

**Title**

*Parental Influence and Child Agency in Educational Decisions and Intergenerational Mobility*

**Abstract:** A large literature in economics has sought to understand family influence in a child's education outcomes, the dynamics of a child's educational and labor market decisions, and, more recently, the role that parents play in intergenerational income mobility. A fundamental question that remains, however, is: What is the relative importance of parental influence and a child's own agency in determining a child's educational trajectory and future earnings, and how do these depend on parents' level of income? I explore this question by analyzing the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS88) data through a dynamic discrete choice model that features a child and parent as separate agents in the decision-making process over a child's educational choices. I find striking differences in parental inputs and in the agency that children have in educational decisions across income groups. Motivated by these empirical patterns, I develop a model in which a parent can influence the child by investing in the child's skills, interacting with the child to shape the child's preferences, and imposing agency in the decision-making process of an educational decision. Preliminary results will be presented.

**Bio:** Neil is a 3rd-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Economics and a graduate research assistant at the Center for the Economics of Human Development. Specializing in labor and public economics, Neil studies issues related to social mobility, poverty, education, and inequality. He is particularly interested in uncovering the mechanisms behind intergenerational mobility including family and social factors and evaluating how schools and the welfare state mediate these channels of influence. Neil received his B.A. in Mathematical Economics and Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania in 2016. He is a National Science Foundation graduate research fellow and an Institute of Education Sciences pre-doctoral fellow.