

Should Kids Spend More Time in School?



Most kids spend about 6-½ hours a day in school. They go to school between 175 and 180 days a year. But many people think the school day and school year need to be longer. They say kids need to spend more time in school if they are to learn the skills needed to be successful in life.

President Obama agrees. Adding days to the school year will boost student achievement and help the United States compete with other nations, he says. Students in Germany and Japan go to school about 240 days a year. And those students do better on tests than U.S. kids do. In many other countries, students go to school 195 days, which is three weeks more than in the U.S.

Making the school day longer can boost achievement too, experts say. Students in the U.S. spend about 32 hours a week in school, while students in Denmark spend 53 hours a week in school. Students in Sweden spend 60 hours a week in school.

Some schools are experimenting with longer days and years. They are shortening summer vacation so their students can go to school 220 or more days instead of 180. In other schools, the school day might end at 5:00 p.m. instead of 3:00. Experts say many of these experiments are resulting in higher student test scores in science, English, and math.

NEWS WORDS

successful compete
achievement afford
taxpayer schedule

Some people say kids don't need more time in school. Longer school days or school years will cost more money for teachers, teaching materials, electricity, and other things. Taxpayers cannot afford the increased costs, they say. A longer school day or year might be too tiring for kids, too. More time in school will take away from family time. And no one can be *sure* that more school time will result in higher test scores.

SCHOOL-YEAR HISTORY

Years ago, many U.S. families worked on farms. Children were needed on those farms before school, after school, and in the summer. That's why we have 6-hour school days and summer vacation. Some people say that schedule needs to be changed.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Should the school day or school year be lengthened?
Do you think longer school days or years might make kids smarter? More successful?