

## **RACHEL FIDEL**

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## **EDUCATION**

### **University of Delaware**

Ph.D. in Education and Social Policy

Primary Advisor: Anamarie Whitaker

Secondary Advisor: Sarah Bruch

Newark, DE

Expected Graduation Fall 2025

### **University of Delaware**

M.A. in Education and Social Policy

May 2024

### **University of Central Florida**

Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Minor in Early Child Development & Education

*Summa Cum Laude*

Orlando, FL

May 2020

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Fidel, R.,** Shores, K., & Whitaker, A. A. (2024) Changes in kindergarten redshirting during the COVID-19 pandemic. (EdWorkingPaper: 24-1038). Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/h3mn-by73>. *Under revision at Educational Researcher.*

**Media:** [How Kindergarten “Redshirting” is Changing.](#) *Education Week.*

Buell, M. J., **Fidel, R.,** Hustedt, J., Slicker, G., & Kuntz, S. (2022). From time-out to expulsion: A national review of states’ center-based child care licensing exclusionary discipline regulations. *Children and Youth Services Review, 141.*

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS**

SPSS, R, Stata, SQL, SPSS, Tableau, NVivo, Microsoft Office; Applied data analysis; Program evaluation; Causal and descriptive statistics; Data cleaning; Data visualization; Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

**Fidel, R.** (2025). *The role of state prekindergarten policies in supporting maternal employment.* Paper accepted for presentation, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management conference, Seattle, WA.

- Fidel, R.,** Whitaker, A., Amendum, S., Hustedt, J., Osgood, D., Student, S., & Zubaca, N. (2025). *A statewide kindergarten readiness assessment's relationship to 3rd grade literacy*. Paper accepted for presentation at the Society for Research in Educational Effectiveness conference in Chicago, IL.
- Fidel, R.,** Shores, K., & Whitaker, A. (2024, September). *Post-pandemic changes in patterns of kindergarten redshirting*. Paper presented at the Society for Research in Educational Effectiveness conference in Baltimore, MD.
- Dee, T., Goodman, J., Shapiro, A., Musaddiq, T., Whitaker, A., & **Fidel, R.** (2023, November). *Understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on enrollment and achievement in early elementary school*. Organized roundtable at the Association for the Public Policy and Administration conference in Atlanta, GA.
- Shores, K., & **Fidel, R.** (2023, March). *Comprehensive description of differential lead exposure among U.S. public schools*. Paper presented at the Association for Education Finance and Policy conference in Denver, CO.
- Whitaker, A., Wallace, L., Buell, M., Cordero, T., & **Fidel, R.** (2022, September). *Individualizing professional development: Coaching as a component of states' early care and education policies*. Paper presented at the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness conference in Arlington, VA.
- Buell, M. J., **Fidel, R.,** Hustedt, J., Hallam, R., & Slicker, G. (2022, June). *The expulsion policy landscape in state ECE documents: Review of CCDF plans, childcare licensing, Pre-K and QRIS*. Poster presented at the Administration for Children and Families' National Research Conference on Early Childhood, virtual.
- Buell, M. J., **Fidel, R.,** Hustedt, J., Hallam, R., Slicker, G., & Newton, N. (2022, April). *Alignment of expulsion and suspension policies among state-level Child Care Development Fund plans, childcare licensing, the Quality Rating and Improvement System, and Pre-K*. Paper presented at the American Education Association Research Conference in San Diego, CA.
- Hustedt, J., Slicker, G., Buell, M. J., **Fidel, R.,** & Hallam, R. (2022, April). *An overview of state Pre-K suspension and expulsion policies and their key provisions*. Paper presented at the American Education Association Research Conference in San Diego, CA.
- Fidel, R.,** & Buell, M. J. (2021, April). *Variance in early childhood expulsion policy language within state agencies: A national survey*. Poster presented at Marion H. Steele Symposium in Newark, DE.

**Fidel, R.,** Russo, J., Mora, E., & Renk, K. (2020, April). *The interaction of parenting stress and parenting behaviors in predicting young children's behavior problems*. Poster accepted for presentation at the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) in New Orleans, Louisiana. [Conference canceled].

Russo, J., **Fidel, R.,** Molina, J., & Renk, K. (2020, February). *Adverse childhood experiences, sensation seeking, and substance abuse among college students*. Poster presented at Florida Undergraduate Research Conference in Fort Myers, FL.

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

### **Delaware Early Literacy Research-Practice Partnership**

Supervisor: Anamarie Whitaker, PhD

*Graduate Research Assistant*

January 2025-Present

As part of a larger research-practice partnership between the University of Delaware and the Delaware Department of Education, this work involves evaluating the use of a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment, the Early Learner Survey. Responsibilities include data cleaning, checking data quality, descriptive statistical analyses, data visualization, and creating informational resources for DOE partners, such as overviews of the study and assessment, and presenting findings to stakeholders.

### **Delaware Classroom Composition Study**

Supervisor: Anamarie Whitaker, PhD

*Graduate Research Assistant*

April 2023-Present

This project uses administrative data from the state of Delaware to examine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrollment and achievement in PK-3. Responsibilities include cleaning data, checking data quality, merging across multiple data sources, data visualization, descriptive statistical analyses (correlation, multiple regression), writing and presenting findings.

### **Lead in U.S. Schools Project**

Supervisor: Kenneth Shores, PhD

*Graduate Research Assistant*

September 2022-May 2023

This descriptive project involved collecting, cleaning, and merging schools' lead water testing results to their academic and demographic characteristics.

### **Examining a State Initiative to Enhance the Educational Leadership Pipeline**

Supervisor: Bryan VanGronigen, PhD

*Graduate Research Assistant*

September 2022-May 2023

This project looked at the experiences of educational leaders in Delaware as they participated in state initiatives to increase their capacity as leaders, through qualitatively coding interviews from participants of an assistant principal induction program and a networking program.

## **Preventing Expulsion and Suspension Through Policy Alignment and Cohesion**

Supervisor: Martha Buell, PhD

*Graduate Research Assistant*

September 2020-September 2022

This study involved collecting and qualitatively coding states' expulsion policies in childcare licensing, public pre-K, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, and Child Care Development Fund plans to describe trends across states and assess within-state policy alignment. Findings were presented in papers and at conferences.

## **Understanding Young Children and Families Research Clinic**

Supervisor: Kimberly Renk, PhD

*Senior Undergraduate Research Assistant*

January 2018-July 2020

Supported supervisor in studying the implementation of an attachment-based parenting intervention (Circle of Security) in different settings: preschools with teachers, a rehabilitation center with substance-involved mothers, and as part of child welfare services provided to families with open cases. Responsibilities included training new research assistants, conducting participant interviews, leading video coding of parent-child interaction videos, transcribing interviews, scoring measures such as the Child Behavior Checklist, conducting literature searches, and maintaining client files.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Child and Family Policy**

University of Delaware

*Guest Lecturer*

Spring & Fall 2021, Spring 2022

Presented guest lectures on child welfare policy to undergraduates.

### **Statistical Methods in Psychology**

University of Central Florida

*Undergraduate Teaching Assistant*

January 2018-December 2018

Teaching assistant for an undergraduate course on statistical methods in psychology in Spring and Fall 2018. Responsibilities included assisting students in lecture and lab, holding review sessions, proctoring exams, providing office hours, and assisting the professor in writing exams.

## **RELEVANT WORK AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

### **Central Florida Urban League**

Orlando, FL

*Program Assistant*

January 2019-August 2019

#### **Office of the Housing Authority**

CFUL partnered with a subsidized housing complex to provide a youth club and summer camp. Responsibilities included planning and executing learning centers and activities for children aged 4-13, writing grant reports, and facilitating the Meals on Wheels program.

#### **Office of the Attorney General**

Responsibilities included facilitating crime prevention workshops, collecting participant feedback, writing reports, and managing attendance records and other grant requirements.

**University of Central Florida's Creative School for Children** Orlando, FL  
*Student Volunteer* September 2016-January 2018

**St. John's Parish Day School** Ellicott City, MD  
*After-Care Assistant and Camp Counselor* September 2014-June 2016

## **HONORS AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society** Spring 2022-Present

**Dean's Scholarship** Fall 2020-Present

**Summa Cum Laude** Spring 2020

**President's Honor Roll (4.0 GPA)** Fall 2016, Fall 2017, Spring & Fall 2018, Spring 2019

**Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology** Spring 2018-Spring 2020

**Dean's List** Spring 2017

**Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society** Fall 2017-Spring 2020

**UCF Burnett Honors College – Honors Student** Fall 2016-Spring 2020

**National Merit Scholarship** Fall 2016-Spring 2020

## **SERVICE**

**Early Education and Development** Spring 2025  
*Reviewer*

**Society for Research in Educational Effectiveness** Spring 2025  
*Reviewer, Research Methods Section*

**UD Graduate Student Mutual Aid Network** Spring 2024-Present  
*Member*

**National Research Conference on Early Childhood** Winter 2023  
*Reviewer*

**Education Graduate Association** Spring 2022-Spring 2024  
*Vice President*

**Queer and Trans Graduate Student Union**

*Executive Board, Outreach Officer, Mental Health Committee*

Fall 2022-Fall 2023

**National Merit Scholar Mentor Program**

*Student Mentor*

Fall 2018-Spring 2020

**Children Beyond Our Borders**

*Member, Volunteer*

Fall 2017-Spring 2020