Today’s piece was prepared by Tammy Ruth, MD, based on a CNN story [In some states, this birth month is linked to higher rates of ADHD diagnosis, study says](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/28/health/adhd-diagnosis-august-kindergarten-study/index.html).

The story, also discussed in an [article](https://fee.org/articles/harvard-study-shows-the-dangers-of-early-school-enrollment/) described by FEE (Foundation for Economic Education) is based on a study NEJM study [Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder and Month of School Enrollment](https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMoa1806828).

Clear differences emerge between the two media pieces, evident in the respective titles and stories:

The Harvard research described was led by the Department of Healthcare Policy, finding ADHD rates of diagnosis and treatment as higher among children born in August than in September in states with a September 1 cutoff for kindergarten entry.

CNN provides a balanced summary that focuses entirely on the research, noting strengths and weaknesses, providing basic statistical data and linking the reader to the NEJM publication and researcher profiles. There are no obviously misleading or overly biased statements, concluding “it’s really helpful to continue to look at what we can call sociological drivers of diagnosis”.

The FEE article uses name recognition to add validity while inflating the conclusion by suggesting “dangers”; in contrast, the NEJM authors state “we are able to conclude only that a child’s age relative to peers has an association with diagnosis and treatment rates of ADHD, not whether this association is harmful or helpful”.  Only 2 of the 13 paragraphs discuss the cited article, taking specific data points out of context to support the author’s perspective. There is no critique of the research, and while there are multiple embedded links, many are to the same source and none are the original publication. The author concludes “parents should push back … by holding onto their kids longer or opting out of forced schooling altogether”, which is unrelated to the researchers’ conclusion that “the context of behavior within a grade or school class influences the likelihood of a diagnosis of ADHD”.  This article uses persuasive language, but it is misleading and strongly biased.

**RESOURCES ON ADHD:**

* [CHADD](http://www.chadd.org/)*National ADHD organization with chapters throughout the country, providing ADHD Information for adults, parents, educators, and professionals, including* [Preschoolers and ADHD](https://chadd.org/for-parents/preschoolers-and-adhd/)

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!