

Exhibit 2: Grade Assessed and Average Age of the Students Assessed in PIRLS 2016

Exhibit 2 provides the years of schooling and the average age of the students assessed for each participant. The PIRLS target population is the grade that represents four years of schooling, counting from the first year of ISCED Level 1.¹ Level 1 corresponds to primary education or the first stage of basic education, with the first year of Level 1 marking “systematic apprenticeship of reading, writing and mathematics.” However, IEA has a policy that children should be at least 9 years old before being asked to participate in a paper-and-pencil assessment such as PIRLS. Thus, as a policy, PIRLS also tries to ensure that, at the time of testing, students do not fall below the minimum average age of 9.5 years old. For example, England, Malta, and New Zealand assessed students in their fifth year of school to meet this requirement. To better interpret the average ages of students, Exhibit 2 also includes information about the countries’ policies regarding age of entry into primary school and how that tends to work in practice. If students start school at a comparatively older age, they will be comparatively older when they are assessed by PIRLS.

¹ ISCED stands for the International Standard Classification of Education developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2012). *International standard classification of education: ISCED 2011*. Montreal, Canada.

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National Research Coordinators' Reports, except average ages are from PIRLS 2016 data

Country	Country's Name for Fourth Year of Formal Schooling*	Average Age at Time of Testing	Information About Policy on Students' Age of Entry to Primary School	Information About Students' Age of Entry to Primary School in Practice
Australia	Year 4	10.0	Varies by state, but generally children must begin school by age 6.	Most children begin school when they are 4.5-5 years old, but some wait until the compulsory age, either on advice from preschool staff or on the judgment of parents, usually because of maturity. It is not usual for children to skip the Foundation year and go straight to Year 1, although this is legally possible.
Austria	Grade 4	10.3	Children must begin school in the September following their 6th birthday.	Parents can request earlier admission to school for mature children who will turn 6 by March 1 of the following calendar year.
Azerbaijan	Grade 4	10.1	Children must be 6 years old by September 15 to begin school the following September. Students with birthdays between September 16 and December 31 can qualify to begin school the following September by taking an examination.	Children typically begin primary school at age 7 because their parents feel they will benefit from being more mature.
Bahrain	Grade 4	9.9	Children begin school in the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Follows policy
Belgium (Flemish)	Grade 4	10.1	Children begin school in September of the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Parents can decide to enroll children at the age of 5, with approval of the class council, or at age 7.
Belgium (French)	Grade 4	10.0	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Parents can extend preschool by one year or enroll students in primary school one year early after consulting with the Centre for Psychological, Medical, and Social Services and the head of the school.
Bulgaria	Grade 4	10.8	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 7th birthday.	Children may begin school at the age of 6 at the discretion of parents or guardians.
Canada	Grade 4	9.9	Varies by province, but most children begin school between ages 5 and 7.	Varies by province, but some parental discretion is typically allowed. Some parents opt to enroll children one year later or earlier and others choose to homeschool their children.
Chile	Grade 4	10.1	Children must be 6 years old by March 31 of the year they begin school.	Principals are allowed some discretion in admitting children who turn 6 after March 31 but before June 30.
Chinese Taipei	Grade 4	10.1	Children must be 6 years old in order to begin school in September.	Parents can apply for early enrollment to elementary schools. Legal representatives can apply to delay enrollment to elementary schools for children with disabilities.
Czech Republic	Grade 4	10.3	Children must be 6 years old to begin school in September.	On one hand, parents may request that children born after September 1 may be allowed to enroll at age 5 with pedagogical and psychological certification. On the other hand, about 22% of students every year receive permission to postpone enrollment for one year.
Denmark	Grade 4	10.8	Children begin preprimary education in August during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Parents may request early enrollment for children whose 5th birthdays are before October 1. Parents may also request a one-year postponement of enrollment. Early enrollment decisions are typically made based on recommendations from the kindergarten or a qualification test.
Egypt	Grade 4	10.0	Children must be 6 years old by the end of September in order to begin school in October.	Children typically begin primary school at age 7 because their parents feel they will benefit from being more mature.
England	Year 5	10.3	Local authorities must provide a place from September for all children turning 5 in that year. Children are required to start primary school (reception class) in the September following their 4th birthday.	Subject to parental discretion, a child can start school later in the school year or in September after the child's 5th birthday if the child was born in the summer (April 1 to August 31) and if parents think their child is not ready yet to start in the September after the child's 4th birthday.
Finland	Grade 4	10.8	Children begin school in August during the calendar year of their 7th birthday.	It is possible for parents to enroll children one year earlier or one year later than the official policy due to psychological or medical reasons.

SOURCE: IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study – PIRLS 2016

* The PIRLS target population is the grade that represents four years of schooling counting from the first year of ISCED Level 1. However, IEA has a policy that students do not fall under the minimum average age of 9.5 years old at the time of testing, so England, Malta, and New Zealand assessed students in their fifth year of formal schooling.

A dash (-) indicates comparable data not available.

Exhibit 2: Grade Assessed and Average Age of the Students Assessed in PIRLS 2016 (Continued)

Country	Country's Name for Fourth Year of Formal Schooling*	Average Age at Time of Testing	Information About Policy on Students' Age of Entry to Primary School	Information About Students' Age of Entry to Primary School in Practice
France	Grade 4	9.8	Children must begin school in the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	In rare cases, parents can request early or delayed enrollment.
Georgia	Grade 4	9.7	Children must be 6 years old by the beginning of the academic year in order to begin school.	Official policy does not allow for early admission. However, there are no regulations on late admission.
Germany	Grade 4	10.3	Varies by state, but generally children must have reached their 6th birthday before a statutory qualifying date (between June 30 and September 30) in order to begin school on August 1.	Varies by state, but generally, parents may apply to the local primary school for deferred enrollment for children with demonstrated physical or mental disabilities.
Hong Kong SAR	Primary 4	9.9	Children must reach the age of 5.75 years before September 1 in order to begin school that year.	For parents who have a particular school in mind, they can apply for a discretionary place.
Hungary	Grade 4	10.6	Children must be 6 years old by August 31 in order to begin school that year.	Children may remain in preschool for an additional year. Parents may request early entry for mature students. These decisions are made on the basis of a recommendation from a committee of experts.
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	Grade 4	10.2	Children must be 6 years old by September 21 (the beginning of the school year) in order to begin school.	Some private schools require children to be 7 years old before beginning primary school.
Ireland	Fourth Class	10.5	Children must begin school between the ages of 4 and 6.	Although not obliged to attend school until the age of 6, most children begin preprimary school in the September following their 4th birthday.
Israel	Grade 4	10.0	Children begin school in the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Parents may apply for delayed enrollment. The request is discussed by the kindergarten teacher, an educational psychologist, and the parents, and the parents have the final say in enrollment decisions.
Italy	Grade 4	9.7	Children begin primary school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Children begin primary school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday. Parents have discretion over early enrollment.
Kazakhstan	Grade 4	10.3	Children begin school when they are 6 or 7 years old.	Most children begin school at age 7.
Kuwait	Primary Grade 4	9.6	Children must be 6 years old by March 31 in order to begin school that year.	Follows policy
Latvia	Grade 4	10.9	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 7th birthday.	Parents can request early or delayed enrollment depending on the state of health and psychological preparedness of the child.
Lithuania	Grade 4	10.8	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 7th birthday.	Parents can request enrollment for children at the age of 6. Children's mental and physical maturity is determined by the municipal pedagogical psychological services. Parents may also request delayed enrollment.
Macao SAR	Primary 4	10.0	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Follows policy
Malta	Year 5	9.7	Children begin primary school during the calendar year of their 5th birthday.	Follows policy
Morocco	Grade 4	10.2	Children begin primary school at age 6. In remote areas, the age of entry may be 5.5 years.	Follows policy
Netherlands	Grade 6	10.1	Children must begin kindergarten on the first school day of the month after their 5th birthday.	Most children begin kindergarten when they turn 4. Most children are 6 years old when they enter primary education (ISCED 1).
New Zealand	Year 5	10.1	Children must attend primary school from their 6th birthday, but they have the right to be enrolled in school from age 5.	In general, children begin school on or soon after their 5th birthday.
Northern Ireland	Year 6	10.4	Children who reach the age of 4 between September 1 and July 1 must begin compulsory education the following September.	Follows policy

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Country	Country's Name for Fourth Year of Formal Schooling*	Average Age at Time of Testing	Information About Policy on Students' Age of Entry to Primary School	Information About Students' Age of Entry to Primary School in Practice
Norway (5)	Grade 5	10.8	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	In rare cases, parents can request earlier (if born before April 1) or delayed enrollment. The decisions are made on the basis of recommendations from kindergarten and the municipal pedagogical psychological services.
Oman	Grade 4	9.7	Children must be at least 5.75 at the beginning of September to join Grade 1 in public schools, or 5.25 years to join Grade 1 in private schools.	To enroll in grade 1, students must be between 5.75 and 6.75 years old. Otherwise, students are registered in above grades according to age with a special treatment plan by the school.
Poland	Primary 4	10.7	--	--
Portugal	Grade 4	9.8	Children must be 6 years old by the beginning of the school year (mid-September) to begin school that calendar year.	Parents and guardians can request conditional enrollment for children who will turn 6 between mid-September and the end of the calendar year.
Qatar	Grade 5 for English curriculum schools; Grade 4 for other schools	10.0	Children must be 6 years old by the end of June in order to begin school the following September.	Although the official policy states that all students can enroll in school when they are 6 years old, some students enroll at age 7 because their parents believe they will benefit from being more mature.
Russian Federation	Grade 4	10.8	Children must be between the ages of 6.5 and 8 by the end of August to begin school.	Parents may request early enrollment with the consent of the school principal for children under 6.5 years of age. Parents have the right to send their children to school at age 7 or older if they want the child to be more mature or for health reasons.
Saudi Arabia	Grade 4	9.9	Children must be 6 years old by the end of August to begin school the following September.	Often, children begin school when they are 5.75 years old.
Singapore	Grade 4	10.4	According to the Compulsory Education Act, children must begin school in the calendar year of their 7th birthday.	Parents may seek a deferral of registration for medical reasons or if the child is homeschooled.
Slovak Republic	Grade 4	10.4	Children must be 6 years old by August 31 in order to begin school in September, unless granted a postponement.	Enrollment may be delayed or advanced based on psychological tests and professional recommendations.
Slovenia	Grade 4	9.9	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Enrollment may be delayed by no more than one year upon parents' or doctors' recommendations. The final decision is made by the head teacher at the recommendation of a committee (including counselors, school physicians, and teachers).
South Africa	Grade 4	10.6	Children must be 6 years old by June 30 to begin school that calendar year. Compulsory schooling begins at age 7.	Children are encouraged to begin at age 7 because schools and parents feel that they will benefit from being more mature.
Spain	Grade 4	9.9	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Follows policy
Sweden	Grade 4	10.7	Children begin school in August in the calendar year of their 7th birthday. Most students begin the voluntary preschool class during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Under special circumstances, the municipality may allow a child to delay enrollment for one year. Parents can also request enrollment during the year of a child's 6th birthday.
Trinidad and Tobago	Standard 3	10.2	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 5th birthday.	Children may begin school at age 4 if they are to turn 5 within the first term (September to December) of that year.
United Arab Emirates	Grade 4	9.8	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Follows policy
United States	Grade 4	10.1	Each state requires parents to send their children to a school between 5 and 8 years old, but the ages vary by state.	Children typically begin kindergarten at age 5.

SOURCE: IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study – PIRLS 2016

Norway chose to assess the fifth grade to obtain better comparisons with Sweden and Finland but also collected benchmark data at the fourth grade to maintain previous trends.

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Benchmarking Participants				
Buenos Aires, Argentina	Grade 4	10.0	Children must be 6 years old before June 30 in order to begin school that calendar year.	Follows policy
Ontario, Canada	Grade 4	9.8	Students must begin school in September if they will turn 6 on or before September 1. However, children have the right to attend school in September if they will turn 6 any time up until December 31 of that year.	Parents may enroll their children prior to age 6, but this is not mandatory. Two years of kindergarten (ages 4 and 5) are not mandatory. In addition, some parents homeschool their children.
Quebec, Canada	Grade 4	10.1	Children must reach the age of 6 before October 1 of the current school year.	Follows policy
Denmark (3)	Grade 3	9.8	Children begin preprimary education in August during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Parents may request early enrollment for children whose 5th birthdays are before October 1. Parents may also request a one-year postponement of enrollment. Early enrollment decisions are typically made based on recommendations from the kindergarten or a qualification test.
Norway (4)	Grade 4	9.8	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	In rare cases, parents can request earlier (if born before April 1) or delayed enrollment. The decisions are made on the basis of recommendations from kindergarten and the municipal pedagogical psychological services.
Moscow City, Russian Fed.	Grade 4	10.8	Children must be at least 6.5 years old but no older than 8 years old by September 1 in order to begin school that September if they have no medical contraindications.	Children typically begin primary school at age 7. Parents and principals have the right to advance or delay enrollment.
Eng/Afr/Zulu - RSA (5)	Grade 5	11.6	Children must be 6 years old by June 30 to begin school that calendar year. Compulsory schooling begins at age 7.	Children are encouraged to begin at age 7 because schools and parents feel that they will benefit from being more mature.
Andalusia, Spain	Grade 4	9.8	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Follows policy
Madrid, Spain	Grade 4	9.9	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Follows policy
Abu Dhabi, UAE	Grade 4	9.7	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Most parents prefer children start school as early as allowed.
Dubai, UAE	Grade 4; Year 5 for schools following UK curriculum	9.9	Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday.	Follows policy

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