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June 1, 2022

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NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES RECOGNIZES AND CELEBRATES FAMILIES THAT HAVE BEEN SAFELY REUNIFIED

The Majority of Children Who Enter Foster Care Return Home to Their Families

NEW YORK, NY – Today, in recognition of National Reunification Month, the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) launched its celebration of families that have been reunified and families that are working toward reunification. ACS and its foster care agency partners strive to keep families together by providing a full range of prevention and family support services; however, when a child must be removed from a home due to safety reasons, ACS works to ensure that children and families receive the services they need so that they can reunify as quickly as possible. Today, the number of children in foster care in NYC is at an all-time low of approximately 7,100, and most children in foster care return home safely to their families.

"There is nothing more important than family, which is why recognizing the heroes that work to reconnect families here in New York City is so important," said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. "During National Reunification Month, it's vital to highlight all of the reunified families that overcame obstacles and were provided a safe and loving home for their children, while simultaneously supporting all families working towards reunification now."

"Family Reunification Month is a time to celebrate families, especially those who have been reunified and to rededicate ourselves to the vital work of helping families care safely for their children," said **ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**. "This month, we are pleased to highlight the critical work to ensure children who are in our care can return home safely and expeditiously."

In 2020, ACS launched a new pilot initiative to pair parents with previous lived experience of the child welfare system with parents of children currently in foster care, to help mentor and walk alongside them, with the goal of improving reunification and race equity outcomes. Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) began with nine parent advocates/peer supporters serving parents at two foster care agencies. Beginning in July 2022, the program will be scaled across the entire foster care system, building over time to approximately 150 parent advocates/peer supporters who will support every parent working toward reunification with their children. ACS is grateful to Rise and the Parent Advocacy Council (PAC), which have helped lead the development of PEP and other key initiatives and continue their dedicated advocacy for parents.

Each year, ACS releases an annual Foster Care Strategic Blueprint Status Report, illustrating the results of the significant work that has been done to improve outcomes for children and families in New York City's foster care system. As the [2021 report shows](#), New York City

continues to set the national standard. ACS and its foster care agency partners have reduced the number of children in care, increased the percentage of children in foster care placed with family members or close friends (kinship), and increased services and supports for children and families.

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