

## Five-year-olds not ready for school, says Cambridge

- From correspondents in London
- From: *Reuters*
- October 16, 2009 10:35AM

**CHILDREN should delay the start of formal schooling to the age of six, a year later than at present, the largest review of primary education in England for 40 years has recommended.**

The 608-page Cambridge University study said introducing children at the age of five into the constraint and discipline of a classroom - a throwback to Victorian days - provided little benefit and could even be harmful.

"They are not going to learn to read, write and add up if you have alienated children by the age of four and five," chairwoman of the Cambridge Primary Review's advisory committee Gillian Pugh said.

"That's the stage at which we are tuning children into learning.

"If they are already failing by the time they are 4½ or five, then it's going to be quite difficult to get them back into the system again."

Although the authors of the report stopped short of recommending a rise in the starting age of compulsory schooling from five, they called for an "open debate" on the issue.

Start of sidebar. [Skip to end of sidebar.](#)

End of sidebar. [Return to start of sidebar.](#)

They said children up to the age of six should instead be given the more informal, play-based education typically found in nurseries.

"Extending the early years phase to age six or seven would give schools up to three years to work with children to establish positive attitudes to learning and the necessary language and study skills which are crucial to raising standards in the long term," the review said.

It said England's tradition of starting school at five, shared in Europe only by Wales, Scotland and the Netherlands, dated from the requirements of Victorian factory owners in the 1870 Elementary Education Act.

"Five was picked not for education or child-development reasons, but in an attempt to service the demands of industry," it said.

"Clearly the earlier children started, the sooner they would finish."

Schooling starts at the age of six in 20 out of 34 European countries, with eight nations, including Sweden, waiting until children are seven.

[Back to top of page](#)

### Victoria

#### Accused tells of torment



*Paul Anderson* A WOMAN strangled by her husband cancelled Christmas as she was "upset with something or someone", court hears.

#### Tough times for home buyers



*Craig Binnie* HOUSING affordability in Melbourne has suffered the biggest drop in the country as rising prices make it harder

to buy a home.

- **Join the conversation:** [Money and Me](#)
- **Interactive:** [Click here for our suburb-by-suburb price map](#)
- **How much:** [Calculate your home loan now](#)
- [Anger management: Doctor disciplined for smacking child](#)
- [Cheltenham: Motorcyclist killed in car smash](#)
- [Poppins producer: Nanny state as Mary flies in](#)
- [Eltham North: Woman trapped under own car in driveway](#)
- [More Victoria](#)

## The Other Side

### [Redback spiders love a deadly affair](#)



10:32AM By [Brian Williams](#) FEMALE redbacks eat male mates who do not spend enough time on foreplay, study finds.

### [Worming a way out of coeliacs](#)



[Danny Rose](#) SCIENTISTS are inching closer to a new therapy for auto-immune disorders but many will find the treatment hard to swallow.

- [London: Aussie to sell last Trafalgar ship flag](#)
- [Viral video: World's drunkest man buys booze](#)
- [Obese: 'World's fattest man' needs surgery](#)
- [Not kidding: Man gets wife's goat in divorce](#)
- [More wacky news](#)

## Most Popular Stories

1. [World's drunkest man buys booze](#)
2. ['I am ashamed'](#)
3. [Polak faces cut at Tigerland](#)
4. [Dees to lift from Brock bottom](#)
5. [The little boy who never grew up](#)

## Top News

### [One hour on P-plates, 154km/h](#)



6:36AM [Aaron Langmaid](#) A TEENAGE driver has been ordered off the road - less than an hour after successfully passing his driving test in country Victoria.

- [Cheltenham: Motorcyclist dead after crash](#)
- [Thornbury: Two trapped after head-on smash](#)
- [Abuse: Kids riddled with booze, drugs](#)

## Top Sport

### Whobegotyou's unbeatable



WHOBEGOTYOU looks a good thing in tomorrow's \$3 million Tatts Cox Plate, rival trainer Gai Waterhouse has declared.

- [Twenty20: NSW-Trinidad and Tobago final](#)
- [John Eales Medal: Giteau claims top rugby award](#)
- [Richmond player: Polak faces cut at Tigerland](#)
- [Cox Plate: Take care of my car, Ollie](#)

- [More Sport](#)

## Top Galleries

### Francesca Cumani



Racing's Francesca Cumani poses for a Herald Sun fashion shoot at Werribee Park Mansion, plus mor...

- [Don Lane](#)
- [Van explosion in Chelsea Heights](#)

## More News

### Entertainment

#### Cate's new flick scrapped



9:33PM A FILM starring Cate Blanchett about the last days of British rule in India has been cancelled.

- [Poppins producer: Nanny state as Mary flies in](#)
- [Comeback gig: Robbie back with a bang](#)
- [Awards lineup: Gudinski's short-Tempered for ARIA](#)
- [Taking it easy: Missy living life in the slow lane](#)

- [More Entertainment](#)

## National

### Fertility under stress



MODERN life is having a devastating impact on men's fertility.

- [High kilojoules: Parents tricked by misleading labels](#)
- [Mitsubishi: Aussie launch of electric car in doubt](#)
- [Anti-war mail: Don't like it? Leave, says grieving dad](#)
- [\\$146 rise: ETS will push up bills, hearing told](#)

- [More National](#)

## Breaking News

### Nine charged after Sydney drug raids

7:10AM NINE men have been charged after police smashed a major drug syndicate in Sydney's south.

- [Speed: Driver gets licence, suspended 45mins later](#)
- [Shopping centre: Woman, girls charged over robberies](#)
- [Court: Man charged over train assaults on woman](#)
- [Crash: Man dead, car ripped in two](#)
- [More Breaking News](#)

- 
- [Terms & Conditions](#)
  - [Privacy Policy](#)
  - [Accessibility](#)

© Herald and Weekly Times. All times AEST (GMT +10) .