

THE EFFECTS OF EVICTIONS ON CHILDREN

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Abstract

Each year in the U.S., more than two million renter households report being threatened with an eviction notice. Over half of these households are families, accounting for more than 3 million children. However, there is little causal evidence on how evictions affect low-income families. We assemble novel data linking individuals and their children from housing court cases in New York City to administrative data and leverage the random assignment of cases to courtrooms to estimate the causal effect of evictions on child outcomes. Using a sample of more than 200,000 public school students with a parent or guardian in housing court, we estimate the effects of eviction on children's test scores, course completion, attendance, school mobility, and high school completion. Eviction has little meaningful effect on test scores but increases drop-out by 4 percentage points (18 percent) reduces on-time graduation by 5 percentage points (6 percent). These effects operate through reductions in course completions and increases in absences. Overall, our results are consistent with evictions disrupting educational attainment through effects on the extensive margin but not the intensive margin.

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