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**UNTANGLING AN INTRICATE WEB:  
SMARTER USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES HELPS CHILDREN THRIVE**  
*Columbia Research Center Receives \$1.2 Million Grant from Kellogg Foundation*

**NEW YORK CITY** – For children to learn and grow with the best chances to succeed in life, they need all the help they can get from the systems developed by the people in charge – namely, the grownups. Unfortunately, we grownups haven’t done such a good job in this arena – so in spite of the intricate web of government programs, policies and funding we’ve woven over the years – too many young low-income children lack the skills to succeed in the early school years. The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) hopes to help communities and states untangle that web so kids can not only succeed, but thrive.

The three-year program, announced today by NCCP, is funded by a \$1.2 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Mich. Under the program, NCCP will develop tools and strategies to help communities and states better align programs, policies, and fiscal practices in ways that will demonstrably improve outcomes for young children.

“The need is urgent,” says Jane Knitzer, EdD, director of NCCP, a research center at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. “America’s low-income young children are not doing very well. On average only 30 percent of third graders are reading on grade level, with state averages ranging from 11 percent in Washington, DC, to 44 percent in Massachusetts, with dismaying in-state disparities by race and ethnicity. Between one-third and one-half of all low-income young children are at risk of early school failure.”

At the same time, the knowledge about how to help these young children succeed is growing. “We believe there’s a way to help communities use that knowledge to spend their dollars smarter and get better outcomes.”

The NCCP project team will work in partnerships with leaders in selected communities to develop an ongoing learning collaborative to get more young children on a pathway to success. In addition to developing and refining tools and action guides, NCCP will produce regular analyses, case studies and issue briefs as well as convene forums and

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briefings to engage high-level policymakers, foundations, advocates and others in a position to actively use the knowledge generated from the project.

“In many cases, we believe the states and communities already have in place a lot of the elements they need to help children succeed,” says Knitzer. “Our research points out, however, that often what is missing is a framework to help link all the pieces together for individual children and families.”

- 30 -

*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.*

*The W.K. Kellogg Foundation was established in 1930 to “help people help themselves.” Specifically, the organization supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society. For greatest impact, the foundation targets its grants toward specific areas, including health; food systems and rural development; youth and education; and philanthropy and volunteerism.*