

Whole grade acceleration success stories

**Compiled by Davidson Young Scholar Parents
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This article contains stories of successful grade skips, written from the parents' perspective. The various accounts cover skips in an assortment of grades in public schools, private schools and homeschooling.

Many schools avoid whole grade acceleration (also known as 'grade skipping' or 'double-promotion') because of anecdotal evidence of social difficulties. However, acceleration has long-term benefits, both academically and socially. Within these pages are stories of successful grade skips, written from the parents' perspective. The various accounts cover skips in an assortment of grades in public schools, private schools and homeschooling. Some stories are recent and some are reflections upon experiences several years ago. Our hope is that educators reading these stories will keep an open mind to the possibility of allowing their students to move ahead.

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[Andrew Skips 6th Grade Despite Mild ADHD](#)

Andrew was the first of our 3 children, and although he was clearly "precocious," having little experience with other children, we really had no idea how far out of the norm he was. In addition, Andrew has some mild ADHD, fine motor and visual processing challenges, and perhaps some mild learning disorders, so although we and his teachers recognized him as "bright," we also saw him struggling in some areas in school: timed math facts (being very noticeable) and social skills. With the intervention of the gifted resource specialist in his public elementary school, he was one of three students in his school recommended for "double accelerated" math in 4th grade (this meant doing the 6th grade curriculum with a group of accelerated 5th graders), and we were asked for permission for the school psychologist to do individual ability testing on him.

The following year, we moved Andrew to a private school for gifted children, where he blossomed socially in a combined 5th-6th classroom, while joining 7th and 8th graders for Algebra. At this new school, his best friends were the 6th graders, and academically he was the top of the class. In March we approached the principal to ask whether it might make sense for Andrew to move to 7th grade the following year with his friends. The school agreed that both socially and academically, that was the best fit for him. The grade acceleration was seamless.

After Andrew's 7th grade year, we moved him to a more traditional private K-12 college prep school for 8th grade. Andrew remained there through 12th grade, although he had largely exhausted the school's curriculum by the end of 11th grade, and spent the first semester of his senior year in a study abroad program in Japan. When he returned for his final semester, his schedule consisted of history and English

electives, independent study in physics, math, and Spanish, and two philosophy courses at the local university. Andrew graduated in the top 10% of his class, scored 2400 on his SAT the only time he took it in high school, was named a Presidential Scholar, and now attends MIT as a double-major in math and physics.

Zack Skips 3rd Despite Lagging Motor Skills

I have a summer-born child, Zack, who was already young for his grade, but years ahead in every area other than handwriting/motor skills. In kindergarten, 1st and 2nd, the school did not want to accelerate him due to these issues. They felt that he was too immature and that "you can't have a 2nd grader writing like a kindergartner." We finally did the IOWA Acceleration Scale on our own and brought it to a meeting with the school, along with a write up explaining why we felt the acceleration should be an option. The school then agreed to do a six-week trial at the start of the year with Zack in 4th grade instead of 3rd. We felt that this trial would alleviate anxiety for both our child and the school. Fourth grade was fun for him; he was sort of a celebrity in the school and some of the issue of his being picked on went away, but 5th grade was tough as they did not place him with any of the few good friends he had made in 4th, and the novelty had worn off for many of the kids who did not like a younger guy being at the head of the class (and sometimes annoyingly having to be right about everything).

Zack will be 11 in June and is entering 7th grade next year. This past year in middle school has gone well as he's been lucky enough to be placed in a very academically oriented charter school where there are several other kids who have been accelerated and being brainy is the norm - and only 4 kids are there from his old school so he's been able to reinvent himself a bit. He doesn't advertise his age to people because he doesn't want to be condescended to as he was in 5th grade. I can't imagine him in a lower grade - he is taking advanced courses with 8th graders for English and Math and seems to get along with kids well, although he hasn't really bonded with many.

The biggest (unexpected) drawback has been that Zack often doesn't want to do things that are appropriate for his age, and even appropriate for older kids, because he thinks that older kids wouldn't do them and he doesn't "get" that even kids in his grade or older like to do these things. For example in 5th grade we encouraged him to ask a school friend to a local farm festival and he said that 5th graders don't do that, although a friend of his later told us he goes there all the time. And he's embarrassed to be driven to school because kids will see he's in the back seat, though we know plenty of older kids who still ride in the back. We've also had to tell him that older kids and adults DO still wear bike helmets because he felt he was old enough not to. So we're working on his feeling he can still be his age in some ways and realizing what's appropriate for his age and grade level. Overall I think we've made a good decision.

Liam Skips Part of K and later 6th to Fit In at Private School

Liam is a middle child. Liam started kindergarten at a small private school for gifted children, because that is where his older brother was attending. We knew Liam was very bright; he had taught himself to read without our being aware of it sometime in pre-school. We didn't know he could read until we found him giggling to himself one day, immersed in a book of humorous poems for children, and he read the poem he thought was so funny out loud to us. We thought the "gifted" school would be a good fit for him, but he was miserable in kindergarten. Because he was so far ahead of the class in reading, the school decided to have him join the 1st grade class for reading and also for social studies. It quickly became clear that he was happier in the 1st grade classroom, so by mid-year, he was moved there full time. The following year, he was in a combined 2nd-3rd grade class at the same school, with a teacher who was not as good a match for him, and with lots of expectations for extended written work. With fine motor skill deficits and having missed much of the instruction in mechanics of writing due to his grade skip, this year proved disastrous for Liam.

At the end of the school year, we switched schools to a more traditional K-12 private school, where he was placed with a wonderful teacher for 3rd grade, who remained his teacher for 4th grade. During this time, Liam was identified as profoundly gifted, but also diagnosed with anxiety and depression, as well as ADHD. Classroom work alternated between brilliant and not done at all. Since the teacher could see that Liam's ability was far ahead of the curriculum, he provided significantly differentiated work for Liam during those two years. A supportive teacher and principal, as well as work with a therapist, gradually undid the damage of his 2nd grade year, and by 5th grade Liam was doing well in school academically, but continued to struggle socially. He was far enough ahead in math that in 5th grade he worked through the 7th grade math curriculum independently. He also was permitted to substitute an online Language Arts curriculum (through Stanford's Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY) - <http://epgy.stanford.edu/>) for part of the 5th

grade language arts at the school.

By the middle of the year, the principal was suggesting that Liam would need more than just subject acceleration in math to 8th grade algebra the following year, but in fact might need acceleration in other subjects as well. Since middle school began in 6th grade, the middle school principal and 6th and 7th grade teaching teams, as well as the school psychologist, joined in discussions of appropriate placement. Since Liam had not made many social connections in his current grade, it was deemed that his social situation was unlikely to be worse if he skipped a grade, and it was clear that the academic fit would only improve. Ultimately it was decided that the best fit for Liam would be a full grade acceleration to 7th grade after the completion of 5th grade, together with additional subject acceleration to 8th grade algebra. This was also the simplest way for the school to address Liam's significantly advanced academic needs. It took a year for Liam to adjust fully, but by 8th grade Liam had a core group of about half a dozen good friends in his grade, even though he was two years younger than most of them. In addition, he was successfully negotiating travel to the high school wing of the building to continue his subject acceleration in math.

Liam is now completing his 11th grade year. Nobody can imagine his fitting in any grade other than the one he is in. The group of friends he found in 8th grade has expanded to consist of about 10 kids who enjoy each other and socialize regularly, and the age difference seems to be completely irrelevant. Liam's school performance continues to be somewhat inconsistent, the hallmark of his ADHD, but all of his teachers agree that he would almost certainly be doing worse if he were in a lower grade, where the material would be even less challenging or engaging for him. Written output remains difficult at times, but all of his teachers recognize his ability. He is in the top 25% of his class but not the top 10%. He recently scored 2350 on the SAT, the first and only time he will take it in high school, and other standardized test scores also indicate that he remains among the top of his grade peers, and far above most age peers, in ability and achievement. He has completed AP Bio, AP Chemistry, AP Calculus BC, AP English Literature, and AP Spanish Language, all before or shortly after turning 15. He will be named a National Merit Semifinalist. He has exhausted the school's math curriculum and will either pursue online mathematics or take math at the local university next year, or possibly both. At the moment we are not certain whether he will go directly to college after completing his 12th grade year, or whether he will pursue a gap year of some sort. This is largely due to concern over whether the executive function deficits stemming from his ADHD have been sufficiently addressed to allow for success in college, and not due to his age.

Madison Skips 3rd Grade and Four Years of Math in Private Gifted School

Madison just turned 10 last month. She is currently finishing 5th grade at private school for the highly gifted.

Madison attended neither Pre-K nor K. She had no interest and I had no need to send her. She spent her childhood at home either with grandma or coming with me to work. She started 1st grade as an older kid because she is an April birthday (was 6 years and 5 months when she started school). She taught herself to read at a very early age and was tested at 4th grade level in reading prior to starting school. She was not exposed to writing, so she learned to do that in 1st grade.

In the second week of school she was accelerated to 2nd grade math. When she moved to 2nd grade she was once again accelerated in math to 3rd grade and a few weeks into the year she received further acceleration to 4th grade math.

Madison was then given a full grade skip from 2nd grade to 4th grade with 5th grade math. Then in 5th grade she was given an additional acceleration in math to 7th grade math.

Madison was just granted another year of math acceleration and will start next year as a 6th grader with 9th grade math. Depending on scheduling, she will be either be taking Algebra II or Geometry. She will also be an official, able to compete, member of the Mathcounts team.

So far Madison has skipped 1st, 3rd, 6th, and now 8th grade math. Even with all these skips, math has usually been painfully easy. Lower school math was especially bad because of all the repetition she had to endure. She was in middle school math this year with a wonderful math teacher that "gets" her and has tried to accommodate her need for faster moving curriculum.

So far I haven't seen any cons with either Madison's full grade skip or the multiple skips in math. She is tall

for her age so she blends right in with her new homeroom class. She has been skipped in math from the beginning, so I think other parents have lost track of where she is versus where she should be by now.

Aidan Skips 1st and Later 6th Regardless of Early Alleged "Immaturity"

Aidan is the third and youngest child in our family, and both of his older brothers had been identified as profoundly gifted while Aidan was still in pre-school. Aidan attends a private school that begins at pre-school and continues through 12th grade. In the summer before kindergarten, we decided to have a psycho-educational assessment done on Aidan, in hopes of avoiding some of the pitfalls we had run into with his older siblings. Aidan was assessed as being every bit as bright as his two brothers. At the start of kindergarten, Aidan was reading beginner chapter books and knew his basic addition and subtraction facts. There was one other child in his kindergarten class who also had some reading skills at the start of the year. Knowing that the school's 1st grade curriculum focused heavily on phonics and phonemic awareness, and basic addition facts, we approached the school with the idea of considering a move to 2nd grade after the completion of kindergarten. We did not want to skip kindergarten and enter 1st, since we felt Aidan would be happier with the flexibility and play time built into kindergarten, given that he had already mastered the 1st grade curriculum anyway.

Aidan was frustrated during much of his kindergarten year, though he did better when given challenging reading, writing, and logic assignments. The school attributed his frustrated behavior to immaturity and perhaps poor parenting, and the principal was reluctant to consider a grade skip. We approached our local public school to see what options might be available there, and they indicated that they would consider 2nd grade, or possibly a combined 2nd/3rd grade placement for Aidan. We wanted to keep Aidan at the school he was already attending, but we were unwilling to accept a 1st grade placement for him after kindergarten, so we let the school know that if they were not willing to place him in 2nd grade, we would either move him to the public school or homeschool him. Reluctantly, with grave concerns about social issues, the school agreed to place him in 2nd grade. By this time (end of kindergarten), Aidan was tearing through the Harry Potter books, had mastered multi-digit addition and subtraction with regrouping, and knew most of his multiplication tables. He knew how to tell time, and understood coins, currency, and making change.

In 2nd grade, Aidan developed some wonderful friendships and really blossomed socially. He was allowed to work independently on a differentiated curriculum in math and reading. During the following two years, Aidan continued to have terrific teachers who differentiated extensively for him, and the school made an effort to include a few other very bright children with whom Aidan worked well in the same classroom as he was in. However, by the middle of 4th grade, Aidan was again feeling frustrated. As he articulately described it to the principal, he had a choice of having fun working with the other students in the class but learning nothing he didn't already know, or working independently on material at his level, but feeling isolated from the other kids. "I want to be able to learn *with* other people."

This plea began the discussion of an additional grade skip. The desire to do at least some learning with others was addressed immediately by allowing Aidan to join the 5th grade math class instead of working independently in 4th grade. The school recognized the math as still below his level, but this move at least allowed for some group learning. Meanwhile, a plan was put into place for Aidan to skip 6th grade in another year and a half. This was deemed best, because middle school started in 6th grade. By skipping 6th, Aidan would stay with his friends in the elementary school building for one more year, while the groundwork for the skip was laid, and then move to middle school at the same time as all of his friends. Since Aidan is very social and had many good friends in his class, this alleviated some of the social concerns. Aidan began to work on some of the 6th grade social studies units independently during the second half of 4th grade. In 5th grade, Aidan covered the 7th grade math curriculum, and began joining the 7th grade math class in the middle school partway through the year. He completed an on-line expository writing curriculum through the Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins (CTY - <http://www.cty.jhu.edu/>) in addition to 5th grade language arts, and the elementary school science teacher imported much of the 6th grade material, compacting the 5th and 6th grade science curriculum for him.

The following year, at age 10, Aidan moved to 7th grade full time, except for math, where he joined the 8th grade honors algebra class. This year Aidan is in 8th grade, but he goes to the high school for honors 9th grade geometry. Aidan has a couple of good friends in 8th grade, but remains very close friends with several kids from his previous grade as well. Next year may be more difficult socially as half of his "group" will still be in middle school while he transitions to full-time high school as a 12-year-old, but his teachers are not concerned. He already is well known and liked at the high school, both through taking geometry and because he was a member of the ensemble for this year's musical, when they needed some extra male cast

members.

Academically, Aidan is at or near the top of his class across all subjects, and teachers occasionally question whether he is sufficiently challenged even after two grade skips. He scored 1400 (M + CR) on the SAT through talent search at age 11, exceeding his high school's average for graduating seniors by over 100 points. Physically, Aidan is on the small side. He has enjoyed competing in cross country in middle school, despite being back-of-the-pack in most races, and plans to continue to participate in cross country in high school. We have, however, decided that for 9th grade Aidan will practice with the team but not compete. The school has agreed that he will be allowed to continue to participate in FIRST Lego Robotics next year, if he wishes, although until now that has been a strictly middle school activity. His best friends in the grade behind him are on the team, and based on his age Aidan would remain eligible for 3 more years.

We feel that the grade accelerations for Aidan have worked out very well, in large part because there has been a great deal of thought given by the school on how to make it successful, and everybody has worked to ensure that the academic placement is as appropriate as possible, while endeavoring not to sacrifice Aidan's social needs at the same time. Aidan feels that academically he is appropriately placed, where he has to work and study to stay at or near the top of the class, but where it is not overwhelming for him to be able to do so. He feels he is learning new things and is appropriately challenged, but he still has plenty of time to participate in extra-curriculars (Lego robotics, flute lessons and band, school drama performances, cross country, ski club in winter, etc.). He has been able to maintain friendships across both his current and his previous grades, but has never really had any close friendships with kids in the class he should have been in by age, two grades below his current placement. He gets along well with the students in his math class (3-4 years older) but does not consider any of them friends.

Popular Grace Skips K and 3rd and in Magnet Middle School

Grace is now 11 years old and is in 7th grade. She skipped kindergarten and 3rd grade. Since she was reading Harry Potter and also had professional testing, the school allowed her to go directly to 1st grade. But getting the 2nd grade skip was incredibly difficult and took an entire year of intense, exhausting lobbying. In the end, one top school administrator literally decided to overrule all the other naysayers and "give her a chance." Also I think the key was getting the school psychologist to look at her IQ scores as he was used to looking at those scores for special education students and he understood just how profound her scores were.

Grace is now several years ahead in math as she is taking Geometry in 7th. She is also at an International Baccalaureate (IB) magnet school with an advanced curriculum and so all the kids are taking, for example, 8th grade social studies in 7th. She is very social, athletic, self-motivated and organized although all of those qualities were not super apparent when she was younger. Despite warnings from so many teachers and other parents not to skip her, we decided to trust the advice of the psychologist who tested her. That person said that if we always meet her intellectual needs first then she will be successful. She gets straight A's and can easily handle the workload (which is intense according to the other parents). She is not the top, top performing student at her school but she is also not a perfectionist and that seems to be the criteria for getting close to perfect grades and winning competitions. Grace resists being seen as an "academic nerd." She has lots of friends and she is quite popular at school. While she does not broadcast it, frankly she is quite proud of her grade skips and her success.

If there is ever a problem I can now see that there are lots of solutions, especially since now that Grace is in middle school we know we always have the option of tinkering with her workload class-by-class instead of worrying about a whole grade placement. We are also open to a "gap year" after she graduates from high school at age 16.

No Learning Curves for Beth and Karen

We are finishing one year of successful grade skips for our two girls, Beth and Karen, ages 10 and 6. They skipped 4th and kindergarten respectively.

Academically, it is a no brainer, and since they are Davidson Young Scholars, it is no surprise to say that they need much, much more than the one year skip in terms of academics. There were no real learning curves except that my oldest, Beth, did miss a grammar concept or two and needed help organizing all of

her subjects and homework.

Socially with Karen, our success is right here playing and tearing up the house (a play date as I type this story). She made friends by October or November and hasn't looked back. She barely mentions the children who stayed in K, except for one good friend, and she has bonded with a couple of kids in the new grade. No one mentions her age at all.

Socially with Beth, it was a success except that we had just pure bad luck. There were only four other girls in the grade and they just never gelled. She did make friends with a couple of boys and saw old friends when possible. Luckily, the 4th and 5th grades do a lot together in the small school, so it worked out more or less. The lack of total success socially was not an age issue but a luck issue.

Most Kids Have Forgotten Nicole Skipped 1st Grade

Nicole was fortunate that her birthday met the kindergarten cut-off date for our state by 2 days. (She turned 5 at the end of September during her kindergarten year.) She attended a full day private kindergarten program where she was able to work at her own pace, which allowed her to complete the kindergarten and 1st grade level work. Nicole then transferred to our public elementary school for 1st grade. After the first week of 1st grade a letter came home from Nicole's teacher requesting our permission for her to be tested by the gifted coordinator.

We agreed to the testing which included Cogat and Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). Nicole spent four hours testing with the gifted coordinator who immediately informed me that she had done quite well and asked if we would consider a grade skip. We were initially very opposed to the idea due to the fact the Nicole was the youngest in her 1st grade class. We agreed to allow an IQ test with the school psychologist and the use of the IOWA Acceleration Scale to be used as a guide for placement. The school psychologist recommended keeping Nicole in 1st grade because she was "not forthcoming" with information when he tested her, and came up with a score of 119 on the WISC-IV. The 1st grade teacher and the gifted coordinator both highly recommended the grade skip. One of their reasons was that Nicole would not feel as different in 2nd grade working on the same curriculum as everyone else; as opposed to being kept in 1st grade with an entirely different curriculum than her classmates.

Nicole skipped ahead to 2nd grade November 1st. Honestly there was not much of a transition, the 2nd grade teacher was incredible and provided enrichment in Nicole's strong subjects. She made friends quickly but was also teased quite frequently about her age. Along came 3rd grade and many new challenges. Nicole would frequently come home with incomplete tests and assignments although she did maintain all A's and B's on her report cards. Her teacher felt she was struggling with ADD and had me questioning if the grade skip had been the right thing to do. I asked the gifted coordinator for her recommendation and she suggested having Nicole evaluated by a psychologist specializing in ADHD and giftedness.

Nicole completed the Woodcock Johnson achievement tests with the specialist and based on initial results he suggested repeating her WISC-IV. We were unable to get the school psychologist to provide us with a copy of his WISC-IV results and he was very reluctant to provide the subtest scores directly at the request of the specialist. We were surprised when we got the full report from specialist, which qualified Nicole for Davidson Young Scholars; the school psychologist was way off. We were quite relieved that Nicole was just bored and not overwhelmed with ADD.

Nicole had numerous grade level friends. I provided Nicole's 4th grade teachers with a copy of the specialist's assessment prior to the start of the school year. This allowed them to plan for strengths and weaknesses before the start of classes. We had a fantastic 4th grade experience. For the first time ever my PG math girl finally liked math! Our district's formal gifted program is called Visions and is for grades 5-8. It is comprised of the top 50 students (based on Cogat and ITBS). Nicole did not meet the cutoff for the ITBS and retook the achievement tests several months later. She did not qualify on the second set of tests either. The gifted coordinator had some concerns about placing Nicole in the Visions program as her scores on the IOWA's were considerably lower than the students who qualified. The gifted coordinator spent some one-on-one time with Nicole to assess her math and reading abilities. Based on her observations and the specialist's test results Nicole is being allowed to join the Visions group next year.

Most of her grade level counterparts have forgotten that Nicole did not start out in 1st grade with them. On rare occasions other kids mention her age, but overall she is very happy where she is placed. I still have the

same concerns I had when we agreed to the acceleration, all having to do with the social aspects of middle and high school. How are we going to handle school dances and dating? I feel the grade skip was the correct thing to do at that time but I would not consider any further grade skips for social reasons. If everything goes well in the Visions program she will be able to start AP classes in 9th grade. We are considering talking with her high school guidance counselor (when we reach that point) about allowing her an extra year of high school to allow her to take all the AP courses she would like and to give her an extra year before heading off to college.

Homeschooling Helps Emily to Skip a Grade

Emily, who just turned 11 at the beginning of May, is wrapping up 6th grade this week -- along with her 12- and 13-year-old classmates. She would have been on the young end of 5th grade had we not skipped her. Because of our state's rigid Sept. 1 kindergarten cutoff for public schools, kids with fall birthdays are often the better part of a year older than their younger classmates, while May babies like our daughter are quite a bit younger.

Prior to attending Emily's new (independent 6-12) school, we homeschooled for two years, which we considered to be 3rd and 5th grades, though the state considered them 3rd and 4th grades with out-of-level curriculum. Fortunately, armed with WISC results (done in 2nd grade) and a portfolio, she waltzed into her new school and is at the top of her class. Better than that, she loves school, after a "just okay" experience with her former (also independent) K-8 school. Next year, she'll be in 7th but will likely accelerate into 8th grade English and possibly history. The school may consider math acceleration as well, but they would prefer to do it the following year. So far, they have been quite flexible. They have a fair number of kids who subject-accelerate, and a handful who have been skipped at one time or another, so it's not an unusual proposition for them. Although the school is not specifically a Gifted and Talented school, it attracts, for the most part, bright, quirky kids -- and some truly exceptional ones.

In addition to being quite a bit younger than her classmates, Emily is also petite (remember 6th grade, when all the girls shot up and towered over the boys? She hasn't yet). She's about the size of your average 9-year-old. But it hasn't made a difference in making friends or dealing with the classroom setting, though the latter took a little adjustment after two years of homeschooling. The main "issues" surrounding her age are that: 1) she's still well ahead of many, though not all, of her classmates and sometimes (in the beginning, often) gets visibly impatient with them when they don't "get" material as quickly as she does -- though her teachers all say she's improving on that score, with some help from them and us, and 2) boys like her. As in, "like her like her." I suppose it's to be expected at this grade level. So far, it's been okay, as she's definitely not interested in romance, and the boys have not been aggressive about it. Fortunately, the girls in her class are a kind lot, and protective of each other.

For now, Emily is happy, she is doing well socially, and she is intellectually stimulated if not quite as challenged in one or two core subjects as we think she could be (hopefully that will change next year).

Jessica, a 9-Year-Old Homeschooler, Takes Biology at the High School

Both my spouse and I have English literature and language backgrounds, so we've always been confident about homeschooling our daughter Jessica, who's now 9, in almost everything literature-related from *Beowulf* to Virginia Woolf. However, essentially ever since she was two years old, she has wanted to be a scientist specializing either in embryology or in epidemiology -- babies or bacteria.

All was well and good until we started running our heads against the problem of what to do with her education in this field. Having done two different distance education programs with her for 9th grade English, we knew how...well, how ineffectual at least some distance education programs really were, particularly the affordable ones. We knew precisely how much we'd had to supplement the thin and unhelpful instruction in writing, particularly.

What, we wondered, would we do for science? We wouldn't necessarily be able to supplement to the degree that she might need (and want). Heck, until very recently, I didn't really even know what a "valence electron" was. Put another way, I've never needed the teacher's edition for English. I desperately needed it for science.

I knew the difference between those teachers who are able to go for the "deep knowledge" in their answers

to (often seemingly simple) student questions versus the teachers who could only skim the surface. It makes all the difference in the world. Bottom line, we wanted Jessica to get exposure to a teacher with that deep knowledge in science and also wanted her to get lab experience and high-school credit from an accredited institution.

I asked around among my science department friends at the high school where I teach and asked them honestly to tell me if I was insane with "MCIP" (My Child is Perfect) syndrome in considering having Jessica take high school biology. I asked about curriculum, groupwork, labs - heck, even the issue of reaching things with small hands. To my surprise, maybe because they'd seen her over the years at competitions and other fun school events, the science folks not only thought it was a good idea, but came up with other arguments in favor of the skip that I had not thought of myself, which I certainly appreciated.

After looking at the textbook, the interactive notebook, and essentially any other information I could glean from them or from my students (Thanks, folks!), I went to my principal, who had proctored a few exams that Jessica had had to take for the distance education English classes. To my surprise, when I brought up the idea of having Jessica remain a homeschooler but take a biology class, my principal immediately agreed. I'm fairly sure she had anticipated that sooner or later, I was going to make this request and had researched the possibility in advance before arriving at a decision.

Artsy Samantha Skips from 4th to 5th at Christmas

Before staying home with my kids, I was a physicist. My husband has a microbiology degree and is a surgeon. I used to joke that I would be cursed with an artistic child. Yep. First born Samantha, 9, is artsy as the day is long. She has a pastel hanging at our state's Institute of Arts, and she has published a bit of poetry. Although she is two years accelerated in language arts, she is still the best student in the class. Samantha is always writing or drawing. She's actually really good at math and science, but doesn't LOVE it the way I did. I'm still hopeful with her younger siblings. I'm hoping for at least one fellow nerd.

On the grade skip front: We're one year into the two-grade subject acceleration (language arts and writing). Roaring success. Samantha is entirely accepted in the new environment, but it must be said it is a very small class. The teacher is entirely blind to her age and treats her like the scholar that she is. She's an angel and thankfully Samantha will have her for 2 more years at this school. She made the jump from 4th to 5th after Christmas. Thank goodness. She really felt like an alien in that 4th grade class. Academically it was work for her for about 5 weeks. She had the first homework of her life. We're back to no homework and complaints of it being too easy. Most grades are in the high 90's. Socially she was awkward in 4th and frankly it was a viper's nest in the girl department. So I had no particular expectations on that front in 5th. I would say it is slightly better, but she is now in a particularly athletic group, and feels goofy at recess and P.E. That is not a big change, though. All in all I think she is grateful for the chance to learn new things; in the past that only really happened at home. Again having a receptive teacher has made all the difference.

In a perfect world they could have home base with age peers and academic challenges with intellectual peers.

Expert Conference Call Helps Allie to Start Public School in 2nd Grade

Allie showed advanced cognitive abilities early on, sight-reading billboards at 18 months. By age 3 1/2, Allie could read 2nd grade books. She attended a Montessori preschool and at that time she developed early mathematical abilities with addition and counting by various numbers (2s, 3s, 5s). She also understood the basis of algebra and could solve simple equations like $5+b=10$. One day after preschool, she said, "I told Ashley that a letter could pretend to be a number." I asked, "What did she say then?" Allie told me, "She just looked at me weird."

Allie was developing a comprehension of place values through thousands by the time she finished her second year of preschool. The following summer she was tested at a low-cost state university program which her parents chose as a trial before investing a lot of money in testing. Allie scored in the 99+ percentile on the SB V and the Bracken Basic Concept Scale (with a Concept Age of 6 years 11 months). The university tester said, "We've never seen anything like her," and their written comments included that "she may be considered for placement in 1st grade" although she would not turn 5 until October. This was the first call for grade skipping.

In response to this information, the school replied that they would consider allowing Allie to enter kindergarten early. Because we saw no benefit, we decided to homeschool her. In that year, she read over 15,000 pages of chapter books (including over a dozen Beverly Cleary books), completed eight spelling workbooks, performed science experiments on nearly a daily basis, completed a world history course, and did math up through part of 4th grade.

We had heard of Davidson Young Scholars, and we thought that the program would benefit both Allie and us. Because there was only a small gap between Allie's IQ score and the Davidson cutoff, we decided to re-test her with nationally known expert in women's achievement. The psychologist determined Allie's results to be above the 99.9th percentile. Allie applied to Davidson Young Scholars and was accepted. We've found the resources to be invaluable and we encourage the parents of any highly advanced child to apply.

The expert recommended that we place Allie in a typical school setting with at least a double grade skip in order for Allie to have an opportunity to work with peers and exchange ideas. The reaction from the two leading local private schools was, "We don't accelerate." A local classical Christian school did not return our call. The principal of the leading local Christian school ridiculed us with, "What does she do, suck her thumb and read a book?" Similarly, the principal of the leading local Catholic school implied that we were lying about Allie's abilities, while he boasted that his school's curriculum was six months ahead of the public school (little comfort to a child four or more years ahead). Although I had been openly critical of the local public school's gifted services and assumed I'd burned bridges, the psychologist encouraged me to try there. Initial opposition to the idea was high, and to make matters worse, less than two weeks remained before the start of the school year. However, the district (and retiring principal) agreed to allow Allie to go directly into 2nd grade after a personal observation of her in a private Spanish class, a first-time use of the Iowa Acceleration Scale, and a conference call with the nationally known psychologist. This was a double skip based on Allie's October birthday. The administration wisely consulted the 2nd grade teachers to see who was most receptive to instructing Allie.

In our state, Gifted Individualized Education Plans (GIEPs) are required by regulation. In fairness to the school, that entire first year was an experiment to answer the question, "What would happen to this kid if she started school in 2nd grade?" Allie's GIEP focused mostly on her integrating into school life, but there were other accommodations. Allie's DRA reading level was assessed at 24 in October, and in November she scored greater than the 90th percentile in more than half of twelve 4th Grade math subtests. Despite disagreeing with the reading assessments, we decided not to protest. Oddly enough, Allie was placed in the highest guided reading group in her grade (which read 4th grade books) and was given access to many 5th grade books for pleasure reading (her teacher formerly taught 5th grade). Allie received a specialized "challenge" spelling list, which her teacher eventually shared with all 2nd grade classes. Although allowed to work ahead on math speed tests as she was able, this was an inconsequential accommodation because Allie was not a rapid calculator. Similarly, she was allowed to work ahead in the district's computerized adaptive math curriculum, but like many mathematically talented students she made frequent computational errors on easy problems and the system would not let her reach her actual conceptual level. Perhaps most helpful, Allie engaged in weekly pull-out sessions for math problem solving with other advanced students. She was allowed to take into school various extension projects in science and social studies. Upon entering 2nd grade, Allie's weakest area was writing because of physical limitations; however, it ended up being her area of greatest growth.

By the end of the year Allie was declared to be at least level 40 in the DRA reading scale. She was given the school's standard placement tests and screeners for gifted programming at the end of 2nd grade. She scored in the 99.9th percentiles in both verbal and non-verbal for both her age group and grade group, so she was able to take part in the gifted pull-out program the following year (in addition to accommodations for most other subjects). Allie's double skip was successful. Two other extremely bright children have been skipped since them. In February of 3rd grade, Allie took the EXPLORE test and scored in the 75th percentile in math and 73rd percentile in reading among 8th graders.

Allie has plenty of friends in school, and she gets invited to sleepovers and birthday parties. Most kids and parents don't even realize she is by far the youngest child in her grade because she's in the 90th percentile for height for her age. She also enjoys activities outside school with older children, such as gymnastics and kids choir at church.

We believe there are two main points that school administrators frequently don't understand: 1) Kids that they see breezing happily through schools with straight As can crash and burn as undergrads or graduate students because they have never been challenged and they either can't handle it or don't know how to

study; 2) The educators' view of children's lives ends at graduation, so they don't get the whole story. Research shows that the vast majority of grade-skipped kids, when interviewed as adults, say that their acceleration was worth it and/or they wish it had been even more pronounced. Quite frankly, after they've finished their Ph.D.s, they really don't care if they were the last kid to drive or if they didn't go to prom.

Michael Enters K Early, Skips 4th, and the School Pushes for More

My son Michael is 11, so our story is far from over, but I do feel as though I have some perspective that I certainly didn't have three or four years ago.

Michael missed the local kindergarten cutoff by a good 4 months. We were able to early admit him into a private kindergarten, which helped take the edge off. When he rolled over to public school in 1st, he was "young", but not technically skipped. His writing was at least somewhat age appropriate, but his attention and commitment to following instructions helped balance that, and his official 1st grade writing still came out pretty far ahead. In those early years though, he complained a lot about his hand being tired. He never seemed to enjoy writing, and I would frequently try to probe into whether it was the creative aspect of writing, or the physical act. In the early years, it was absolutely the physical act that he disliked, but he's more of a math guy, and is not one to elaborate. The most frequent criticism we get academically is in that regard. Most teachers acknowledge too that he is technically on target, but doesn't go beyond that much at all. At 11, this seems to be more personality than immature hands.

Back to the acceleration aspect though. In 1st grade, Michael was still very academically ahead, and for 2nd, we requested and received another year of acceleration in math, which kicked off a hop, skip and a jump approach to elementary math, skipping probably about half of it overall, but stopping at least briefly in most of the classes. In late 3rd grade, he officially moved into 4th grade across the board, in effect a 2nd full skip.

The math hunt and peck continued, until last year when Michael was in 6th grade, taking Algebra 2 with the top 9th graders. I don't see him skipping any more math at this point. He completed 10th grade geometry with these same kids this year, while home based in 7th grade. He also took science with 8th grade. In planning for the fall, the once hesitant school has asked again whether we'd like Michael to skip full time into high school. We've turned them down, as despite the disadvantages of straddling buildings, he has made friends with his current base grade, and I don't want to disrupt that. He can blend with the kids who are two years older, but going for the third might be a little too alienating socially. It's been an interesting turnaround to have the school pushing this one.

I'll end with some pros and cons over the years, with some insights into Michael's personality and how that has helped or hindered him. Hopefully someone can benefit from our history.

Pros:

1. The unorganized manner in which Michael has skipped has had the benefit of keeping him engaged. There was always something new with his schedule, and this fit with his personality. A kid who doesn't necessarily like change might not be as secure with such a path.
2. The fact that he stopped at least briefly in most grades, has given him lots of opportunities for making friends. He lacks close friends, which could be a con, but he is known and reasonably liked by a large variety of kids.
3. Michael's unique situation helps remind his teachers that he is unique. In some ways I fear it might be "halo effect", but it typically works to our advantage.
4. The extra base grade skips have made the more radical math skips more tolerable from the school's perspective, and more likely to happen. I doubt very much that he would have his current math acceleration, had we not moved him along across the board at some point.
5. His current work, while still paced wrong and relatively easy is MUCH better than lock step would have been.

6. This isn't really a "pro", but it's worth mentioning. Many people fear the increased work load at too early of an age. This has yet to be a concern for Michael, even with the high school courses. He just works that much faster. He still spends less time on homework than his siblings, even adjusted for grade/age.

Cons:

1. There is no getting around that he's "that kid". His personality does okay with it, but my daughters would be mortified (and still are somewhat mortified to have "that kid" for their brother). A kid that doesn't enjoy being questioned and commented on might have more concerns.
2. Michael is a little awkward socially, as he is two full years younger than most of his grade peers (though we recognize that he might have been just as awkward with age peers).
3. Michael is not as likely to stand out by talent search scores, etc. For example, he did extremely well on the SAT this past year, but did miss the grand ceremony, that he will likely hit age appropriate. He does however still typically score at the very top of his current placements.
4. For sports, it's a con. We didn't think Michael would be a big sports guy, but we did perhaps steal that choice. He toyed with the idea of basketball this year, but despite his height, I was a little relieved when his sister got sick and we all missed the tryouts. I really don't think he stood a chance. He does get to play baseball by age, and I'm toying with the idea of investigating playing "down" school sports in the future.

We also skipped our son, third of three children, into his older sister's base grade. Just to be fair, he skipped into the firstborn's math grade. That part was not ideal, and is a "do not proceed" step on the Iowa Acceleration Sale, but it has worked well enough for our family, and we felt it was truly the "least worst" situation at the time.

Two Solutions for Two Talented Daughters, Hannah and Sarah

I was a Montessori kid, my mother was one of the first U.S. trained Montessori teachers, so of course we enrolled our eldest daughter, Hannah, in a Montessori school the fall after she turned 2. Montessori classes met her needs and kept us from having to deal with her differences, more or less, until she was five and a half. At that point, my husband took what ended up being a 20 month sabbatical, and we moved to a different part of the country.

We knew Hannah was bright, but hadn't had to deal with how far she was from others until we enrolled her in a public school kindergarten in January. I had carefully screened schools, and this was a kindergarten through 1st all-day classroom (she had been all-day at home) and the school principal was very clear that 100 percent of instruction was differentiated because they had kids from all over the world. Hannah's class had a kid who had arrived from Peru the week before and spoke not a word of English, and it had children of highly-paid professionals with very bright children. Everything was individualized. It should have worked, but it failed Hannah miserably both socially and educationally. By the end of January, I was looking at private schools. When she brought home a "math" worksheet counting snowmen, my husband found www.hoagiesgifted.org, and by March she was enrolled in Stanford's Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY - <http://epgy.stanford.edu/>). I could go on and on about how that school failed her and about how my advocacy made things worse, but I won't.

The following year (at age 6) Hannah attended a very expensive, very lovely private school dedicated for the gifted for 1st grade that only accepted children with IQ scores above 130. It was expensive, and far from where we were living, and they initially placed her incorrectly in math, but it was a very good educational environment for her. I don't know if it would have been long-term, and certainly we couldn't have afforded it long-term.

We had our first dealings with our local schools shortly before our return to our home (back into our same house). At their insistence and expense, they ran Hannah through a WISC III, and suggested that we accelerate her into 3rd grade with further math acceleration. We knew that the adjustment year was going to be hard, and it was. She had a miserable year socially and organizationally, but learned a lot. That's the

year she became a Davidson Young Scholar, and our Family Consultant helped us tease apart some of the issues. The next year went much more smoothly, and the school actually ran a math class for her and one other boy instead of sending them over to the middle school for math. This came from the superintendent. We didn't have to advocate a thing. There are other accommodations that we did need to advocate for, but we've always had someone in our corner.

For what it's worth, size was never an issue. Hannah was tiny until she hit puberty, and today as a 15-year-old high school junior is under 5 feet tall, though no one would call her tiny today.

Our middle school begins in 5th grade, and since then it has been really lovely. In middle school, Hannah was with her grade level for language arts, honors humanities and social studies, and has been accelerated in science and radically accelerated in foreign language and math. This has meant sitting down and working a schedule over the summers, but by now we have the trust and confidence of the administrators, and having a child who has performed above and beyond expectations, and garnered national recognition for the school has helped both her and her younger sister. Not only do we take it one year at a time, but we've taught the school administrators to do so as well.

When she ran out of language and math classes she was given the option of independent study periods and distance learning (which she's done) or to go to the high school. She's had two years of significant independent study time now. She's had a wonderful time in middle school and fully participated in extra-curriculars in school and competed in multiple academic competitions at the national level.

She spent a fairly lonely year at our 3,200 student local high school breezing through the honors classes, though she put her foot down and insisted on studying math outside of school. The high school's highest honors pre-calculus was neither deep enough nor paced sufficiently fast for her taste. At that point, we knew that she would not be graduating from that high school, so we worked out another solution. She currently has just finished her first year at our state's (public) math and science honors high school. She is challenged and very happy there. She has found her social milieu.

Sarah, by virtue of being the younger sister, has had a smoother path. She was in a lovely Montessori school until 1st grade, when she entered a public school that understood that they needed to make sure she had significant in-class differentiation, and teachers who like teaching gifted children. She has not had any full-year acceleration (though we have considered it in multiple years and rejected it because of specific teacher and scheduling issues). Sarah's passions and academic interests are different from her sister. She's a strong math student, but her overwhelming passions are for literature, both as reader and author, which is somewhat easier to accommodate in a differentiated classroom. Sarah was first accelerated in math in 3rd grade (earlier she pretested out of classroom math and did enrichment activities, more or less) and entered middle school with her age peers in 5th grade where she was accelerated into honors Algebra and 6th grade science. She has just finished up her 7th grade year, and with it she completed 8th grade science and Algebra II, typically taught in our high school as the 9th grade highest honors class, but additionally taught in our middle school. She's taken advantage of a combination of distance learning and independent study to substitute for inappropriate or insufficient classes. In 6th grade she substituted a CTY writing course and some guided reading for English. This year she substituted one-on-one work with a History professor in place of 7th grade social studies. Next year in 8th grade she's planning on using a combination of distance learning and independent study periods for math, science (biology) and American history.

Sarah is a fairly serious violinist, and really enjoys the middle school orchestra. Her ability to stay grouped with age peers for solo and competition purposes is a significant advantage, or rather, if she had been grade accelerated, being forced to compete with musicians who are older and have had more years of practice and instruction would be a huge disadvantage. To an even greater extent than her elder sister, Sarah has found that the extra and co-curricular activities available in the middle school hugely enrich her life. In addition to school orchestra and chorus, she has found much success and satisfaction competing at the on the robotics team, Science Bowl team, and MathCounts team. In the past 12 months she has been invited to Washington, D.C. twice to events hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama. Subject acceleration has allowed her to remain a middle school student with strong age-peer connections while still being sufficiently academically challenged.

No, No, No, No, Yes! Eden Skips 2nd Grade in Public School

The plan was a two-year plan: send Eden to a private school with full-day pre-kindergarten and full-day

kindergarten and then move her to our local public school. During her time at the private school we had Eden tested both with the WPPSI III IQ testing (at 4 years) and with the Woodcock-Johnson III test for achievement (4yrs 3 mo).

We live in a fantastic, award winning, public school district – they should be able to accommodate our now documented profoundly gifted (PG) child. Right?

Part way through our second year at the private school I began meeting with educators in our district. I first called the principal of our public school and told him all about Eden and that I was interested in learning how they were going to be able to meet her scholastic needs. He told me that the curriculum was already a challenging one, that all his students were bright and that considering grade skipping would be terrible for Eden because she would not hit puberty at the same time as her classmates. It was news to me that puberty was on a timer! But he suggested that I speak to the head of Curriculum to feel more comfortable with what the children were going to learn in each grade. Therefore, I did.

This gentleman was a very nice man who said all the right things while making no promises to do anything. I learned that skipping, or what they prefer to call "Double-Promotion," is hardly ever done and that they could not do anything until she was enrolled in the district as a student.

Therefore, near the end of the second year of private school I had a face-to-face meeting with the principal of our local public school. I brought in Eden's IQ scores, achievement scores, report cards and work samples. We talked; he said he'd get back to me, and two weeks later, he said no. Then at the end of the school year, we felt we were forced to resort to hiring a gifted children's advocate. Maybe she could speak his language. How could we put Eden in 1st grade? She learned their curriculum two years ago. I came back with our arms full: a hired advocate, a husband, M.A.P. scores, and even an IOWA Acceleration Scale. Our advocate presented our case in front of the principal and the school psychologist. They said they would get back to us in a week or so and again, the school said NO!

Then that principal retired. We were nowhere but out a few hundred dollars. Summer was here. We were entering a deep depression and our last chance was mid-August when the new principal would begin her post. We quietly sought out a family at our public school that had been navigating our school system for years before us. Maybe she had some ideas about what worked or didn't work so that we wouldn't be wasting our time. She turned out to be an amazing mentor in navigating our particular school system and was key to keeping us focused on whom to speak to, about what and when.

August came and we had to face that Eden was entering 1st grade. But my husband and I (going as a united front is seen as more serious than just the Mom) took everything we provided to the retired principal to our new, and younger, principal minus the advocate. She told us there was nothing she could do: she had never met Eden, the district rarely-to-never skips and on the rare occasion that they do, it is when the student was actually in the building where observation can occur, differentiation can be tried, and social-emotional factors can be considered. Nevertheless, we didn't leave that meeting empty handed. Our new principal spoke to our previous private school principal and he was able to advocate for us that Eden had already completed the 1st grade math curriculum. Since math is a measurable subject, and both schools used the same math program, Eden was subject accelerated into 2nd grade math for the fall. We were also fortunate enough to have been promised a special reading group for Eden.

School began. Just to make sure that the school was making the right math choice, they put Eden through many end-of-chapter math tests and the state math M.A.P. test. Meanwhile Eden was biding her time. She eventually began her special reading group and to the school's credit, they did find one other 1st grade student to be a 'peer' for Eden so she wasn't working alone. But her existence in school was lonely. She was pulled out for reading, she went out for 2nd grade math and when she was in class she was to work on a literacy folder put together by the extended learning specialist to keep her challenged. However, Eden wanted to be doing what the other kids were doing even if it was easy. She liked her literacy folder work, but what 7-year-old wouldn't pick cutting, pasting and markers over lonely work sheets?

I was emailing many different people in the building to get a handle on her new choppy schedule. The principal came to me and said that instead of trying to search out the answers she was going to have Eden's 1st grade teacher call me weekly and be my point person. This became a helpful tool for me in carefully reiterating my concerns: socially, emotionally, and scholastically. By late fall I was beginning to see the toll the choppy schedule was taking on Eden. I called the school social worker to discuss my concerns and to

request having Eden join a social group. This purpose was two-fold: first, to provide Eden with an outlet but second was to have the social worker begin to get to know Eden as a child and not as a 'case' so that she would realize Eden is emotionally sensitive, empathetic and sympathetic and not emotionally immature. I believe this was a key factor because if the social worker says no to the grade skip there will be no grade skip. How can they make that determination properly with one or two random observations?

Eden was now responsible for remembering her individual disconnected schedule, so we bought her a watch with a vibrating alarm to help her remember when to get to her other classes. We were afraid that if we complained too much about the responsibilities and choppiness being placed on a 7-year-old, that the accommodations would end. It was a step in the right direction, but very difficult to execute.

The year went by. She began to get spelling words that I sometimes had to double-check. She was doing great in math class and her math teacher 'got her'. Having subject acceleration in place, with a great teacher, so they could constantly get feedback was also a key factor. Even with all these wonderful things, it was a social disaster. Eden never felt she belonged anywhere. When she was in her 1st grade class, she was generally working alone. When she was in her 2nd grade math class, she had a great time but was never there long enough to truly enjoy them and foster true friendships. At recess, her 1st grade friends weren't interested in what she liked and her 2nd grade friends saw her as the little 1st grader. The principal really felt she was doing what was right for Eden, but unfortunately it is difficult to prove social-emotional effects until after the fact. Remember, we did have a passing IOWA Acceleration Scale we presented to both principals back at the beginning of the school year.

Our parent-teacher conferences consisted of many different faculty members. Before winter break we really wanted to ask to have Eden fully accelerated into 2nd grade beginning in January, but we knew that the school really stood behind their choices. At this point, we felt we had no other choice than to let this well thought out plan show on its own the shortcomings -- and they slowly did. It was painful to watch and not fair to any child to have the constant pull-outs, especially a very young one who lived and breathed school, but we were halfway through the year and the goal now was to look forward to achieving the full skip for the beginning of the next school year.

Just before spring break, we took a chance and jointly requested a private meeting with the principal and the extended learning specialist. We asked for both because nothing happens without principal approval and because we trusted the extended learning specialist. Witnesses are also a good idea. We boned up on all the supporting research (bringing some key excerpts with titles and page numbers to the meeting). We wanted to discuss the possibility of entering Eden, full-time, into her 2nd grade math class so that the school could fully observe her socially and emotionally if they still had doubt. We proposed that after spring break, Eden would spend the last eight weeks of school in 2nd grade and we suggested that they consider having Eden join her 2nd grade math class in doing all the 2nd grade state M.A.P. testing to gather more information for her scholastic plan in the fall. We got a yes to the M.A.P. testing but again a no to full time 2nd grade because that had never happened and therefore it couldn't be granted. Nevertheless, it did show the school that we were still serious about this. Therefore, they decided to set up some exclusively social situations in Eden's 2nd grade math class that she would join and then be observed - NO PRESSURE!

I should point out here that after each meeting we had with the school we made sure to send an email in the next day or two thanking the faculty for making the time for our family. Moreover, within that email I carefully reiterated what we discussed in the meeting and any follow-ups that were promised. Therefore, if there were any objections they would be sure to respond. Otherwise, the meeting was documented.

We didn't tell Eden about the observations for fear of added anxieties. We never knew when it was going to happen or how often. Therefore, we entered the final stages of school with a positive reinforcement plan at home - yep, bribing! We resorted to bribing Eden to keeping her emotions to a minimum. It was for the greater good! We just had to make it though the last eight weeks. As her parents, we did everything possible; there was nothing more we could do. It was unfortunately up to Eden's observed behaviors and the school. Even if her behavior was perfect, we realized that politics could still dictate a "no."

Three weeks before the end of school the principal, the social worker, and the extended learning specialist called a meeting. We knew they had made their final decision. After sharing with us how difficult this decision was to make, that her social-emotional well-being was their number one priority, and the social worker added that in her 11 years of working at the school that this had been done only once before - YES they would fully skip her to 3rd grade in the fall! They want to avoid the choppiness in her schedule and to

allow her to foster real friendships and this can only be done with her being in a class full time.

We were more relieved than excited. We knew this was the right thing but the school had to believe it too. As I write this, it is summer, so we don't know how she will do in those first few weeks of school in her new grade. But what we do know is that this past year of sacrifice should prove to be worth it because we have support from the faculty that Eden will need next year. We are sure that there will still be some tweaking but it should be smaller and happen more quickly. We commend her faculty for trying different things, making accommodations and seeing Eden as an individual child.

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