

SARAH CATTAN

CONTACT DETAILS	sarah_c@ifs.org.uk www.sites.google.com/site/sjcattan Phone: +44 (0)7447565277	
CURRENT POSITIONS	Research Fellow, Institute for Fiscal Studies Policy Fellow, Nesta	2023- 2025-
PREVIOUS POSITIONS	Senior adviser, Early Years Strategy team, Department for Education Director, A Fairer Start (Early Years) Mission, Nesta Associate Director and Head of Education and Skills sector, Institute for Fiscal Studies Senior Research Economist, Institute for Fiscal Studies Research Economist, Institute for Fiscal Studies Teaching Fellow, University College London	2025 2023-2025 2017-2023 2014-2016 2012-2013 2012-2015
EDUCATION	Ph.D. in Economics, University of Chicago M.A. in Economics, University of Chicago B.A. in Economics and Political Science, Columbia University	2008-2012 2006-2008 2001-2005
AFFILIATIONS	Research Fellow, CESifo Research Fellow, Humam Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group Research Fellow, IZA Institute for Labor Economics Research Associate, University College London	
AWARDS	ONS Research Excellence, Impact of Analysis for “The short- and medium-term impacts of Sure Start on children’s outcomes” Smart Thinking, “Best Publication of the Year” for “The short- and medium-term impacts of Sure Start on children’s outcomes”	2025 2025
WORKING PAPERS (incl. under review)	The health effects of universal early childhood interventions: evidence from Sure Start (with G. Conti, C. Farquharson, R. Ginja and M. Pecher), Conditionally accepted at the Journal of Human Resources A CBT-Informed Youth Violence Reduction Intervention: Evidence from a Field Experiment and Qualitative Data (with P. Bajpai, M. Costa-Dias, I. Rasul), Revise and Resubmit at Journal of Political Economy-Micro Workforce quality and early childhood development at scale (with G. Conti and C. Farquharson), submitted	

Improving Early Childhood Care and Education in Rural Ghana (with B. Cayers, L. Cardona-Sosa, S. Krutikova, A. Siddique), preparing for submission

Parental labour market instability and children's mental health during the pandemic (with C. Farquharson, S. Krutikova, A. McKendrick and A. Sevilla), preparing for submission

The short- and medium-term impacts of Sure Start on children's outcomes (with P. Carneiro, G. Conti, C. Crawford, C. Farquharson, N. Ridpath)

The impact of the two-child limit on children's health and attainment (with T. Waters and T. Wernham)

PUBLICATIONS

Education mobility across multiple generations in Indonesia (with A. Dalla-Zualla, J. Stuhler, and P. Y. Wong), **Journal of Development Economics**, forthcoming

First generation elite: the role of school networks (with K. Salvanes and E. Tominey), **American Economic Review**, 2025

Theoretical and empirical perspectives on the link between poverty, parenting and children's outcomes (w. P. Carneiro and H. Neves), **Fiscal Studies (Special issue: A Symposium on Poverty, the Safety Net, and Child Development)**, 2025

Early child development in England: Cross-sectional analysis of ASQ®-3 records from the 2-2½-year universal health visiting review using national administrative data (with J. Jung, C. Powell, J. Barlow, M. Liu, A. Clery, L. Mc Grath-Lone, C. Bunting and J. Woodman), **International Journal of Population Data Science**, 2025

Early childhood inequalities (with E. Fitzimons, A. Goodman, A. Phimister, G. B. Ploubidis, and J. Wertz), **Oxford Open Economics**, 2024

The impact of area-level mental health interventions on outcomes for secondary school pupils: Evidence from the HeadStart programme in England (with T. Lereya, Y. Yoon, R. Gilbert and J. Deighton), **Economics of Education Review**, 2023

Short and long-term effects of sickness absence in school: Evidence from Sweden (with D. Kamhofer, M. Karlsson and T. Nilsson), **The Economic Journal**, 2022

Early childhood development, human capital and poverty (with O. Attanasio and C. Meghir), **The Annual Review of Economics**, 2022

Does more free childcare help parents work more? (with M. Brewer, C. Crawford and B. Rabe), **Labour Economics**, 2022

The gendered division of paid and domestic work under lockdown (with A. Andrew, M. Costa Dias, C. Farquharson, L. Kraftman, S. Krutikova, A. Phimister and A. Sevilla), **Fiscal Studies**, 2022

How does the association between special education need and absence vary overtime and across special education need types? (with Tanya Lereya, Yeosun Yoon, Ruth Gilbert and Jessica Deighton), **European Journal of Special Needs Education**, 2022

Mortality inequality in England over the past 20 years (with J. Banks, S. Krutikova and L. Kraftman), **Fiscal Studies**, 2021

Mortality among Black and White Americans by Age and Area-Level Socioeconomic Status and Relative to European Mortality, 1990–2018 (with H. Schwandt, J. Currie et al.), **PNAS**, 2021

Estimating the production function for human capital: results from a randomized controlled trial in Colombia (with O. Attanasio, E. Fitzsimons, C. Meghir and M. Rubio-Codina), **American Economic Review**, 2020

Educational inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic (with A. Andrew, M. Costa Dias, C. Farquharson, L. Kraftman, S. Krutikova, A. Phimister and A. Sevilla), **Fiscal Studies**, 2020

Identifying sibling influence on teenage substance use (with J. Altonji and I. Ware), **Journal of Human Resources**, 2017

Can universal preschool increase maternal labour supply? **IZA World of Labor**, 2016

BOOK CHAPTERS

Early childhood inequalities (with E. Fitzsimons, A. Goodman, A. Phimister, G. Ploubidis and J. Wertz), **Deaton Review of Inequality**, 2022

State support for early childhood education and care in England (with C. Crawford and M. Brewer), **IFS Green Budget**, 2014

POLICY WRITINGS

A new era for the early years: joined-up support that works for all families (with T. Symons, L. Kraftman, T. Gunter and Z. Rhao), **Nesta Report**, 2025

Trends in early-years spending suggest tough choices ahead, **Nesta Blog**, 2025

The PM's Plan for Change is a big moment for the early years, **Nesta Blog**, 2025

Where you live shouldn't stop you accessing the very best childcare – but in some places it does (with L. Orso, L. Jones, V. Roy-Chowdhury, C. Sanquest), **Nesta Data Story**, 2024

Home learning experiences through the COVID-19 pandemic (with C. Farquharson, S. Krutikova, A. Phimister, A. Salisbury and A. Sevilla) **IFS Report**, 2021

Family time use and home learning during the COVID-19 lockdown (with A. Andrew, M. Costa Dias, C. Farquharson, L. Kraftman, S. Krutikova, A. Phimister and A. Sevilla) **IFS Briefing Note**, 2020

The long shadow of deprivation: regional differences in social mobility in England (with P. Carneiro, L. Dearden, L. Van Der Erve, S. Krutikova and L. MacMillan) **Social Mobility Commission Report**, 2020

Improving early childhood development in rural Ghana through scalable low-cost community-run play schemes: Evaluation report (with O. Attanasio, B. Caeyers, L. Cardona Sosa and S. Krutikova) **IFS Report**, 2020

How are mothers and fathers balancing work and family under lockdown? (with A. Andrew, M. Costa Dias, C. Farquharson, L. Kraftman, S. Krutikova, A. Phimister and A. Sevilla) **IFS Briefing Note**, 2020

Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning (with A. Andrew, M. Costa Dias, C. Farquharson, L. Kraftman, S. Krutikova, A. Phimister and A. Sevilla) **IFS Briefing Note**, 2020

A home-visiting programme for disadvantaged young children: final report for the feasibility study (with A. Armstrong, O. Attanasio, C. Farquharson, E. Fitzsimons, E. Fulton and S. Grantham-McGregor) **IFS Report**, 2019

Improving early childhood development in rural Ghana through scalable low-cost community-run play schemes: Baseline report (with S. Amadu, O. Attanasio, B. Caeyers, L. Cardona Sosa, S. Krutikova, P. Leighton, L. Masselus and M. Yakubu) **IFS Report**, 2018

Early childhood policies: evidence and the research agenda (with O. Attanasio and S. Krutikova), **Vox blog**, 2016

Universal Pre-School and Labor Supply of Mothers (with M. Brewer) **CESifo DICE Report**, 2016

The economic effects of pre-school education and quality (with C. Crawford and L. Dearden), **IFS Report**, 2014

TEACHING

University College London , guest lecturer Economics of Education (Lecture on Early Childhood Education)	2022
University College London , Lecturer Applied Economics (1 st year Undergraduate Economics)	2014-2016
University of Chicago , Teaching Assistant Analysis of Microeconomic Data II (PhD course, Prof. LaLonde) Empirical Labor Economics (PhD course, Prof. Heckman) Introduction to Microeconomics (Undergraduate, Prof. Sanderson) Competitive Strategy (MBA course, Prof. Bertrand)	2008-2009

GRANTS

UKRI Evaluation Accelerator Fund, co-Investigator, £191,000 <i>Long-term effects of childcare entitlements for parents' labour supply</i>	2025-2026
NESTA, Principal Investigator, £125,000 <i>The importance of families' financial resources for child development: Evidence from the 2017 UK welfare reforms</i>	2021-2024
Youth Endowment Fund, Co-Investigator, £1,100,000 <i>Evaluation of a scalable CBT-informed programme for youth at risk of violence across the 32 boroughs of London</i>	2020-2021
ESRC Research Methods, Co-Investigator, £200,000	2020-2022

Machine learning methods for studying the trajectories of young offenders in administrative data

Nuffield Foundation, Principal Investigator, £180,000 <i>A comprehensive evaluation of the short- and medium-term impacts of Sure Start</i>	2020-2022
Nuffield Foundation, Principal Investigator, £270,000 <i>The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on families' time-use and child development</i>	2019-2020
Social Mobility Commission, Co-Investigator, £136,000 <i>The drivers of intergenerational mobility in England</i>	2019-2024
National Institute for Health Research, Co-Investigator, £5m <i>Children and Families Policy Research Unit</i>	2017-2020
NORFACE Network, Co-Investigator, €1.5m <i>Dynamics of Inequality Across the Lifecourse</i>	2018-2021
Rockwool Foundation, Co-Investigator, £311,000 <i>The origins of intergenerational mobility in Europe: evidence from within- and cross-country variation</i>	2017-2018
Nuffield Foundation, Principal Investigator, £48,000 <i>Feasibility study for a scalable and sustainable home-visiting programme for disadvantaged young children in England</i>	2015-2018
Nuffield Foundation, Co-Investigator, £170,000 <i>The health effects of early interventions: evidence from Sure Start</i>	2014-2018
British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, Principal Investigator, £355,000 <i>Child development and household behavior in developed and developing countries</i>	2015-2018

**SEMINAR AND
CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS**

2026: ONS Research Excellence Series, University of Sussex, ADR UK Community Catalyst series

2025: University of Padova, Department for Health and Social Care, ETH Zurich (scheduled), SNS Conference on Evidence-Based Policymaking (keynote, scheduled)

2024: University of Cambridge (Centre for Child, Adolescent and Family Research), Berlin Applied Microeconomic Group seminar series, Ludwig Erhard ifo Research Seminar, Coram Family and Childcare, NSPCC Conference, Department for Education, Ministry of Justice

2023: Essex University, University of Bristol, CESifo/CES Workshop on the Economics of Children, LSE Wellbeing seminar, Queen Mary Mental Health Economics Workshop, Workshop on Economics and Sustainability at University Rovira I Virgili (keynote), HMRC

2022: University of St Andrews, Swedish Institute for Social Research at Stockholm University, Bank of Italy Human Capital Workshop, Essex University, Royal Holloway, Paris School of Economics Early Childhood Education and Social Inequalities Workshop, Lund University Arne Ryde Workshop on Gender and Family Wellbeing, Summer Workshop of the Berlin Network for Labor Market Research (keynote speaker), University of Warwick Mental Health and Economic Status Workshop

2021: Erasmus University of Rotterdam, University of Dusseldorf, International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education, DIAL Conference, University of Surrey

2020: NORFACE Workshop on Intergenerational Mobility, Yale University*, World Bank*, Inter-American Development Bank* (*cancelled due to COVID-19)

2019: University of Zurich, Bristol University, UCL Institute of Education, Family Economics, Gender and Old Age Workshop (London School of Economics), Solstrand Workshop in Labor Economics, Essen Health Conference, RES Conference

2018: University of Copenhagen

2017: Norwegian School of Economics, Early Life Environment Workshop (University of Helsinki), Society of Labor Economists (SOLE) Annual Meetings, University of Essex

2016: University of Bonn, University of Surrey, INSEAD, Education and the development of preferences and attitudes in children Workshop (University of Essex), Workshop on Family Economics (York University)

2015: Royal Economic Society Conference, “Health and Skills Formation” Conference (University of Essex)

2014: Oxford University, Royal Economic Society Conference, Society of Labor Economists (SOLE) Annual Meetings, McGill University, Cornell University, Rethinking Barker Conference, GCE Barcelona Summer Forum, EEA-ESEM Conference

REFEREEING

For journals: American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, Economic Journal, European Economic Review, Journal of Applied Econometrics, Journal of Economic Inequality, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Human Capital, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Labor Economics, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Review of Economic Studies, Review of Economics of the Household, Southern Economic Journal, Quantitative Economics, Quarterly Journal of Economics

For funding bodies: British Academy, Nuffield Foundation, ESRC

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Lead of the Education and Skills sector	2017-2023
Member of the IFS senior management team	2017-2023
- Performance reviewer to junior staff	
- Mentoring of junior staff	

Conference scientific committees

2023 International Institute for Public Finance (IIPF)

2023 Society of Economics of Household Annual Meeting
 2022 European Economic Association Congress
 Essen Health Conference (since 2020)

Conference and Workshop organization

Masterclass on “New Difference-in-Difference estimators”	2022
Masterclass on “Sequence Analysis”	2021
IFS conference “Human Capital and the Dynamics of Inequality across the Lifecycle”	2021
Human Capital Brown Bag series	2016-2017
IFS Seminar series	2013-2016

Advisory role

New Generation Era, Strategic Advisory Board, Centre for Longitudinal Studies	2026
Childcare Review Advisory Group, Department for Education	2026
Best Start in Life Advisory Group, Department for Education	2025
NESTA’s Early Years mission (A Fairer Start), Expert advisor	2021-2023
Inter-disciplinary Child Well-Being Network, Network member	2020-
Open Innovation Team (Department for Education), Expert advisor	2020

OTHER

Personal: 2 children (maternity leaves in 2015; 2018)
Citizenship: French (EU Settled Status)