widened for more complex skills."

The report, the Kindergarten Year, is part of an ongoing, six-year, early childhood longitudinal study. It tracks 22,000 children from 1,000 elementary schools, who represent the nation's 4 million kindergarten students. The study began in the fall of 1998, when students were evaluated before they entered kindergarten. This is the second full report and reflects data that compares the children's skills in the fall of 1998 with their abilities at the end of the kindergarten year in the spring of 1999.

The overall purpose of the study is to gather information about children's knowledge and skills from the beginning of kindergarten through fifth grade. It will include information about social, emotional, and physical development, such as specifics regarding children's home environments, home educational practices, school and classroom environments, curriculum, and teacher qualifications. The study costs \$6 million annually, West said.

"The report isn't terribly surprising," said Edward F. Zigler, who founded Head Start 35 years ago. He is currently Sterling Professor of Psychology at Yale University. Kids who grow up in poverty have long been at an academic disadvantage compared with children from middle class homes, Zigler said. Although that isn't news to most educators, Head Start continues to fall short.

The program serves only 42 percent of the children who live in poverty and does not serve at-risk children who live in households just above the poverty level, he noted.

The report further substantiates school-readiness differences based on varying early childhood home and school experiences. "There is a high correlation between family income and preschool experience," Zigler told Education World. "For poor families, preschool is too expensive. Middle class homes have better learning environments plus [kids] get preschool, so they're ahead of the children from the poor homes. Plus, poor children usually had lousy childcare. Put all those things together, and they are behind."

"Many countries have universal early childhood programs," Zigler continued. "We do all this talk about investing in children and in education in this country but we're not making any progress."

Zigler thinks progress is on the horizon, however, mainly because of the education debates between presidential candidates Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush. "We are in a wonderful shape, thanks to the debate about providing universal preschool education," Zigler said. "It is a really good opportunity for us to accomplish a lot for preschool. Gore pushed for universal pre-kindergarten, and Bush wants all children to be reading by third grade. Bush will soon realize he can't wait to start helping children in kindergarten."

The disparity between skills and knowledge among kindergartners follows children through their entire education experience, Zigler said. "This is not frustrating only for the kids; it is equally frustrating for teachers to have more than one of these at-risk students," he said. "Teachers talk about it to me all the time. If they have three or more at-risk students in the classroom, everyone's learning suffers. Everybody in the class loses, not just those three kids."

We need to do more, said Richard W. Riley, secretary of education, at the press conference. "This report clearly shows that kindergarten benefits all children," Riley said. "It also reminds us that a half-day of kindergarten and regular school cannot do everything."

The report reinforces the findings of the report released earlier this year that identified four risk factors that result in poor reading and math skills. Those factors include living in a single-parent household, being a welfare recipient, having a mother with less than a high school education, and living in a home in which English is not the primary language.

Read Study Looks for Keys to Early School Success, a story about the first full NCES report, America's Kindergartners.

The NCES researchers also found that some patterns identified at the beginning of school continue throughout the year. For example, older children have higher-level skills and knowledge than their younger classmates do. The researchers also found that children whose mothers have more education stay on task more, seem more eager to learn, and pay closer attention than do children whose mothers have less education. Teachers also continue to report that children who have fewer risk factors are more likely to accept peer ideas and form friendships and are less likely to argue, fight, or get angry than children who have more risk factors are.

One "interesting" new finding the report notes is that kids in all-day kindergarten get crankier than kids in partial-day kindergarten do, although all-day kindergartners make more gains academically. The report suggests caution in interpreting differences in behavior, though, because researchers observed the same differences when children entered the program in the fall. Children in full-day programs may demonstrate slightly higher skills and knowledge than their peers in partial-day programs, but they are more likely to exhibit a higher frequency of some problem behaviors, such as how often they argue and fight with others.

Diane Weaver Dunne
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SCHOOL ISSUES ARTICLE

Starting Kindergarten Late: How Does It Affect School Performance?

Does entering kindergarten late help some children do better in school? The answer isn't as simple as it sounds! Opinions -- and the results of several recent surveys -- are divided on that question.

One child in seven in the United States either entered kindergarten late or was required to repeat kindergarten, according to data from the 1993 and 1995 National Household Education Surveys. Since the 1970s, another report shows, the proportion of children who have delayed entering kindergarten has doubled, mainly because parents want to give them a competitive and social advantage.

How does entering kindergarten late or repeating the grade affect children's school performance? The 1993 and 1995 surveys found notable differences between the later school performance of students who were held out of kindergarten and students who repeated kindergarten.

The performance of first- and second-graders who were held out of kindergarten was better than that of first- and second-graders who entered kindergarten at the prescribed age.

On the other hand, children who had to repeat kindergarten were doing worse than other first- and second-graders.

These are highlights from a statistical analysis report, titled "The Elementary School Performance and Adjustment of Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Findings from National Surveys," published in November 1997 by the National Center for Education Statistics.

MOST DRAMATIC DIFFERENCES

Following are the areas in which the report shows students with delayed kindergarten entry differed most dramatically from students who entered on time:

First- and second-grade students in 1993 who had been kept out of kindergarten until they were older were less likely than other students to draw negative feedback from teachers about their academic performance or conduct in class.

In 1995 the delayed entry students were less likely than students who started kindergarten on time to have repeated first or second grade.

First- and second-graders who were retained in kindergarten had more school performance problems than children who didn't repeat.

First- and second-graders in 1993 who had repeated kindergarten were more likely than children who had not repeated to receive negative feedback from their teachers.

BACKGROUND FACTORS HAVE IMPACT

In the 1995 survey, controlling for demographic, socioeconomic, and development factors basically eliminated the differences between students who entered kindergarten late and other first- and second-graders. On the other hand, when those factors were taken into account in the 1993 survey, the differences in student school performance were reduced but remained significant.

No evidence was found in the surveys that children who may have been at heightened risk of having difficulties in school benefited from, or were hurt by, delayed kindergarten entry more than other children. Neither starting kindergarten late nor retention in kindergarten were shown to relate significantly to first- and second-grade school performance or adjustment.

THE CONS OF DELAYED KINDERGARTEN

Not every study seems to indicate that delaying a child's entry into kindergarten is beneficial. A study published in *Pediatrics*, the American Academy of Pediatrics journal, might support educators who oppose delaying children's entry into kindergarten. Students who are older because they started school late tend to have more behavioral difficulties in adolescence than students who are the average age for the grade, according to research done at the University of Rochester.

"Parents want to keep kids out to give them a leg up on tests," said Dr. Robert S. Byrd, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester [N.Y.] School of Medicine. "But holding children out of school may not give them any advantage, and may cause problems."

The trend toward delayed entry into kindergarten, along with an increase in the number of special education students who take more time to complete high school and of immigrant students who may need more time to catch up on work, has created an aging school population in the United States. According to an October 1997 article in *Education Week*, the percentage of 12th graders in U.S. public schools who are 19, 20, or 21 has nearly doubled, from 4 percent in 1984 to 7 percent in 1994.

For the study published in *Pediatrics*, staff at Rochester General Hospital studied interviews with parents of more than 9,000 children from 7 to 17 years old, gathered in 1988 for the federal National Health Interview Survey.

In that survey, 26 percent of children were older than their peers were. About half had been retained a year, and the other half had been delayed in starting school by their parents or by a school's cutoff date for entry. Students who started school later had more behavioral problems than students of average age, especially when they hit adolescence, the study showed. According to this research, at 17, 16 percent of students who started kindergarten later demonstrated extremely inappropriate conduct, while 7 percent of the average-age students exhibited similar inappropriate behavior.

A FEW CAVEATS

Some education groups have said the possibility that older students may have more behavioral problems does not make it advisable to promote children who are not academically ready for the next grade. Other experts have criticized the Rochester hospital study for using data that was years old and possibly not applicable at this time.

Complicating the issue of kindergarten readiness is the fact that parents and teachers or school administrators may view readiness very differently. An article titled "How Should Children Be Prepared For Kindergarten?" from the Educational Resource Network on the Web recognizes that much of the diversity among 5-year-olds is due to "developmental differences, the varying rates at which individuals mature." Yet some of the diversity, the article asserts, may be based on different ways parents prepare, or don't prepare, their children for kindergarten.

The article is based on information from a survey by Kimberly Harris and Shelly Knudsen Lindauer. Harris and Lindauer sought to learn what parents and teachers believe about kindergarten readiness. They surveyed two-parent families from diverse economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds in urban and rural areas.

"When asked what parents could do to better prepare their children," the article states, "teachers most frequently mentioned the areas of receptive language, cognitive-attention/problem-solving, and small muscle coordination." Parents, however, tended to emphasize helping children with pre-reading, math, and social skills. According to Harris and Lindauer, "clarifying goals for parents is essential," and communication between home and school about expectations for children entering kindergarten will help those children succeed in school.

Article by Sharon Cromwell
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Related Resources

"Parent and Teacher Priorities for Kindergarten Preparation," *Child Study Journal*, Volume 18, Number 2, p. 61.
Young Children. (November 1990): 21-23. The position statement on school readiness from The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
The National Association of Elementary School Principals makes available cassette audio tapes from its 1997 Annual Convention. For more information, go to the NAESP Web site. Tape #36: Retention Prevention: Strategies to Make Informed Decisions (Jim Grant). Tape #37: Readiness Strategies for Kindergarten and First Grades: How to Meet the Needs of Today's Late Bloomers (Jim Grant).

Related Sites

The Report: "The Elementary School Performance and Adjustment of Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Findings from National Surveys." This National Center for Education Statistics report analyzes the elementary school performance of children whose entry into kindergarten is delayed or who repeat kindergarten. See the NCES Web site to order a copy of this report.
Readiness: Children and Schools An ERIC Digest report by Lilian G. Katz focuses on general readiness for school, including social readiness as well as intellectual readiness.
Trouble Ahead for Older Students, Study Finds An Education Week article looks at a study published in the journal of the American

academy of Pediatrics that could support educators who oppose holding children out of kindergarten an extra year.

02/02/1998

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 41
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
 Title: "An Act relating to kindergarten programs and compulsory education; and providing for an effective date." BRU: K-12 Support
 Sponsor: Senator Bettye Davis Component: Foundation Program
 Requester: Senate HESS Committee Component Number: 141

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	*	*	*	*	*	*
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	*	*	*	*	*	*

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	*	*	*	*	*	*
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	*	*	*	*	*	*

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

* The department is unable to determine the fiscal impact to the foundation program, because there are children ages 5 and 6 that are not currently attending school, that would be required to attend under this legislation.

Currently all school districts offer kindergarten on either a half or full time basis. This legislation would lower the compulsory school age from 7 years of age to 5.

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, School Finance Manager Phone 465-8679
 Division: Education Support Services Date/Time 04/19/01
 Approved by: Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education Date 04/19/01
 Agency: Education and Early Development

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

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To the Honorable Bettye Davis,

I am so pleased to see your efforts to support the education of young children through Senate Bill 41. As you know the Anchorage School Board believes in the importance of a strong kindergarten program for all children. It is becoming more and more important that our youngest children have a firm foundation because performance standards and high academic content in primary grades can be a considerable challenge for many of them.

State and local performance standards set high expectations in mathematics, reading and writing for children age 5 through 7. Among other skills we are expecting our young children to learn to read, to distinguish between common genres of text, know basic phonics and be able to retell stories. We are expecting these children to write complete stories, with paragraphs and good sentence structure. We are expecting our children to be familiar with simple addition and subtraction, recognize and understand the concept of fractions as well as know some estimation skills, geometry and basic statistics. That can be quite a tall order for a child without adequate preparation.

Our district believes so much in the importance of kindergarten that we are switching to full day kindergarten on a district-wide basis. In doing so we are joining with the majority of school districts throughout the United States. Our School Board would like to thank you again for your efforts.

Respectfully,

Debbie Osniander

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Study: Kindergarten Aids Young Minds



December 5, 2000

WASHINGTON (AP) - Like most kindergartners, Daniel Hartman is learning his letters, words and numbers. As evidence of the potential for learning in formal schooling before the mandatory first grade, the 6-year-old also recites his lessons in English and Spanish.

Kindergarten, says his father Andrew, a 'literacy expert, is more than just kids' stuff. A six-year federal study of 22,000 children backs him up with a glimpse of just how much children learn in public and private kindergartens.

"Learning can't start too early," Hartman said.

Tracking the same 22,000 students for a second year, the Education Department study shows that five times as many could do simple addition and subtraction as a year earlier. Twice as many could recognize letters of the alphabet.

The Education Department-funded study offers no comparison with children who do not attend kindergarten, but officials said the first-ever look attempts to show what children know when they enter school and how that knowledge is shaped throughout their early school years.

Results of the study, which will follow the same children through the fifth grade, also could help advocates make a case for allocating to early childhood education more money for research and better programs.

"Kindergarten is doing exactly what it's supposed to do," Education Secretary Richard Riley said in releasing the study last week. "It's helping (all) children ... pick up basic verbal and math skills."

Under the project, pupils will be tested regularly in math and reading and observed for physical well-being, social development and other factors that researchers say affect learning. The cost was not immediately available.

While poor children did worse than others on academics and readiness for school, results showed that all kindergartners increased their knowledge and skills regardless of how much they knew at enrollment.

By the end of kindergarten, 94 percent could recognize their letters, compared to 65 percent when they entered. Children who could recognize simple words rose from 2 percent to 13 percent. Math test scores rose eight points; reading scores increased 10 points.

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study focuses on children who attend full or half-day kindergartens, covering children from about 1,000 public and private

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schools across the country. Education Department researcher Jerry West said the kindergarten group's scores on future standardized tests can be compared to children who skipped kindergarten, although the study uses no formal control group.

Future studies will chart the same children's reading and math skills, cooperation with others and physical development. Their families, schools and classrooms also will be examined. Previous studies have surveyed teachers or followed smaller groups of students.

In the current study, children who are poor, non-English speaking or living with single or poorly educated parents had trouble catching up in their first year of school. They did not improve so much as better-off peers in advanced skills, like solving math problems, the study said.

Kindergarten still deserves more respect, say advocates like Hartman, whose son attends Rolling Terrace Elementary School in Takoma Park, Md.

"It's like a relay race," he said. "The low-performing group of kindergartners could be the class of 2010 for the adult education system."

Hartman said some parents in his son's suburban school district were resistant to full-day programs, emphasizing learning over play.

Though the German-born kindergarten program of developmental play, song and stories dates from the 1800s, it is far from universally embraced. All states provide kindergarten, and even pay for half a day of it, but just 12 states and the District of Columbia require kindergarten before allowing a child to enter regular school.

Four million children are eligible each year for preschool or kindergarten, the department said. Only two-thirds of them are enrolled.

Riley fought the battle of getting children into kindergarten when he was governor of South Carolina. "I saw many of the children who didn't attend kindergarten were the ones who need it most," he said.

He won. South Carolina now has mandatory kindergarten.

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Saturday, April 12, 1997

Teachers seek to make kindergarten mandatory

By Jane Ann Morrison
Review-Journal

A bill making kindergarten mandatory drew philosophical opposites to Friday's Assembly Ways and Means Committee in Las Vegas.

Assemblywoman Chris Giunchigliani asked the committee to pay to hire more kindergarten teachers, at a cost estimated at between \$3 million and \$5 million, and require all children attend.

Nevada Concerned Citizens' Kris Jensen called the bill an encroachment on parental rights and said parents should decide when and if a child is ready to go to kindergarten.

Jensen said 98 percent of Nevada's children already go to kindergarten.

Giunchigliani, D-Las Vegas, a special education teacher who since 1991 has introduced bills that would make kindergarten mandatory, estimated that as many as 10 percent don't attend kindergarten.

Her bill also would allow parents to home-school their children of kindergarten age.

Children who are 5 by Sept. 30 of the school year would be allowed to enter kindergarten and those who are 6 by Sept. 30 of the school year would have to attend, unless parents or guardians request waivers, under Assembly Bill 6.

Giunchigliani touted the benefits kindergarten brings to children and said the committee should be willing to spend on children an amount "equal to what we spent on an auto museum in Reno last session."

She estimated her bill would mandate that about 2,800 additional students attend kindergarten and get a better foundation for their education.

Kindergartens now have about 32 students in a class, and the assemblywoman argued that those classes are too large, particularly when compared with university classes "where it's policy for professors to teach adults in a 1-to-15 class-size ratio. There's something wrong here."

About 10 more people testified in favor of the bill, including kindergarten teacher Peggy Spencer, who said

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she supported the bill on behalf of students who came to her class without ever having held a crayon or a pair of scissors or having touched Play -Doh.

Jensen said the bill would take parents' rights away from them. Although she put her own son in kindergarten, she said, she did it "when he was ready and I felt he was ready, not when the school district said he was ready."

Giunchigliani's bill is expected to pass out of the Assembly, where Democrats are the majority, and she expects it will face opposition in the Senate, where Republicans hold the majority. It died in the Senate last session.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



NEWS

FOR RELEASE:
December 1, 2000

Contact: David Thomas
(202) 401-1579

READING AND MATH GAINS MEASURED AFTER YEAR OF KINDERGARTEN

Education Study Finds All Children Improve, At-risk Children Close Gaps for Basic Skills

Speech

Children from all backgrounds significantly improve their reading and math performance during kindergarten and increase their readiness for future schooling, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). And the gains reported in *The Kindergarten Year* are about the same regardless of the child's background. Significant gaps remain, however, in more advanced skills between at-risk children and their peers.

"This report clearly shows that kindergarten benefits all children," U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said. "But it also reminds us that a half-day of kindergarten and regular school cannot do everything. The challenge for at-risk students raises compelling questions. Would universal pre-school reduce the gaps in skills that appear before children even enter kindergarten? Would all-day kindergarten make a difference? Would after-school programs in elementary and middle schools be especially beneficial to at-risk students in closing the gap? What can parents do long before their children enter kindergarten? How can community-based organizations give parents more support?"

"There's certainly mixed news in the report," said Gary Phillips, acting commissioner of education statistics. "The good news is that during kindergarten, all types of students improve their readiness for school. On the other hand, the pattern of group differences entering kindergarten is still there at the end of kindergarten. Furthermore, the gap between at-risk and more advantaged students is reduced for more basic skills, but widened for more complex skills."

The Kindergarten Year provides national data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, which included a representative sample of 22,000 children, their families, schools and classrooms. The study is the second in a series of planned reports from the longitudinal study, which provides first-time data on children attending public and private kindergartens.

The study found that children increased their specific knowledge and skills in reading from when they first entered kindergarten. After a year of kindergarten, those who could recognize their letters increased from 65 percent to 94 percent; children who could understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words rose from 29 percent to 72 percent; and those who could understand the letter-sound relationship at the end of words increased from 17 percent to 52 percent.

By the end of kindergarten, nearly all children recognize shapes and numbers (99 percent) and a majority understand the relative size and order of objects. Also, almost five times (18 percent) as many children could solve simple addition and subtraction problems at the end of kindergarten as at the beginning.

The Kindergarten Year identifies four risk factors for kindergartners: single-parent households, welfare recipients, mother with less than a high school education, and homes where English is not the primary language. Students with two or more risk factors enter kindergarten with much lower reading and math skills, but by the end of the year have virtually erased the gaps for the most basic skills. At-risk children remain behind in the more advanced skills such as recognizing words by sight or solving simple math problems.

The study found that patterns at the beginning of the school year persist and that by the end of the kindergarten year:

- Older children have higher specific reading and math knowledge and skills than their younger counterparts;
- According to teachers, children whose mothers who have more education are more likely to persist at tasks, seem more eager to learn, and pay closer attention than children whose mothers have less education;
- Teachers also report that kindergartners with fewer risk factors are more likely to accept peer ideas and form friendships, and less likely to argue, fight, or get angry than children with more risk factors.

Future studies will continue to follow the same sample of children through fifth grade, regularly gathering data on their reading and math achievement, social skills, physical development, and school experiences. The study will reveal the extent to which differences that exist when children enter school persist or change over time and how schooling influences progress.

The full text of *The Kindergarten Year* is available on the NCES Web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/>. A copy of the report can be ordered by calling toll free 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) TTY/TDD 1-877-576-7734; via e-mail at edpubs@inet.ed.gov; or through the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html>.

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January 25, 2001

Senate Bill 41: Compulsory School Age

Author:

Davis

Summary:

This bill would lower the compulsory attendance age from 7 to 5. It would also require every school district to offer a kindergarten program.

Status:

This bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services.

HSLDA's Position:

This bill should be opposed.

Other Resources

Bill History

ERIC Digests

ERIC Identifier: ED382410

Publication Date: 1995-05-00

Author: Rothenberg, Dianne

Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education Urbana IL.

Full-Day Kindergarten Programs. ERIC Digest.

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Changes in American society and education over the last 20 years have contributed to the popularity of all-day (every day) kindergarten programs in many communities (Gullo, 1990). The increase in single parent and dual employment households, and the fact that most children spend a significant part of the day away from home, also signal significant changes in American family life compared to a generation ago. Studies show that parents favor a full-day program which reduces the number of transitions kindergartners experience in a typical day (Housden & Kam, 1992; Johnson, 1993). Research also suggests that many children benefit academically and socially during the primary years from participation in full-day, compared to half-day, kindergarten programs (Cryan et al., 1992).

Families who find it difficult to schedule both kindergarten and a child care program during the day are especially attracted to a full-day program (Housden & Kam, 1992). In many areas, both public and private preschool programs offer full-day kindergarten (Lofthouse, 1994). Still, some educators, policymakers, and parents prefer half-day, everyday kindergarten. They argue that a half-day program is less expensive and provides an adequate educational and social experience for young children while orienting them to school, especially if they have attended preschool. Many districts thus offer both half-day and full-day kindergarten programs when possible, but the trend is clearly in the direction of full-day kindergarten.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Well over 3.3 million children attend kindergarten in the United States, nearly as many children as attend first grade (Smith et al., 1994, p. 54). In 1993, about 54% of kindergarten teachers taught full-day classes, and about half of kindergartners attended full-day programs. Two-thirds of full-day kindergarten teachers taught in high-poverty areas, while fewer than one-third (29%) taught in schools with a low incidence of poverty (Heaviside et al., 1993). Teachers of classes with high minority enrollments were also more likely to teach full-day classes than were teachers of classes with low minority enrollments (67% versus 43%). State aid for all-day students is often used to fund full-day kindergarten. One reason for the high ratio of full-day to half-day kindergarten programs in high-poverty and high-minority schools is that state and federal funding for at-risk students is often used to supplement all-day funding, since all-day programs typically require extra classroom space, increased staffing for special services and programs, and additional classroom kindergarten teachers (Fromberg, 1992; Housden & Kam, 1992).

Full-day kindergarten is also popular because it eliminates the need to provide buses and crossing guards at mid-day. A higher proportion of kindergarten teachers taught full-day classes in rural areas in 1993 (66%)

than in city schools (59%), in towns (53%), or in schools in the urban "fringe" (39%) (Heaviside et al., 1993).

RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Research studies confirm that attendance in full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits for students, at least in the primary grades (Cryan et al., 1992; Karweit, 1992). Early studies seemed to offer little reliable evidence one way or the other because they used small samples or unique populations, failed to use rigorous standards, or concentrated almost exclusively on academic outcomes (as opposed to children's attitudes toward school, for example).

Cryan et al. (1992), however, are among the researchers who have found a broad range of effects, including a positive relationship between participation in full-day kindergarten and later school performance. After comparing similar half-day and full-day programs in a statewide longitudinal study, Cryan et al. found that full-day kindergartners exhibited more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers, and reflectiveness than half-day kindergartners. They were also more likely to approach the teacher and they expressed less withdrawal, anger, shyness, and blaming behavior than half-day kindergartners. In general, children in full-day programs exhibited more positive behaviors than did pupils in half-day or alternate-day programs.

Results similar to those of Cryan et al. have been found in other studies (Holmes and McConnell, 1990; Karweit, 1992). These positive effects and the academic gains in the first years of school support the value of developmentally appropriate full-day kindergarten.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Observers of trends in kindergarten scheduling argue that changing the LENGTH of the kindergarten day begs the underlying issue: creating developmentally and individually appropriate learning environments for ALL kindergarten children, regardless of the length of school day (Karweit, 1992; Katz, 1995).

Full-day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics in depth; reduces the ratio of transition time to class time; provides for greater continuity of day-to-day activities; and provides an environment that favors a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach. Recent research indicates that, compared to children in didactic programs, children in child-centered kindergarten programs rated their abilities significantly higher, had higher expectations for success on academic tasks, and were less dependent on adults for permission and approval (Stipek et al., 1995).

Experts urge teachers, administrators, and parents to resist the temptation to provide full-day programs that are didactic rather than intellectually engaging in tone. Seat work, worksheets, and early instruction in reading or other academic subjects are largely inappropriate in kindergarten. By contrast, developmentally appropriate, child-centered all-day kindergarten programs:

- * integrate new learning with past experiences through project work and through mixed-ability and mixed-age grouping (Drew & Law, 1990; Katz, 1995) in an unhurried setting;
- * involve children in first-hand experience and informal interaction with objects, other children, and adults (Housden & Kam, 1992);
- * emphasize language development and appropriate preliteracy experiences;

- * work with parents to share information about their children, build understanding of parent and teacher roles, emphasize reading to children in school and at home, and set the stage for later parent-teacher partnerships;
- * offer a balance of small group, large group, and individual activities (Katz, 1995);
- * assess students' progress through close teacher observation and systematic collection and examination of students' work, often using portfolios; and
- * develop children's social skills, including conflict resolution strategies.

CONCLUSION

Recent research supports the effectiveness of full-day kindergarten programs that are developmentally appropriate, indicating that they have academic and behavioral benefits for young children. In full-day programs, less hectic instruction geared to student needs and appropriate assessment of student progress contribute to the effectiveness of the program. While these can also be characteristics of high-quality half-day programs, many children seem to benefit, academically and behaviorally, from all-day kindergarten. Of course, the length of the school day is only one dimension of the kindergarten experience. Other important issues include the nature of the kindergarten curriculum and the quality of teaching.

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Identifiers: Developmentally Appropriate Programs, ERIC Digests, Program Characteristics

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Indiana Department of Education
2001 Legislative Agenda
 Dr. Suellen Reed, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Appendix B State Kindergarten Survey Results

The Indiana Department of Education conducted a survey of the states to identify policies related to kindergarten issues. These survey results were combined with data from the Council of Chief State School Officers to provide a complete picture of the 50 states. The results are:

- Kindergarten attendance is mandatory in 15 states.
- In 42 of the states, including Indiana, school districts must offer kindergarten classes even if attendance is not mandatory.
- Half day classes are required in 12 states, 11 require full day, while 27 states offer a combination of both programs, leaving the decision to the local school districts.
- All 50 states provide at least partial state funds for kindergarten.
- Most states (31) require a student to be at least age 5 by August or September before being allowed to enter kindergarten. In one state, a child can be as young as 4 years old. Six states allow local school districts to set age requirements.
- Indiana's enrollment cut-off date of June 1 is the earliest cut-off date in the nation.

	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
Alabama	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Alaska	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 8/15		No
Arizona	Yes	Half day some full-day	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Arkansas	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/15		Yes
California	No	max of 4 hours	Yes	5 by 12/2	6 by 12/2	Yes
Colorado	No	Local option	Yes	Local Option		No
Connecticut	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 1/1		Yes
Delaware	Yes	Half day	Yes	5 by 8/31	5 by 8/31	Yes
Florida	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Georgia	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Hawaii	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 12/31		Yes
Idaho	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		No, but all districts do.
Illinois	No	State funds full-day, but, Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes

	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
Indiana	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 6/1		Yes
Iowa	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/15	6 by 9/15	Yes
Kansas	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 8/31	6 by 8/31	Yes
Kentucky	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 10/1		Yes
Louisiana	Yes/or test for 1st grade	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/30	6 by 9/30	Yes
Maine	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 10/15		Yes
Maryland	Yes	Local option	Yes	Local Option		Yes
Massachusetts	No	Full day	Yes	Local Option		Yes
Michigan	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 12/1		No
Minnesota	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Mississippi	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Missouri	No	Local Option/Almost all full day	Yes	5 by 8/1	6 by 8/1	Yes
Montana	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/10		Yes
Nebraska	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 10/15		Yes
Nevada	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/30		Yes
New Hampshire	No	Half day	Yes	Local Option		No
	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
New Jersey	No	Local option	Yes	Local option		No, but all offer.
New Mexico	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
New York	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 12/1	6 by start of school	Yes
North Carolina	No	Full day	Yes	5 by 10/16	6 by 10/16	Yes
North Dakota	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 8/31		No
Ohio	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/30		Yes
Oklahoma	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Oregon	No	Half day funded	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Pennsylvania	No	Local option	Yes	Local Option Ages 4 to 6	At least 5 years, 7 months.	Yes
Rhode Island	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 12/31		Yes
South Carolina	Yes	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
South Dakota	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Tennessee	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/30		Yes
Texas	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes

	Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance	Program Length	State Funds Provided	Kindergarten Entrance Age	First Grade Entrance Age	School Must Offer Kindergarten
Utah	Yes	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/2		Yes
Vermont	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 1/1		Yes
Virginia	Yes	Local option	State and Local	5 by 9/30	6 by 9/30	Yes
Washington	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 8/31		No
West Virginia	Yes	Full day	Yes	5 by 9/1		Yes
Wisconsin	No	Local option	Yes	5 by 9/1	6 by 9/1	Yes
Wyoming	No	Half day	Yes	5 by 9/15		Yes

Hawaii State Legislature

2001 Legislative Session

Bill Status

HB99

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Measure Title: RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Report Title: Mandatory Kindergarten (\$)

Description: Lowers the compulsory education age from 6 years to 5 years, making attendance in kindergarten mandatory.

Package: Keiki

Companion: SB93

Introduce.(s): ARAKAKI, TAKAI, THIELEN, KAHIKINA, MOSES, LUKE, AHU ISA, CASE, B. OSHIRO, MORITA, KAWAKAMI, M. OSHIRO, ABINSAY, TAKAMINE, MAGAOAY, CABREROS

Current Referral: EDN, JHA, FIN

Date		Status Text
1/18/01	H	Introduced and Pass First Reading
1/22/01	H	Referred to the committees on EDN, JHA, FIN, referral sheet 1.

\$ = Appropriation measure
 ConAm = Constitutional Amendment

Background Information

Arguments for and against Mandatory Kindergarten

Mandatory Kindergarten, Kindergarten or No Kindergarten: The Debate

There is a great deal of debating going on about half-day vs. full day kindergarten. The real problem that needs to be addressed is some type of kindergarten vs. no kindergarten. Should kindergarten be mandatory?

Most of the articles concerning this issue and according to my survey, many teachers are in favor of mandatory kindergarten. Both teachers working with children living in poverty and middle class children voiced this as an issue currently facing them. Munsil (Munsil, 1998) wrote, "Many children do benefit from a preschool or kindergarten setting if they live in poverty, abusive or neglectful conditions or are in other ways developmentally or socially disadvantaged". Unfortunately, many of these children are also not of the dominant white culture. Therefore, what the dominant culture values may not be what another culture values, thus putting them at a disadvantage. And if they never attend kindergarten or only come 50 of the 100 some days, as some of the children in my district do, when do they have time to make up the things that some children already come to school with knowing?

In Texas, "Bill 01 emphasizes early detection of reading problems, beginning in kindergarten, along with intensive remediation for those with problems. Imagine the huge advantage that the first-graders who attend kindergarten have over first-graders who do not"(Ramos, Pilarczyk Rinehart-Morgan & Briscoe). How do the children and the school districts then compete with children so obviously far ahead? I know from experience that most children of poverty are able to learn as well as any other children, but they are starting from a different point. As long as districts and their children are going to be compared at the same age levels to other districts, all children need to go to kindergarten to have a closer starting point.

The people who are opposing mandatory K-5 oddly are the ones who are most likely to send their children to school. Most often, they provide a learning environment and even send their children to preschool or an academically structured day care. However, some of these educated people will voice their opposition to mandatory k-5 because it is no longer a choice. Another section of the dominant culture whom would oppose mandatory k-5 are the people most likely to home school or people whom feel the government is trying to take over. Mandatory K-5 would be, "...the biggest anti-family education reforms in our state's history, effectively taking control of a 5 year-old's educational, destiny from his parents and giving it to the state"(Munsil,1998). On the other side, many uneducated parents may not understand the need for kindergarten and not send them, and unfortunately they are the ones that need to go so they are able to become viable competitors in our society.

So here we are left with this dilemma, do we say that only some parents have a choice or for the best interest of most children do we make it mandatory? I believe that some type of kindergarten should be mandatory whether it is half or a full day, so that all children have the opportunity to be successful in school and become a productive member of their community. Should some type of 5 year-old kindergarten (half vs. full day)continue to go non-mandatory we will continue to condemn a population of our society to the poverty cycle they are in. And portions of society and the government will continue to blame large urban school districts for the ills of their communities and ultimately society.

Full-day kindergarten? Best option is keeping it optional: By Tracy F. Munsil

In this article, the author, was debating the issue of half day vs. full day kindergarten. The author reported that full day kindergarten, "if adopted, it could constitute one of the biggest anti-family education reforms in our states history, effectively taking control of a 5 year-old's educational destiny from his parents an giving it to the state"(Munsil, 1998). Although the author does admit that children in poverty or that are

neglected do benefit from early childhood programs such as preschool or kindergarten, it is the author's position that it should be a parental choice, and not the rationale for mandatory kindergarten. The author also felt that the push for all day kindergarten comes from the new tougher academic standards and the number of both parents having to work outside of the home.

Social Promotion: Letters to Governor George W. Bush

Most of the letters written by a number of teachers from Texas, felt that social promotion bill that their governor wanted to pass, was not the answer or should not be passed alone without added reforms. The one most pertinent, reoccurring request, to my research was to make kindergarten mandatory. The teachers felt that if the children who didn't attend kindergarten had the benefits of it and of the early reading detection program there would be little need for social promotion and less retention.

Teachers seek to make kindergarten mandatory: By Jande Ann Morrison

In this article, Morrison talked about the need for mandatory K-5 in Las Vegas. Many of the children come into kindergarten or even 1st grade without having colored, held a pencil or played with play-doh. Thus starting them at a huge disadvantage. The opposition again felt it is the parents right to decide when and if their child should go to kindergarten.

All-Day kindergarten: Dissenting Voices (Section Summarized) by Raymond and Dorothy Moore

This article was broken into sections with different authors but it essentially has the same view point. The authors felt that by making kindergarten mandatory, parents were relinquishing their control over their children and giving them to the government. They felt, if the government had control of their 5 year olds, it could carry out its master plan to eventually control all of the public and do its bidding. A "re-engineering of society in the interest of the state"(Moore, R. & D., 1981). Instead they feel, "five and six year olds need to run free as lambs, guarded and shepherded by their parents and fenced in where necessary to train and protect them. They should not be regimented into school-type task..."(Moore, R.& D 1981), such as reading readiness workbooks, etc.

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St. Edwards: Social Promotion [On-line]. Available World Wide Web: <http://www.stedwards.edu/educ/eanes/promotion.htm>

The Center for Arizona Policy: Full-day kindergarten? Best option is keeping it optional[On-line]. Available World Wide Web: http://www.cenazpol.org/citizen/ctzn_nov98.htm

Background Information

SB 41

Bill introduced in State of Hawaii

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that studies have confirmed the importance of quality early childhood education. The Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children concluded that a child's early years are crucial to brain development and help to prepare the child for formal learning and academic achievement.

There is additional research showing that full-day kindergarten programs are preferable to half-day programs because developmentally appropriate full-day kindergarten programs offer additional benefits, especially for children from low socioeconomic or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, a full-day kindergarten teacher has the needed time to individualize the curriculum and to accommodate the individual differences of the children.

The legislature believes that early learning and preparation for all students to enter the first grade should be a major focus. While mandatory statewide kindergarten carries some expense, it is one of the best investments for the education of future generations of Hawaii children.

The purpose of this Act is to lower the compulsory education age from six years to five years, making attendance in kindergarten mandatory.

SECTION 2. Section 302A-411, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) The department shall establish and maintain kindergartens with a program of instruction as a part of the public school system[; provided that attendance shall not be mandatory]. No child shall attend any kindergarten unless the child will be at least five years of age [on or before December 31] before January 1 of the school year; provided that [a]:

- (1) A child attending a school that convenes after the regular school schedule shall be five years of age [on or before one hundred twenty-five] before one hundred twenty-six days following the date the school convenes; and [provided further that the]
- (2) The board shall develop informational guidance to promote the understanding of a child's readiness for kindergarten."

SECTION 3. Section 302A-1131, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[§302A-1131] Public schools; attendance. (a) Except as authorized by section 302A-411, no child shall attend any public school unless the child will be at least [six] five years of age before January 1 of the school year; provided that

- (1) A child attending a school that convenes after the regular school schedule shall be [six] five years of age [on or before one hundred twenty-five] before one hundred twenty-six days following the date the school [shall convene;] convenes; and

(2) The department may establish procedures and criteria to determine the psychological and physiological readiness of children for public school and may grant an exception in the case of a child who is found to be ready.

(b) All teachers who teach [in] kindergarten, and the first and second grades, and all principals of public schools shall enforce this section and require proof of age by birth certificates or certificates of registration, or if none can be obtained, then by satisfactory evidence."

SECTION 4. Section 302A-1132, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) Unless excluded from school or excepted from attendance, all children who will have arrived at the age of at least [six] five years, and who will not have arrived at the age of eighteen years, [by] before January 1 of any school year, shall attend either a public or private school for, and during, the school year, and any parent, guardian, or other person having the responsibility for, or care of, a child whose attendance at school is obligatory shall send the child to either a public or private school. Attendance at a public or private school shall not be compulsory in the following cases:

(1) Where the child is physically or mentally unable to attend school (deafness and blindness excepted), of which fact the certificate of a duly licensed physician shall be sufficient evidence;

(2) Where the child, who has reached the fifteenth anniversary of birth, is suitably employed and has been excused from school attendance by the superintendent or the superintendent's authorized representative, or by a family court judge;

(3) Where, upon investigation by the family court, it has been shown that for any other reason the child may properly remain away from school;

(4) Where the child has graduated from high school;

(5) Where the child is enrolled in an appropriate alternative educational program as approved by the superintendent or the superintendent's authorized representative in accordance with the plans and policies of the department, or notification of intent to home school has been submitted to the principal of the public school that the child would otherwise be required to attend in accordance with department rules adopted to achieve this result; or

(6) Where:

(A) The child has attained the age of sixteen years;

(B) The principal has determined that:

(i) The child has engaged in behavior [which] that is disruptive to other students, teachers, or staff; or

(ii) The child's non-attendance is chronic and has become a significant factor that hinders the child's learning; and

(C) The principal of the child's school, and the child's teacher or counselor, in consultation with the child and the child's parent, guardian, or other adult having legal responsibility for

or care of the child, develops an alternative educational plan for the child. The alternative educational plan shall include a process that shall permit the child to resume school.

The principal of the child's school shall file the alternative educational plan made pursuant to subparagraph (C) with the child's school record. If the adult having legal responsibility for or care of the child disagrees with the alternative educational plan, then the adult shall be responsible for obtaining appropriate educational services for the child."

SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2001-2002 and the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2002-2003 to lower the compulsory education age from six years to five years.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2001.

By Zaffirini
77R71 BDH-D

S.B. No. 30

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1-1
1-2 relating to mandatory kindergarten attendance in public schools.

1-3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-4 SECTION 1. Sections 25.085(b) and (c), Education Code, are
1-5 amended to read as follows:

1-6 (b) Unless specifically exempted by Section 25.086, a child
1-7 who is at least five [~~six~~] years of age on the first day of
1-8 September of the school year, or who is younger than five [~~six~~]
1-9 years of age and has previously been enrolled in kindergarten
1-10 [~~first-grade~~], and who has not yet reached the child's 18th
1-11 birthday shall attend school.

1-12 (c) On enrollment in prekindergarten [~~or kindergarten~~], a
1-13 child shall attend school.

1-14 SECTION 2. Section 29.009, Education Code, is amended to read
1-15 as follows:

1-16 Sec. 29.009. PUBLIC NOTICE CONCERNING PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR
1-17 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Each school district shall develop a
1-18 system to notify the population in the district with children who
1-19 are at least three years of age but younger than five [~~six~~] years
1-20 of age and who are eligible for enrollment in a special education
1-21 program of the availability of the program.

1-22 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately and applies
1-23 beginning with the 2001-2002 school year.

State of Alaska
Department of Education
Office of Data Management

District Enrollment as of October 1, 2000
FY2001

District	Pre- Elem.	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Ungraded	Total KG-12	Total PE-12	
Alaska Gateway Schools	0	27	40	28	37	43	38	46	47	44	49	32	32	27	0	490	490
Aleutian Region Schools	4	5	5	2	8	4	4	3	4	3	5	8	4	2	0	57	61
Aleutians East Borough Schools	0	24	18	19	19	29	24	19	21	28	30	21	25	24	0	301	301
Alyeska Central School	0	34	18	31	29	22	33	46	52	63	140	110	100	363	0	1041	1041
Anchorage Schools	403	3572	3808	3794	4115	3997	4103	3951	4142	3842	3763	3577	3263	3196	0	49123	49526
Annette Island Schools	6	23	28	20	24	24	32	20	26	23	29	25	22	29	0	325	331
Barrow Strait Schools	1	210	119	154	158	126	132	157	144	137	130	102	79	86	0	1734	1735
Bristol Bay Borough Schools	34	16	19	24	15	14	26	21	20	18	20	15	18	17	0	243	277
Chatham Schools	0	12	18	12	26	23	20	19	19	34	24	18	12	11	0	248	248
Chugach Schools	11	26	16	8	9	16	7	12	13	12	15	14	10	10	0	168	179
Copper River Schools	3	54	53	41	66	59	57	52	59	64	57	50	55	30	0	697	700
Cordova City Schools	13	19	35	36	44	35	42	41	47	38	41	37	24	15	0	465	478
Craig City Schools	6	43	45	46	42	48	37	50	49	42	36	38	38	23	0	537	543
Delta/Greely Schools	0	50	39	50	48	33	56	72	100	109	70	104	48	71	0	850	850
Denali Borough Schools	2	20	16	22	18	25	22	20	25	38	27	19	26	32	0	310	312
Dillingham City Schools	11	47	40	40	45	42	50	54	50	34	49	50	37	29	0	567	578
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools	104	1061	1188	1140	1245	1298	1266	1258	1241	1189	1670	1235	927	837	0	15555	15659
Galena City Schools	0	0	285	296	276	281	298	280	240	251	221	185	181	137	409	3340	3340
Haines Borough Schools	0	24	24	22	31	29	40	23	35	42	30	39	35	28	0	402	402
Hoonah City Schools	0	13	12	15	17	13	17	18	20	22	16	19	24	20	0	226	226
Hydaburg City Schools	0	5	6	7	4	9	8	8	4	5	10	7	11	7	0	91	91
Ikroavik Area Schools	4	50	55	37	54	58	48	52	51	65	62	56	31	33	0	652	656
Juneau Borough Schools	31	321	376	431	427	419	485	415	424	421	518	462	428	336	0	5463	5494
Kake City Schools	1	8	6	12	11	9	11	23	13	12	21	20	9	10	0	165	166
Kashunamiut Schools	0	24	35	25	27	28	28	23	25	26	23	21	16	12	0	313	313
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools	9	631	634	670	716	757	733	777	864	821	891	865	837	720	0	9916	9925
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools	48	142	186	159	211	177	207	203	207	207	278	189	152	151	0	2469	2517
Klawock City Schools	1	11	9	19	15	22	17	15	13	16	14	14	14	11	0	190	191
Kodiak Island Borough Schools	8	201	190	203	185	236	240	249	210	202	227	229	210	153	0	2735	2743
Kuspuk School District	0	30	37	34	42	36	54	43	35	32	40	34	32	25	0	474	474
Lake & Peninsula Borough Schools	48	45	33	42	34	45	32	41	38	45	32	37	22	34	0	480	528
Lower Kuskokwim Schools	17	372	344	328	405	301	226	290	316	263	293	208	174	158	0	3678	3695
Lower Yukon Schools	0	162	178	162	166	179	151	157	153	143	207	99	70	71	0	1898	1898
Mat-Su Borough Schools	84	809	837	853	957	1049	1031	1027	1019	1009	1327	1105	1040	861	0	12924	13008
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	94	89	90	57	0	330	330

District	Pre- Elem.	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Ungraded	Total KG-12	Total PE-12	
Nenana City Schools	0	204	158	160	178	156	154	180	151	157	147	111	77	56	0	1889	1889
Nome City Schools	0	59	57	52	86	80	54	51	57	51	63	72	38	41	0	761	761
North Slope Borough Schools	230	135	118	155	149	193	193	169	143	149	199	152	116	86	0	1957	2187
Northwest Arctic Borough Schools	42	255	161	164	192	197	174	180	193	151	166	118	100	95	0	2146	2188
Pelican City Schools	0	3	3	0	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	0	3	2	0	23	23
Petersburg City Schools	0	50	30	59	44	56	52	48	62	59	64	50	60	44	0	678	678
Pribilof Schools	0	10	13	6	16	17	9	12	11	9	15	9	10	7	0	144	144
<i>Saint Mary's District *</i>	4	10	10	16	8	14	12	13	12	8	9	6	9	4	0	131	135
Sitka Borough Schools	25	112	133	129	117	115	137	133	142	121	120	147	118	91	0	1615	1640
Skagway City Schools	0	13	9	11	11	9	15	5	9	8	7	12	10	13	0	132	132
Southeast Island Schools	0	29	16	16	18	18	27	28	20	22	18	26	27	20	0	285	285
Southwest Region Schools	0	98	77	53	71	58	67	70	68	60	40	31	42	36	0	771	771
Tanana Schools	0	7	4	5	6	7	5	11	6	3	7	8	8	3	0	80	80
Unalaska City Schools	3	28	39	27	32	22	28	31	27	23	28	25	20	22	0	352	355
Valdez City Schools	0	53	59	48	79	59	77	52	80	79	91	64	48	67	0	856	856
Wrangell Public Schools	6	36	36	34	41	40	43	33	41	41	50	38	27	31	0	491	497
Yakutat City Schools	1	10	12	16	14	14	12	18	11	13	12	13	16	6	0	167	168
Yukon Flats Schools	34	14	22	18	25	33	35	24	28	27	29	32	18	10	0	315	349
Yukon/Koyukuk Schools	0	28	32	44	46	33	41	53	47	54	33	24	24	36	0	495	495
Yupit Schools	0	30	39	30	34	39	32	26	30	39	26	35	26	18	0	404	404
Statewide Totals:	1194	9275	9780	9825	10694	10648	10743	10624	10865	10376	11586	10106	8893	8325	409	132149	133343

* Saint Mary's did not report enrollment data for FY2001. These numbers are estimates based on the FY2000 enrollments.

ECS Selected State Policies

Kindergarten

Education Commission of the States • 707 17th Street, Suite 2700 • Denver, CO 80202-3427 • 303-299-3600 • fax 303-296-8332 • www.ecs.org

The following summary includes policies enacted since 1998. Summaries are collected from *StateNet*, *Lexis-Nexis*, state Web sites and state newsletters. *StateNet* and *Lexis-Nexis* descriptions reflect the content of bills as introduced and may not reflect changes made during the legislative process. To assure that this information reaches you in a timely manner, minimal attention has been paid to style (capitalization, punctuation) or format.

State	Status/Date	Level	Summary
NH	Signed by governor 06/2000	pre-K-12	Relates to the establishment of an alternative kindergarten program within a school district; provides that school districts operating an approved alternative kindergarten program shall be eligible to receive adequate education grant distributions; provides for programs which were approved and in effect before a set date may continue to operate and receive per pupil adequate education grant amounts. Title: H.B. 1188 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
NH	Signed by governor 06/2000	pre-K-12	Makes an appropriation from the Education Trust Fund to the Department of Education for the funding of public kindergarten programs; adjusts the Adequate Education Grant amount for the Town of Orange for the fiscal year 2000; adjusts the property tax warrant in the Town of Orange. Title: S.B. 397 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
NY	Signed by governor 05/2000	pre-K-12	Relates to state aid for school districts; funds a workforce education program in New York City; creates the Universal Prekindergarten Reserve Fund; provides State aid for conversion to full day kindergarten; relates to administration of the School Tax Relief Program; relates to 1997 and later assessment rolls; relates to tuition assistance program awards; relates to allowances for members of the Legislature, funding for the Legislature and legislative commissions. Title: A.B. 9291 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
IN	Signed by governor 03/2000	pre-K-12	Requires the mailing, instead of publishing, of the school corporation performance report; provides that a child must be at least five years of age on July 1 of the 2000-2001 school year or any subsequent school year to officially enroll in a kindergarten program offered by a school corporation; provides that an assessment for early entry must consist of more than an intelligence test; states that \$ 25 is the maximum fee a parent must pay to obtain a waiver for early entry. Title: S.B. 489 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
NM	Signed by governor 02/2000	pre-K-12	Relates to full day kindergarten programs; provides funding. Title: H.B. 211 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
NJ	Signed by governor 01/2000	pre-K-12	Provides additional State aid to support full-day kindergarten programs in charter schools located in the Abbott districts. Title: A.B. 2773 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

OH Signed by governor 07/99 pre-K-12 Requires a child under the age of 6 who attends kindergarten to be considered of compulsory school age.
Title: H.B. 281
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

MO Signed by governor 07/99 pre-K-12 Amends existing law to add that child whose fifth birthday is before August 1 or is 5 at the commencement of the summer school session immediately prior to the beginning of the school year, whichever is earlier, is eligible for entry to kindergarten.
Title: H.B. 889
Source:

VA Signed by governor 01/99 pre-K-12 Clarifies in standard 1 of standards of Quality (SOG) that school divisions offering half-day kindergarten programs are to adjust their average daily membership (ADM) for kindergarten to reflect 85% of the total kindergarten ADM, as in appropriation act.
Title: H.B. 2141
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

HI Died 10/98 pre-K-12 Amends the age requirement for a child to attend kindergarten to be at least 5 years of age, to be more specifically determined by the Board of Education.
Title: S.B. 2871
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

KS Died 05/98 pre-K-12 Relates to school districts; authorizes the collection of fees for maintenance of kindergarten for full school days; imposes certain limitations.
Title: H.B. 2853 Kindergarten
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

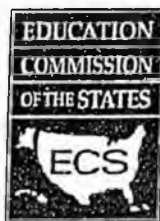
OK Signed by governor 05/98 pre-K-12 Intended to deal with increasing numbers of 4-year olds in kindergarten. Removes authority for underage children to attend kindergarten and first grade, eliminates income eligibility criteria for early childhood programs, and increases financing for districts offering early childhood programs.
Title: H.B. 1657
Source: Research Division, Oklahoma House of Representatives

TN Signed by governor 05/98 pre-K-12 BECAME LAW WITHOUT GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE. Requires children entering kindergarten to be five years of age 7/31, rather than present date of 9/30.
Title: S.B. 2787 Kindergarten Requirement
Source: Information for Public Affairs, Inc.

WA Died 05/98 pre-K-12 Establishes the full-day kindergarten grant program in the 1998-99 school year to qualify school districts; may increase the time in kindergarten from one half-day to one full-day for each annual average full-time equivalent kindergarten student enrolled.
Title: H.B. 2318 & H.B. 2329 Full-Day Kindergarten Program
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

WA Died 05/98 pre-K-12 Funds full day kindergarten programs.
Title: H.B. 2329 Full-Day Kindergarten Programs
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

NV Signed by governor 07/97 pre-K-12 Makes kindergarten attendance mandatory in Nevada effective July 1, 1999. Children age 6 on or before 9/30 must be admitted to kindergarten or, if he or she has completed kindergarten, be admitted to the first grade.
Title: A.B. 6
Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet



ECS StateNotes

Kindergarten

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Kindergarten: State Characteristics

ECS Information Clearinghouse
March 2000

KEY:

M = Mandatory

P = Permissive

LEA = Local Education Agency

State	Compulsory Age	Kindergarten Entrance Age	District Offering	Pupil Attendance
AL	7	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
AK	7	5 on or before 8/15	P	P
AS	6	5 by 9/1	M	M
AZ	6	5 before 9/1	M ¹	P
AR	5	5 on or before 9/15	M	M ²
CA	6	5 on or before 12/2	P	P
CO	7	LEA option	P	P
CT	7	5 by 1/1	M	P
DE	5	5 on or before 8/31	M	M
DC	5	5 by 12/31	M	M
FL	6	5 by 9/1	M	M ³
GA	7	5 by 9/1	M	P
HI	6	5 by 12/31	P	P
ID	7	5 by 9/1	P	P
IL	7	5 on or before 9/1	M ⁴	P
IN	7	5 by 6/1	M	P
IA	6	5 on or before 9/15	M	P
KS	7	5 on or before 8/31	M	P
KY	6	5 on or before 10/1	M	P
LA	7	5 by September 30 ⁵	M	M ⁶
ME	7	5 on or before 10/15	M ⁷	P
MD	5	5 by 12/31	M	M
MA	6	LEA option	M	P
MI	6	5 on or before 12/1	P	P
MN	7	5 by 9/1	M	P
MS	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
MO	7	5 as of 7/1 ⁸	P	P
MT	7	5 on or before 9/10	M	P
NE	7	5 on or before 10/15	M ⁹	P
NV	7	5 by 9/30	M	P
NH	6	LEA option	P	P

State	Compulsory Age	Kindergarten Entrance Age	District Offering	Pupil Attendance
NJ	6	LEA option	P	P
NM	5	5 by 9/1	M	P
NY	6	5 on or before 12/1	M	P
NC	7	5 on or before 10/16	M	P
ND 10	7	5 as of midnight 8/31	P	P
OH	6	5 on or before 9/30	M	M
OK	5	5 on or before 9/1	M	M
OR	7	5 on or before 9/1	P	P
PA	8	LEA option	P	P
PR	5	5 by 8/1	M	M
RI	6	5 on or before 12/31	M	M
SC	5	5 on or before 9/1	M	M 11
SD	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
TN	7	5 on or before 9/30	M	M
TX	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
UT	6	5 on or before 9/2	M	P
VT	7	5 on or before 1/1 12	M	P
VI	5	5 13	M	M
VA	5	5 on or before 9/30	M	M
WA	8	5 on or before midnight 8/31	p 14	P
WV	6	5 prior to 9/1	M	p 15
WI	6	5 on or before 9/1	M	P
WY	7	5 on or before 9/15	P	P

NOTES:

- Each school district shall establish a kindergarten program in Arizona, unless the governing board of the school district files an exemption claim with the department of education.
- In Arkansas, pupil attendance is mandatory, but parents can request a waiver.
- In Florida, the compulsory school age is 6; however, successful completion of kindergarten is mandatory and if it is not successfully completed a child may be older than 6 when entering first grade.
- Illinois permits districts to offer full-day kindergarten programs and receive full state aid.
- The kindergarten entrance age for the Orleans Parish, Louisiana School District is 5 by December 30.
- Louisiana specifies mandatory half-day attendance or test for first-grade readiness.
- In Maine, schools shall either operate a kindergarten program or otherwise provide for students to participate in such a program.
- As of July 1, 1997, the kindergarten entrance age in Missouri is 5 before August 1. In addition, beginning with the 1997-98 school year, St. Louis and Kansas City may require that child is 5 on or before any date between August 1 and October 1.
- Kindergarten is required for accreditation of districts in Nebraska, thus all LEAs offer it.
- In North Dakota, children with special talents/abilities born between 9/1 and 12/31 can be enrolled early, upon passing State Department of Education approved screening tests.
- The South Carolina Education Improvement Act of 1984 specifies that "5-year-olds shall attend kindergarten" but parents may obtain a waiver from this requirement.
- In Vermont, a school district may establish and enforce a regulation which requires that students admitted to kindergarten have attained the age of five on or before any date between August 31 and January 1.

13. In order to be eligible for kindergarten in the Virgin Islands, a child must reach the age of 5 during the calendar year in which they enter kindergarten.
14. LEAs in Washington can permit early entrance up to 3 months.
15. Kindergarten attendance in West Virginia is permissive, but prior to entrance into the first grade each child must successfully complete kindergarten. Under extraordinary circumstances a child may pass a county school board approved readiness test in lieu of kindergarten attendance.

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www.edweek.org/ew/001-17/07delay.html

Read "Grade Retention Doesn't Work," a Sept. 17, 1997 commentary.

Trouble Ahead for Older Students,
Study Finds

By Jessica Portner

Age matters. That, in a nutshell, is the conclusion of a new study about delaying children's entry into school or retaining them in the same grade once they get there.

The study, published last week in *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, could lend credence to educators who oppose holding children back. It could also give pause to parents who postpone enrolling their children in school in the hope of giving them an academic edge.

Because down the road, the study says, separating these children from others their own age may set them up for problems.

Researchers at the University of Rochester found that students who are older than their classmates because they started school late tend to have more behavioral problems in adolescence than students who are the average age for their grade.

"Parents want to keep kids out to give them a leg up on tests," said Dr. Robert S. Byrd, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester school of medicine in Rochester, N.Y. "But holding children out of school may not give them any advantage, and may cause problems."

Since the 1970s, the proportion of students who have delayed entering kindergarten has doubled, owing in part to holding children back to give them a competitive academic and social advantage, the report says. This and other trends, including a rise in the number of special education students who are

allowed more time to complete high school, as well as immigrant students who may need more time to catch up on coursework, have contributed to an aging school population in the United States.

The percentage of 12th graders in U.S. public schools who are 19, 20, or 21 has nearly doubled in recent years, from 4 percent in 1984 to 7 percent in 1994. ("Older Students Make Presence Felt in Classes," Sept. 18, 1996.)

For the study, Dr. Byrd and his colleagues at Rochester General Hospital analyzed interviews with parents of more than 9,000 children, ages 7 to 17, collected for the federal National Health Interview Survey in 1988.

Of the 26 percent of children in that sample who were old for their grades relative to their peers, about half had been retained a year. The other half had been held back from entering school by their parents, or because a child's birthday fell near a school's cutoff date.

Conduct Unbecoming

The researchers found that students who repeated a year were more likely than their younger classmates to manifest behavioral problems, such as crying excessively, cheating, lying, and losing their tempers. In addition, the study found, students who started school later had more behavioral difficulties than average-age students, especially when they reached adolescence.

At age 17, 7 percent of the average-age students in the study exhibited extreme behavioral problems. In comparison, 16 percent of the students who started kindergarten late displayed similar inappropriate conduct, while 31 percent of the students who had failed a grade for academic reasons showed extreme behaviors, the researchers found.

"Early on, children who have been delayed look like normal age-for-grade kids, whereas when they reach adolescence, they look more like kids who've failed a grade," Dr. Byrd said.

No Social Promotion

In general, older students may exhibit improper behavior because separation from students their own age might make them feel self-conscious and stigmatized, the study says.

But just because students who are older than their peers may have more behavioral problems should not be an argument for promoting children who aren't academically ready to advance to the next grade, some education groups said last week. ("Promote or Retain? Pendulum for Students Swings Back Again," June 11, 1997.)

"To pass kids along when they can't read--to socially promote them--is an outrage," said Bella Rosenberg, an assistant to the president of the American Federation of Teachers. The 950,000-member union published a national report last month that decried so-called social-promotion policies, but cautioned against conventional retention as well. ("AFT Report Assails Schools' Promotion, Retention Policies," Sept. 17, 1997.)

While overworked instructors rarely want to shoulder the unfinished work of another teacher, the question shouldn't be social promotion vs. retention, Ms.

Rosenberg argued. "The issue is getting these kids the academic help they need in a timely way so they can turn things around," she said.

While education researchers found the study intriguing, they said it should come with some caveats. "This is an important study in that it reiterates the importance of early intervention," said Nancy Karweit, a research scientist at the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, located at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

But Ms. Karweit said that because the Rochester study uses a decade-old survey, it may not accurately reflect current trends. More districts have halted the practice of retaining students in recent years, she said.

Ms. Karweit also noted that the study fails to distinguish between children who were held back from starting school by their parents to give them an academic boost and those who were retained by their kindergarten teachers because of learning disabilities, for example.

If this "early retention" were counted, Ms. Karweit said, it might shed more light on how problematic delaying a child's entry into school really is.

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Article

SCHOOL ISSUES ARTICLE

All Kids Make Progress in Kindergarten

After tracking 22,000 kindergartners for a full year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports mixed findings. Although most children who start school without basic school-readiness skills catch up by the end of the school year, their more-advantaged classmates continue to move further ahead to master more-complex skills.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported some good news and some bad news about the nation's kindergartners this week.

The good news is that most children who start school without basic school-readiness skills catch up by the end of the school year. The bad news is that they spend the entire year catching up; in the meantime, their more-advantaged classmates gain further mastery of more-complex reading and math skills, said Jerry West, one of the authors of the NCES report. The gap widens in more-sophisticated skill areas as children who have basic skills at kindergarten entry move on to more-advanced skills, West said.

"There's certainly mixed news in the report," said Gary W. Phillips, acting commissioner of education statistics for NCES, at a press conference this week. "The good news is that during kindergarten, all types of students improve their readiness for school. On the other hand, the pattern of group differences entering kindergarten is still there at the end of kindergarten. Furthermore, the gap between at-risk and more-advantaged students is reduced for more basic skills but widened for more complex skills."

The report, the Kindergarten Year, is part of an ongoing, six-year, early childhood longitudinal study. It tracks 22,000 children from 1,000 elementary schools, who represent the nation's 4 million kindergarten students. The study began in the fall of 1998, when students were evaluated before they entered kindergarten. This is the second full report and reflects data that compares the children's skills in the fall of 1998 with their abilities at the end of the kindergarten year in the spring of 1999.

The overall purpose of the study is to gather information about children's knowledge and skills from the beginning of kindergarten through fifth grade. It will include information about social, emotional, and physical development, such as specifics regarding children's home environments, home educational practices, school and classroom environments, curriculum, and teacher qualifications. The study costs \$6 million annually, West said.

"The report isn't terribly surprising," said Edward F. Zigler, who founded Head Start 35 years ago. He is currently Sterling Professor of Psychology at Yale University. Kids who grow up in poverty have long been at an academic disadvantage compared with children from middle class homes, Zigler said. Although that isn't news to most educators, Head Start continues to fall short.

The program serves only 42 percent of the children who live in poverty and does not serve at-risk children who live in households just above the poverty level, he noted.

The report further substantiates school-readiness differences based on varying early childhood home and school experiences. "There is a high correlation between family income and preschool experience," Zigler told *Education World*. "For poor families, preschool is too expensive. Middle class homes have better learning environments plus [kids] get preschool, so they're ahead of the children from the poor homes. Plus poor children usually had lousy childcare. Put all those things together, and they are behind."

"Many countries have universal early childhood programs," Zigler continued. "We do all this talk about investing in children and in education in this country but we're not making any progress."

Zigler thinks progress is on the horizon, however, mainly because of the education debates between presidential candidates Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush. "We are in a wonderful shape, thanks to the debate about providing universal preschool education," Zigler said. "It is a really good opportunity for us to accomplish a lot for preschool. Gore pushed for universal pre-kindergarten, and Bush wants all children to be reading by third grade. Bush will soon realize he can't wait to start helping children in kindergarten."

The disparity between skills and knowledge among kindergarteners follows children through their entire education experience, Zigler said. "This is not frustrating only for the kids; it is equally frustrating for teachers to have more than one of these at-risk students," he said. "Teachers talk about it to me all the time. If they have three or more at-risk students in the classroom, everyone's learning suffers. Everybody in the class loses, not just those three kids."

We need to do more, said Richard W. Riley, secretary of education, at the press conference. "This report clearly shows that kindergarten benefits all children," Riley said. "It also reminds us that a half-day of kindergarten and regular school cannot do everything."

The report reinforces the findings of the report released earlier this year that identified four risk factors that result in poor reading and math skills. Those factors include living in a single-parent household, being a welfare recipient, having a mother with less than a high school education, and living in a home in which English is not the primary language.

Read *Study Looks for Keys to Early School Success*, a story about the first full NCES report, *America's Kindergartners*.

The NCES researchers also found that some patterns identified at the beginning of school continue throughout the year. For example, older children have higher-level skills and knowledge than their younger classmates do. The researchers also found that children whose mothers have more education stay on task more, seem more eager to learn, and pay closer attention than do children whose mothers have less education. Teachers also continue to report that children who have fewer risk factors are more likely to accept peer ideas and form friendships and are less likely to argue, fight, or get angry than children who have more risk factors are.

One "interesting" new finding the report notes is that kids in all-day kindergarten get crankier than kids in partial-day kindergarten do, although all-day kindergartners make more gains academically. The report suggests caution in interpreting differences in behavior, though, because researchers observed the same differences when children entered the program in the fall. Children in full-day programs may demonstrate slightly higher skills and knowledge than their peers in partial-day programs, but they are more likely to exhibit a higher frequency of some problem behaviors, such as how often they argue and fight with others.

Diane Weaver Dunne
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SCHOOL ISSUES ARTICLE

Starting Kindergarten Late: How Does It Affect School Performance?

Does entering kindergarten late help some children do better in school? The answer isn't as simple as it sounds! Opinions -- and the results of several recent surveys -- are divided on that question.

One child in seven in the United States either entered kindergarten late or was required to repeat kindergarten, according to data from the 1993 and 1995 National Household Education Surveys. Since the 1970s, another report shows, the proportion of children who have delayed entering kindergarten has doubled, mainly because parents want to give them a competitive and social advantage.

How does entering kindergarten late or repeating the grade affect children's school performance? The 1993 and 1995 surveys found notable differences between the later school performance of students who were held out of kindergarten and students who repeated kindergarten.

The performance of first- and second-graders who were held out of kindergarten was better than that of first- and second-graders who entered kindergarten at the prescribed age.

On the other hand, children who had to repeat kindergarten were doing worse than other first- and second-graders.

Those are highlights from a statistical analysis report, titled "The Elementary School Performance and Adjustment of Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Findings from National Surveys," published in November 1997 by the National Center for Education Statistics.

MOST DRAMATIC DIFFERENCES

Following are the areas in which the report shows students with delayed kindergarten entry differed most dramatically from students who entered on time:

First- and second-grade students in 1993 who had been kept out of kindergarten until they were older were less likely than other students to draw negative feedback from teachers about their academic performance or conduct in class.

In 1995 the delayed entry students were less likely than students who started kindergarten on time to have repeated first or second grade.

First- and second-graders who were retained in kindergarten had more school performance problems than children who didn't repeat.

First- and second-graders in 1993 who had repeated kindergarten were more likely than children who had not repeated to receive negative feedback from their teachers.

BACKGROUND FACTORS HAVE IMPACT

In the 1995 survey, controlling for demographic, socioeconomic, and development factors basically eliminated the differences between students who entered kindergarten late and other first- and second-graders. On the other hand, when those factors were taken into account in the 1993 survey, the differences in student school performance were reduced but remained significant.

No evidence was found in the surveys that children who may have been at heightened risk of having difficulties in school benefited from, or were hurt by, delayed kindergarten entry more than other children. Neither starting kindergarten late nor retention in kindergarten were shown to relate significantly to first- and second-grade school performance or adjustment.

THE CONS OF DELAYED KINDERGARTEN

Not every study seems to indicate that delaying a child's entry into kindergarten is beneficial. A study published in *Pediatrics*, the American Academy of Pediatrics journal, might support educators who oppose delaying children's entry into kindergarten. Students who are older because they started school late tend to have more behavioral difficulties in adolescence than students who are the average age for the grade, according to research done at the University of Rochester.

"Parents want to keep kids out to give them a leg up on tests," said Dr. Robert S. Byrd, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester [N.Y.] School of Medicine. "But holding children out of school may not give them any advantage, and may cause problems."

The trend toward delayed entry into kindergarten, along with an increase in the number of special education students who take more time to complete high school and of immigrant students who may need more time to catch up on work, has created an aging school population in the United States. According to an October 1997 article in *Education Week*, the percentage of 12th graders in U.S. public schools who are 19, 20, or 21 has nearly doubled, from 4 percent in 1984 to 7 percent in 1994.

For the study published in *Pediatrics*, staff at Rochester General Hospital studied interviews with parents of more than 9,000 children from 7 to 17 years old, gathered in 1988 for the federal National Health Interview Survey.

In that survey, 26 percent of children were older than their peers were. About half had been retained a year, and the other half had been delayed in starting school by their parents or by a school's cutoff date for entry. Students who started school later had more behavioral problems than students of average age, especially when they hit adolescence, the study showed. According to this research, at 17, 16 percent of students who started kindergarten later demonstrated extremely inappropriate conduct, while 7 percent of the average-age students exhibited similar inappropriate behavior.

A FEW CAVEATS

Some education groups have said the possibility that older students may have more behavioral problems does not make it advisable to promote children who are not academically ready for the next grade. Other experts have criticized the Rochester hospital study for using data that was years old and possibly not applicable at this time.

Complicating the issue of kindergarten readiness is the fact that parents and teachers or school administrators may view readiness very differently. An article titled "How Should Children Be Prepared For Kindergarten?" from the Educational Resource Network on the Web recognizes that much of the diversity among 5-year-olds is due to "developmental differences, the varying rates at which individuals mature." Yet some of the diversity, the article asserts, may be based on different ways parents prepare, or don't prepare, their children for kindergarten.

The article is based on information from a survey by Kimberly Harris and Shelly Knudsen Lindauer. Harris and Lindauer sought to learn what parents and teachers believe about kindergarten readiness. They surveyed two-parent families from diverse economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds in urban and rural areas.

"When asked what parents could do to better prepare their children," the article states, "teachers most frequently mentioned the areas of receptive language, cognitive-attention/problem-solving, and small muscle coordination." Parents, however, tended to emphasize helping children with pre-reading, math, and social skills. According to Harris and Lindauer, "clarifying goals for parents is essential," and communication between home and school about expectations for children entering kindergarten will help those children succeed in school.

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Related Resources

"Parent and Teacher Priorities for Kindergarten Preparation," *Child Study Journal*, Volume 18, Number 2, p. 61.
Young Children. (November 1990): 21-23. The position statement on school readiness from The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
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02/02/1998

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02/02/1998

Executive Summary

The kindergarten year marks a period of rapid change in the ways children think about themselves and the world around them (Bredekamp and Copple 1997; Sameroff and McDonough 1994). This change is influenced by both developmental factors (e.g., age, maturation) and environmental factors (e.g., schooling, home educational activities, family resources). Across this first year of schooling, children will acquire the knowledge and skills that will prove integral to their future success in school and in life.

Children enter school demonstrating a vast array of knowledge and skills, some children further along than others (West, Denton, and Germino Hausken 2000). The kindergarten year serves multiple purposes and is geared toward the development of both cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills (Seefeldt 1990). And, depending on the child, knowledge and skills develop in different areas and at different rates across this year of school.

To enrich the picture of children's first experience in formal education—the kindergarten year—we need to understand the knowledge and skills children possess as they enter kindergarten and we need to gain insight into how these develop across the kindergarten year. This report attempts to answer two basic sets of questions about children's knowledge and skill acquisition during the kindergarten year.

1. What gains are children making from the fall of their kindergarten year to the spring of their kindergarten year in their reading and mathematics knowledge and skills? Do these gains differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? As children are exiting kindergarten and preparing for first grade, how do their knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, family risk factors)?
2. What gains are children making in specific knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing letters, recognizing numbers, paying attention)? Do children's gains in specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics? At the end of their kindergarten year when children are preparing for first grade, do their

specific knowledge and skills differ by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics (e.g., age, mother's education)?

The findings in this report come from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K). The ECLS-K, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), selected a nationally representative sample of kindergartners in the fall of 1998 and is following these children through the end of fifth grade. The full ECLS-K sample is comprised of approximately 22,000 children who attended about 1,000 kindergarten programs during the 1998–99 school year. The children attended both public (85 percent) and private (15 percent) kindergartens that offered full-day (55 percent) and part-day (45 percent) programs. All kindergarten children within the sampled schools were eligible for the sampling process, including language minority and special education students. The sample includes children from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the fall of 1998, about 95 percent of kindergartners were entering school for the first time. This report focuses on these first-time kindergartners. When information on children's cognitive knowledge and skills is presented, this report focuses on the children in the sample who received the cognitive assessment in English in both the fall and the spring of their kindergarten year.¹

Findings

Question 1: Gain, Differences in Gain, and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Knowledge and Skills

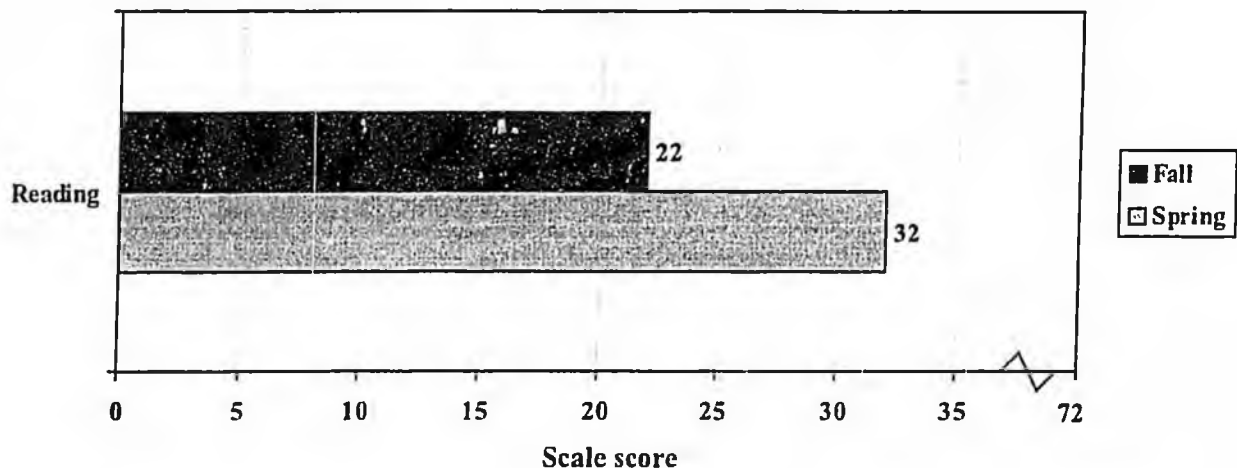
To address the first set of questions, the change from the fall of kindergarten to the spring of kindergarten in children's reading and mathematics scale scores was examined. These scores reflect children's overall performance in these domains. The possibility that particular groups of children might demonstrate more or less gain over the kindergarten was also explored

¹ Approximately 30 percent of Hispanic children and 19 percent of Asian children were not assessed in English and are not included in the estimates related to cognitive knowledge and skills. The Hispanic children who were proficient in Spanish were assessed in Spanish (for details see *Methodology and Technical Notes, Constructs, and Variables Used in Analysis*). The Hispanic and the Asian children not assessed in English are included in the estimates related to noncognitive knowledge and skills. And, due to specific instructions listed in the child's school record, about one-half percent of children were excluded from the cognitive assessment based on a disability.

(e.g., children at risk for later school difficulty might not acquire reading knowledge and skills at the same rate as children not at risk for later school difficulty).

As their kindergarten year comes to a close, children demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than they demonstrated as they entered school for the first time. Children's reading scale scores increased by 10 points from the fall to the spring (figure A). Therefore, the gain from fall to spring is about one standard deviation (an appreciable increase).

Figure A.—First-time kindergartners' mean reading scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999

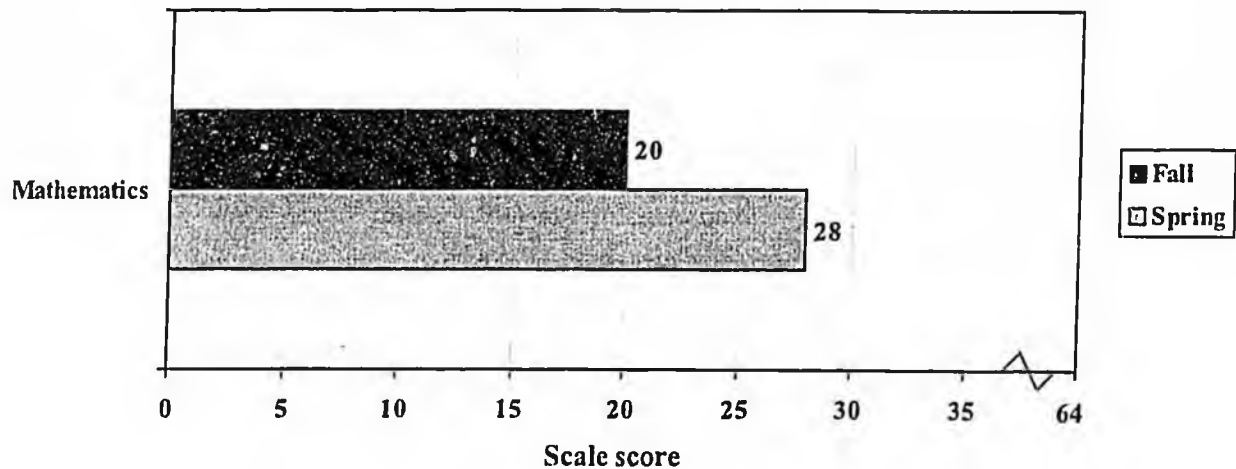


NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Children's mathematics scores increased by eight points from the fall to the spring (figure B). Thus, children's mathematics knowledge and skills increased about one standard deviation during the kindergarten year. For the most part, the gains children demonstrate in their overall reading and mathematics knowledge and skills do not differ markedly by child, family, and kindergarten program characteristics. For example, there is not more than a two-point difference in the gains children demonstrate in reading and mathematics by mother's education.

Figure B.—First-time kindergartners' mean mathematics scale scores: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



NOTE: The ECLS-K assessment was designed for both kindergarten and first-grade children. Therefore a mean score of approximately 30 in the spring of kindergarten is not unexpected.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

The absence of a substantial differential gain in children's general reading and mathematics knowledge and skills is seen again when we consider other characteristics of children, their families, and their kindergarten programs, such as children's age as they enter school and family risks for later school difficulty. The same is true when we look at school type and kindergarten program type. However when we consider the specific knowledge and skills children are acquiring (e.g., letter recognition, addition and subtraction, making friends, paying attention), children are developing particular cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills at different rates.

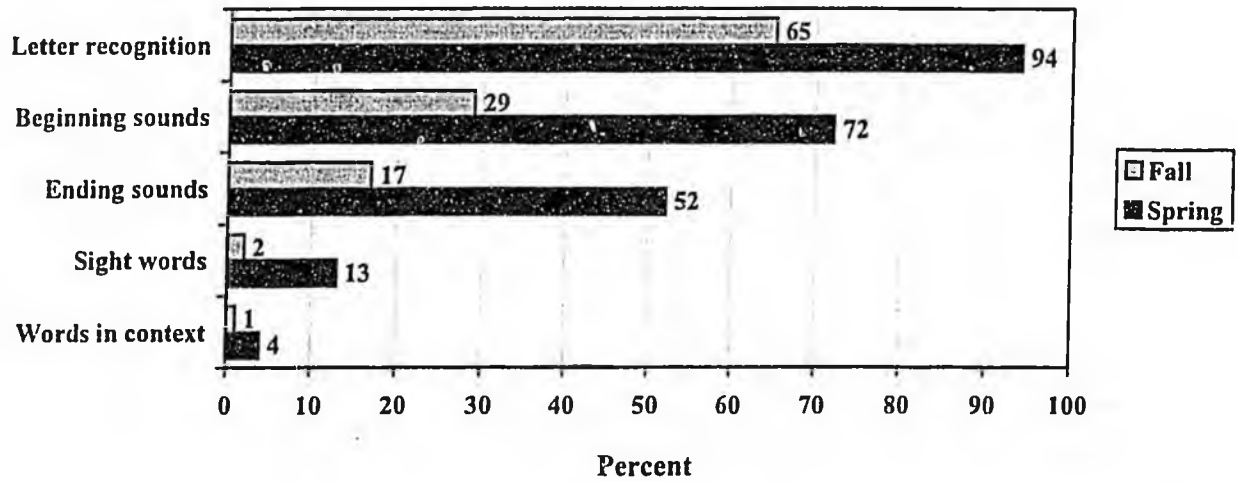
Question 2: Gain, Differences in Gain and Spring Kindergarten Status in Children's Specific Knowledge and Skills

To address the second set of questions, children's specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills were examined. Furthermore, the question of whether certain groups of children were more likely to acquire specific cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills than others was explored (e.g., does the probability that children acquire the reading skill of sight-word recognition vary by the level of their mother's education?). Finally, information is presented on the specific knowledge and skills children demonstrate in the spring of their kindergarten year as they are preparing for first grade.

In addition to the overall reading and mathematics scale scores, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on specific proficiencies. In the reading domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on: letter recognition; understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words; understanding of the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words; sight-word recognition; and understanding of words in context. In the mathematics domain, the ECLS-K assessment battery provides information on: recognizing single-digit numbers and basic shapes; counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns, and comparing the relative size (dimensional relationship) of objects; recognizing two-digit numbers, identifying the next number in a sequence, and identifying the ordinal position of an object; performing simple addition and subtraction; and performing basic multiplication and division.

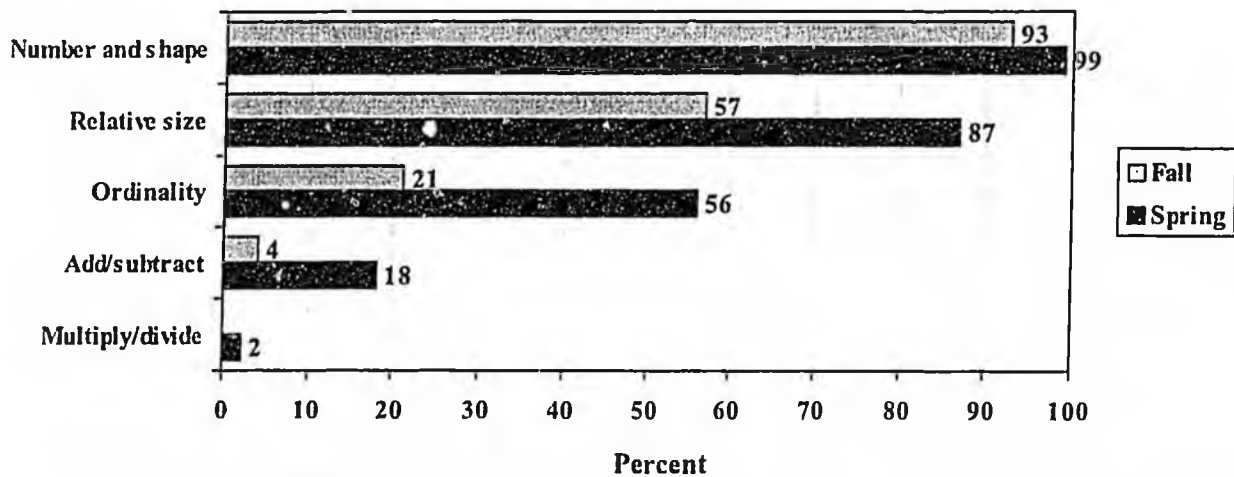
Across the kindergarten year, children acquire specific knowledge and skills in reading and mathematics (figures C and D). By the end of their kindergarten year, nearly all children recognize their letters, their numbers and their shapes. The percent of children who can recognize words by sight and demonstrate an understanding of words in context, though still relatively low, increased from kindergarten entry to kindergarten exit. And the numbers of children adding and subtracting also increased from kindergarten entry to kindergarten exit. We see less dramatic changes in children's social skills and approaches to learning across the kindergarten year, with a large percentage of children exhibiting prosocial behaviors and positive approaches to learning.

Figure C.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific reading knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

Figure D.—Percentage of first-time kindergartners demonstrating specific mathematics knowledge and skills: Fall 1998 and spring 1999



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999.

When we examined children's overall gains in reading and mathematics knowledge and skills, as measured by their reading and mathematics scale scores, by child, family and kindergarten program characteristics, we found little evidence of differential gains from fall to spring. Based on those findings, the conclusion might be that from fall to spring of kindergarten, all children are acquiring knowledge and skills at approximately the same rate, and that they are learning the same things. However, this is not completely accurate. We see a very different picture when we look at children's acquisition of specific knowledge and skills.

To illustrate, children from the more disadvantaged backgrounds (those with at least one risk factor) are closing the gap in basic skills (i.e., recognizing their letters and counting beyond 10, recognizing the sequence in basic patterns and comparing the relative size of objects). However, these same children lag further behind their more advantaged classmates when it comes to gaining more sophisticated reading and mathematics knowledge and skills (i.e., recognizing words by sight or solving simple addition and subtraction problems). In fact, the gap has widened. The same basic patterns we see when we consider cumulative family-risk factors are present when we consider other child characteristics, such as race/ethnicity.

Furthermore, to illustrate, we see some evidence of differential gain in the frequency with which children demonstrate specific social skills. According to their teachers, younger children are more likely to acquire the skill of paying attention than their older counterparts during the kindergarten year.

As children are completing kindergarten and preparing for first grade, almost all (94 percent) children know their letters, and 72 percent understand the letter-sound relationship at the beginning of words, while 52 percent understand the letter-sound relationship at the ending of words. In fact, 13 percent demonstrate a proficient understanding of words by sight and 4 percent, words in context (figure C). In mathematics, 99 percent of children recognize their numbers and basic shapes, and the majority (87 percent) demonstrate understanding of dimensional relationships among objects (relative size). Just over half (56 percent) of children demonstrate an understanding of the mathematical concept ordinality. Moreover, 18

percent show they can add and subtract, and 2 percent are successfully performing multiplication and division (figure D).

Summary

Young children need knowledge and new experiences to develop and thrive. Schools offer a plethora of learning and development opportunities for children. Consequently, it is not surprising that across the kindergarten year children are rapidly acquiring the knowledge and skills integral to succeed in school and life.

This report presents a simple picture of the gains children make across the kindergarten year. The ECLS-K will follow these children through the fifth grade. We will be able to track children's performance and the differences in their performance, not only by child and family characteristics but also by teacher and school characteristics. This report represents only the beginning of understanding the role of the kindergarten year in children's development. Future analyses, based on the information from the ECLS-K, will help us understand the role of such things as child care, home educational environment, teachers' instructional practices, class size and the general climate, and facilities and safety of the schools.

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Senate Bill 41

"An Act Kindergarten programs and compulsory education; funding grants for public schools; and providing for an effective date."

Sponsor Statement

The aim of a Kindergarten program is to provide a strong foundation from which students can grow to become active participants in life-long learning. Children's early learning experiences have a profound effect on their development. In Kindergarten, children's receptivity to new influences and capacity to learn are at their peak. During this period, they acquire a variety of important skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will affect their ability to learn, their personal development, their relationships with others, and their future participation in society. The learning experienced in Kindergarten provides the basis for the acquisition of literacy skills (including technological and computer literacy), mathematics skills, and science skills, and prepares them for successful learning experiences in later grades.

This bill would require that all children be enrolled in a kindergarten program. This legislation is based on the belief that early learning and preparation for all students who enter the first grade should be a major focus.



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March 29, 2001

Senator Bettye Davis
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol (MS 3100)
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Davis:

Thank you for addressing the Alaska Association of School Administrators on Monday, March 26, 2001. I appreciated hearing your thoughts and concerns about accountability and the exit exam. It is encouraging to note that legislators, educators, and the general public are all speaking about the importance of essential learning for our students. We seem to disagree only in the implementation details. I think the committee substitute for SB 133 goes a long way in addressing important issues for students and testing.

I commend your unrelenting support of public education and especially emphasis on the importance of early entry into school. As you know, there are many children who need the enriched environment of schools to enhance their learning potential.

My 26 years of service in public education in Alaska convinces me that we have a strong school system. I am confident that the joint efforts of legislators, educators, and the public will strengthen our work with our children as we ensure that all have essential skills while nurturing their individuality.

Sincerely,

Patricia R. Chesbro
Superintendent

LETTER OF SUPPORT