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Kindergarten skills and fifth-grade achievement: Evidence from the ECLS-K

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Abstract

Children enter kindergarten with disparate rudimentary reading and mathematics skills; capabilities for paying attention, sitting still and making friends; mental health; and inclinations for aggressive behavior. The role of these characteristics in producing fifth-grade school achievement is the subject of this paper. We find considerable impacts for school-entry academic skills but, with the exception of a kindergartener's capacity to pay attention, virtually no impacts for the collection of socioemotional skills. This finding holds both for the overall sample and for subgroups defined by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The most powerful pre-school avenue for boosting fifth-grade achievement appears to be improving the basic academic skills of low-achieving children prior to kindergarten entry.



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