

**MELANIE SKEMER**  
**RESEARCH ASSOCIATE**

**EDUCATION**

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**M.A., Sociology**, University of California-Irvine, 2010.

**B.A., Psychology**, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, 2005.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**MDRC**, New York, NY

Research Associate III, 1/19 – Present

Research Associate II, 1/17 – 12/18

Research Associate I, 1/15 – 12/16

Research Analyst II, 1/13 – 12/14

Research Analyst I, 9/10 – 12/12

Researcher with substantial experience evaluating criminal justice programs, policies, reforms, and systems, as well as programs and policies targeted to noncustodial parents and disadvantaged young people. Current responsibilities include project management and direction, research design, impact analysis, interview and focus group facilitation, policy brief and report writing, and presentation of research findings, with vast prior experience in data acquisition, processing, analysis, and management.

Current projects include (1) the process and impact evaluation of New York City’s Supervised Release program, a bail alternative intended to reduce the use of pretrial detention and money bail while ensuring defendants’ appearance in court and maintaining public safety; (2) the Pretrial Justice Collaborative, a study of pretrial practices in eight jurisdictions across the country aimed at building usable evidence on the most effective strategies for reducing pretrial detention, minimizing supervision conditions, and reducing racial and economic inequities while preserving court appearance; and (3) the Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt Demonstration, a random assignment study testing the efficacy of incorporating procedural justice principles into child support practices to re-engage noncustodial parents who have fallen behind in their payments, rather than relying on a court-driven civil contempt process.

Selected past projects include the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration, for which Skemer served as lead researcher for The Doe Fund’s New York City-based Pathways reentry program, whose services were targeted to the formerly incarcerated; the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration, a random assignment study testing innovative training and subsidized employment strategies with various populations that struggle in the labor market, including disconnected young people, noncustodial parents, and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients; the Evaluation of the PACE Center for Girls, a school-based, gender-responsive program offering both academic and social services to at-risk middle and high school-age girls in Florida, many of whom interact with the juvenile justice system; and the Youth Villages Transitional Living Evaluation, an intensive counseling and support program that

serves former foster care and juvenile justice youth in Tennessee.

With over 10 years of experience in research and evaluation across a wide range of projects and content areas, Skemer is adept at collaborating with a broad array of system actors and stakeholders to implement research designs ranging from randomized controlled trials to quasi-experimental methods to descriptive analyses, all in the service of producing clear, reliable, actionable research evidence for policymakers and practitioners.

**University of California-Irvine, Irvine, CA**

Teaching Assistant, 9/08 – 6/10

Designed lesson plans, led laboratory sections, graded assignments, and otherwise supported faculty in the teaching of undergraduate probability and statistics courses.

**American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC**

Research Assistant, 1/07 – 8/08

Co-authored a report for the U.S. Department of Education on the achievement of 15-year-old students in mathematics and science literacy; conducted all data analysis in comparing the performance of U.S. students to the performance of students internationally. Traveled to pilot test cities throughout the country to collect data for the redesign of the U.S. naturalization test under contract to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); duties included conducting focus groups and evaluating new testing procedures at USCIS district offices, administering new test questions in citizenship test preparation classrooms, and entering and coding collected data. Recruited pre-service teachers to participate in a nationwide study of teacher preparation in early reading instruction commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education; collected data at universities across the county. Interviewed air traffic controllers for the purposes of formulating an updated job analysis to be used in improving recruitment, selection, and training procedures employed by the Federal Aviation Administration.

**Kids' Turn, San Francisco, CA**

Executive Assistant, 9/05 – 10/06

Utilized writing and editing skills in preparing grant proposals and reports for submission to various foundations. Participated in the creation of a new program through collaborative development of a pilot curriculum. Presented on behalf of Kids' Turn to several international government delegations, as well as at other community-based organizations. Cleaned and managed all data in a large fundraising database, ensuring sound donor relationships as well as accurate tax reporting. Co-led educational workshops to help ease children through separation or divorce in hopes of lessening future risk factors. Recruited participants via telephone for a longitudinal study on the efficacy of Kids' Turn programs.

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

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- 2020 **Skemer, Melanie**, Cindy Redcross, and Howard Bloom. 2020. *Pursuing Pretrial Justice Through an Alternative to Bail: Findings from an Evaluation of New York City's Supervised Release Program*. New York: MDRC.
- 2019 Courtney, Mark E., Erin J. Valentine, and **Melanie Skemer**. 2019. "Experimental Evaluation of Transitional Living Services for System-Involved Youth: Implications for Policy and Practice." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 96, 396-408.
- 2018 Valentine, Erin Jacobs, **Melanie Skemer**, and Mark C. Courtney. 2018. *Making Their Way: Summary Report on the Youth Villages Transitional Living Evaluation*. New York: MDRC.
- 2018 Cummings, Danielle, Mary Farrell, and **Melanie Skemer**. 2018. *Forging a Path: Final Impacts and Costs of New York City's Young Adult Internship Program*. OPRE Report 2018-75. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2017 Redcross, Cindy, **Melanie Skemer**, Danna Guzman, Insha Rahman, and Jessi LaChance. 2017. "New York City's Pretrial Supervised Release Program: An Alternative to Bail." New York: MDRC.
- 2017 **Skemer, Melanie**, Arielle Sherman, Sonya Williams, and Danielle Cummings. 2017. *Reengaging New York City's Disconnected Youth Through Work: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Young Adult Internship Program*. OPRE Report 2017-22. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2016 **Skemer, Melanie** and Erin Valentine. 2016. *Striving for Independence: Two-Year Impact Findings from the Youth Villages Transitional Living Evaluation*. New York: MDRC.
- 2016 Redcross, Cindy, Bret Barden, Dan Bloom, Joseph Broadus, Jennifer Thompson, Sonya Williams, Sam Elkin, Randall Juras, Janaé Bonsu, Ada Tso, Barbara Fink, Whitney Engstrom, Johanna Walter, Gary Reynolds, Mary Farrell, Karen Gardiner, Arielle Sherman, **Melanie Skemer**, Yana Kusayeva, and Sara Muller-Ravett. 2016. *The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.
- 2015 Valentine, Erin Jacobs, **Melanie Skemer**, and Mark C. Courtney. 2015. *Becoming Adults: One-Year Impact Findings from the Youth Villages Transitional Living Evaluation*. New York: MDRC.

- 2014 Manno, Michelle, Erin Jacobs, Julianna Alson, **Melanie Skemer**. 2014. *Moving into Adulthood: Implementation Findings from the Youth Villages Transitional Living Evaluation*. New York: MDRC.
- 2013 **Skemer, Melanie**, and Brian Bayes. 2013. "Examining the Interaction Between Welfare and Disability: Lessons from an In-Depth Data Analysis." OPRE Report 2013-49. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2009 Baer, Justin, and **Melanie Skemer**. 2009. "Review of State Motorcycle Safety Program Technical Assessments." DOT HS 811-082. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation.
- 2007 Baldi, Stéphane, Ying Jin, **Melanie Skemer**, Patricia J. Green, and Deborah Herget. 2007. *Highlights From PISA 2006: Performance of U.S. 15-Year-Old Students in Science and Mathematics Literacy in an International Context*. NCES 2008-016. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.