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Webinar: The Economics of Migration. Starting off on the right foot – Integrative schooling and the educational success of immigrant children

Starting off on the right foot – Integrative schooling and the educational success of immigrant children

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ABSTRACT

This study is the first empirical analysis to identify the causal effect of an educational integration model which focuses on language acquisition for newly immigrated primary school-aged children on their academic success. Employing unique administrative panel data from the German federal state Hamburg between 2013 and 2019, we use the quasi-random allocation of refugee children to neighborhoods and therewith schools to study the effect of attending a separate preparatory class for language learning on standardized test scores and the probability of attending an academic track in secondary school. Our results show that primary school-aged refugees who visit a preparatory class perform significantly worse in standardized test scores in fifth grade. The negative effect is particularly strong for Math and German, while we see no significant differences in the probability of attending the academic track. Overall, our results indicate that preparatory classes for newly immigrated children focusing on language learning do not foster their academic achievement more than integrating them directly into the regular classroom.

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