

# Full-Day Kindergarten Questions/Concerns and Answers

**#1) You say that full-day kindergarten is needed to close gaps and to support all students as they enter first grade but isn't it true that children will catch up developmentally to one another on their own by the time they get to the later elementary grades?**

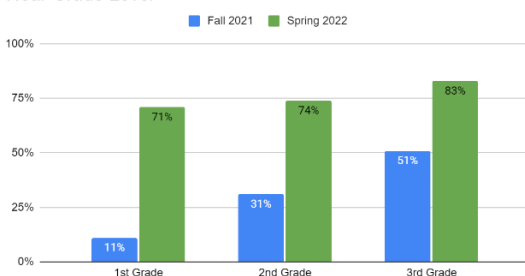
Early development does vary significantly from one child to another. Each child's development follows its own unique trajectory, developing different skills at different times from their peers. Further, as children work to master one skill, they may lose another creating very distinct patterns of development and learning that vary across all children. It is true that this significant developmental variability does decrease over time as children get older and development begins to look more similar than different. This typically happens in the later elementary/early middle school grades. However, there are many reasons to ensure that all children have access to high quality early childhood programs, including full-day kindergarten, to ensure that their brain's development is supported to build all of the connections for literacy, math and social and emotional learning that are critical for their future success.

**First, the child's brain is 90% developed** by the time they leave kindergarten so maximizing on the window of growth and development is critical during this time period. Otherwise, we will continue to have significant gaps in learning even when we get to the later grades when developmental milestones have started to follow similar patterns.

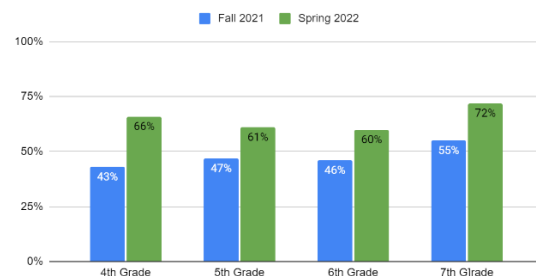
**Second, the curriculum demands shifted significantly in 2010** when our state adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS increased the expectations of our standards in a significant way. Our current kindergarten program is trying to address many more and higher-level standards for kindergarten students, and they are trying to do it with a curriculum that was designed for a full-day program in a half day schedule.

**Third, the charts below show that even in the years where development starts to even out, students in Londonderry can and do fall behind.**

Reading i Ready Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Students On or Near Grade Level



Reading i Ready Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Students on or Near Grade Level



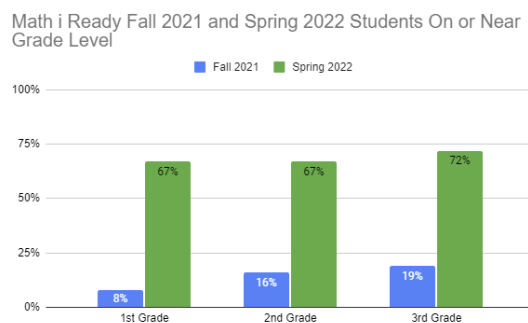
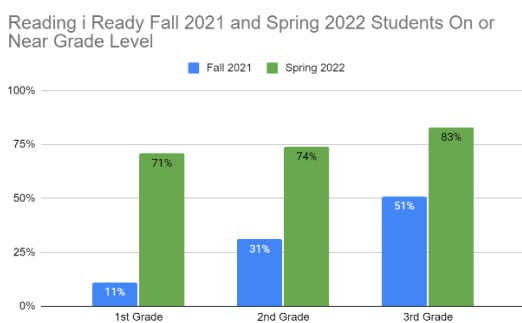
**Fourth, the research is clear that children who have not learned to read by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will struggle academically throughout the middle and high school years** ([Annie E. Casey Foundation](#); [Campaign for Grade Level Reading](#)). Additionally, the science of reading has provided our educators with clear direction on what children need in the development of language and literacy skills. Along with decoding skills, students need time to build background knowledge and vocabulary, which are critical for reading comprehension skills. Students also need direct instruction in specific skills and then need the opportunity to practice and apply those skills through playful learning that is relevant and interesting to them. Full-day kindergarten provides educators with additional time to help students build the language and literacy skills that are critical to keeping them on a path towards reading proficiency by third grade ([American Institute on Research, 2010](#)).

**#2) Kindergarten is subsidized childcare. There is no structured curriculum; it's more for socializing kids. Why should taxpayers pay for a full-day kindergarten program?**

Twenty to thirty years ago, the perception may have been that preschool and kindergarten were primarily for the purpose of children’s socialization. However, as was the case then and remains the case today, **preschool and kindergarten** provide the start of a strong academic foundation. Below is a summary of the general research on the social and academic benefits of full day kindergarten.

**The General Research on Full Day Kindergarten**

While all students can benefit from this additional time, we can also see from our kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade data, this additional time in kindergarten is needed.



Full-day kindergarten has been shown in longitudinal research to have positive impacts on literacy, math and social-emotional learning ([NCES, 2004](#); [Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, 2004](#); [National Education Association](#); [NIEER, 2005](#)), particularly when followed up with high quality elementary instruction, which helps to prevent fade out effects. Adding full-day kindergarten to Londonderry’s education continuum, Preschool through 12, would provide the district with the opportunity to ensure that:

1. We maximize the brain's growth and development to build the critical foundations children need for later learning.
2. Close achievement gaps in literacy, math and social and emotional skills that can be identified as early as kindergarten and first grade; and
3. Ensure that children have what they need, including becoming proficient readers, to continue to be successful as they move into the later elementary and middle school grades.

**#3) I have a Lancer that is attending a great university. He/she attended Moose Hill, ½ Day program, why is Full Day K necessary? What's the problem?**

The Big Picture Data we keep an eye on is college graduation (2- and 4-year degrees) as well as certificate programs. What we are finding year in, and year out is many of our successful high school graduates who are accepted to college do not achieve that goal 6 years later. This is a problem we are seeing over nearly 20 years of data.

**#4) We have a parent who is at home and/or works from home, so ½ Day K is not a day care challenge for our family. Do I have to send my child to full-day kindergarten?**

Full Day Kindergarten is a family's choice to send their child. Additionally, full day kindergarten is not a requirement for the State of New Hampshire. If full day kindergarten becomes a reality in Londonderry, we presume we would move to full day only approach because that is what has happened in other communities. They have found that the vast majority of families only wanted a full day program for their kids.

**#5) I don't want my child to attend Full Day Kindergarten because I think it is too long of a day. Will I be required to send my child to full day kindergarten?**

*Full Day Kindergarten is a family's choice to send their child. Additionally, full day kindergarten is not a requirement for the State of New Hampshire.*

**#6) How are we going to staff a Full Day Kindergarten? Do the assistants really *need to be there*?**

Picture what it was like to throw a party for 5-year-olds. Now imagine teaching them to read and work with numbers . . . in a calm and happy environment . . . for 7 hours a day . . .

*Our plan is to build our full day program around the curriculum needs of our students and the instructional focus for our staff needs. Given our class sizes and the increasing curriculum and learning expectations outlined in our state standards, we anticipate needing instructional assistants to facilitate the learning of all students in the classroom as we do now in a ½ day program.*

**#7) We already have plans in place for child care to wrap around the current ½ day Kindergarten program. Finding childcare for just a few hours after the full-day kindergarten program is going to be a problem for my family and we don't want to change our child care provider. Do we have to send our child to full-day kindergarten?**

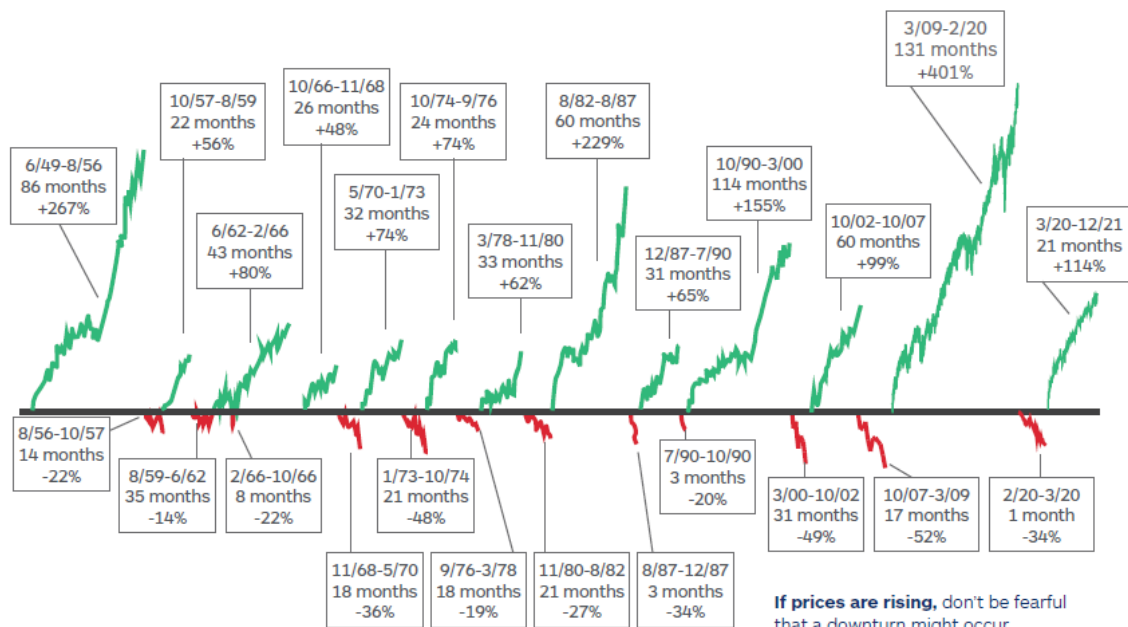
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**#8) We could be heading into a recession. Inflation is high, interest rates just went up, taxes just went up, maybe we should wait. Is now the best time to design full-day kindergarten for our community?**

Since WWII, average recession is about 11.1 months (Source: [Kiplinger](#)). Proposals by the Kindergarten Committee, if supported by the school board and passed by the townspeople, won't take place for 2 to 3 years from now.

## The stock market rises a lot and falls a little

S&P 500 1949-2021



**If prices are rising,** don't be fearful that a downturn might occur.

**If prices are falling,** get excited about what's coming next!

Source: S&P Capital IQ; Bloomberg.

An index is a portfolio of specific securities (common examples are the S&P, DJIA, NASDAQ), the performance of which is often used as a benchmark in judging the relative performance of certain asset classes. Indexes are unmanaged portfolios and investors cannot invest directly in an index. Past performance does not guarantee future results.

