

Full-Day Public Kindergarten at an Inner City of South Korea: Exploring an Option for Extended Learning

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Introduction

Full-Day Kindergarten

In South Korea, presently, there are a lot of models being used for performing of kindergarten curriculum. School districts in most South Korea provinces make available to kindergarten age children a minimum of full-day programs. In Seoul metropolitan office of education offers full-day kindergarten programs toward all public kindergarten in Seoul since 19, so kindergarten age children can attend public kindergarten from Monday to Friday 08:00 a.m. – 08:00 p.m., and Saturday 08:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Because the kindergartens also run through winter and summer vacations, from early morning to night, the riding for the children of the working parents are convenient and the parents can stay in their offices without worries through the school year.

With the circumstances of full-day kindergarten in Seoul metropolitan area, I organize a kindergarten improvement plan for full-day students to suggest proper programs which are suited to them who stay longer time in the classroom than half-day children.

The program allows me to acknowledge that what activities are effective and helpful toward inner city full-day kindergarten children who have working parents.

What does the Research Say?

The increase in single-parent and dual-wage-earner families has greatly expanded the need for all-day, out-of-home care for young children (Miller, 2002; West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken, 2000). James Elicker, an early childhood researcher at Purdue University, conducted a two-year evaluation of a Wisconsin full-day program, and critically reviewed the research on full-day kindergarten (Elicker, 2000; Elicker & Mathur, 1997). Elicker's examination of the research yields the following conclusions:

- ❖ Students participating in full-day kindergarten consistently progress further academically during the kindergarten year, as assessed by achievement tests, than students in either half-day or alternate-day programs.
- ❖ There is tentative evidence that full-day kindergarten has stronger, longer-lasting academic benefits for children from low-income families or others with fewer educational resources prior to kindergarten.
- ❖ There is not current, strong evidence that the academic achievement gains of full-day kindergarten persist beyond first grade for all students.
- ❖ There is no evidence for detrimental effects of full-day kindergarten. The full-day curriculum, if developmentally appropriate for five- and six-year-olds does not seem to overly stress or pressure kindergarten children.
- ❖ Kindergarten teachers and parents strongly value the increased flexibility and opportunities to communicate and individualize instruction for children offered by the full-day schedule.

Table A. Benefits of Full-Day Kindergarten

| Benefits for students | Benefits for parents |
|---|--|
| More "time and opportunity to play with language", as well as to explore subjects in depth | Lowered childcare costs possible |
| A more flexible, individualized learning environment | The opportunity for lower-income families to enroll children in a higher quality early education program |
| More individual and small-group interaction with the teacher than in possible in most half-day classrooms | Less difficulty scheduling childcare and transportation |

Characteristics of the Kindergarten

1. Type: Regular Public Kindergarten

2. Number of Students

| | |
|---|----|
| Male | 25 |
| Female | 35 |
| Total Students | 60 |
| Free Tuition Eligible Students Based on Low-income Families | 35 |
| Full-Day Students | 30 |
| Full-Day Students with Free Tuition Eligible | 24 |

3. Staffs

| Kindergarten staff | Number of staff |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| principal | 1 |
| Vice-principal | 1 |
| Kindergarten teacher | 4 |
| Instructional assistant | 1 |
| Health Clerk | 1 |
| Cook | 1 |
| Maintenance coordinator | 1 |
| Total | 10 |

4. Budget for Extended Full-day Program: \$40,000 / year

Above budget is an additional funding for students' activities of full-day kindergarten. The funding is only given for the kindergartens which are located in urban area with low-income families.

Survey for the Options of Full-day Kindergarten Program

Parents Survey Results

Before deciding what program will be selected for the full day children through the year, two subjective questions are given to the parents of the full-day children.

1. What kind of activities do you want to be performed for your children by the extended full-day kindergarten program?
2. What do you anticipate from the activities?

Based on the questionnaire, 60% of the parents reply that they want their children to have a lot of field trip opportunities through the year. 26.6% parents want more literacy development activities and 13.4 % reply that they want health care program for their children. The results are interpreted that the working parents do not have much time to go outside for further learning experiences with their children because of the limitation of available times. Therefore, we select "field trip" as an extended full-day program and make a year plan for the full-day students.

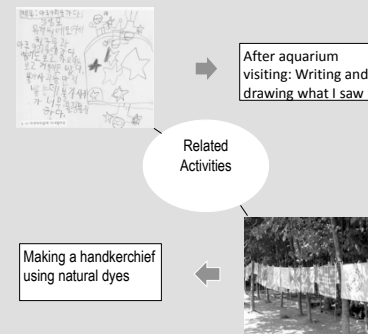
Timeline for Field Trip

1. A Yearly Schedule for Field Trip

| Month | Place | Educational Objectives |
|-------|--------------------------------|---|
| 4 | Children' Traffic Safety Hall | Learning the signs and coping with dangerous situations |
| 5 | Dental Clinic | Learning the proper ways of tooth brushing |
| 6 | Samsung Children' Museum | Experiencing and inquiring of science |
| 7 | COEX Aquarium | Understanding the ecology of fish |
| 8 | National Theater – Dance Drama | Understanding performance arts |
| 9 | Boramae Park | Inquiring trees, flowers, and fruits |
| 10 | Fabric Dyeing | Learning natural dyes |
| 11 | Kinderland | Physical development |
| 12 | Unhyung Palace | Learning traditional etiquette |
| 1 | Local Restaurant | Cooking with families |

The school year of South Korea starts March 1st and ends upcoming February 29th. The funding of field study for low-income families' full-time kindergarten students is provided by office of the school districts, so the students can participate the trips without any charges.

2. The Outcome of the Program



Children learn traditional bow etiquette of South Korea wearing traditional clothes "Hanbok"



Related Activities



Meeting the Dance Director and learning performance movements

Conclusions and Recommendations

After one year of field trip project of full-day kindergarten, 'N' kindergarten' full-day students had an opportunity of in-depth learning through real inquiries and experiences. Some students began to have an interesting of literacy because they wanted to represent what they saw and what they felt.

It was a valuable opportunity for full-day kindergarten students to have an additional field trip with their teachers and peers because they relatively had been less play and learning time spending with their families than the time of half-day students have. Therefore, the means for delivering instruction in kindergarten can continue to be "play" and "inquiry" based. Students need to continue to learn in ways which fit with the manner in which children learn naturally. Field trip is the means by which children learn about the world around themselves, this needs to be the focus of learning in kindergarten programs.

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