

Each spring when we hold registration, there are several questions about when a child should be enrolled in school. While parents are allowed to enroll their children into 4K if they turn four before September 1<sup>st</sup>, is that really the best for the child? Should children be “held back” if they have a late spring or summer birthday? With over 20 years of watching children socialize and learn in school, my answer is a definite yes!

The only understandable reason I’ve heard for sending children to 4K as soon as possible is that it saves the family on daycare expenses. I get this, but then have the child repeat 4K, or if not having school on Fridays is an issue with 4K, have them attend Kindergarten for two years. The amount of social, physical and academic learning potential of a child increases dramatically with another year of development.

Now don’t interpret this to mean I don’t believe early education is important; I absolutely do and encourage all families to read with their children and expose them to as many different learning scenarios as possible. However, the extra year of maturity in school is easily recognized by our teachers. Children build more confidence and are more developmentally able to learn easier as they get older and this carries through their educational career.

If you don’t think the advantages in the primary years are important, consider middle school and high school. When a child reaches puberty compared to classmates, when they get their driver’s license, how much naturally, physically stronger they will be in athletics just because they are a year older. Consider keeping kids as kids an additional year and feel good about letting them mature a little more before they are forced to grow up.