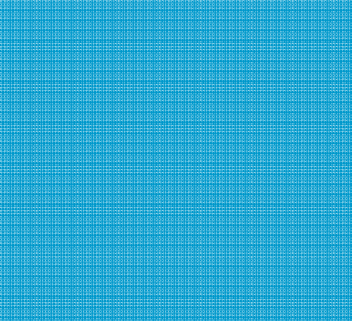


**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
FULL-DAY VERSUS HALF-DAY KINDERGARTEN:
A LITERATURE REVIEW**



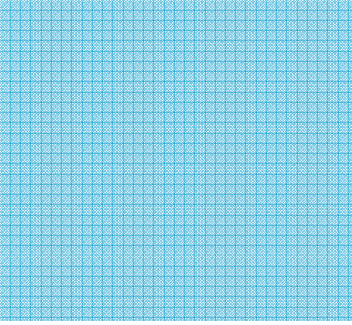
SANGEET A MATHUR, PH.D.
AUGUST, 2000



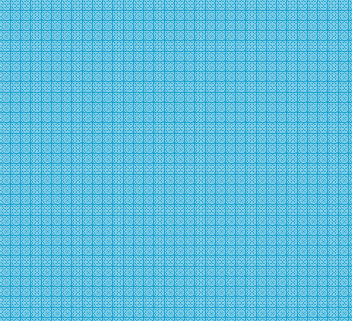
children's institute
Strengthening social and emotional health



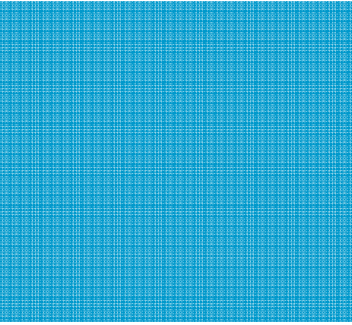
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY




Parents, teachers, administrators, board of education members and community, alike, express interest and concern regarding the education of children. Central to this is how we provide the most advantageous learning opportunities and environment. Of primary concern is the early education years, considered the time when a child is most open and capable of processing large quantities of new information. Inevitably, the discussion that ensues finds its way to the merits and or challenges of various kindergarten options. There is an ongoing trend in the United States today to modify *half-day* kindergarten programs to *full-day* programs. The purpose of this comprehensive, not exhaustive review of the literature is to present the most recent and significant data to provide decision-makers with information needed to pursue the program that best meets the needs of those involved.

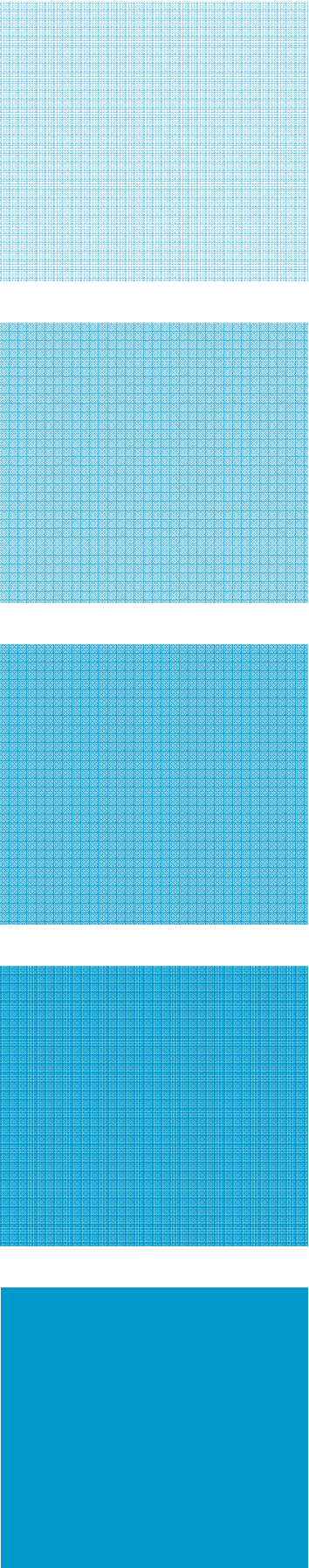


Kindergarten is an important early school experience for the young child because patterns of success or failure established early and often endure throughout later school years. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES,1998), in October 1997, 89% of all 5-year-olds were enrolled in public preprimary programs. A recent Early Childhood Longitudinal Study reported approximately 4 million children attended kindergarten in the United States in the fall of 1998 (U.S. Department of Education NCES, 1998). Of those children attending kindergarten, 55% were in *full-day* programs and 45% were in part-day or *half-day* programs.



Many traditional *half-day* kindergarten programs are beginning to convert to *full-day*. Summarizing the existing body of literature on *full-day* and *half-day* kindergarten evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

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- Recent research supports the effectiveness of *full-day* kindergarten, indicating that there are short-term academic gains for young children.
 - A *full-day* kindergarten schedule is beneficial for children at-risk for school failure.
 - Children attending a *full-day* kindergarten are rated more positively for social competence than *half-day* and *alternate-day* children.
 - *Full-day* schedules offer the potential for a program to be more "child-centered."
 - Participation in *full-day* kindergarten has a positive influence on academic performance through first grade.
 - There is no evidence of any detrimental effects of *full-day* kindergarten.



The growth in full-day kindergarten does represent an expanding commitment to provide high quality education and care for all young children. Careful planning of kindergarten programs can make schooling a positive experience for the child. It is imperative to involve all players in the planning process while making decisions for changing the kindergarten schedule. This means including parents, community members, school administrators, school board members and teachers. While increasing the length of the school day is an important aspect of the kindergarten experience as highlighted in this review, it is also crucial to consider what teachers and children do in the classroom for the extended period of the time as well as the kindergarten curriculum.

Note: Reference T00-605

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