

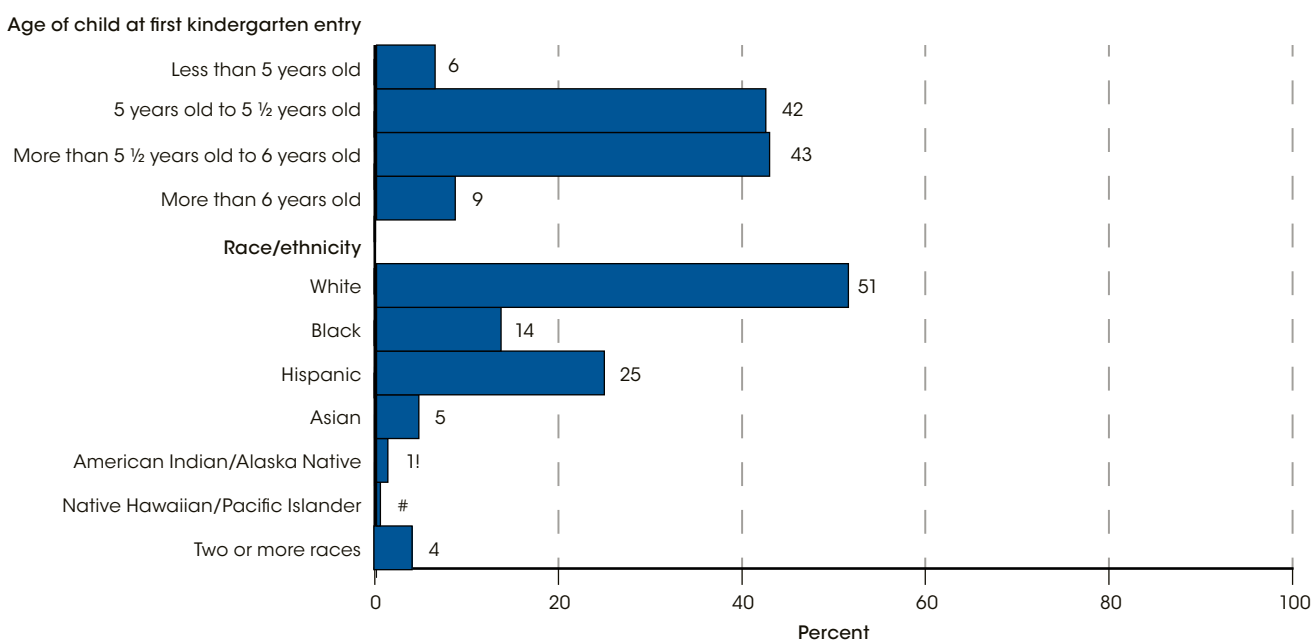
## Kindergarten Entry Status: On-Time, Delayed-Entry, and Repeating Kindergartners

In the fall of 2010, reading scores were higher, on average, for delayed-entry kindergartners (36 points) and repeating kindergartners (37 points) than for on-time kindergartners (35 points). In the spring of 2011, however, reading scores were higher for delayed-entry kindergartners and on-time kindergartners (51 and 50 points, respectively) than for repeating kindergartners (48 points).

As of May 2011, 42 states and the District of Columbia required their school districts to offer kindergarten programs, and 15 states and the District of Columbia required children to attend kindergarten (see *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 197). In the 2010–11

school year, about 4 million students were enrolled in kindergarten in the United States (see *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 136). About 89 percent of the kindergartners attended public schools and 11 percent attended private schools.

**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of kindergarten students, by age at the time child first started kindergarten and race/ethnicity: Fall 2010**



# Rounds to zero.

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: Most of the children first entered kindergarten in 2010–11, but the children who were repeating kindergarten in 2010–11 had first entered kindergarten in an earlier school year. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and survey item nonresponse.

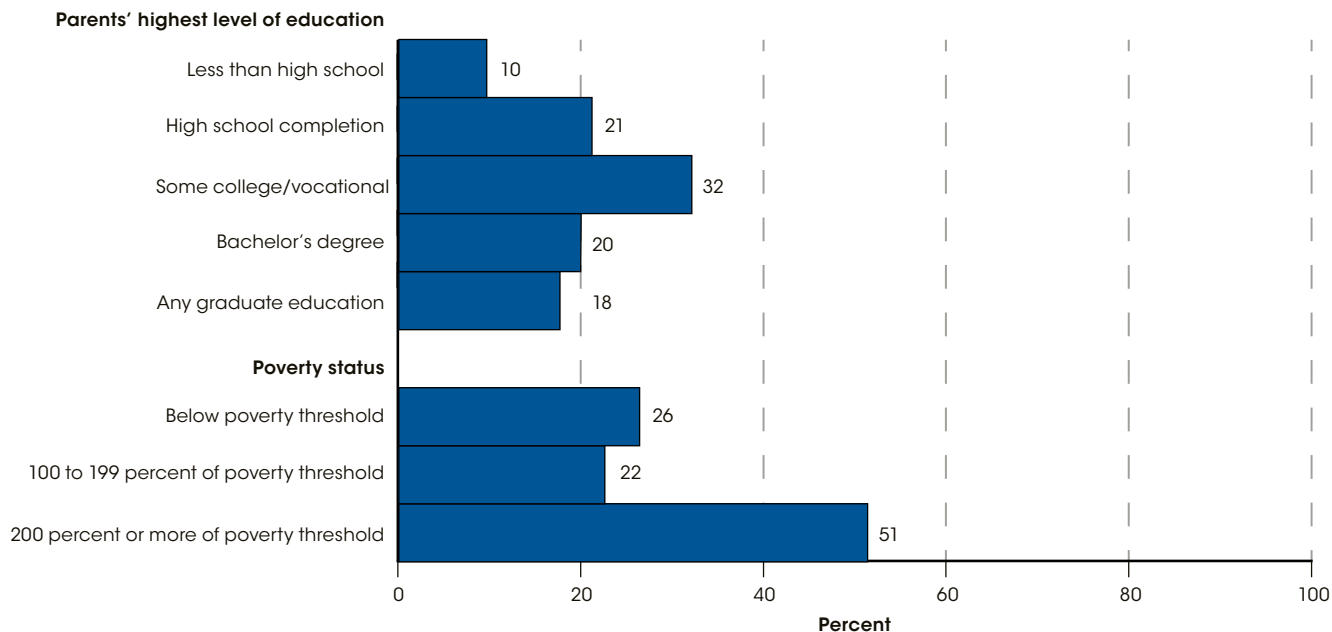
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010–11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 136.

The kindergarten class of 2010–11 was diverse with respect to characteristics of individual children and their families. Six percent of kindergartners started their first year of kindergarten before they turned 5 years old, while 42 percent started when they were between 5 and 5½ years old, 43 percent started when they were more than 5½ years old to 6 years old, and 9 percent started after they turned 6 years old. Some 51 percent of

kindergartners were White, 25 percent were Hispanic, 14 percent were Black, 5 percent were Asian, 4 percent were of two or more races, 1 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native, and less than 1 percent were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Fifty-five percent had attended center-based care as their primary care arrangement in the year prior to kindergarten.

For more information, see the Reader's Guide and the Guide to Sources.

**Figure 2. Percentage distribution of kindergarten students, by parents' highest level of education and poverty status: School year 2010-11**



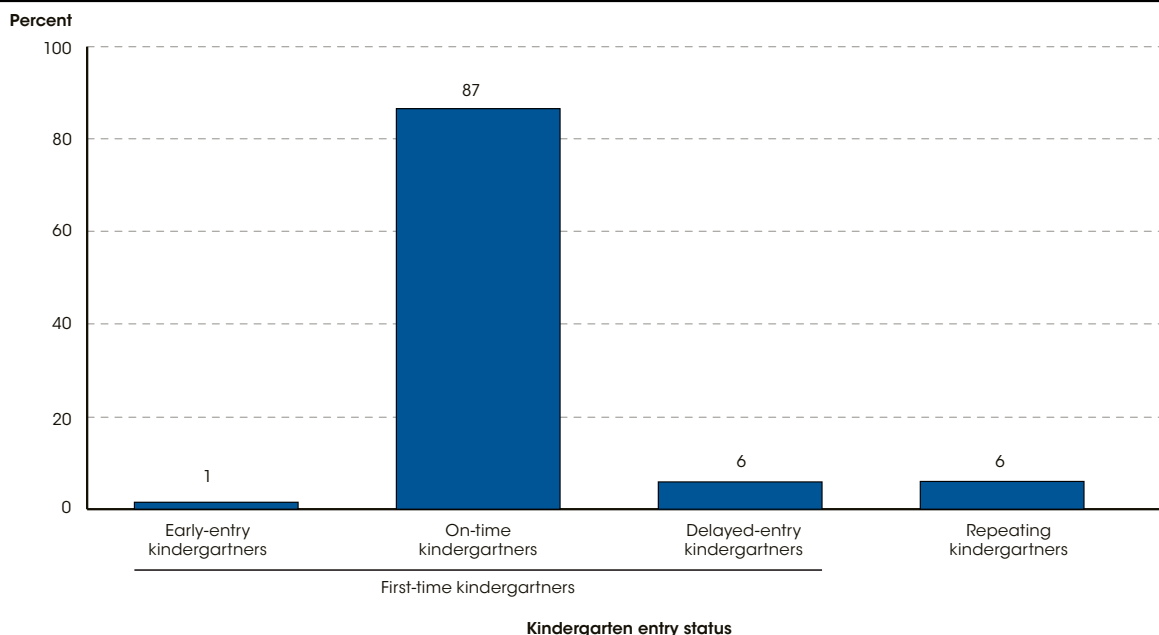
NOTE: Parents' highest level of education is the highest level of education achieved by either of the parents or guardians in a two-parent household, by the only parent in a single-parent household, or by any guardian in a household with no parents. Poverty status is based on preliminary U.S. Census income thresholds for 2010, which identify incomes determined to meet household needs, given family size and composition. For example, a family of three with one child was below the poverty threshold if its income was less than \$17,552 in 2010. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and survey item nonresponse.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 136.

In the 2010–11 school year, about 10 percent of kindergartners lived in a household where no parent had completed high school; 21 percent lived in a household where the highest education level of any parent was a high school diploma or its equivalent; 32 percent lived in a household where the highest education level of any parent was completion of some college or a vocational degree; and 37 percent lived in a household where at least one parent had a bachelor's degree or any graduate education. Twenty-six percent of kindergartners lived in households

that were below the federal poverty threshold, 22 percent lived in households that were from 100 to 199 percent of the poverty threshold, and 51 percent lived in households that were at 200 percent or more of the poverty threshold. Sixteen percent of kindergartners lived in a household where English was not the primary language, and 23 percent lived in single-parent households (i.e., 21 percent in mother-only households and 2 percent in father-only households).

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of kindergarten students, by kindergarten entry status: Fall 2010



NOTE: A child who enrolled in kindergarten for the first time in 2010-11 is classified as an early, on-time, or delayed kindergarten entrant depending on whether the parent reported enrolling the child early, enrolling the child when he or she was old enough, or waiting until the child was older relative to school guidelines about when children can start school based on their birth date. A child is classified as a kindergarten repeater if the parent reported that 2010-11 was the child's second (or third or more) year of kindergarten. Excludes students with missing kindergarten enrollment status information. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and survey item nonresponse.

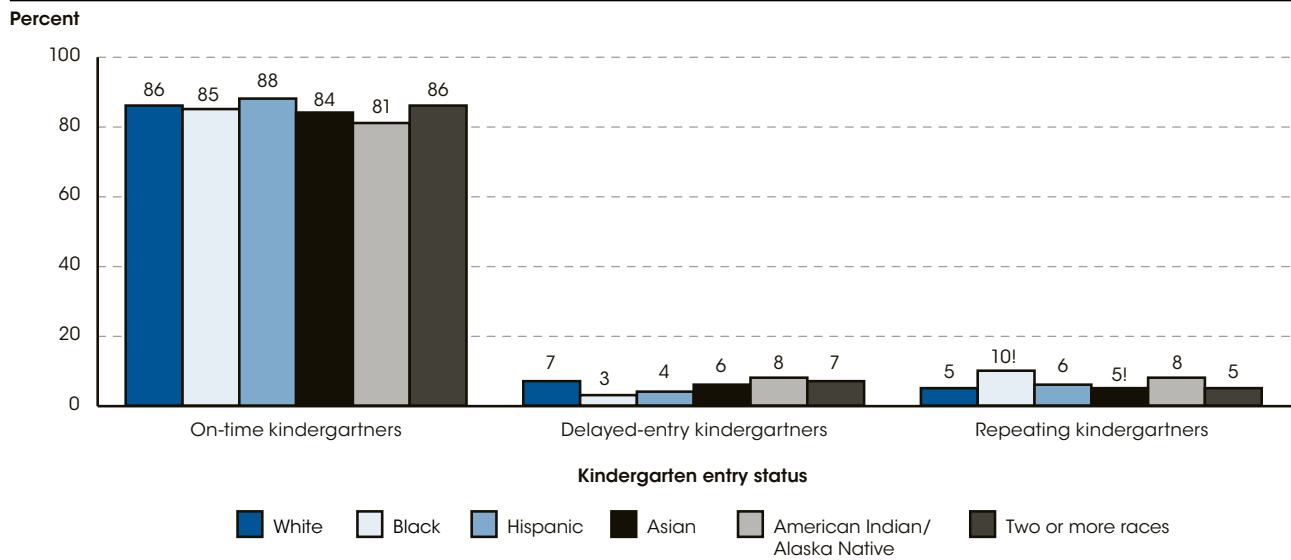
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 136.

Over the years, policies and practices have emerged that are intended to improve children's early school experiences by giving them more time to develop and mature (e.g., changes to age of entry requirements and use of transitional grades and readiness testing). One such enrollment strategy is to purposefully delay a child's entrance into kindergarten, a practice known as "academic redshirting."<sup>1</sup> Parents or school staff may decide to wait a year to enroll a child in kindergarten if the child's birthday is close to the school system's cutoff date for kindergarten age requirements. Redshirting may occur if parents do not wish their child to be among the youngest in their kindergarten class, or if there is

concern that the child exhibits less mature academic, social, or physical skills than their peers of the same age. A second strategy is to retain kindergartners who did not achieve the same level of academic or social skills as their peers in their first year of school and to have them repeat kindergarten. In the fall of 2010, about 94 percent of kindergartners were attending their first year of kindergarten: 87 percent were on-time kindergartners who started kindergarten within the age requirements set by their school system, while 6 percent were delayed-entry kindergartners and 1 percent were early-entry kindergartners, based on school system age requirements. In addition, about 6 percent of fall 2010 kindergartners were repeating kindergarten.

<sup>1</sup> Katz, L.G. (2000). *Redshirting and Young Children*. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. (ERIC ED447951)

Figure 4. Percentage of kindergarten students, by kindergarten entry status and race/ethnicity: Fall 2010



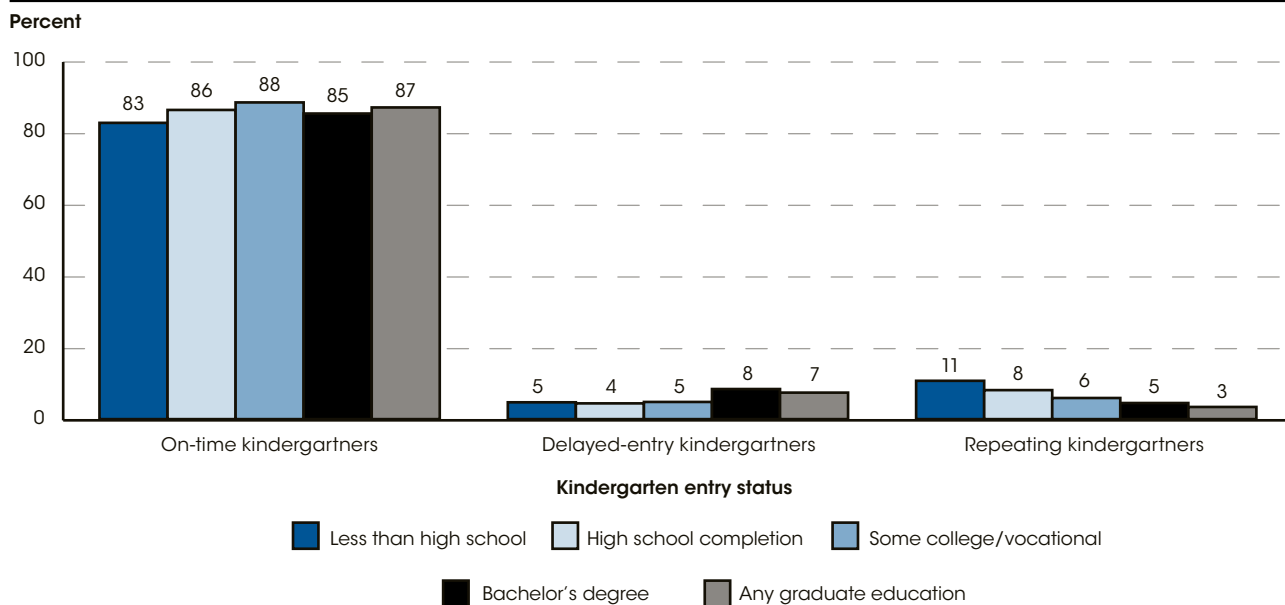
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: A child who enrolled in kindergarten for the first time in 2010-11 is classified as an early, on-time, or delayed kindergarten entrant depending on whether the parent reported enrolling the child early, enrolling the child when he or she was old enough, or waiting until the child was older relative to school guidelines about when children can start school based on their birth date. A child is classified as a kindergarten repeater if the parent reported that 2010-11 was the child's second (or third or more) year of kindergarten. Excludes students with missing kindergarten enrollment status information and students whose parents reported that they entered kindergarten at an earlier age than the criteria set by the school district. Reporting standards for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander kindergartners were not met; therefore, data for this group are not shown in the figure. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 136.

In fall 2010, about 6 percent of all kindergartners were delayed entrants. Higher percentages of American Indians/Alaska Natives (8 percent), Whites (7 percent), and students of two or more races (7 percent) than of Hispanics (4 percent) or Blacks (3 percent) were delayed-entry kindergartners. Also, a higher percentage of Asian students than of Black students (6 vs. 3 percent)

were delayed-entry kindergartners. No measurable differences were observed in the percentages of repeating kindergartners across different racial/ethnic groups. Comparisons could not be made for early-entry kindergartners due to the small number of children in the sample.

Figure 5. Percentage of kindergarten students, by kindergarten entry status and parents' highest level of education: Fall 2010



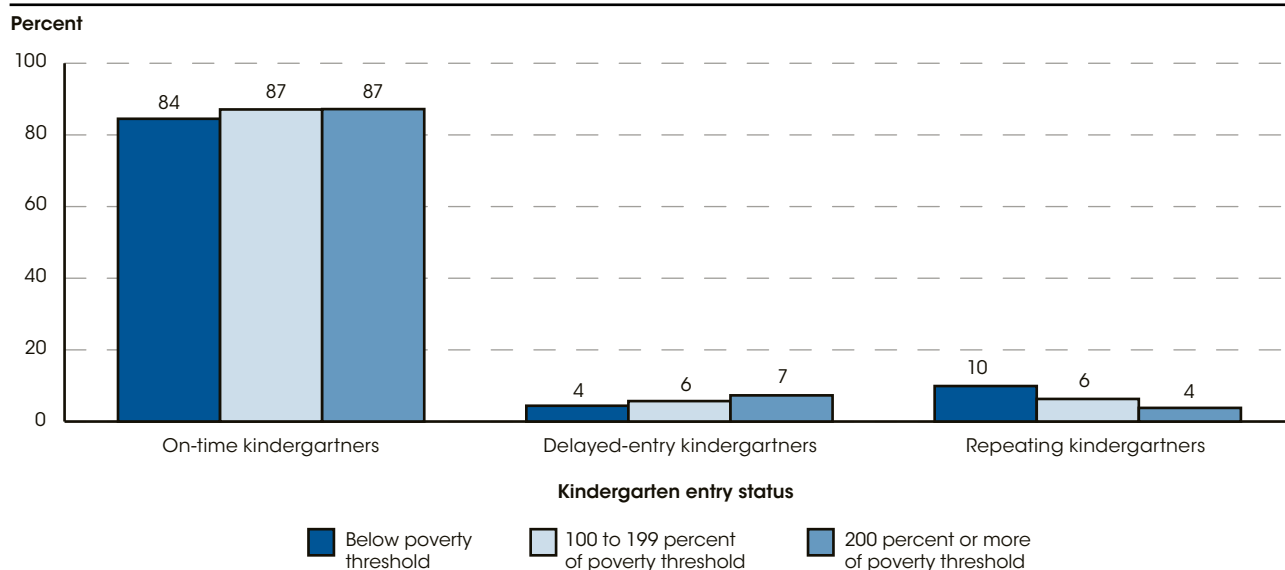
NOTE: A child who enrolled in kindergarten for the first time in 2010-11 is classified as an early, on-time, or delayed kindergarten entrant depending on whether the parent reported enrolling the child early, enrolling the child when he or she was old enough, or waiting until the child was older relative to school guidelines about when children can start school based on their birth date. A child is classified as a kindergarten repeater if the parent reported that 2010-11 was the child's second (or third or more) year of kindergarten. Excludes students with missing kindergarten enrollment status information and students whose parents reported that they entered kindergarten at an earlier age than the criteria set by the school district. Parents' highest level of education is the highest level of education achieved by either of the parents or guardians in a two-parent household, by the only parent in a single-parent household, or by any guardian in a household with no parents.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 136.

The percentages of delayed-entry kindergartners were higher for students living in households where at least one parent had completed a bachelor's degree (8 percent) or some graduate education (7 percent) than for students whose parents had lower levels of educational attainment (4 to 5 percent). Conversely, the percentages of repeating kindergartners were higher for students who did not

have any parent completing high school (11 percent) and for students whose parents' highest education level was a high school diploma or equivalent (8 percent) than for students who had at least one parent completing a bachelor's degree (5 percent) or some graduate education (3 percent).

Figure 6. Percentage of kindergarten students, by kindergarten entry status and poverty status: Fall 2010

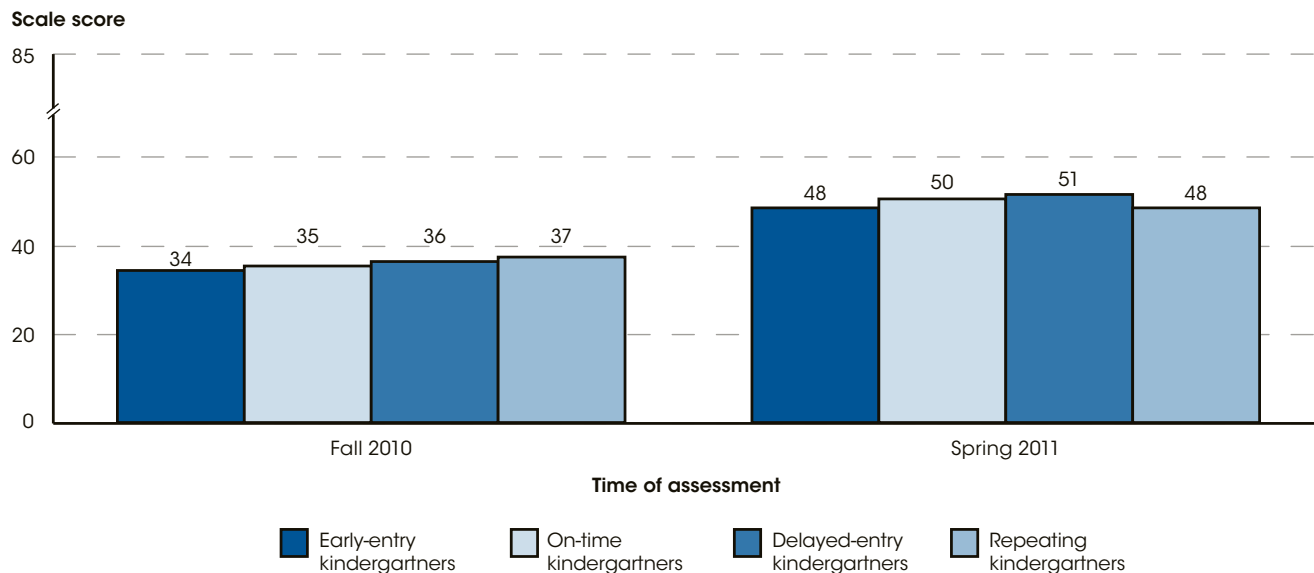


NOTE: A child who enrolled in kindergarten for the first time in 2010-11 is classified as an early, on-time, or delayed kindergarten entrant depending on whether the parent reported enrolling the child early, enrolling the child when he or she was old enough, or waiting until the child was older relative to school guidelines about when children can start school based on their birth date. A child is classified as a kindergarten repeater if the parent reported that 2010-11 was the child's second (or third or more) year of kindergarten. Excludes students with missing kindergarten enrollment status information and students whose parents reported that they entered kindergarten at an earlier age than the criteria set by the school district. Poverty status is based on preliminary U.S. Census income thresholds for 2010, which identify incomes determined to meet household needs, given family size and composition. For example, a family of three with one child was below the poverty threshold if its income was less than \$17,552 in 2010.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 136.

In fall 2010, the percentages of delayed-entry kindergartners were higher for students living in households that were at 200 percent or more of the federal poverty threshold (7 percent) than for students living below the poverty threshold (4 percent). In contrast, the percentages of repeating kindergartners were

higher for students living below the poverty threshold (10 percent) or for those living between 100 percent and 199 percent of the poverty threshold (6 percent) than for students living in households that were at 200 percent or more of the poverty threshold (4 percent).

Figure 7. Kindergartners' mean reading scale scores, by time of assessment and kindergarten entry status: School year 2010-11



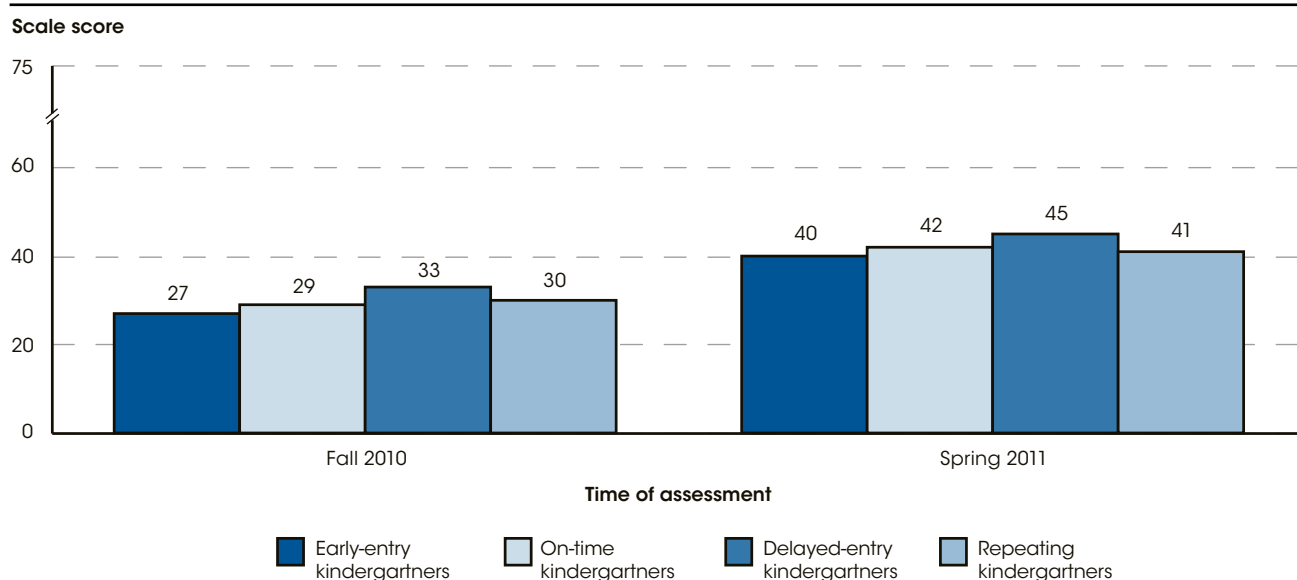
NOTE: A child who enrolled in kindergarten for the first time in 2010-11 is classified as an early, on-time, or delayed kindergarten entrant depending on whether the parent reported enrolling the child early, enrolling the child when he or she was old enough, or waiting until the child was older relative to school guidelines about when children can start school based on their birth date. A child is classified as a kindergarten repeater if the parent reported that 2010-11 was the child's second (or third or more) year of kindergarten. Excludes students with missing kindergarten enrollment status information. Actual reading scores range from 6 to 83.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 137.

For the most part, delayed-entry kindergartners tended to outscore on-time and repeating kindergartners in reading, mathematics, and science in the 2010-11 school year. In reading, for instance, the fall scores were higher, on average, for delayed-entry kindergartners (36 points) and repeating kindergartners (37 points) than for on-time

kindergartners (35 points) (see *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 137). In the spring, however, reading scores were higher for delayed-entry kindergartners and on-time kindergartners (51 and 50 points, respectively) than for repeating kindergartners (48 points).

**Figure 8. Kindergartners' mean mathematics scale scores, by time of assessment and kindergarten entry status: School year 2010-11**



NOTE: A child who enrolled in kindergarten for the first time in 2010-11 is classified as an early, on-time, or delayed kindergarten entrant depending on whether the parent reported enrolling the child early, enrolling the child when he or she was old enough, or waiting until the child was older relative to school guidelines about when children can start school based on their birth date. A child is classified as a kindergarten repeater if the parent reported that 2010-11 was the child's second (or third or more) year of kindergarten. Excludes students with missing kindergarten enrollment status information. Actual mathematics scores range from 5 to 75.

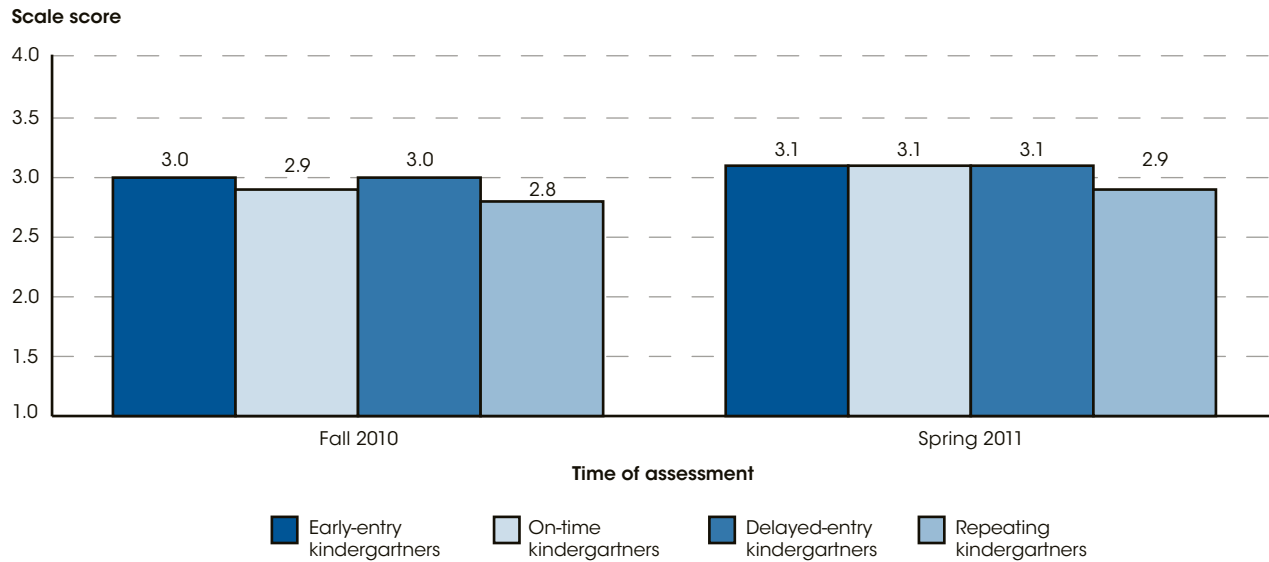
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 137.

In mathematics, the fall 2010 scores were higher for delayed-entry kindergartners (33 points) than for on-time kindergartners (29 points) and repeating kindergartners (30 points). This pattern was also observed in the spring of 2011: delayed-entry kindergartners had an average mathematics score of 45 points, compared with an average score of 42 points for on-time kindergartners and an average score of 41 points for repeating

kindergartners. Kindergartners were also assessed in science in the spring of 2011. The science assessment reflects student performance on questions about physical sciences, life sciences, environmental sciences, and scientific inquiry. For that assessment, scores were higher, on average, for delayed-entry kindergartners (12.1 points) than for on-time kindergartners (11.4 points) and repeating kindergartners (11.0 points).



**Figure 9. Kindergartners’ mean approaches to learning scale scores, by time of assessment and kindergarten entry status: School year 2010-11**



NOTE: A child who enrolled in kindergarten for the first time in 2010-11 is classified as an early, on-time, or delayed kindergarten entrant depending on whether the parent reported enrolling the child early, enrolling the child when he or she was old enough, or waiting until the child was older relative to school guidelines about when children can start school based on their birth date. A child is classified as a kindergarten repeater if the parent reported that 2010-11 was the child’s second (or third or more) year of kindergarten. Excludes students with missing kindergarten enrollment status information. The approaches to learning scale is based on teachers’ reports on how students rate in seven areas: attentiveness, task persistence, eagerness to learn, learning independence, flexibility, organization, and ability to follow classroom rules. Actual scores range from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating that a child exhibits positive learning behaviors more often.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), Preliminary Restricted-Use Data File. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 137.

In the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011, kindergarten teachers were asked to rate their students on a set of seven approaches to learning behaviors: attentiveness, task persistence, eagerness to learn, learning independence, flexibility, organization, and ability to follow classroom rules. Scores ranged from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating that a child exhibited positive learning behaviors more often. In both the fall and spring

of the kindergarten year, delayed-entry and on-time kindergartners had higher scores on the approaches to learning scale than repeating kindergartners. In the spring, for example, delayed-entry and on-time kindergartners both had average scores of 3.1 points on the 4-point scale, while repeating kindergartners had an average score of 2.9 points.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, tables 136, 137, 197

**Glossary:** Educational attainment, Poverty, Racial/ethnic group