

## **Abstract**

Female labor force participation is associated with welfare improvement for mothers and also contributes to the welfare for the next generation. I exploit China's school meal program to estimate its effects on the mother's labor supply using a difference-in-differences (DID) strategy. I find that mothers can work longer when children are exposed to a school lunch program, but this program does not change mother's employment status (work or not work). Thus, it increases mother's labor force participation on the intensive but not the extensive margin. Specifically, the program significantly increases their working hours per week by 9%-13%. This paper may help to inform policy and can help the government formulate reasonable policies to promote female labor participation rates.

## **Keywords**

School meal program   Mother's labor supply