

Full-Day Kindergarten: *An Advocacy Guide*



Full-Day K Research

Advocacy Strategies

Coalition-Building Techniques

Organizing Tools

Policy Recommendations

Political Considerations

Effective Legislation

Full-Day Kindergarten: An Advocacy Guide was co-created by the National Education Association and Collaborative Communications Group.

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The National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's 2.8 million members work at every level of education—from preschool to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States.

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Collaborative Communications Group is a strategic consulting firm that builds the capacity of individuals, organizations and networks to work collaboratively to create solutions that are better than any single entity could produce on its own. Through strategic consulting, dialogue and convening, creation of publications and tools, and community conversations, Collaborative helps organizations and networks to identify, share and apply what they know in ways that increase productivity and effectiveness. The ultimate objective of Collaborative's work is the improvement of the quality of public education and community life.

Full-Day Kindergarten: *An Advocacy Guide*

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Methodology

To develop this guide, we began by reviewing the contemporary research on full-day kindergarten. We then interviewed kindergarten teachers, experienced NEA state-level staff and elected leaders. The interviews were designed to gather information about what we should include in the guide—not just content, but tools and techniques that readers and activists would find helpful. Many of the people we interviewed had extensive experience as state-level activists in the areas of early childhood education and kindergarten. Finally, we conducted case studies, looking carefully at how NEA affiliates in the states of West Virginia and New Mexico worked to support the passage of state-wide full-day kindergarten policies.

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Kindergarten is a magical time in a child’s life. During kindergarten, children learn to get along with each other, they discover the joy and challenge of reading and writing, and they learn what it means to be in school.

We know that kindergarten is a key “bridge year” for children—a year for children to move from unstructured play and early learning to the more structured learning environment of formal schooling.

For children to grow and thrive in kindergarten, they need a few very simple things: they need care and attention from their teacher and education support professionals; they need developmentally appropriate activities that engage them as young learners; and they need time to process information and to move between activities. Quality full-day kindergarten programs ensure that children have the time and attention they need from their teachers to be successful learners.

Kindergarten teachers prefer full-day kindergarten to half-day kindergarten. Studies show that parents prefer full-day kindergarten as well. States and communities should support these views and provide resources to ensure that quality full-day kindergarten programs are available to every child. This includes resources for providing teachers and education support professionals with the training and support they need to succeed in kindergarten classrooms.

Today approximately 60 percent of America’s children attend full-day kindergarten—it’s time that we make full-day kindergarten available to all of America’s children!



Reg Weaver, *President*

National Education Association



“Without question, today the number one challenge facing American public education is the achievement gaps among different students. And, also without question, NEA is committed to doing everything within its power to close these gaps.”

—Reg Weaver, President and
John I. Wilson, Executive Director,
National Education Association

The National Education Association (NEA) has embarked on a broad-based initiative to close achievement gaps in American public education. As part of this process, NEA is developing tools and techniques to help affiliates address gaps on a range of fronts—including class size, parent involvement and early childhood education.

In this advocacy guide, we focus on the importance of full-day kindergarten as a strategy for closing gaps. Why full-day kindergarten? Full-day kindergarten provides an essential bridge between prekindergarten and the primary grades. It enables children to develop the academic, social and emotional skills they need to be successful. By laying a strong foundation, full-day kindergarten can boost student performance, access and attainment later in school.

Achievement Gaps Defined

NEA identifies achievement gaps because we choose to include the many students who may not be achieving at the high standards needed to be successful. Most of us are familiar with the gaps associated with these student characteristics:

- **Race and ethnicity**
- **Income levels**
- **Language background**
- **Disability status**
- **Gender**

In addition, we recognize that gaps across these categories are evidenced in a variety of data, including but not limited to:

- **Performance:** Who is scoring at the proficient or above levels on standardized state assessments, the National Assessment for Educational Progress and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)?
- **Access:** Who is enrolled in Advanced Placement classes, who has access to algebra in the middle grades and who is taking college preparatory classes?
- **Attainment:** Who graduates on time, goes on to college or technical training, completes postsecondary education or attains advanced degrees?

—Source: NEA, *Closing Achievement Gaps: An Association Guide*

How to Use the Guide

This guide is designed to give NEA leaders, members and staff the tools, resources and research you will need to successfully advocate for full-day kindergarten in your state. Early childhood advocates, parents and community groups can also use the guide to bring full-day kindergarten to their state or district. All audiences can use the guide as a starting point for gathering information and developing an effective legislative plan.

As you page through the guide, look at the overview of each section. In some instances, basic advocacy and organizing tips are given—experienced advocates may want to skip over these tips.

- **The first section** of the guide includes the latest research on full-day kindergarten, emphasized with vital talking points.
- **In the second section**, you'll find tools for mapping the policy and political landscape pertaining to full-day kindergarten in your state.
- **In the third section**, we've included resources for planning your legislative strategy—advocacy tips, coalition building strategies, responses to opposition arguments, and communication techniques, among other tools.
- **The fourth section** outlines NEA's full-day kindergarten policy priorities. This section also includes model legislation.
- **The last section** describes the passage of full-day kindergarten legislation in New Mexico and West Virginia. Take time to read through these state stories as you begin your own journey.
- **Throughout**, you'll find examples of effective practices used by full-day kindergarten supporters across the United States.

Full-Day Kindergarten Helps Close Achievement Gaps: What the Research Says



“Attempting to repair reading skills in fourth grade is far more expensive and risky than guaranteeing good reading skills in kindergarten.”

—Reg Weaver, President,
National Education Association

SECTION OVERVIEW:

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN HELPS CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS: WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

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Introduction

Full-day kindergarten is a sound educational investment. Research demonstrates that full-day kindergarten, though initially more costly than half-day kindergarten, is worth the expense. Full-day kindergarten not only boosts students' academic achievement, it strengthens their social and emotional skills as well. Additionally, it offers benefits to teachers and parents—teachers have more time to work with and get to know students, and parents have access to better teaching and care for their children. Everyone gains!

Full-Day Kindergarten Boosts Student Achievement

Longitudinal data demonstrate that children in full-day classes show greater reading and mathematics achievement gains than those in half-day classes.

In their landmark longitudinal study of full-day versus half-day kindergarten, researchers Jill Walston and Jerry West found that students in full-day classes learned more in reading and mathematics than students in half-day classes—after adjusting for differences in race, poverty status and fall achievement levels, among other things.

All students experienced learning gains. By giving students and teachers more quality time to engage in constructive learning activities, full-day kindergarten benefits everyone.

Full-day kindergarten can produce long-term educational gains, especially for low-income and minority students.

In a study comparing national and Indiana research on full-day and half-day kindergarten programs, researchers found that compared to half-day kindergarten, full-day kindergarten leads to greater short-term and long-term gains.

In one Indiana district, for example, students in full-day kindergarten received significantly higher basic skills test scores in the third, fifth and seventh grades than students who attended half-day or did not attend kindergarten at all. The researchers also found that the long-term benefits of full-day kindergarten appeared to be greatest for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. And full-day kindergarten helped to narrow achievement gaps between groups of students.

In a study of over 17,000 students in Philadelphia, researchers found that “by the time they reached the third and fourth grades, former full-day kindergartners were more than twice as likely as children without any kindergarten experiences—and 26 percent more likely than graduates of half-day programs—to have made it there without having repeated a grade.”

—Deborah Viadero, Reporter, *Education Week*



Full-Day Kindergarten Improves Students' Social and Emotional Skills

A full day of learning offers several social, emotional and intellectual benefits to kindergarteners. They have more time to focus on activities, to reflect on activities and to transition between activities.

If children are taught by quality teachers using age-appropriate curricula in small classroom settings, they can take full advantage of the additional learning time—social, emotional and intellectual—that a full day allows. Further, research demonstrates that children adjust well to the full-day format. While some parents worry that full-day kindergarten is too much for kids, research shows that 5-year-olds are more than ready for a longer day. They also do better in a setting that allows them time to learn and explore activities in depth.

Full-Day Kindergarten Is a Sound Educational Investment

Recent research has demonstrated that funds invested in quality early education programs produce powerful returns on investment.

Viewing half-day kindergarten as a vehicle for saving money is shortsighted. In recent years, a number of researchers have begun doing economic analyses of early childhood education programs. They are finding that investments in quality early childhood programs generate returns of 3-to-1 or even higher—that's at least \$3 for every \$1 invested.

Robert Lynch, a researcher who has extensively studied this issue, points out, "Even economists who are particularly skeptical about government programs make an exception for high-quality early childhood development programs."

By helping to develop students' academic abilities, and by improving their social and emotional skills, effective early childhood programs can lower grade retention and dropout rates.

Full-day kindergarten provides a bridge between prekindergarten programs and the early elementary years.

Full-day kindergarten enables students to successfully navigate from prekindergarten to early elementary grades. In America today, an estimated 69 percent of children attend community-based prekindergarten programs. For most children, kindergarten is not their first full-day experience. For all children, even those who are away from home for the first time, full-day kindergarten sets the stage for first grade and beyond by helping students make the transition to more structured learning.

"The practice of scheduling kindergarten students for only half-day has been more a function of economics (less expensive to schedule two groups of children for half-day each) than of early childhood education concerns."

—Sherrill Martinez,
Director, Planning and
Research Section, Kansas
State Department of
Education

Full-day kindergarten enables teachers to assess students' needs and abilities more effectively, leading to early intervention.

Children spend more time in a formal school setting in full-day kindergarten. Teachers have more time to get to know kids, and to work with specialists to identify and evaluate kids' needs, skills and abilities. School personnel can then work with parents to develop plans to address children's learning challenges early. This saves money and resources over the long term, and increases the odds that children will be successful later in school.

Teachers Prefer Full-Day Kindergarten

Full-day kindergarten helps teachers improve student learning.

On average, students in full-day kindergarten spend about twice as much time in school as children in half-day programs do. As a result, teachers get to know students much better. They are able to develop a richer understanding of students' needs and, in turn, to develop activities and lessons to meet those needs.

The Benefits of Full-Day Kindergarten: Teachers' Perspectives

In a study evaluating teachers' views on full-day kindergarten, teachers reported a number of benefits for themselves as well as for children and parents, including:

- Participating in full-day (kindergarten) eased the transition to first grade, helping children adapt to the demands of a six-hour school day.
- A longer school day offered more flexibility and more time to do activities during free-choice times.
- Having more time made kindergarten less stressful and frustrating for children because they had time to develop interests and activities more fully.
- Participating in the full-day schedule allowed more appropriate challenges for children at all developmental levels.
- Children with developmental delays or those "at-risk" of experiencing school problems had more time for completing projects and for needed socializing with peers and teachers.
- More advanced students had time to complete long-term projects.
- Having full-day kindergarten assisted parents with child care.
- Having more time made child assessment and classroom record keeping more manageable for teachers.
- Switching to full-day kindergarten gave teachers more time for curriculum planning, incorporating a greater number of thematic units in the school year, and offering more in-depth coverage of each unit.

—Source: Sherrill Martinez and Lue Ann Snider, *Summary of Research: Full-Day Kindergarten*, citing James Elicker and S. Mathur's study, "What do they do all day?"

Full-Day Kindergarten Is Optimal for Parents

Full-day kindergarten provides parents with better support for their children.

For parents who work outside the home, full-day kindergarten means that children do not have to be shuffled between home, school and child care. For all parents, there is more continuity in the child's day, less disruption and more time for focused and independent learning.

A 2000 study published by the National Center for Educational Statistics found that after the second year of a full-day kindergarten program, 100 percent of full-day parents and 72 percent of half-day parents noted that, if given the opportunity again, they would have chosen full-day kindergarten for their child.



“Rhianna Wilson was worried that her son, Timothy, would be overwhelmed in an all-day program. He wasn’t. ‘He just learns more quickly,’ she said. ‘The other day he announced that he wanted to be a paleontologist.’”

—Tara Manthey, “What a Difference All Day Makes,” *The News Tribune* (Tacoma, WA)

Mapping the Landscape of Full-Day Kindergarten in Your State



“With all state-level decision makers operating under tight budgetary constraints, full-day kindergarten competes with other social and educational policy options—prekindergarten, increases in teacher salaries, higher education, special education—for legislative support and resources.”

—Anthony Raden,
*Achieving Full-Day Kindergarten
in New Mexico: A Case Study*

SECTION OVERVIEW:

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN IN YOUR STATE

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Introduction

A keen understanding of the political terrain is a crucial factor in organizing a campaign. This is especially true for full-day kindergarten, where politics and policies vary considerably from state to state and often from district to district.

This section is designed to help you map the landscape surrounding full-day kindergarten in your state and to gather the information needed to undertake your campaign. This section is divided into categories: Policies, Resources and People. As you read through the categories, answer the questions and begin to develop an action plan. Don't be daunted by the number of questions. Rather, think of them as a starting point for discussion and reflection.

I POLICIES

Gaining an Understanding of Full-Day Kindergarten in Relation to Early Education and Prekindergarten

Become familiar with the prekindergarten, early education or child care movement in your state. Are there coalitions organized around prekindergarten? Around child care? How do they view full-day kindergarten? How many private kindergarten providers are there in your state? How organized and vocal are these providers? What impact would public full-day kindergarten have on them?

Early education and prekindergarten advocates are well organized in many states. Look for ways to join forces with them. Full-day kindergarten should be part of every comprehensive early education initiative.



Early Education for All

In Massachusetts, a coalition of early education advocates teamed up to promote Early Education for All, a state-wide campaign with a provision for full-day kindergarten. Kathryn Boudreau, president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, is a member of the Early Education for All advisory committee.

Early Education for All has three primary goals:

- Every preschool-aged child has access to a high-quality early childhood education that meets professionally accepted standards, is staffed by well-trained early educators, and is delivered through a mix of public and private programs
- Creation of a state system to improve the training, education and compensation of the work force specializing in early childhood and school-age education
- Access to high-quality, full-school-day public kindergarten for all families who desire it

For more information, visit www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/eea_home.htm.

Mapping the Status of Kindergarten in Your State

As you think about what kindergarten should look like in your state, begin by thoroughly researching the current status of kindergarten in your state. How many children attend kindergarten? Of those, what percentage attend full-day versus half-day? What percentage of public schools in your state offer full-day kindergarten? How many children attend private kindergartens? Are children required to attend kindergarten? At what age are children required to attend school?

You should be able to obtain this information from your state department of education. The Education Commission of the States also tracks kindergarten attendance and legislation in each state at www.ecs.org.

Determining the Price Tag of Full-Day Kindergarten

Advocates for full-day kindergarten identify cost as the biggest challenge facing full-day kindergarten supporters. As you define what a full-day kindergarten program would look like in your state (see Section IV: What Full-Day Kindergarten Should Include, page 27), ask the following questions:

- How much would it cost to implement a comprehensive full-day kindergarten program throughout your state? Factors to consider include teacher salaries, teacher training and professional development, paraprofessional salaries, curriculum development, assessment, classroom space, school lunches, transportation and miscellaneous administrative costs associated with implementing full-day kindergarten.
- How do education funding formulas work in your state? Is kindergarten funded at the same level as other grades? In most states, it is not.

As you develop cost estimates, look for ways to save money. You could realize a net savings, for example, if buses ran only twice a day instead of three. You should also include calculations on the return on investment. Those numbers can be very persuasive to policymakers and the general public.



A Snapshot of Full-Day Kindergarten in the United States

- The Education Commission of the States estimates that over 60 percent of children in the United States attend full-day kindergarten. By contrast, in 1979 just over 25 percent of kindergartners were enrolled in full-day programs.
- Only nine states, most of which are located in the southeastern United States, require full-day kindergarten for all kindergartners.

To support full-day kindergarten programs, states employ a patchwork of funding programs—combining per-child funding formulas (which often differ between kindergarten and first grade), federal funds such as Title I, and state categorical funds. If not mandated by the state, full-day kindergarten programs remain vulnerable to funding cuts.

State Funding for Full-Day Kindergarten

Funding levels for full-day kindergarten vary considerably from state to state. Some states provide more or equivalent funding for kindergarten students than for post-kindergarten students; others provide significantly less than they do for students in first grade and beyond.

For comprehensive information on state kindergarten funding, see “How Most States Fund Full-Day Kindergarten,” Education Commission of the States, August 2005 (www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/63/10/6310.htm). Also visit the ECS Kindergarten Database at www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/EarlyLearning/KDB_intro.asp.

Identifying Ways to Pay for Full-Day Kindergarten

As you formulate your legislative strategy, it is important to think about how your state can pay for full-day kindergarten—where will the funds come from? What other budget priorities are coming up in the next legislative session? Should you make full-day kindergarten part of a larger early education package? Or part of a larger education-spending package? What are your association’s other education priorities? How might full-day kindergarten compete with those priorities? Why should it take precedence over other priorities? If you are not able to pass a full-day kindergarten bill this year, how will you pass one next year, or the following year?



Scrutinizing the Money Flow: Paying for Full-Day Kindergarten Through Cost Savings

Think New Mexico, an organization advocating for full-day kindergarten in New Mexico, worked with a former state budget director to do a line-by-line review of the state budget. The team identified a number of programs that could be trimmed or eliminated. They then released a report to the press identifying these programs and explaining how the cost savings could be used to pay for full-day kindergarten. The strategy was successful—the New Mexico press highlighted Think New Mexico’s report, and presented full-day kindergarten as an affordable policy option.

Trims in State Budget Could Fund Full-Day Kindergarten

The following excerpt from an article published by *The Santa Fe New Mexican* illustrates how the newspaper presented full-day kindergarten as an affordable policy option.

A Santa Fe group claims the state government could afford to fund full-day kindergarten by eliminating wasteful and unnecessary spending from its existing budget.

“The bottom line is that there is already sufficient revenue to pay the cost of implementing full-day kindergarten,” concludes the group, called Think New Mexico, in a new report.

The report, “*Setting Priorities: How to Pay for Full-Day Kindergarten*,” was released this week as part of the think tank’s preparations for a lobbying campaign at the 2000 Legislature. The recommendations include calls for the state to stop operating its visitor-information centers, end preferential tax treatment for volume cigarette sales and horse racetracks, create new oversight for state agency contracts and eliminate jobs at the Public Regulation Commission.

The study comes as the state is moving toward “performance-based” budgeting that is intended to bring new scrutiny to longstanding programs, expenses and practices. About half of the state’s yearly budget is spent on education.

State law now mandates that schools offer a half day or 2 hours of kindergarten for 5-year-olds. About 15 percent of 5-year-olds in New Mexico attend full-day kindergarten, compared with a national average of nearly 55 percent.

Many politicians, including Martin Chavez, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate defeated last year by Gov. Gary Johnson, have made full-day kindergarten a campaign priority.

But the proposal has always been stopped at the legislature mostly because of costs.

“I don’t know of anybody that’s in opposition to mandatory full-day kindergarten. The stumbling block has always been the financial end of it,” said Sen. John Arthur Smith, D-Deming, who intends to introduce a bill in the 2000 Legislature calling for the full-day change.

“We recognized,” think-tank founder Fred Nathan said, “that full-day kindergarten carries a price tag with it and, therefore, we felt an obligation to explain how the state could pay for it.”

—Source: Martin Hummels, “Trims in State Budget Could Fund Full-Day Kindergarten,” *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, December 3, 1999, pp.A-1.

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—Sen. John Arthur Smith, D-Deming, NM

Preparing a Legislative Strategy

As you prepare your campaign, think carefully about how to work with your state legislature. When will you begin the campaign? How will you get legislators on board? Who should you work with in the legislature to ensure passage of your bill? In West Virginia, advocates of full-day kindergarten worked closely with members of the education committees in both houses, as well as well-respected legislators outside of those committees. In New Mexico, full-day kindergarten supporters focused their efforts on members of the appropriations committees because supporters knew the primary debate would be about the affordability of full-day kindergarten.

Who will sponsor your legislation? Who will write the legislation? Do you have the governor's support? If not, how will you get it? Does it make sense to try to pass a ballot initiative—if your state has that option, as many states in the West do—instead of going through the legislature? If so, what kind of campaign would that strategy require?

You will need to know what your state's legislative calendar looks like as well. When is education legislation typically drafted? When do committees meet? For more information on when state legislatures meet and how they operate, visit the National Conference of State Legislatures Web site: www.ncsl.org/programs/legman/legman.htm.

II RESOURCES

Assessing Your Organizational Commitment

This kind of campaign requires a long-term organizational commitment to be successful. Begin by determining who will lead this effort in your association. Think about the following: What organizational resources will the campaign require? (For more information, see Section III: Organizing Tools on page 17.) Can your government relations, media and research teams work together on this campaign? Who will spearhead the campaign? How does this issue fit into your other organizational priorities? How will you sustain the campaign over time?

Finding Examples of Effective Full-Day Kindergarten Programs in Your State

Look for effective public full-day kindergarten programs in your state. Contact education researchers in your state to help you locate effective full-day programs. Go online to look for newspaper articles about effective programs in your state. How can you use those examples of effective programs to help make your case? Advocates in New Mexico used an evaluation comparing full-day and half-day kindergarten outcomes in an Albuquerque school to persuade lawmakers.

Networking With Other States

Advocates who have worked to support full-day kindergarten in other states are an important resource. What can you borrow from legislation that others have drafted?

- Go to NEA's Closing the Achievement Gaps site (www.achievementgaps.org) to view examples of legislation from West Virginia and New Mexico. Contact NEA affiliates in states that have passed full-day kindergarten legislation.
- Also see the ECS Web site (www.ecs.org) for more detail on kindergarten legislation in each state.

III PEOPLE—POTENTIAL SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION

Identifying Potential Coalition Partners

Take time to evaluate potential partners. Consider early education groups such as your local affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.org) or a national group like Pre-K Now (www.preknow.org). Who else might you work with? Education associations? Parent groups? Social service agencies?

As you assess potential partners, look for nontraditional allies, like business groups. In New Mexico, support from the Hispanic business leaders association as well as the Association of Commerce & Industry of New Mexico, the equivalent of the state Chamber of Commerce, helped full-day kindergarten advocates gain ground in the state legislature and with the governor.

Also think about groups like the AFL-CIO, as well as ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) and other community activist groups. They can be important allies in this work.

Assessing Parents' Views— Parents as Allies

Parents are perhaps the most important constituency on this issue—especially parents of small children. It is important to know where parents stand.

Have you surveyed parents to determine what their views are? (See the next section, Organizing Tools, for more information on surveys.) Look for ways to involve parents as allies. How does full-day kindergarten help them? If some parents are opposed to full-day kindergarten, find out why. How can you change their minds or counter their opposition? How can you involve the state Parent Teacher Association and local parent-teacher organizations in your campaign? Find out where they stand on this issue.

Assessing Kindergarten Teachers' and Other Teachers' Views—Teachers as Allies

Kindergarten teachers are a vital constituency. They work most closely with kindergartners and can provide crucial and credible voices in support of particular policies. Additionally, they will be directly affected by the outcome of your work. How will you engage them in your initiative? Have you surveyed them? Are they willing to support your efforts? What about 1-3 teachers? How will you involve your broader membership in the campaign? How does full-day kindergarten benefit them?

Successful organizing campaigns should include teachers as spokespersons and supporters. As you reach out to teachers, identify possible champions. Who will speak forcefully and effectively on your behalf?

“If I had to do it over again, I would have involved more kindergarten teachers in our campaign.”

—Perry Bryant, former lobbyist with the West Virginia Education Association



Assessing the Views of Education Support Professionals— Teacher Aides, Bus Drivers and Others as Allies

Like teachers, education support professionals such as teacher aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and others have an important stake in this issue. How would half-day to full-day schedule changes affect various support professionals? Where do they stand on this issue? How can you work with their unions to gain support for your work?

Assessing School Administrators' and Local School Officials' Views—Administrators as Allies

School administrators, administrators' organizations and local school officials such as school board members can be valuable allies. Legislators look to these leaders for advice, and you will need their support to move your proposal forward. What do your state's principals believe? Superintendents? The state board of education? How will you engage them as allies? How can you get their associations on board with you?

Enlisting Champions

As you assess your support, look for champions who are willing to join forces with you. Champions are important for several reasons. They can provide visible support for your work, they can use power and influence to sway the views of legislators and other leaders, and they can galvanize public opinion. Consider how parents, teachers, administrators, business leaders, celebrities and influential politicians—such as the governor, state legislators and national political leaders from your state—can be advocates for your work. Community leaders and researchers can also be helpful champions. As you identify possible candidates, think about what they can gain from working with you, and why this issue is important to them.

An Important Supporter of Full-Day Kindergarten

In New Mexico, supporters engaged the governor's wife, Dee Johnson, as a champion of full-day kindergarten. This served a dual purpose—she publicly endorsed full-day kindergarten and she privately urged her husband, who had been critical of the initiative, to sign the full-day kindergarten bill once it was passed by the state legislature.

Assessing Your Opposition: Preparing to Respond

It is also important to know who your likely opponents will be, who their allies are, what arguments they will make and what strategies they will use to counter your work.

Opponents in New Mexico and West Virginia included:

- Fiscal conservatives in the state legislature
- Government officials who favored local control of education
- Principals and district leaders opposed to the structural changes embedded in moving from half-day to full-day kindergarten
- Conservative parent groups

Additionally, you are likely to face opposition from groups opposed to the NEA—those who see your work on this issue as just another way to bolster the power of the union or secure jobs for teachers. How will you rebut their arguments?

Organizing Tools—Before, During and After the Campaign



“Good information is essential, but if you don’t have the right people in place who care about your issues, you will face unnecessary roadblocks—lobbying begins at election time.”

—Jan Reinicke, Executive Director,
Iowa State Education Association

SECTION OVERVIEW:
ORGANIZING TOOLS—BEFORE, DURING
AND AFTER THE CAMPAIGN

- **Getting Started p. 18**
- **Building a Coalition to Support Your Campaign p. 19**
- **Launching the Campaign p. 19**
- **Responding to Opposition—Counterarguments for Opposition Arguments You May Face p. 22**
- **Moving Forward After Passage—or Failure p. 26**

Introduction

In organizing a campaign, it is essential to begin with a clear vision of where you want to go and know how you plan to get there. Included in this section are strategies, techniques and tools for undertaking a successful full-day kindergarten campaign in your state. This is just a starting place. Use it, along with the Web tools referenced here, as you begin organizing your initiative.

Getting Started

As you begin your campaign, review the factors discussed in Mapping the Landscape of Full-Day Kindergarten on page 9.

- Identify who will coordinate the campaign within your association.
- Note what resources you will need, including staff time for media relations, research and government relations; funds; and materials. As you determine what resources you will need, think long term. Advocates of full-day kindergarten often say that they wished they'd known how long the work would take. Legislative processes are slow—often campaigns like this take years. In addition to having the right idea, you have to be in the right place at the right time to make it happen, and you typically must make compromises along the way. Be prepared to dig in for the long haul.
- This guide contains much of the research you'll need to get started. Draft a background paper or some talking points about the current state of kindergarten—and, more broadly, early education—in your state. Pinpoint what else you need to learn.
- Begin to develop a preliminary policy proposal. (Use the next section, What Full-Day Kindergarten Should Include: Policy Priorities, as a starting place.)



Grassroots Organizing on the Web

In addition to the NEA's online Legislative Action Center (www.nea.org/lac/index.html), here are other advocacy toolkits available on the Web:

For more comprehensive information about NEA's work on closing the achievement gaps, download *Closing Achievement Gaps: An Association Guide* at www.achievementgaps.org/nea/Associationguide.pdf.

For an excellent overview of legislative advocacy, visit the Community Toolbox Web site: http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1253.htm

For early education coalition building and other advocacy tips, see the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Toolbox for Advocates at www.naeyc.org/policy/toolbox.asp.

Building a Coalition to Support Your Campaign

- As you begin to do research and develop a policy proposal, identify the groups you want and need to work with. Link up with allies, but also look for new partners, such as business groups, that can help accomplish your objectives. Groups like the Business Roundtable (www.businessroundtable.org/taskForces) and Corporate Voices for Working Families (www.cvworkingfamilies.org) are strong supporters of quality early childhood education.
- Next, begin reaching out. Meet with group representatives to share your policy proposal and answer their questions.
- Get buy-in and support. Make sure additional groups are willing to join your campaign. Often coalitions use a memorandum of agreement to ensure that everyone knows what resources they will be expected to provide, including public endorsements, staff time to work on legislation development, and lobbying assistance.
- Decide who will do what. You may want to lead the campaign or work with another group that will take the leadership role. An early education group or parent organization, for example, may be better positioned to lead the effort. Who leads is not as important as what the partnership accomplishes. All participants, however, must have a clear understanding—in writing—about who is responsible for what and who has sign-off authority on communications and legislative changes.

Launching the Campaign

- Work with partner groups to conduct additional research, if necessary, and flesh out your policy proposal.
- Develop a plan and a timeline for implementing your proposal—either through your state legislature or through a ballot initiative. Make sure to include the state department of education and the governor’s office in your plan. How will you work with them?
- Develop three to five key messages to support your campaign. Based on your mapping research, develop messages that promote your idea and address key arguments of the opposition. These messages can serve as organizing tools for building coalitions and developing communications plans.
- Put together a communications plan. What information do you want to release to the press? When will you release it? How will you counter opposition? Who will handle press calls? Requests for interviews? Make sure to develop talking points for everyone who communicates with the press so that you put forth a consistent message.

Surveying Parents, Teachers and Administrators

Surveys are a powerful tool in advocacy campaigns. They give lawmakers insight into the views of their constituents, and they give advocates public opinion research to back claims from scientists and researchers.

In the case of full-day kindergarten, surveys or, at the very least, focus groups, are essential. In New Mexico, advocates used parent, teacher and administrative survey data to convince legislators that there was broad-based support for full-day kindergarten.

There are a number of tools advocates can use to develop, administer and analyze surveys, such as Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com), an easy-to-use “one-stop shop” for online surveys.

- Decide how you will fund your proposal. Advocates of full-day kindergarten identify cost as the most important issue. A number of states with full-day kindergarten programs have phased them in, providing state funds to the neediest schools first. What would a phase-in program in your state look like? Are there state funds that could be used to jump-start the program?
- Create a legislative strategy. Decide who will sponsor your legislation—and be strategic about your choice. Determine which techniques will get the number of votes needed for passage of the legislation—in-person lobbying, dissemination of research, legislative forums, media coverage and letter writing, for example.
- Be prepared to respond to opposition. What are your opponents' arguments? How will you counter them? Strategize with advocates in other states, such as New Mexico and Maryland, with full-day kindergarten programs already in place. What strategies did they find most successful? What lessons did they learn?

Getting Positive—and Free—Press for Your Campaign

In New Mexico, positive media coverage was a crucial factor in the passage of full-day kindergarten legislation. Think New Mexico, the primary advocate for full-day kindergarten in New Mexico, used a number of press strategies to gain positive media coverage.

“We knew that the best way to get to the legislature—and the only way to get the public involved—was to go to the media and get their support,” Nathan (Think New Mexico’s director) said. From September through the legislative session, representatives from Think New Mexico met with writers and editors from the state’s major newspapers (The Santa Fe New Mexican, The Albuquerque Journal and The Albuquerque Tribune), which responded with extensive coverage and several enthusiastic editorial endorsements. Nathan also wrote op-ed articles published in local papers.

As the three major newspapers began to cover the legislation and campaign, the organization received interview requests from radio and television stations across the state, as well as from smaller regional and local newspapers. Within a span of five months, Nathan conducted dozens of interviews with print journalists and appeared on radio and television on at least six separate occasions. The press also frequently quoted the legislative sponsors and prominent Think New Mexico board members.

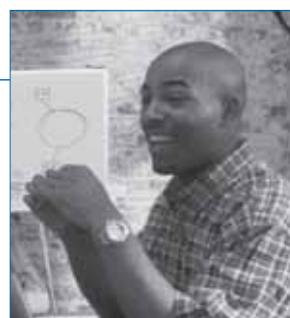
Nathan went out of his way to provide journalists with information or to encourage coverage of breaking developments. “He knew the media very well,” said one reporter who recalled Nathan walking into the capitol media room on an almost daily basis. The reporter commented that while Nathan’s knowledge and intellectual honesty gave him credibility, his “persistence sometimes annoyed the capitol beat reporters.” As the vote neared, Think New Mexico maximized the free media coverage to reach legislators; on one occasion, for example, the organization distributed copies of a positive article about the legislation to the offices of every legislator in the Senate and House.

—Source: Anthony Raden, *Achieving Full-Day Kindergarten in New Mexico: A Case Study*

- If you decide to undertake a state-wide initiative, determine how many signatures you need to get the initiative on the ballot, decide how you will get those signatures, and map out a media strategy and a public relations campaign for gaining public support. Study other successful ballot initiatives. What strategies have they used?
- Involve members in letter writing or e-mail campaigns to help ensure passage of the legislation. See NEA's Legislative Action Center (www.nea.org/lac/writing.html) for effective letter writing and e-mail techniques.
- Create a set of short fact sheets to promote the campaign. Persuasive, data-driven fact sheets describe the benefits of full-day kindergarten, outline your campaign's policy goals and counter opponent's arguments. They can be useful as background material for meetings with the media and champions and as a general advocacy tool.
- Consider collective bargaining as a tool in your advocacy campaign. Look for ways to build full-day kindergarten issues—such as class size, class time, professional development and appropriate curricula—into teachers' contracts. For more information on using collective bargaining as an advocacy tool, see *Closing Achievement Gaps: An Association Guide* (www.achievementgaps.org/nea/Associationguide.pdf).
- Make sure you have the support of the governor. If your legislation passes, you will need the governor's signature before your bill becomes a law. Use coalition partners and other supporters to ensure the governor is on your side. See the New Mexico case study on page 36 for more information about how advocates worked with the governor's wife as well as the New Mexico business community to urge the governor to sign full-day kindergarten legislation.
- Prepare to negotiate. Although the goal of the campaign is to achieve certain policy objectives, any legislative process will include negotiation on a number of topics. Before moving forward with your legislative strategy, determine which issues you will be willing to negotiate, and which ones are deal breakers.

“It is really important to reach primary teachers in this campaign who may be less politically involved than teachers who teach older students. They know what kids need and what teachers need.”

—Amanda Rutledge, Vice Chair, Early Childhood Educator's Caucus, Former Kindergarten Teacher, Texas Education Association



Responding to Opposition

Here are some arguments against full-day kindergarten and counterarguments you can make:

● ARGUMENT I:

“Full-day kindergarten is too expensive.”

COUNTERARGUMENTS:

“It is not as expensive as you might think.”

Know what the cost of full-day kindergarten will be in your state. In Arizona, for example, Governor Janet Napolitano asked for \$21 million in 2005 to expand full-day kindergarten. This would have brought the total cost for full-day kindergarten in Arizona to \$46 million out of a budget of nearly \$8 billion.

“We can pay for it.”

Have a plan ready for how the state will pay for it—perhaps beginning with a phase-in period. Once cost estimates had been done in the state of New Mexico, for example, Think New Mexico conducted a systematic assessment of the state budget and identified programs that could be cut to pay for full-day kindergarten.

“We save money in the long run.”

Though the initial cost might be higher than half-day kindergarten, kids in full-day kindergarten learn more, are less likely to experience grade retention, are more likely to succeed later in school, etc.

“Quality early childhood programs have at least a 3-1 return on investment.”

Be able to produce the evidence. Show what the long-term cost savings will be for your program.

● ARGUMENT II:

“There are other more important priorities—for example, the state should spend money on prekindergarten instead of full-day kindergarten.”

COUNTERARGUMENTS:

“Full-day kindergarten should be part of any comprehensive early education program.”

For supporting evidence, see the Early Education for All Web site: www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/eea_home.htm.

“This is a simple step we can take as we move toward implementing a comprehensive early education program.”

● ARGUMENT III:

“Full-day kindergarten cuts into family time.”

COUNTERARGUMENTS:

“Full-day kindergarten enriches family time by improving children’s learning and their adjustment to elementary school.”

“Comparison studies show that parents prefer full-day kindergarten to half-day kindergarten.”

“Full-day kindergarten saves families’ time and energy. Children do not have to be shuffled between school and child care.”

● ARGUMENT IV:

“Five-year-olds aren’t ready to spend a full day in school.”

COUNTERARGUMENTS:

“Research shows that 5-year-olds are ready to spend a full day in school.”

Be ready to cite the studies.

“Research also shows that full-day kindergarten is preferable for kids—socially, emotionally and intellectually.”

Children have time to learn and explore at a slower pace and in more depth.

“Teachers get to know kids better in full-day kindergarten.”

Teachers are better able to nurture and care for children in a full-day setting.

● ARGUMENT V:

“Children don’t need full-day kindergarten; they learn more during time with their parents or family members.”

COUNTERARGUMENTS:

“Research shows that all children learn more in full-day kindergarten.”

“Full-day kindergarten provides an ideal learning setting for all children.”

This includes those children with stay-at-home parents. Kindergartners are taught by certified teachers who specialize in the needs and learning styles of young children.

“Many children don’t spend much time with parents and family members during the day.”

Instead, they are shuffled between kindergarten and child care.

As you read through these arguments, think about the strategies your opponents and their allies may use. If they release research with findings that counter your research, how will you respond? Who are their supporters in the state legislature? How powerful are they? Who can you enlist on your side to help ensure that you will win the day?

TALKING POINTS—WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

1. Full-Day Kindergarten Boosts Student Achievement

Longitudinal data demonstrates that children in full-day classes show greater reading and mathematics achievement gains than those in half-day classes.

Walston, Jill and West, Jerry. *Full-Day and Half-Day Kindergarten in the United States: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/web/2004078.asp>.

Ackerman, Debora J., Barnett, W. Steven, and Robin, Kenneth B. *Making the Most of Kindergarten: Present Trends and Future Issues in the Provision of Full-day Programs*. National Institute for Early Education Research, March, 2005. <http://nieer.org/docs/?DocID=118>.

Full-day kindergarten can produce long-term educational gains, especially for low-income and minority students.

Plucker, Jonathan A, Eaton, Jessica J., Rapp, Kelly E., et. al. *The Effects of Full Day Versus Half Day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data*. Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, January 2004. www.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/fulldaykreport.pdf.

Cryan, John R., Sheehan, Robert, Wiechel, Jane, and Bandy-Hedden, Irene G. “Success outcomes of full-day kindergarten: More positive behavior and increased achievement in the years after.” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 1992, v. 7, no. 2, 187-203.

Education Commission of the States. *Full-Day Kindergarten Programs Improve Chances of Academic Success*. The Progress of Education Reform 2004, ECS, v. 5, no. 4, September 2004.

Montgomery County Public Schools. *Early Success: Closing the Opportunity Gap for Our Youngest Learners*. Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools, July 2004, www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/superintendent/docs/early_success.pdf

Viadero, Debra. “Study: Full Day Kindergarten Boosts Academic Performance.” *Education Week*, April 17, 2002, v. 21, no. 31, p. 14.

2. Full-Day Kindergarten Improves Students’ Social and Emotional Skills

A full day of learning offers social, emotional and intellectual benefits to kindergartners. They have more time to focus on activities, to reflect on activities and to transition between activities.

Ackerman, Debora J., Barnett, W. Steven, and Robin, Kenneth B. *Making the Most of Kindergarten: Present Trends and Future Issues in the Provision of Full-day Programs*. National Institute for Early Education Research, March, 2005. <http://nieer.org/docs/?DocID=118>.

Cryan, John R., Sheehan, Robert, Wiechel, Jane, and Bandy-Hedden, Irene G. “Success outcomes of full-day kindergarten: More positive behavior and increased achievement in the years after.” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 1992, v. 7, no. 2, 187-203.

3. Full-Day Kindergarten Is a Sound Educational Investment

Recent research has demonstrated that funds invested in quality early education programs produce powerful returns on investment.

Heckman, James J. and Masterov, Dimitriy V. *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children*. Working Paper 5, Invest in Kids Working Group, Committee for Economic Development, October 2004. <http://jenni.uchicago.edu/Invest/>.

Lynch, Robert. *Exceptional Returns: Economic, Fiscal and Social Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Education*. Economic Policy Institute, 2005. www.epinet.org/content.cfm/books_exceptional_returns.

Full-day kindergarten provides a bridge between prekindergarten programs and the early elementary years.

Education Commission of the States. *Full-Day Kindergarten: A Study of State Policies in the United States*. ECS, June 2005. fcd-us.org/PDFs/ECS_FDK.pdf.

Full-day kindergarten enables teachers to assess students' needs and abilities more effectively, leading to early intervention.

Plucker, Jonathan A, Eaton, Jessica J., Rapp, Kelly E., et. al. *The Effects of Full Day Versus Half Day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data*. Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, January 2004. www.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/fulldayreport.pdf.

4. Teachers Prefer Full-Day Kindergarten

Teachers get to know students better; they are able to develop a richer understanding of students' needs and, in turn, to develop activities and lessons to meet those needs.

Elicker, J. and Mathur, S. "What do they do all day? Comprehensive evaluation of a full-day kindergarten." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, v.12, no. 4, pp. 459-480, 1997.

5. Full-Day Kindergarten Is Optimal for Parents

Comparison studies demonstrate that parents prefer full-day kindergarten.

Early Education for All. "Investing in Full-Day Kindergarten Is Essential." Citing West, Jerry, Denton, Kristin, and Germino-Hausken, Elvira. *America's Kindergartners*. National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000.

Education Commission of the States. *Full-Day Kindergarten: A Study of State Policies in the United States*. ECS, June 2005. fcd-us.org/PDFs/ECS_FDK.pdf.

“One of the things we have learned from doing this work for many years is that you have to be in it for the long term—don’t give up. Adjust to changes and build support among a broad coalition of groups.”

—Jim Griess, Executive Director, and Jay Sears, Director of Instructional Advocacy, Nebraska Education Association

Moving Forward After Passage—or Failure

- **If your initiative is successful,** your work is far from over. You will need to help ensure that the legislation is successfully enacted. Consider creating an implementation working group within your coalition. This group can help oversee issues such as funding, professional development and curriculum development, among others. As you develop your campaign plan, include this phase of the process in your plan.
- **If your proposal is unsuccessful,** decide where you will go next. Work with your coalition to determine why the campaign failed. Was it too costly? If so, why? Who were your primary opponents? Why were they opposed to your campaign? How can you hold them accountable for their opposition? Determine what your next steps will be. Do you want to reintroduce the legislation in the next session? Should you make alterations to it first?



What Full-Day Kindergarten Should Include: Policy Priorities



“NEA knows what works in the classroom—the same ingredients that are supported by research, by parents, and by teachers and education support professionals: strong parental involvement, qualified and certified teachers, small class sizes that allow for individual attention, and books and materials aligned with high standards—and high expectations—for every child.”

—Reg Weaver, President,
National Education Association

SECTION OVERVIEW:
WHAT FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN
SHOULD INCLUDE: POLICY PRIORITIES

- **NEA'S Full-Day Kindergarten Policy Priorities p. 29**
- **NEA Model Legislation p. 30**

Introduction

For children to reap the benefits of full-day kindergarten, they need more than just additional time for school. Research demonstrates that the most successful full-day kindergarten environments are staffed by licensed, certified teachers and paraprofessionals who receive ongoing professional development, teach in small classroom settings and involve parents as partners in the learning process.

Both the structure of the learning environment and the curriculum should be aligned with that of other primary grades and with prekindergarten, so that kindergarten can serve as a bridge year for children. Activities should engage children's minds and bodies, allowing them to improve literacy and numeracy skills, as well as social and emotional abilities.



NEA's Commitment to Full-Day Kindergarten

At its 2003 representative assembly, NEA committed to work toward the following goals:

That all 3- and 4-year-old children in the United States should have access to a full-day public school prekindergarten that is of the highest possible quality, universally offered and funded with public money not taken from any other education program.

That full-day kindergarten for all 5-year-old children should be mandated in every public school in this country. These kindergartens should support the gains children made in prekindergarten, provide time for children to explore topics in depth, give teachers opportunities to individualize instruction and offer parents opportunities to become involved in their children's classrooms.

—Source: *NEA on Prekindergarten and Kindergarten*

NEA’s Full-Day Kindergarten Policy Priorities

Issue	Commitment
Mandatory Full-Day Attendance	<p>Full-day does not designate a specific number of hours but means that kindergarten should be in accord with the regular school day.</p> <p>Full-day kindergarten should be universal (available in all schools) and mandatory.</p>
Teacher Certification	<p>Kindergarten teachers, support professionals and administrators should be considered qualified if they hold the license or certification that the state grade requires for their employment.</p>
Class Size	<p>NEA supports an optimum class size of 15 students for regular programs and smaller class sizes for programs that include students with exceptional needs. As with prekindergarten, smaller classes generate the greatest gains for younger children.</p>
Alignment	<p>State policymakers should ensure learning standards for kindergarten are created and aligned both with early learning standards and standards for first grade and beyond.</p> <p>The Education Commission of the States recommends that learning standards for kindergarten be implemented comprehensively across five key domains: physical and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, cognitive development, and language and literacy development.</p>
Professional Development	<p>Educators—teachers, support professionals and administrators—should have access to high-quality, continuous professional development that is required to gain and improve knowledge and skills and that is provided at school district expense.</p>
Funding	<p>Kindergarten should be funded in the same manner as the rest of the public school program, but the money should come from new funding sources. This does not necessarily mean that new taxes should be imposed. It does, however, mean that the necessary financing for mandatory, full-day, public school kindergarten, including the need to recruit and equitably pay qualified teacher and support professionals, should not be obtained at the expense of other public school programs.</p> <p>Public funds should not be used to pay for children to attend private kindergarten. Any portion of public money, even “new” money, going to private kindergartens, which are open to some but not all children, will reduce resources available to public school kindergartens, which are available to all children.</p>
Parent Involvement	<p>Because kindergarten is the bridge to the more structured school experience, training programs should be made available to help parents and guardians take an active role in the education of their kindergarten children. Parents and guardians should be encouraged to visit their children’s schools and maintain contact with teachers and other school personnel.</p>
Curriculum	<p>In kindergarten, as with prekindergarten, all areas of a child’s development should be addressed: fostering thinking and problem solving, developing social and physical skills, and instilling basic academic skills.</p>
Assessment	<p>Assessment of the child’s progress should also address all areas of a child’s development: physical, social, emotional and cognitive. Many sources of information should be used and children should be given opportunities to demonstrate their skills in different ways, allowing for variability in learning pace and for different cultural backgrounds. As in prekindergarten, large-scale standardized testing is inappropriate. The purpose of assessment should be to improve the quality of education by providing information to teachers, identifying children with special needs and developing baseline data.</p>
Teacher Assistants	<p>Adult supervision is vital. Each kindergarten teacher should have the support of a full-time teacher assistant.</p>
Flexibility in Age Requirements	<p>To give children the best possible chances to benefit from kindergarten, NEA recommends that 5 be the uniform entrance age for kindergarten. The minimum entrance age (of 5) and the maximum allowed age (of 6) should not be applied rigidly, however. In joint consultation with parents and teachers, a school district should be allowed to make case-by-case exceptions to age requirements.</p>

NEA Model Legislation

The following model legislation has been developed by NEA to assist you as you draft legislation appropriate for your state. Use it as a starting point for conversation with partners, lawmakers and colleagues.

To establish a preschool and full-day kindergarten program, and for other purposes.

January x, 200X

A BILL

Be it enacted by the xxxx and the xxxxx of the State of _____

Section 1. Short Title.

This Act may be cited as ‘The Prekindergarten and Full Day Kindergarten Act.’

Section 2. Findings.

The Legislature finds the following:

- (1) Prekindergarten programs are essential to supporting the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of young children.
- (2) Kindergarten programs are essential to ensuring the school readiness of children when they enter the 1st grade.

Section 3. Purpose.

The purpose of this Act is expand preschool and full-day kindergarten opportunities for children aged three, four, and five.

Section 4. Program Authorization.

The State Department of Education (hereinafter referred to as the designated State agency) shall establish a program to provide for the development of –

- (1) High-quality full-day, full-calendar-year universal prekindergarten for all children age 3 and 4; and
- (2) Full day kindergarten program for all children age 5 in the State.

Section 5. Plan and Requirements.

(a) State Plan--The designated State agency shall develop a plan to implement the program described in section 4. Such plan shall include each of the following:

- (1) A description of the universal prekindergarten program that will be established and how it will support children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.
- (2) A description of the full day kindergarten program that will be established and how it will ensure school readiness for such children.
- (3) A statement of the goals for the universal prekindergarten and the full day kindergarten programs and how such goals will be measured through program outcomes and other means.
- (4) A description of how the designated State agency will involve representatives of early childhood program providers that sponsor programs addressing children 3, 4, and 5 years old.
- (5) A description of how the designated State agency will coordinate with existing State-funded prekindergarten programs, federally funded programs (such as Head Start programs), public school programs, and child care providers.
- (6) A plan to address the shortages of qualified early childhood education teachers, including how to increase such teachers’ compensation to be comparable to that of public school teachers.
- (7) How the designated State agency will provide ongoing professional development opportunities to help increase the number of teachers in early childhood programs who meet the State’s education or credential requirements for prekindergarten teachers.

- (8) A plan to address how the programs will meet the needs of children with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and other special needs.
- (9) A plan to provide transportation for children to and from the programs.
- (10) A plan to ensure parents of children enrolled in the program are actively involved with and engaged in their child's education.

(b) Local Requirements.

(1) In General- An eligible program provider receiving funding under this Act shall--

- (A) Maintain a maximum class size of 15 children;
 - (B) Maintain a ratio of not more than 10 children for each member of the teaching staff;
 - (C) (i) Ensure that all prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers meet State requirements for teachers under applicable State law; and
 - (ii) Document that the State is demonstrating significant progress in assisting such teachers on working toward a bachelor of arts degree with training in early childhood development or early childhood education;
 - (D) Meet all health and safety standards required for prekindergarten programs.
- (2) Local Application- Program providers under this Act shall submit an application to the designated State agency under this Act containing the following:
- (A) A description of the program to be provided.
 - (B) A statement of the demonstrated need for a program, or an enhanced or expanded program, in the area served by the eligible program provider.
 - (C) A description of the age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate educational curriculum to be provided that will help children be ready for school and assist them in the transition to kindergarten (as applicable to prekindergarten programs).
 - (D) A description of how the eligible program provider will collaborate with existing community-based child care providers and Head Start programs, as appropriate.
 - (E) A description of how students and families will be assisted in obtaining supportive services available in their communities.
 - (F) A plan to promote parental involvement in the program.
 - (G) A description of how teachers will receive ongoing professional development in early childhood development and education.

Section 6. Professional Development Set-Aside.

A designated State agency may set aside a portion of funding under this Act for ongoing professional development activities for teachers and staff at prekindergarten and kindergarten programs that wish to participate in the programs under this Act. Funds set aside under this subsection may be used for ongoing professional development—

- (1) To provide prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers and staff with the knowledge and skills for the application of recent research on child cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, including language and literacy development, and on early childhood pedagogy;
- (2) To provide the cost of education needed to obtain a credential or degree with specific training in early childhood development or education;
- (3) To work with children who have limited English proficiency, disabilities, and other special needs; and
- (4) To select and use developmentally appropriate screening and diagnostic assessments to improve teaching and learning and make appropriate referrals for services to support the development and learning of children in such programs.

Section 7. Definition.

In this Act the term 'eligible program provider' means a prekindergarten program provider that is—

- (A) A public school;
- or
- (B) A Head Start program.

State Stories



“Our central message was always an educational message: full-day kindergarten provides long-term educational benefits. An investment in full-day kindergarten is an investment in the educational future of our children.”

—Charles Bowyer, Government Relations, Professional Issues and Research, National Education Association-New Mexico

SECTION OVERVIEW:

STATE STORIES

- **West Virginia—Meeting the Needs of Students, Parents and Teachers p. 34**
- **New Mexico—A Lesson in Patience, Persistence, Compromise and Focus p. 36**

West Virginia—Meeting the Needs of Students, Parents and Teachers

West Virginia is one of nine states, most of which are located in the southeastern United States, with mandatory full-day kindergarten. The West Virginia law requiring full-day kindergarten was passed in the early 1990s, and full-day kindergarten was implemented throughout the state by the mid-1990s.

“Full-day kindergarten made sense for West Virginia—from an educational and an economic perspective.”

—Perry Bryant, former lobbyist with the West Virginia Education Association

The West Virginia Education Association (WVEA) was actively involved in the passage of full-day kindergarten legislation because it made sense from educational and economic perspectives.

At the time full-day kindergarten legislation was passed, a number of districts in the state—especially in the western part—faced declining enrollment. Schools were closing and teachers were being transferred or fired. Additionally, as a rural state, West Virginia could not afford to have multiple bus schedules to accommodate kindergartners.

Full-day kindergarten provided a way of more effectively meeting the needs of students while at the same time saving teachers’ jobs and saving districts’ money. Because enrollments were declining in a large portion of the state, the need for additional classroom space was an issue only for districts in the eastern panhandle—where population was growing at the time and continues to grow.



The WVEA teamed up with county superintendents to support passage of full-day kindergarten legislation. The group worked with the education committees of the West Virginia House and Senate, and gained the support of influential legislators. At the time, there was not significant opposition to the bill.

The passage and subsequent implementation of full-day kindergarten in West Virginia was not without challenges, however. Some schools in the eastern panhandle struggled to find classroom space and some parents voiced concern about how longer days—in some cases, coupled with long bus rides—would affect their children.

“Looking back, one of the things we would have done differently,” notes Bryant, “is involve more parents as supporters.”

Full-day kindergarten has provided a number of benefits to parents, however. As Cathy Jones, who coordinates early education program at the West Virginia Department of Education, notes, “West Virginia has a lot of working parents. Public full-day kindergarten programs ensure working parents that their children are well educated and well cared for. All parents receive those benefits.”

Currently, the WVEA is working in partnership with early education groups in the state to support the passage of a comprehensive public prekindergarten program. “The work we did on full-day kindergarten really helped set the stage for the work we are doing now,” explains Bryant.

A snapshot of full-day kindergarten in West Virginia:

Issue	Meets NEA Policy Recommendations
Mandatory Full-Day Attendance	YES —Kindergarten is “full day/every day” and tied to the regular school calendar. Kindergarten is universal (available in all schools) and mandatory.
Teacher Certification	YES —Kindergarten teachers must be appropriately certified. The state requires a kindergarten certificate.
Class Size	NO —Classes are capped at 20 students.
Alignment	YES —Content standards are required for each grade. Alignment is built into content standards that are followed in each grade.
Professional Development	YES —The state provides ongoing professional development for teachers and principals.
Funding	YES —Full-day kindergarten is fully funded by the state.
Parent Involvement	SOMEWHAT —Parents are required to register children and participate in pre-screening programs.
Curriculum	YES —The state of West Virginia has a mandated state-wide curriculum for each grade, including kindergarten.
Assessment	NO —Informal assessments are mandated by the state, but no formal assessments are required in kindergarten.
Teacher Assistants	YES —The law stipulates that if there are 11 or more students, teachers must have an aide in the classroom.
Flexibility in Age Requirements	NO —The kindergarten age requirement is uniform throughout the state.

New Mexico—A Lesson in Patience, Persistence, Compromise and Focus

The state of New Mexico began implementing a state-wide full-day kindergarten program in the 2000-2001 school year. Now, kindergartners attend school full day in every school in the state. Though New Mexico eventually ended up phasing in full-day kindergarten, proponents of full-day kindergarten did not initially envision a phase-in period. An important part of New Mexico's story is how the phase-in solution was eventually reached and the benefits it offered.

“Our central message was always an educational message: full-day kindergarten provides long-term educational benefits. An investment in full-day kindergarten is an investment in the educational future of our children.”

—Charles Bowyer, Government Relations, Professional Issues and Research, National Education Association-New Mexico

The push for full-day kindergarten in New Mexico began in the early 1990s. Mike Gladden, a school superintendent concerned about the academic preparedness of the young children in his school system, worked with his state senator, Pete Campos, to pass a memorial to study the feasibility of offering full-day kindergarten throughout the state of New Mexico. In summer 1993 the state's Public Education Department teamed up with the New Mexico legislature's Education Study Committee to form a full-day kindergarten task force.

The task force conducted a literature review and surveyed parents, teachers and school administrators about their attitudes toward the expansion of full-day kindergarten. A majority of parents and teachers supported full-day kindergarten, and all of the administrators surveyed with full-day programs in place favored the full-day approach. The task force then drafted a report, making the case for full-day kindergarten. The report included cost calculations for implementing full-day kindergarten and referenced an Albuquerque school evaluation that favorably compared full-day classes to half-day classes.

Key Steps in the New Mexico Full-Day Kindergarten Advocacy Process

With abundant experience at confronting the political and budgetary realities that state policymakers face, full-day kindergarten supporters effectively:

- Defined a problem (inadequate student achievement)
- Offered a policy solution (full-day kindergarten)
- Built political pressure and momentum (through media coverage and endorsements and the support of influential individuals and constituencies)
- Provided policymakers with funding solutions and implementation strategies (recalculating projected costs, identifying funding sources)
- Monitored and influenced implementation after passage of the legislation (attending to the selection of schools; offering teacher training opportunities)

—Source: Anthony Raden, *Achieving Full-Day Kindergarten in New Mexico: A Case Study*

Based on this report, supporters introduced a bill in the 1994 legislative session to begin implementing full-day kindergarten in selected districts. Though the bill appeared to have popular support, it ultimately failed in committee. In his case study of full-day kindergarten in New Mexico, Anthony Raden notes that the bill was likely defeated for two reasons: there were concerns about funding equity in districts with low property values, and some conservative parents were opposed to the bill on the grounds that it constituted state intervention in family life.

For several years, the drive to pass a full-day kindergarten bill gave way to other education priorities. Gary Johnson, a conservative businessman, was elected governor in 1994 on an education platform that included an emphasis on local control. Though he initially professed support for full-day kindergarten, his first legislative package did not include funds for the program, and public education supporters found themselves battling the governor on other fronts, including the voucher issue.

The full-day kindergarten issue continued to resurface, though. In 1998 another full-day kindergarten bill was introduced. But after the New Mexico Public Education Department increased the estimated amount of funds required to implement the program to approximately \$103 million—with \$38 million for teacher salaries, \$65 million for additional classroom space and \$500,000 for transportation—again the bill failed in committee. In response, supporters of full-day kindergarten proposed a three-year phase-in period, and managed to pass a prekindergarten package that included funds for full-day kindergarten in 1999. In a larger battle with the legislature over vouchers, the governor then vetoed the package, along with a number of other education provisions.

A key turning point for full-day kindergarten in New Mexico was the founding of Think New Mexico (TNM), a bipartisan research and advocacy organization created by Fred Nathan, an attorney and former special counsel in the New Mexico attorney general's office. As special counsel, Nathan worked with the New Mexico legislature for seven years. When he left the attorney general's office to found Think New Mexico, he intended to focus on important yet seemingly intractable issues facing New Mexico. He built a high-profile bipartisan board of directors, and with a few small grants from New Mexico foundations, set about working on TNM's first issue: full-day kindergarten.

Interviews with Anthony Raden, Nathan and TNM board members point to several reasons why they selected full-day kindergarten as their first issue:

- The board members agreed that New Mexico needed to do much more on the early education front.
- Full-day kindergarten was a manageable piece of the larger pre-K issue.
- It was a “potentially winnable issue.” As Nathan put it, “I thought that it would be a long shot, but achievable.”

TNM's strategy was simple, yet effective. Though the concept of full-day kindergarten had been gathering support in New Mexico for a number of years, advocates had not managed to successfully implement a full-day kindergarten program. The TNM board and staff knew that

“Think New Mexico pointed out that while 54.7% of 5-year-olds attended full-day kindergarten programs nationally, only 14.7% did so in New Mexico. New Mexico children were way behind their peers in educational achievement.”

—Anthony Raden, *Achieving Full-Day Kindergarten in New Mexico: A Case Study*

they would need to win over the governor, which would require the support of the business community, and they would need to convince legislators that New Mexico could afford full-day kindergarten. With these two factors in mind, they began their campaign.

- First, they issued a report, making the case for full-day kindergarten—framing it as an essential and affordable program—and held a press conference to announce the findings in the report. As the legislative session drew near, they issued a second report, outlining how the state could pay for full-day kindergarten by cutting some costly, and arguably unnecessary, programs.
- They worked hard to get free positive media coverage—writing op-eds, meeting with writers and editors at the state’s major papers, and giving radio and TV interviews.
- They identified and worked with popular legislators on both sides of the aisle to cosponsor the legislation.
- Using the connections of a powerful board, they gained the support of New Mexico’s political and business leaders—including the governor’s wife, Dee Johnson, and the Association of Commerce and Industry, New Mexico’s most powerful business organization. This set the stage for the governor to eventually sign the legislation into law.
- Finally, TNM members “staffed the legislature” by acting as legislators’ aides before the vote. In a state where legislators receive very little compensation and little to no staff support, this kind of attention made a huge difference.

Raden notes in his case study that “teachers unions” were reluctant to support the passage of full-day kindergarten. Not so, says Charles Bowyer, National Education Association-New Mexico’s government relations, research and professional issues coordinator.

“We were always supportive of full-day kindergarten, but we wanted to make sure that there was enough funding for the program,” explains Bowyer. “We were concerned about how the passage of full-day kindergarten would impact other programs, vis-à-vis funding. At the time, we were working on other legislation....We wanted to make sure that this reform was not at the expense of other reforms.”

When asked what NEA-NM would have done differently, Bowyer notes that they would have started by supporting a phase-in process for implementing full-day kindergarten. “It took us (the coalition supporting full-day kindergarten) a long time to reach that compromise. If we had begun with a phase-in approach, we could have saved a lot of time and frustration—it was just too expensive otherwise,” explains Bowyer.

Staffing the Legislature

Every morning during the session, Nathan checked in personally with the legislative sponsors (Taylor, Wilson and Smith). If they needed anything—a typed speech, talking points, photocopies—he and his staff took care of it. Nathan and his allies spoke to every legislator in the House and Senate, shaping arguments to appeal to the person’s ideological leanings and legislative priorities. “We tried to make a marketing package that was attractive to everyone to counter all objections out there,” Senator Smith said. To Republicans, in particular, they tended to emphasize that the reform could be done in a fiscally prudent manner and would bring a high return on investment. To all politicians, they claimed that full-day kindergarten would boost student achievement—an affordable and popular reform that made enormous sense educationally and politically.

—Source: Anthony Raden, *Achieving Full-Day Kindergarten in New Mexico: A Case Study*

Ultimately, the phase-in compromise was appealing to a wide range of people. It was much more palatable to legislators, and it enabled NEA-NM to simultaneously work for salary increases for teachers and support full-day kindergarten.

The Right Solution at the Right Time

Andy Lenderman, a journalist who covered the education beat for *The Albuquerque Tribune*, points to several conditions and factors that made the timing ideal for passage of full-day kindergarten legislation. First, parents in the state, “tired of being dead last in every single education category,” were anxious for educational change and improved student outcomes. Second, with a booming economy, the state was “flush,” with a significant budgetary surplus from which new programs could be funded. Finally, legislators (who were up for re-election) and the governor (who endured criticism for vetoing the previous year’s budget and various education initiatives) had pledged to take action to revitalize the state’s educational system. Political and economic forces, therefore, converged to allow full-day kindergarten, an idea drifting on the political landscape for years, to emerge as a feasible and popular reform strategy on the state’s legislative agenda.

—Source: Anthony Raden, *Achieving Full-Day Kindergarten in New Mexico: A Case Study*

A snapshot of full-day kindergarten in New Mexico:

Issue	Meets NEA Policy Recommendations
Mandatory Full-Day Attendance	NO —Full-day kindergarten is universal (available in all schools), but not mandatory. More than 98 percent of parents choose to send their children to full-day kindergarten.
Teacher Certification	YES —Kindergarten teachers must be appropriately certified.
Class Size	YES —The ratio between teacher and students is 1 to 15. Classes with 15 to 20 students must be provided with a teacher’s assistant.
Alignment	Not specified in the statute (according to the ECS Kindergarten Database).
Professional Development	YES —The state provides ongoing professional development for teachers and principals.
Funding	YES —Full-day kindergarten was phased in across the state from 2000–2001 to 2004–2005. It is now fully funded by the state as part of the state’s regular education funding formula.
Parent Involvement	Not specified in the statute (according to the ECS Kindergarten Database).
Curriculum	NO —There is no mandated state curriculum. However, the statute specifies that programs must contain an early literacy program tied to reading research, and that they must be child-centered and developmentally appropriate.
Assessments	YES —Schools are required to conduct a variety of assessments, including reading and literacy assessments.
Teacher Assistants	YES —The law stipulates that if there are 15 to 20 students, teachers must have an assistant in the classroom.
Flexibility in Age Requirements	NO —The age requirement (5) is mandatory throughout the state. All students must attend at least half-day kindergarten if they turn 5 by September 1.

NEA Resources

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Additional Organizations/Web Sites

Early Education for All

www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/eea_home.htm. This Massachusetts campaign is a coalition of leaders from business, early childhood, labor, religion, health care, education and philanthropy, working in partnership with parents, grassroots leaders and state policymakers to make publicly funded, high-quality preschool education and full-day public school kindergarten available to every Massachusetts child. The Web site features full-day kindergarten research as well as draft legislation.

Full-Day Kindergarten: Exploring an Option for Extended Learning

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. www.nwrel.org/request/dec2002/index.html. Contains resources for parents, teachers, school administrators and policymakers.

Education Commission of the States—Kindergarten Database. www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/educationIssues/ECSSStateNotes.asp. Includes comprehensive information on state kindergarten funding and statutes.

National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.naeyc.org. NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children with a focus on birth to age 8. See the Early Childhood Issues section of their Web site for research and advocacy information.

National Conference of State Legislatures

www.ncsl.org. Maintains detailed information about state legislatures, including when they meet and how they are structured.

National Institute for Early Education Research

www.nieer.org. NIEER supports early childhood education initiatives by providing objective, nonpartisan information based on research. The NIEER Web site contains an Expert Database with profiles and contact information for experts in early childhood education.

Pre-K Now—Resources

www.preknow.org. Pre-K Now is a public education and advocacy organization that advances high-quality, voluntary prekindergarten for all 3- and 4-year-olds. Visit the Resources section of their Web site for more information about the early education climates in different states.

