

IAB-Colloquium

zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

Date of birth and selective schooling

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The 1944 Education Act in England and Wales introduced free universal state secondary education together with an exam for all children aged 11 or 12 (the 11+ exam) used to determine who would attend selective grammar school or nonselective secondary modern school. The Act has featured prominently in the international education literature. Prior to 1944, grammar school entry involved fee paying and non-fee paying pupils with a significant proportion of places allocated non-competitively. Using these differences as a natural experiment, we compare the effects of date of birth on entry into selective schools before and after the Act using a difference-in-difference approach.

(Fortsetzung auf Seite 2)

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14:00 Uhr

Sitzungssaal 126a

IAB-Colloquium zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

In the post-1944 era, local education authorities standardised 11+ marks for age differences. We find that, while the prospects of selective school entry among children whose birthdays fell in the middle of the school year improved compared to pre-1944, the youngest children remained significantly disadvantaged. We argue that a strong influence in this latter case was the practice of streaming (or tracking) junior school children at age 7 into classes delineated by average ability.