



**8°C**  
Light rain  
Detailed Forecast

**Calgary Herald Home** Search  in the Calgary Herald



Monday, September 17, 2007

## Held back to excel

Parents, teachers debate merits of academic 'redshirting'

**Janice Tibbetts, CanWest News Service**  
Published: Monday, September 03, 2007

Furthermore, studies suggest that the advantage of the older kids is short-lived and that there is no difference in the oldest and youngest students by the time they reach Grade 3.

"It seems to wash out," said McNamara, who decided against holding back his son, Joe, from kindergarten this year, even though his Dec. 23 birthday falls a week before the cut-off date.

There are no Canadian statistics on the prevalence of redshirting, but McNamara expects the figures are similar to the those in the U.S.

 **Email to a friend**

 **Printer friendly**

Font:

Mary Scissons, a Saskatoon educational psychologist, said she would hold back her daughter, Brigid, if she could do it all over again.

"She's very bright and I thought she had to be challenged intellectually," says Scissons, who put her late -October child into kindergarten

when she was four.

"I think I kind of got caught in the parental treadmill. To do it all over again, I would just slow down a little bit more."

Brigid, who is now almost 16 and is starting Grade 11 this fall, remains one of the brighter kids in her class, but lacks the more sophisticated social and emotional skills of her older peers, Scissons said.

Research on the long-term effects of redshirting is muddy.

A paper published last November in the Quarterly Journal of Economics suggested being the youngest in the class can haunt a child throughout his or her schooling.

Kelly Bedard and Elizabeth Dhuey, economics professors at University of California, who studied more than 200,000 children in 19 countries, concluded that the youngest students scored substantially lower than the oldest students at both the fourth-grade and eighth-grade levels.

They also found that in British Columbia, that the relatively youngest kids were 10 per cent less likely to be in the pre-university stream in their final year of high school.

"Relative age may play a role in determining educational success throughout the educational process, even into college," the study concluded.

Education experts, however, say that deciding whether to hold a child back must be made on an individual basis, rather than making across-the-board

### Digital Products

- See today's Digital Edition
- Subscribe to email newsletter
- Calgary RushHour

### Inside the Calgary Herald

- News
- The Editorial Page
- Letters
- City & Region
- Calgary Business
- SportsMonday
- Entertainment
- Real Life
- Columnists

- 30 days Archive
- Headlines Scan
- Newspaper Ads
- Special Sections

### Weekly Sections

- Driving
- Swerve
- Books & The Arts
- Life at Home
- New Homes
- New Condos
- Neighbours
- Travel
- Working
- Green Guide

### Sports

- Flames
- Stampeders
- Roughnecks
- Hitmen
- Vipers

### Features

- Acts of Kindness

### Today's Herald



#### Paramedic injured

A 30-year-old Calgary paramedic is in hospital with serious head injuries after ...

[ more ]

- O.J. held without bail in Vegas robbery
- Hells Angel's heirs feud over estate
- Mulroney urges climate change action

### More News Stories

Newspapers In Education

**Classifieds**

**Marketplace**

- Find a job at working.com
- Find a car at driving.ca
- Find real estate at Homes
- Find great stuff at shopping
- Find a contractor

**Announcements**

- Announcements at Celebrating.com
- Obituaries at Remembering

**General Classifieds**

- Local classifieds
- Selling? Place an ad
- Meet a match at Connecting

**Subscriber Exclusives**

Headlines marked with a  are exclusive to subscribers.

**More**



**Enter our contests**

**Your Herald**

- Subscriber Services
- Subscribe
- Renew subscription
- Update credit card information
- Help
- Send us a news tip
- Advertising
- About us
- Contact us
- Privacy Statement

**Ads by Google**

assumptions based on birthdate.

Thiessen says she will make a decision about her unborn baby by gauging whether the child appears ready for school when the time comes in four or five years.

And how does one define school readiness?

"It's an eagerness to learn," she said.

© The Calgary Herald 2007

**Letters**

- To the editor
- About your event

Inside the **canada.com Network.**

**Newspapers:**

National Post Victoria Times Colonist The Province (Vancouver) Vancouver Sun Edmonton Journal Calgary Herald Regina Leader-Post Saskatoon StarPhoenix Windsor Star Ottawa Citizen The Gazette (Montreal) DOSE Vancouver Island Newspapers VANNET Newspapers

**Television:**

Global E! TVTropolis CoolTV DejaView Fox Sports World Canada LONESTAR Men TV MysteryTV X-TREME Sports

**Marketplace:**

working.com driving.ca connecting celebrating remembering househunting shop

**CanWest Countries:**