**Winter 2016**

**Early Childhood: Human Capital Development and Public Policy: PP 407**

Monday/Wednesday 1:30-2:50 Room 289A Harris

Instructor: Professor Ariel Kalil (akalil@uchicago.edu), Harris School of Public Policy Studies

Office Hours: By appointment

TA: Yuvraj Pathak ([ypathak@uchicago.edu](https://xmail.uchicago.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=0AZv8-eyT0WrzY6U9mIPQ_Q2YLI5GdMIXIGMTJMa57Mpti6LB10j_pla9oE7IEZivwnw11zw-hQ.&URL=mailto%3aypathak%40uchicago.edu))

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the literature on early child development and explore how an understanding of core developmental concepts can inform social policies. This goal will be addressed through an integrated, multidisciplinary approach. The course will emphasize research on the science of early child development from the prenatal period through school entry. The central debate about the role of early experience in development will provide a unifying strand for the course. Students will be introduced to research in neuroscience, psychology, economics, sociology, and public policy as it bears on questions about “what develops?” critical periods in development, the nature vs. nurture debate, and the ways in which environmental contexts (e.g., parents, families, peers, schools, institutions, communities) affect early development and developmental trajectories. The course will introduce students to the major disciplinary streams in the developmental sciences and the enduring and new debates and perspectives within the field. It will also examine the multiple contexts of early development to understand which aspects of young children’s environments affect their development and how those impacts arise. Throughout the course, we will explore how the principles of early childhood development can guide the design of policies and practices that enhance the healthy development of young children, particularly for those living in adverse circumstances, and thereby build a strong foundation for promoting equality of opportunity, reducing social class disparities in life outcomes, building human capital, fostering economic prosperity, and generating positive social change. In doing so, we will critically examine the evidence on whether the contexts of children’s development are amenable to public policy intervention and the costs and benefits of different policy approaches.

In this course students will critically examine historical trends, current challenges, and new directions in developmental science and early childhood policy. Through directed readings, written work, and class participation, students will have opportunities to grapple with the complexities of connecting scientific research to the formulation of evidence-based policies that advance the healthy development of children, families, and communities and bring high returns to all of society, in the United States and around the world.

The course will combine lecture and seminar format. Student participation, debate, and critique are strongly encouraged for all class types and will contribute to your final grade. **Laptops are to be used for note-taking only**. Our TA will monitor laptop use during every class period and spot checks of laptops will be conducted. Students found using lap-tops other than for note-taking will automatically lose 5 points (5% of grade) for each infraction.

**Class Participation**. Students are expected to do all of the required reading before class. Much of the class sessions will be used to discuss and critique the assigned readings. Students are expected to understand the following: What is the theory being advanced? What are the substantive findings? How do they bear on public policy? The active participation of all members of the class is essential to the course’s success. Therefore, it is important that you do all the assigned readings and come to class prepared to discuss and debate the issues raised in them.

**Written Assignments:**

**Reaction Papers**. Four times during the quarter, students will be required to submit short responses (3 double-spaced pages maximum) to an Op-Ed drawn from the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, or similar source whose topic bears on a research topic relevant to the course. Your responses should draw on the class readings to **rebut or support the argument made in the Op-Ed**. These papers are to be uploaded to Chalk by 5:00 Friday in weeks 3, 5, 7, and 9. Please use a standard 12-point font with 1-inch margins and make sure your documents are free of typos and grammatical errors. Chalk provides a time stamp for submissions and late papers will be docked 5 points for each hour late the paper is submitted (i.e., more than two hours late receives no credit for the assignment). These assignments will be distributed during the week the assignment is due.

**Exams** -- There will be an in-class midterm (Monday of week 6) and an in-class final exam (Wednesday of week 10). Each of these exams can be completed on your laptop (and emailed to the TA at the end of the exam period) or hand written in a blue book. These will be a combination of short answer/definitions and essay questions. The final exam will cover the material from the second half of the quarter only. The exams will be “open-book” but you will only be allowed to refer to course materials (assigned articles and class lecture material) in your answers.

**Grading**. The class must be taken for a letter grade. Students are not permitted to audit the class or take it pass/fail.

The grade for the course will be determined by the following: 25 points for the midterm and 25 points for the final; 10 points each for the four Op-Ed reaction papers and 10 points for class participation. Note that students must sign in for each class and any unexcused absence from class automatically loses 1 point from the class participation grade. Given the weight placed on class participation, students are expected to attend each class session, except in cases of illness or extenuating circumstances, and to notify me in advance if you must miss class.

Grades will be awarded based on total points:

A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82

C+ 77-79; C 73-78; C- 70-72; F < 70

**Course Materials**

Course materials are available through direct weblinks included on the syllabus. You can also access the articles using Google Scholar or any other search engine. You can access the materials from any campus computer or off-campus computer as long as you have a University connection.

# **Book for Purchase (Order paperback or Kindle Versions from Amazon)**

Duncan, G. & Murnane, R. (2014). *Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tough, P. (2012). *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*.

**Week 1: January 4 and January 6: Introduction to the Course; Influences on Early Brain Development**

January 4

The American Prospect (May 28, 2013, Chuck Collins) “The Wealthy Kids are Alright.” <http://prospect.org/article/wealthy-kids-are-all-right>

January 6

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004). *Young children develop in an environment of relationships*. Working Paper #1. <http://www.developingchild.net>

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2005/2014). *Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain*. Working Paper #3. Updated Edition. <http://www.developingchild.net>

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2011). *Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function.* Working Paper #11. <http://www.developingchild.net>.

**Week 2: January 11 and January 13: Poverty and Child Development**

January 11:

[Hackman, D.A., Farah, M.J. & Meaney, M.J.  (2010).  Socioeconomic status and the brain: Mechanistic insights from human and animal research.  *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 11, 651-659](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~mfarah/pdfs/HackmanFarahMeaney2010NRN.pdf). <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~mfarah/pdfs/HackmanFarahMeaney2010NRN.pdf>

Duncan, G., Ziol-Guest, K., & Kalil, A. (2010). Early childhood poverty and adult attainment, behavior, and health. *Child Development, 81,* 292-311.

Mani, A., Mullainathan, S., Shafir, E., & Zhao, J. (2013). Poverty impedes cognitive function. *Science,* Vol. 341, pp. 976-979.

January 13

Duncan & Murnane Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 8

Akee, R., Copeland, W., Keeler, G., Angold, A., and Costello, J. (2010). Parents’ incomes and children’s outcomes: A quasi-experiment. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics,* 2 (1), 86-115.

Duncan, G., Magnuson, K., & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2014). Boosting family income to promote child development. *The Future of Children, 24 (1),* 99-120. <http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/24_01_05.pdf>

**Week 3: January 18 and January 25: Executive function, self-regulation, and “non-cognitive skills”**

*January 18: No class: MLK Day*

January 25

How Children Succeed: Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-104)

Ursache, A., Blair, C., & Raver, C. (2012). The promotion of self-regulation as a means of enhancing school readiness and early achievement in children at risk for school failure. *Child Development Perspectives, 6*, (2), pp. 122-128.

[Blair](file:///C%3A%5CDocuments%20and%20Settings%5Crmr64%5CMy%20Documents%5CClasses%5CEarly%20Child%20Development%5CBlair), C. (2010). Stress and the development of self-regulation in context. *Child Development Perspectives, 4*(3). 181-188.

B. J. Casey, Leah H. Somerville, Ian H. Gotlib, Ozlem Ayduk, Nicholas T. Franklin, Mary K. Askren, John Jonides, Marc G. Berman, Nicole L. Wilson, Theresa Teslovich, Gary Glover, Vivian Zayas, Walter Mischel and Yuichi Shoda. (2011). Behavioral and neural correlates of delay of gratification 40 years later. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 108, No. 36, pp. 14998-15003.

The New Republic (Jeffrey Aaron Snyder, May 6 2014): “Teaching kids “grit” is all the rage. Here’s what’s wrong with it.” <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/117615/problem-grit-kipp-and-character-based-education>

**Op-Ed assignment 1 due by Friday: How to help the poor (Respond to David Brooks, New York Times)**

**Week 4: January 25 and January 27: Parenting and the Home Environment**

January 25

Weaver IC, Cervoni N, Champagne FA, D'Alessio AC, Sharma S, Seckl JR, Dymov S, Szyf M, Meaney MJ (2004). Epigenetic programming by maternal behavior. *Nature Neuroscience,* 7 (8), 847–54.

Guryan, J., Hurst, E., & Kearney, M. (2008). Parental education and parental time with children. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 22*, 23-46.

January 27

Kalil, A. (2014). *Addressing the parenting divide and children’s life chances*. The Hamilton Project Discussion Paper (Chapter 2 in The Hamilton Project’s “Policies to Address Poverty in America”). Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution. <http://www.hamiltonproject.org/files/downloads_and_links/parenting_divide_early_child_development_kalil.pdf>

Olds. D., Henderson, C, Kitzman, H., Eckenrode, J., Cole, R. & Tatelbaum, R. (1999). Prenatal and infancy home visiting by nurses: Recent findings. *Future of Children, 9*, (1), 44-65. <http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/09_01_02.pdf>

The New Yorker (Margaret Talbot, January 12 2015). *The Talking Cure*. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/01/12/talking-cure>

The New York Times (Sabrina Tavernise, March 8 2015). *Visiting Nurses, Helping Mothers at the Margins*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/09/health/program-that-helps-new-mothers-learn-to-be-parents-faces-broader-test.html?smid=nytcore-iphone-share&smprod=nytcore-iphone&_r=1>

**Week 5: February 1 and February 3: The Context of Family Structure**

February 1

Kalil, A., Ryan, R., & Chor, E. (2014). Time investments in children across family structures. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *654*, 150-168.

Edin, K. and Kefalas, M. (2005). Unmarried with children. *Contexts* 4(2), 16-22.

Jencks, C., and McLanahan, S. (2015) Was Moynihan right? What happens to children of unmarried mothers. *EdNext, 15(2):* <http://educationnext.org/was-moynihan-right/>

New York Times (Jason deParle, July 14, 2012). “Two classes, divided by ‘I do.’” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/us/two-classes-in-america-divided-by-i-do.html?ref=us>

February 3

Haskins, R. (2014, Spring). Marriage, parenthood, and public policy. *National Affairs*, 55-72.

Schneider, D. (2015). Lessons learned from non-marriage experiments. *Future of Children*, 25 (2), pp 155-178.

**Op-Ed assignment #2 due by Friday: Marriage promotion as public policy. Respond to Charles Murray, WSJ**

**Week 6: February 8 and February 10: Promoting Young Children’s Health**

**Monday February 8: In-class MIDTERM covering Weeks 1-5.**

February 10

Rossin-Slater, M. (2015). Promoting health in early childhood. *Future of Children*, 25 (1), pp. 35-64.

Berger, L. & Font, S. (2015). The role of the family and family-centered programs and policies. *Future of Children*, 25 (1), pp. 155-176.

Gundersen, C. (2015). Food assistance programs and child health. *Future of Children*, 25 (1), pp. 91-109.

**Week 7: February 15 and 17: Early Experience, Severe Early Deprivation and Resilience**

February 15

Heckman, J. (2012). Primate evidence on the late health effects of early-life adversity (with G. Conti, C. Hansman, M. Novak, A. Ruggiero, S. Suomi). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109 (23), 8866-8871.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2010). *Early experiences can alter gene expression and affect long-term development*. Working Paper #10. <http://www.developingchild.net>

Pluess, M. & Belsky, J. (2009). Differential susceptibility to rearing experience: The case of child care. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 50*(4), 396-404.

February 17

Smyke, A.T., Zeanah, C.H., Fox, N.A., Nelson, C.A. & Guthrie, D. (2010). Placement in foster care enhances quality of attachment among young institutionalized children. *Child Development, 81(1),* 212-223.

Belsky, J. & Pluess, M. (2009). The nature (and nurture?) of plasticity in early human development. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4 (4), 345-351.

New York Times (Andrea Elliott): December 2013: Invisible Child: Dasani’s Homeless Life (parts 1-5). Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2013/invisible-child/#/?chapt=1>

**Op-Ed Assignment #3 due by Friday: Respond to Belsky, New York Times**

**Week 8: February 22 and 24: Early Childhood Care and Education**

February 22

The New Republic (Jonathan Cohn), April 2013. “The Hell of American Daycare.” <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/112892/hell-american-day-care>

Knudsen, E. I, Heckman, J. J., Cameron, J. L., & Shonkoff, J. P. (2006). Economic, neurobiological, and behavioral perspectives on building America’s future workforce. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 103*(27), 10155–10162.

Duncan & Murnane: Chapters 4 and 5

February 24

Schweinhardt, L. et al. (2011). The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through age 40: Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions. Download the PDF summary (“The Age 40 Results”) at: <http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=219>

Heckman, J. (2014). “Labor Market Returns to an Early Childhood Stimulation Intervention in Jamaica,” (with P. Gertler, R. Pinto, A. Zanolini, C. Vermeerch, S. Walker, S. Chang, S. Grantham-McGregor). *Science*, 344(6187): 998-1001.

**Week 9: February 29 and March 2: Head Start and Universal Pre-K**

**February 29:**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010, January). *Head Start Impact Study: Final report*. Executive Summary. Washington, DC: Author.

Gelber, A. & Isen, A. (2013). Children’s schooling and parents’ behavior: Evidence from the Head Start Impact Study. *Journal of Public Economics, 101*, 25-38.

**March 2:**

Duncan, G. & Magnuson, K. Early childhood interventions for low-income children. *Focus*, Vol 31 (2), Fall/Winter 2014-2015.

Yoshikawa, Weiland et al. (2013, October). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. Society for Research in Child Development/Foundation for Child Development. http://fcd-us.org/resources/evidence-base-preschool

How Children Succeed: Chapter 4 and 5 (pp. 148-197)

**Op-Ed assignment #4 due by Friday. How best to invest in children’s development? Respond to Kristoff , New York Times**

**Week 10: March 7 and 9: New approaches to intervention: Perspectives from behavioral science**

March 7:

Mayer, S., Kalil, A., Oreopoulos, P. & Gallegos, S. (2015). *Using behavioral insights to increase parental engagement. The Parents and Children Together (PACT) intervention*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 21602. http://www.nber.org/papers/w21602

Gennetian, L. & Shafir, E. (2015). The persistence of poverty in the context of financial instability: A behavioral perspective. *Journal of Policy and Management*, 34 (4), 904-936.

Eduardo Porter (2016, February 23). “Nudges aren’t enough for problems like retirement savings.” New York Times.

**March 9: In-Class final EXAM**