

# Impact of kindergarten redshirting



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The term “Redshirting” comes from college athletics, where coaches delay some athletes’ participation on a team until their sophomore year, when they are called “redshirt freshmen” and have better-developed skills. The belief in kindergarten is that this delay will allow the child to grow physically, cognitively, and emotionally, making their eventual kindergarten experience more successful (Gonzalez 2016). Nearly all children entered kindergarten at age five, but a recent scholarly article accounted a New York Times article that noted in 2008, 17 percent of kindergarten entrants were at least six years old (Paul 2010). The shift towards later school entry is partially explained by changes in school entry laws, but may also be due to an increase in the prevalence of redshirting (Deming & Dynarski 2008). Some other accounts suggest parents increasingly delay kindergarten entry because they believe their child is not developmentally ready for the increasing demands of (Deming & Dynarski 2008). Others argue that redshirting reflects parents’ strategic desire to ensure their child enters kindergarten older, taller, and with higher levels of social and cognitive skills than their schoolmates (Paul 2010).

Kindergarten today is very different from the kindergarten that is was 20 to 25 years ago. Many schools have gotten rid of play programs in schools and have switched over to a more direct instruction and regular testing school, in part thanks to the pressure to improve grade-school test scores. As seen in multiple different teacher blogs online, teachers are calling kindergarten, the new first grade.

The incidence of kindergarten redshirting is steadily increasing, with national rates estimated between 4% and 14%. Which is nearly triple the rate from

what research showed in the 1970s (Deming & Dynarski, 2008). It is surprising then, that prior research shows limited positive effects redshirting kids from kindergarten, and even negative effects of delayed entry on academic outcomes (Dagli & Jones, 2013). Parents redshirt their child because they believe that children who are more mature at the start of school, experience an academic benefit, allowing them to outcompete their relatively younger classmates. Parents also consider other factors like child care prices, income, and their child's developmental needs in their decisions about kindergarten entry; they may delay their child's entry to kindergarten if they believe their child's skills are behind their peers, or suspect their child may have a developmental delay or disability (Dagli & Jones, 2013).

There are many short term benefits when it comes to delaying a child's kindergarten education. In a study done by Linda Mendez of *The Educational Journal*, Mendez (2015) found that children who experienced delayed entry received less negative feedback from teachers and had fewer school performance problems in first and second grade, than students who may have entered kindergarten around the age of 5 or when they were eligible (Mendez 2015). Data from third and fourth grade demonstrated similarly favorable results for students who experienced delayed entry (Mendez 2015). Additionally, children whose entry into kindergarten was delayed were half as likely as those entering when age-eligible to repeat first and second grade.

There is also the idea of delaying a student's kindergarten education with the parental goal of keeping the child ready for athletics at a higher level. Parents consider the fact that if they keep their child out of school for a year, <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-kindergarten-redshirting/>

their child will become the oldest and, presumably they will also be the most physically developed. This is a trend we start to see even at the high levels of college athletics, where the term first came from.

Linda Mendez (2015) investigated the effects of delaying entry on later elementary school grade retention and special education placement. In this small study, they identified 27 students from different schools as having experienced delayed entry in one suburban school district and were examined for later retention and placement in special education programs and compared to district rates for these practices. Results showed that 70% of students who experienced delayed entry were boys. The finding that 6% of students who experienced delayed entry were later retained in elementary school was not significantly different than the overall district rate for the same period (12.8%). However, among students who experienced delayed entry and were later retained, 82% were boys. Additionally, 17% of students who experienced delayed entry later received special education services. This was significantly higher than the district rate of 7% of students served in special education. This information can be correlated with the scholar report “Kindergarten redshirting: Motivations and spillovers using census-level data. Early Childhood Research Quarterly” done by C. K. Fortner and J. M. Jenkins (2017).

In the scholar report “Kindergarten redshirting: Motivations and spillovers using census-level data. Early Childhood Research Quarterly” (Fortner & Jenkins 2017), it was found that among students who redshirt and are later designated as having a disability, there were strong negative associations with achievement outcomes. An important argument against <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-kindergarten-redshirting/>

delaying school entry for children with, or at risk for disability is that children would be more likely to be referred, properly identified, and offered beneficial services and interventions when they reach public school (Fortner & Jenkins 2017). Once public school children are identified as having a disability, schools are required under IDEA to develop an IEP and to provide a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (Kessler 2018).

Another top researcher D. T. Burkam (2007) investigated the effects of kindergarten retention on academic achievement and found that retained students continued to perform at statistically lower levels than their same grade peers in both literacy and mathematics in their second year of kindergarten as well as in Grade 1. Hong and Yu (2007) used data collected through the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class (ECLS-K) to examine the effects of kindergarten retention on later elementary school outcomes. Hong and Yu (2007) examined social-emotional development by comparing kindergarten students who were retained to those students in the same cohort who were at risk of being retained but were ultimately promoted. Two years later, children's competence and interest in academics were significantly higher among the group of students who were retained than among the group that was promoted, although effect sizes were small.

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding long-term outcomes for students who experience delayed entry or kindergarten retention. Many researchers have investigated only short-term outcomes, neglecting the long-term consequences that could result from these practices. Others have examined only delayed entry or early retention but have not compared these

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two groups to typically progressing students in a single cohort of students. Additionally, although researchers are beginning to take into consideration other variables known to be related to achievement in examining outcomes, it remains unclear if the more negative outcomes that have been associated with retention are related to the overrepresentation of less privileged students in this group.

Lincove and Painter (2006) reported some outcomes that were more positive for students that were not redshirted (E. X.: Not as likely to be arrested in high school, more likely to attend a 4 year college or university), in Lincove's and Painter's study (2006), delayed entry students showed a pattern of superior outcomes to retained students after the adjustment of prior differences in covariates. For example, among children with paid lunch, those in the retained group, in this specific group, were over six times more likely to be placed in special education in Grades 1-5 than children in the delayed entry group. Among those receiving free or reduced-price lunch, children in the retained group were over three times more likely to be placed in special education than children in the delayed entry group. Teacher ratings of attention in Grades 3 and 5 showed the same pattern of more positive outcomes for delayed entry than students that entered into kindergarten when they were eligible. In fifth grade, delayed entry children also were rated by teachers as having significantly better attitudes toward school. With regard to standardized test scores, the data show a clear pattern of higher scores among the delayed entry group than the retained group.

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