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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Cornell University, expected May 2019
M.A., Economics, Cornell University, 2017
B.A., Mathematical Economics, Colorado College, 2012 (with distinction)

REFERENCES

Professor Maria Fitzpatrick
292 Caldwell Hall, Cornell University
P: 607-255-1272 E: mdf98@cornell.edu

Professor Ronald Ehrenberg
271 Ives Hall, Cornell University
P: 607-255-3026 E: rge2@cornell.edu

Professor Zhuan Pei
431 Kennedy Hall, Cornell University
P: 607-255-2503 E: zp53@cornell.edu

RESEARCH AND TEACHING FIELDS

Public economics, economics of education, labor economics

RESEARCH PAPERS

Is Special Education a Pathway to Supplemental Security Income for Children? (Job Market Paper)

[NBER Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Project]

I document a direct pathway from receipt of special education to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) using a two sample fuzzy regression discontinuity design. First, I use administrative records from North Carolina to document that children born the month before the kindergarten entry eligibility cutoff date are 3.28 percentage points more likely to receive special education services relative to children born the month after the school cutoff date. Next, using National Health Interview Survey respondents linked to Social Security Administration records, I document that the children born just before the cutoff date are 0.78 percentage points (or 30%) more likely to apply for and 0.55 percentage points (or 59%) more likely to receive an award for SSI relative to children born just after the school cutoff date. I find no increase in awards among groups unlikely to be affected by the relationship between school starting age and special education; these include children with physical impairments or those too young for school enrollment. My estimates indicate that a 1 percentage point increase in the fraction of children receiving special education services increases the fraction of children on SSI by 0.16 percentage points (an approximate 10% increase in the SSI caseload).

RESEARCH PAPERS IN PROGRESS

Interactions Among Social Safety Net Programs: Evidence from the Earned Income Tax Credit and Supplemental Security Income for Children [*Mathematica Dissertation Fellowship Project*]

In 2017, approximately 1.2 million children between the ages of 0 and 18 received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments totaling just over \$9.6 billion. Few studies have examined how aspects of the current social safety net interact with the SSI program. Using microdata on children aged 15-18 in the American Community Survey (ACS) I generate a measure of exposure to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which reflects the cumulative maximum credit available to that individual based on their year of birth, state of residence, and number of qualifying children within the household. Using EITC exposure as the measure of treatment, I implement a difference-in-differences strategy to identify the effect of the EITC on the child SSI program. My strategy leverages three sources of variation: federal expansions in the EITC for various family structures in 1990, 1994, and 2009; introduction of state EITCs; and changes in family structures across ages.

Relative Age in Grade and Child Disability: Evidence from North Carolina

Using administrative student level data and regression discontinuity methods, I corroborate earlier research indicating that in the early grades (grades 3-8) the youngest children in the classroom are more likely to be classified for other health impairments (including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)), speech impairments, and emotional/behavioral disorders. I also corroborate findings that the youngest children in the classroom score below their older classmates on end of grade exams in both math and reading in grade 3. While these effects diminish with each subsequent grade, younger students are still performing 0.06 standard deviations below their older classmates in math and 0.08 standard deviations below their older classmates in reading at the end of grade 8. I augment the existing literature by showing that the youngest children are more likely to be diagnosed for specific learning disabilities in mathematics and reading, in all grades, and that these relative-age-in-grade effects for special education placement for other health impairments and specific learning disabilities persist through 12th grade. In addition, contrary to Dhuey and Lipscomb (2010) I find similar effect sizes for both boys and girls given that the base diagnosis rate for girls is smaller than the base diagnosis rate for boys.

Beyond Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic: The Role of Teachers and Schools in Reporting Child Maltreatment (with Sam Bondurant and Maria Fitzpatrick)

Estimates show that 4 in 10 children experience some form of maltreatment by the time they are teenagers. However, we know little about the role of reporters. For example, although educators report many instances of child maltreatment, it could be the case that they are identifying and reporting maltreatment that would be reported by others. We study the role of teachers and other educators in reporting child maltreatment by causally identifying the effect of exposure to school on child maltreatment reporting. Unique administrative data on nearly all reported cases of child maltreatment across the U.S. over a 14 year period allows us to use two different regression discontinuity methods, one based on school entry laws and the other based on school calendars. Both methods show an increase in reports by educators due to time in school that is not accompanied by a decrease in reports by others. Overall, reports increase by 5 to 10 percent. The additional reports due to time in school (and the resulting time with educators) are no less likely to be substantiated than other reports, suggesting that educators are no more likely to over-report than others. Our results indicate that educators play an important role in the early detection of child maltreatment.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Bidding for Classes: Course Allocation Under the Colorado College Auction System (with Daniel K.N. Johnson and Kristina M. Lybecker). Conference Proceedings, Academy of Economics and Finance 2014.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2016

Ithaca College, Instructor, Principles of Microeconomics

Evaluation: 4.37/5 (department average: 4.15)

Spring 2015

Cornell University, Teaching Assistant for Professor Tom Evans, Multiple Regression Analysis

Evaluation: 4.23/5 (department average: 4.01)

Fall 2014

Cornell University, Teaching Assistant for Professor Sean Nicholson, The US Healthcare System

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT

May 2018-August 2018

Cornell University, Research Assistant for Professor Maria Fitzpatrick

August 2016-December 2016

Ithaca College, Visiting Lecturer

May 2015-August 2017

Cornell University, Research Assistant for Professor Ronald Ehrenberg

May 2012-April 2013

Colorado College, Technical and Statistical Coordinator, Department of Economics and Business

May 2012-August 2012

Colorado College, Research Assistant for Professor Kevin Rask and Professor Daniel Johnson

UNIVERSITY SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

2018	Session chair, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
2015-2018	Co-founder and mentor, Field of Economics Mentorship Program, Cornell University
2015-2016	President, Graduate Student Association for Economics, Cornell University
2015-2016	Social Sciences Voting Member, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, Cornell University, previously Economics Field Representative (2014-2015)
2015-2016	Chair, Faculty Awards Committee, Cornell University, previously member (2014-2015)
2015-2016	Graduate Student Representative, President's Council on Hazing Prevention, Cornell University
2014-2015	Treasurer, Graduate Students in Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

2018-2019	Mathematica Disability Research Consortium Dissertation Fellowship (\$28,000)
2018	Conference Travel Grant, Cornell University (\$235)
2017-2018	National Bureau of Economic Research Pre-Doctoral Fellowship in Disability Policy Research (\$23,376)
2017	Research Travel Grant, Cornell University (\$2,000)
2017, 2018	NBER Summer Institute invited attendee
2013-2014	College of Human Ecology Fellowship, Cornell University
2013	Best Economics Paper, Academy of Economics and Finance
2012	Robin Satterwhite Thesis Award, Colorado College
2012	Van Skilling Award for Independent Research in Economics, Colorado College
2011	Meritorious Recognition in Mathematical Contest in Modeling

INVITED PRESENTATIONS (includes scheduled)

2018 Colorado College
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
Disability Research Consortium (poster)

2013 Eastern Economic Association
Western Social Sciences Association
Academy of Economics and Finance

Updated: October 2018