



Columbia University
**MAILMAN SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

Poverty, Public Policy,
and Child Development
P 8590-064

CLASS SESSIONS

Thursday, 9-11:50am. January 20th – March 3rd

Location: Hammer Health Sciences, Lower Library Room 103

INSTRUCTORS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

A leading practitioner has described child well-being as a three-legged stool supported by the child's access to quality health care, sound early education, and family economic security. If the three legs work together to support child well-being, they also support and strengthen one another. Children from economically secure families are much more likely than children from poor families to gain access to both high-quality health care and early education.

Family economic security is closely associated with a range of positive social and economic outcomes for children, including higher academic attainment and achievement, fewer externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems, and better physical health. Adults who were poor as children are themselves more likely to be poor, resulting in the inter-generational transmission of poverty. For society, poverty is a moral blight and costs the economy many billions of dollars annually in forgone output, earnings, and tax revenue.

This interdisciplinary course—taught by a psychologist, a sociologist, and an economist—is designed to give students a critical introduction to United States public policy intended to improve development outcomes for children in low-income families. Course content is organized into three sections: family economic security; early childhood; and health and mental health. Within each section, we review the state of contemporary research on the problem and evaluate leading policy approaches. We employ multiple learning strategies to familiarize students with, and help them

develop their competencies in, policy analysis. These methods include in-class presentations and discussions, independent readings, and a group policy analysis project.

PREREQUISITES

None

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- (1) Describe the historical context of child poverty in the United States
- (2) Explain the major theories of poverty and the link between poverty and child health and well-being
- (3) Identify the major child policy issues at the federal, state, and local level
- (4) Examine and critically assess the link between public policy and child health and well-being
- (5) Organize information and relevant research to articulate and advocate policy positions through written submissions and verbal presentations.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING POLICY

Student grades will be based on:

Three policy papers (4-6 pages) with class presentations	60%
General class participation.....	15%
Group project.....	25%

Written Assignments and Individual Presentations

Each student will prepare and present to the class a total of three policy papers of 4-6 pages in length. The papers will analyze a policy problem within each of the broad course topics: (i) Family Economic Security and Welfare Policy; (ii) Early Childhood Learning and Development and (iii) Social Determinants of Child Health and Mental Health/Housing, Neighborhood and Child Development. The papers should be based on the reading assignments and linked to the learning objectives. Each paper will examine a specific problem related to child poverty and development, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of one or more policy responses. The papers should include policy-relevant, analytic questions for class discussion.

Group Project and Presentation

Students will be divided into groups. Each group will: (i) identify an outstanding problem confronting low-income families and hindering their children's healthy and positive development; (ii) review existing public policy approaches to the problem in the United States; and (iii) identify a promising new policy or program to address the problem. The shortcomings of existing policy and the group's policy/program recommendations should be supported by evidence, and the presentation prepared as if the group were addressing a legislative body empowered to make the policy change. The policy or program the group develops should encompass two or more aspects of economic security, child health/mental health and early childhood learning and development. A portion of each class will be devoted to work on the group project, and each group will deliver its findings orally with a PowerPoint presentation on the last class session of the course.

COURSE STRUCTURE

We employ multiple learning methods to familiarize students with, and help them develop their competencies in, child policy analyses. These methods include in-class presentations and discussions, independent readings, and a group policy analysis project.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The class is offered in seminar format and students are expected to attend all sessions and complete the readings on a timely basis so that they may participate in informed discussions. Students are expected to fulfill all written and oral assignments. Late assignments and incompletes will not be accepted without prior approval from the instructor.

Please refer to the information on Written Assignments, Presentations, and Examinations under the Assessment and Grading Policy section.

Some Useful Information:

A WORD ON PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is not tolerated. If you are not certain of how or when to cite reference materials, it is your responsibility to ask the professor for guidance. Violation of these and other applicable rules will result in failure for the assignment or exam in addition to other available sanctions.

MAILMAN SCHOOL POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Students and faculty have a shared commitment to the School's mission, values and oath.
<http://mailman.columbia.edu/about-us/school-mission/>

Academic Integrity

Students are required to adhere to the Mailman School Honor Code, available online at <http://mailman.columbia.edu/honorcode>.

Disability Access

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students who have, or think they may have a disability are invited to contact ODS for a confidential discussion at 212.854.2388 (V) 212.854.2378 (TTY), or by email at disability@columbia.edu. If you have already registered with ODS, please speak to your instructor to ensure that s/he has been notified of your recommended accommodations by Lillian Morales (lm31@columbia.edu), the School's liaison to the Office of Disability Services.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please see the lecture section of Courseworks to download the readings, exams, and lecture slides.

Session 1	Introduction (Skinner, Aratani and Smith) Understanding Child Poverty: History, Theory and Measurements (Skinner)
Jan. 20	<p data-bbox="354 342 617 378"><u>Learning Objectives:</u></p> <ol data-bbox="402 415 1443 703" style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe the “three-legged stool” of child development, supported by family economic security, early child education, and access to quality health care2. Describe important socioeconomic factors associated with child poverty in the United States and the recent trend in U.S. poverty rates3. Identify the costs of childhood poverty and the personal, social, and economic returns to investing in children and families4. Describe holistic policy approaches to child development5. Compare the strengths and weaknesses of alternative measures of poverty <p data-bbox="354 741 467 777"><u>Reading:</u></p> <p data-bbox="354 814 1274 850">Sen, A. (1992). Poverty and Affluence. Chapter 7 of <i>Inequality Reexamined</i>.</p> <p data-bbox="354 888 1443 961">Heckman, J. (2005). Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. <i>Science</i> (312), 30 June, pp. 1900-1902.</p> <p data-bbox="354 999 1443 1098">Brooks-Gunn, J., K. Magnuson and J. Waldfogel (2009). Long-Run Economic Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Adult Earnings. Washington, DC: Partnership for America’s Economic Success.</p> <p data-bbox="354 1136 1443 1241">Levitan, M. et.al. (2010). Using the American Community Survey to Create a National Academy of Sciences-Style Poverty Measure: Work by the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity. <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> 29(2), pp. 373-400.</p> <p data-bbox="354 1278 1443 1352">Magnuson, K. and E. Votruba-Drzal (2009). Enduring Influences of Child Poverty. <i>Focus</i> 26(2), pp. 32-37.</p> <p data-bbox="354 1390 1443 1463">Waldfogel, J. (2009). The Role of Family Policies in Antipoverty Policy. <i>Focus</i> 26(2), pp. 50-54.</p> <p data-bbox="354 1501 1443 1575">Haveman, R. (2009). What Does it Mean to be Poor in a Rich Society? <i>Focus</i> 26(2), pp. 81-86.</p>

Session 2 Family Economic Security and Welfare Policy (Skinner)

Jan. 27 Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the public safety net—income and work supports—for low-income families in the U.S.; identify strengths and weaknesses in the net; describe evolution of the safety net over time; compare key differences with European policies
2. Evaluate labor market policies and poverty reduction
3. Evaluate asset development policies and poverty reduction
4. Use NCCP's Family Resource Simulator to model safety net effectiveness and policy change

Reading:

Berlin, G. (2007). Rewarding the Work of Individuals: A Counterintuitive Approach to Reducing Poverty and Strengthening Families. *The Future of Children* 17(2), pp. 17-42.

Bartik, T. J. (2010). A Proposal for Early Impact, Persistent, and Cost-Effective Job Creation Policies. *Employment Research* 17(1), pp. 1-4.

Aratani, Y. and M. Chau (2010). Asset Poverty and Debt Among Families with Children. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty.

Smeeding, T. M. and J. Waldfogel (2010). Fighting Poverty: Attentive Policy Can Make a Huge Difference. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 29(2), pp. 401-407.

Smeeding, T. (2006). Poor People in Rich Nations: The United States in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20(1), pp. 69-90.

Moffitt, R. (2007). Four Decades of Antipoverty Policy: Past Developments and Future Directions. *Focus* 25(1), pp. 39-44.

Cancian, M. and S. Danziger (2009). Changing Poverty and Changing Antipoverty Policies. *Focus* 26(2), pp. 1-5.

Bane, M. J. (2009). Poverty Politics and Policy. *Focus* 26(2), pp. 75-80.

Purmort, Jessica (2010). Making Work Supports Work: A Picture of Low-Wage Workers in America. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

Assignment:

A short paper due for students who signed up on this topic
In-class group exercise

Session 3 Social Determinants of Child Health and Mental Health (Aratani)

Feb 3

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify key social factors that affect child health and mental health and the causes of health disparities
2. Explain the current strengths and weaknesses of the major children's public health policies and programs in addressing disparities in child health and mental health
3. Apply knowledge about the social determinants of child health and mental health and the status of current children's public health policies and programs for formulating recommendations for new or enhanced initiatives that reduce disparities in child health and mental health

Reading:

Costello EJ, Compton SN, Keeler G, Angold A. (2003). Relationships Between Poverty and Psychopathology. *JAMA*. 290:2023-2029.

Glied S, Cuellar AE. (2003). Trends and issues in child and adolescent mental health. *Health Affairs*. 22(5):39-50.

Kim, Young O. Rhee. (2005). Reducing Disparities in Dental Care for Low-income Hispanic Children. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 16 (3), August 2005, pp. 431-443.

Larson, K., Halfon, N. (2010). Family Income Gradients in the Health and Health Care Access of US Children. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*. 14:332-342.

Markel, H., Golden, J. (2004). Children's Public Health Policy In the United States: How The Past Can Inform The Future. *Health Affairs*, 23(5), 147-152.

Assignment:

A short paper due for students who signed up on this topic
In-class group exercise

Session 4 Early learning and development: Promoting long-term health and education outcomes (Smith)

Feb 10

- Risk and protective factors in early development
- Early experiences and their contribution to later education and health outcomes
- Children at exceptional risk
- Overview of key policies and programs

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify key elements of children's experiences and environments in the first five years that are essential to optimal development and major risk factors that impede positive outcomes;
2. Explain the contribution of early learning and development in the first five years of life to health outcomes during adolescence and adulthood;
3. Describe the specific goals and groups of children targeted by major programs and policies designed to support the healthy development and school readiness of young children growing up in poverty;

Reading:

Sektnan, M, McClelland, M., Acock, A., & Morrison, F. (2010) Relations between early family risk, children's behavior regulation, and academic achievement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 25, 464-479.

Halle, T., Forry, N., Hair, E., Perper, K., Wandner, L., Wessel, J., & Vick, J. (2009) Disparities in early learning and development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-B). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

Hernandez, D.J., Takanishi, R., Marotz, K.G. (2009) Life circumstances and public policies for young children in immigrant families. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 24, 487-501.

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2010) The Foundations of Lifelong Health are Built in Early Childhood. Available at:
<http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

Duncan, G.J., Zio-Guest, K.M., Kalil, K.M. (2010) Early childhood poverty and adult attainment, behavior, and health. *Child Development*, 81,1, 306-325.

Assignment:

A short paper due for students who signed up on this topic
In-class group exercise

Session 5 Early Learning and Development: Programs and Policies (Smith)

Feb 17

- The early care and education “system”
- New strategies for improving the quality of early care and education: Quality Rating Improvement Systems
- Home visiting
- Reaching the most vulnerable children: Part C Early Intervention; Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act; McKinney-Vento

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the specific goals and groups of children targeted by major programs and policies designed to support the healthy development and school readiness of young children growing up in poverty (cont.);
2. Explain the current strengths and weaknesses of these policies and programs including their reach and quality;
3. Apply knowledge about the needs of young children and the status of current policies and programs to formulate recommendations for new or enhanced initiatives that can better ensure positive outcomes for specific groups of vulnerable children.

Reading:

Magnuson, K. and Shager, H. (2010). Early education: Progress and promise for children from low-income families. *Children and Youth Services Review*. 32, 1186-1198.

Burchinal, P., Kainz, K., Cai, K., Tout, K., Zaslow, M., Martinez-Beck, I., and Rathgeb (2009) Early care and education and child outcomes. OPRE research to policy issue brief. Washington D.C.: Child Trends.

Ludwig, J., Phillips, D.A. (2007) The benefits and costs of Head Start. Society for Research in Child Development Social Policy Report. Available at: http://www.srpd.org/documents/publications/spr/21-3_early_childhood_education.pdf

Wong, V.C., Cook, T.D., Barnett, W.S., Jung, K. (2008) An effectiveness-based evaluation of five state prekindergarten programs. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 27, 122-154.

Ayoub, C., O’Conner, E., Rappolt-Schlichtmann, G., Vallotton, C., Raikes, H., and Chazan-Cohen, R. (2009) Cognitive skill performance among young children living in poverty: Risk, change, and the promotive effects of Early Head Start. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 24, 3, 289-305.

Council on Community Pediatrics (2009) The role of home-visiting programs in improving children’s developmental and health outcomes. *Pediatrics*. 123, 598-603.

Rosenberg, S.A., Zhang, D. Robinson, C.C. (2008) Prevalence of developmental delays and participation in early intervention services for young children. *Pediatrics*, 121, 1503-1509.

Assignment:

A short paper due for students who signed up on this topic
In-class group exercise

Session 6 Housing, Neighborhood and Child Development (Aratani)

Feb 24 Learning Objectives:

1. Identify key conceptual framework in understanding how living environment affects child development.
2. Describe key policies and programs that address improving the quality of housing and neighborhood for families with children
3. Identify current housing policy and program challenges including their reach and quality
4. Apply knowledge about key conceptual frameworks and formulate recommendations for new or enhanced initiatives that improve the quality of living environment that promotes positive child development

Reading:

Evans GW, Saltzman, H., & Cooperman, J. L. (2001). Housing Quality and Children's Socioemotional Health. *Environment and Behavior*. 33(3):389-399.

Sard, B., Fischer, W. (2008). *Preserving Safe, High Quality Public Housing Should Be a Priority of Federal Housing Policy*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Washington, DC.
<http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=655>

Leventhal T, Fauth RC, Brooks-Gunn J. (2005). Neighborhood poverty and public policy: A 5-year follow-up of children's educational outcomes in the New York City moving to opportunity demonstration. *Developmental Psychology*. 41(6):933-952.

Meyers, A., Frank, D. A., Roos, N., Peterson, K. E., Casey, V. A., Cupples, L. A., et al. (1995). Housing Subsidies and Pediatric Undernutrition. *Archive of Pediatrics and Adolescence Medicine*, 149(10), 1079-1084.

Yeung WJ, Linver MR, Brooks-Gunn J. (2002). How Money Matters for Young Children's Development: Parental Investment and Family Processes. *Child Development*. 73(6):1861-1879.

Assignment:

A short paper due for students who signed up on this topic
In-class group exercise

**Session 7 Student Policy Paper Presentations and Discussion and Concluding Thoughts
(Skinner, Smith and Aratani)**

Mar 3 Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the major child policy issues at the federal, state, and local level
2. Examine and critically assess the link between public policy and child health and well-being
3. Organize information and relevant research to articulate and advocate policy positions through written submissions and verbal presentations.

Reading:

None

Assignment:

Group project presentations