

Improving Children's Skill Development and Reducing Inequality: Is Promoting Higher Education for Lower Educated Mothers the Answer?

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What is your project about?

This project aims to replicate and extend my previous research, in which I find that increases in mothers' educational attainment does not lead to significant changes in children's cognitive skills or noncognitive skills. I will do this by:

- (1) Testing whether my previous findings are robust to a more contemporary sample of families participating in the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, as well as a wider set of indicators of children's cognitive and noncognitive skills.
- (2) By exploring why increases in maternal education not significantly associated with increases in children's skills, focusing on changes in family structure, parenting, the home environment, maternal labor force factors, family economic factors, and maternal stress.

Why is the project important?

As it becoming increasingly normative for women with children to *return* to the higher educational system to increase their education, scholars and policy makers are increasingly promoting "two-generation" policies to reducing inequality that target both the child and parent generation. We know little, however, about the efficacy of such approaches, and more specifically, how obtaining higher education after children are born is associated with children's development. This study addresses these questions.

Who are you collaborating with on your project?

At present, I am not currently collaborating on the project with others. I do hope, however, to involve several researchers in the project in the future.

Who is funding your project?

This project is funded by an ASPIRE I mechanism through the Office of the Vice President of Research at the University of South Carolina.