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**PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Kari Root Bonaro 212 263 2479 office  
646 354 3405 cell  
kari.root@med.nyu.edu

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NYU CHILD STUDY CENTER LAUNCHES SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS GOING THROUGH  
A SEPARATION OR DIVORCE**  
*Six-Week Workshop Provides New Service from NYU*

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 15, 2007 – In an effort to address critical issues that affect the approximately one million children with separated or divorced parents, the New York University Child Study Center, in association with the Ackerman Institute for the Family, will offer its first-ever support group for parents who are going through a divorce or separation. Through six weekly lunch time meetings, the sessions will explore parenting, legal, and psychological issues that impact families experiencing a separation or divorce. The group begins on Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>.

How parents deal with the dilemmas and stress of parenting after a divorce has a lasting impact on how their children cope with the situation and their ability to move on. While many parents attempt to do the best possible job in making divorce easier on their children, studies show that about 25 percent of children show signs of adjustment difficulties resulting from their parents' divorce.

"With 38,000 divorces filed each year in New York City, there is an overwhelming need to address ways parents can help their children adapt to this confusing and unsettling situation," said Donna Laikind, M.S, a family therapist and co-chair of the Separation and Divorce Support Group at the NYU Child Study Center. "We realize that many of the services people need are lacking. We can help families navigate the difficult and murky waters of a separation or divorce."

"Our clinical experience is consistent with national studies that reveal children in divorced families are at greater risk of developing adjustment and behavioral problems," said Richard Oberfield, M.D., co-chair and Clinical Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the NYU Child Study Center. "We have seen too many parents and children go through this painful process on their own. Our program will focus on helping separated parents manage the negative effects of divorce on their children by providing education and support for all members of the family," he added.

## Divorce and Families

At the outset of a separation or divorce, children can feel resentful toward their parents, sometimes resulting in children manipulating their parents. Recent studies have demonstrated that this is particularly evident among teenagers who often play one parent off against the other to their own advantage. Left untreated, this behavior may lead to other serious long-term consequences such as feelings of abandonment or cynicism about relationships which may follow children through their adult lives.

Studies also show that children are not the only ones who can have a hard time accepting and coping with a separation or divorce. Roughly 10 percent of U.S. adults who have been divorced experience the destabilizing effects of a separation. Emotional reactions of parents going through a divorce often include acute depression, anxiety symptoms, impaired functioning, and social withdrawal.

“Our research and clinical experience at the NYU Child Study Center point to a growing need for programs to help families cope with these difficult circumstances. Family members should be reassured that we have the tools and professionals to help them navigate through these uncertain times.” said Laikind.

### About the Separation and Divorce Support Group

Two clinicians will lead the weekly workshops and focus on various issues and problems that many people face at varying stages of the separation/divorce process. These may include when and how to break the news to children, setting up rules at home, finding a lawyer, custody arrangements, handling family events/holidays, when to start dating again, and establishing a cooperative relationship with a former spouse. The discussion will be tailored to the participants' needs each week.

The first series of six weekly sessions begins on Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. at 577 First Ave., New York, NY. Additional series will be added throughout the year. To learn more, contact Rebecca Dell'Aglio at (212) 263-8720.

### About the Family Divorce Support Service

The Family Divorce Support Service at the NYU Child Study Center is dedicated to providing clinical and educational services to all members of a family in all stages of the separation and divorce process. It is part of NYU's Family Studies Program, which offers a variety of family-based treatments with the goal of strengthening relationships within the family and utilizing those strengths to enhance the functioning of its members.

### About the NYU Child Study Center

The NYU Child Study Center is dedicated to the understanding, prevention and treatment of child and adolescent mental health problems. The Center offers expert psychiatric services for children and families with emphasis on early diagnosis and

intervention. The Center's mission is to bridge the gap between science and practice, integrating the finest research with patient care and state-of-the-art training utilizing the resources of the New York University School of Medicine. The NYU Child Study Center offers a variety of mental health services for children, adolescents, young adults and their families. Child and Family Associates is the clinical arm of the NYU Child Study Center and the point of entry for all clinical programs. The goal of the Child Study Center is to bring together the most research-supported evaluations and treatments with an individualized and family centered approach. The Child Study Center was founded in 1997 and established as the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry with the NYU School of Medicine in 2006.

For more information, please visit [www.aboutourkids.org](http://www.aboutourkids.org).