FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 30, 2009

Contact: Morris Ardoin, 646-284-9616, ardoin@nccp.org

RENUED CHILD ADVOCATE DR. JANE KNITZER DIES

New York City – Dr. Jane Knitzer, a national leader who called attention to the urgency of addressing social and emotional issues in young children as well as improving broader early childhood policies died Sunday at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx, after battling cancer for more than a year.

From 2004 to 2009, Dr. Jane Knitzer served as executive director of the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), a policy and research center at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, where she was also a clinical professor of population and family health.

“Dr. Knitzer was a champion for children and families,” said Janice Cooper, PhD, interim director of NCCP, in a statement. “Her life’s work has left an indelible imprimatur in America. We mourn the loss of a gifted leader, a relentless advocate, consummate professional, and true friend.”

Under Dr. Knitzer’s leadership of NCCP, the organization was shaped by strong research and policy expertise in family economic security, early childhood development, and health and mental health – essential elements for children to thrive. Dr. Knitzer strengthened NCCP’s unique policy niche as a national organization with a 50-state foci and expertise in working with policy makers in individual states.

Dr. Knitzer’s own scholarship had a major impact on public policies related to children's mental health, child welfare, and early childhood. She was highly acclaimed for her work in mental health, including the ground-breaking policy reports, Unclaimed Children: The Failure of Public Responsibility to Children and Adolescents in Need of Mental Health Services and At the Schoolhouse Door: An Examination of Programs and Policies for Children with Behavioral and Emotional Problems.

Before joining NCCP in 1994, Dr. Knitzer had been on the faculty at Cornell University, New York University, and Bank Street College of Education. She held master’s and doctoral degrees from Harvard University. Dr. Knitzer was a past president of the American Association of Orthopsychiatry and of Division 37, Child, Youth, and Family Services of the American Psychological Association. Among other awards, she was the first recipient of the Nicholas Hobbs Award for Distinguished Service in the Cause of Child Advocacy from the American Psychological Association. She had served as a member of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Crossing the Chasm: Adaptation to Mental Health and Addictive Disorders and

- more -
most recently on the Committee on Depression, Parenting Practices and the Healthy Development of Children. She was a member of the New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children. In 2007 Governor Spitzer named her to the New York State Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board.

Knitzer attended Wellesley College, where in 1963 she received her BA with honors, in psychology. From 1964 to 1965, she was a clinical intern on a Tinkham Fellowship at the Judge Baker Guidance Center in Boston. She earned an MEd in 1964 and an EdD in 1968 from Harvard Graduate School of Education. From 1968 to 1970 she was a postdoctoral fellow of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, National Institute of Mental Health.

Knitzer is survived by her husband, Dr. Herbert Ginsburg, and their daughters, Lizbeth and Susie Ginsburg, as well as by her stepchildren Debbie, Becky, and Jon. Funeral services are scheduled for March 31 at 10 a.m. at the Plaza Jewish Community Chapel, 630 Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan.