



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AS PART OF 'NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH,' ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES URGES NEW YORKERS TO CONSIDER BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT TO A CHILD IN NEED**

*Interested New Yorkers Should Call 311 Or The WISH Line (877-676-WISH) to Apply*

**NEW YORK, NY** – As part of National Foster Care Month, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell encouraged New Yorkers to consider becoming a foster parent for a child in need. Foster parents provide a safe, nurturing, loving home for children in need, and work with parents and families to help children return home safely. Some foster parents also become adoptive parents or kinship guardians.

"Foster parents are heroes in New York City, particularly during the pandemic, and they deserve to be appreciated not just during National Foster Care month but all year-long," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "As we recognize National Foster Care Month, I encourage New Yorkers who have the capacity to help a child to consider becoming a foster parent. ACS is dedicated to working hand-in-hand with New York City's foster parents, provider agencies, community leaders, local and state agencies, faith-based organizations and others to recruit, support and train foster parents."

During the month of May, National Foster Care Month is recognized by child welfare agencies, and others, across the country as a way to renew our commitment to ensuring a bright future for children and youth in foster care. It is also a time to acknowledge and celebrate foster parents, family members, child welfare professionals and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections.

When children must be placed in foster care because of safety concerns, ACS works with a network of non-profit organizations, known as foster care providers, to place them in temporary homes. Whenever possible, ACS works to place children with a relative or family friend, which keeps children more closely connected to their families and has been shown to accelerate reunification from foster care.

Children in foster care come from varied backgrounds and family situations, and range in age from infants to youth to 21 years of age. Most children in foster care return home to their parents once safety issues are resolved. For those who cannot return home safely, ACS pursues adoption or kinship guardianship.

ACS has been aggressively implementing a Foster Care Strategic Blueprint that outlines our key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. This work has produced

measurable results. Today, the number of children in New York City's foster care system is under 8,000, a historic low. Comparatively, 25 years ago, there were over 40,000 children in New York City's foster care system, and nearly 17,000 just a decade ago. In 2020, ACS launched a new initiative providing parent advocates with personal lived experience of the child welfare system to help support parents with children in foster care to safely reunify. ACS has increased the proportion of children placed with relatives and friends from 31% in 2018 to 41% in 2020. Additionally, under Commissioner Hansell's leadership, ACS has redesigned the way foster parents are recruited and supported and strengthened all aspects of the foster care continuum to promote children's wellbeing. ACS increased the number of new foster homes by 50 percent from FY17 to FY19, turning around a previous six-year decline in the number of new foster homes recruited.

To ensure that children in foster care receive the care and nurturing they need, foster parents are provided with support and specialized training regarding meeting children's needs and working with parents who are working towards reunification. This past year, ACS launched a new online portal that is modernizing the foster parent certification process. The online software, made possible thanks to a partnership between ACS and Binti, will mean a simpler and more efficient application process for potential foster families and their caseworkers, and improved matches between youth and foster homes.

Throughout the pandemic, ACS has provided support and resources to foster parents. For instance, ACS worked closely with the Department of Education to ensure that foster parents were eligible for Regional Enrichment Centers and Learning Bridges. ACS also partnered with DOE on a series of information sessions about remote learning foster parents and parents of students in care. Additionally, ACS worked with the foster care provider agencies to ensure foster parents were provided technology and Wi-Fi plans when needed. At the start of the pandemic, ACS launched a digital campaign, "[Coping Through COVID](#)," that aims to better connect families, including foster parents, to a range of services and supports to help them manage the daily challenges of the COVID-19 public health crisis.

It is especially important now that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact children and families across New York City that more people consider foster care. For information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/child-welfare/foster-adopt.page>

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