



## A child's age at school entry matters; policy changes can have long-lasting implications for student's knowledge and skills development

A new report, just published on [IZA World of Labor](#), finds that school entry age has strong effects on outcomes, including test scores, special-needs diagnosis, and leadership.

During the last 50 years, school entry ages have been decreasing across many regions. But in some countries, such as the US, it is becoming conventional wisdom that to succeed in school, children need to be older when they start. This new report—by Elizabeth Dhuey of the University of Toronto—summarizes the latest research in this area. Evidence suggests that children who start school at an older age are in fact at an advantage in primary education, and these advantages can continue into adulthood.

Though many questions regarding the optimal age of school entry remain unanswered, Dhuey's report indicates that children who are older than their classmates at the beginning of primary school score higher on standardized exams throughout primary and secondary school. These children are more likely to have high-school leadership experience, are more likely to be enrolled in pre-academic university-track programs and attend high-end universities, and are less likely to be identified as disabled or receive special education services.

Policy makers need to keep this in mind as the implications of changes of school-entry policies can have long-lasting effects on students' knowledge and skill development throughout their childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Evidence shows school-age may also have important long-term implications for productivity, employment, and earnings.

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### Notes for editors:

- IZA World of Labor (<http://wol.iza.org>) is a global, freely available online resource that provides policy makers, academics, journalists, and researchers, with clear, concise and evidence-based knowledge on labor economics issues worldwide.
- The site offers relevant and succinct information on topics including diversity, migration, minimum wage, youth unemployment, employment protection, development, education, gender balance, labor mobility and flexibility among others.

Established in 1998, the Institute for the Study of Labor ([www.iza.org](http://www.iza.org)) is an independent economic research institute focused on the analysis of global labour markets. Based in Bonn, it operates an international network of about 1,300 economists and researchers spanning more than 45 countries.