

Rebecca Bier

Curriculum vitae

University of Wisconsin – Madison

rbier@wisc.edu

EDUCATION

- 2020-present Ph.D. student, Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Preliminary exams: Sociology of Education, Social Stratification
- 2023 M.S., Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Thesis: Peers in the early years: Peer networks and learning in preschool
classrooms (Defended May 2023)
Committee: Eric Grodsky (chair), Fabien Accominotti, Jessica Calarco
- 2015 Bachelor of Arts, Development Studies, University of California-Berkeley,
High Distinction Honors, Departmental Citation

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed

Bier, R., Vaade, E., Witthuhn, C. (2026) Peers in the early years: Peer network homophily among four-year-old preschool students. [*Early Childhood Research Quarterly*](#).

Bier, R., Vaade, E., Witthuhn, C. (2025) Do peers' skills matter for learning in preschool classrooms? Within- and across-classroom differences in the relationship between peers' academic skills and individual skill gains. [*American Educational Research Journal*](#).

Under review

Bier, R., Miesner, H.R., Grodsky, E., Vaade, E., Witthuhn, C. Extending the school day for our youngest scholars: Learning gains in full- and half-day 4K classrooms.

Published reports

* Shared first-authorship

Bier, R., Grodsky, E., Vaade, E., & Witthuhn, C. (2024) [Full Day 4K in Year Two: Understanding Learning Gains for Students](#). Madison, WI: Madison Education Partnership

Bier, R., Miesner, H.R., Grodsky, E., Vaade, E., Witthuhn, C., & Brown, K.G. (2023) [Extending the school day for our youngest scholars: Learning gains in full- and half-day 4K classrooms](#). Madison, WI: Madison Education Partnership.

Bier, R.,* Love, H., * Boonstra, K. Brown, K.G., Duong, L., Grodsky, E., Lauter, L., Miesner, H.R., Vaade, E., & Witthuhn, C. (2023) [Extending the school day for our youngest scholars:](#)

[Learning about the first year of full-day 4K implementation in MMSD](#). Madison, WI: Madison Education Partnership.

Bier, R. Chibwana, C., Lokur, R., & McManus, J. (2020). [Addressing the youth skills gap through skills-based university curricula / Evidence from a quasi-experimental evaluation of a blended learning program in Rwanda](#). IDinsight.

FELLOWSHIPS

2021-2025 Interdisciplinary Training Program in Education Sciences Fellow (three years), University of Wisconsin-Madison, Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

PRESENTATIONS

Refereed conference presentations

Bier, R. Expanding full-day childcare for low-income mothers: Effects of full-day Head Start on maternal employment and educational attainment
Association for Education Finance and Policy, Chicago, IL, March 2026
Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Chicago, IL, Oct. 2025.

Bier, R. Widding-Havnerås, T., Yu., A. Zachrisson, H.D., Elwert, F. How Childcare contributes to skill inequality under universal and targeted provision.
International Sociology Association Research Committee on Social Stratification (RC28) Conference, Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 2025.
Annual Sociological Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, Aug. 2025.

Bier, R. Socioeconomic disparities in preschool enrollment and gaps in academic achievement in Kindergarten.
Midwest Sociology of Education, Chicago, IL, Oct. 2024.
Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Baltimore, MD, Sep. 2024.
RC28 Conference, Providence RI, Aug. 2024.

Bier, R. Peers in the early years: Peers and learning in preschool classrooms.
Midwest Sociology of Education, Madison, WI, Oct. 2023.
Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Arlington, VA, Sep. 2023.
Annual Sociological Association Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA, Aug. 2023.

Bier, R., Miesner, R., Grodsky, E., Vaade, B., Witthuhn, C. Extending the school day for our youngest scholars: Learning gains in full-day and half-day 4K classrooms.
Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Arlington, VA, Sep. 2023.

Bier, R. Peer network homophily in preschool classrooms.
Midwest Sociology of Education Conference, South Bend, IN, Oct. 2022.

Bier, R., Chibwana, C., Lokur, R., & McManus, J. Do skills matter on the job market? The role of skill attainment and higher education on employment in Rwanda.
RC28 Conference, South Bend, IN, Aug. 2022.

Invited presentations

Bier, R. Expanding full-day childcare for low-income mothers: Effects of full-day Head Start on maternal employment and educational attainment
Interdisciplinary Training Program (ITP) Seminar, Madison, WI, Sep. 2025.

Bier, R., Miesner, R., Grodsky, E., Vaade, B., Witthuhn, C. Extending the school day for our youngest scholars: Learning gains in full-day and half-day 4K classrooms.
National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships (NNERPP), Early Childhood Education Subnetwork, Virtual Sep. 2023.
Interdisciplinary Training Program (ITP) Seminar, Madison, WI, Sep. 2023.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin – Madison, Department of Sociology
Statistics for sociologists 1 (undergraduate level)
Lecturer (summer 2024)
Teaching assistant (fall 2023)
Statistics for sociologists 3 (graduate level)
Teaching assistant (spring 2023)
Tutor (spring 2025)
Statistics for sociologists 2 (graduate level)
Tutor (fall 2024)

University of Zambia
Monitoring & evaluation short course
Lecturer (spring 2019)

RESEARCH & UNIVERSITY WORK EXPERIENCE

2025-present	<i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> Managing Editor, Supervisor: Felix Elwert, Editor-in-Chief (Jan. 2025-pres.)
2024-present	The Discussion Project, Wisconsin Center for Education Research Project assistant, PI: Diana Hess (Sep. 2024-pres.)
2021-2023	Madison Education Partnership, Wisconsin Center for Education Research Graduate student intern (Sept. 2021-Aug. 2023) Research assistant, PI: Eric Grodsky (Sept. 2020-Aug. 2021)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & SERVICE

Service to profession

2025 Session organizer, Sociology of Education section roundtables, 2025 meetings of the American Sociological Association

Reviewer: *AERA Open*

Service to the University of Wisconsin-Madison

2025 Graduate admissions visit day panel organizer

2024 Graduate admissions visit day event organizer

2023 Graduate student mentor

Organizational affiliations

American Sociological Association

Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE)

International Sociology Association Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility (RC28)

NON-ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

2017-2020 IDinsight, Lusaka, Zambia
Senior Associate (Oct. 2019 – Aug. 2020)
Associate (Oct. 2017 – Oct. 2019)
IDinsight is an international research organization that helps governments and leaders maximize their social impact through data-driven decision-making.

2015-2017 Great Minds, Washington, D.C.
Program Associate (Oct. 2016 – Aug. 2017)
Program Assistant (Feb. 2016 – Sept. 2016)
Intern (Aug. 2015 – Jan. 2016)
Great Minds is an education nonprofit that creates curricula in math, English, and science for use in primary and secondary schools.

REFERENCES

Eric Grodsky (doctoral advisor)
Professor of Sociology and Educational Policy Studies
Chair, Department of Sociology
University of Wisconsin - Madison
grodsky@wisc.edu

Felix Elwert
Professor of Sociology
University of Wisconsin - Madison
elwert@wisc.edu

Christine Schwartz
Professor of Sociology
University of Wisconsin - Madison
cschwartz@ssc.wisc.edu