

Given the burden childcare places on female labor market outcomes, reducing public childcare costs through universal preschool provision may increase the likelihood women join the workforce. Extensive research on the impact of childcare cost-reducing policies generally indicates a positive effect of cost-reducing policies on female labor force participation, but universal preschool is a relatively novel policy in the United States; as a result, there are few studies on American universal preschool's effect on maternal employment. Building on previous work analyzing the impact of universal preschool programs in Georgia, Oklahoma, District of Columbia, Florida, and Vermont, this paper investigates how a 2014 policy to implement state-funded preschool for all three, four, and five-year-old children in Vermont affects employment of mothers of young children using difference in differences and triple differences methods and interaction of the treatment effect with covariates on American Community Survey microdata from 2012-2019. The study finds a significant 8.5 percentage point effect (12.1 percent increase from baseline) on maternal employment from universal preschool provision in Vermont using an inverse propensity weighted triple differences model, with even stronger effects on white, single, uneducated mothers not in poverty. Comparing this result and the specifics of the Vermont policy with research on policies in other states lends guidance to future policy construction.