AERA Open Special Topic Call for Papers

Successfully Taking Preschool to Scale: Implications of Research for Policy and Practice

Special Topic Editors: Daphna Bassok and Mimi Engel

Public interest and investment in early childhood education has escalated rapidly over the past two decades. Between 2001 and 2014 state spending on preschool more than doubled, going from $2.4 to $5.6 billion. Similarly, the number of children now in public preschool has nearly doubled since the early nineties. The federal government has also increased its emphasis on early childhood education, competitively allocating roughly one billion dollars to 20 states since 2011, with the explicit goal of improving access to high-quality early learning experiences.

The evidence most often cited to motivate this increased public investment comes from rigorous studies examining the short and long-term impacts of small interventions that took place decades ago. While that evidence is compelling, recent studies suggest more modest initial benefits from preschool participation, and two large-scale experiments suggest rapid fade-out as children progress through school. The implications of these recent results for public policy around early childhood education are unclear.

This special topics issue aims to take stock of the current evidence on the effects of preschool programs, both in general and those that are implemented on a large scale. We are interested in results of interventions and strategies for improving the quality of scaled up preschool initiatives through strategies including, but not limited to, curricular reform, reduced fragmentation, accountability, programmatic alignment, and labor market reforms. We encourage submissions that directly address issues of racial, ethnic, language, and/or socioeconomic diversity.

Interested authors should submit an abstract (no more than 500 words) describing their proposed manuscript. Editors will review and invite selected authors to submit full manuscripts for possible inclusion in the special topic. All manuscript submissions will go through peer review and meet the publication standards of AERA Open. An invitation to submit a full manuscript is not a guarantee of acceptance.

Publication Timeline:
July 1, 2016: Submission deadline for abstracts (submit to AERAOpenEditors@aera.net)
August 1, 2016: Invitation to authors to submit manuscripts
January 1, 2017: Manuscripts due
4th quarter 2017 (approximately): Articles published

Please direct questions regarding the special topic to Daphna Bassok and/or Mimi Engel (db9ec@virginia.edu, mimi.engel@vanderbilt.edu).

Please consult the AERA Open website for general guidelines on manuscript submission.