

Spring 2024 Update

FY 2023-2024 Strategic Priorities





April 24, 2024

Dear ACS Staff and Provider Partners,

I am pleased to share the Spring 2024 Update to our FY 2023-2024 Strategic Priorities. When we first announced these priorities eighteen months ago, we committed to building a New York City that is more safe, just and equitable for children and families. We continue to carry out these commitments and are pleased to share with you this update on our progress.

As you will see, we have continued to increase the number of children enrolled in child care with a low-income voucher, with over 34,500 children enrolled. And we have seen a 514% increase since June 2022 in children enrolled from the 17 high need community districts. We know that these types of supports, along with the now 12 open Family Enrichment Centers and the eight to be soon-opened, and newly awarded contracts for school-based early support prevention programs, help families and communities thrive.

We are also continuing to strengthen our work to promote family-driven solutions to keeping children safe. We have increased CARES, our non-investigatory child protection approach, so that now 25% of incoming reports are addressed in a manner that empowers the family to identify needed supports for their children. After a successful pilot, we are now moving citywide to better help parents understand their rights at the outset of a child protection investigation by providing a new form regarding their rights.

We are continuing to see the number of children in foster care decrease and by January 2024 more than half of the non-kinship foster parents were trained in the Trauma-Responsive Informed Parenting Program (TRIPP), over 300 youth are participating in College Choice, and approximately 4,000 NYC young people between the ages of 11-26 are receiving Fair Futures coaching and/or tutoring, including 167 justice-involved young people. We are also supporting court-involved youth with our new Alternative to Detention contracts that have served over 120 youth in the first 6 months and our work to develop a pilot program to serve older youth with cases in the Youth Part of Supreme Court.

We are investing in both the ACS and provider workforce, with hiring, training, scholarships and the ACS Leadership Institute. We are also strengthening our infrastructure, with a new governance framework for IT priorities, improved administrative processes and additional services for limited English proficient and hard-of-hearing families.

ACS remains dedicated to building an NYC where children and young people are safe and thriving and families are supported as their most important resources and protectors; and where our staff and our provider staff are supported as they carry out this critical work.

The deep commitment and passion our teams have for making New York City a better place for children and families continues to inspire and move me. And I pledge -- on behalf of all of us -- that ACS will continue to listen, learn and evolve our work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JDH", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jess Dannhauser,
Commissioner

Support Community Investments for Families

Increase access to subsidized child care

In July 2022, Mayor Adams unveiled NYC's Blueprint for Child Care & Early Childhood Education expanding access for families and support for providers.

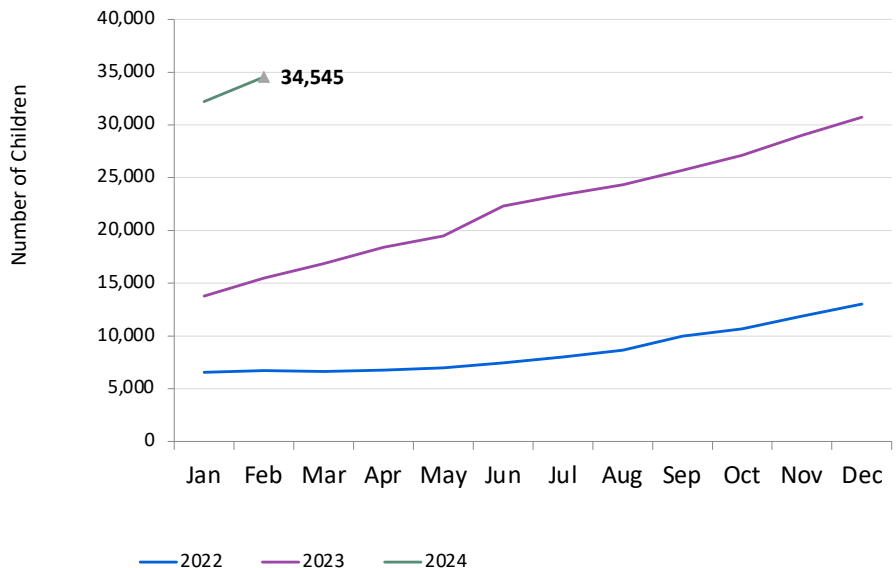
- As of February 2024, more than 34,500 NYC children were enrolled in child care subsidized by an ACS-issued low-income voucher, up from 8,000 in July 2022. In March 2023, the City launched the "MyCity" portal, a one-stop shop for city services, including a streamlined child care assistance application. By January 2024, over 25,000 families applied for ACS vouchers through MyCity.
- ACS continues to target outreach to 17 high need community districts where poverty and unemployment are highest and child care supply is inadequate. As of February 2024, just under 9,500 children from these community districts were enrolled with a low-income voucher, a 514% increase from June 2022. The City plans to reach up to 11,000 children by FY 2025.
- ACS continues to advocate for legislation that would allow eligible parents to receive subsidized child care assistance beyond the hours parents are working or in school.

Expand Family Enrichment Centers (FECs)

FECs are warm, inviting spaces co-designed with community and open to community members. They are led by caring staff and parent advisory councils. The spaces promote protective factors – like social connection, and parental resilience -- that contribute to healthy development and a reduction of risks related to child maltreatment. ACS contracts with 20 nonprofit organizations for Family Enrichment Centers throughout NYC, 12 of which are open to families and community; the remaining 8 are opening in the coming months. This spring, ACS

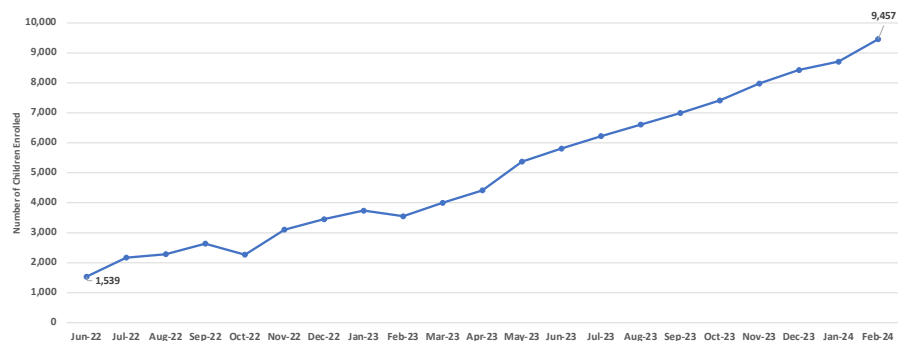
Children Using ACS-Issued Low-Income Child Care Vouchers

February 2022 – February 2024



Children Receiving Child Care in Priority Community Districts with the Support of a Voucher

June 2022 through February 2024



recommended awards for nine additional FECs.

Implement new School-Based Early Support Programs

ACS has re-envisioned the model for our programs formerly known as ACS Beacon Prevention. providers will work closely with schools to connect families to supports and

services well before concerns warrant a call to the SCR. ACS is recommending awards to 11 providers (16 contracts) whose programs will begin in July 2024. Providers will connect families to community resources that can meet concrete needs, assist with case management, support caregivers and avoid unnecessary child welfare investigations.

Permanent affordable housing and supports for housing stability

ACS is securing stable housing for ACS involved youth and families.

● CityFHEPS

Over 100 eligible youth have received vouchers, 88 of whom have moved into permanent homes. ACS is issuing 100 additional vouchers to help house youth aging out of care and offering CityFHEPS vouchers to families at high risk of homelessness who receive contracted prevention services.

● Federal Section 8/Emergency Housing Vouchers

220 youth aging out of foster care have received these vouchers and 141 youth have used them for permanent housing.

● Federal Section 8 Family Unification Program vouchers

These NYCHA and HPD issued vouchers are for youth aging out of foster care and families reunifying with their children from foster care. Eleven youth are in process and 3 are searching for housing.

● Housing Stability Services

ACS has contracted with a non-profit to help our youth and families navigate the housing process. Over 80 households have been referred for these services, 32 have moved into new homes and are receiving stability services and 30 are in the leasing process.

● Re-envision NYC's work to keep youth out of the justice system

In 2018, New York State raised the age of criminal responsibility to 18 years old, which allows 16- and 17-year-

olds accused of certain crimes to be adjudicated in Family Court instead of in the adult system. ACS is supporting support these older youth to get the help and services they need as well as prevent court-involvement altogether.

● In July 2023, ACS implemented the new Alternative to Detention contracts. In the first six months, these programs allowed 120 youth to remain at home with supervision and support while their Family Court cases were pending. Three providers can serve up to 310 youth annually across the five boroughs with programs that seek to reduce recidivism, and promote positive behaviors, healthy relationships and problem-solving skills.

● ACS's Division of Youth and Family Justice is assessing the juvenile justice prevention continuum and will develop recommendations. We are exploring an expansion of our community-based programs to serve young people before they come to the attention of the Family Court.

● ACS is developing a pilot program to serve older youth whose cases are heard in the Youth Part of Supreme Court. Through engagement with judges and other stakeholders, we are identifying service gaps and making appropriate services available.

Keep Children Safe and Promote Family-Driven Solutions

Create alternative pathways to support families

● Increasing community-based supports for families during child protection interventions

CARES (Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement and Support) is a state-authorized, non-investigative child protection response in which specially trained child protective staff assess the safety of the children and then partner with the family to identify their needs, empower the family to make decisions that address their needs and the needs of their children, and connect families to appropriate services. CARES cases account for about 25% of new cases.

● Supporting maternal mental health

ACS is working with a comprehensive treatment center for new and expecting parents that offers support groups, therapy, medication management, and other services. The partnership will aid ACS in developing in-depth training materials for staff on perinatal mood and anxiety disorders that affect parents during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

● Expanding resources for fathers and other male caregivers

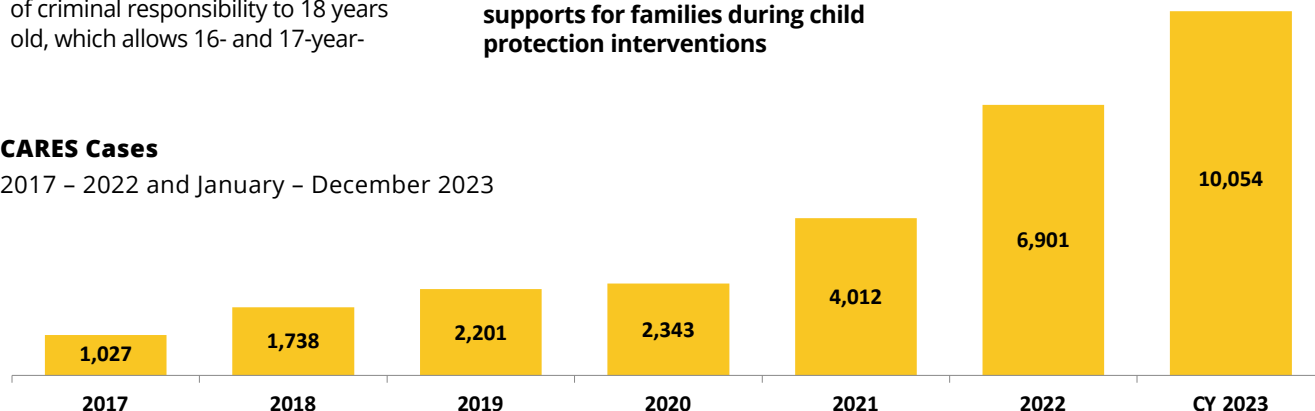
With the support of our partners at Casey Family Programs, ACS is developing an Office of Fatherhood Engagement to better serve the fathers and male caregivers that are engaged with ACS. ACS plans to co-create this work with fathers and male caregivers. Among several initiatives, the Office will work to make ACS policies and practices more inclusive of fathers.

● Supporting Families Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

ACS and the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based

CARES Cases

2017 – 2022 and January – December 2023



Violence (ENDGBV) collaborate on best practices to support families experiencing IPV. The two agencies continue to explore models for Child Protective Specialists work with IPV survivors.

Support contracted prevention providers to work with families

ACS contracts with 44 community-based non profit organizations offering over 100 programs in every borough of NYC. These providers serve families with case management, homemaking services, parenting training, and intensive home-based therapeutic services. The number of new prevention cases rose 7% from 6,488 in 2022 to 6,915 in 2023. ACS is working with providers across our continuum to support them to meet individual monthly targets toward a systemwide goal of enrolling 9,000 new families each year.

Reduce the stress investigations can cause

- **Implementing written notifications at the front door** ACS is helping parents better understand their rights at the outset of a child protective investigation. After a successful pilot in 2023, ACS is providing families with new, written information about their rights regarding CPS requests to enter and assess the safety of the children. The new written notification explains that, while ACS has a legal requirement to assess the safety of the child, parents are not required to let ACS into their homes and can

seek the assistance of an attorney. The notification explains that ACS may seek permission from Family Court to complete the assessment, if necessary. ACS is now training all borough office staff to provide the new written information to families, which will be implemented Citywide May 2024.

● Connecting Families to Supportive Services

In addition, CPS are offering families a packet of information containing contact information for lawyers as well as other service providers in their local communities. This citywide effort allows parents to receive important relevant information, while continuing to keep child safety and well-being at the forefront.

Continuously strengthen practices to protect children

- **Ensuring Child Protective Specialists are supported through supervision and clinical expertise** ACS's Clinical Consultation Program supports case work decision making through consultants with specialized knowledge and skills in areas that often come to our attention: intimate partner violence, mental health, and substance abuse. We contract with two providers to offer this expertise and are exploring a refined approach to the ways that contracted nonprofits can support the child protective team in assessing the safety of and options for the families we serve.

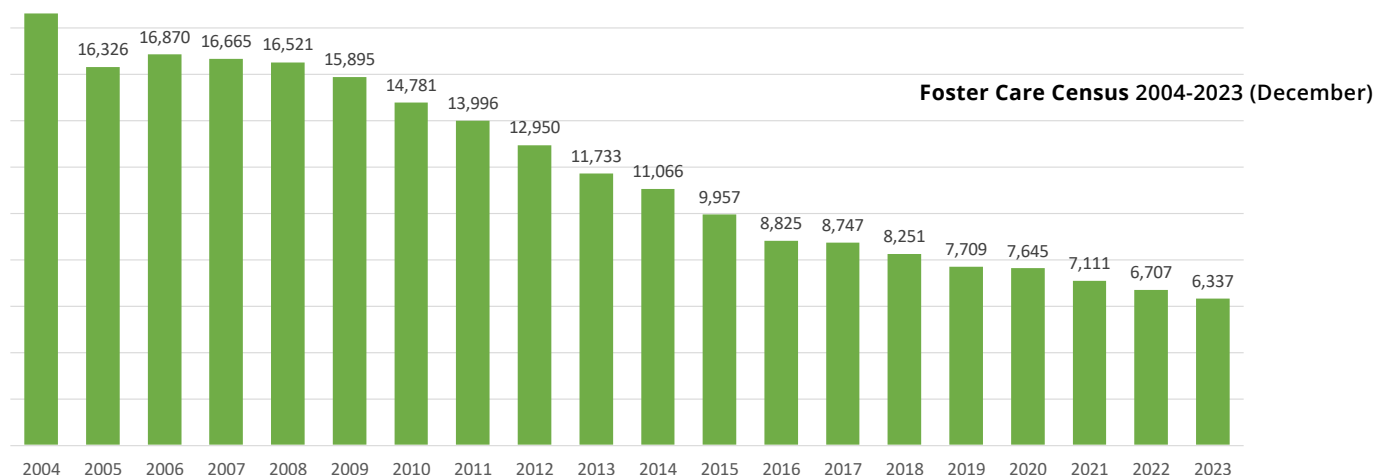
● Growing and supporting our continuous learning and improvement culture

In *Child Stat* and *CARES Forums*, ACS staff assess data and discuss casework. ACS held 26 ChildStats and four CARES Forums in 2023 and in 2024, will hold 31 ChildStat sessions and four CARES Forums. ACS also hosts quarterly System Support ChildStat meetings and Citywide CoQI learning sessions to identify challenges faced by child protection teams and jointly devise solutions with ACS support divisions. All sessions embrace "Safety Culture" by emphasizing a fuller understanding of the context of a case when concerns arise. In Juvenile Justice, leadership has also moved away from a culture that relies on the discipline of blame and instead is focusing on opportunities for coaching and learning.

Provide Quality Care and Enduring Solutions

Partner with Foster Care Providers to advance respectful and effective practices with families that leads to timely permanency, safe stable placements, quality care for complex needs and the well-being of youth

On July 1, 2023, ACS launched a new foster care model which increases therapeutic supports for youth in care. The model includes parent advocates to support family members



and offers more trauma-informed and evidenced-based services in residential care programs. These enhancements support our goals to strengthen services, achieve permanency and to improve well-being and success for children, youth, parents, and families. We have made significant progress in the following areas:

- The average number of New York City children in foster care in FY 2023 reached a low of 6,728 dropping from 7,140 in FY 2022. Two decades ago, nearly 22,000 NYC children were in foster care; that number has been steadily decreasing since 2007.
- ACS and its foster care agency partners have increased the number of children in foster care who are placed with kin from 31% in FY 2017 to 44% in FY 2023.
- The majority of children who enter foster care return home. In FY 2023, 1,562 children were reunified with their families.
- The number of finalized adoptions rose from 469 in FY22 to 562 in FY23.
- In 2023, 99% of foster homes had no incidents of indicated child neglect or abuse. The rate of indicated allegations of child maltreatment while in foster care (per 100,000 care days) improved from 5.0 in FY 2022 to 4.3 in FY 2023
- The number of children in residential settings has decreased significantly, reaching a nine year low of 628 children in FY23 down from 929 children in FY15.

Trauma training for all foster parents and staff

ACS partners with our contracted family foster care agencies to ensure that all foster parents and staff are trained in the Trauma-Responsive Informed Parenting Program (TRIPP) training is designed to increase foster parent and staff capacity to support children and youth with complex needs. Agencies are in the process of TRIPP training all of their existing foster parents. As of January 2024, more than half (60%) of the system's non-kin foster parents are therapeutically trained.

Reduce stays at the Children's Center

Pre-placement at the NYC Children's Center is intended to be a short-term approach to caring for children while an appropriate foster care placement is identified.

- Finding kin (relatives, close family friends, or other people who are already in a child's life) is one of our key strategies for shortening stays at the Children's Center. ACS and our contracted agencies have increased the proportion of children placed with kin from 31% in FY 2017 to 44% in FY 2023.
- Foster care agencies are strengthening their abilities to recruit, certify and therapeutically train non-kin foster parents. ACS and foster care providers use a matching process to identify placements that best align with the needs of the child.

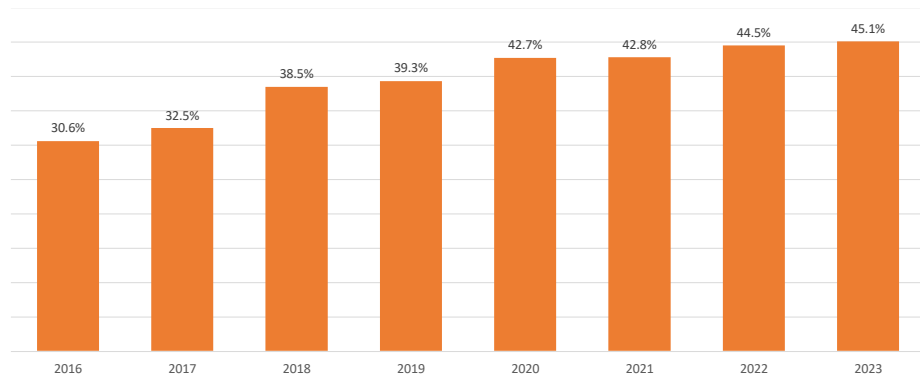
- ACS is adding foster care placement capacity through new Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPs) and smaller, population specific residential programs. SILPs are designed for youth ages 18-20 who are ready for independence and are either enrolled in school and/or employed. SILPs offer support for young people in areas such as understanding how to budget, managing responsibilities, and living independently prior to transitioning from foster care. SILPs are presently operating in both Brooklyn and the Bronx with a total of 50 contracted beds.

Focus on safety, youth engagement and staff retention within secure juvenile detention

- Even though the population in secure detention increased by 27%, violence in the facilities is on the decline. The rate of youth-on-youth assaults decreased 16% and the rate of youth on staff assaults decreased by 43%, when comparing the second quarter of FY24 to FY23. We are continuing to offer retention incentives for frontline staff and are seeing some reduction in attrition. Our new leadership structures are improving facility management and responsiveness to youth, families and staff. We are expanding programming options to include vocational and college classes.
- To meet the enhanced needs of the older youth who are in ACS custody due to Raise the Age, ACS is adding capacity to our secure detention campus in the Bronx. Partnering with the NYC Department of Design and Construction, we will build a safe, secure, and youth-centered annex to ACS's existing facility. Construction is slated to begin this year and finish in 2029. The annex will reduce the risks of overcrowding by adding residential and educational space, as well as an expanded kitchen/dining area and space for outdoor recreation and a mental health clinic.

Percent of Children in Foster Care in Kinship Homes

2016-2023 (December)



Support the Success of Young People

Expanding and sustaining Fair Futures

Currently, approximately 4,000 NYC young people between the ages of 11-26 are receiving Fair Futures services from 500 Fair Futures staff across 35 programs.

- In addition, over 500 newly eligible young people who were discharged from foster care were able to keep their Fair Futures supports after leaving care.
- In less than one year, 40 juvenile justice staff have been hired and 167 young people with justice involvement received coaching.
- In close collaboration with ACS, providers, and partners, the Center for Fair Futures launched six initiatives in response to requests from young people. These include *Opportunity Year*, a year-long program to help high school graduates gain the skills, self-esteem, and network of support needed to be successful in a post-secondary setting or the workforce and *Soul Care*, a systemwide initiative to expand youth choice around mental health and wellness supports. Several pilot agencies are collecting feedback from hundreds of youth and agency staff. For more information, go to <https://www.fairfuturesny.org/>

Partner with NYC Public Schools (NYCPS)

Our contracted foster care agencies, NYCPS, and other city partners are collaborating to offer intensive and targeted education-related supports to children and youth in foster care. ACS and the NYCPS Foster Care Office share data, trainings, and consultations to help staff identify and address key challenges, such as chronic absenteeism. The rate of chronic school absenteeism fell 4% from the 2021-2022 school year to the 2022-2023 school

year. ACS also worked with NYCPS leadership to establish interagency policies and services supporting school transportation for children and youth in foster care. In fall 2023, foster care agencies received updated school transportation guidance and options. In addition, wait times for school transportation have decreased and reimbursements for private school transportation have increased.

Expand educational, internship, vocational, and employment initiatives for older youth

ACS's College Choice Program supports young people who are in foster care to attend college and offers them academic support. Over 300 youth are currently enrolled. ACS recently launched a vocational training and apprenticeship program called V-CRED (Vocational training that emphasizes a Continuing Responsibility toward Education and Development) that provides professional opportunities to 90 youth in foster care.

Re-procure the NYC juvenile placement system

In March 2024, ACS recommended five providers for awards to provide placement services for justice involved youth who have been determined by a judge to need residential placement. New Close to Home contracts will begin on July 1, 2024 and will increase the education, mental health, substance use, housing and workforce supports that these youth receive.

Ensure That First-Hand Experiences Guide Our Work

Work with the Parent Advocacy Council

Since 2019, the PAC has brought parents with lived experience into policy and practice by regular convenings with ACS leadership.

More than 24 such meetings have been held since October 2023. The PAC continues to strengthen its infrastructure and recruit more participants as general members. In December 2023, the PAC coordinated a holiday event for families whose children are moving toward trial discharge. This coming summer, PAC events in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens will support family engagement and provide resources.

Work with the Youth Leadership Council, Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board and other youth groups

- **The ACS Youth Leadership Council (YLC)** is training ACS staff on the benefits of engaging youth 16+ to use the Daily Living Checklist. The Checklist was co-created with Advocates and Fair Futures. Additional YLC goals include ongoing recruitment of new members, and developing training materials on authentic youth engagement and youth-adult partnership. The YLC continues to work across the child welfare system to hire youth with lived experience.
- **The Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board (YAB)** is comprised of 20 young adults representing 15 foster care agencies that led the advocacy for Fair Futures. It is currently focused on advocating for more and better quality housing in safe, desirable neighborhoods that are fully integrated; addressing housing discrimination and improving voucher processes; decreasing rates of youth aging out to uncertain housing and increasing the rate of youth aging out to highly stable housing; and launching a Know Your Rights campaign for transition-aged youth, which includes streamlining documents and communication so young people ages 13+ have the key information they need to make informed decisions.

Reduce Unwarranted Involvement with Families, and the Overrepresentation of Black, Latinx and LGBTQAI+ families in our systems

Work with other City and State agencies to improve training for mandated reporters

ACS continues to collaborate closely with other City systems to shift messaging to mandated reporters from “when in doubt, call the SCR” to “you can support a family without having to report a family.” The training, based on statewide OCFS training, emphasizes that poverty in and of itself is not maltreatment.

- ACS collaborations aim to promote a citywide culture shift from reporting to supporting families with successful engagement, relationship-building and service referrals. We are helping mandated reporters understand better how to assess when a report to the SCR is necessary—and when it is not.
- Since January 2023, ACS and NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) have jointly trained over 6,000 school staff and leaders in more than 60 sessions and provided a 30-minute training for all NYCPS school-based personnel citywide. Reports from schools have decreased by 11%

this school year compared to last school year, amounting to over 600 fewer families reported. In the same period, schools have referred more than 400 families to community-based organizations providing prevention services and other supports.

- ACS has also provided training to Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) youth services provider agencies, to medical staff and social workers at private NYC hospitals, and to the Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health. Collaborations are ongoing with Health+Hospitals (H+H), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV).

Defer appropriate late-night low-risk investigations for daytime follow-up

Since ACS began this work in the spring of 2022, Emergency Children’s Services has increased the percentage of cases deferred and now is deferring 100% of eligible cases, which allows for families to be engaged during much less stressful and disruptive hours. We continue to use the data to analyze the case trends and our practice. We are also exploring how to expand the types of cases where immediate community visits can be safely delayed by ECS

until visits can be conducted during daytime hours.

Safely Ending ACS involvement

When NYC family courts were operating on a limited schedule during the earliest days of the pandemic, ACS and our foster care agencies convened to identify cases appropriate for expedited reunifications. We found this to be a productive process and are reengaging with our partner agencies to develop similar efforts for families that may be ready for reunification.

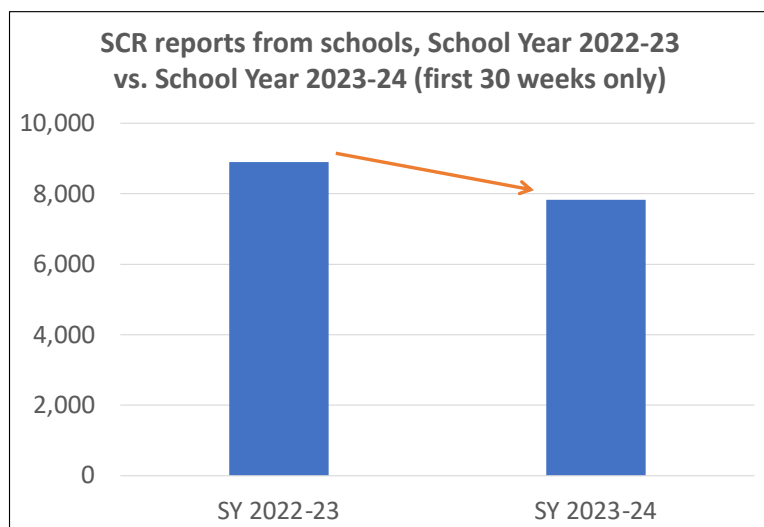
Invest in ACS and Provider Workforce

Hire frontline staff ahead of attrition to keep workloads manageable

Despite increasing attrition rates and separations over the past five years, ACS’s recruitment efforts continue to yield new staff. In 2023, ACS hired 509 Child Protective Specialists and 263 Youth Development Specialists, our critical frontline titles in child welfare and juvenile justice. ACS had a net increase of hired employees versus those that separated and we continue to focus on retention efforts.

Ensure support for safe CPS Investigations

ACS has refined a process for swift assistance from NYPD when child protective investigations involve activities that could compromise the safety of CPS (i.e., the presence of weapons, the sale of drugs and gang involvement, etc.). CPS contact Investigative Consultants (who are former NYPD supervisors) to coordinate directly with the relevant NYPD precinct desk supervisor to explain what is needed for the CPS and why. The NYPD supervisor then dispatches an officer/unit to assist the ACS staff. ACS and NYPD are formalizing an enhanced and improved process for ACS workers to request police assistance.



Engage with Provider partners

- ACS program areas meet regularly with our Provider partners to support their vital work. In addition, ACS leadership meets regularly with the Council on Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) to discuss system updates, as well as fiscal and/or legislative updates that are relevant to our work together.
- ACS has been working to reduce the administrative burden in our invoicing processes and thereby improve timeliness and accuracy of submissions. Across several divisions, ACS is streamlining the invoicing process to reduce payment delays. Additionally, we have implemented a process to notify providers if they fall behind on invoicing and ensure timely payment to avoid cashflow concerns.
- In March 2024, Mayor Adams announced an annual three percent Cost of Living Adjustment increase for human service providers for the next three years, starting July 1, 2024.

Support contracted providers to continue to recruit and retain excellent staff

ACS recognizes that a stable workforce is critical not just for City staff but also for the nonprofits who carry out our shared mission of serving families effectively and with compassion. High staff turnover rates and a limited pool of job applicants challenge nonprofit agencies across program areas. In a new initiative, ACS is partnering with contracted partners to design and implement strategies to improve workforce recruitment and retention, including looking across city, state and federal requirements to identify possible workload reductions.

Provide workforce with the technology and tools to do their jobs safely and effectively

- **Safety App for Providers**
ACS staff who work in the community have a Safety App - a smartphone application to enhance protection for staff conducting home visits. In addition, 14 contracted agencies requested the App, which extends

this option to over 1,000 provider staff who are serving families in the community.

- **The ACS Leadership Institute and Career Long Learning**
In the fall of 2023, ACS launched the Institute for Leadership Development which provides leadership training and executive coaching to ACS and provider agency leaders. Close to 60 participants currently receive executive coaching. As of December 2023, 51 applicants have applied for *Leading and Exploring Through Accountability and Development (LEAD)* and the first cohort of 20 leaders will begin March 2024. Coursework planning for the *Learning, Evolving, and Advancing Professionally (LEAP)* program is underway.

Scholarship Opportunities

In June 2023, ACS extended our scholarship program to provider agency staff who are pursuing a Master's in Social Work. To date, 33 provider agency recipients have been awarded a total of \$330,000 to support their degrees. Also in 2023, 108 ACS staff received scholarship support totaling almost \$700,000. In addition to advanced degrees, this funding supported mentorship and staff development, as well as preparatory classes for the social work licensing exam.

Strengthen Infrastructure

Prepare for and prevent service disruption

To protect essential services from natural disasters or cyber incidents, ACS is improving its back-up of core IT capabilities, developing incident response plans and improving cybersecurity. To safeguard the privacy of the 150,000+ families we work with every year, we are undertaking several efforts, including encrypting sensitive information, securing mobile devices, continuously monitoring all IT systems and securing system administrator accounts. Additionally, we are rolling out guest Wi-Fi in the coming months at all our locations to provide internet access to those visiting our offices.

Prioritizing and consolidating Information technology projects

ACS developed an agency-wide governance framework to implement IT priorities. We have 16 active projects underway. In addition, we developed eight "Enterprise Solutions" to solve numerous needs across the agency. For example, we are working to develop a comprehensive Prevention System to improve how ACS interfaces with Prevention Providers, expedites referrals for services and improves service coordination. In the Summer of 2023, ACS kicked off implementation of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) for youth at the Children's Center and detention facilities to safely maintain the health profile of all the children and youth in our care and allow electronic interfaces to pharmacies, laboratories and radiology.

Improve key administrative processes so that staff may better serve children and families

The ACS Division of Administration is improving communication and enhancing transparency about its work throughout the agency.

- **Transportation Services**
ACS is enhancing services for frontline staff who serve families, especially where CPS must remove children from their caregivers. ACS Dispatchers monitor vehicle movements and redirect cars as needed to reduce wait times.
- **Safety and Security**
ACS built operations command centers in juvenile detention and at the Children's Center, equipped with cameras, computers, and other security tools to allow for operations control and management. ACS is partnering with Police and Correction Departments, as well as Homeless Services to train ACS Police to maintain safety and security at ACS sites.
- **Repair, maintenance and construction projects**
Several facility-based improvements are underway or

have recently been completed, including increasing the room capacity in secure detention; installing a new roof at 1200 Waters; creating a calming room and completing restroom renovations at the Children's Center; and deep cleaning of floors at ACS locations throughout the city.

Strengthen services for limited-English proficient and hard-of-hearing families

ACS's Office of Immigrant Services and Language Affairs (ISLA) facilitates interpretation and translation services for limited English proficient and deaf/hard-of-hearing children, youth and families. The office manages ACS's five language access contracts that provide telephonic, in-person and video remote interpretation

(VRI) on-site Spanish interpretation, Sign Language interpretation, and written translation of documents. The Office also facilitates a program certifying ACS staff to do their work in a language other than English. ISLA is currently supporting the interpretation services at the City's Asylum Application Help Center and is working to improve the accessibility of ACS' phone system and website for limited English proficient users. ■

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Appendix of Completed Projects | 1

<p>Support Community Investments for Families</p>	<p>Increased Access to Subsidized Child Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Last year ACS worked with four organizations serving NYC's immigrant communities to implement a child care subsidy program for undocumented children. Promise NYC served over 600 children in 2023 and was funded in FY 2024. ● Due to NYC's advocacy, the state increased income eligibility for subsidized child care from 300% of the Federal Poverty Level to 85% of the State Median Income, starting on October 1, 2023.
<p>Keep Children Safe and Promote Family-Driven Solutions</p>	<p>Prevent Child Injuries</p> <p>ACS's Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention (OCSIP) promotes interventions that address fatal and severe unintentional injuries impacting young children, including infant unsafe sleep, Shaken Baby Syndrome, and poisoning prevention focused on safe storage of harmful substances. OCSIP offers free resources, trainings and public campaigns to heighten awareness about how to keep children safe.</p> <p>Supporting Families Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence</p> <p>In 2023, ACS expanded A Safe Way Forward, an innovative model that serves intimate partner violence survivors and the persons causing harm. The program has the capacity to serve 195 families across Brooklyn, the Bronx and Staten Island.</p> <p>Identifying and Preventing Child Trafficking</p> <p>Over the past 18 months, ACS has trained over 2,300 staff to screen children and youth who come to our attention for possible involvement in trafficking. ACS and provider agency staff will continue to be trained online and through ACS's monthly 3-hour live training.</p>
<p>Provide Quality Care and Enduring Solutions</p>	<p>Supporting Provider Partners to Help Young People Heal and Benefit from Therapeutic Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ACS's Senior Advisor for Medicaid Services is training ACS staff and provider agencies on the full continuum of Medicaid services offered so a wider number of NYC children, youth and families can access therapeutic resources. ● ACS continues to advocate to the State Office of Mental Health to ensure NYC staff can access services for youth. ● ACS and provider staff received trainings from DOHMH and OMH on Children's Single Point of Access (CSPOA) -- a centralized referral system for children and youth with serious emotional disturbance who need intensive mental health services to remain at home. to accessing services, as well to identify gaps in services to bring to the attention of state and city policymakers.
<p>Support the Success of Young People</p>	<p>Child-Centric Social Security Benefits Initiative</p> <p>In July 2022, ACS updated our approach to using Social Security benefits of an eligible foster youth to offset costs of care. We are now saving funds for eligible youth to access upon discharge from foster care or reaching adulthood.</p>
<p>Ensure That First-Hand Experiences Guide Our Work</p>	<p>Enhancing the Role of Parent Advocates in Child Safety Conferences (ICSC).</p> <p>In January 2023, ACS implemented an enhanced model of Parent Advocate participation in ICSC which now includes: standardized training for ACS-contracted Parent Advocates, consent forms for parents, private family time during and additional support after the conference.</p>

Appendix of Completed Projects | 2

Reduce Unwarranted Involvement with Families, and the Over-representation of Black, Latinx and LGBTQAI+ Families in Our System

Reduce Disparities in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems

- **Continued implementation of the ACS Race Equity Action Plan**
[Local Law 174 - Equity Assessments \(nyc.gov\)](#) ACS will next update our Race Equity Action Plan in July 2025. We are pleased to continue progress in the following areas: reducing unnecessary SCR reports, providing upfront supports to parents via our primary prevention work, child safety campaigns on newborn safe sleep, safe storage of medication, and the implementation of restorative justice interventions as part of behavior management programs in secure detention and in Close to Home.
- **Continued implementation of the ACS LGBTQAI+ Equity Action Plan** [ACS - LGBTQ Support \(nyc.gov\)](#) In the fall of 2023, ACS conducted our annual Youth Experience Survey, which includes five questions concerning sexual orientation and gender identity and expression that will help us assess the experiences of LGBTQAI+ youth in ACS care. 1,126 youth completed the survey and findings will be available later this year.

Invest in ACS and Provider Workforce

Disbursing Workforce Enhancement Funding to Human Service Providers

In the fall of 2023, NYC allocated \$68 million to support the workforce at eligible Human Service providers. Over 90 organizations with 214 contracts with ACS received \$5.6 million of this funding. In summer 2024, the City increased the Workforce Enhancement investment in human service providers by \$40M in FY24 and \$90M starting in FY25, which was proportionally allocated to ACS contracted providers.

Streamline Processes So Staff Can Spend More Time Directly Engaging with Children and Families

- In the fall of 2023, ACS replaced strict templates used for interviewing subjects with a tool called the "EADGO"- *Engagement Assessment Documentation Guidance and Outline*." The EADGO allows staff to use guidance tips rather than proscriptive templates to document casework contacts and activities. Staff can now access training and support via an E-Learn.
- ACS has reduced case review responsibilities for Child Protective Managers by instituting a new High Priority code (HP16) to redefine frequently encountered families as those who have had four or more SCR referrals within the last 8 years. Since this change, the number of DCP cases involving frequently encountered families that CPMs must review has dropped by one-third.

Regularly solicit and act on staff recommendations

In January 2023, ACS issued an all-staff Engagement Survey to which 41% of staff responded. Staff reported that the number one reason why they continue to work at ACS is a passion for the mission of the agency. The majority of respondents feel their work contributes to the overall goals of ACS. Staff reported that they could be better recognized for their accomplishments and seek more career advancement opportunities available to them. ACS continues to address these concerns and seek additional feedback and suggestions from staff.

Continue to offer healing circles and wellness initiatives

ACS offers Race, Diversity and Intersectionality – Reflective Practice sessions, healing circles and consultations/facilitations related to race equity initiatives as needed throughout the agency.

We commit to continuing to listen, learn and evolve our work.