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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES UNVEILS ITS PLAN FOR THE CITY'S FIRST-EVER SIMULATED TRAINING SITES FOR CHILD WELFARE WORKERS

Mock Apartments, a Courtroom & a Detention Center Will Offer a More In-Depth "On-The-Job" Training Experience for Child Protective Specialists, Youth Development Specialists, as well as Foster Care & Prevention Case Workers, Similar to Other First Responder Training in NYC

NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced that plans are underway for two new training sites that will offer simulated 'on the job training' to Child Protective Specialists (CPS) and other child welfare and Youth Justice staff. Since last year, training for frontline CPS workers has been expanded in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of children citywide. CPS now receive five months of training (two months at the James Satterwhite Academy and three months in the field). Next year, ACS will open the City's first-ever simulated sites, where CPS will train in mock apartments, a mock courtroom, a mock detention center and interview rooms using actors and retired NYC family court judges. The new training sites will further align CPS with other first responders in NYC, like police officers and firefighters.

"Our Child Protective Specialists are the first responders for New York City's children when they may be in danger, and they need the same state-of-the-art training experiences that other first responders have access to," **said Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "Our new simulation centers will give future child welfare workers a realistic sense of what it's like to conduct home visits during investigations, interview parents and children, and testify in court. Robust and realistic training is critical for ensuring that children across New York City are safe, which is why we've expanded training over the last year and why we're building these new sites."

CPS investigate approximately 60,000 reports of abuse or neglect in New York City every year, in response to calls to the state hotline. They provide thousands of families a year with services ranging from free food and cribs to mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment. Child Protective Specialists meet education and

background requirements, and they receive extensive training before they are deployed and on an ongoing basis.

The ACS Office of Training and Workforce Development oversees the training of all direct service staff and supervisors at ACS and provider agencies. The James Satterwhite Academy focuses on establishing the foundations of fundamental practice for newly hired direct service staff and supervisors. The ACS Workforce Institute (a partnership with CUNY) provides ongoing professional skill development to direct service staff and their supervisors. Together, the ACS James Satterwhite Academy and the ACS Workforce Institute provide foundational and continuous learning for child welfare and juvenile justice direct service staff and supervisors.

While the James Satterwhite Academy is a national leader in child welfare and juvenile justice training and professional development, Commissioner Hansell explained that other first responders—like NYPD and FDNY---have access to simulated training sites. For instance, the Police Academy is the NYPD’s state-of-the-art training facility that provides academic and physical preparation to uniformed and civilian members of the NYPD. Training includes scenario-based training and mock-environment training rooms include a precinct station house, multi-family residence, grocery store, restaurant, park, court room, bank and a subway car and platform. Since last year, newly hired CPS have participated in training at the NYPD Police Academy to help strengthen investigative skills. Similarly, the FDNY has access to a ship simulator on Randall’s Island.

The new ACS simulation centers will be located at Union Hall in Jamaica, Queens as well as in Harlem, and will accommodate the training of over 11,000 staff throughout the child welfare sector. The new simulation centers will hold trainings simultaneously and will be able to accommodate up to 250 learners at one time.

The Union Hall and Harlem training centers will have capacity and flexibility for training large numbers of staff in intimate yet practical ways. Furniture and training sets will be mobile to accommodate diverse needs. In these spaces, child protective specialists, juvenile justice youth development specialists, foster care case planners, prevention staff and their supervisors will learn and practice skills that can be transferred to their day to day work with children and families.

Expanded training is just one aspect of the sweeping reforms Commissioner Hansell has put in place to strengthen ACS’ protective and prevention work since taking office last year. Other safety-related informs include:

- Re-launched CHILD-STAT quality improvement process, a regular review of high-risk cases under current investigation and an analysis of performance data.
- Created a new Quality Assurance Unit to improve case practice on investigations involving high-risk families.
- Hired more than 600 new Child Protective Specialists.
- Strengthened infrastructure to support child protective work, including additional transportation options and the use of ZipCar’s “local motion technology,” allowing

CPS the ability to find and reserve cars online so that they can respond even more quickly to reports of child abuse and neglect.

- Provided more than 2,000 frontline child welfare workers upgraded technology, including high-speed tablets and “Safe Measures” software, which can automatically identify and flag high-risk cases that need additional review by managerial staff.
- Enhanced review protocols by implementing a new Heightened Oversight Protocol on SCR reports involving alleged physical or sexual abuse of a child under the age of three.
- Increased collaboration with other agencies that can partner in investigations and in getting supportive services to families, including the Department of Education, Department of Homeless Services and NYPD.

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