

Cora E. Bennett

Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research
Department of Economics
University of Tennessee
916 Volunteer Boulevard
Knoxville, TN 37966

Phone: (+1) 317-626-6600
Email: corabennett@utk.edu
Website: www.CoraBennett.org
Citizenship: USA
Last Updated: September 2020

Education

Ph.D., Economics, University of Tennessee, Knoxville	Expected May 2021
M.A., Economics, University of Tennessee, Knoxville	2017
B.S., Economics, Seton Hall University, <i>magna cum laude</i>	2012

Research Interests

Public Economics, Labor Economics, Economics of Education

Research in Progress

It's Dolly's World, We're Just Reading in It: The Effects of an Early Childhood Literacy Program (Job Market Paper)

Recent empirical work has investigated early childhood interventions that occur during formal schooling, such as preschool and kindergarten, but we know less about the formative years prior to that time. I assess the effects of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a program that mails free books to children between the ages of birth and five years old, on elementary standardized test scores. I exploit the timing of the introduction of the program across school districts using data from Stanford's Education Opportunity Project for the years 2009-2016. I measure the change in educational achievement for cohorts who were exposed to the program relative to those that were not. Results suggest small, mixed effects on later student achievement for the full sample of students. Generally, access to the program has a negative effect on third grade English Language Arts (ELA) exams but a more positive effect on later ELA and math exams, however many of these results fail to reach statistical significance. Heterogeneous analysis suggests access to the program could increase average scores for poorer school districts and decrease achievement inequality between high and low-achieving school districts. These small effects suggest programs with little mandated interaction have analogously smaller impacts than their more intensive counterparts, such as full day kindergarten.

Do Benefit Phase-outs and Cliffs Create a Poverty Trap?

Does Payday Lending Reduce Crime?

Academic & Teaching Experience

Sole Instructor

Econ 201: Introductory Economics, Survey Course	Fall 2019
Econ 211: Principles of Microeconomics	Summer 2019

Graduate Research Assistant

Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Tennessee	Fall 2018-
---	------------

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Econ 512: Graduate Microeconomic Theory II	Spring 2018
Econ 511: Graduate Microeconomic Theory I	Fall 2017
Econ 211: Principles of Microeconomics	Spring 2017
Econ 201: Introductory Economics, Survey Course	Fall 2016

Other Research Experience

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Policy Analysis Division Intern	Summer 2015
--	-------------

Awards and Honors

Haslam Doctoral Scholarship, University of Tennessee	2016-2021
Chi Alpha Sigma, National College Athlete Honor Society, Seton Hall	2016
Omicron Delta Epsilon, Honor Society for Economics, Seton Hall	2016
Big East All-Academic Team, Seton Hall University	2012-2016

Conference and Seminar Presentations

2020 University of Tennessee Brown Bag Workshop, National Tax Association Annual Meetings, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (Poster)

2019 Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Regional Student Conference, University of Tennessee Brown Bag Workshop

2018 University of Tennessee Brown Bag Workshop

Professional Activities

Member: American Economic Association, Association for Public Policy and Analysis, National Tax Association, Southern Economic Association