

# Social-Emotional Effects of Students Skipping a Grade

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## Introduction

The current study examines how students who skip a grade are affected socially and academically. Previous studies have consistently found skipping a grade tends to have positive academic benefits as students who are not being intellectually challenged are able to advance to a level that better fits their needs. However, there could be consequences to leaving long-term peers behind and joining a new grade. Body issues, social isolation, and bullying could increase after skipping a grade, however limited research has demonstrated skipping a grade does not tend to negatively impact social-emotional wellbeing.

## Methods

The current study utilized waves 1 and 2 of the Adolescent Health Longitudinal Health Study dataset (AddHealth). This is a national study of over 20,000 adolescents who were in grades 7-12 during the 1994-95 school year and were reevaluated the following year in wave 2. Specific data from this study included demographic measures, whether or not the student skipped a grade, if they felt socially accepted, lonely, felt they got into trouble with peers often, and felt that their peers disliked them.

Figure 1

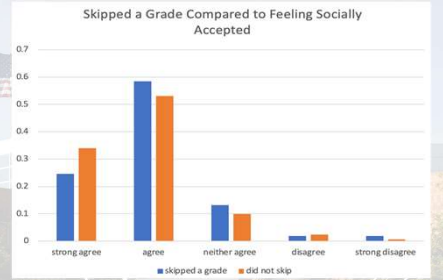
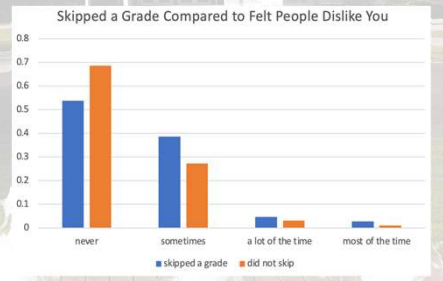


Figure 2



## Results

An independent t test was performed and found on average students who skipped a grade were more likely to not feel socially accepted ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 0.793$ ), than those who did not skip a grade ( $M = 1.82$ ,  $SD = 0.746$ ). This difference was significant  $t(4813) = -2.145$ ,  $p = 0.032$  with a small effect size of  $d = -0.211$ . A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between students who skipped a grade and if they ever felt their peers dislike them. The relationship between these variables was significant,  $\chi^2 = 0.001$ .

## Recommendations

Further research is needed to determine if skipping a grade negatively impacts students longitudinally or only most significantly the year after they skip a grade. Psychologists who are seeing patients considering skipping a grade should help them determine if this transition would do more harm than good based on their current social-emotional feelings. Psychologists who are currently seeing patients that have skipped a grade should take into consideration how this transition may cause them to feel more isolated than their peers.

## Conclusion

When students skip a grade, they are more likely to not feel socially accepted and feel their peers dislike them more the following year than those who do not skip a grade. This finding has important implications for students who are considering skipping a grade as they need to not only consider how this transition will affect them academically, but emotionally. Future research should help determine ways to aid in reducing negative social-emotional impacts for students who are skipping a grade as it will allow students to further excel academically without adverse social impacts.



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