

The background of the entire page is a textured, abstract image. It features a central, slightly darker purple globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. Overlaid on this globe are numerous handprints in various shades of purple, blue, and white. The handprints are scattered across the globe, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others. The overall color palette is dominated by purples and blues, with a gradient from dark purple at the top to lighter blue at the bottom.

2009
Annual
Report

NCCP

National Center for Children in Poverty

Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia University

Honoring Jane Knitzer

A symposium on early childhood health and mental health was held in October to honor the life and work of renowned child advocate and researcher Jane Knitzer, who led NCCP from 2004 until shortly before her death in early 2009.

A dinner following the symposium was attended by members of Jane's family and included a special address by longtime colleague and friend, David A. Hamburg, president emeritus of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Presenters included Marilou Hyson, senior consultant, National Association for the Education of Young Children; Sharon Lynn Kagan, co-director, National Center for Children and Families; associate dean for policy, Teachers College, Columbia University; Taniesha Woods, senior research associate, NCCP. Also presenting were Walter Gilliam, The Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy, Yale University; Hiro Yoshikawa, professor, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University; Mareasa Isaacs, executive director, National Alliance of Multi-ethnic Behavioral Health Associations;

William Beardslee, chair, Department of Psychiatry, Children's Hospital, Boston; Joan Lombardi, deputy assistant secretary and interdepartmental liaison for early childhood development, Administration for Children and Families; and Janice Cooper, interim director, NCCP.

Moderators included Sheila Smith, NCCP's director of early childhood; Patrick McCarthy, senior vice president, Annie E. Casey Foundation; and Linda Fried, dean, Mailman School of Public Health.



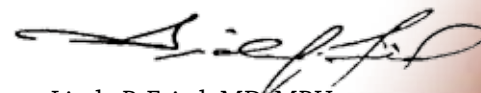
From the dean

Columbia University and the Mailman School lost an inspirational colleague and true friend early last year with the passing of Dr. Jane Knitzer, who led our National Center for Children in Poverty for five years before her death. In the brief time I worked with her, I was both impressed and inspired by Jane's pronounced influence at NCCP, an organization whose mission spans a wide spectrum of research encompassing early childhood, health and mental health, and family economic security. It was Jane's personal mission to make sure that NCCP played a leadership role nationally in conducting and synthesizing research for America's policymakers; helping them to understand and implement policies that truly benefit low-income families in every state and territory of the nation.

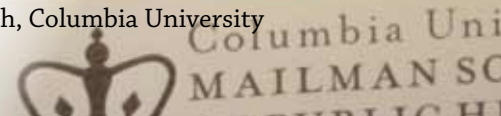
Dr. Knitzer graduated with honors from Wellesley College, and later earned an EdD from Harvard University, where she was most interested in the intersection between education, health, development, and children's ability to thrive. From there, she received a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of the National Institute of Mental Health, and then went on to produce two of her most groundbreaking works. *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* were hailed as landmark publications that transformed the collective understanding of the unmet needs of marginalized children and adolescents.

But more than a remarkable list of academic and professional achievements, Dr. Knitzer was known for her deep emotional and personal connection to the people she hoped to help. Peers, colleagues, family members, and friends all remember her talent for finding the stories behind the data, and helping to elevate the moving day-to-day struggles of marginalized children and families from the shadows to the spotlight. It was this special ability that made Jane so very capable of inciting change. Among policymakers, national and state leaders, academics, and her own family and loved ones, she was known as a true leader in her own right, one whose deep sense of moral and ethical commitment to helping the individuals whose lives and challenges she researched would touch countless people during her life and for many years after she was gone.

As we look back in this report at another excellent year of service to our nation, I am confident that under the capable leadership of Interim Director Janice L. Cooper, the legacy of NCCP's fine work will continue. The Center is one of the Mailman School's shining examples of excellence, whose mission is to translate the School's science into action and make an impact in the communities we serve. I look forward to working closely with Dr. Cooper and to many more years of NCCP's continued devotion to the health and wellbeing of America's most vulnerable children and families, and to its great success in serving the very people to whom Jane Knitzer devoted her remarkable life.



Linda P. Fried, MD, MPH
Dean and DeLamar Professor
Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University



From the interim director

I was profoundly saddened by the passing of Jane Knitzer last year. It was with a strong sense of commitment and support for the agenda she laid out that I assumed the job of interim director for NCCP. For me, NCCP and Jane will always be linked. I knew about NCCP before I met Jane but I really came to know NCCP and its work because of Jane.

Last fall we held a symposium to honor Jane's life and her work, and to celebrate her enormous contribution in scholarship, policy analysis and advocacy related to child wellbeing. It was also a reminder and a catalyst for doing some of what Jane would have done: seize the opportunity presented to us by these remarkable times in our nation's history. A question I know she'd ask is, "Can we help create policies that measurably ensure that children – especially young children – are better off each and every year?"

Our work at NCCP is driven by a vision of an America where families are strong, nurturing, and economically secure; where healthy child development is integral to how we develop policies and programs across this country, and where children's opportunities don't depend on the state in which they live. We promote family-oriented policy solutions and the smarter use of scarce public resources at the state, local, and national levels. As a national policy center situated in an academic institution, NCCP has developed a strong reputation for using research to inform policy and practice. We promote, wherever possible, the use of research-informed, cost-effective

approaches to improve outcomes and reduce disparities in access to quality services and informal supports for the 41 percent of American children and their families with household incomes at or below 200 percent of the poverty level.

The challenges to implementing this vision are enormous. During the past decade, low-income children and their families lost considerable ground. The percentage of low-income and poor children began to increase in 2000 after almost a decade of decline. Although the full effects of the economic downturn that began in 2008 have not completely played out, we know that the situation is dire. States and communities are struggling to maintain a safety net for the most vulnerable citizens. This rapidly changing context reinforces the need for NCCP to continue to deepen our foothold as a national organization that reflects the realities at the state level, while we develop new capacities to bring our knowledge to bear on the design and implementation of national policies. As we enter a new year, we are fortunate to be joined by new staff with tremendous talent who will contribute significantly to this agenda.

For the much-too-brief time I spent working with Jane the few years before her passing, she often ended our roundtable discussions and other meetings with, "Go forth and do good work!" So it is in that spirit that I welcome and encourage everyone reading this to join us in fulfilling that noble directive.



Janice L. Cooper, PhD
Interim Director



Focus on children and families

In 1989, the National Center for Children in Poverty was created at the request of the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation to focus on the youngest children in poverty. In the ensuing 20 years NCCP's mission has expanded to include children of all ages, and their families.

Today, NCCP's breadth of research and policy analysis places it as a premier resource for highly credible information and analysis for policymakers, researchers, advocates, practitioners, educators, family members and youth, and students.

NCCP:

- ◆ conducts original policy research on cutting-edge issues;
- ◆ translates research for policymakers in user-friendly syntheses and promotes public discourse on how to use research in the real world to improve its impact on the daily lives of low-income children and families;
- ◆ works to improve the quality and relevance of policy-related research, helping to ensure researchers address policymakers' questions;
- ◆ maintains a unique niche through its 50-state policy focuses and analyses and its work with individual states;
- ◆ uses on-the-ground knowledge – from its close ties to practitioners, advocates, and policymakers at the community, state, and national levels – to identify important gaps in research to optimize positive outcomes for children and families; and
- ◆ strategically disseminates user-friendly materials and resources (including fact sheets, policy briefs, and web-based data tools and state profiles), and identifies emerging policy challenges and opportunities.



Research and policy expertise

NCCP's portfolio encompasses three areas of research and policy expertise – Health and Mental Health, Family Economic Security, and Early Childhood – that together are essential for children to thrive. Each area is aligned closely with the core public health paradigm, and within each area, our work generates knowledge and supports improved public policy through relevant research, as well as by facilitating access to the research to those in the best positions to use it.

NCCP's work helps policymakers focus on linking policies to promote healthy development across all aspects of a young child's life. Threading through all of NCCP's efforts in early childhood is attention across all domains of development and in the context of families. In a public early childhood dialogue that focuses primarily on improving early care and education, NCCP calls for policies that break down policy and practice silos and promote common goals and strategic fiscal planning across states and communities to promote early school success, healthy development and nurturing parenting.

Typically, our research examines the programs and policies that affect children, and how to help make those policies and programs more effective and transparent. We ask questions such as, "How can the child care subsidy system be improved?" or "How can Medicaid be used to promote the needs of children without diagnoses but at risk of poor health and mental health outcomes?"

But we also focus on how to improve direct services and support to families. How, for example, can home-visiting programs respond to the many parents of young children whose depression interferes with their ability to parent?





Several themes cut across our research, including the need to lift up families economically even as we focus on children's specific needs; attention to reducing racial-ethnic disparities in access to and outcomes for low-income children and families; attention to children who fall into policy or service voids because they are affected by combinations of demographic, family, and environmental risks that place them at higher risk of failure.

NCCP is known for linking research and knowledge with policy and practice. Drawing on the wide range of research we synthesize, the policy research we conduct, our in-house expertise, and our university affiliation, NCCP advances solutions that are evidence-based, cost-effective, and likely to have the greatest impact.

Even though we are a relatively small organization, NCCP issues and strategically disseminates between 30 and 40 influential publications each year, ranging from succinct fact sheets, to primers for policymakers, to in-depth working papers.

Our reputation is based on far more, however, than just the quality and quantity of what we produce. NCCP has developed strong, long term relationships with many of the key players who influence child and family policy – state and local government executives, legislative staff, organizational leaders, program directors, advocates, academic researchers, and the media. Although it is difficult to claim success for changing specific policies and improving research and its use, we know that NCCP's work has made a difference. Examples include New York City's adoption of a child care tax credit in 2007; Connecticut's antipoverty agenda in 2004; or the use of *Research Connections* documents by policymakers, such as child care licensing officials in Delaware or state early childhood specialists in Wyoming.

At the forefront of emerging issues

NCCP regularly conducts roundtables and webinars on emerging issues, where we bring together key players who don't usually sit at the same table – policymakers and their advisers, program administrators, researchers, funders, families, and advocates

– to explore issues that warrant increased attention. By “connecting the dots” across multiple knowledge perspectives, NCCP accelerates new thinking and new action on behalf of low-income children and families and calls attention to issues that need to be

on the policy radar screen but are not. Frequently NCCP's roundtables and webinars lead to further opportunities to educate decision makers. And they help frame the next iteration of research and policy analysis.



Helpful tools for crafting smart policy

NCCP is a leading source of information and hub for tools about state and community policy choices. We provide more 50-state information on child and family policy than any other organization. With our readily accessible web-based state-specific profiles, policymakers, advocates, and others can find state-level information on early childhood policy choices regarding health and mental health, early care and education, and parenting and economic supports.

Another set of profiles tracks state choices regarding family economic security, focusing on policies to promote work attachment and advancement, income adequacy, and asset development. Through an Atlantic Philanthropies grant NCCP is extending the successful state policy profiles now available on young children, to the adolescent age group.

NCCP's Family Resource Simulator provides another unique resource for understanding state policies by modeling the interaction of earnings, public benefits, and family expenses. The simulator is currently available for 21 states, and over 100 localities within those states. The Basic Needs Budget Calculator shows how much it takes for families to afford minimum daily necessities and challenges common assumptions about basic family expenses. Together, these resources – along with our 50-state profiles on demographics – are increasingly positioning NCCP as the “go-to” organization for state-specific policy information about low-income children, youth, and families.



2009 Highlights

In 2009, NCCP continued its work throughout the country, even as world, national, and local events affected the socio-economic landscape for America's children and families in ways that presented us with new challenges – as well as new opportunities.





Health and Mental Health

During 2009 NCCP reinforced its position as a leader in mental health. We delivered information to policymakers to foster policy action with a focus on vulnerable children following the 2008 release of *Unclaimed Children Revisited: the Status of Children's Mental Health Policy in the United States*, which firmly established the Center's expertise in child mental health policy. Two related studies on California and Michigan were completed and a national dissemination strategy undertaken that included 23 presentations across the country. In addition our work expanded to include a deepening focus on early childhood mental health, early intervention services for children with disabilities, homeless children and adolescents and meeting the emotional and behavioral needs of children in the child welfare system. In each of these areas we broke new ground for NCCP, with the release of a brief for the field on development of indicators to measure community level progress on improving social emotional health for young children; a report on promoting

social-emotional development in early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities; and, highlighting the research on homeless children and youth to policymakers.

In child welfare, our emerging issues roundtable convened prominent players, including policymakers, researchers and family advocates, to address the challenges of ensuring mental health services and supports for the youngest children. With *Improving the Odds for Adolescents*, in addition to written products, we produced two web-streamed videos of key adolescent health researchers and the implications of their work for policy that has received many viewers, (http://www.nccp.org/projects/ITOAdolescents_resources.html). At the end of 2009, the first scholarly article that reported the results of *Unclaimed Children Revisited* was published in *Psychiatric Services*, a leading scholarly mental health journal.

Family Economic Security

In 2009, the Family Economic Security work continued to focus on improving state-level policy. Throughout the year, we worked closely with state-level partners – in Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio, Washington, and Vermont– to improve work support policies. Increasingly, states (such as Vermont, Louisiana,

Ohio, and Delaware) are turning to us to analyze their work support policies in the context of new anti-poverty initiatives. We expanded the reach of the Family Resource Simulator, which now covers 21 states representing nearly two-thirds of the nation’s low-income families.

At the National Governors Association Children’s Summit in September we presented NCCP’s on-line policy tools, which we also used to produce our newest report, “Making Work Supports Work: The National Picture,” which analyzes the effectiveness of government “work support” policies.

NCCP continued to be at the forefront of efforts to modernize the official poverty measure. We presented at a briefing for Congressional staffers on the Measuring Poverty Act of 2009. We produced a fact sheet on measuring poverty and this year will convene key national stakeholders for a webinar on the topic. Our brief, “Budgeting for Basic Needs,” outlines exactly what it takes to meet minimum basic needs. The FES team disseminates demographic analysis of child and family poverty and updates its popular publications, including *Child Poverty and Family Economic Hardship: 10 Important Questions*, *Measuring Poverty in the United States*; *Who are America’s Poor*



Children? The Official Story; Basic Facts about Low-Income Children; and Low-Income Children in the United States: National and State Trend Data.

Along with the Children's Health Fund, NCCP hosted "Economic Crisis: How the Fallout will Affect the Health, Well-Being and Security of Children and Families," a New York City Child health forum that brought together policy experts and state and city legislators to address the needs of those most vulnerable in the current economic climate.

In 2009 we also expanded our work to advance a greater understanding of the causes, consequences, and definition of child poverty and highlight the need for a two-generational approach to improve the odds for children. We are expanding our research work on asset poverty and development. We co-hosted a roundtable meeting with the Corporation for Enterprise Development about the role of asset

building among families with young children. In 2009 we finalized a new brief, "Asset Poverty and Debt Among Families with Children in the United States," which shows economic vulnerability of families with children

by using an alternative measurement of poverty based on asset ownership. The NCCP-commissioned *Childhood and Intergenerational Poverty*, a white paper and issue brief were also released.





Early Childhood

In 2009, as part of our Early Childhood program we launched two new studies of states' Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS), initiatives designed to strengthen the quality of early care and education programs serving young children. Partnering with the Center for Assessment and Policy Development, NCCP's early childhood researchers evaluate the field test of New York State's Quality Stars and make recommendations for this system's full implementation. In a second project, NCCP gathers information about professional development and other quality improvement activities in states' QRISs, disseminates this information to state policymakers, and recommends approaches for continued refinement of quality improvement methods in these systems.

At the end of the year NCCP released the first set of new state profiles and data showing an expanded set of state policy choices in the areas of health and nutrition, early care and education, and supports for parenting and family economic security. The profiles allow state policymakers to quickly examine an array of key state policy choices that affect the health and school readiness of children from birth to 5 years old. A companion resource under development in 2009, is a child risk calculator. With this tool, state policymakers will see profiles showing key characteristics of young children and families in their state and the prevalence of children experiencing risks that are known to impede healthy development.

As part of the Thrive project, which supports the work of state Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems initiatives, we are developing a tool to help state leaders strengthen and integrate supports for young children across systems, including early childhood care and education, health and mental health, and family economic security. This tool is designed to help leaders identify opportunities to share and extend resources across systems, helping vulnerable families gain easier access to supports.

NCCP continues to promote sophisticated management of research knowledge in the early childhood arena. Child Care and Early Education *Research Connections* is a unique knowledge management infrastructure whose web site (www.researchconnections.org) offers one-stop access to a comprehensive and continually updated collection of original research reports, policy briefs, fact sheets and datasets

for researchers and policymakers. With funding from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, our work is conducted in partnership with the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan.

Research Connections Fellows represent national policy and professional organizations in the field. They use the site to respond to technical assistance requests from their members, as well as help inform its continual improvement and the development of new policy-relevant content.



Growing Ties to the Mailman School of Public Health

In 2009 NCCP became part of the Department of Health Policy and Management under the chairmanship of Michael Sparer, JD, PhD. This realignment within the Mailman School will help us foster closer ties with the School, specifically by developing more opportunities for increased faculty

interactions with NCCP researchers and vice versa, as well as with more direct contact between Mailman students and NCCP researchers, policy analysts and staffers. In 2010 this type of student/NCCP interaction is in evidence with student practica involving NCCP-staffed supervision and collaboration.

In 2009 NCCP was instrumental in spearheading a Mailman School-wide forum, "Child, Youth and Family Health," where a scan of the School's child health catalogue was taken, and the School's role in shaping public policy was examined.



Resources

Financial Resources – NCCP is funded primarily by foundation grants and support from federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) and Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

Private foundations supporting NCCP's work now include: The A.L. Mailman Family Foundation; Annie E. Casey Foundation; Atlantic Philanthropies; Bernard Van Leer Foundation; Birth to Five Policy Alliance; The California Endowment; The Commonwealth Fund; David and Lucille Packard Foundation; Irving Harris Foundation; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; W.K. Kellogg Foundation; The Zellerbach Family Foundation; Foundation for Child Development; Women's Foundation of Colorado; and The Urban Institute.

Other funding entities include Illinois Action for Children; the Early Care and Learning Council; the State of Vermont Department for Children and Families; the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Nintendo of America, Inc., individual donors to the Jane Knitzer Directorship Fund and the NCCP Annual Fund, as well as anonymous donors.

How you can help

As the child poverty rate continues to climb, NCCP's unique role has never mattered more. No other group has our ability to identify the most relevant data, craft recommendations grounded in solid research, and communicate with the real decision makers.

To secure NCCP's ongoing vitality, we are undertaking a major initiative to expand and diversify our base of core support. Additional funding allows NCCP not only to maintain the scope and excellence of our extraordinary research tools, become more agile at using our expertise on emerging issues, and to launch new endeavors to leverage that expertise.



NCCP Advancement Committee

In 2009 we assembled the NCCP Advancement Committee to help steer the organization during these critical, uncertain economic times by helping us achieve our fundraising and communications goals. Participants on this special committee come from all walks of life, including academia, government, and private entities.

NCCP Annual Fund

Gifts to the Annual Fund will be used to support all aspects of NCCP's work, from providing "seed money" for launching future initiatives; facilitating ongoing research and data collection; promoting our research among policymakers and in the media; and keeping the organization adequately staffed and functioning. Your support is greatly appreciated in these economically difficult times.

The Jane Knitzer Directorship in Early Childhood

The Jane Knitzer Directorship in Early Childhood is a way to demonstrate how much Dr. Knitzer was appreciated for the contributions she made throughout her remarkable career – not only to Columbia University, the Mailman School of Public Health, and to the National Center for Children in Poverty, which she led for five years, from 2004 to 2009, but also to the broader world of children and family advocacy.

Donating online or via U.S. mail

Credit card donations can be made through the NCCP website (www.nccp.org) or directly through the Columbia University website:

<https://giving.columbia.edu/giveonline/?schoolstyle=588&alloc=17323>.

If you prefer to donate by check, please make it payable to Columbia University, and indicate "Annual Fund" or "Knitzer Fund" in the "Notes" area on the bottom left.

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NCCP People

In 2009 NCCP was in the final stages of selecting a new head of its Family Economic Security team; and after nationwide searches, welcomed four new key senior researchers who complement and enrich our research and policy analysis capabilities.

Christel Brellochs, whose career has focused on increasing access to health care for underserved populations, oversees NCCP's health and mental health team. She joined the organization after serving six years as deputy commissioner of New York City's Office of Citywide Health Insurance Access, where she was responsible for policy development and conduct of health insurance initiatives.

Sheila Smith, an expert in child development and policy, early childhood education and literacy, spearheads our early childhood agenda to help states and communities implement effective policies and evidence-based practices in support of healthy development for young children, as well as collaborates with researchers and policy analysts in areas of family economic security and child health.

Taniesha Woods, a behavioral scientist with policy and research experience, specializes in equity in education for young children. Woods, who also has substantial experience relating to how families from diverse socioeconomic and racial-ethnic backgrounds can support children's intellectual development, focuses on our early childhood research area.

Vanessa Wight, a family demographer, conducts demographic research on child poverty and its implications for policies at the national and state levels. Her new responsibilities involve analyzing and managing large-scale data sets, designing and implementing studies, and leading a range of new demographic projects.

Among other new additions to NCCP were researchers David Seith, policy coordinator on the family economic security team, David Gottesman, research assistant for Research Connections; William Schneider, data manager for Improving the Odds; Dionna Walters, project coordinator for Improving the Odds; Shannon Stagman, early childhood project assistant; and Fianna Sogomonyan, project assistant on the health and mental health team.

Interim Director

JANICE L. COOPER, PhD

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