

## Laura Stilwell

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<https://laurastilwell.github.io>

- Education**     **Duke School of Medicine/Sanford School of Public Policy**  
 MD expected May 2025  
 Primary Care Leadership Track (PCLT)  
 PhD in Public Policy, Dissertation defended on April 6, 2024  
 Dissertation title: “Three Essays on the Well-being of Children and Families”  
 Committee: Lisa Gennetian (Chair), Kate Bundorf, Manoj Mohanan, Marcos Rangel
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology**  
 BS in Economics, 2014
- Research Interests**     Child health & development in low-resource settings, housing and child health, prevention and evaluation of child maltreatment, child poverty, infant feeding
- Research**     **Peer-reviewed manuscripts (including accepted):**
1. **Stilwell, L.**, Morales-Gracia, M., Magnuson, K., Gennetian, L., Sauval, M., Fox, N., Halpern-Meekin, S., Yoshikawa, H., Noble, K. (2024). “Unconditional Cash and Breastfeeding, Child Care and Maternal Employment Among Families with Young Children Residing in Poverty.” *Social Service Review* 98(2): 000-000.
  2. Halpern-Meekin, S., Gennetian, L. Hoiting, J., **Stilwell, L.**, Meyer, L. (2024). “Monthly unconditional income supplements starting at birth: Experiences among mothers of young children in poverty in the U.S.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 43(3): 871-898.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22571>
  3. **Stilwell, L.**, Golonka M., Ankoma-Sey, K., Yancy, M., Kaplan, S., Terrell, L., & Gifford, E. (2022). “Electronic Health Record Strategies to Identify and Evaluate Child Maltreatment: Systematic Literature Review and Key Informant Interviews” *Academic Pediatrics*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2022.01.017>
  4. Golonka, M., Liu, Y., Rohrs, R., Copeland, J., Byrd, J., **Stilwell, L.**, Crew, C., Kuehn, M., Snyder-Fickler, E., Hurst, J. H., Evans, K. E., Terrell, L., & Gifford, E. J. (2022). “What Do Child Abuse and Neglect Medical Evaluation Consultation Notes Tell Researchers and Clinicians?” *Child Maltreatment*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595221134537>
  5. Liu, Y., Shepherd-Banigan, M., Evans, K., **Stilwell, L.**, Terrell, L., Hurst, J., Gifford, E. (2022) “Do children evaluated for maltreatment have higher subsequent emergency department and inpatient care utilization compared with a general pediatric sample?” *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 134, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105938>
- Policy Briefs & Commentaries:**
1. **Stilwell, L.**, Franklin, M., Buck, A., Green, S., Hurewitz, S., Johnson, S., Vasudeva, K., Gifford, B., Schmidler, G., Cholera, R. (2023) “[Landscape of Early Childhood Housing Instability & Homelessness in North Carolina and Recommendations to Address Unmet Needs](#).” Margolis Center for Health Policy, Duke University.
  2. **Stilwell, L.**, Golonka M., Ankoma-Sey, K., Yancy, M., Kaplan, S., Liu, Y., Terrell, L., & Gifford, E. (2023, November). “[What We Know About Current Electronic Health Record Tools for the Identification and Management of Child Abuse](#).” Center for Child & Family Policy, Duke University.
  3. **Stilwell, L.** & Merritt., D.H. (2023) "Methodology and interpretation of recent Rebbe et al paper." *The Journal of Pediatrics*. 261.
  4. Liu, Y., Shepherd-Banigan, M., Evans, K., **Stilwell, L.**, Terrell, L., Hurst, J., Gifford, E. (2023, March). “[Children Evaluated for Maltreatment Have Higher Subsequent Emergency Department and Inpatient Care Utilization than the General Pediatric Population](#).” Center for Child & Family Policy, Duke University.

5. Stilwell, L. & Gennetian, L. [Economics of Infant Feeding in the U.S.](#) *Econofact*. Posted October 7, 2022.

### Working Papers & Ongoing Projects:

1. Gennetian, L., Maury, M., Stilwell, L., Shah, H., Magnuson, K., Noble, K., Duncan, G., Fox, N., Halpern-Meekin, S., Yoshikawa, H. "The Impact of Monthly Unconditional Cash on Food Security, Spending, and Consumption: Three Year Follow-Up Findings from the Baby's First Years Study." (April 2, 2024). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4781670>
2. The Causal Impact of Poverty Reduction on Housing Conditions of Low-Income, U.S. Children: Evidence from Baby's First Years (Chapter 2 of Dissertation)
 

**Abstract:** Early housing environments are critical for children's healthy development, yet a worsening housing affordability crisis and insufficient housing supports has left millions of low-income families with children unable to find safe, affordable rental housing. With increase interest in guaranteed income programs and unconditional cash support, understanding whether direct cash assistance can improve housing outcomes of low-income children is an important policy question. This paper evaluates the impact of an unconditional cash transfer on housing conditions for low-income families with young children using data from the Baby's First Years randomized control trial. 1000 low-income mothers were recruited in maternity wards between May 2018 and June 2019 shortly after giving birth to their infants and randomized into a high-cash (\$333 per month; 40% of all mothers) or low-cash gift group (\$20 per month; 60% of all mothers). Using data from the Age 1, 2, and 3 survey, we find no impacts of the high-cash gift on likelihood of mothers experiencing evictions or homelessness. The high-cash gift mothers were less likely to have ever received housing assistance and may have been more likely to own a home at age 1 and age 2. At age 3, mothers had a decreased likelihood of being cost burdened (>30% of income toward rent) and severely cost burdened (>50% of income toward rent). Mothers in the high-cash gift group were also less likely to ever live in a doubled-up (living with an adult who is not a partner) or multigenerational household between birth and age 3. We find no statistically significant differences in survey reports of housing quality.
3. Infant Feeding in Pakistan (with Erica Field, PhD, Kate Vyborny, PhD, Nicola Singletary, PhD, IBCLC)
 

**Abstract:** Breastfeeding is critical for infant health, particularly in poor settings, as it ensures infants receive key nutrients and protects infants from lethal water-borne infections such as diarrheal disease and pneumonia. Worldwide, adoption of WHO-recommended breastfeeding practices could avert over 820,000 infant deaths annually, which include: (1) early initiation (< 1 hour after birth), (2) exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, and (3) continued breastfeeding with appropriate complementary foods for > 2 years. Collaborating with UNICEF and the Government of Punjab, we will conduct a randomized evaluation of an innovative mobile health app designed to support the promotion of WHO-recommended breastfeeding practices by Pakistan's Lady Health Workers. Using variation in breastfeeding behavior induced by the intervention, we will quantify the causal effect of breastfeeding on infant and maternal health outcomes. Innovative sub-experiments will also allow us to estimate the impact of measurement error on the relationship between breastfeeding and health outcomes.
4. Evaluating the impact of community health workers on maternal and child health outcomes: Evidence from a natural experiment (with Erica Field, PhD and Kate Vyborny, PhD)
 

**Abstract:** Community Health Workers (CHWs) are uniquely positioned to reduce maternal and child health disparities in developing countries. Over 4 million CHWs worldwide provide health services to millions of households, with many programs focusing specifically on maternal and child health (Schneider et al. 2016; WHO, 2023). However, despite the wide reach of these programs, there exists little, high-quality evidence on the causal impact of CHWs on maternal and child health outcomes (Lewin et al., 2010). We propose to leverage detailed micro-data from over 100,000 households in Punjab, Pakistan in combination with a quasi-experimental change in CHW coverage. Punjab's CHW program focuses on child and maternal health and has a wide reach in rural areas where access to other health care is limited. By exploiting the quasi-experimental change in coverage, we aim to address the following research questions: (1) How does CHW coverage affect health beliefs, behaviors, and maternal and child health outcomes?; (2) What are the medium-term effects on health outcomes for children exposed to CHW support in utero / in infancy?; and (3) How do effects evolve over time after a community loses access to a CHW? This project will provide robust evidence on the impact of Punjab's CHW program and lay a strong foundation for future collaborations with the government to study the CHW program. More broadly, this study will provide critical evidence on the causal impact of CHWs on child and maternal well-being and their role in promoting global health equity.
5. Days at Home among Child and Adolescent NC Medicaid Beneficiaries by Complexity of Chronic Disease (with Caleb Easterly, Neal deJong, MD, MPH, David Ming, MD, Justin Trogdon, PhD)

**Acknowledged Contributions:**

1. Banerjee, A., Duflo, E., Grela, E., McKelway, M., Schilbach, F., Sharma, G., & Vaidyanathan, G. (2022) "[Depression and Loneliness Among the Elderly Poor](#)" (No. w30330). *National Bureau of Economic Research*.
2. Wong, C., Ming, D., Maslow, G., Gifford, E. (2020). "[Mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic response on at-risk children](#)." *Pediatrics* 145, no. 4.
3. Banerjee, A., Barnhardt, S., Duflo, E. (2018). "[Can iron-fortified salt control anemia? Evidence from two experiments in rural Bihar](#)." *Journal of Development Economics* 133 (2018): 127-146.
4. Duflo, E. "[Richard T. Ely lecture: The economist as plumber](#)." (2017). *American Economic Review* 107(5): 1-26.
5. Bertrand, M, Duflo, E. "[Field experiments on discrimination](#)." (2017). In *Handbook of Economic Field Experiments*, vol. 1, pp. 309-393. North-Holland.
6. Banerjee, A., Duflo, E., Kremer, M. (2016). "The influence of randomized controlled trials on development economics research and on development policy." *The State of Economics, The State of the World*.
7. Banerjee, A., Barnhardt, S., Duflo, E. (2015). "[Movies, margins, and marketing: Encouraging the adoption of iron-fortified salt](#)." In *Insights in the Economics of Aging*, pp. 285-306. University of Chicago Press.

**Conferences  
& Invited  
Presentations**  
\*indicates  
presenter

1. Basloe, M.,\* Haskett, M.,\* **Stilwell, L.\*** "Early Childhood Homelessness: What We've Learned and Plans for Action." Smart Start Conference. Presentation. May 2024. Greensboro, NC.
2. Easterly, C.,\* **Stilwell, L.,\*** Trogon, J., Ming, D., deJong, N. "Days at Home among Children with Medical Complexity: Differences by Payer and Place of Residence in North Carolina." Pediatric Academic Societies. Platform Presentation. May 2024. Toronto, Canada.
3. **Stilwell, L.,\*** Buck, A., Green, S., Hurewitz, S., Johnson, S., Vasudeva, K., Cholera, R., Franklin, M., Gifford, B., Schmidler, G. "Early Childhood Housing Instability & Homelessness in North Carolina: Landscape and Recommendations to Address Unmet Needs" Duke Department of Pediatrics Research Retreat. Poster. April 2024.
4. **Stilwell, L.,\*** Gennetian, L., Magnuson, K., Duncan, G., Fox, N., Halpern-Meekin, S., Noble, K., Yoshikawa, H. "The Causal Impact of Poverty Reduction on Housing Conditions of Low-Income, U.S. Children: Evidence from Baby's First Years."
  - The 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference for the Society for Humanities, Social Science, and Medicine. Panel Presentation. *Structural Vulnerability Across the Lifecourse*. April 2024. Chapel Hill, NC
  - Duke Department of Pediatrics Research Retreat. Poster. April 2024. Durham, NC.
  - Atlanta Workshop on Public Policy & Child Well-Being. Presentation. March 2024.
  - Southern Economics Association (SEA) 93<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting. Panel Presentation. *Income Support and the Well-Being of Families with Young Children in the U.S.* November 2023. New Orleans, LA.
  - Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) 2023 Fall Meeting. Panel Presentation. *Income Support and the Well-Being of Families with Young Children in the United States: Evidence from the Baby's First Years Study*. November 2023. Atlanta, GA.
  - Population Association of America (PAA) Conference. Panel Presentation. *Poverty, Hardship, and Social Policy*. April 2023. New Orleans, LA.
5. **Stilwell, L.\*** "Randomized Control Trials in Practice: Example of Baby's First Years." PubPol813 Quantitative Evaluation Methods, Duke University, Sanford. February 19, 2024. Invited Guest Lecturer.
6. **Stilwell, L.\*** "Tips on Getting Grants." PubPol 908 Dissertation Proposal Seminar, Duke University, Sanford. September 18, 2023. Invited Guest Lecturer.
7. **Stilwell, L.,\*** Gennetian, L., Magnuson, K., Morales-Gracia, M., Sauval, M., Duncan, G., Fox, N., Halpern-Meekin, S., Noble, K., Yoshikawa, H. "Unconditional cash and breastfeeding among low-income mothers: Evidence from Baby's First Years." Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Conference. Panel Presentation. *Baby's First Years: Early Findings from a Poverty Reduction Intervention in Early Childhood*. March 2023.

8. Gennetian, L.,\* Sauval, M.,\* **Stilwell, L.**\* “Unconditional Cash and Family Investments in Infants: Evidence from a Large-Scale Cash Transfer Experiment in the U.S.” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Policy Development and Research Seminar. Presentation. November 3, 2022.
9. **Stilwell, L.**,\* Gennetian, L., Magnuson, K., Duncan, G., Fox, N., Halpern-Meekin, S., Noble, K., Yoshikawa, H. “The Impact of a Monthly, Unconditional Cash Transfer on Housing Conditions of Low-Income Mothers with Young Children: Evidence from Baby’s First Years.” The Administration for Children and Families’ National Research Conference on Early Childhood. Poster. June 2022.
10. Morales-Gracia, M., **Stilwell, L.**,\* Magnuson, K., Gennetian, L., Duncan, G., Fox, N., Halpern-Meekin, S., Noble, K., Yoshikawa, H. “Impacts of an Unconditional Cash gift on meeting intentions across childcare, breastfeeding, and employment.” APPAM 2021 Meeting. Panel Presentation, *Baby’s First Years: Findings from Year One*. March 2022.
11. **Stilwell, L.**,\* Golonka M., Ankoma-Sey, K., Yancy, M., Kaplan, S., Terrell, L., Gifford, E. “Electronic Health Record Strategies to Identify and Evaluate Child Maltreatment: Systematic Literature Review and Key Informant Interviews.”
  - Academy Health Virtual Meeting. Poster. June 2021.
  - Duke Department of Pediatrics 2021 Research Retreat Virtual Conference. Poster. April 2021.
  - Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2021 Virtual Meeting. Poster. April 2021.
12. **Stilwell, L.**,\* Golonka M., Ankoma-Sey, K., Yancy, M., Kaplan, S., Terrell, L.,\* Gifford, E.\* “Child Abuse Clinical Decision Support in Electronic Health Records.” UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh Child Abuse Clinical Decision Support (CA-CDS) Virtual Conference. Invited Presentation. October 2020.

## Grants, Fellowships & Awards

### Fellowships

National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (NICHD) F30 Fellowship (2023-2025); Duke University Katherine Goodman Stern Fellowship (2023-2024); Duke University SSRI Program for Advanced Research in the Social Sciences (PARISS) Fellowship (2023); Social Science Research Council’s Charles E. Lindblom Memorial Fellowship (2022); Duke University Research Summer Fellowship (2021, 2022, 2023); MSTP T32 Training Grant (2019, 2020); Primary Care Leadership Track (PCLT) Scholarship, Duke School of Medicine (2017)

### Awards

P.E.O. Scholar Award (2023-2024); Duke-Margolis Scholar in Health Policy and Management (2022-2024); Graduate School Conference Support Award (2023); PhD Small Grants Award, Sanford School of Public Policy (2020, 2022, 2023); Duke University Center for International and Global Studies (DUCIGS) Graduate Award (2022); Dissertation Research Travel Award: Domestic (2022); Gertrude B. Elion Mentored Medical Student Research Award (2021-2022); Ferdon Children’s Health & Discovery Initiative (CHDI) Award from the Duke Department of Pediatrics (2020); PCLT Opportunity Award, Duke School of Medicine (2019); Honors in 6/7 Core Clinical Clerkships, Duke School of Medicine (2018-2019); Fulbright-Nehru Grant Finalist (2014; *received Fulbright to execute a project in India; turned down opportunity to work for J-PAL/Esther Duflo*)

### Research Grants/Funds

Duke University Global Student Research Fund (2022); Duke University Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) Grant (co-PI, 2022-2023); Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics (co-PI, 2021-2024); Duke University Population Research Institute (DUPRI) Pilot Project Grant (2021)

### Undergraduate Travel & Project Grants

Davis Projects for Peace Grant (2014); Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation Scholarship (2014); Legatum Seed Grant (2013); Baker Foundation Project Grant (2013), MIT Public Service Leadership Council Grant (2013); Kelly-Douglas Travel Fellowship (2011, 2013)

<b>Past Research Experience</b>	Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Research Assistant to Esther Duflo, Cambridge, MA	Aug 2014 – June 2017
	Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Undergraduate Research Assistant, Cambridge, MA	Sept 2012 – June 2014
	Inter-American Development Bank, Knowledge Intern for Gender and Diversity Division, Washington, D.C.	May 2013 – July 2013
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Duke University, Teaching Assistant</b>	
	HLTHMGMT 710: Health Institutions, Systems & Policy, Master's Level (Summer 2023); PubPol 590S: Poverty, Policy & Pandemics, Master's Level (Spring 2022); Microeconomics Tools for Public Policy Analysis, Undergraduate Level (Spring 2022; Spring 2023); Bass Connections, NC Integrated Care for Kids Model, Undergraduate Level (Sept 2021 – May 2022) PubPol 303: Microeconomics Tutor, Master's Level (Fall 2021)	
	<b>MIT EdX</b>	
	14.100x Microeconomics (Teaching Assistant, 2017); 14.73x The Challenges of Global Poverty (Content Development, 2016-2017); 14.740x Foundations of Development Policy (Content Development, 2016-2017)	
	<b>MIT, Undergraduate, Teaching Assistant</b>	
	MIT Development Lab (D-Lab) Course: Waste Management in Kuna Yala, Panama (Spring 2014)	
	<b>Tutoring</b>	
	Microeconomics Tutor, Master's Level (Fall 2021); Private Tutor (Biology, Math, Writing, MCAT; 2015-2018)	
<b>Service</b>	<b>Discussant.</b> APPAM Conference (2022, 2023)	
	<b>Mentoring.</b> <a href="#">Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN)</a> Mentorship Program (Mentor, July 2023-present); Mentorship Program with University of Global Health Equity in Kigali, Rwanda (Mentor, Feb 2021 – June 2022); Holton Wellness Clinic Student Opportunity, Duke School of Medicine (Mentor/Leadership Team, Sept 2019-Dec 2021);	
	<b>Community Service.</b> Volunteer Tutor, Families Moving Forward, Homeless Shelter (Sep 2022-present); Fresh Produce Program, Root Causes, Duke School of Medicine (Apr 2020-present); Durham County Board of Elections Election Official (Fall 2022); Criminal Justice Resource Center, Mental Health Court (Feb 2019-Jun 2019)	
	<b>Other Service.</b> Psychiatry Interest Group, Duke School of Medicine (Co-President, 2019-2020; MS1 Liaison 2017-2018); DukeMed for Social Justice (DMSJ), Duke School of Medicine (Action Coordinator/Cofounder, 2017-2018)	