

**Learning from Puzzles:
Test Scores, Habits, Behavior, and Schooling
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Enrolling in Headstart has a modest positive effect on test scores but the advantage fades within a few years, so for many years Headstart was viewed as ineffective. Now, however, we know that Headstart, like Perry Preschool, has had positive effects on longer term outcomes, reducing grade repetition, disability diagnoses, and health problems, while increasing high school graduation, college attendance, and employment. An extra year of school also has a modest positive effect on test scores, but this effect is too small to account for most of schooling's estimated effect on adult earnings or health.

Because the primary goal of schooling is to improve children's academic skills, it took many years for researchers to recognize that schools' non-academic effects might be even more important than their academic effects. Today most researchers are aware that schools non-academic effects are important, but those who shape educational policy have not gotten the message. One reason is that the research community still can't say with any confidence what short-term consequences of schooling account for its positive long-term effect on non-academic outcomes. We know even less about what schools can do to enhance such benefits.