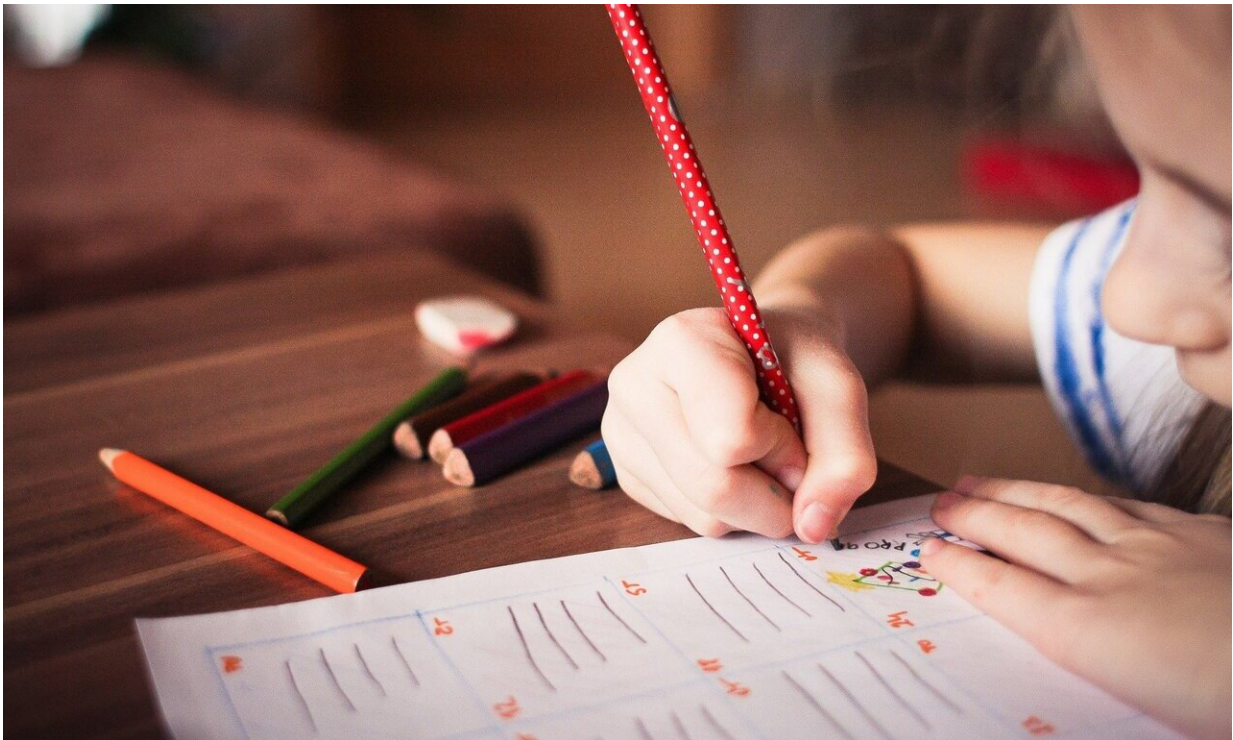


By age 10, retinoblastoma patients' learning and life skills rebound

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Retinoblastoma starts in the retina, the thin membrane at the back of the eye. Most patients are infants or toddlers when their cancer is found. Without treatment, the cancer spreads. Thanks to chemotherapy, surgery and other treatments, 96% of patients survive.

St. Jude researchers studied how survivors fared years later at home and at school. A previous St. Jude study of 98 retinoblastoma survivors found that their [early learning](#) and [life skills](#) declined from diagnosis to age 5.

Researchers tested 78 of the same survivors five years later. The results were more upbeat. By age 10, almost all the [children](#) functioned within the normal range in those areas. That included children who had one eye removed, although they did not make up quite as much ground in the areas of learning, thinking and memory.

"The good news is that as a group the children did improve over time, but not everyone is recovering at the same rate," said Victoria Willard, Ph.D., of St. Jude Psychology. "The findings show we all need to be aware of factors that put children at risk for difficulties later. It highlights that all young children with retinoblastoma may benefit from [early intervention](#) to promote growth and development."

The *Journal of Clinical Oncology* published a report on this work.

More information: Victoria W. Willard et al, Cognitive and Adaptive Functioning in Youth With Retinoblastoma: A Longitudinal Investigation Through 10 Years of Age, *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1200/JCO.20.03422](https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.20.03422)

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