Michelle Maier
Research Associate at MDRC in the Family Well-Being and Children's Development Policy Area

Michelle Maier is a Research Associate at MDRC in the Family Well-Being and Children's Development Policy Area. She is a developmental psychologist who brings extensive experience in the design, start-up, impact, implementation/field research, and measurement activities for a variety of research projects focused on early care and education. Her work aims to build evidence for policy and practice in the areas of early care and education (ECE), Early Head Start/Head Start, preschool programming; two-generational approaches that aim to enhance children's outcomes and parental employment, educational, and economic self-sufficiency outcomes; and strengthening family engagement at community, school, and family levels. Dr. Maier is the deputy project director of the Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI) project and ExCEL Quality, both of which are three-group, random assignment studies examining the causal effect of different dimensions of quality on child outcomes in Head Start and community-based child care programs via a professional development intervention for the ECE workforce. She is project director of Head Start Connects, a descriptive study examining the coordination of family support services in Early Head Start/Head Start Programs, and the principal investigator for a grant from the Foundation for Child Development's Young Scholars Program to conduct a secondary data analysis of Making Pre-K Count data where she is examining the influence of professional development supports on the ECE workforce. She leads measurement on the Expanding Children's Early Learning (ExCEL) P-3: Promoting Sustained Gains from Preschool to Third Grade study, where she is developing an aligned curriculum fidelity tool for use in P-3rd grade classrooms in Boston. She has led the implementation and measurement teams on Making Pre-K Count, which examined the effects of a preschool mathematics intervention on teacher and child outcomes in public school and community-based child care settings, including Head Start. She also coauthored a literature review examining the effect of family involvement on children's learning. Maier received her PhD in applied developmental psychology from the University of Miami where she was an Institute of Education Sciences Predoctoral Fellow. Prior to joining MDRC, Maier was a postdoctoral research associate at the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia.