

News from the Future of Children, February, 2005

School Readiness: Closing Racial and Ethnic Gaps Executive Summary

School Readiness: Closing Racial and Ethnic Gaps, the first Princeton-Brookings volume of *The Future of Children* journal.

Racial and ethnic differences in school readiness is an issue confronting educators across the country. Although these gaps in educational achievement have narrowed over the past thirty years, test score disparities among American students remain significant. Furthermore, these sizable gaps already exist by the time children enter kindergarten. Research suggests that what happens to children early in life has a profound impact on their later achievement.

If policy makers are to address this disparity in academic achievement (and the consequent lack of parity in later opportunity), the racial and ethnic gap must be examined in the earliest years of children's lives, before students start school with embedded inequalities. Efforts to prepare children for school success must begin early in life.

This volume of *The Future of Children* journal includes eight articles written by some of the nation's leading academics on these topics. Their articles address the size of the gap, synthesize what is known about its causes, and identify some policy solutions.

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