

Kindergarten redshirting: What families should know

If you've heard other parents in your community talking about waiting an extra year before starting kindergarten—a practice called “redshirting”—you may have some questions. This fact sheet is for families considering redshirting or those who just want to know a little more.

Is redshirting a rising trend? The short answer is “no”

The rate of redshirting has barely budged in the last two decades, staying at about 5% of kindergarteners redshirted on average each year. These rates are quite comparable to redshirting rates from the 1990s and 2010s (5–7% of kindergarteners), indicating that the practice is still uncommon despite a rise in rhetoric these past few years.

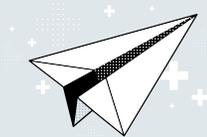
What are the benefits of redshirting?

Higher maturity

Children have an extra year to academically and socially prepare for kindergarten.

Short-lived academic benefits

Redshirted students do better academically in the early grades than students who enter kindergarten on time. However, multiple studies confirm that this advantage goes away as students move through school.



Potential advantages in sports

Another reason some parents redshirt is to give kids a leg up in sports, since redshirted students are likely to have a physical maturity advantage over their peers.

What are the costs of redshirting?

Extra childcare costs

In the short term, parents who redshirt their children are on the hook for providing or paying¹ for an extra year of childcare.

+\$12,000

PER YEAR AVERAGE

Higher rates of high school dropout

In the long term, being older for your grade can have some disadvantages by the time students reach high school. Because redshirted students will turn 18 before finishing high school, there is a higher risk of dropping out² of high school.

Potential impacts on earnings

Additionally, there can be potentially lower lifetime earnings³ because they enter the labor force one year later than their on-time peers.

Should I redshirt my child?

For most children, the answer is likely no. Nonetheless, there are some children who are more likely to benefit from redshirting:

- Children with significant developmental delays
- Children who majorly struggle with behavioral or emotional regulation

Where can I learn more?

- Should kindergartners be redshirted? Costs likely outweigh academic benefits
<https://www.nwea.org/research/publication/should-kindergartners-be-redshirted-costs-likely-outweigh-academic-benefits/>
- Kindergarten readiness resources
<https://opb.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/kindergarten-readiness-resources/kindergarten-readiness-resources/>
- Is your child ready for kindergarten?
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/is-your-child-ready-for-kindergarten/>

1 "Catalyzing Growth: Using Data to Change Child Care." 2025. Child Care Aware of America. May 22, 2025. <https://www.childcareaware.org/price-landscape24/#PriceofCare>.

2 David Deming and Susan Dynarski, "The Lengthening of Childhood," Journal of Economic Perspectives 22, no. 3 (July 2008): 71–92, <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.22.3.71>.

3 Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach and Stephanie Howard Larson, "Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?," Brookings, April 13, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/is-your-child-ready-for-kindergarten/>.