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Life in the Fast Lane

Effects of Early Grade Acceleration on High School and College Outcomes

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Abstract

Research has repeatedly demonstrated the positive effects of acceleration for gifted and talented students. This study expands the literature by not only evaluating the impact of early grade skipping on high school and college outcomes but also examining the role of postacceleration opportunities on subsequent performance. Using a representative national sample, accelerated students were compared with older grade-level peers who had similar academic and demographic backgrounds. Results suggest that, on average, accelerated students consistently and significantly outperformed their nonaccelerated peers, both in high school and in college. Furthermore, postacceleration educational opportunities provided additional benefit; students who skipped a grade and also participated in challenging academic programs (e.g., Advanced Placement, high-ability instructional groups) demonstrated particularly high achievement. Results suggest that gifted learners profit most when acceleration is coupled with additional opportunities for advanced study.

[acceleration](#) [gifted](#) [grade skipping](#) [college outcomes](#)
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