



Postdoctoral Fellowship in Early Childhood

Summary

The [Education Policy Initiative \(EPI\)](#) seeks candidates interested in deepening their knowledge of rigorous, applied quantitative and mixed-methods education policy research for a two-year postdoctoral fellowship. EPI will hire up to two postdoctoral fellows to begin as soon as possible, in winter 2026.

EPI is composed of researchers interested in understanding and evaluating education policies at the local, state, and national level. This fellowship position will train the postdoctoral fellow to use quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate outcomes and disseminate lessons learned about early childhood curriculum implementation. Fellows should be interested in applied research, implementation science, creating policymaker-focused deliverables (along with academic articles), working with district and state partners, and leading the quantitative analysis in collaboration with scholars at EPI, UM, and other highly respected institutions.

Fellows will receive close mentorship from professor [Christina Weiland](#) and will have the opportunity to learn from cross-disciplinary [faculty at EPI](#), with co-mentorship from [Sarah Cohodes](#) for the West Virginia project. The fellows will also have the opportunity to work with state and district partners in Mississippi and Arkansas, among others. Fellowships will include working with experts such as Michelle Maier from MDRC, the communications firm Advocacy & Communications Solutions, and pre-k curriculum expert Melissa Luc. Moreover, the University of Michigan (UM) is home to a dynamic community of researchers, with ample opportunity for professional development—via participation in [seminars](#) and trainings, as well as through exposure to [high-profile speakers](#).

Fellows will work across the following early childhood projects with exact roles dependent on candidate experience and expertise:

The first project builds upon a broader Gates Foundation-funded project to generate stories of effective curriculum implementation. Fellows will support research funded by the Overdeck Family Foundation to better understand variation in curriculum implementation and links between fidelity of implementation and gains in student outcomes. The postdoc will serve as the quantitative analysis lead on this project. Responsibilities may include: supporting collection of fidelity data, leading processing and analysis of all quantitative data including fidelity data, CLASS, and child outcome and covariates data, writing of reports and academic articles, and supporting other project deliverables such as policy briefs and conference presentations.

A second body of work is in Arkansas, supporting the state's use of HQIM in early childhood. The state is currently working to adapt and pilot the Boston Public School's *Focus on Pre-K* curricula, with the goal of offering it as an option for other programs in the state in the future. Postdocs will provide general project support including: supporting curriculum revisions, gathering, analyzing, and summarizing feedback from the pilot, supporting curriculum iteration after the pilot, and contributing to reports and written project deliverables.

The third project the fellows will support is a quasi-experimental study to understand the impact of school closures in West Virginia. In recent years, West Virginia has seen a wave of school closures, and our team at the University of Michigan has been tracking these closures, participating in local non-partisan policy meetings, and connecting with local universities tracking vacant schools across the state. The next step is to collect policy-relevant research to understand predictors of closure and the impact of these closures. For this project, fellows will lead quantitative analysis. Responsibilities may include: assembling public data on school closures, applying for student-level data and completing the UM IRB process, contributing to the analysis on predictors of closures, fitting difference-in-difference models, and co-leading write-ups of findings.

EPI strives to foster an inclusive work environment that is home to scholars with a wide range of backgrounds and research interests. We do so by bringing in a diverse set of speakers who do research directly on inequality in education, encouraging trainings and collaborations across campus, surveying community members about our seminar culture, and self-evaluating ways to make our research—from start to finish—more equitable. We are interested in recruiting applicants with diverse backgrounds and life experiences and from a diverse pool of academic disciplines and PhD institutions.

This is a 1-2 year fellowship beginning in the winter of 2026/2027 with competitive salary and benefits plus funds for related travel. Renewal of the position in the 2nd year is contingent on strong performance and continued project funding in the first year. EPI strongly prefers to hire a candidate who is willing to work from U-M's Ann Arbor campus; hybrid situations may be considered for exceptional remote candidates, particularly those who live in a partner state.

Qualifications

Applicants must have completed their PhD in a relevant social science discipline prior to December 31, 2026, have an interest in researching education and receiving further training in quantitative methods, and have academic research experience in public policy, implementation science, education, quantitative methodology, qualitative methods, or other similar fields. The University of Michigan is an equal opportunity employer.

Application Process and Deadline

We will accept applications submitted online. The application can be found [here](#). Complete applications include a 2-3 page statement of interest, writing sample (job market paper or recent publication authored / co-authored by the applicant), CV, and the names of three references (we will contact finalists for letters of recommendations). We will begin reviewing applications on November 6th, 2026 and the tentative deadline for submitting an application is November 20th, 2026. Anticipated start date is approximately January 2027.