

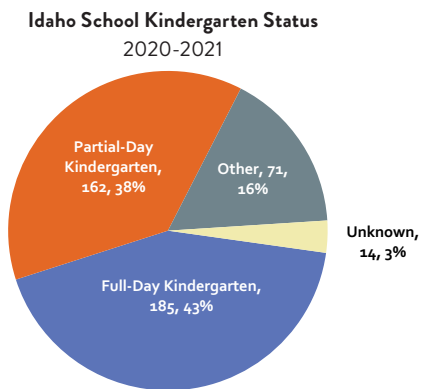
Full-Day Kindergarten in Idaho

With only 42% of Idaho kindergarteners scoring at or above grade level on the statewide reading assessment in fall 2020, we clearly need more and better early education. National research shows that attending full-day kindergarten boosts students' academic outcomes, self-confidence, and ability to work and play with other children.¹ The benefits of full-day kindergarten are even larger for Hispanic children, non-English speakers, children from immigrant households, and children with low socioeconomic status.² Yet Idaho not only does not require districts to offer full-day kindergarten, it is one of only nine states with no requirement that districts offer kindergarten at all.³

Kindergarten in Idaho

In the 2020–21 school year, 184 schools offered some form of full-day kindergarten; 162 schools provided only partial-day kindergarten. Seventy-one other schools offered a hybrid between full-day and partial-day. As an example, a hybrid model may involve students being full-day for three days per week and half day for the other two.

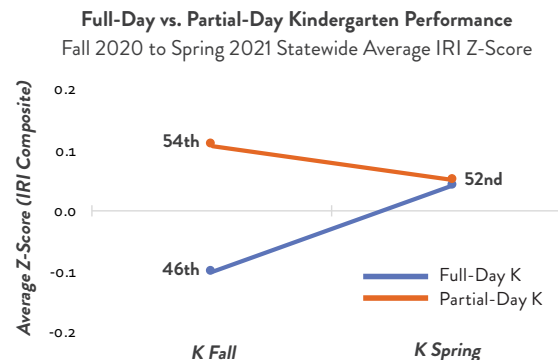
The funding source for full-day kindergarten varies by district—ranging from some districts covering the costs completely to others that require families to opt in and pay the full cost for full-day kindergarten.



Effectiveness of Full-Day Kindergarten in Idaho

A recent analysis by Public Impact on the effectiveness of full-day kindergarten in Idaho, as measured by student test scores on the Idaho Reading Indicator assessment, found the following:

- In 2020–21, full-day kindergarteners made statistically significant improvements in reading scores of about 0.2 standard deviations compared to partial-day kindergarten students.⁴
- For the cohort of full-day kindergarten students who started in 2018–19, these gains had partially diminished by the end of second grade.



What Does This Mean for Kindergarteners in Idaho?

The national and Idaho research sends a clear signal to policymakers about the value of increasing access to full-day kindergarten for the state's children. Requiring all districts to offer full-day kindergarten, with state funding behind it, would expand the number of students getting the benefit of full-day kindergarten.

¹ Cooper, H., Allen, A., Patali, E., & Dent, A. (2010). Effects of all-day kindergarten on academic achievement and social development. *Review of Educational Research*, 80(1), 34–70. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249797967_Effects_of_Full-Day_Kindergarten_on_Academic_Achievement_and_Social_Development

² Dhuey, E. (2011, March 1). Who benefits from kindergarten? Evidence from the introduction of state subsidization. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 33(1), 3–22. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0162373711398125>

³ Institute of Education Sciences. (2020). Types of state and district requirements for kindergarten entrance and attendance by state. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab1_3-2020.asp; Education Commission of the States. 50-state comparison: State K–3 policies. Retrieved from <https://www.ecs.org/childcare-policies/>

⁴ Source: Idaho State Board of Education, 2018–19 to 2020–21 results, *Idaho Reading Indicator Assessment* [provided through data-sharing agreement]. An explanation of the assessment can be found at <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/assessment/iri/>