For Immediate Release
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National Center for Children in Poverty Welcomes Expert Demographer

Vanessa Wight, PhD, a family demographer, has joined the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) as the center’s new associate research scientist for demographic research. NCCP is part of Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health.

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

Wight made the move to NCCP after completing a joint appointment as a postdoctoral research fellow in the University of Maryland’s Family Science and Human Development departments. During her fellowship, Wight worked on an NICHD-funded project examining the causes and consequences of parenting practices, with a focus on men and fathering. The research, which complements her broader interest in family processes related to children’s outcomes, explored questions of whether early childhood experiences, such as the home environment and exposure to involved parenting, are related to children’s health and well-being in early childhood and whether these experiences have consequences for children’s subsequent parenting behaviors in adulthood.

As a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, Wight was a recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Robert W. Janes Commemorative Award for Excellence in Sociology, the Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship, and the George M. Phillips Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Dissertation in the Public Interest. She also has several peer reviewed publications to her name, in scholarly journals and compilations including Social Forces, Social Science Research, Social Indicators Research, and The American Woman 2003-2004: Daughters of a Revolution – Young Women Today.

NCCP has been a leader in improving policy through strong research and data since its inception in 1989. Janice Cooper, PhD, NCCP’s interim director, notes, “We are delighted to welcome Dr. Wight as our go-to person on demographic research, the backbone of all that we do. Her strong analytic skills and grounding in child development open up even more opportunity for cross-discipline work.”

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.

Photo available upon request.