
**Abstract.** The authors investigated the effects of retention in grades 1 to 5 on students' reading and math achievement, teacher-rated engagement, and student-reported school belonging in middle school. From a multiethnic sample (N = 784) of children who scored below the median on a test of literacy in grade 1, an average of 75 students subsequently retained in grades 1 to 5 were matched with an average of 299 continuously promoted students on the basis of propensity to be retained in the elementary grades. A total of 20 imputed datasets were analyzed, all of which showed good balance across the 67 baseline covariates used to calculate propensity scores. The hypothesis that retained students, who are “old for grade” when they make the transition to middle school, would have a more difficult transition to middle school than promoted peers was tested with 3-level, piecewise growth modeling. Piece 1 included assessments prior to the transition to middle school, and piece 2 included assessments after the transition. Retained and continuously promoted students did not differ on any of the outcome measures during the year prior to transition, nor did they differ in their post-transition trajectories. Discrepancies between these results and results of prior research are discussed in terms of demographic and generational differences as well as differences in methodological rigor.