FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Morris Ardoin, 646-284-9616 / ardoin@nccp.org

Ranks of Poor & Uninsured Increase; Income Levels Stagnate. Now What?
NCCP Researchers Say Correction to Take Years

New York City – Today’s Census report on poverty, income, and health insurance comes as no surprise to researchers at the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), a think-tank at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. The report reveals that:

- the official child poverty rate in the United States has increased for a third year in a row; for 2009 the rate increased to 20.7 percent (from 19 percent in 2008, and 18 percent in 2007);
- more Americans lack health insurance – 50.7 million people were uninsured in 2009 (up by nearly four million from the previous year); and
- nationwide, incomes are stagnant.

“Unfortunately, given the state of our economy – persistent unemployment, fraying public safety nets, housing insecurity – the trajectory of which became apparent a few years ago, this is really not a surprise,” says Curtis Skinner, PhD, head of Family Economic Security at NCCP.

Skinner says that years of research and analysis have shown know that:
- given the financial burden of purchasing health care, children and their families need access to affordable health insurance;
- adults need jobs with incomes that allows them to support their families; and
- in order to get and maintain living-wage jobs, parents need access to affordable quality child care.

“Yet we know that those investments have not been made,” he says. “We only recently passed a comprehensive health insurance bill. Wages for many poor and low-income families are way below what it takes to address their basic needs, and, childcare slots and subsidies are being cut in many states. These vital social investments have both immediate and long-term payouts for our country.”

Each year NCCP crunches the Census numbers to help users - policy-makers, advocates, other researchers, and the general public – understand in human terms what the data mean for children’s well-being.

“Americans should understand that these results reflect years of accumulated, inattention to policies that make a difference in the lives of families,” says Skinner. “We need to recognize the urgency of our current predicament. There’s a wide body of research documenting the negative consequences of poverty on children’s lives. How many years do we need to witness another increase in child poverty before we act?”
The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is the nation’s leading public policy center dedicated to promoting the economic security, health and well-being of America’s low-income families and children. Part of Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health, NCCP uses research to inform policy and practice with the goal of ensuring positive outcomes for the next generation.