

Several helpful research articles related to kindergarten entry age

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1. Shepard, L. A., & Smith, M. L. (1988). Escalating academic demand in kindergarten: Counterproductive policies. *The Elementary School Journal*, 89(2), 135-145.

<http://www.colorado.edu/education/faculty/lorrieshepard/PDF/Escalating%20Academic%20Demand.pdf>

Abstract

Academic demands in kindergarten and first grade are considerably higher today than 20 years ago and continue to escalate. Downward shifts of what were next-grade expectations into the earliest grades are the result of large-scale social trends, for example, the universality of kindergartens, as well as day-to-day pressures felt by teachers, from accountability gates and demands for acceleration from middle-class parents. Narrow emphasis on isolated reading and numeracy skills is detrimental even to the children who succeed and is especially harmful to children labeled as failures. Policies such as raising the entrance age, readiness screening, and kindergarten retention are intended to solve the problem of inappropriate academic demand by removing younger or unready children. Research evidence does not support the efficacy of these policies. Rather, these practices contribute to the continued escalation of curriculum as teachers adjust their teaching to an older and more able group.

2. Shepard, L.A., and Smith, M.L. Synthesis of research on school readiness and kindergarten retention. *Educational Leadership* (November 1986) 44:78-86.

http://eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ342574&_ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ342574

Abstract

Summarizes school readiness and retention research issues, including youngest first graders' performance, entrance age policies, voluntary decisions to wait an extra year, assessment of children's readiness, and the negative effects of kindergarten and first-grade retention. Concludes that age disadvantages are seldom serious and usually disappear by the third grade. Cites 52 references.

3. Bickel, D. D., Zigmond, N., & Strayhorn, J. (1991). Chronological age at entrance to first grade: Effects on elementary school success. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 6(2), 105-117.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0885200691900012>

Abstract

The effects of children's ages at entrance to first grade upon success in elementary school was examined in a cohort of urban children who entered first grade in 1983. A set of demographic, social, and early experience variables was used as covariates in the analysis. Older children did slightly, but significantly better academically in first grade, primarily because of better performance in mathematics. There was no relationship between age of entrance and a measure of conduct in the first grade. Four years later, no effect of age at entrance to first grade upon academic performance or upon placement inside or outside the mainstream of regular education was found. Age at entrance was a far less powerful predictor than the socioeconomic variables in the covariate set.

4. Smith, M. L., & Shepard, L. A. (1987, October). What doesn't work: Explaining policies of retention in the early grades. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 129-134.

<http://www.colorado.edu/education/faculty/lorrieshepard/PDF/What%20Doesn't%20Work.pdf>

This article focuses more on early retention but may be helpful to you.

5. Policy statement by National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Department of Education (NAECS/SDE)

<http://www.naecs-sde.org/policy> (This link includes several helpful policy-oriented papers).

NAECS/SDE. (2001). STILL unacceptable trends in kindergarten entry and placement. Washington, DC: Author.