

# Early School Exposure, Test Scores, and Behavioral Outcomes\*

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*Abstract:* We estimate the effects of receiving additional early school exposure, by entering school at an earlier age, on cognitive and noncognitive outcomes. We exploit the unique regional variation in the school-entry rules in England, which cause variation in the age at school-entry and the length of exposure to early schooling for children born in the same month and who sit the assessment test at the same age. We find that, after age-at-test is controlled for, an additional month of exposure to the first year of primary school (reception class) before the age of 5 increases test scores by about 6–9% of a test score standard deviation. This effect is larger for boys with a weak parental background, but not for girls. The effect decreases, but is still significant by age 7. We also find positive effects on noncognitive skills.

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