

“The education and wages of immigrant children: the impact of age at arrival”

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Abstract: Foreign-born children can attend American schools, but various immigration-related factors, such as language, and social acculturation, affect educational attainment. Age at arrival proxies for many of these factors, but the relationship between age at arrival and education is not empirically known for the nation's immigrant children. Age at arrival also affects the percentage of total schooling attained in the US, and therefore immigrants with more US schooling will earn more if the returns to US schooling are greater than the returns to foreign schooling, holding total education constant. In addition, this study asks whether families with young children should be admitted prior to the start of the first grade so that immigrant children can attend American primary and secondary schools. Only for Mexican and Latin American immigrants is it the case that the benefit outweighs the costs of 12 years of primary and secondary education.