

20 Important Points about Educational Acceleration

1. Acceleration is the most effective academic intervention for gifted children.
2. For bright students, acceleration results in both long-term and short-term beneficial effects, academically, psychologically, and socially.
3. Acceleration is a very low-cost intervention for addressing the needs of gifted students.
4. Gifted children tend to be socially and emotionally more mature than their age-mates; therefore, for many bright students, acceleration provides a better personal maturity match.
5. When bright students are presented with curriculum developed for age-peers, they can become frustrated and disengaged from learning. Advanced curriculum in core subject matter is essential to challenge them.
6. Testing, especially above-level testing (using tests developed for older students), is highly effective in identifying students who would benefit from acceleration.
7. The K-12 Common Core State Standards, which correspond to math and reading, and the Next Generation Science Standards, which focus on K-12 science, raise academic expectations for most students; however, for highly capable students, these standards do not eliminate the need for accelerative options.
8. The twenty types of acceleration available to bright students fall into two broad categories: grade-based acceleration, which shortens the number of years a student spends in the K-12 system, and subject-based acceleration, which allows for advanced content earlier than customary.
9. Entering school early is an excellent option for some gifted students, both academically and socially.
10. Early entrance to college is effective, both academically and socially, especially when students are part of a cohort of early entrants. This option results in both short-term and long-term academic success, leading to long-term occupational and personal satisfaction.
11. Advanced Placement (AP) is the most available large-scale option for bright students who want to take college-level courses in high school.
12. State residential STEM schools use accelerated approaches that include early admission, AP, International Baccalaureate (IB), and various forms of personalized learning.
13. High-ability students who are economically vulnerable achieve considerably less without support for their abilities than economically secure students.
14. Educators need to ensure that options for acceleration are available for students at all stages of the learning process.
15. Policy on acceleration at state and local levels can facilitate the effective use of the process and promote change. To encourage a major change in America's perceptions of educational acceleration, we need to use legislation, the courts, administrative rules, and professional initiatives.
16. Effective implementation of accelerative options for gifted students with disabilities is necessary for their academic advancement and social and emotional well-being.
17. It is important for educators, parents, and students to be fully involved in the decision-making process about an individual student's acceleration. The *Iowa Acceleration Scale* is an effective instrument for helping schools through the process.
18. The few problems that have been experienced with acceleration have stemmed from inadequate planning and insufficient preparation on the part of educators or parents.
19. Educational equity does not mean educational sameness; rather, equity respects individual differences in readiness to learn and recognizes the value of each student.
20. The key questions for educators are: what type(s) of acceleration does the gifted learner need and when is it optimal to implement the intervention?

For more information on the research that informs these points, see Volume 2 of *A Nation Empowered* (www.nationempowered.org), or Volumes I and II of *A Nation Deceived* (www.nationdeceived.org).