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IN RECOGNITION OF 'NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH,' NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES HOSTS EVENT AT CITY HALL TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE MANY FREE SERVICES & RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT FAMILIES ACROSS NEW YORK CITY WITH CHILDREN

ACS Staff, Along with the Mayor's Office, Governmental Leaders, Prevention Providers and Families, Gather on the Steps of City Hall to Recognize Efforts to Prevent Child Abuse & Provide Greater Support to Families

NEW YORK, NY – In recognition of April as “National Child Abuse Prevention Month,” the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today, along with the Mayor's Office, governmental leaders, prevention providers and families gathered on the steps of City Hall to recognize the city's efforts to prevent abuse, keep children safe, and provide supports for families. National Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time to raise awareness of the fact that child abuse happens and shine a light on the many programs and partners in New York City communities dedicated to helping parents and caregivers keep children safe and families healthy and strong. Recognizing that parenting can be challenging, ACS highlighted the many free services and supports available to families with children in New York City, ranging from: mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, homemaking services, as well as access to food, diapers, cribs and more. A full directory of ACS prevention services programs is available at www.nyc.gov/ForFamilies or by calling (212) 676-7667.

More and more, ACS has been collaborating with its partners in city government that work most closely with children and families to raise awareness about the services available and help families feel and be comfortable and safe enough to ask for and receive help without judgement or fear. For example, ACS has jointly trained over 6,000 staff at New York City Public Schools in more than 65 sessions and developed a training that reached tens of thousands of school-based personnel last fall. As a result, we have seen a substantial increase in referrals from schools directly to prevention programs and other supportive services without involving the child protection system. ACS has also been training Department of Homeless Services shelter staff and DYCD after-school providers and helped revise a training for Health and Hospitals staff. These tailored sessions provide mandated reporters with tools they need to not only assess whether a report is truly needed, but also how to connect families with services and supports outside of the traditional child protection system.

“Every month is Child Abuse Prevention Month in New York City because it is our top priority to keep children and youth safe, and ensure their families are supported,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “I want to thank Commissioner Jess Dannhauser, the hardworking team at ACS, and our partner provider agencies for raising awareness about the many free services available to families across New York City. This is all part of our vision to provide New York City families with upstream support before life's challenges become too overwhelming. I encourage all New Yorkers to visit ACS's website if they are in need of a helping hand.”

“Every child in every neighborhood in New York City deserves a stable, safe environment where they can grow and thrive. During National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we reaffirm our commitment to creating this environment for every child everywhere and do so with proactive supportive services for children and families. Thank you to ACS and to all agencies engaged in this effort to support children, young people, and families,” **said Anne Williams-Isom, Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services.**

“There is no greater responsibility than ensuring our littlest New Yorkers are safe and their families have everything they need to help them grow and thrive, and that’s why we are making sure all New Yorkers know about the resources available to them,” **said ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser.** “Whether it’s access to child care assistance, help with substance abuse treatment or being connecting to mental health counseling, we encourage all families with children to reach out to our dedicated prevention support line to get the services they need to help their families grow and thrive: 212-676-7667, or visit our website: www.nyc.gov/ForFamilies.”

ACS contracts over 100 prevention programs throughout New York City. In 2023, approximately 15,000 families were served in ACS-contracted prevention programs. A [2023 survey of families](#) participating in prevention services showed strong satisfaction with services. Approximately 94% of survey participants reported being happy with the services their families were receiving through ACS contracted providers. Additionally, 91% of survey participants reported that they would go to their prevention provider for help in the future.

“Keeping children safe and providing families the resources they need to thrive are critical steps in our broader efforts to address domestic and gender-based violence,” **said Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) Acting Commissioner Saloni Sethi.** “When we intervene early, we can interrupt intergenerational cycles of abuse and prevent future violence. This child abuse awareness month, ENDGBV is thrilled to partner with ACS to raise awareness and connect families to the support they need.”

“As New York City Public Schools Chancellor, a proud New Yorker, and the father of four, the safety and success of our youngest is of paramount importance to me,” **said Schools Chancellor David C. Banks.** “At New York City Public Schools, we are deeply committed to the well-being of our children, and I commend our agency partners for their continued work to ensure all students live a life free from abuse and neglect.”

“As a father, like countless parents across New York City, one my greatest joys is watching my children grow up healthy and safe,” **said Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani.** “During National Child Abuse Prevention Month, I encourage all parents and caregivers to make the most of New York City’s free programs and services to ensure their children’s well-being now and every month in the future.”

“I’ve seen the horrors of child abuse, and the toll it takes on the mental, emotional, and physical lives of young people and their families. Growing up with friends who experienced childhood abuse leaves you feeling numb and helpless,” **said NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Keith Howard.** “I support the Mayor and Commissioner Jess Dannhauser in making sure families have the supports they need to raise safe and healthy children. Thank you to ACS for training DYCD providers, so they can help keep young people safe and provide families with the resources they need.”

New York State Office of Children and Family Services Acting Commissioner Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden said, “Our children represent the most delicate and invaluable segment of our society, and it is our paramount duty to safeguard them. The Governor, along with the dedicated team at OCFS, has an unwavering commitment to fortifying the comprehensive range of resources designed to end child abuse, support families, and cultivate safe, healthy environments for our children. Empowering our families with the essential supports they require, such as child care, food, housing and mental health care, is one of the most effective strategies to safeguard children’s well-being and uphold the sanctity of family bonds. We thank New York City and the ACS team for their partnership and alignment with our vision.”

"As we recognize National Child Abuse Prevention Month, I want to commend ACS for their efforts to keep children safe from abuse and recognize the progress the agency has made in centering family wellbeing to support families through preventative services," **said Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Chair, Children and Families Committee.**

“With my mother working on the front line in the fight against child abuse, I grew up believing every child deserves a childhood free from fear and harm. Let us come together this National Child Abuse Prevention Month to ensure all children are safe and their dreams are nurtured. Let’s build a future filled with hope and opportunity,” **said Council Member Nantasha Williams**

“The Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) recognizes Child Abuse Prevention Month as an opportunity to raise awareness for all of us to do all that we can to protect children and keep families together. It’s also a time to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the child welfare staff who go above and beyond to keep children safe. As a community, we will continue to work alongside our government partners to provide concrete supports meeting families’ needs and to promote children’s safety and well-being,” **said Kathleen Brady-Stepien, President & CEO, COFCCA.**

Liz Roberts, CEO, Safe Horizon: "Safe Horizon, the nation's largest nonprofit victim assistance organization, is proud to stand with Commissioner Jess Dannhauser and his dedicated team at ACS to let New Yorkers know we will always work to keep children in every community safe from abuse. As we mark Child Abuse Awareness month this April, Safe Horizon will redouble our efforts to protect children from sexual and physical abuse, and help create pathways to safety and healing for our youngest neighbors. We know what works, and we look forward to working with our city partners to ensure the right investments are pledged to help ensure every child in New York can thrive."

“Center for Family Life in Sunset Park recognizes Commissioner Dannhauser and the leadership at NYC ACS for their commitment to address the impact of material hardship on families and children in neighborhoods throughout New York City. We applaud the serious effort to include programming that addresses access to public benefits and material hardship in all of ACS’s programming, as poverty is recognized as the most significant driver of child welfare participation,” **said Julia Jean-Francois, Ph.D., LCSW, Co-Executive Director of the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park.**