



# Implementation and impact of full-day kindergarten in Oregon



In 2015/16, Oregon shifted its funding policy on kindergarten enrollment, creating financial incentives for school districts to offer full-day kindergarten (FDK). This resulted in an increase in the percentage of kindergarten students enrolled in FDK, from 42 percent in 2014/15 to nearly 100 percent in 2015/16.<sup>1</sup> Evidence from other research generally shows that FDK has positive short-term effects on academic and non-academic outcomes, but longer-term effects are unclear.<sup>2</sup> To support decisionmaking about FDK in Oregon, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest partnered with the Oregon Department of Education and one large Oregon school district on a study, *Examining the implementation and impact of full-day kindergarten in Oregon*. This infographic summarizes the study's findings and implications.

## How many Oregon districts already had full-day kindergarten before the policy shift in 2015/16?

In 2013/14 and 2014/15, **about two-thirds of school districts already offered FDK**, either as the sole kindergarten option or alongside half-day kindergarten (HDK), according to a district survey conducted by the Oregon Department of Education and analyzed by Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

## What were the impacts of FDK on student outcomes in one large Oregon district?

To look at the impact of FDK on student outcomes, researchers analyzed data from a single large Oregon school district that offered both FDK and HDK in 2013/14 and 2014/15, matching FDK students in each year to similar HDK students in the same district. **Thirty percent of kindergarten students in the study district attended FDK in 2013/14 and 2014/15.**

### Impacts of attending FDK compared to HDK in one Oregon district



**ATTENDANCE** The study found a small improvement in attendance in grades 1 and 3 among the 2013/14 kindergarten cohort. Attendance =in all K–3 among the 2014/15 kindergarten class also improved.



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY** The study found a negative effect for FDK on English language proficiency scores in grade 3 in certain domains for English learner students in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 classes.



**GRADE 3 TEST SCORES IN MATH AND READING** The study found no differences between FDK and HDK.



**LIKELIHOOD OF GRADE RETENTION BY GRADE 3** The study found no differences between FDK and HDK.



**LIKELIHOOD OF BEING DISCIPLINED BY GRADE 3** The study found no differences between FDK and HDK.

The impact of FDK on tested outcomes for specific student groups (Latinx; American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, multiracial, or Native Hawaiian; and economically disadvantaged) was similar to the results for all students. For these student groups, FDK had mixed impacts for attendance and no impact on grade 3 assessment scores in math or reading.

# What did FDK in Oregon look like in 2017/18?

In a 2017/18 Oregon Department of Education survey analyzed by Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, teachers and principals reported different FDK practices (detailed below) used in schools after the 2015/16 policy shift. The survey was not representative of all teachers and principals throughout the state (22 percent of teachers and 42 percent of principals responded), but can illustrate examples of FDK practices and classroom time allotments.

76%

of teachers spent two or more hours on teacher-directed whole class activities.

Child-selected activities may be more developmentally appropriate for kindergarten students than teacher-directed activities.<sup>3</sup>

85%

of teachers spent less than one hour on child-selected activities in a typical day.

36%

of principals reported offering joint professional development for kindergarten and preschool teachers, compared to nearly all principals reporting joint professional development for kindergarten and early elementary grade teachers. This indicates opportunities for improved alignment between preschool and kindergarten.

56%

of teachers did not use kindergarten entry assessment data to inform instruction. Some teachers reported that they did not receive results or that the results arrived too late to be useful.\*

\* The percentage of respondents for this question was smaller than for the other questions in the survey.

22%

of principals and other district staff reported a small number of children attending FDK programs who were on half-day schedules for reasons such as having an individualized education program (IEP). Regardless of number, the potential exclusion of students with IEPs is of concern if this student group is not being afforded the same educational opportunities as their peers.

## What are the implications for practice and research?

- ▶ Oregon should consider **collecting statewide FDK data** identifying which kindergarten students access FDK compared to HDK and which are put on a half-day schedule while enrolled in a FDK program. This may help the state ensure equity in access to and participation in FDK programming.
- ▶ Oregon could **develop materials and supports on FDK implementation** for districts, specifically around developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous kindergarten instruction and how teachers can incorporate purposeful play and child-selected activities. Guidance to districts on using kindergarten entry assessment data and on alignment of preschool and kindergarten curricula and teacher professional development could be useful for appropriately implementing FDK.
  - The state could make data reports available to teachers early in the school year to encourage use of the data.
- ▶ States seeking to expand FDK should **consider funding incentives for districts** and identify facilitators and barriers to offering FDK. Information on facilitators and barriers can be used to help craft appropriate FDK policy as well as supports and incentives for districts to offer FDK.
- ▶ Researchers should **investigate variations in FDK impact** on student outcomes, focusing on implementation differences across classrooms, schools, and districts and the time spent on developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, future research should examine impacts on a variety of early elementary outcomes and for specific student groups, such as English learner students, to determine who benefits most from FDK.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Students not in FDK were enrolled in half-day kindergarten. Oregon Department of Education. (2016a). Oregon full-day kindergarten enrollment: School years 2003–04 through 2014–15. [http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/FullDayK/Documents/full\\_day\\_k\\_enrollment\\_report.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/FullDayK/Documents/full_day_k_enrollment_report.pdf)
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- <sup>2</sup> Pelletier, P.J., & Corter, J. E. (2019). A longitudinal comparison of learning outcomes in full-day and half-day kindergarten. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 112(2), 192–210. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1214299>
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- <sup>3</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8 (Position statement). <http://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/PSDAP.pdf>

**Read the full study:** Pierson, A., & Merrill, B. (2021). *Examining the implementation and impact of full-day kindergarten in Oregon* (REL 2022–121). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4634>

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