

Long-Term Effects of Preschools on Educational Attainments*

Hideo Akabayashi[†]
Keio University

Ryuichi Tanaka[‡]
National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies

January 16, 2012

Abstract

Whether universal preschool education can eliminate the achievement gap among children in the long-run has been debated in the U.S and elsewhere. This paper offers new evidence from an experience of massive expansion of preschool education occurred in Japan. Using prefecture-level data, we estimate the impact of differences in policy pressure measured by the gap between the target and the initial enrollment on the two measures of the long-term educational achievement: high school completion rate and college advancement rate. We find that the expansion of kindergarten had a small but significant positive impact on high school completion, but not on the college advancement rate.

JEL classification: I22; I28; H75

Keywords: Preschools, Education, Head start

*We are grateful to Hiroko Araki, Sinpei Sano, Atsushi Yoshida, and the participants of the workshop on education economics in Shizuoka and at Keio University for their very helpful comments. We are grateful for financial support from JSPS (Basic Research A). Of course, all remaining errors are solely ours.

[†]Graduate School of Economics, Keio University, 2-15-45 Mita, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-8345, Japan hakab@econ.keio.ac.jp

[‡]National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 7-22-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8677, Japan. r-tanaka@grips.ac.jp