WEB MATERIALS

Web Appendix 1

Comparisons of prospective and retrospective measures of grandparent (G1) and parent (G2) schooling

We used measures of grandparent (G1) and parent (G2) schooling reported retrospectively by parents (G2) and participants (G3), respectively, instead of schooling information collected directly from G1 and G2 Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) sample members because (1) the retrospective measures contain more complete information, including information about both parents irrespective of whether they were PSID sample members and (2) the prospective measures were more likely to be outdated because after initial collections this information was only updated during several specific PSID study waves.

In most cases, information for the prospective measure of G1/G2 (grandparent/parent) schooling was collected from the Head of that generation in the first study wave in which the G1/G2 person was a Head or Wife. The information was then updated for all PSID Heads and Wives in several update study waves (1976, 1985, and 1997). Information for the retrospective measure of G1/G2 schooling was collected from the Head of the following generation (i.e., G2 for G1 schooling and G3 for G2 schooling) in the first study wave in which the G2/G3 person was a Head or Wife. Therefore, in most cases the retrospective measure contains the most recent information (Figure A1). In addition, using the retrospective measure of grandparent schooling reported by the parent more than doubled the size of the sample because it did not require that any grandparent be a PSID sample member. Finally, selecting G3 participants based on the availability of prospective grandparent information might also create a sample very distinct from
the general population because of the multigenerational survival and fertility patterns required to make three adult generations available to participate in the PSID during its 41 years of follow-up.

The prospective and retrospective measures agree fairly well (Web Figure 1). In preliminary exploratory analyses of G3 participants with both prospective and retrospective parent and grandparent schooling information, agreement between prospective and retrospective measures of parent high school and college degree attainment were 93% and 88%, respectively. Agreement between prospective and retrospective measures of grandparent high school and college degree attainment were 74% and 86%, respectively. There was a tendency for the retrospective measures to be higher than the prospective measures. This is consistent with the fact that the information for the retrospective measures was collected later in time (Web Figure 2), suggesting that the prospective measures had not been updated. However, it is also possible that the discrepancies result from a tendency by the G2 and G3 generations to overreport the schooling of the previous generation.