MATERNAL EDUCATION, HOME ENVIRONMENTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract
We study the intergenerational effects of maternal education on children’s cognitive achievement, behavioral problems, grade repetition and obesity, using matched data from the female participants of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) and their children. We address the endogeneity of maternal schooling by instrumenting it with variation in schooling costs during the mother’s adolescence. Our results show substantial intergenerational returns to education. Our data set allows us to study a large array of channels which may transmit the effect of maternal education to the child, including family environment and parental investments at different ages of the child. We discuss policy implications and relate our findings to the literature on intergenerational mobility. (JEL: I21, I24, J13, J24)

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