

CATHERINE ARMSTRONG ASHER

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Education

Harvard University, Cambridge MA

Ph.D. in Education 2021

A.M. in Statistics 2018

Ed.M. in Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education 2017

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

A.B. in Economics with High Honors 2010

Academic and Research Positions

2021 – present	Assistant Research Scientist Youth Policy Lab, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Winter 2022	Lecturer Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
2015 – 2021	Graduate Research Assistant Professor James Kim, READS Lab at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA
2012 – 2015	Technical Research Assistant K-12 Policy Area, MDRC, New York, NY

Publications

In Progress

Lynch, K., **Asher, C.A.**, Gotwals, A., & Settledge, J. (*under review*). Early Childhood Science, Technology, and Engineering Education: A Meta-Analysis of Learning and Teaching Innovations.

Asher, C.A. (*in preparation*). Measurement Error in the Tailoring Variable: Conceptual Framing and Research Implications.

Asher, C.A., Tang, S., & Hamp, N. (*in preparation*). Early Intervention Referral Practices Among Pediatric Physicians.

Peer-reviewed articles

Mattera, S., Jacob, R.T., & **Asher, C.A.**, & Morris-Perez, P. (*accepted*). The Impact of Making PreK Count on Short and Longer-term Academic Outcomes. *Journal for Research on Educational Effectiveness*

Asher, C.A. (*forthcoming*). Counterfactual Differences and Variation in the Impacts of a District-Run Universal Pre-K Program. *Early Education & Development*. DOI: 10.1080/10409289.2025.2502900

- Asher, C.A.**, Scherer, E., Kim, J.S., Tvedt, J. (2024). Understanding Heterogeneous Patterns of Family Engagement with Educational Technology to Inform School-Family Communication in Linguistically Diverse Districts. *Educational Researcher*.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X241238651>
- Asher, C.A.**, Scherer, E., and Kim, J.S. Using a Factorial Design to Maximize the Effectiveness of a Parental Text Messaging Intervention (2022). *Journal for Research on Educational Effectiveness*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2021.2009073>
- Schueler, B., **Asher, C.A.**, Larned, K., Mehrotra, S., and Pollard, C. (2021). Improving Low-Performing Schools: A Meta-Analysis of Impact Evaluation Studies. *American Education Research Journal*.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/000283122111060855>
- Kim, J.S., Burkhauser, M.A., Mesite, L.M., **Asher, C.A.**, Relyea, J.E., Fitzgerald, J., and Elmore, J. (2020). Improving Reading Comprehension, Science Domain Knowledge, and Reading Engagement through a First-Grade Content Literacy Intervention. *Journal of Educational Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000465>
- Kim, J.S., **Asher, C.A.**, Burkhauser, M.A., Mesite, L.M., and Leyva, D. (2019). Using a Sequential Multiple Assignment Randomized Trial (SMART) to Develop an Adaptive K-2 Literacy Intervention with Personalized Print Texts and App-Based Digital Activities. *AERA Open*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419872701>
- Troyer, M., Kim, J. S., Hale, E., Wantchekon, K. A., and **Armstrong, C.** (2018). Relations Among Intrinsic and Extrinsic Reading Motivation, Reading Amount, and Comprehension: A Conceptual Replication. *Reading and Writing*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-018-9907-9>
- Jacob, R.T., **Armstrong, C.**, Bowden, A.B, and Pan, Y. (2016). Leveraging Volunteers: An Experimental Evaluation of a Tutoring Program for Struggling Readers. *Journal for Research on Educational Effectiveness*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2016.1138560>
- Reports and policy briefs*
- Kim, J.S., **Armstrong, C.**, and Kelley-Kemple, T. (2017). Practices Matter: Major Findings from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Teacher Literacy Survey. READS Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Jacob, R.T., **Armstrong, C.**, and Willard, J.A., with Bowden, A.B., Pan, Y. (2015). Mobilizing Volunteers: How the Reading Partners Program Leverages Community Resources to Help Struggling Readers. MDRC.

Grants and Funding

Pending

- 2025 – 2026 Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce. “Detroit Area Talent Fund Evaluation”
Role: U-M Principal Investigator/Consultant
 Total award: \$199,954
- 2025 – 2026 Accelerate – The National Collaborative for Accelerated Learning. “Multi-arm Evaluations for Accelerate’s Call to Effective Action”
Role: Principal Investigator
 Total award: \$400,000

Awarded

- 2024 – 2025 Accelerate - The National Collaborative for Accelerated Learning. “RCT of Accelerate’s Call to Effective Action”
Role: Principal Investigator
Total award: \$300,000
- 2023 – 2026 Arnold Ventures via subaward from Reading Partners. “Reading Partners Expanded Evaluation”
Role: Co-Investigator (PI: Dean Elson)
Total subaward: \$772,725
- 2022 – 2026 U.S. Department of Education. “Evaluating the Impact of TRAILS on Academic and Behavioral Health Outcomes in Detroit Public School Students”
Role: Co-Investigator (PI: Robin Jacob)
Total award: \$3,797,950
- 2022 – 2026 National Science Foundation via subaward from University of Connecticut. “The Impacts of Early Childhood Science, Technology, and Engineering Interventions on Student Learning and Classroom Instruction: A Meta-Analysis”
Role: Co-Principal Investigator (PI: Kathleen Lynch)
Total subaward: \$102,358
- 2023 – 2025 American Educational Research Association. “Impacts of Grade Retention for English Learners in North Carolina”.
Role: Principal Investigator
Total award: \$34,751
- 2022 – 2025 Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce. “Strategic Data Partnership Continuation”.
Role: Principal Investigator
Total award: \$197,882
- 2021 – 2025 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration via subaward from Michigan Department of Education . “Michigan Department of Education Project AWARE”
Role: Co-Investigator (PI: Aimee Alaniz)
Total subaward: \$994,953
- 2023 – 2025 Michigan Health Endowment Fund. “EMR-Integrated Early On eFax Referral Project”
Role: Principal Investigator
Total award: \$274,422
- 2021 – 2023 Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce. “Detroit Chamber Debt Forgiveness Evaluation”
Role: Principal Investigator
Total award: \$40,000

Honors and Awards

PhD Commencement Marshal, *Harvard Graduate School of Education* (2021)

IES Partnering in Education Research Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, *Harvard University* (2017-2019; \$68,000)

Harvard Presidential Scholar (2015-2016; \$4,000)

Updated May 2025

Fellowship for Emerging Leaders in Public Service, *Wagner School of Public Service, NYU* (2013-2014)

Professional Activities and Service

2023 – Present	<i>Graduate Student Mentor</i> , Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
2022 – Present	<i>Conference Abstract Reviewer</i> , Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Association for Public Policy and Management
2021, 2024 – Present	<i>Faculty Advisor</i> , Strategic Data Project at the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University
2019 – Present	<i>Ad hoc reviewer</i> , Journal for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Educational Psychology Review, Review of Educational Research, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Evaluation Review, AERA Open, Journal of the American Statistical Association: Applications & Case Studies, Institute for Education Sciences
2023	<i>Methodological Expert & Small Group Facilitator</i> , Comprehensive Program for Adaptive Interventions Training in Education (CATIE) at the d3Center at the University of Michigan
2022 – 2023	<i>Advisory Group</i> , Preparation of Early On Michigan Data for Researchers, Education Policy Institute, University of Michigan
2020 – 2021	<i>Advisor for master's degree students</i> , Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE)
2017 – 2021	<i>Founder & Coordinator</i> , HGSE Ph.D. Buddy Program for Incoming Students

Invited Presentations and Guest Lectures

2025	National Student Support Accelerator 2025 Conference
2022	Education Policy Initiative, University of Michigan
2021	University of Massachusetts-Amherst; Ford School of Public Policy, PP 712

Conference Presentations

Asher, C.A., Hamp, N., Jiang, Z. (2024, November). Improving Access to Special Education Early Intervention Services through a Technology & Information Intervention. Association for Public Policy & Management (APPAM), National Harbor, MD.

Asher, C.A., Jacob, R., Mattera, S. (2024, September). Impacts of High Quality Pre-K on Chronic Absenteeism. Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE), Baltimore, MD.

Asher, C.A., Mumma, Kirsten S. (2024, April). Impacts of Third-Grade Retention and Grade Placement in North Carolina. American Education Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.

Session Organizer for Peko-Spicer, S., Jacob, R.T, McDaniel, M., Fields, P. (2023, September). Community Advisory Boards in the Real World – Insights from Three Projects. SREE, Arlington, VA.

Asher, C.A., Scherer, E., Kim, J.S., Tvedt, J. (2023, March). Understanding Heterogeneous Patterns of Family Engagement with Educational Technology to Inform School-Family Communications in Linguistically Diverse Districts. Association for Education Finance & Policy (AEFP), Denver, CO.

Asher, C.A., Scherer, E., Kim, J.S., Tvedt, J. (2022, November). Understanding Patterns of Family Engagement with Educational Technology. APPAM, Washington, D.C.

- Asher, C.A.** (2022, September). Measurement Error in the Tailoring Variable: Implications for Implementation and Analysis of SMARTs. SREE, Arlington, VA.
- Asher, C.A.,** Scherer, E., Kim, J.S. (2022, September). Understanding Patterns of Family Engagement with Educational Technology to Inform School-Family Communications. SREE, Arlington, VA.
- Asher, C.A.,** Miratrix, L. (2021, September). Improving Inference in Sequential Multiple Assignment Randomized Trials (SMARTs) Using Principal Stratification. SREE, virtual due to COVID-19.
- Asher, C.A.,** Miratrix, L. (2021, March). Improving Inference in Sequential Multiple Assignment Randomized Trials (SMARTs) Using Principal Stratification. AEFPP, virtual due to COVID-19.
- Schueler, B., **Asher, C.A.,** Larned, K.K., Mehrotra, S., Pollard, C. (2021, March). A Meta-Analysis of Causal Evidence on Post-NCLB Efforts to Improve Low Performing Schools. AEFPP, remote due to Covid.
- Asher, C.A.,** Scherer, E., Kim, J.S. (2020, November). Using a Factorial Design to Maximize the Effectiveness of a Parental Text Messaging Intervention. APPAM, remote due to COVID-19.
- Schueler, B., **Asher, C.A.,** Larned, K.K., Mehrotra, S., Pollard, C. (2020, November). Improving Low-Performing Schools: A Meta-Analysis of Impact Evaluation Studies. APPAM, remote due to Covid.
- Asher, C.A.** (2020, March). Understanding How District-Provided Pre-K Impacts Depend on the Counterfactual. AEFPP, virtual due to COVID-19.
- Asher, C.A.,** Scherer, E., Kim, J.S. (2020, March). Using a Factorial Design to Understand Varying Effects of Parental Text Messaging Interventions. AEFPP, virtual due to COVID-19.
- Asher, C.A.** (2019, November). Understanding How District-Provided Pre-K Impacts Depend on the Counterfactual. Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), Denver, CO.
- Armstrong, C.,** Kim, J., Burkhauser, M., Mesite, L. (2019, March). Developing and Testing the Effects of an App-Supported Personalized Literacy Intervention to Improve Reading Engagement and Comprehension. SREE, Washington, DC.
- Kim, J., Burkhauser, M., Mesite, L. & **Armstrong, C.** (2019, March). Using Design-Based Implementation Research and a Randomized Controlled Trial to Replicate, Refine, and Study the Effectiveness of a Model of Reading Engagement (MORE). SREE, Washington, DC.
- Miratrix, L., Bertling, M., **Armstrong, C.,** Weidmann, B. (2018, February). Using Covariates to Detect Treatment Effect Heterogeneity in Multisite Trials. SREE, Washington, DC.
- Kim, J., **Armstrong, C.,** Quinn, D.M. (2017, March). Impact of Differential Treatment Trajectories on Reading Growth. SREE, Washington, DC.
- Jacob, R.T., **Armstrong, C.,** Bowden, A.B, Pan, Y. (2015, November). Capitalizing on Volunteer Tutors: An Experimental Evaluation of a Tutor-Based Program for Elementary Struggling Readers. APPAM, Miami, FL.
- Jacob, R.T, Elson, D., Bowden, A.B, **Armstrong, C.** (2015, March). Exploring the Implementation, Effectiveness, and Costs of the Reading Partners Program. SREE, Washington, DC.

Teaching Experience

Lead Instructor, Ford School of Public Policy

Updated May 2025

2022, Winter PubPol 639: Quantitative Methods for Program Evaluation
Graduate Student Teaching Fellow, Harvard University

2018, 2019 Fall Multilevel and Longitudinal Models (cross-listed in Statistics Department), earned
Certificate of Distinction in Teaching both years

2019 Spring Intermediate and Advanced Statistical Methods for Applied Educational Research

2018 Fall Politics and Education Policy in the U.S.

2018 Spring Intermediate Statistics: Applied Regression and Data Analysis

2017 Fall Introduction to Applied Data Analysis

2017 Spring Accumulating Evidence: How to Conduct a Quantitative Research Synthesis that
Informs Educational Policy and Practice (Meta-Analysis)