What Do Parents Need to Know About Academic Acceleration?

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Acceleration is...

- A progression through an educational program
- In a *shorter* time
- Or at a *younger* age than is typical.
When you think about acceleration for your child, what worries you?
What Worries Parents?

- Socialization: will my child have friends?
- Inappropriate conversations on the bus?
- Will my child be well-rounded?
- Going away to college when very young?
- What about athletics?
- Missing academic competitions & college scholarships?
What Do Parents Need to Know?

- Acceleration works.
  We have a strong research base.
- Well-researched methods can help make decisions.
- Acceleration helps students to be presented with new material.
- Acceleration raises expectations for the student.
- Accelerated students do just fine socially.
Will Acceleration Cause Academic Harm?

- High-ability students engage in abstract thinking at a younger age
- Acceleration leads to higher levels of achievement
- Accelerated students will not run out of courses before high school graduation thanks to online courses, dual enrollment
Why Accelerate?

- **Equity**: all students have the right to learn something new
- **A better match between a student’s abilities & the curriculum**
- **Research supported**
- **Accelerated students do well academically and socially**
- **Low Cost**
Forms of Acceleration

Subject-Based Acceleration

Student moves up for one or more subjects, stays in regular grade for others

Grade-Based Acceleration

Moves up a grade to be with older students full-time
Acceleration Works: Short-Term Benefits

Accelerated students are more **challenged** and therefore more **engaged** in school.

Accelerated students must work harder, learning good “habits of mind”

Academically talented students who enter K or college early **do very well** compared to their older classmates.

Students accelerating in math and science often continue studying those subjects (no burnout)
Acceleration Works: Long-Term Benefits

Acceleration has long-term beneficial effects, both academic and social.

Accelerated students tend to be more ambitious, earning graduate degrees at higher rates.

Students who skipped a grade performed even better when acceleration was accompanied by other educational opportunities.

...higher rates of productivity, work in more prestigious occupations, are more successful and earn more money and increase income faster than older, similar ability, non-accelerated peers.

Looking back, an overwhelming majority of accelerated students say acceleration was the right decision for them.
Acceleration Supports Students’ Social Development

Placed with academic peers with similar interests & intellectual level

Research on social development and academic acceleration is positive overall

2020 Bernstein, Lubinski, & Benbow. Soc/emo concerns are “fruitless”
Where do I find the research?

www.accelerationinstitute.org
A Nation Empowered

→ Free download
→ Volume 1: Stories of acceleration
→ Volume 2: The research
→ www.nationempowered.org
How Will Decisions About Acceleration Be Made?

Use of objective information to make decisions

Who participates in the decision? How are parents included? No gatekeepers

Communication strategies: How are parents kept informed?

Trial period

Measures of success: How do we know it’s working?
**Iowa Acceleration Scale** (3rd edition, 2009)

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Available from Gifted Unlimited

Paper and pencil survey to assist with acceleration decisions

Required by the state of Ohio for grade-skipping decisions
A new (2021) online tool designed to assist educators and families through the decision-making process about acceleration
The Integrated Acceleration System focuses on 4 forms of acceleration:

- Grade Skipping
- Early Entrance to Kindergarten
- Subject Acceleration
- Early Entrance to College

The experts from the Belin-Blank Center are available to assist with acceleration questions for students who are twice-exceptional.
The Integrated Acceleration System...

→ Gathers information in one place
→ Facilitates discussion of important questions.

For example:
• Questions/hesitation expressed by student
• Social/emotional aspects

→ Ensures the team discusses all important factors
→ Produces a recommendation and report about the student

→ Assists in developing a plan for transition to the accelerated grade
Things for Parents to Consider

- Especially with whole-grade acceleration, there is an adjustment period.
- Student might no longer feel like the “big fish”
- Issues of dating, being too young to drive are later seen as “temporary inconveniences,” but they are very real at the time!
Other Things to Consider

→ How will we resolve “gaps” in the student’s background?
→ Preparing the receiving teacher and students
→ Younger students may have more issues (for example, handwriting, stamina)
→ Preparing the parents: Homework may take longer
→ Helping the parents prepare the child
What Happens if We Don’t Accelerate?

• This is an extremely important question to investigate and discuss.
• Not only should we consider what the research tells us (acceleration is highly successful for carefully selected students), but we should also understand the consequences of inaction
• “Doing nothing” is still a decision
• If we don’t accelerate now, we can still consider this option in the future
Is your school interested in doing acceleration better?

NCRGE is seeking schools serving grades 2-5 interested in FREE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES and assistance in making acceleration decisions.

ncrge.uconn.edu/acceleration
Resources for Educators & Families

NAGC Tip Sheet for Parents on acceleration: https://tinyurl.com/NAGCaccel

NAGC Position Statement on Acceleration https://tinyurl.com/NAGCaccelerate

Hoagies Gifted blog hop: https://tinyurl.com/HoagiesAcceleration

Davidson Institute: Search “acceleration”
Would you like to receive updates about the Integrated Acceleration System?

→ Sign up here:

https://tinyurl.com/SignUpAcceleration
Above-Level Testing

Give a test developed for older students to younger, bright students

Raises the “ceiling” and extends the yardstick

Discovers exceptionally talented students

Helps us to tailor educational opportunities to the students
Developing Academic Acceleration Policies

• Checklists for developing policies:
  – Whole grade acceleration
  – Subject acceleration
  – Early entrance to kindergarten or first grade

• Authors:
  – Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik
  – Wendy A. Behrens
  – Susan G. Assouline

• Online. Free.

• Sample policies on the website
  – www.accelerationinstitute.org/guidelines
State Policy information on the Acceleration Institute website

https://tinyurl.com/StateAccelPolicy

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Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development
We teach a whole course on academic acceleration

Academic Acceleration (PSQF:4123)
Usually meets in the summer
 Entirely online, asynchronous

For more info, email: acceleration@belinblank.org
An important catalyst for work on academic acceleration
www.belinblank.org
Connect with us!

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