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ABSTRACT

Compared were the academic achievement, personal and social adjustment, and special education referral rates of early, middle, and late school entrants. It was hypothesized that: (1) there is a significant relationship between entry age and achievement and adjustment variables; (2) achievement and adjustment are significantly different among early, middle, and late school entrants; and (3) early, middle, and late entrants differ significantly in special education referral rates. A total of 83 students of 5-12 years of age who attended grades 1-6 of a small, private, parochial school participated. Data on subjects' academic achievement, and personal and social adjustment, were obtained. Significant differences were found among the groups on: (1) Iowa Mathematics Achievement scores; (2) scores on the Brigance K-1 Screening Test; and (3) personal and social adjustment ratings from student report cards. In addition, a significant relationship was found between rate of referral for special education service and entry age status. It is concluded that findings support the establishment of a September 1st cutoff date for entry to first grade. About 100 references are cited. Related materials, including examples of report cards, a school adjustment checklist, and a survey of teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, are appended. (RH)

SCHOOL ENTRY AGE:

THE EFFECTS ON

SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT AND ADJUSTMENT

by

LINDA GROSS RABINOWITZ

AN EDUCATION FIELD PROBLEM
RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT

Presented in Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Education Specialist Degree in the
Graduate Program of Education at
Mercer University

Atlanta, Georgia

1989

I'm a bright November boy.
School for me is not a joy.
Teacher thinks I'm rather slow.
I just need more time to grow!
Next to me sits Prissy Pearl,
Teacher's "good" September girl.
Pearl just loves her A,B,C's---
Wants to learn to make her threes.
I prefer the trucks and water---
Teacher doesn't think I oughter.

Johnny's March--he really shines,
Colors well within the lines.
April Smith can write her name
In big round letters, all the same.
Teacher says that I don't try---
All I do is blink one eye,
She thinks that I am not too bright,
I still mix my left and right!

Teach says I should listen more
And spend less time down on the floor.
I can sing and march and play,
I can paint--but not her way!
I made a person--red and blue
With lots of hair and buttons, too.
It was good--but what the heck!
All she said was, "Where's the neck?"

Teacher's getting rather riled,
Thinks I am a stubborn child.
Hopes that I don't have a brother---
Says she couldn't stand another.
Warns if I don't pay attention
She is thinking of retention.
That threat of hers it thrills me so,
Then I would have more time to grow.

by Kay M. Innes
Madison Heights, Michigan
(cited by Ames, 1986)

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ABSTRACT

SCHOOL ENTRY AGE:

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by

Linda Gross Rabinowitz

Purpose of the Study

This study compared the academic achievement, personal/social adjustment, and the special education referral rates of early, middle, and late school entrants. Early entrants were less than six years and one month when they entered first grade in September. Middle entrants had their sixth birthdays between January 1st and July 31st of the year they entere first grade. Late entrants had their seventh birthdays before December 31st of the year they entered first grade. The purpose of this study was to explore the following hypotheses: 1) That there is a significant relationship between entry age and the variables of academic achievement and personal/social adjustment; 2) That there are

significant differences in both academic achievement and personal/social adjustment among early, middle, and late school entrants; and 3) That there are significant differences in special education referral rates among early, middle, and late school entrants. 83 students, ages 5-12, in grades 1-6 of a small, private, parochial school were subjects in this study.

Methods and Procedures

Data on the subjects' academic achievement and personal/social adjustment were obtained from Iowa Achievement Tests, student report cards, the Brigance K-1 Screening Test, and the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills. Significant relationships were found between entry age and scores on the Brigance K-1 Screening Test.

Results and Conclusions

Significant differences were found among the three group on the following: 1) Iowa math achievement scores,2) scores on the Brigance K-1 Screening Test, and 3) personal/social adjustment ratings from student report cards. In addition, a significant relationship was found between rate of referral for special education service and entry

age status. These results support the establishment of a September 1st cutoff date for entry to first grade.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Problem Statement

Introduction

What is the best age for all children to enter first grade? Friesen (1984) quotes a sixteenth century English schoolmaster who wrote:

> One of the first questions is at what age children should be sent to school, for they should neither be delayed too long, so that time is lost,nor hastened on too soon, at the risk of their health. The rule, therefore, must be given according to the strength of their bodies and the quickness of their wits jointly. What the age should be I cannot say, for ripeness in children does not always come at the same time.(p.14)

For years there has been controversy over the ideal school entry age , both in this country and abroad. Most states, (and private schools), specify a cutoff date for entry into first grade. However, there appears to be no consensus as to the "best" age. According to Shepard & Smith,

cutoff dates in the United States vary by at least six months (cited by May & Welch, 1986).

It appears that often selection of these cutoff dates was not even based on educational principles. According to Connell (1987), the September 1st cutoff was selected because it was near the end of the summer harvest season. Parsons (1985) states that 80 to 100 years ago state aid was based on the number of students present on any given day. In order to facilitate bookkeeping, all students were required to start school on the same day.

Research findings appear to differ as much as school entry dates. Bigelow (1934) found that children who were under the age of six when entering first grade had a decreased chance for school success. Baer (1959) found that older entrants scored higher on achievement tests in reading, math, and social studies. Green and Simons (1962) and Hall (1963) had similar findings.

Miller and Norris (1967) and Langer, Kalk, and Searls (1984) found that early academic differences between younger and older school

entrants lessened as the children progressed through school.

Kinard and Reinherz (1986) found that younger children tested lower in cognitive ability than older children at the time of school entrance, but found no age differences in subsequent years.

Proctor, Black, and Feldman (1986) reviewed 21 studies of early admission of selected children to either kindergarten or first grade. They reported that a large majority of these children were equal or superior in academic and behavioral characteristics to children admitted at the official cutoff age.

Ilg et al (1978) state that a child does best in school if started and promoted on the basis of developmental rather that chronological age. The developmental age can be obtained from the Gesell School Readiness Test (GRST). If a six year old child performed on this test like a five and a half year old, then it would be recommended that this child is not ready for first grade, regardless of the state mandated entry age. Moore

and Moore (1975) propose that many children are not ready for formal schooling until age 8 to 10.

Statement of the Problem

This study compared achievement test scores, cognitive abilities of entering first graders, and achievement and behavioral ratings from report cards of 83 children from grades 1-6 in a private school. The children were divided into three groups. Early entrants were designated as those children who were less than six years and one month when they entered first grade in September. Middle entrants had their sixth birthdays between January 1st and July 31st of the year they entered first grade. Late entrants had their seventh birthdays before December 31st of the year they entered first grade. In addition, the referral rate for special education services among the three groups was investigated.

Definitions of Terms

Early Entrants- those children who were less than six years and one month when they entered first grade.

Late Entrants-those children who turned seven before December 31st of the year they entered first grade

Chronological Age-age based on the number of years from birth.

Developmental Age-age based on the level of a child's performance rather than years from birth.

Developmental or Transitional First Grade-a class designed to teach readiness skills and to provide an educational "bridge" between kindergarten and first grade for those children who need additional time before entering first grade.

Developmental Placement-school entrance or placement that is determined by developmental rather than chronological age.

Social Development-Emotional Maturity-the ability to adapt or adjust to standards of group behavior; the ability to be away from home for a long period of the day; the ability to relate to other children; the ability to be capable of meeting work standards set by the teacher without becoming upset and evidencing undue anxiety; the ability to

be a happily coping child in the new school environment (Hedges, 1977).

School Readiness-the ability to cope with the demands (academic and social/emotional) of the school setting.

School Success-achievement that is attained in school without undue stress or frustration.

Overplacement-being placed in a school situation which is too difficult to handle and which is causing stress.

Retention-repeating a grade for academic and/or social/emotional reasons.

Formal Education-education obtained in a school setting, as opposed to a home setting, or a semi-formal preschool setting.

Assumptions of the Study

It is assumed that Iowa achievement test scores,scores on the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills, and report card ratings are indicators of school success. It is also assumed

that the Brigance Screening Test is a predictor of school success.

Delimitations

The sample for this study is small. The student population is extremely homogeneous, so that findings here might not necessarily be applicable to other groups. While the achievement test scores are standardized, the report card findings are more subjective. In certain instances, children who transferred in did not have equivalent data for comparison, and thus were not included.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

Numerous studies have been conducted to determine whether or not there is a significant relationship between school entry age and academic success and/or school adjustment. A review of pertinent literature reveals a continuing conflict in this area of education. Many influencing factors are discussed and many "solutions" are put forth. For this literature review, studies, reports, and research findings have been grouped into the following categories: 1) The relationship between school entry age and academic achievement; 2) The relationship between school entry age and school adjustment; 3) Early admission of selected children to kindergarten and first grade; 4) The relationship between physical and emotional maturity and school readiness; 5) The use of developmental versus chronological age as a guideline for school placement; 6) The relationship between sex, chronological age, and school readiness; 7) The relationship between school entry age and retention; 8) The

relationship between school entry age and special education referrals; 9) Cross-cultural differences in school entry age; and 10) Varying state requirements for school entry age and compulsory attendance.

The Relationship Between School Entry Age and Academic Achievement

There are numerous studies investigating the relationship between academic achievement and school entry age. Reports on findings are arranged in chronological order. In 1958, Baer found that older children received higher marks and scored higher on achievement tests.

Benjamin Bloom's findings (1964, p.88) had a big impact on the push for early education. Bloom states that in terms of intelligence measured at age 17, approximately 50% of the development takes place between conception and age 4,about 30% between age 4 and age 8, and approximately 20% between ages 8 and 17.

Moore and Moore (1973) claim that Bloom's data are exaggerated. Furthermore, they feel that even if Bloom's findings were accurate, that

school is not necessarily the best place to nurture intelligence in young children. They state that intelligence in the young child is more of a "potential ability to reason", and that to force this potential is much like forcing the bud of a flower to open before it is ready. The Moores cite a study by Dr. Margaret Gott who concluded from her research that two-thirds of the significant differences among children in the higher IQ ranges were in favor of the older children (p.92).

Ilika (1969) found that though early entrants had a seven to eight month "head start" over late entrants, there was no significant difference in achievement scores for spelling, language, reading, or math.

Kerr (1973) found that there was not a significantly greater number of poor-achieving children born between May and August. He went on to examine the relationship of birthdate to commencement of the school year. The achievement levels of children born after the start of the school year but who were still eligible to enter school were compared with children who were born

in earlier months of the year. The younger children comprised 37% of the total population, 48% of the poor-achieving group, and 25% of the average-achieving group.

Hedges (1978,p.8) states that "children should not always be considered as in a race to walk first, talk first, and read first." After a careful review of research, he found that approximately half of the children admitted to first grade before age six and one half years would benefit from an additional year of readiness experiences.

Ilg et al (1978) cite a report from the developmental examiner in Gwinnet County, Georgia. In September, 1971, approximately 1800 Scott Foresman Reading Readiness Tests were administered to incoming first graders. On the basis of this test, it was determined that only 3 out of 10 children were likely to be successful in a first grade reading program and would read on a first grade level.

Davis, Trimble, and Vincent (1980) found that students who entered first grade at age six scored significantly higher on achievement tests than

students who entered first grade at age 5. These findings were repeated at the fourth grade level. At the eighth grade level it was found that first grade entry age was significantly related only to reading achievement.

Pain (1981) found that at the beginning of first grade younger students appeared to be significantly less ready than older students, but by spring of second grade, the differences were very small. No significant differences were found at the sixth grade level. Some differences reappeared in the eighth grade, but disappeared again in the tenth grade.

Kalk et al (1982b) found that the oldest students achieved at significantly higher levels at age nine. This difference decreases, but remains significant at age thirteen and disappears at age seventeen.

Carrington (1982) found that age of entrance had a significant effect on the performance of first grade students in language and math. However, by the third grade, she found that age of entrance provided neither an advantage or a disadvantage. In the sixth grade, the older

students achieved below the levels of the younger students. She further found that early entrants made excellent progress in school. Carrington concluded that, based on her study, the influence of chronological age on school performance is minimal.

Hildebrand (1983) did a study of 593 first grade and kindergarten early entrants in Florida. He found that only 58% of these early entrants were performing as expected. All of these children had been admitted only after screening measures had been administered. For 247 of these students, the decision to allow early entrance was questionable. On the basis of this research, Hildebrand recommended that the state of Florida discontinue the practice of early admission to kindergarten and first grade.

Langer, Kalk, and Searls (1984) examined achievement data from Caucasian and Black students in grades 4,8, and 11. They found that, for the Caucasians, the oldest students achieved significantly higher at age 9. At age 13, the difference decreased, but remained significant. The differences disappeared by age 17. For

Blacks, the trend did not decrease at age 13, but it did disappear by age 17.

Sue Moskowitz (cited by Friesen, 1984,p.17) reported findings that the brightest two-thirds of a group taught to read early did not maintain their initial advantage over their classmates who had not learned to read by first grade.

Montz (1985) compared the academic achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills of 20 early and 20 late kindergarten entrants. She found that the later entrants scored significantly higher than the early entrants.

Dietz and Wilson (1985) studied a group of 117 children who began kindergarten in 1979. They divided the children into three age groups at the time of entry into kindergarten. Using standardized achievement tests, they found no significant differences in achievement at the kindergarten, second, or fourth grade levels.

Kinard and Reinherz (1986) found age group differences on cognitive ability at school entry, with the youngest group having the lowest scores and the oldest group having the highest

scores. They found no age differences with respect to achievement and adjustment in subsequent years (grades three and four).

The Relationship Between School Entry Age and School Adjustment

Social adjustment, as well as academic achievement, is a factor that is related to school success. Many researchers suggest that while early-entrants may do well academically in school, they may have more adjustment problems. Baer (1958) reported that older children were rated higher on positive personality traits. Beattie (1970) cited a study which found more adjustment problems, speech defects, and "nervous indications" from early entrants. He also reported on another study which found that early entrants scored above average in popularity and leadership.

Gray (1985) reports on a study in Broward County, Florida, in 1974, which found that early entrants did well academically, but were less socially accepted by their peers than older classmates. Friesen (1984, p.16) cites a study by

Floyd Hemphill of 950 students. This study showed that while early entrants were as mentally capable older students, they did not seem to gain as much social approval. He also reports that the younger students were more likely to have nervous disorders and be less physically coordinated.

Moore and Moore (1975) cite a study by Mawhinney which found that nearly one-third of the early entrants turned out to be poorly adjusted, and that nearly three out of four were considered to be entirely lacking in leadership. The Moores further cite the findings of Rohwer that the earlier a child entered school, the more negative were his attitudes toward school.

The results of Carrington (1982) seem to conflict with those of many others. Upon inspection of adjustment data, she found that entrance age did not affect the social adjustment of students.

Uphoff and Gilmore (1986) reported on a pilot study they did on youth suicides in the state of Ohio. Summer children make up almost 35 percent of total births per year in the state of Ohio. Of the male youth suicides, at least 45 percent were

summer children. When males who had October and November birthdays and who started school early were included, the percentage increased to 55 percent. The percentage of female youth suicides with summer birthdays was 83 percent.

Early Admission of Selected Children to Kindergarten and First Grade

While early admission to school for the general population is not supported by many, there are a growing number of proponents for the early admission of mentally advanced children. According to Braga (1971), chronological age is closely related to ability and maturity in the general population, but not in the exceptional population (either gifted or disabled). For these children, Braga feels that mental age is a better predictor of school success.

Worcester (cited by Braga, 1971) proposed the idea that if gifted children got an earlier start in school, they would be released sooner and be available to society earlier. He calculated that if 3 percent of school children could save one year by acceleration, "our country would have

gained for its use more than 1,000,000 years of its best brains in a single generation"(p.39).

Benedict et al (1983) state that while early admission might not be for everyone, it can provide a challenge to the talented and gifted children who are ready for it. They outline thorough and specific guidelines for determining whether or not a child is a candidate for early admission.

Proctor, Black, and Feldhusen (1986) reviewed 21 studies reporting on early admission of selected children to elementary school. Comparisons of the selected early entrants with their unselected classmates generally revealed no negative effects. Comparisons of early entrants with matched samples suggested that early admission may be preferable. Proctor et al (1988) stated that delaying formal schooling for those who are mentally ready may have harmful consequences, but they do not state what these harmful consequences might be. They feel that mentally advanced children have a more rapid rate of learning, and that early admission is a way to accommodate this rapid rate. They go on to outline

some guidelines for determining candidates for early admission.

Elkind (1987b) feels that it would be far more useful for gifted children to have more opportunities to explore and investigate rather than early formal instruction. Elkind cites a study by Goertzels of 500 eminent people. He found that more than 300 of these people had serious problems in school. Their difficulties ranged from difficulties with teachers and fellow students to dissatisfaction with a boring curriculum.

The Relationship Between Physical and Emotional Maturity and School Readiness

In 1898, John Dewey insisted that age 8 is "early enough for anything more than an incidental attention to visual and written language form" (cited by Parsons, 1985,p.62). Since that time, many researchers and educators have found evidence to support Dewey's assertion.

Furth and Wachs (1974, p.271) state , "The ability to sit quietly and read is in part dependent on a degree of development in visual and

skeletal structure that in many children is not completed by the sixth or even seventh birthday." In order for a child to read and perform many other school tasks, s/he must be able to integrate many of the brain's functions, such as vision, hearing, touch, and reasoning. Dr. David Metcalf of the University of Colorado Medical School believes the division of labor between the two sides of the brain is probably established sometime between 7 and 9 years of age (cited by Moore & Moore, 1975, p. 65).

In a study of students in grades one through six, optometrist H.M. Coleman (1968) found that approximately half of all the students he tested had visual, perceptual, or refractive problems that were severe enough to cause reading difficulties.

Moore and Moore (1975) report on a study by Henry Hilgartner, an opthamologist from Austin, Texas, and his father, who kept careful records of all 8 to 12 year-old children that they examined over a 50 year period. In the early 1900's they found that nearly eight children were far-sighted to every one that was near-sighted. This is

consistent with established findings of other eye specialists, that for children in this age group, far-sightedness is normal. Hilgartner found that by 1940 the ratio of normal to abnormal was one to one, rather than the earlier seven or eight to one. By 1962, the ratio was one far-sighted (normal) child to every five near-sighted (abnormal) children. Hilgartner believes that this dramatic change is in part due to the advent of television which encourgages close vision. Hilgartner states that the eye tissues of young children up until the age of 8 or 9 are softer and more elastic than older eyes. He feels it is best for children not to read too much until the visual system is stabil_zed. These findings are supported by Hemphill's study (cited by Friesen,1984) in which he found that early entrants wore glasses more often than later entrants.

Moore and Moore (1975) cite many noted experts who feel that many young children are not physically and mentally developed enoughed to meet the demands of formal schooling. Joseph Wepman feels that many children cannot readily

distinguish and remember sounds until the end of the eighth year. Drs. Birch and Lefford say that most children are not able to integrate visual, auditory, and sensory learning until about eight years of age.

Ames (1978) stated that there is a relationship between teething and general development. She found that among those children who were early teethers: 60% were in the top group academically; 36% were doing well or fairly well; and 4% were doing badly. Among those children who were late to teethe: 6% were in the top group; 40% were questionable; and 54% repeated, or should have.

The Use of Developmental Versus Chronological Age as a Guideline for School Placement

Ilg et al (1978) report on a study done by the Gesell Institute in which three kindergarten classes, one first grade class, and one second grade class were administered developmental tests and followed for three subsequent years. They found that between 34% and 68% of the children were ready for the work of the grade in which they

had been placed on the basis of their chronological age. For comparisons made during the first year, there was 83% agreement between teachers' estimates and the results of the developmental testing for the kindergarten students. The agreement was 68% for the first graders and 59% for the second graders. In the following years there was agreement in a majority if the cases.

Simner (1983) administered cost-effective, highly reliable screening tests to 114 kindergarten children. Several measures of academic performance were administered at the end of kindergarten and first grade. He also did two subsequent studies. The third study also included interviews to determine the effect of background factors on school achievement. He concluded from the results of his studies that raising the entry age is likely to be less effective than implementing a psychometrically based screening program supplemented by intervention geared to the needs of high risk children. From information gained from interviews in the third study he did, Simner found that high risk children had access to

about half as many books at home, moved two to three times more often, and had mothers with two to three years less schooling than the top performing fall-born children.

King (1984) reports on a study done by K.D. Olson in 1981 to determine whether developmental placement using the Gesell kindergarten screening instrument was more effective than chronological placement. There were 301 kindergarten subjects. Olson found that age did not affect how a child did on a particular subtest. Rather, how a child did on a subtest was dependent on how that child was progressing in his/her development of the skill being measured. Olson thus concluded that developmental placement would best meet the individual needs of the majority of children.

Jaworski (1985) did a long-term longitudinal study to determine the impact of developmental placement. 500 subjects were divided into three groups: 1) children who were recommended for a growth year between kindergarten and first grade and who followed the recommendation; 2) children who were recommended for a growth year, but did not follow the recommendation; and 3) a control

group of randomly selected classmates. Parents, teachers, and children were given questionnaires covering demographic information, school adjustment, school achievement, and self-esteem. The only item on any of the questionnaires that yielded a significant difference between the groups was that parents of children who took the growth year felt that they had made the right decision, and would recommend a growth year to friends with children in similar circumstances.

May and Welch (1985) investigated the effects of developmental placement on young children's cognitive and social/emotional development. They found that the children in their study who scored as immature on the Gesell Screening Test and who were retained a year according to the Gesell Developmental Placement Program, had the lowest scores on achievement tests, even though they were almost a year older than the other children in the study at the time of testing. May and Welch also found no significant differences between the number of children referred for special services from each group in the study. In this study, there were not any demonstrable positive effects of

"buying a year" on children's later performance in school.

In 1986 May and Welch did another study to determine the influence of birthdate and sex on screening for school readiness. They found that the Gesell School Readiness Test was sensitive to the different birthdate groups, but that these differences diminished as the children got older. There were no significant differences between birthdate groups on the Stanford Achievement Test. May and Welch concluded that if the Gesell Screening Test predicts school performance better than using birthdate alone, then its use would be justified. However, if birthdate alone is as good or better a predictor, then the cost of screening might be used more effectively elsewhere (p.104).

The Relationship Between Sex, Chronological Age, and School Readiness

Many researchers have found a relationship between sex, birthdate, and school readiness and performance. Ilika (1969) found that late-entrant boys' rates of achievement tended to be faster than those of early-entrant boys in all measures

except arithmetic. Late-entrant girls were also shown to achieve at a faster rate than early-entrant girls. These results seem to uphold Olson's theory (1959) that initially faster rates of early entrants will decline and not exceed the rates of development of late entrants.

Kalk et al (1982a) studied the changing achievement relationships between nine, thirteen, and seventeen year-olds with regard to their age of entry into first grade. The data indicated a superior performance for classes with an older combined mean age. The data also clearly showed girls to be four months ahead of boys in maturation needed for school readiness.

At the Gesell Institue it was found that regardless of the test used and regardless of the age of the students, for almost every test at every age, the scores of the girls, (both academic and social/emotional), were higher than those of boys (Ilg et al, 1978). Louise Ames states, "On the average, boys tend to be some six months slower in their development than girls" (1974, p.62). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), in a report printed in the March

1986 issue of the Harvard Education Letter, found that in states with December, January, and February cutoffs, 47% of the youngest boys are a year behind by the time they reach their ninth birthdays, compared to 26% in states with fall cutoffs.

Gredler (1980) found differences in academic achievement between early and late entrants more often for boys. These findings were supported by those of DiPasquale et al (1980). On the other hand, May and Welch (1986) found no evidence to support interaction between birthdate, sex, and school readiness.

The Relationship Between School Entry Age and Retention

The findings of many researchers support the idea that there is a relationship between school entry age and school retention. Baer (1958) found that older students were retained less frequently. Ilika (1969) found that twice as many early-entry boys as late-entry boys were retained. Kalk et al (1982a) found that a large proportion of the youngest students were retained at some point in

their schooling. Montz (1985) found that 61% of the students who were retained in elementary school or placed in modified classes were within the early entry group at the time they entered kindergarten.

Kalk, Langer, and Searls (1984) found that significantly increased proportions of both Caucasian and Black students were retained as relative age became younger. Biegler and Gillis (1985) found that 48% of the boys and 37% of the girls who were retained were chronologically younger. Pain (1981) found that young students were more at risk for retention than older students, but felt that this was in part due to less reluctance to hold a younger student back.

The Relationship Between School Entry Age and Special Education Referrals

There is much literature that points to a relationship between school entry age and special education referrals. Ames (1977) feels that educators create a large percentage of learning problems by trying to teach students that which they are not developmentally ready to learn.

The March 1986 issue of the Harvard Education Letter reports on a study by Cleborne Maddux of Texas. He analyzed the records of 374 children with learning disabilities in grades one through twelve. Almost half of these children were in the youngest third of their class. Maddux also found that 60% of the 188 children in the gifted program were in the older half of their class.

DisPasquale et al (1980) and Erion (1986-87) found a tendency for children who entered school early to be referred for special education services. Uphoff and Gilmore (1986) found that December-born students were twice as likely to have been diagnosed as learning disabled as were January-born students. Drabman, Tarnowski, and Kelly (1987), using results from 172 pediatric referrals, found that younger children in the class and boys were both more likely to be referred.

Maddux et al (1986) did a study of a group of special education students (learning disabled,emotionally disturbed, and mildly mentally retarded) to see if there was a disproportionately large number of these children

who were relatively young when they entered school. Analyses were significant for the total group, the learning disabled group, and the emotionally disturbed children. Significant results were not obtained for the mildly retarded group. When the learning disabled children were divided into elementary and secondary groups, significant results were obtained only for the elementary group.

Cultural Differences in School Entry Age

Just as there is no uniform school entry age in this country, it varies from country to country around the world as well. Elkind (1987b) reports that in Denmark formal reading instruction is not introduced until the second grade. Denmark has almost 100 percent literacy. In France, where formal reading instruction is begun at age 5, 30% of French children have reading problems. In Japan, formal reading instruction is also begun early, but there are fewer reading problems than in France. Elkind feels this is because Japanese is phonetic and is thus easier to learn than English or French.

In the Soviet Union, the traditional starting age for school has been seven. In recent years there has been a push to have children start school at six. Though the children are starting a year earlier, Russian researchers have found that the six year olds are not able to cope with as formal a curriculum as the older children. Thus, the demands on these younger children have been curtailed (Louis, 1981).

Ilg et al (1978) report that in Scandinavian countries children do not begin first grade until they are seven and, even then, are not pressured to read if they are not ready. In these countries, there are reportedly very few reading failures.

Varying State Requirements for School Entry Age and Compulsory Attendance

Whaley (1985) did a survey of the 50 states to determine their requirements for school entry age and compulsory attendance. She found that compulsory attendance in the states varies from age six to eight. At the time of her study, 26 states required first grade attendance by age six;

21 required first grade attendance by age 7; and 3 states required first grade attendance by age 8.

Whaley (1985) also found that four states required kindergarten attendance, and every state provided kindergarten programs. There were 15 different cutoff ages for kindergarten. States west of the Mississippi tended to require children to be older for kindergarten entry. Northeastern states tend to permit kindergarten entry at an earlier age than other states. Less than a dozen states required some type of screening before kindergarten. Most of these were for potential health problems. Criteria for promotion from kindergarten to first grade were determined by local districts in at least 43 states.

Summary

This review of literature suggests that there is a relationship between chronological age and school readiness. It is still undetermined, however, as to what the best entry age would be. Most educators seem to favor a fall cutoff date. Russ Lofthouse (1987) comes out strongly in favor of a uniform national cutoff date. He points out

that in our mobile society, the variations in school entry age requirements create many unnecessary difficulties for transfer students.

Some educators recommend different cutoff dates for boys and girls. Ilg et al (1978) recommended that girls be 5 before starting kindergarten, and 6 before starting first grade. They recommended that boys be 5 1/2 before starting kindergarten, and 6 1/2 before starting first grade.

As Weinstein (1968-69) points out, regardless of the cutoff date, there is always likely to be a twelve month age span in any given class of children. The younger children will probably be at a disadvantage. This age difference is most pronounced in the younger grades. She suggests adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of a variety of children. Gredler (1978), Egertson (1987), McGlauchlen (1984), Wruble (1987), and Maddux (1983), as well as others, concur with Weinstein on this point. Pain (1981, pp.17-18) gets right to the heart of this issue. She asks, "Should the child be ready for school, or the school ready for the child?"

According to Connell (1987), within five years after Sputnik, the entire second grade curriculum had been moved into first grade. She feel that this has greatly contributed to the learning difficulties experienced by many early primary children. Perhaps an increasingly difficult curriculum in the younger grades is not the answer to the educational deficits many American children seem to possess. It might be more beneficial in the long run to have a more experiential and less demanding curriculum in kindergarten and first grade. Increasing the length of the school year, and if necessary, adding a 14th year of school might be more helpful in improving the skills and knowledge of our youngsters.

Another very important issue that is raised concerns the gifted. While many studies show that gifted early-entrants do well academically, the question still remains whether or not early admission deprives these students of academic excellence. Are they able to achieve their fullest potential, or would they too benefit from a gift of additional time?

To summarize, this review of the literature offers several possible solutions to the problem of school entry age: 1) older entry age; 2) flexible admission policies; 3) individual assessment before school entry; 4) a flexible, individualized primary curriculum; 5) multi-grade and multi-age groupings; 6) different cutoff dates for boys and girls; 7) transitional or readiness classes; and 8) a less academically demanding curriculum in kindergarten and first grade.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Overview of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1) To determine whether or not there is a relationship between school achievement and school entry age.

2) To determine whether or not there is a relationship between school adjustment and school entry age.

3) To determine if there are signigicant differences in Iowa achievement test scores, academic report card ratings, and report card ratings of personal and social adjustment among early, middle, and late entrants to first grade.

4) To determine if there are significant differences on the Brigance K-1 Screening Test and the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills among early, middle, and late entering first graders.

5) To determine is there is a difference in the referral rate for special education services among early, middle, and late school entrants.

Statement of Hypotheses

The hypotheses being investigated in this study are as follows:

1) HO: There is no significant relationship between school entry age and school achievement as measured on the following: a) Iowa math scores, b) Iowa reading scores, c) Iowa composite scores, d) report card math ratings, e) report card reading ratings, and f) composite report card ratings.

HR: There is a significant relationship between school entry age and school achievement as measured on the following: a) Iowa math scores, b) Iowa reading scores, c) Iowa composite scores, d) report card math ratings, e) report card reading ratings, and f) composite report card ratings.

2) HO: There is no significant relationship between school entry age and school adjustment.

HR: There is a significant relationship between school entry age and school adjustment.

3) HO: There is no significant relationship between school entry age and cognitive abilities of entering first graders as measured on the Brigance K-1 Screening Test and on the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills.

HR: There is a significant relationship between school entry age and cognitive abilities of entering first graders as measured on the Brigance K-1 Screening Test and on the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills.

4) HO: There are no significant differences in achievement among early, middle, and late school entrants as measured on the following: a) Iowa math scores, b) Iowa reading scores, c) Iowa composite scores, d) report card math ratings, e) report card readng ratings, and f) composite report card ratings.

HR: There are significant differences in achievement among early, middle, and late school entrants as measured on the following:a) Iowa math scores, b) Iowa reading scores, c) Iowa composite scores, d) report card math ratings, e) report

card reading ratings, and f) composite report ratings.

5) HO: There are no significant differences in report card ratings of personal and social adjustment among early, middle. and late school entrants.

HR: There are significant differences in report card ratings of personal and social adjustment among early, middle, and late school entrants.

6) HO: There are no significant differences in the referral rates for special education services among early, middle, and late school entrants.

HR: There are signficant differences in the referral rates for special education services among early, middle, and late school entrants.

If one or more of the null hypotheses are rejected, the specific question should be investigated: What is the optimal age for beginning first grade?

Description of the Sample

The sample in this study included 83 boys and girls, ages 5-12. All of the children were white, middle class, and Jewish. They attend a private school where half of the day is devoted to secular studies and the other half of the day is devoted to Judaic studies. There is somewhat more pressure associated with school due to the dual curriculum. First graders are expected to learn to read two languages. There is more homework and less time for review than would be the case in public school. The IQ range of the sample was 91 to 137. (These were full scale scores as measured on the WPPSI or the WISC R.) The mean IQ was 118 with a standard deviation of 11. There were 38 boys and 45 girls in the sample.

For the data analyses of the Brigance K-1 Screening Test and the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills, data was only available for 33 students. 16 of these students were boys and 17 were girls.

Instrumentation

Achievement test scores used in this study were measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The school entry screening test used was the Brigance K-1 Screening Test. The Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills was used to test the beginning reading skills of entering first graders. Report cards were skills lists that were checked off when desired competency levels were attained. Academic skills vary from grade to grade. The checklist of personal and social adjustment skills was the same for every grade. See Appendices A and B for sample first and fifth grade report cards. A copy of the checklist of personal and social adjustment skills can be seen in Appendix C.

Procedures

Students for this study were grouped according to their age at the time of entry into first grade. Early entrants were those children who entered first grade at less than six years and one month of age (with birthdays between August

1st and January 1st). Middle entrants had their 6th birthdays between January 1st and July 31st of the year they entered first grade. The late entrants were seven before December 31st of the year they entered first grade.

Data was collected through ITBS achievement test scores, report card ratings,scores from the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills, and Brigance K-1 screening tests. This data was collected from the cumulative records of each student. Data was also gathered on each student's gender and intelligence test scores.Report card ratings were converted to percentages of skills attained. A student roster was given to each of the teachers and they were asked to indicate which students had been referred, were currently receiving, or were known to have received in the past, special education services. This would include help in social/emotional areas as well as academic tutoring.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson R Correlations were run to determine if any of the following relationships were

significant: a) entry age and Iowa math achievement test scores, b) entry age and Iowa reading achievement test scores, c) entry age and Iowa composite test scores, d) entry age and Brigance K-1 screening socres, e) entry age and scores from the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills, f) entry age and report card math ratings, g) entry age and report card reading ratings, h) entry age and composite report card ratings, and i) entry age and report card ratings of personal and social adjustment.

Analyses of Variance were performed to determine if there were significant differences in performance among early, middle, and late school entrants on the following: a) Iowa math achievement scores, b) Iowa reading achievement scores, c) Iowa composite scores, d) Brigance K-1 screening scores, e) scores on the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills, f) report card math ratings, g) report card reading ratings, g) composite report card ratings, and h) report card ratings of personal and social adjustment.

A Chi-square test was performed to see if there was a significant relationship between the

referral rates for special education services among early, middle, and late school entrants.

A survey was given to teachers to get an indication of their attitudes and opinions concerning school entry age. A copy of this survey and a summary of the results can be seen in Appendix D.

The significance levels for the data analyses in this study were set at .10. It was the feeling of this researcher, that in making a first grade placement decision, it is better to err on the side of caution. The risks of repeating kindergarten or participating in a transitional class are minimal. However, inappropriate placement in first grade can have lasting effects in a child's academic career and in his or her social/emotional development.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Conclusions

Results

After data collection was complete, students were assigned to "early", "middle", and "late" entry groups according to their ages at the beginning of first grade. The early entry group consisted of students whose sixth birthday came after August 1st of the year they entered first grade. Middle entry students had their sixth birthdays between January 1st and August 1st of the year they entered first grade. Late entry students had their seventh birthday before December 31st of the year they entered first grade. Results of the data analyses will be reported in three parts: academic success, social/personal adjustment, and special education referrals.

Academic Success

The question of academic success was assessed using several indicators: Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Brigance K-1 Screening Test, Scott

Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills, and school report card grades.

Correlations (Pearson R) were done among scores of students in grades 2 through 6 to determine if there were significant relationships between entry age and achievement. Math, reading, and composite scores from the Iowa tests and from student report cards were used for the comparisons. No significant relationships were found.

Analyses of Variance were performed on the same data to determine if there were significant differences in academic performance of early, middle, and late entrants. No Significant difference was found between the entry status of students and math, reading, and composite grades from report cards. There was also no significant difference between the groups on Iowa reading and composite scores. A significant difference was found between the groups on their Iowa math scores ($p<.1$). Upon further comparison, a t-test between the Iowa math scores of early and middle entrants yielded a p of .02. See Figures 1,2, and 3 for tables of these results.

Figure 1

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF ENTRY STATUS COMPARED WITH ITBS MATH SCORES

EFFECT	SS	df	MS	F	P
Among	3385.64	2	1692.82	2.78	.07
Within	35924.55	59	608.89		

Figure 2

TABLE OF MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS-ITBS MATH SCORES

Groups	Mean	Stdv	N
Early Entrants	59.1	22.69	12
Middle Entrants	78.97	22.83	29
Late Entrants	71.67	27.98	21
Whole Sample	72.65	25.39	62

Figure 3

T-TESTS BETWEEN GROUPS-ITBS MATH SCORES

Comparison	t	df	p
Early and Middle Entrants	2.35	59	.02
Early and Late Entrants	1.41	59	.16
Middle and Late Entrants	1.03	59	.31

Comparisons were made between entry age of first and second graders and their scores on the Brigance K-1 Screen and the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills. Correlations (Pearson R) and analyses of variance were done. No significant differences were found on scores from the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills. A correlation of entry age and scores from the Brigance K-1 Screen yielded a significance of .04. An analysis of variance between the Brigance scores of the three groups did not yield a significant difference. A t-test based on separate variance estimates yielded a significance of .06 when comparing scores of early and late

entrants. A summary of the data from the Brigance scores can be seen in figures 4, 5, and 6.

Figure 4

CORRELATION BETWEEN ENTRY AGE AND BRIGANCE SCORES

Variable	M	S	N
Entry Age	6.27	.41	36
Brigance Scores	89.67	7.23	36
r(34)=.35	p=.04		

Figure 5

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF ENTRY STATUS COMPARED WITH BRIGANCE SCORES

Effect	SS	df	MS	F	P
Among	156.47	2	78.23	1.54	.23
Within	1673.53	33	50.71		

Figure 6

TABLE OF MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS-ERIGANCE

Variable	Mean	Stdv	N
Early Entrants	88.68	7.18	14
Middle Entrants	88.04	9.1	12
Late Entrants	93	3.22	10
Whole Sample	89.67	7.23	36

Personal and Social Adjustment

To assess personal and social adjustment, a 13 item checklist from student report cards was used. Raw scores were converted to percentages and then the data was analyzed Scores of second through sixth graders were used. A correlation (Pearson R) and analysis of variance were performed. The correlation yielded an r that approached significance at the .1 level. A summary of these results can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7

CORRELATION BETWEEN ENTRY AGE AND PERSONAL/SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Variable	M	S	N
Entry Age	6.4	.39	62
Personal/Social Rating	85.63	16.76	62

r(60)=.2 p=.11

An Analysis of Variance of the personal/social report ratings yielded a significant difference between the three groups ($p<.1$). See Figures 8,9, and 10 for a summary of these results.

Figure 8

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF ENTRY STATUS COMPARED WITH PERSONAL/SOCIAL REPORT CARD RATINGS

Effect	SS	df	MS	F	P
Among	1539.27	2	769.64	2.91	.06
Within	15597.2	59	264.36		

Figure 9

TABLE OF MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS-PERSONAL/SOCIAL REPORT CARD RATINGS

Variable	Mean	Stdv	N
Early Entrants	75.67	23.89	12
Middle Entrants	87.07	13.49	29
Late Entrants	89.33	14.54	21
Whole Sample	85.63	16.76	62

Figure 10

T-TESTS BETWEEN GROUPS-PERSONAL/SOCIAL RATINGS

Comparison	t	df	p
Early and Middle Entrants	2.04	59	.04
Early and Late Entrants	2.32	59	.02
Middle and Late Entrants	.49	59	.63

Special Education Referrals

Teachers were asked to submit names of any pupils that have been referred, are currently receiving, or have received in the past special education services . (This would include educational tutoring and/or counseling.) 38% of early entry children, 28% of middle entrants, and 18% of late entrants were referred. A Chi-Square between early and late entrants yielded a significant difference at the .1 level. Figure 11 illustrates these results.

Figure 11

CHI-SQUARE: SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS

Groups	R-O	R-E	NR-O	NR-E
Early	8	5.69	13	15.31
Late	5	7.31	22	19.69

x=2.82 df=1 p=.1

R=Referred NR=Not Referred

O=Observed E=Expected

Discussion

It is not surprising that the comparisons of achievement based on report card ratings did not yield significant differences. These report cards are skills checklists and do not reflect a comparison of absolute abilities among children. Most of the children attained the desired performance level on a high percentage of the skills. This is also in part due to the overall high ability level of the students in this study.

The differences in reading and math achievements on the Iowa Tests are not easily explained. One possible explanation might lie in the fact that mathematics is a more sequential set of skills than reading. If young children are introduced to math skills at an early stage of Piagetian development when they are not ready to absorb them, then subsequent skills will be based on a "faulty foundation". The entire math structure would then be weaker.

In addition, reading achievement is perhaps more influenced by the home environment than math achievement. The large majority of students in this study come from print-rich home environments. They are read to often and have parents who enjoy reading. These factors would positively affect reading achievement. Parents are often more concerned about reading difficulties than math ones. They also seem to be more inclined to tutor and help remediate reading problems. This might also explain why there were no significant differences on the Scott Foresman Test of Early Reading Skills.

The significant differences in cognitive abilities among the groups on the Brigance K-1 Screen were not surprising as there was more than a year's difference in age between the youngest and oldest students. At this young age, a year is a significant amount of time in terms of a child's development.

Perhaps the most meaningful results were those in the area of personal and social Adjustment. The results of this study seem to indicate that older students as a group seem to do better in this area throughout the grades (2-6). As stated earlier, a large majority of students in this study work at average or above-average levels. This study would seem to indicate that high performance in academic areas does not necessarily guarantee high levels of personal and social adjustment. Both areas are important for a child's optimal success in school as well as later on in life.

It is also important to note that there were a significantly larger number of referrals for special education services among early entrants. Perhaps if these childlren had waited a year

before entering first grade, a lot of time, money, and frustration could have been spared.

As a part of this study, a survey was given to the teachers at this school. (See Appendix D.) Of the 8 teachers who responded, 7 felt that youngness was a concern in the classroom. Interestingly enough, however, only a few of the teachers who responded felt that age affected a child's social/emotional adjustment at school. Yet 7 of the teachers felt that a child's relative age in class affected his or her self-esteem. In speaking with the teachers, a large majority favor children being six before entering first grade. It is difficult to say whether teacher opinions reflect past experiences or whether they become expectations that influence child performance...probably both!

Limitations of This Research

As stated earlier, the implications of this research are limited due to the small sample and the narrow population. However, the results achieved here do bear looking into further and would be applicable to other private schools

Implications for Further Research

The following are recommendations for future research:

1) That this study be continued and updated in the present school on a yearly basis.

2) That a longitudinal study be done on a particular group of students whose progress could be followed over a number of years.

3) That this study be replicated in other private schools to see if similar results are obtained.

4) That research be done to determine in there are any harmful effects related to above-average students who enter school at a later age.

Implications for School Practice

This research also suggests the following recommendations:

1) Implement a September 1st cutoff date for entering kindergartners and first graders.

2) Utilize developmental testing for those students who seek early admission.

3) Consider the possibility of instituting a transitional or pre-first grade.

4) Educate parents to help them understand the implications of early entrance to first grade.

5) Educate teachers to make them more aware of the wide diversity of ages and abilities that will be in any class no matter what the cutoff date is.

6) Adapt the curriculum to adapt to a wider range of abilities and ages.

Summary

According to Elkind (1987a), in an attempt to right the wrongs of our educational system and social inequalities, there has been a push in this country toward infant education. This is evidenced by such articles as "Bringing Up Superbaby" (Newsweek, 1983) and "Raising the Superkid" (McCalls, 1983). There is an ever-growing number of classes, videos, and educational packages geared toward formal education for young children. Is this trend in children's best interests? According to Elkind, the answer is no. He points out "the danger in

assuming that the end point for us as adults should be the starting point for children" (p.9).

King (1984) states that now more than ever parents are pushing their children into school at an earlier age because they "already know how to read and write" (p.2). The question remains, will they be able to handle the stress of a formal classroom. No matter how intelligent a child is, school entrance before he or she is developmentally ready in every way is doing that child a great disservice.

In this researcher's mind there is very little to lose by letting a child have an extra year to grow and learn, while on the other hand there is potentially a great deal to lose by pushing an unready child ahead. Even for very bright students who do well as early entrants, the question remains: Are they able to achieve <u>their</u> optimum?

One also must take care not to confuse early education with early formal education. The former cannot be begun too soon. From the earliest ages children should be encouraged to explore, manipulate, and make discoveries about their

world. Formal, teacher-directed learning is an entirely different thing. There is much evidence in this review of literature and in this study to support later entrance into a formal school setting. Children's emotional well-being as well as their academic abilities must be taken into account when making such decisions. Many educators, including the researcher in the present study, agree with Rousseau who once said: "Hold childhood in reverence and do not be in a hurry" (cited by Friesen, 1984,p.18).

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APPENDIX A

FIRST GRADE REPORT CARD

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Linda Rabinowitz

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: First

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level	
Reading and Language Arts	Word Identification: 1. Uses initial consonant substitution with word ending phonograms (-un, -at. -an, -et, -ane, -ide, ick, -op, -ail, -ake, -ing, -oat, -eep)		
	2. Identifies initial consonants using context c/s/, c/k/, k, n, t, b, s,r, d, h, f, z, m, g/j/, j, g, w, y, v, qu, w, y		
	3. Identifies initial consonant digraphs ch, sh, th, wh, using context		
	4. Identifies initial consonant blends sl, cl, sw, bl, cr, br, ~~de~~ dr ←, fr, gl, gr, pr, st, pl, fl, tr, sk, using context		
	5. Uses word endings -s, -ed, -ing,		
	6. Identifies final consonant sounds t, n, r, g, l, k, s, f, m, b, d, x		
	7. Identifies mastery words		
	8. Identifies contractions -'s, -n't, -'ll, -'ve, -'re, -'m		
	9. Recognizes root words with endings -'s, -s, -es, -ed, -ing, -er, -est		
	10. Identifies short vowel sounds a, i, o		
	11. Identifies long vowel sounds a, i, o		
	12. Identifies compound words		
	13. Identifies final consonants using context ll, ss, zz, ff		
	14. Identifies final consonant sounds using context ck, st, nt, ld, rt, nk, sk, mp, ng		
	15. Blends sounds for which vowels and consonants stand		
	16. Alphabetizes words using the first letter		
	Comprehension 1. Follows oral directions		
	2. Distinguishes between realism and fantasy		
	3. Recognizes details		
	4. Identifies sequence relationships		

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Linda Rabinowitz 80

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: First

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level
	Comprehension cont'd 5. Identifies size relationships (tall, short, big, little, small, long/er/est) 6. Draws conclusions 7. Recognizes feelings, actions, traits and motives of characters 8. Extends knowledge of relationship between own experience and text materials 9. Demonstrates oral reading ability 10. Demonstrates silent reading ability 11. Recognizes main idea 12. Recognizes class relationships (objects that belong together) 13. Recognizes part/whole relationships (relates parts to the whole) 14. Identifies opposites 15. Recognizes cause/effect relationships 16. Recognizes word referents (pronouns)	
Writing	1. Forms letters correctly 2. Sizes letters correctly 3. Spaces letters correctly 4. Spaces words in a sentence correctly 5. Expresses ideas clearly 6. Uses correct punctuation and capitalization 7. Writes in complete sentences 8. Copies accurately and neatly from board onto paper 9. Copies accurately and neatly from a nearby book or paper to paper 10. Demonstrates ability to transfer thoughts to paper 11. Demonstrates ability to write a descriptive sentence about a picture	

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Linda Rabinowitz

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: First

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level: Improvement Needed	Proficiency Level: Desired Performance Level
Math	1. Reads, writes and orders two-digit numbers less than 40 using object groups of tens and ones 2. Demonstrates an understanding of place value models 3. Reads, writes and orders numbers through 99		
	4. Compares numbers through 99 5. Recognizes and uses ordinal numbers through ten 6. Skip counts by twos and fives		
	7. Tells time to the hour and half hour 8. Reads a calendar 9. Counts groups of coins up to 99¢		
	10. Demonstrates the ability to add by counting on 11. Demonstrates the ability to subtract by counting back 12. Recalls addition facts to 12		
	13. Adds three one-digit numbers where sums are 12 or less 14. Recalls subtraction facts related to sums through 12 15. Makes and interprets tally charts and bar graphs		
	16. Solves problems using cumulative computational skills 17. Uses the calculator to gain access to skills beyond his/her level of computational skills 18. Uses the calculator to experiment with mathematical ideas and discover patterns		
	19. Uses the calculator to explore, develop and reinforce concepts including estimation, computation, approximation and properties 20. Demonstrates awareness of the proper care and use of the computer		

Comments:

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Linda Rabinowitz

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: First

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level
Science	1. Has an awareness of good health practices including proper nutrition, exercise, rest, good dental care and cleanliness	
	2. Understands that good health habits are important for staying well and having energy for work and play	
	3. Understands that the earth is made up of air, land and water and how things depend on these three parts of earth	
	4. Has an awareness that the earth has limited resources that we must conserve	
	5. Knows the four seasons and the changes which accompany each one	
	6. Identifies common household poison and how to avoid accidental poisoning	
	7. Knows basic facts about spiders and their habits	
Social Studies	1. Knows key facts about Martin Luther King's life and the civil rights movement	
	2. Knows key facts about Abraham Lincoln's life	
	3. Knows key facts about George Washington's life	
	4. Uses critical thinking skills to analyze, organize, and evaluate general information about self, school and community	
	5. Identifies themes and customary observances of holidays	
	6. Verbally presents the main idea of a current event	
	7. Identifies famous artists and their work	
	8. Can analyze and discuss works of art	

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Davida Levin

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: Fifth

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level	
		Improvement Needed	Desired Performance Level
Social Studies cont'd	4. Particpates in discussions of current news events		
Work and Study Habits	1. Follows directions properly		
	2. Uses good listening habits and is attentive		
	3. Works well independently		
	4. Works well with others		
	5. Begins work promptly		
	6. Completes assignments diligently		
	7. Participates in discussion		
	8. Organizes and maintains materials neatly		
	9. Comes to class with materials ready		
	10. Writes and treats work neatly		
	11. Respects authority and fellow schoolmates		
	12. Observes classroom and schoolwide decorum		
	13. Checks work carefully		

Comments:

בס"ד

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

84

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Miryam Vilinsky

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: First

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level	
קְרִיאָה (Reading)	1. Sequences letters א-ת		
	2. Identifies differences between sounds of look-alike letters א-ת		
	3. Decodes and blends words with letters א-ת		
	4. Reads fluently as expected withir own reading group		
	5. Is building functional vocabulary through reading		
	6. Translates isolated phrases in sentences using cumulative vocabulary		
	7. Translates short stories on grade level		
כְּתִיבָה (Script handwriting)	1. Forms letters correctly		
	2. Sizes letters correctly		
	3. Spaces letters correctly		
	4. Spaces words correctly in sentence		
	5. Identifies script letters א-ת		
	6. Writes script letters א-ת		
	7. Matches print to script letters א-ת		
	8. Transfers print to script with ease		
	9. Copies accurately and neatly from printed material		
הֲלָכָה (Laws and Customs)	1. Understands the laws and customs for Chanuka, Asarah B'Tevet, Tu B'Shvat, and Purim		
	2. Knows the selected terminology related to each Yom Tov		
	3. Knows the story and sequence of events for the miracle of Chanuka and Purim (Megilat Esther)		
	4. Reads and translates selected P'sukim from Megilat Esther		
	5. Knows chronological sequence of holidays in history		
	6. Realizes need to recite B'rachot for food before and after eating		
	7. Knows appropriate B'rachot preceding food		
	8. Knows appropriate B'rachot following food		
	9. Knows the seven species of the fruits of Israel and their proper B'rachot		
	10. Can prioritize B'rachot for food		

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Miryam Vilinsky 85

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: First

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level	
תְּפִלָּה (Prayer)	1. Understands value to daven in place of Karbanot		
	2. Understands value of davening as a group		
	3. Knows rules of respect for parts of T'fila (standing, silence, etc.)		
	4. Understands and recites בְּרוּכוֹת הַתּוֹרָה בְּרוּכוֹת הַשַּׁחַר הַרְיאַת שְׁבַע עָלֵינוּ		
עִבְרִית (Hebrew)	1. Understands conversational Hebrew used in classroom instruction and discussion		
	2. Recognizes prefixes ו,ב,ה,ל,מ of words		
	3. Recognizes common roots in similar words		
	4. Translates and uses weekly vocabulary words		
	5. Identifies masculine and feminine words		
	6. Uses masculine and feminine adjectives appropriately in a sentence יָפֶה, קָטָן, גָּדוֹל		
	7. Uses verbs in present tense singular: ישב, צמד, רוץ, הלך, בתב; קרא		
	8. Identifies singular and plural nouns		
	9. Masters weekly spelling list		
	10. Combines words into whole sentences		
חוּמָשׁ (Chumash)	1. Is building a Chumash vocabulary through Parshat Hashavuah		
	2. Sequences the names of the Parshiot in Sifrei B'reishis and Shmos		
	3. Is familiar with the events and their sequence in each Parsha		
	4. Knows the names of our patriachs and matriarchs		
	5. Knows the names of the Tribes of Israel		
	6. Can sequence and define the Eser Macot		
	7. Translates selected key phrases in Sefer Shmos		

Comments:

Improvement Needed | Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Miryam Vilinsky 86

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: First

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level	
(Chumash cont'd)	8. Knows geneology of key figures in Sifrei Breishis and Shmos 9. Demonstrates ability to compose and share accurate and informative D'var Torah, based on class discussions 10. Demonstrates through discussion an appreciation for values and morals.		
Work and Study Habits	1. Follows directions properly 2. Uses good listening habits and is attentive 3. Works well independently 4. Works well with others 5. Begins work promptly 6. Completes assignments diligently 7. Participates in discussion 8. Organizes and maintains materials well 9. Comes to class with materials ready 10. Writes and treats work neatly 11. Respects authority and fellow schoolmates 12. Observes classroom and schoolwide decroum 13. Checks work carefully		

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

APPENDIX B

FIFTH GRADE REPORT CARD

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Davida Levin

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: Fifth

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS		Proficiency Level	
Reading and Language Arts	Reading:	1. Uses a glossary to determine meaning and pronunciation of vocabulary 2. Interprets quotation marks correctly 3. Comprehends figures of speech and idiomatic expressions		
		4. Extracts correct information from bar, line and circle graphs 5. Distinguishes between types of literature, eg. historical fiction and modern realistic fiction 6. Identifies the main idea and key supporting details in a story		
		7. Chooses appropriate word meaning based on context 8. Uses encyclopedia section headings and cross-references to locate information 9. Analyzes story elements for character, setting, and plot sequence		
		10. Classifies and summarizes information in a factual selection 11. Applies appropriate stress to emphasize meaning in a sentence 12. Interprets political, physical and product maps accurately		
		13. Draws conclusions from inferred information 14. Differentiates fact from opinion 15. Recognizes exaggeration in tall tales 16. Uses a card catalog to locate authors, titles, subject and call numbers		
		17. Reads orally with expression and smoothness 18. Reads silently with comprehension and speed 19. Completes book reports as assigned		
	Phonics:	1. Distinguishes prefixes, suffixes and roots 2. Decodes and understands words using prefixes such as un-, dis-, er-, in-, mis-, pre-, fore-, tri-.		

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Davida Levin 89

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: Fifth

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level	
	3. Decodes and understands words using roots such as pos-, pel-, dict-, scribe-, spec-.		
	4. Uses apostrophe correctly in singular and plural possessives 5. Forms contractions correctly 6. Syllabicates words based on vowel sounds		
Handwriting	1. Forms and spaces letters correctly 2. Writes with minimal corrections 3. Uses cursive writing for class work		
Language	1. Recognizes synonyms and antonyms for common vocabulary 2. Expands basic sentences by adding adjectives, adverbs and supporting phrases 3. Adds supporting details to a main idea		
	4. Identifies action and linking verbs 5. Uses verbs in present, past and special tense form 6. Conjugates present and past tenses of regular and irregular verbs		
	7. Identifies correct subject-verb agreement 8. Differentiates between metaphors and similes 9. Writes a paragraph that includes descriptive details		
	10. Identifies pronouns as subjects, after linking verbs, and as objects 11. Identifies correct pronoun-verb agreement 12. Separates run-on sentences correctly		
	13. Orders events from a paragraph in correct time sequence 14. Identifies and capitalizes proper adjectives 15. Uses comparative forms of adjectives correctly		

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Davida Levin 90

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: Fifth

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level	
Language cont'd	16. Uses complete sentences and appropriate grammar in oral expression		
Spelling	1. Correctly spells basic list words 2. Uses correct spelling at grade level in written work		
Mathematics	1. Subtracts with two or more trades 2. Subtracts with zeros 3. Reads and writes decimals through thousandths		
	4. Compares and orders decimals 5. Rounds decimals to nearest whole number and to tenths 6. Adds and subtracts decimals through thousandths, including money		
	7. Uses multiplication facts to find and estimate products that are multiples of 10, 100 or 1,000 8. Multiplies by a one digit factor 9. Multiplies by 2 and 3 digit factors		
	10. Uses division facts to find and estimate quotients that are multiples of 10, 100 or 1,000 11. Estimates quotients using compatible numbers 12. Divides by a 1 digit divisor to find a 1,2, or 3 digit quotient		
	13. Divides by a 1 digit divisor to find a quotient with a zero 14. Divides by a 1 digit divisor to find a 4 digit quotient 15. Divides dollars and cents by a 1 digit divisor		
	16. Finds the average of a list of numbers 17. Solves word problems using the 5-point		

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Mrs. Davida Levin

Date: March 1, 1988 Grade: Fifth

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level: Improvement Needed	Proficiency Level: Desired Performance Level
Math cont'd	checklist and cumulative computational skill		
Science	1. Distinguishes between simple and more complex plant groups 2. Names two kinds of seed plants and their characteristics 3. Differentiates between self pollination and cross pollination		
	4. Distinguishes seed plants based on growing seasons 5. Labels the parts of a flower 6. Identifies sun as Earth's energy source		
	7. Defines a food chain from sun to human 8. Identifies the components of the oxygen-carbon dioxide cycle 9. Defines and lists six kinds of body tissue		
	10. Defines and gives examples of body organs 11. Defines and lists seven body systems 12. Describes function and parts of the circulatory, respiratory, and excretory system		
	13. Describes the function and structure of the skin 14. Analyzes minor injuries for type of wound 15. Describes appropriate treatment for minor injuries		
Social Studies	1. Prepares reports on current news events at two per month minimum 2. Writes a 3-7 sentence summary of a current news event including a lead sentence 3. Locates the site of the news on a local, U.S., or world map		

Comments:

ב"ס

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Rabbi Y. Hauser 92

Date: November 24, 1987 Grade: Fifth

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level
חוּמָּשׁ (Chumash)	1. Translates P'sukim in Parshat Bo 10:1-12:28 2. Identifies roots in new vocabulary words 3. Translates new P'sukim based on prior vocabulary 4. Understands basic structure of Rashis commentary on Chumash 5. Understands concepts and sequence of events in Parshat Bo 10:1 - 12:28 6. Understands selected questions and answers from Rashi's commentary on the Chumash 7. Reads isolated words in Rashi script fluently 8. Identifies the grammatical form - plural possessive 9. Identifies double-word emphasis (גַּרְשׁ יְגָרֵשׁ) 10. Forms coherent questions based on class discussion	
מִשְׁנָה Mishna	1. Translates fluently Chapter 1 of Masechet Brachot 2. Understands terms used in Chapter 1 3. Understands concepts related in Chapter 1 4. Understands structure of the Mishna	
הֲלָכָה (Laws and Customs)	1. Understands laws of Elul, Rosh Hashana, Shofar, Aseret Y'mai T'shuva, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hoshana Rabba, Simchat Torah and Shmini Atzeret 2. Knows names and accomplishments of key figures involved in the formation of Halacha throughout history 3. Understands basic terminoly used in learning laws in Halacha (Mutar, Asur)	
עִבְרִית (Language)	1. Knows vocabulary in "Ze lo Ani" workbook through unit 10 2. Understands conversational Hebrew spoken in class discussion 3. Uses new vocabulary and proper sentence structure in writing and speaking	

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF ATLANTA PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Teacher: Rabbi Y. Hauser

Date: November 24, 1987 Grade: Fifth

CONTENT AREA	TARGET SKILLS	Proficiency Level
שׁוֹפְטִים (Navi)	1. Knows sequence of events, people, and places in Chapter 1:1 - 19 2. Participates in discussions of basic value lessons learned in Chapter 1:1 - 19	
פָּרָשַׁת הַשָּׁבוּעַ (Parsha)	1. Knows sequence of events, people, and places 2. Participates in discussions of basic value lessons learned in the Parsha	
תְּפִלָּה (Prayer)	1. Pronounces words correctly in Davening: בִּרְכוֹת הַתּוֹרָה בִּרְכוֹת הַשַּׁחַר פְּסוּקֵי דְזִמְרָה בִּרְכוֹת קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שְׁמוֹנֶה עֶשְׂרֵה עָלֵינוּ הַלֵּל	
Work and Study Habits	1. Follows directions properly 2. Uses good listening habits and is attentive 3. Works well independently 4. Works well with others 5. Begins work promptly 6. Completes assignments diligently 7. Participates in discussion 8. Organizes and maintains materials neatly 9. Comes to class with materials ready 10. Writes and treats work neatly 11. Respects authority and fellow schoolmates 12. Observes classroom and schoolwide decorum 13. Checks work carefully	

Comments:

Improvement Needed

Desired Performance Level

APPENDIX C

SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT CHECKLIST

SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT CHECKLIST

1. Follows directions properly
2. Uses good listening habits and is attentive
3. Works well independently
4. Works well with others
5. Begins work promptly
6. Completes assignments diligently
7. Participates in discussion
8. Organizes and maintains materials well
9. Comes to class with materials ready
10. Writes and treats work neatly
11. Respects authority and fellow schoolmates
12. Observes classroom and schoolwide decorum
13. Checks work carefully.

APPENDIX D

TEACHER SURVEY

Please fill out the following questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. I need this information for my research. I really appreciate your help. Thanks again.
Linda R.

Name:_____

CIRCLE YES OR NO FOR EACH QUESTION.

* Please note that older and younger refers to relative age within a single class. It does not mean first graders versus sixth graders._

1. I feel that youngness is an important concern for school-age children. Yes 7 No 1

2. I refer younger children to support services more often than older children. Yes 3 No 5

3. Younger children are just as likely to be leaders as older children. Yes 5 No 1

4. Older children are more likely to be leaders than youger children. Yes 4 No 3

5. Younger children are more likely to be followers than older children. Yes 4 No 2

6. Younger children make friends as easily as older children. Yes 5 No 2

7. Older children make friends more easily than younger children. Yes 3 No 5

8. Behaviorally, younger children fall within the normal range. Yes 7 No 1

9. Younger children tend to have more behavior problems than older children. Yes 2 No 6

10. Younger children tend to have less behavior problems than older children. Yes 0 No 8

11. Younger children tend to have poorer self-concepts than older children.

Yes	No
2	6

12. Older children have better self-concepts than younger children.

Yes	No
4	4

13. A child's relative age in a class does not influence how s/he feels about himself or herself.

Yes	No
1	7