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NYC[™]
Administration for
Children's Services

REPORT OF THE
INTERAGENCY FOSTER
CARE TASK FORCE

NYCTM

**Administration for
Children's Services**



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ACS is pleased to acknowledge the many individuals and organizations that have contributed to the work of the Interagency Foster Care Task Force and who will work with ACS to advance the important recommendations in this report.

We thank New York City Council Member and Chair of the General Welfare Committee Stephen Levin, who introduced the legislation that led to the creation of the Task Force and participated actively in the entire Task Force process. We thank former Speaker of the City Council Melissa Mark-Viverito and her staff for their participation and contributions. We extend our appreciation to Public Advocate Letitia James and her staff for their commitment and work on the Task Force.

We are extremely grateful to the youth representatives, foster parents and parent leaders from Rise and the Child Welfare Organizing Project who shared lived experiences and whose voices were critical in establishing the priorities of the Task Force and crafting these recommendations.

We appreciate Citizens' Committee for Children and leadership from foster care agencies Children's Aid, Children's Village and Graham Windham for their knowledge and advocacy in shaping the Task Force recommendations. Thank you to the Legal Aid Society and Center for Family Representation for their important presentations to the Task Force.

All of our NYC sister agencies – the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Youth and Community Development, the NYC Housing Authority and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development – dedicated significant time and energy and brought their full range of creativity and expertise to the work of the Task Force. We thank them for this critical collaboration and look forward to our continued partnership moving forward.

Thank you to Marta Siberio who provided expert facilitation of the Task Force meetings, and to Eric Lee and the team at Bennett Midland, which provided research on national best practices that helpfully informed the Task Force's work.

We thank Rob Horwitz, Cathy Redlich and Sarah Chiles from the Redlich Horwitz Foundation for providing a generous grant that supported the facilitation of the Task Force. We thank Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez at New Yorkers for Children for supporting this work. We also thank the wide range of experts and key stakeholders who presented at Task Force work group meetings.

I want to thank my team at ACS, in particular Deputy Commissioner for Family Permanency Services, Julie Farber, for her leadership in driving improvements to the foster care system and for her coordination of the Task Force, with incredible support from Raymond Toomer and Polly Mygatt, who helped structure and organize all aspects of the Task Force's work. Thank you to the many other ACS staff that supported the work of the Task Force including Karyn Boutis, Eric Brettschneider, Eric Ferrero, Loren Ganoë, Sonia Gonzalez, Kathleen Hoskins, Rachael Jensen, Iris Kaplan, Jill Krauss, Bianca Lopez, Angel Mendoza, Rachel Natelson, Alan Sputz, Gita Thadhani, Nancy Thomson, Andrew White, Marsha Wright and Allon Yaroni. I also want to thank the ACS marketing and design team that designed this report, including Malissa Ifill, John W. Taylor and Giselle Rodas.

A special thank you to Deputy Mayor Herminia Palacio, her Chief of Staff, Peter Hatch, and Deputy Chief of Staff, Elizabeth Gillroy, who support our important work at ACS day in and day out and provided critical guidance in the Task Force process.

Finally, thank you to Mayor Bill de Blasio for his unparalleled commitment to child welfare and the investments that his administration has made to strengthen NYC's families and improve outcomes for children. As described in this report, we have made significant progress. Still, much work remains to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive. This report sets important aspirations for the City's shared work to support children and families in the foster care system. We look forward to working with the City Council, including Council Member and Chair of the General Welfare Committee Stephen Levin and new Speaker of the City Council Corey Johnson, Public Advocate Letitia James and all of our City agency and community partners to move these recommendations forward.

David A. Hansell, Commissioner, NYC Administration for Children's Services
Chair, Interagency Foster Care Task Force

ENDORSEMENTS

On March 14, 2018, this report was unanimously endorsed by all members of the Task Force:

Task Force Chair

David A. Hansell

Commissioner, *Administration for Children's Services*

Steven Banks

Commissioner, *Department of Social Services*

Mary Travis Bassett

Commissioner, *Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*,
represented by designee

George Askew

Deputy Commissioner

Georgia Boothe

Vice President,
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Youth Representative

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Commissioner, *Department of Youth and Community Development*

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Youth Representative

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CEO, *Graham Windham*

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Former Chancellor,
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CEO, *Children's Village*

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City Council Member & General Welfare Committee Chair

Jennifer March

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Speaker of the City Council

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Training Director, Rise

I. Executive Summary

The Foster Care Interagency Task Force (the Task Force) was created following the enactment of Local Law 144 of 2016, signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio on November 16, 2016. The legislation, which was introduced by City Council Member and Chair of the General Welfare Committee Stephen Levin, charged the Task Force with issuing recommendations to improve services and outcomes for youth in and aging out of foster care. In addition to this report, the Task Force must also produce two follow-up reports on the implementation of the recommendations in 2019 and 2020.

The law established the composition of the Task Force to include a range of perspectives, experience and expertise. The Task Force is chaired by the Commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Its designated members include youth in and previously in foster care; parents; advocates; representatives from foster care agencies; the Public Advocate; the Speaker of the City Council; the Chair of the City Council General Welfare Committee; the commissioners of the City Departments of Social

Services, Youth and Community Development, and Health and Mental Hygiene; the Chancellor of the Department of Education and the Chair of the New York City Housing Authority. The Task Force held five meetings between June 2017 and March 2018 and generated 16 recommendations that build upon the New York City Administration for Children's Services' (ACS') Foster Care Strategic Blueprint.

The ACS Foster Care Blueprint was issued in January 2016 and identifies key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results across the foster care continuum—from family reunification to kinship placement to adoption to supporting older youth in care. While much work remains, this focus, combined with the unprecedented investments made by the de Blasio administration to strengthen child welfare, is yielding promising results. New York City's foster care population is at a historic low of under 9,000 children in care, exits to kinship guardianship have been steadily increasing and fewer children are returning to foster care.

Building on the work underway via the Blueprint and drawing from the diverse perspectives of the Task Force members, the Task Force identified key recommendations to further improve outcomes for children and families in the foster care system.

IMPROVING PERMANENCY OUTCOMES

Three recommendations (#1 - #3) are designed to reduce the time that children spend in foster care by increasing Family Time (aka visiting) with parents, placing more children with relatives and empowering parents with information so they can fully exercise their rights when their children are placed in care.

IMPROVING HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Seven recommendations (#4 - #8, #10 and #11) will improve the well-being and educational attainment of children while in foster care. Dedicated guidance counselors, tutoring in middle schools and focused oversight and service coordination of the educational needs of children in foster care will increase promotion, attendance and graduation rates. Three recommendations will strengthen mental and behavioral health services for children in foster care and allow improved tracking and trending of needs and service provision. One recommendation is designed to increase the connection of pregnant and parenting teens in foster care to available home visiting services, which will improve the quality of care received by the youth and their young children.

IMPROVING THE PROSPECTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS LEAVING FOSTER CARE

Six recommendations (#9 and #12 - #16) target the needs of young adults leaving foster care. One recommendation is for New York State to ensure that youth with serious and complex physical and mental health needs are able to access Medicaid coverage for the services they need after foster care. Four recommendations will increase housing options and improve access to housing for young people leaving care. Finally, one recommendation seeks to establish a comprehensive education, employment and housing support service for all youth ages 16 to 25 who are in or have recently been discharged from foster care.

Finally, it is important to note that this report comes at a time of fiscal uncertainty at both the federal and state levels. ACS is implementing major reform initiatives in its foster care system through a federal Title IV-E waiver that expires December 31, 2018. ACS plans to submit a request to extend the waiver through most of 2019; however, the request is subject to state and federal approval, and there is no certainty about the federal foster care financing structure after October 2019. In addition, new federal child welfare legislation, the Family First Act, was passed as part of the federal budget approved by Congress on February 9, 2018. This landmark

legislation will benefit child welfare programs in other jurisdictions around the country that do not have the kind of robust preventive funding that New York City has already established. However, the financial impact on New York State and New York City, which have already made such an investment, is uncertain.

At the state level, the Governor's Executive Budget proposal for 2018-19 would dramatically reduce funding for child welfare in New York City. The City will be working with the Governor and the legislature to explain the drastic impact these cuts would have on ACS programs and services, and it is



our fervent hope that they will not be enacted. They would hurt children and families at risk of child abuse and neglect, receiving preventive services, and in foster care. We have seen similar cuts in the past lead to significant increases in the number of children in foster care. These risks create a context for decisions that the City will have to make as it implements the Task Force recommendations.

While ACS has made significant gains in addressing the needs of children in foster care over the last several years, important opportunities remain to make a positive difference in the lives of these children. Task Force members have worked

diligently and thoughtfully to identify top areas of need and meaningful ways to address them. The Task Force recommendations include ideas for new programs that will require investment, changes to City and State policies, as well as suggestions for new ways of collaborating between government agencies. The work moving forward will be to evaluate and prioritize the recommendations for implementation. The Task Force members—who have all endorsed all the recommendations—are ready to support ACS and the other agencies to take up this challenge on behalf of the City’s children in foster care.

II. Introduction

The Foster Care Interagency Task Force (the Task Force) was created following the enactment of Local Law 144 of 2016, signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio on November 16, 2016. The legislation, which was introduced by City Council Member and Chair of the General Welfare Committee Stephen Levin, charged the Task Force with issuing recommendations to improve services and outcomes for youth in and aging out of foster care. See Appendix A for a copy of the legislation.

The Task Force is chaired by the Commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), David A. Hansell, and includes youth in and previously in foster care, parents, advocates, foster care agencies and leadership from the City Council, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Department of Social Services (DSS/HRA/DHS), the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the City Housing Authority (NYCHA). See Appendix B for a full list of Task Force members and staff.

The Task Force report containing its recommendations is due to the Mayor and City Council March 31, 2018, and two annual reports on the implementation of the recommendations are due 12 and 24 months following the submission of the initial report, after which the Task Force will cease to exist. All required Task Force reports are to be published on the ACS website.

In June 2017, ACS convened the first meeting of the Interagency Foster Care Task Force. Task Force members were briefed on the ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint, which was issued in January 2016 and which identifies key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results across the foster care continuum—from family reunification to kinship placement to adoption to supporting older youth in care.

The Task Force reviewed key data and program information pertaining to permanency, health and mental health, education, employment and post-secondary education and housing. The Task Force reviewed the initiatives already underway and outcomes that have been achieved through the Blueprint (see Section III of this report). See Appendix C for issue area data summaries. See Appendix D for the FY 2017 Foster Care Strategic Blueprint Status Report.

The Task Force organized itself into five workgroups: permanency; health and mental health; education; housing; and employment and post-secondary support. See Appendix B for work group participants.

THE TASK FORCE IDENTIFIED THESE INITIAL COMMON THEMES:

- Better sharing of information about existing services is needed;
- Access to existing services for youth and families needs to be facilitated;

-
- Relationships with supportive adults are critical to help youth utilize available resources;
 - More information sharing between agencies to identify children in foster care and address their unique needs is important; and
 - Starting interventions early is critical.

Task Force members met in their work groups during the summer of 2017 to review additional data and best practices information and to brainstorm possible strategies. The work groups heard presentations from experts and key stakeholders to help inform their discussions; see Appendix B for a list of presenters.

The second Task Force meeting in September 2017 included a panel of foster parents and legal advocates who shared their perspectives on the Task Force's priority issues; see Appendix B for panel members. The panel offered many important ideas to the Task Force that were considered in the development of these recommendations.

In addition, the Task Force heard the findings from the research firm Bennett Midland that was tasked to identify key national examples of successful interagency collaborations. These practices were highlighted as contributing to successful collaborations:

- **Governance:** define specific leaders responsible for moving the work forward;
- **Sharing data and information:** determine who needs to know what information and when;
- **Co-location:** many programs require sitting side by side to be successful;
- **Coordinated operations:** identify who is doing what and clearly communicate it to all partners; and
- **Dedicated capacity:** programs endure and reach full potential with dedicated staff capacity.

Task Force members have incorporated many of these approaches into the development of the recommendations contained in this report. Finally, Task Force members defined criteria to guide the development and selection of their recommendations and continued to develop their list of ideas. After the second meeting in September, work groups met and work group leaders prepared detailed written drafts of all recommendations for review by work group members.

At the third Task Force meeting in October 2017, the work groups met to refine their recommendations and presented them to the full Task Force for feedback. Extensive feedback was provided and work groups were asked to address the questions and suggestions offered and refine their recommendations for final review at the fourth Task Force meeting in December.

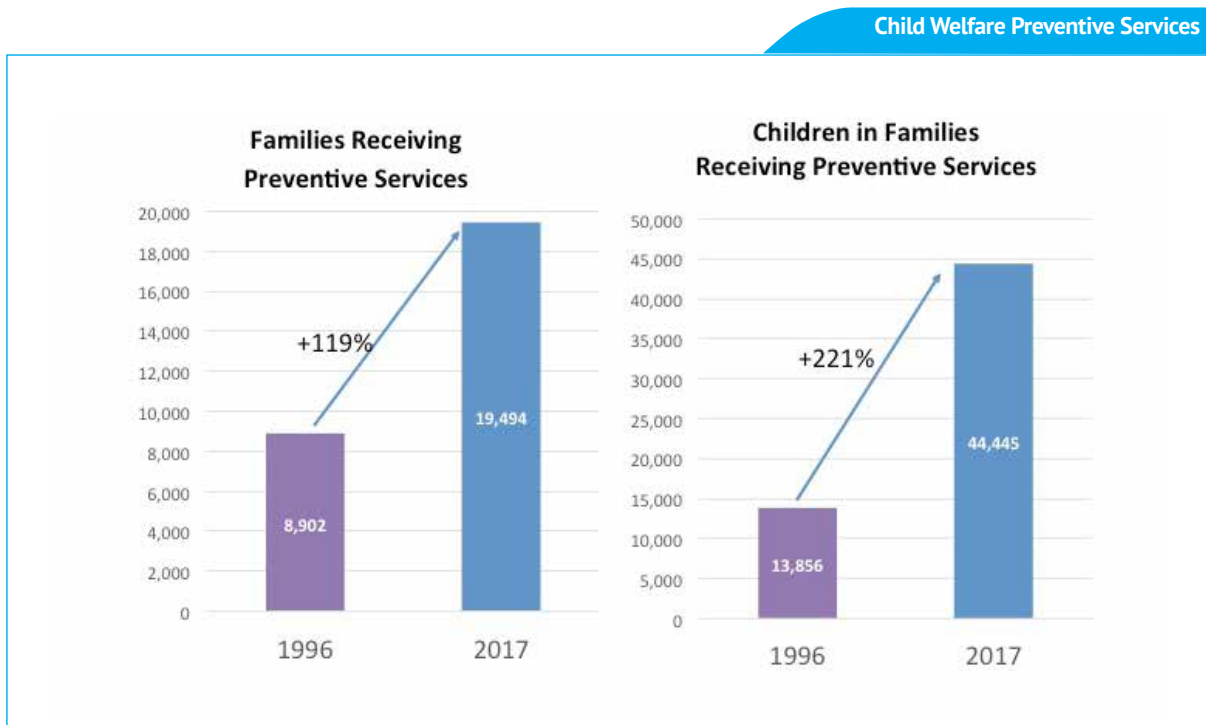
In December 2017, the Task Force met for a fourth meeting and conducted a final review of all of the recommendations.

Task Force staff produced a draft of the report, which was circulated to all Task Force members for final comment and endorsement in February 2018. This report was endorsed by all Task Force members.

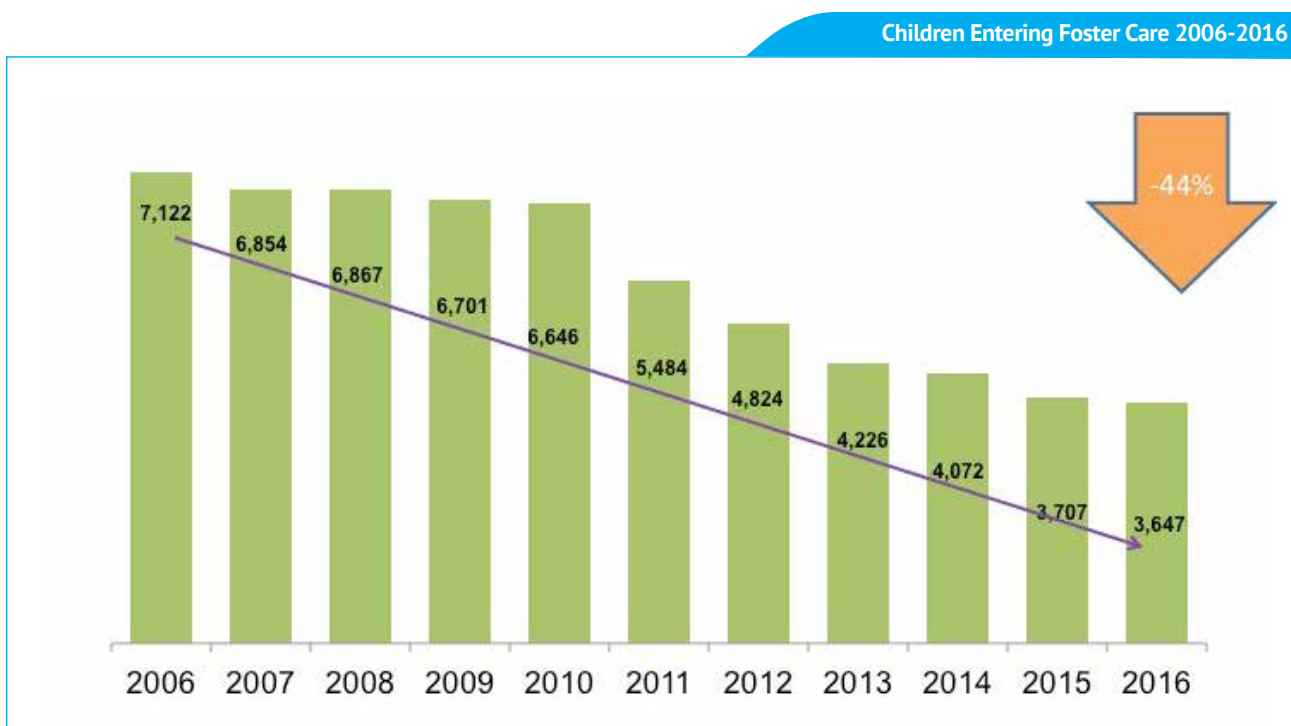
III. Current Context of the New York City Foster Care System

The number of New York City children in foster care at the end of FY 2017 reached a historic low of fewer than 9,000, less than one-fifth of the number of children in care 25 years ago. ACS has invested extensively in preventive services to avoid foster care entry, and in efforts to achieve permanency for those in care. This investment in preventive services has resulted in one of the widest arrays of evidence-based models available anywhere in the country.

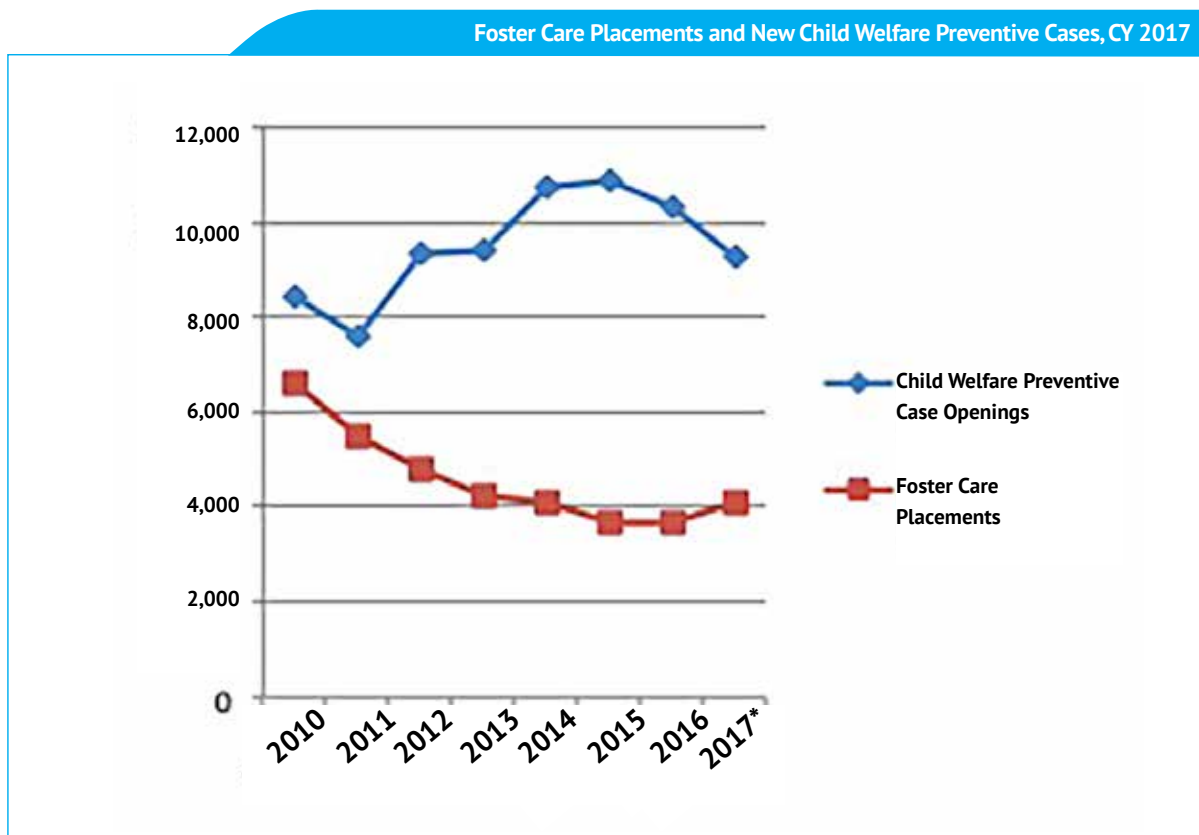
The charts below illustrate the vast increases in the number of children and families receiving preventive services over the past decade. In 1996, nearly 9,000 families—and 13,856 children within those families—received preventive services in NYC. In 2017, the number of families receiving preventive services had more than doubled, and the number of children had more than tripled.



ACS's investment in prevention has paralleled a dramatic decline in the number of NYC children in foster care, suggesting that these up-front interventions are succeeding in keeping children safe while reducing the trauma associated with family separations. While the Division of Child Protection completes more than 50,000 abuse and neglect investigations each year, the number of children entering foster care has significantly dropped. The following chart demonstrates a 44% decrease in foster care entries from 2006 to 2016.

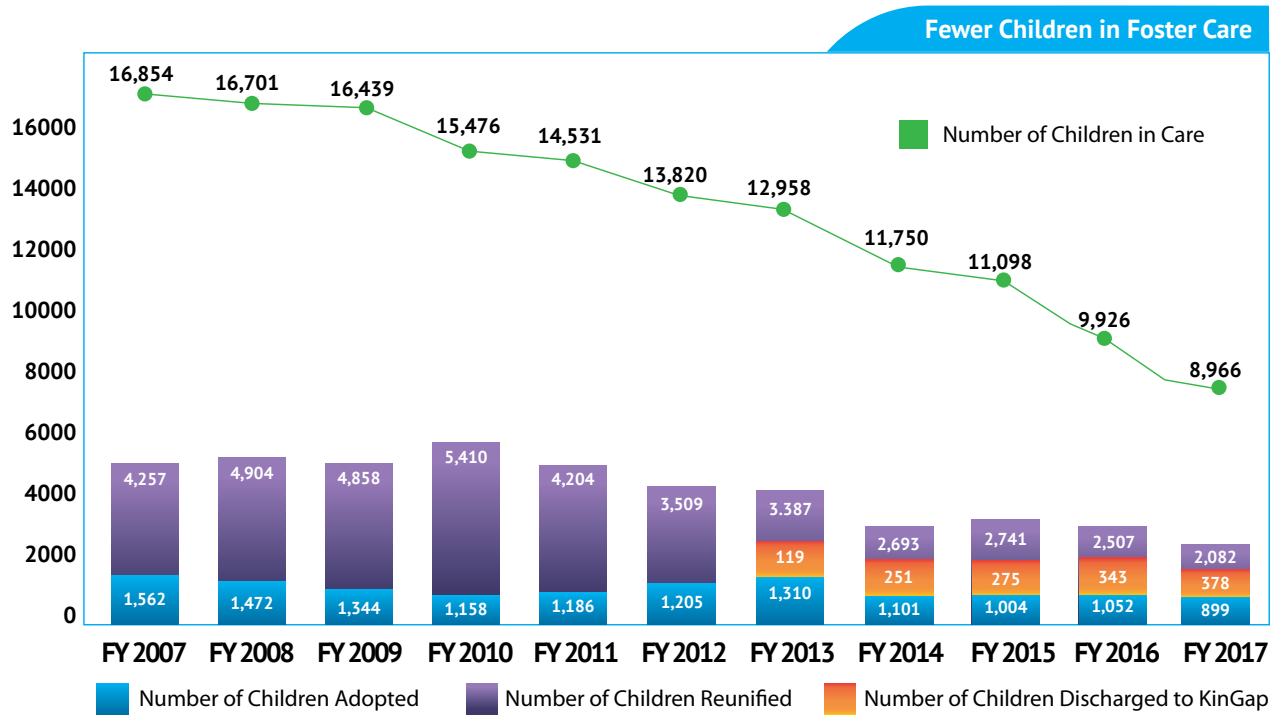


The chart below illustrates the relationship between the number of preventive case openings and the number of children entering foster care from 2010 to 2017.



*2017 Foster care placement count is preliminary as of 2/13/18

For children who are in foster care, ACS strives to help families reunify, and if that is not possible, to connect children with permanent families through adoption or kinship guardianship. As shown in the chart below, ACS has made significant progress, dramatically reducing the number of children in foster care and narrowing the gap between the number of children in care and the number exiting to permanency.



New York State and New York City are among the jurisdictions nationwide that have longer lengths of stay for children in foster care. While this may in part be the result of a far smaller number of children coming into care, it also reflects case practice and administrative process challenges that ACS is addressing through targeted strategies. The numbers are improving: From 2013 to 2017, there were 2,400 fewer New York City children in foster care for more than two years. Nonetheless, there is a great deal of work to be done.

In order to continue and build on this progress, ACS issued a Foster Care Strategic Blueprint in January 2016. The Blueprint identifies key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results for children and families in the foster care system—from family reunification to kinship placement and adoption to supporting older youth.

These strategies include:

- **No Time to Wait**—ACS’s multifaceted initiative to reduce children’s length of stay in foster care by improving case practice, streamlining business processes, utilizing intensive data tracking and analysis and providing tailored technical assistance to foster care agencies.
- **Home Away from Home (HAFH)**—A citywide effort to improve foster care placements by strengthening foster parent recruitment and increasing the use of kinship care in order to enhance children’s well-being.
- **Strong Families NYC**—ACS’s largest foster care initiative ever, combining reduced caseloads, universal trauma screening, and evidence-based models to address attachment, trauma and mental health needs.
- **Strengthening Foster Care Agency Case Practice** through cutting edge training provided through the new ACS Workforce Institute, as well as intensive provider oversight and quality assurance.
- **Improving Education/Employment Outcomes & Pathways to Adulthood** through a range of initiatives and partnerships with DYCD, CUNY, workforce development organizations and other key stakeholders.

More detail on each of the above strategies is included in Section IV of this report as context for the Task Force recommendations.

While much work remains to reduce foster care length of stay and improve outcomes for children in care, these targeted strategies, combined with the unprecedented investments made by the de Blasio administration to strengthen child welfare and coordinated efforts by foster care agencies throughout New York City, are yielding promising results. ACS has issued two annual reports tracking progress against the Blueprint. Highlights include the following:

ACS FOSTER CARE STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

- **Fewer children in foster care:** In FY 2017, there were fewer than 9,000 children in foster care.
- **Increases in Adoption and Kinship Guardianship:** From FY 2015 to FY 2016, ACS increased the number of children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship (KinGAP) by 25% and adoption by 5%, even as the overall numbers of children in foster care continued to decline. The numbers of children exiting foster care to kinship guardianship (KinGAP) has steadily increased from 119 in FY 2013 to 275 in FY 2015 to 378 in FY 2017.
- **Fewer children returning to foster care:** The proportion of children re-entering foster care following reunification or KinGAP (kinship guardianship) declined from 9.1 percent in FY 2015 to 7.8 percent in FY 2016 and 6.3 percent in FY 2017.
- **Improving education and employment outcomes:** ACS established a new Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives dedicated to improving employment outcomes for youth in the foster care and justice systems, and launched the new ACS/CUNY dorm program and new programs in partnership with DYCD, Columbia University Workplace Center and FirstStar. As of FY 2017, 355 foster youth were in college, including almost 100 in the new ACS/CUNY dorm program. ACS also launched a new Driver's Education program and new mentored internship program with the Pinkerton Foundation.
- **More foster homes recruited:** In the first seven months of FY 2018, there were 19% more new foster homes certified, compared to the same time period last year.
- **Historically Low Caseloads:** Foster care caseworker caseloads average 10-12 children per worker.
- **Scaling of Evidence-Based Services:** Foster care agencies are using a nationally recognized screening tool to assess trauma, and proven interventions are being delivered to help children, parents, and families cope with trauma.
- **Cutting Edge Training:** The ACS Workforce Institute has trained more than 5,000 ACS and provider agency staff.
- **Data Driven Decision Making:** In consultation with national child welfare experts, ACS is utilizing data analytics and structured business process improvement approaches to streamline and improve services to children and families.

As detailed in the issue area data summaries (Appendix C), further work is necessary in order to accelerate permanency and to improve services and outcomes in the other areas of focus for the Task Force: education; housing; post-secondary and employment support; and health and mental health. The Task Force focused on these opportunities for improvement as it developed its recommendations.

Finally, it is important to note that this report comes at a time of fiscal uncertainty at both the federal and state levels. ACS is implementing major reform initiatives in its foster care system through a federal Title IV-E waiver that expires December 31, 2018. ACS plans to submit a request to extend the waiver through most of 2019; however, the request is subject to state and federal approval, and there is no certainty about the federal foster care financing structure after October 2019. In addition, new federal child welfare legislation, the Family First Act, was passed as part of the federal budget approved by Congress on February 9, 2018. This landmark legislation will benefit child welfare programs in other jurisdictions around the country that do not have the kind of robust preventive funding that New York City has already established. However, the financial impact on New York State and New York City, which have already made such an investment, is uncertain.

At the state level, the Governor's Executive Budget proposal for 2018-19 would dramatically reduce funding for child welfare in New York City. The City will be working with the Governor and the legislature to explain the drastic impact these cuts would have on ACS programs and services, and it is our fervent hope that they will not be enacted. They would hurt children and families at risk of child abuse and neglect, receiving preventive services, and in foster care. We have seen similar cuts in the past lead to significant increases in the number of children in foster care. These risks create a context for decisions that the City will have to make as it implements the Task Force recommendations.

While ACS has made significant gains in addressing the needs of children in foster care over the last several years, important opportunities remain to make a positive difference in the lives of these children. Task Force members have worked diligently and thoughtfully to identify top areas of need and meaningful ways to address them. The Task Force recommendations include ideas for new programs that will require investment, changes to City and State policies, as well as suggestions for new ways of collaborating between government agencies. The work moving forward will be to evaluate and prioritize the recommendations for implementation. The Task Force members—who have all endorsed all the recommendations—are ready to support ACS and the other agencies to take up this challenge on behalf of the City's children in foster care.

IV. Task Force Recommendations

The Interagency Foster Care Task Force offers ACS the opportunity to collaborate with key City agencies and other partners to find more ways to improve services for youth in foster care and outcomes for youth aging out of foster care. The Task Force's recommendations are aligned with the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint, and will build on the work already underway.

	#	Recommendation	Page
Permanency	1	Identify strategies to increase placement of children in foster care with kin	20
	2	Identify strategies to increase and improve the quality of Family Time (aka family visiting)	23
	3	Enhance materials for parents about the child welfare system and their rights	25
Education	4	Explore feasibility of establishing dedicated guidance counselors for children in foster care	27
	5	Identify strategies to provide academic enrichment services, tutoring and social-emotional supports for middle school students in foster care	28
	6	Identify strategies to improve service coordination and regulatory oversight to support DOE students in foster care	29
Health & Mental Health	7	Explore opportunities to expand intensive, trauma-informed psychosocial and behavioral supports for youth in family foster care	32
	8	Explore feasibility of implementing wraparound model for youth in foster care with significant mental health needs	33
	9	Advocate to NYS DOH to ensure that youth leaving foster care are eligible for Home and Community Based Waiver Services (HCBS)	34
	10	Advocate to NYS OMH to provide ACS with access to PSYCKES (Psychiatric Services and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System)	35
	11	Facilitate access to home visiting services for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care	35

	#	Recommendation	Page
Housing	12	Ensure that eligible foster youth aging out of care receive the NYCHA N-zero priority, if they are legally in the care and custody of ACS, regardless of the location of their foster placement	38
	13	Advocate to increase State-set housing rental assistance for youth and families	39
	14	Explore expansion of transitional housing for youth leaving foster care	40
	15	Provide integrated, accessible information on housing resources for youth leaving foster care	40
Employment & Post-Secondary Education	16	Explore strategies to provide supportive services to youth ages 16-25—both during and after foster care—to achieve career, educational and housing goals	43

A. Permanency

Overview

In January 2016, ACS issued a Foster Care Strategic Blueprint that identified key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results for children and families in the foster care system—from family reunification to kinship placement and adoption to supporting older youth. These strategies include:

- **No Time to Wait—Shortening Lengths of Stay in Foster Care:** ACS is working aggressively to reduce children’s length of stay in foster care. This work includes enhancing Family Time (aka visiting) practice to facilitate safe and timely reunification, as well as addressing barriers to timely adoption and kinship guardianship. In 2017, ACS closely analyzed the cases of approximately 2,500 children who had been in foster care for more than two years and identified opportunities to streamline administrative processes and provide technical assistance to foster care agencies to reduce time to permanency. In 2017, ACS announced an \$11 million initiative in partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation to expand the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids child-focused adoption recruitment model to increase the number of older children and children with special needs who exit foster care to adoption or KinGAP.
- **Improving Foster Care Placements to Enhance the Well-Being of Children:** ACS’ Home Away from Home (HAFH) initiative is focused on increasing placement with kin, redesigning the way foster parents are recruited and supported, and enhancing all parts of the placement continuum to improve child well-being and permanency outcomes. In the first seven months of FY 2018, there were 19% more new foster homes certified, compared to the same time period last year.
- **Strong Families NYC:** Through ACS’ largest foster care initiative ever, Strong Families NYC, ACS lowered caseworker and supervisor caseloads, implemented a universal trauma screening tool and scaled evidence-based models to address attachment, trauma and mental health needs.
- **Strengthening Foster Care Agency Case Practice:** The ACS Workforce Institute is providing cutting edge training and professional development to significantly enhance the capacity of the child welfare workforce. ACS also implements an intensive provider oversight, accountability and quality assurance system.

Much work remains to reduce length of stay and continue to improve permanency outcomes for children. However, these targeted strategies, combined with significant investments made by the de Blasio administration to strengthen child welfare and coordinated efforts by ACS contracted foster care agencies throughout New York City, are yielding promising results, including the following:

- **Fewer children in foster care.** In FY 2017, there were fewer than 9,000 children in foster care, down from 50,000 25 years ago and almost 17,000 ten years ago.
- **More children exiting foster care to kinship guardianship.** The numbers of children exiting foster care to kinship guardianship (KinGAP) has steadily increased from 119 in FY 2013 to 275 in FY 2015 to 378 in FY 2017.
- **Fewer children returning to foster care.** The proportion of children re-entering foster care following reunification or KinGAP (kinship guardianship) declined from 9.1% in FY 2015 to 6.3% in FY 2017.

Building upon this work, the Task Force has identified three high priority areas where additional investment could further improve permanency for children: kin placement, Family Time, and information for parents.

Recommendation #1: Identify strategies to increase placement of children in foster care with kin

Need and Opportunity

In New York City, 30% of children in foster care currently live with relatives or kin. This is lower than kinship care rates in other large jurisdictions such as Los Angeles (38%) and Dallas (41%). Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) has 62% of its children in foster care placed with kin.

The research is unequivocal that children fare best when placed with kin:

- Children placed with kin have greater placement stability, which is associated with better outcomes. A meta-analysis of kinship care research found that children and youth in foster care are 2.6 times more likely than children in kinship care to have 3 or more placements and are 1.9 times more likely to experience a placement disruption.¹ An analysis of ACS data showed that in NYC, children in non-kinship care experience approximately three times as many moves as children in kinship placements.
- Kinship care helps to preserve community and family links. Studies in California, New York City and Illinois all indicate that children and youth in kinship care are more likely than children and youth in

¹ Winokur, Marc, et al. *Kinship Care for the Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being of Children Removed from the Home for Maltreatment* (2014). <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD006546.pub3/abstract;jsessionid=7985C3B546A25BEDE3F060B5FF0A98BD.f04t03>

general foster care to be placed with their siblings and in close proximity to their home of origin.² In NYC, ACS data indicates that 32% of children initially placed with kin are placed within their home community district, compared to only 14% of children placed with non-kin foster parents.

- Placement with kin helps reduce trauma and leads to higher rates of behavioral and emotional well-being. A meta-analysis found that children and youth in kinship care are two times more likely than those in foster homes to report positive emotional health.³
- Children and youth in kinship care are more likely than children and youth in non-kinship foster care to achieve permanency overall through reunification, adoption, or guardianship.⁴
- Kinship care creates the possibility of permanency through KinGAP, and it improves parent-child and sibling visitation rates, which in turn improves permanency and well-being. Of all NYC teens who entered care in 2010, ACS data shows that 60% of those youth initially placed with kin achieved permanency after 5 years whereas only 52% of those youth placed in non-kinship homes achieved permanency after 5 years.
- Children placed in kinship homes are less likely to re-enter foster care after exiting to permanency.⁵

In addition to the direct benefits for children living with kin, the recruitment of kinship resources also decreases strain on the foster home pool, giving foster care agencies more flexibility to make the best possible matches for children who need non-kin placements.

Currently, the same ACS child protective services (CPS) worker who is responsible for conducting investigations to ensure the safety of children is also responsible for searching for relatives at the time a child is removed from their parents. This juncture in an investigation involves many time-sensitive tasks, and the CPS worker has limited opportunity to complete extensive kinship searches. At foster care agencies, the work to search for and engage kin is done by the same case planners who are responsible for meeting all of the safety, permanency and well-being needs of the children in foster care as well as for working with parents to address the issues that led to their children entering foster care. Other jurisdictions have experienced success increasing the proportion of children placed with kin by establishing Kinship Specialist staff positions and functions that are exclusively dedicated to identifying, engaging and supporting kin.

2 PewTrusts. *Time for Reform: Support Relatives in Providing Foster Care & Permanent Families for Children* (2007). http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/foster_care_reform/SupportingRelativespdf.pdf

3 Winokur, Marc, et al. (2014).

4 Sakai, Christina, et al. *Health Outcomes & Family Services in Kinship Analysis of a National Sample of Children in the Child Welfare System* (2011). <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=384260>

5 Winokur, Marc, et al. (2014).

Recommendation

ACS should explore opportunities to dedicate staff as Kinship Specialists within the DCP and the foster care provider agencies. Kinship Specialist staff could identify and engage kinship resources for children at the time of removal and for those in foster care, focusing particularly on children recently placed in non-kin homes as well as those in care for longer periods who still need permanency resources.

Kinship Specialists in DCP could help ensure that whenever possible, children never have to spend a night with a stranger. When kinship placements cannot be found immediately, Kinship Specialists at the foster care agencies would pick up where DCP left off. They would build longer-term relationships with families outside of the (often conflict-laden) context of removal and would work diligently to ensure that children are settled with the most appropriate caregivers by their 45th day in care.

These specialists could also help achieve permanency for long-stayers, including children in care 15 months or more. These children may not have had the benefit of extensive kinship searches when they entered care, and even if they did, circumstances may have changed so that a renewed search would yield positive results. Data suggest that NYC has room to grow here—of the 1,307 adolescents (ages 14 and older) in family foster care for over 15 months, only 9% have been in the same kin placement for six or more continuous months. Working with these teens in a trauma-sensitive way, helping them to explore and build their own support networks, could result in both legal and relational permanency for more youth.

As a result of establishing kinship focused functions, more NYC children in care could be placed with kin, and these children would experience fewer re-placements and re-entries once they leave foster care. This initiative could impact thousands of children and families. Increasing kinship placement would also reduce the strain on non-kin foster home resources, allowing more children to be better matched with a resource that is able to meet their needs.

RECOMMENDATION #2: IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO INCREASE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF FAMILY TIME (FAMILY VISITING)

Need and Opportunity

Research indicates that children who experience frequent, high quality Family Time—visiting between children in foster care and their parents—are ten times more likely to reunify.⁶

ACS' Family Time policy is informed by national best practices and requires visitation plans tailored to the needs of individual families, use of the least restrictive level of supervision appropriate, and active support of families to move progressively from supervised to unsupervised community visits, and eventually to overnight visits. However, key stakeholders have identified concerns about the on-the-ground implementation of the policy, as the majority of Family Time that occurs is supervised.

During the past two years, ACS revamped its Family Time training with feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and trained thousands of staff in the child welfare workforce. In addition, ACS recently developed new tools to help improve agency visiting spaces and to help agencies safely move families to unsupervised visiting when appropriate. However, continuing improvement in the quantity and quality of Family Time is still needed.

Recommendation

This is a three-part recommendation to expand and improve Family Time:

1. Implement best practices to increase frequency and quality of Family Time

ACS should continue working with foster care agencies to increase the frequency and quality of Family Time. This includes holding visits in the community when possible, continually adjusting the level of supervision to reflect the family's progress and current safety assessment, assisting families to overcome transportation barriers, and working creatively with families and community partners to provide high-quality visiting experiences for all involved. In particular, providers should collaborate with parents, foster parents and youth to explore locations for visits that are safe, convenient, and family-friendly; this can help set the stage for positive interactions and high-quality Family Time. Providers should also explore whether foster parents or other supportive adults can safely supervise visits, allowing for more flexibility in scheduling and location.

⁶ Davis, I., Landsverk, J., Newton, R., & Ganger, W. (1996). Parental visiting and foster care reunification. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 18, 363-382.

ACS and providers should consider staffing models that would enhance support for the coordination and supervision of Family Time. Foster care agencies should also explore collaborations with local organizations to provide community visit hosting services. In addition, ACS should continue providing technical assistance to agencies to improve their Family Time practices.

2. Develop alternative visiting locations for parents living in homeless shelters

Parents and families living in shelters need a physical space to visit with their children who are in foster care. Under current HRA and DHS rules, parents living in single adult shelters and adult family shelters are prohibited from having any children, including their own, on the premises. When parents are in family shelters (meaning they have multiple children, and at least one child lives with them while another child or children are in foster care), there can be flexibility to arrange visits, including overnight visits, at the shelter, depending on space and other factors. Finally, for parents in HRA domestic violence shelters, there are often rules prohibiting children from visiting to preserve the confidentiality of the shelter's location. Furthermore, shelters have strict policies with regard to curfews and check-ins to ensure that those assigned to shelters are in fact residing there.

When a parent lives in an adult shelter and is ready for overnight visits but no appropriate location (such as a relative or family friend's home) can be identified, ACS should provide an alternate location for the family to have visits. ACS, DHS and HRA should also work collaboratively to address the specific Family Time-related challenges that homeless families with children in foster care face. DHS and ACS should each identify agency leads to work with foster care agencies and DHS providers on troubleshooting as they develop a plan to make visitation possible.

3. Strengthen Family-to-Family⁷ work from the moment a child enters foster care to ensure that parent-child visits begin within two business days of placement and that Parent to Parent meetings occur consistently

Positive relationships between parents and foster parents play a vital role in well-being and permanency for children in foster care. Per ACS policy, the Parent to Parent (P2P) meeting is a child-centered and team-oriented meeting that occurs shortly after a child is placed in a foster home. The P2P meeting gives foster parents an opportunity to understand the needs of the children in their home and allows for parents to feel more at ease about who is caring for their child. ACS policy supports consistent and high-quality P2P meetings, but there is a need for collaboration with providers to support

⁷ Broadly speaking, the Family-to-Family concept refers to the relationship between foster parents and parents to support child well-being and positive permanency outcomes, and strategies for child welfare systems to support and advance this.

and track implementation of this policy. Along with the P2P meeting, the first parent-child visit should occur within two business days of the child's placement in foster care. Again, there is a need for support and tracking to ensure that practice matches policy for these initial visits.

ACS should implement new technical assistance, protocols and tracking (which may require advocating to OCFS for new functionality in the Connections system) to support consistent, high-quality Parent to Parent Meetings and initial parent-child visits, which should occur within two business days of placement as per ACS policy.

RECOMMENDATION #3: ENHANCE MATERIALS FOR PARENTS ABOUT THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM AND THEIR RIGHTS

Need and Opportunity

When families are involved with the child welfare system, it is vital that they are informed about how the system works, as well as their rights and how to exercise them. Written materials on these topics exist, including materials produced by ACS and other organizations, for example the ACS pamphlet "A Parent's Guide to Child Protective Services in New York City." It is critical to ensure that updated materials are updated and consistently distributed to all families involved in ACS investigations and foster care cases.

Recommendation

With input from parent advocates and other stakeholders, ACS should develop updated materials for parents that provide relevant information about the child welfare system, their rights and how to exercise them in order to ensure that families consistently receive the materials at the appropriate time and in the appropriate language.

B. Education

Overview

Research consistently shows that children who are highly mobile, including both children in foster care and children experiencing homelessness, are at a significant educational disadvantage; with each school change, they can lose up to six months of academic progress.⁸ Movement within the foster care system also results in higher school absence rates and a greater likelihood of trauma-induced behavioral problems. Children who experience frequent school changes also face challenges in developing and sustaining supportive relationships with teachers and counselors, a key ingredient in resilience and overall well-being.

National studies show that these students experience higher rates of school suspensions and expulsions, lower standardized test scores in reading and math, high levels of grade retention and drop-out, and far lower high school and college graduation rates.⁹ Youth in foster care are two times more likely to be absent from school than other students.¹⁰ The average reading level of 17- to 18-year-olds in foster care is that of a seventh grader, and young people in foster care are 2½ to 3½ times more likely than their peers to be receiving special education services.¹¹

These challenges are reflected at the city level, with 22% of students in foster care repeating a grade, as compared to 6% of all NYC Department of Education students. While 70.5% of students citywide completed high school in 2015, 35% of foster care youth were on track to graduate (ACS and DOE data, see Appendix C).

The Task Force discussed ways to coordinate and leverage existing resources at the Administration for Children's Services, the Department of Education, and the Department of Youth and Community Development to improve educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care. The Task Force explored areas where a targeted new investment could make a significant difference in these outcomes.

The recommendations below are designed to reduce the number of over-age students in foster care; increase grade promotion, attendance, and graduation rates; and improve interagency collaboration on educational planning for students in foster care and compliance with federal, state, and local mandates.

8 Legal Center for Foster Care & Education, "Questions and Answers: Credit Transfer and School Completion," https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/child/education/OA_2_Credits_FINAL.authcheckdam.pdf.

9 National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, "Fostering Success in Education: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care," http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?portalid=0&EntryId=1279&Command=Core_Download.

10 Id.

11 Id.

RECOMMENDATION #4: EXPLORE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING DEDICATED GUIDANCE COUNSELORS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Need and Opportunity

Students in foster care are often assigned to school guidance counselors with high caseloads who may or may not have specific expertise related to foster care. If a child changes schools, this disrupts any relationship the child had with their previous guidance counselor as they are assigned to a new counselor in their new school. Children in care could greatly benefit from the support of dedicated guidance counselors with specific child welfare expertise.

Recommendation

DOE should explore the feasibility of developing a dedicated guidance counselor/social worker function serving youth in foster care, and the possibility of piloting this approach with middle and high school foster care youth in two districts with high placement concentrations. If the pilot is successful, the approach could be expanded citywide. Counselors would mentor and advocate for students, connecting them with resources necessary to succeed in school and beyond. In addition to possessing in-depth understanding of social-emotional and individual environmental challenges, the counselors would have significant training in post-secondary readiness. Their expertise would include the NYC DOE high school application process; college exploration, preparation, and the application process; the impact of societal and environmental challenges; interpersonal dynamics and problem solving; and social justice and community partnerships. Counselors would be based at schools but would have the flexibility to make home visits. Their services could be expanded over and above what traditional guidance counselors do; for example, these counselors would visit with students at different schools, follow students from middle school through high school, and work intimately with foster care agencies.

Similar models have yielded impressive results both locally and in other jurisdictions. The 2010-2013 NYC Interagency Task Force on Truancy, for example, found school-based mentors to be the most effective component of its strategies to combat chronic absenteeism, most notably among such vulnerable populations as special education students, students in temporary housing, and over-age students. In addition to gaining almost two additional weeks of schooling per student, mentored youth were 52% more likely than their peers to remain enrolled the following year.

A similar program in Colorado saw dropout rates decline from 5.5% to 3.5% after adding 220 counselors to 59 schools, cutting the student-to-counselor ratio down from 363:1 to 216:1. Based on

projections of increased earnings and decreased incarceration and social welfare expenditures, the state calculated its return on investment to total approximately \$319,842,750 or \$20 saved for every \$1 invested in counseling.

RECOMMENDATION #5: IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT SERVICES, TUTORING AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Need and Opportunity

Intensive academic and social-emotional supports are of particular importance during the middle school grades, in order to set the stage for success in high school, college and careers. A time of academic and developmental transition, these years are characterized by a volatility that can derail educational progress and undermine scholastic engagement. For youth in foster care, such risks are only amplified by instability, leaving them especially vulnerable to academic disengagement. An analysis of ACS and DOE data shows:

- Of the 800 middle school students currently in foster care, at least 170 are chronically absent¹²
- Approximately 20% of 8th graders in foster care are over-age for their grade
- 90% of chronically absent students are at least one year over-age for their grades; more than a third are more than 2 years over-age for their grades

Recommendation

ACS and DYCD should work together to ensure that youth in foster care are utilizing the various DYCD programs including the Beacon, Cornerstone and COMPASS (Comprehensive After School System) programs that provide a range of academic enrichment services and social-emotional supports.

ACS and DOE should explore ways to connect 6th graders in foster care as well as any 7th or 8th graders who are over-age for their grades (approximately 400 students) to tutoring services. DOE has experience providing supplemental educational services to vulnerable populations of students and has licensed staff to implement these programs. Currently, DOE provides tutoring services for students in temporary housing at various shelter sites across the five boroughs to combat any academic losses due to school mobility. DOE also operates the Middle School ExTRA program that offers an expanded school day featuring an hour of small-group literacy tutoring. DOE's two year-old Middle School Quality

¹² DOE defines "chronically absent" as less than 90% attendance.

Initiative, which aims to boost literacy in schools in the bottom third of the district, is modeled after a “high-dosage” math tutoring program in Houston that yielded academic gains equivalent to an extra four to six months of schooling; in New York City, a similar program combining an expanded school day with intensive tutoring resulted in state-exam math scores improving at twice the citywide rate.

RECOMMENDATION #6: IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SERVICE COORDINATION AND REGULATORY OVERSIGHT TO SUPPORT DOE STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Need and Opportunity

Currently, there are fewer DOE policies and infrastructure specific to students in foster care as compared to other populations such as English language learners, students with disabilities, and students in temporary housing. Establishing policies specific to students in foster care, along with the infrastructure to coordinate appropriate population-specific supports, will improve service delivery and establish uniform monitoring and oversight of the educational needs of these children by recognizing and prioritizing their distinct needs. In addition, with the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), school districts are for the first time legally obligated to collaborate with child welfare agencies in the interest of promoting educational stability and success for youth in foster care.

Recommendation

Explore opportunities to establish an infrastructure for the delivery of services and the enforcement of legal protections for students in foster care. Like the DOE Office of Students in Temporary Housing, dependent on available resources, this child welfare support function could oversee and advise a team of borough-based foster care content experts responsible for field support and case consultation. These staff would be versed in both education and child welfare systems in order to provide schools with support comprising individual case consultation, professional development, and cross-system project coordination for all child welfare divisions, including foster care. To comply with the ESSA mandate, DOE and ACS must engage regularly in joint decision-making and planning on school placement and transportation, and enhanced collaboration between ACS and DOE would also allow for more efficient consultation regarding unexplained absences. This function could also coordinate with the existing Office of Counseling Support Programs and the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning to administer counseling and tutoring programs dedicated to students in foster

care. Finally, this function could promote and enforce a new Chancellor's regulation that will address in a comprehensive manner the educational rights of children and youth in foster care.

A Chancellor's Regulation on students in foster care would outline school stability requirements under ESSA in addition to providing a detailed parent engagement protocol. In the tradition of regulations addressing such other vulnerable populations as students in temporary housing, parenting youth, and LGBTQ youth, this regulation would inform schools of the rights of students in foster care and the requirement for interagency collaboration with respect to school placement determinations and school transportation coordination. A formal policy will also help ensure consistent messaging to all schools regarding the legal complexities of record access for purposes of educational planning.

C. Health and Mental Health

Overview

Youth in foster care have experienced trauma that can affect their physical and mental health. Among NYC foster care youth ages 6-21 years old, 50% display symptoms of trauma, 58% display emotional or behavioral difficulties and 41% experience behavioral problems in school¹³ (see Appendix C). Considering this, these youth—as well as the families supporting them—need a variety of physical and mental health services in order to thrive. While some such services do exist, service offerings could be enhanced and access could be increased.

Through ACS's Strong Families NYC initiative, foster care agencies are using a nationally recognized screening tool to assess trauma, and evidence-based interventions to help children, parents, and families cope with trauma. However, these interventions focus primarily on younger children, and the Task Force identified that additional trauma-informed supportive services could improve physical and mental health outcomes for older youth in foster care. The Task Force identified the need to expand access to wraparound mental health services, and to address a problematic state policy that prevents youth transitioning out of foster care from accessing adult Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) through Medicaid. The Task Force also identified opportunities to increase access to mental health care data to enable ACS and its partners to more efficiently and effectively plan for and address the mental health needs of children and older youth in care.

Lastly, the Task Force identified an opportunity to enhance services for youth in foster care that have children of their own. ACS has a Teen Specialist Unit (TSU) that provides training and technical assistance to foster care agencies working with expectant and parenting youth. This work is informed through a partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. While home visiting programs exist to support expecting and parenting youth, there is an opportunity to improve access to these programs for NYC youth in foster care to ensure that young parents understand the resources available to them and improve child well-being and reproductive health outcomes.

¹³ Health Status of Youth in Care based on the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) screening tool. ACS Data from the last CANS approved for the child from 10/27/2016 to 6/12/2017.

RECOMMENDATION #7: EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND INTENSIVE, TRAUMA-INFORMED PSYCHOSOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH IN FAMILY FOSTER CARE

Need and Opportunity

As noted above, many youth in care display trauma symptoms and face challenges with behavioral health. Unmet behavioral health and psychosocial support needs of youth in care can contribute to a cycle of placement disruption, foster home attrition, and adverse outcomes for foster youth. Anticipating these needs and proactively offering supports can help avoid such a cycle. Currently, additional supports are provided for youth in therapeutic family foster care (TFFC); however, additional supports are also needed for youth placed in regular family foster care (FFC).

Recommendation

Explore opportunities to expand access to intensive, trauma-informed psychosocial and behavioral supports for youth placed in family foster care (FFC) settings and their foster parents. Although youth placed in FFC settings—versus youth placed in the higher level of care known as therapeutic family foster care (TFFC)—may present with fewer special needs or behavioral challenges, virtually all adolescents in foster care face challenges given the nature of adolescence, compounded by their histories of trauma. For example, one promising model, the FaST program, is currently being implemented at Children’s Village with funding from the Hilton Foundation. It addresses challenges inherent in fostering teens by providing individualized in-home support, specialized training for foster parents, funding for family bonding activities, crisis management, independent living classes, and pro-social activities for the teens. The expected outcomes of the FaST program include a reduction in placement disruptions, and improved health and behavioral health and high school graduation rates. To date the program has achieved a 71% decrease in youth who are AWOL from the agency and an 88% rate of youth enrolled in the program with passing grades. The Task Force recommends exploring expansion of the FaST model or similar intensive, trauma informed supports for older youth in foster care.

RECOMMENDATION #8: EXPLORE FEASIBILITY TO IMPLEMENT WRAPAROUND MODEL FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE WITH SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Need and Opportunity

Foster and birth parents need more support regarding medical and mental health issues, diagnoses, and treatment options. They also need real-time information and guidance regarding implications of clinical diagnoses, medications, and treatment options, especially for youth with the highest mental health needs. In calendar year 2016, 589 children in foster care under age 18 had acute inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations, with an average length of stay of 17 days. Thirty-five percent of the 589 children had 2 or more hospitalizations.¹⁴ With better access to clinical information and community-based resources, foster parents and caregivers may seek out the appropriate services sooner, thus preventing re-hospitalizations.

Recommendation

Determine feasibility to implement the High Fidelity Wraparound Service Model (HFW) for youth in foster care with serious emotional disturbances (SED). HFW is a structured, team-based process that uses an evidence-based, nationally recognized model to partner with families, incorporating their voice and strengths to develop a family-driven plan that promotes self-advocacy.¹⁵ High-Fidelity Wraparound care coordination for youth in foster care and foster parents can provide better mental health outcomes and will ensure that children in foster care will have improved access to an array of mental health service options to facilitate reunification or, for those in residential care, to return to family-based settings. Foster and birth parents will have enhanced support and guidance regarding the mental health needs of children in their care, including a better understanding of the implications of clinical diagnoses, medications and treatment options.

The NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) is already conducting a pilot of this model in other counties across the state, and NYC DOHMH is planning a local demonstration program of the model in association with the OMH initiative. The demonstration program will be open to youth with SED involved in at least one other child-serving system, including child welfare/foster care. This demonstration program could be expanded to dedicate additional slots exclusively to youth with SED

¹⁴ New York City Administration for Children's Services Mental Health Coordination Unit Database Detail Report For Period covering January 1-December 31, 2016.

¹⁵ Suter, J.C. & Bruns, E.J. (2009). Effects of Wraparound from a Meta-Analysis of Controlled Studies. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 12, 336-351.

in foster care via a partnership between DOHMH and ACS.

HFW services could be particularly effective in facilitating and stabilizing return to family-based settings for youth in residential programs with high lengths of stay and/or complicated paths to permanency. HFW services would be initiated at the point of discharge from the residential setting. A foster care pilot could complement the existing DOHMH demonstration program with 1-2 teams working exclusively with the foster care population, starting with approximately 20 foster youth annually (10 youth per team) with serious emotional disturbances, and gather evidence on the model's impact in decreasing psychiatric hospitalizations, re-hospitalizations, and lengths of stay, and improving well-being and permanency outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION #9: ADVOCATE TO NYS DOH TO CHANGE POLICY SO THAT YOUTH EXITING FOSTER CARE ARE ELIGIBLE FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED WAIVER SERVICES (HCBS)

Need and Opportunity

Many young adults aging out of foster care are not currently able to access adult Medicaid Home and Community Based (HCBS) Waiver services that are designed to serve individuals with complex physical and/or mental health needs. This is due to an unintended consequence of the state eligibility process established by the New York State Department of Health (DOH). The current eligibility process is based in part on a review of three years of Medicaid claims history. However, young adults in foster care lack Medicaid claims history because health services for young adults in foster care are covered by a Medicaid per diem payment arrangement with foster care agencies, rather than through community Medicaid; thus young adults exiting foster care do not have Medicaid claims history. As such, young adults with complex medical and/or mental health needs who would otherwise meet the criteria for adult HCBS are being denied simply because they lack claims history.

Recommendation

Young adults leaving foster care should be exempted from the current three-year claims look-back requirement to prove that complex Medicaid-billed services were used in order to facilitate access to HCBS. DOH should establish alternative eligibility criteria for the young adults that do not have Medicaid claims history. NYS Department of Health's Medicaid Redesign Team should also ensure that the State effectively includes this population in its plans moving forward.

RECOMMENDATION #10: ADVOCATE TO NYS OMH TO PROVIDE ACS WITH ACCESS TO THE PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES AND CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENT SYSTEM (PSYCKES)

Need and Opportunity

The data reporting limitations of the existing payment system for medical and mental health services delivered in foster care preclude a comprehensive aggregation and analysis of data pertaining to the specific diagnoses and treatments (including medications and hospitalizations) of children and youth while in care. The Psychiatric Services and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System for Medicaid (PSYCKES), is a web-based portfolio of tools designed to support quality improvement and clinical decision-making. PSYCKES uses administrative data from the NYS Medicaid claims database to generate quality indicators and summarize patient treatment histories. Access to PSYCKES data will help ACS and its partners more efficiently and effectively create systems to address the mental health needs of children in care.

Recommendation

Access and use of the Office of Mental Health's Psychiatric Services and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System (PSYCKES) community mental health claims data can help significantly with planning for children and youth during time in foster care. By understanding utilization of specific treatment services, diagnostic trends, and medication prescription patterns, ACS can build future service capacity, assist in program and resource planning and help guide individual case planning. Information from PSYCKES will help ACS support agencies in the delivery of tailored health and mental health services and will also inform monitoring of foster care agency performance by making information periodically available to the Medical Audit Unit.

RECOMMENDATION #11: FACILITATE ACCESS TO HOME VISITING PROGRAMS FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Need and Opportunity

Young women in foster care are more than twice as likely as their peers not in foster care to become pregnant by age 19.¹⁶ Research shows that children of parents with histories of childhood abuse and neglect are more likely to experience sexual abuse and neglect themselves, as well as involvement

¹⁶ Boonstra HD. Teen Pregnancy among Young Women in Foster Care: A Primer. Guttmacher Policy Review 2011.

with child protection services at some point their lives.¹⁷ Home visiting programs exist but are not frequently utilized for young parents in foster care.

Recommendation

Ensure that teens in foster care who become pregnant and mothers who already have other children in foster care who become pregnant are routinely provided information about and referrals to home visiting programs including the Nurse Family Partnership, the DOHMH newborn home visiting program, and the state funded Healthy Families program. These evidenced-based and evidence-informed home visiting programs can facilitate access to and increase utilization of health services by the youth and their children, reduce the likelihood of future child abuse/neglect, and increase access to and utilization of reproductive healthcare and family planning services to reduce the number of subsequent unplanned pregnancies. ACS and DOHMH should work together to develop and implement strategies to ensure that foster care agencies are aware of and referring young people to these programs and to track referrals from ACS to Nurse Family Partnership.

¹⁷ Widom CS, Szaja SJ, and Dumont KA. Intergenerational transmission of child abuse and neglect: Real or detection bias? Science. 2015; 347 (6229): 1480-1485.

D. Housing

Overview

Although most children in foster care return home to their families, get adopted or exit foster care to kinship guardianship, there is a group of young people who “age out” of the foster care system to independent living. In 2016, 758 young people aged out of foster care. ACS and its foster care providers assist all young people who are aging out to secure housing. In some cases, young people are able to continue living with their foster parents even after they exit the foster care system or they are able to live with relatives or other resources. Others need to look to supportive housing, NYCHA or market rate housing.

For many of these youth, given New York City housing prices, affording a market rate apartment immediately upon leaving foster care is not realistic. NYCHA public housing and New York/New York III supportive housing are currently two primary destinations for youth aging out of care, but there are limited apartments available.

ACS-referred youth who are eligible for NYCHA public housing are placed on a borough-wide certified waiting list. NYCHA assigns them the highest priority for public housing, known as N-zero. Because of very limited public housing turnover, especially for the studio apartments most youth require, they remain on the waiting list for three months to three years. The average wait time is 1 ½ years, with longer wait times for the very limited pool of studio apartments becoming available. This group also shares the N-zero priority with city-referred homeless families, increasing the wait time for those requiring larger units. In addition, the number of ACS-referred youth has grown consistently. At present, 758 youth are on the waiting list, 742 (98%) of whom are waiting for studio apartments, and in 2016, NYCHA received 738 new applications (see Appendix C).

Nevertheless, NYCHA housed 249 of these youth in 2016. Of 283 new non-senior studio apartment rentals in 2016, 144, or 51%, went to ACS-referred youth. NYCHA also rented 79 of 1,227 non-senior one-bedroom units to this group in 2016.

In addition to its efforts to assist ACS-referred youth through its public housing program, NYCHA also works with ACS to provide targeted Section 8 assistance to this population. Under its Section 8 program, NYCHA is approved for 440 vouchers to house ACS youth and families. In 2016 HUD introduced a demonstration program for youth aging out of foster care combining the Family Unification Program with Family Self Sufficiency services. The demonstration will test whether longer-term, more intensive services for youth aging out of foster care will improve housing stability. NYCHA,

with ACS as its partner, has allocated 40 vouchers as part of this demonstration project and, as of March 2018, NYCHA has issued all 40 vouchers.

Within NY/NYIII supportive housing, there are 423 available slots in the two categories specifically designated for youth with a foster care history, between 18 and 25, who have spent at least a year after their sixteenth birthday in foster care. Of the available 423 slots, 200 are set aside for foster care youth who present with a severe mental health illness, or who are residing in a New York State licensed residential treatment facility. The remaining slots are for youth who are being discharged from care and face a risk of homelessness. In 2016, a total of 107 youth received a supportive housing apartment out of the 1,053 applications submitted (see Appendix C).

ACS foster youth will have the ability to apply for the New York City supportive housing initiative, NYC 15/15, which will develop 15,000 new units of supportive housing in New York City over 15 years. The initiative has designated 1,687 units for young adults ages 18-25, both singles and pregnant women/young adults who are parents, as a target population. Unlike NY/NY III, there is not a set-aside specifically targeted for young adults aging out of foster care. Instead, the units are designated to target young adults who may be aging out of foster care, in shelter, homeless or in transitional settings based on their need and vulnerability.

The Task Force developed four recommendations designed to improve housing access: ensure eligible foster youth receive the N-zero priority for NYCHA; explore feasibility of increasing rental subsidies; explore expansion of transitional housing; and leverage technology platforms to ensure young people are aware of all available housing resources.

RECOMMENDATION #12: ENSURE THAT ELIGIBLE FOSTER YOUTH AGING OUT OF CARE RECEIVE THE NYCHA N-ZERO PRIORITY, IF THEY ARE LEGALLY IN THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF ACS, REGARDLESS OF THE LOCATION OF THEIR FOSTER PLACEMENT

Need and Opportunity

Some NYC youth in foster care reside in settings outside of the five boroughs in order to meet their service needs. Until now, these youth have not been considered eligible for the NYCHA N-zero priority.

Recommendation

NYCHA is currently addressing this issue, putting in place a new business process that will ensure that all aging out foster youth who are eligible receive this priority, so long as they are in the care and custody of the ACS Commissioner as a legal matter, regardless of their foster care placement address.

RECOMMENDATION #13: ADVOCATE TO INCREASE STATE-SET HOUSING RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Need and Opportunity

Since most youth aging out of foster care have not yet acquired the skills or education to secure employment that would allow them to afford a market rate apartment, they need financial assistance to maintain an apartment. Currently, families reunifying with children in care and youth ages 18 to 20 leaving foster care can receive a State-set recurring monthly subsidy of up to \$300 for a maximum of 3 years or a total of \$10,800 to assist with renting an apartment. For youth, this subsidy ends when they reach age 21, whether or not the three years are up. The amount of the rental subsidy payment has not been adjusted by the State in more than 30 years, while the NYC cost of living has risen substantially. This subsidy is rarely utilized because it is not large enough and its use is limited to market rate apartments, which most youth cannot afford.

Recommendation

Advocate to increase the State-set housing rental assistance level (along with the associated subsidy cap) and for additional State resources to support it. This will allow reunifying families and youth exiting foster care to more readily obtain and maintain market rate apartments.

RECOMMENDATION #14: EXPLORE EXPANSION OF TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE

Need and Opportunity

As noted above, there is a shortage of housing options available for youth leaving foster care. In addition, youth who have aged out of foster care can benefit from additional social and emotional support and supports pertaining to education, employment and independent living skills. Expanding the City’s array of time-limited transitional housing programs would address some of the obstacles to long-term housing for these young adults and reduce the risk of homelessness.

Recommendation

The City could explore developing additional transitional housing serving youth in foster care. Transitional housing programs, such as the Chelsea Foyer operated by Good Shepherd Services, that combine housing and targeted services have been shown to be a promising intervention for at-risk populations. A study by the New York City Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI) found that Foyer participants were less likely than a comparison group to have a shelter stay or go to jail; and college enrollment and employment increased for Foyer participants.¹⁸

RECOMMENDATION #15: PROVIDE INTEGRATED, ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION ON HOUSING RESOURCES FOR YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE

Need and Opportunity

In addition to the limitations on available housing resources, young people leaving foster care and the professionals assisting them face challenges finding relevant housing information in a centralized location to help guide their housing decisions. Easily accessible information about the most appropriate housing, available subsidies, and eviction prevention assistance, is crucial to improve housing outcomes. While there is a great deal of information available about these resources on various web sites, it is not linked and organized in a way so that young adults and families can easily access all the information they need.

¹⁸ <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/cidi/projects/chelsea-foyer-outcome-study.page>

Recommendation

Provide current and former foster youth and families with comprehensive information, reflecting content from relevant city and community agencies, on all available housing resources for youth and families. Information should include eligibility requirements, the application process, the expected time for approval of a particular application, as well as all available assistance. Information about leases, subleases, occupancy agreements, and legal rights associated with landlord and tenant agreements should also be provided with links to other websites and resource pages.

E. Post-Secondary Education and Employment

Overview

Nationally, we know that youth in foster care have poorer educational outcomes and college attendance, persistence and graduation rates than their peers, and face high rates of unemployment as adults. Youth in foster care need support to succeed in post-secondary education and in seeking and maintaining employment. ACS has significant college and career initiatives underway designed to improve outcomes for post-secondary and employment outcomes for older youth in foster care.

ACS' Office of Education Support and Policy Planning engages stakeholders throughout a child's academic career to prepare them for post-secondary educational success. In 2017, the office released *A Foster Parent's Guide to Education*,¹⁹ which provides detailed information regarding educational services, students' rights and foster parents' responsibilities, and includes specific, actionable information to help foster parents work with the young person in their care, the foster care agency and the child's school to support the student's path to higher education.

In 2017, ACS launched a new program in partnership with First Star CUNY Staten Island that is designed to support a group of rising ninth grade students successfully through high school to college. The program's goal is to build academic and life skills through tutoring and professional mentoring to prepare young people in foster care for higher education.

As of fall 2017, approximately 355 foster youth are enrolled in two and four-year college programs. This represents approximately 27% of all young people ages eighteen and older receiving foster care support from ACS. ACS provides financial supports for college room and board payments along with daily stipends for living expenses not covered by traditional financial aid. (Please see Appendix C for additional details shared at the first Task Force meeting.)

In the summer of 2016, ACS launched a partnership with the City University of New York (CUNY) to establish the Fostering College Success Initiative ("ACS/CUNY Dorm Project"). The ACS/CUNY Dorm Project was developed to provide year-round housing and academic supports to foster youth attending CUNY schools. As of December, 2017 ACS is providing 24/7 wrap-around support to 93 students residing on three CUNY campuses.

¹⁹ <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/youth/2017/FosterParentsGuideToEd.pdf>

In 2016, ACS established the Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives to support foster care agencies in preparing youth for the workforce. This office has implemented several new programs and initiatives serving youth in foster care including the following:

- the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) Plus, developed and implemented in partnership with DYCD;
- the ACS Driver's Education program;
- a mentored internship program in partnership with the Pinkerton Foundation; and
- intensive technical assistance to the foster care agencies to implement the Columbia University Workplace Center YA WORC model.

However, still too many foster youth reach adulthood without the basic skills, educational attainment, work experience and support networks necessary to ensure their well-being beyond their time in care. The Task Force identified the need to draw from the City's educational, workforce development, social services and foster care communities to deliver an integrated set of personalized academic, employment and housing services for youth both during *and after* their time in foster care.

RECOMMENDATION #16: EXPLORE STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE EXPERT SUPPORT SERVICES TO YOUTH AGES 16-25—BOTH DURING AND AFTER FOSTER CARE—TO ACHIEVE CAREER, EDUCATIONAL AND HOUSING GOALS

Need and Opportunity

As noted above, compared to all adults, youth formerly in foster care have far lower rates of college completion,²⁰ employment rates and average annual earnings.²¹ Youth who age out of foster care are also among the populations at greatest risk for becoming homeless.²²

Many foster youth experience an abrupt loss of support and services immediately upon their exit from foster care. There are a handful of community programs that focus on serving youth in care as well as those who have recently exited foster care, such as Graham SLAM at Graham Windham, the Academy at The Door and the Children's Aid Next Gen Center. However, these programs rely primarily

20 Day, A., Dworsky, A., Fogarty, K., & Damashek, A. (2011). An Examination of Post-Secondary Retention and Graduation Among Foster Care Youth Enrolled in a Four-Year University. *Children and Youth Services Review*.

21 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008). Coming of Age: Employment Outcomes for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care Through Their Middle Twenties.

22 Dworsky, A., Dillman, K., Dion, R., Coffee-Borden, B., Rosenau, M. (2012). Housing for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: A Review of the Literature and Program Typology. Available at: http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/interim/hsg_fter_care.html. Accessed December 29, 2017.

on private philanthropy to serve this population, because there is no dedicated government funding stream to support educational, workforce and housing services for youth after they leave the foster care system. As such, existing programs currently serving youth who have transitioned out of care are unable to meet all of the existing need.

Additionally, obtaining stable housing is a major need of young people leaving foster care as evidenced by the recommendations in this report related to increased housing access. Many foster youth are unprepared to handle the stressors of living independently and can fail to pay rent or commit other violations of lease agreements that lead to eviction. Most young adults are unaware of the housing preservation resources available to them. These factors combined with a high likelihood of growing up in poverty and the trauma associated with the experiences that led to foster care present a unique set of challenges that can be mitigated through a consistent, supportive relationship with a professional coach that continues after young people exit foster care.

Recommendation

Explore the feasibility and resources available to provide academic, workforce development and housing services for current *and former* foster youth between the ages of 16 and 25. Programming could help youth strengthen their academic performance, acculturate to the world of work via hands-on experiences, and explore different career paths while working toward attaining and maintaining stable housing.

This model could draw from best practices in youth development and offer the critical elements to improving educational and employment outcomes for foster care youth: personalized academic support, counseling, a primary person coordinating services, and employment readiness services. Coaches could work one-on-one with each young person to identify educational, vocational and social-emotional goals, plan how to achieve them and communicate consistently to support the youth in reaching those goals. Coaches could also be available to troubleshoot critical issues that could potentially hinder or delay academic, employment or housing stability. In addition, coaches could help youth build the financial literacy skills necessary to reach their goals. The coach could be assisted by employment and education experts located on-site at the foster care agencies and trained to access services offered by DOE, DYCD and other City and community based agencies. All program components should be trauma informed; and service plans should be individually tailored to young people's needs and interests, building upon their academic coursework and skills developed in the program.

There are currently very few interventions working at scale to address the overlapping risk factors that foster youth face. This initiative could improve long-term well-being outcomes by increasing the probability of high school completion, advanced education and training, transition to the workforce and steady housing.

V. Conclusion

While ACS has made significant gains in addressing the needs of children in foster care over the last several years, important opportunities remain to make a positive difference in the lives of these children. Task Force members have worked diligently and thoughtfully to identify top areas of need and meaningful ways to address them.

As noted above, this report comes at a time of fiscal uncertainty at both the federal and state levels. The federal Title IV-E waiver expires at the end of 2018, and a request to extend the waiver through most of 2019 is subject to state and federal approval. Beyond October 2019, there is no certainty about the federal foster care financing structure. In addition, new federal child welfare legislation, the Family First Act, was passed as part of the federal budget approved by Congress on February 9, 2018. This landmark legislation will benefit child welfare programs in other jurisdictions around the country that do not have the kind of robust preventive funding that New York City has already established. However, the financial impact on New York State and New York City, which have already made such an investment, is uncertain. At the state level, the Governor's Executive Budget proposal for 2018-19 would dramatically reduce funding for child welfare in New York City. The City will work with the Governor and the legislature to explain the drastic impact these cuts would have on children and families and will advocate strongly for child welfare funding. Still, these fiscal uncertainties create a context for decisions that the City will have to make as it implements the Task Force recommendations.

These recommendations include changes to City and State policies, suggestions for new ways of collaborating between government agencies, as well as ideas for new programs that will require investment. The work moving forward will be to evaluate and prioritize the recommendations for implementation. The Task Force members—who have all endorsed all the recommendations—are ready to support ACS and the other agencies to take up this challenge on behalf of the City's children in foster care.

VI. Appendices

Appendix A: Legislation Establishing the Task Force



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: Int 1192-2016 **Version:** A **Name:** Foster care task force.
Type: Introduction **Status:** Enacted
In control: Committee on General Welfare

On agenda: 5/25/2016

Enactment date: 11/16/2016 **Enactment #:** 2016/144

Title: A Local Law in relation to a foster care task force

Sponsors: Stephen T. Levin, Donovan J. Richards, Inez E. Dickens, Daniel Dromm, Rafael Salamanca, Jr., Mathieu Eugene, Margaret S. Chin, Barry S. Grodenchik, I. Daneek Miller, Corey D. Johnson, Andrew Cohen, Carlos Menchaca, Brad S. Lander, James G. Van Bramer, Helen K. Rosenthal, Ben Kallos

Indexes: Council Appointment Required, Other Appointment Required, Report Required, Sunset Date Applies

Attachments: 1. Legislative History Report, 2. Summary of Int. No. 1192-A, 3. Summary of Int. No. 1192, 4. Int. No. 1192 - 5/25/16, 5. May 25, 2016 - Stated Meeting Agenda with Links to Files, 6. Committee Report 6/16/16, 7. Hearing Testimony 6/16/16, 8. Hearing Transcript 6/16/16, 9. Committee Report 10/26/16, 10. Hearing Transcript 10/26/16, 11. Fiscal Impact Statement, 12. Committee Report - Stated Meeting, 13. Int. No. 1192-A (FINAL), 14. Mayor's Letter

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/25/2016	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
5/25/2016	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
6/16/2016	*	Committee on General Welfare	Hearing Held by Committee	
6/16/2016	*	Committee on General Welfare	Laid Over by Committee	
10/26/2016	*	Committee on General Welfare	Hearing Held by Committee	
10/26/2016	*	Committee on General Welfare	Amendment Proposed by Comm	
10/26/2016	*	Committee on General Welfare	Amended by Committee	
10/26/2016	A	Committee on General Welfare	Approved by Committee	Pass
10/27/2016	A	City Council	Approved by Council	Pass
10/27/2016	A	City Council	Sent to Mayor by Council	
11/16/2016	A	Mayor	Hearing Held by Mayor	
11/16/2016	A	Mayor	Signed Into Law by Mayor	
11/17/2016	A	City Council	Recved from Mayor by Council	

Int. No. 1192-A

By Council Members Levin, Richards, Dickens, Dromm, Salamanca, Eugene, Chin, Grodenchik, Miller, Johnson, Cohen, Menchaca, Lander, Van Bramer, Rosenthal and Kallos

A Local Law in relation to a foster care task force

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. a. There shall be an interagency task force to issue recommendations for improving services for youth in foster care and outcomes for youth aging out of foster care.

b. The task force shall consist of 21 members which shall be:

1. the commissioner of children's services, or their designee, who shall serve as chair;
2. the commissioner of the department of social services, or their designee;
3. the chancellor of the city school district, or their designee;
4. the commissioner of youth and community development, or their designee;
5. the commissioner of health and mental hygiene, or their designee;
6. the chairperson of the New York city housing authority, or their designee;
7. six members appointed by the mayor, including one member who shall represent foster care service providers, one member who shall represent advocacy organizations with relevant expertise, one youth currently in foster care and two youth who have aged out of the system in the previous 48 months, and one member who shall be a birth parent of a child who has spent a period of time in the child welfare system;
8. six members appointed by the speaker of the city council, including one member who shall represent foster care service providers, one member who shall represent advocacy organizations with relevant expertise, one youth currently in foster care and two youth who have aged out of the system in the previous 48 months, and one member who shall be a birth parent of a child who has spent a period of time in the child welfare system;
9. the speaker of the city council, or their designee, and the chairperson of the council committee on general welfare, or their designee; and
10. the public advocate, or their designee.

c. All members shall be appointed within 60 days of the enactment of this local law. All members of such task force shall serve without additional compensation. No member of the task force shall be removed except for cause and upon notice and hearing by the appropriate appointing official. Any vacancies in the

membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

d. Such task force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the mayor and the council no later than 14 months after the effective date of the local law that added this section. Such recommendations shall address areas including, but not limited to education, housing, financial literacy, health and mental health services, parenting, decreasing the number of youth who age out of foster care, post-permanency services, and prioritizing permanent placements of youth with families before they age out. Annual reports on the implementation of such recommendations shall be submitted to the mayor and the council no later than 12 and 24 months following the submission of the initial report, after which the task force will cease to exist. Each report required pursuant to this section shall be posted on the administration for children's services' website.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately and is expired and deemed repealed three years after the date of the local law that added this section.

AV
LS #6167/6757
10/19/16, 7:48pm

Appendix B: Task Force Members, Staff, Workgroup Participants and Panel Members

Task Force Members

David Hansell, Commissioner, Administration for Children's Services – Task Force Chair

Steven Banks, Commissioner, Department of Social Services

Mary Travis Bassett, Commissioner, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, represented by designee

George Askew, Deputy Commissioner

Georgia Boothe, Vice President, Children's Aid

Patrick Brown, Youth Representative

Alondra Castillo, Youth Representative

Bill Chong, Commissioner, Department of Youth and Community Development

Kurt Dawiec, Youth Representative

Jess Dannhauser, CEO, Graham Windham

Carmen Fariña, Former Chancellor, Department of Education, represented by designee Ursulina Ramirez,

Chief of Staff/Chief Operating Officer

Brianna Hayes, Youth Representative

Letitia James, Public Advocate, Office of the Public Advocate, joined by Barbara Sherman,

Deputy Policy Director

Jeremy Kohomban, CEO, Children's Village

Stephen Levin, City Council Member and General Welfare Committee Chair

Jennifer March, Executive Director, Citizens' Committee for Children

Speaker of the City Council: Melissa Mark-Viverito (2017-2018), Corey Johnson (2018-Present),

represented by designee Dohini Sompura, Unit Head, Finance Division

Joyce McMillian, Director of Programming and Parent Advocate, Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP)

Shola Olatoye, Chair, New York City Housing Authority, represented by designees Jackie Primeau, Chief of

Staff, and Rosanne Pisem, Associate General Counsel

Milcah Slater, Youth Representative

Anthony Trotter, Youth Representative

Jeanette Vega, Training Director, Rise

Staff to the Task Force

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

Elizabeth Gillroy, Deputy Chief of Staff

ACS Staff

Karyn Boutis, Director, Division of Family Permanency Services

Julie Farber, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Family Permanency Services

Loren Ganoë, Chief of Staff, Family Permanency Services

Sonia Gonzalez, Executive Director of College Bound & Support Programs

Kathleen Hoskins, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Education Support and Policy Planning

Iris Kaplan, Associate Commissioner, Division of Family Permanency Services

Bianca Lopez, Director of Health Policy and Planning, Office of Child and Family Health

Angel Mendoza, Agency Medical Director

Polly Mygatt, Director, Division of Family Permanency Services

Rachel Natelson, Attorney, Office of Education Support and Policy Planning

Alan Sputz, Deputy Commissioner, FLCS

Gita Thadhani, Director, Office of Child and Family Health, Mental Health Coordination Unit

Nancy Thomson, Associate Commissioner, FCLS

Raymond Toomer, Associate Commissioner, Division of Family Permanency Services

Andrew White, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Policy, Planning and Measurement

Paul Williams, Director, Division of Family Permanency Services

Marsha Wright, Director, Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs

Marta Siberio Consulting

Marta Siberio, Consultant Facilitator

Bennett Midland, Consultant Researchers

Eric Lee, President

Michelle Lau, Manager

Ben Hoynes, Associate

Work Group Participants

Permanency Workgroup

Patrick Brown, Youth Representative

Julie Farber, Administration for Children's Services

Loren Ganoë, Administration for Children's Services

Stephanie Gendell, Citizens' Committee for Children

Lavern Harry, Graham Windham

Brieanna Hayes, Youth Representative

Joyce McMillan, Parent Representative, Child Welfare Organizing Project

Polly Mygatt, Administration for Children's Services

Anais Peguero-Vasquez, Graham Windham

Ann Marie Scalia, Department of Social Services

Jeanette Vega, Training Director, Rise

Education Workgroup

Georgia Boothe, Children's Aid

Karyn Boutis, Administration for Children's Services

Bill Chong, Department of Youth and Community Development

Elizabeth Gillroy, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

Kathleen, Hoskins, Administration for Children's Services

Ursulina Ramirez, Department of Education

Barbara Sherman, Office of the Public Advocate

Milcah Slater, Youth Representative

Andrew White, Administration for Children's Services

Health and Mental Health Workgroup

George Askew, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Joanne Casarella, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Alondra Castillo, Youth Representative

David Collins, Children's Village

Marnie Davidoff, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Stephen Levin, City Council Member and General Welfare Committee Chair

Jennifer March, Citizens' Committee for Children
Angel Mendoza, Administration for Children's Services
Gita Thadhani, Administration for Children's Services

Housing Workgroup

Steven Banks, Department of Social Services
Joslyn Carter, Department of Homeless Services
Robert Griffith, New York City Housing Authority
Susan Haskell, Department of Youth and Community Development
Ayo Haynes, Child Welfare Organizing Project
Iris Kaplan, Administration for Children's Services
Jeremy Kohomban, Children's Village
Molly Murphy, Department of Social Services
Jackie Primeau, New York City Housing Authority
Anthony Trotter, Youth Representative
Lydon Sleeper, Housing Preservation and Development
Paul Williams, Administration for Children's Services

Employment and Post-Secondary Education Workgroup

David Hansell, Administration for Children's Services – Task Force Chair
Kurt Dawiec, Youth Representative
Jess Dannhauser, Graham Windham
Sonia Gonzalez, Administration for Children's Services
Dohini Sompura, Office of the Council Speaker
Raymond Toomer, Administration for Children's Services
Andre White, Department of Youth and Community Development

Foster Parent and Legal Advocate Panel Members

O'Donna-Hue Osbourne, Foster Parent, Children's Village
Zoraida Torres, Foster Parent, Children's Aid
Michele Cortese, Esq., Center for Family Representation
Zoe Allen, Esq., Legal Aid Society

Work Group Meeting Presenters

Molly Armstrong, Partner, Public Catalyst

Kelly Celony, Director of Training and Special Initiatives, and Rebecca Fisher, Director for Evaluation,
Office of School Health

Charles Edwards, Employment Specialist, Sheltering Arms

Mina Fasolo, Director of Policy and Planning, Children Youth and Families, NYC Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene

Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez, Executive Director, New Yorkers for Children

Lauren Gates, Director, and Yetunde Oshodi, Research Staff Associate, The Workplace Center, Columbia
School of Social Work

Melanie Hart, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Small Business Services

Sharon Sewell-Fairman, Executive Director, and Bruce Carmel, Chief Program Officer, Workforce
Professionals Training Institute

Jane Spinak, Edward Ross Aranow Clinical Professor of Law, Columbia Law School

Denise Tolbert, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, and Stacie Hare, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator,
NYC Human Resources Administration



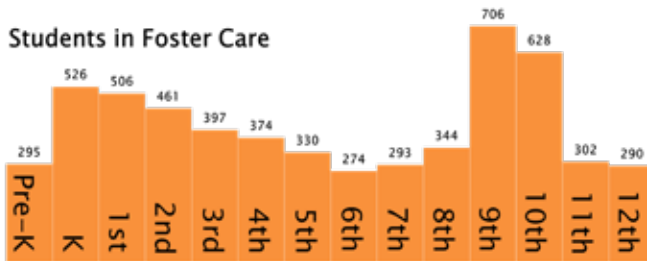
Education

Data from School Year 2015-2016



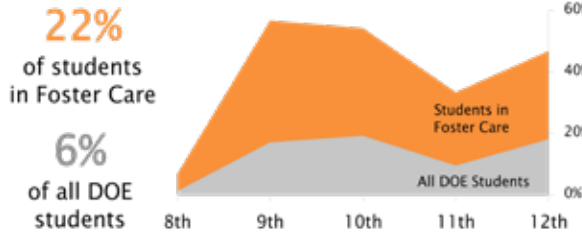
Youth in foster care in NYC are in **every school district** at **all grade levels**

Students in Foster Care

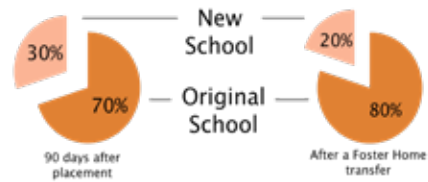


6,000 DOE students in foster care | **30%** Special Education | **70%** General Education

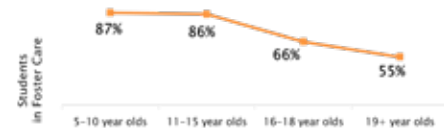
Repeating a Grade



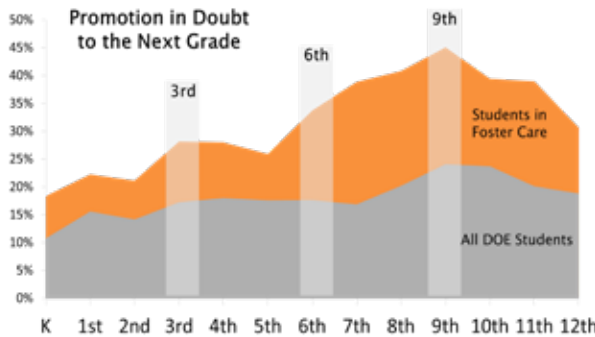
School Stability



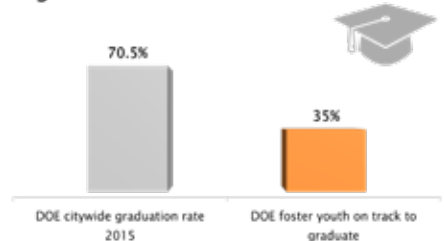
Attendance Rate



Youth in Foster Care during **critical transitions**



High School Graduation Rates

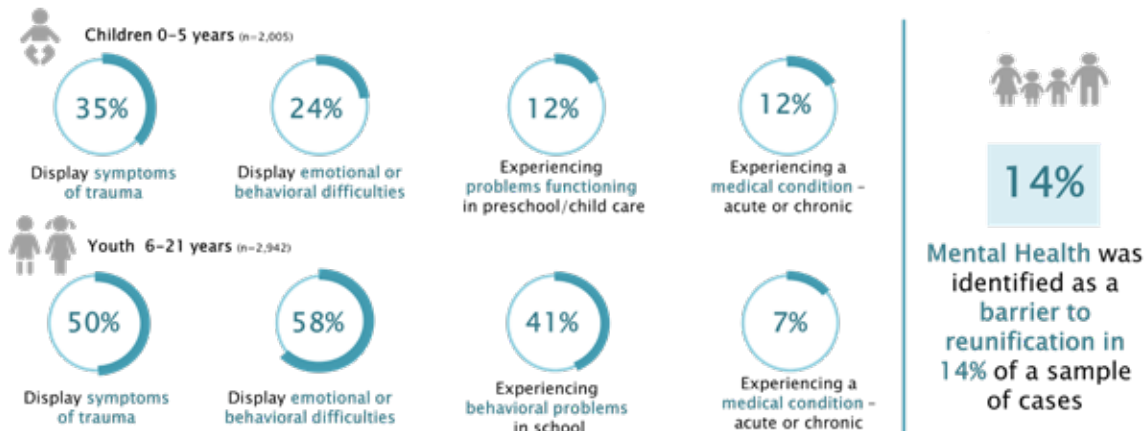




Health and Mental Health

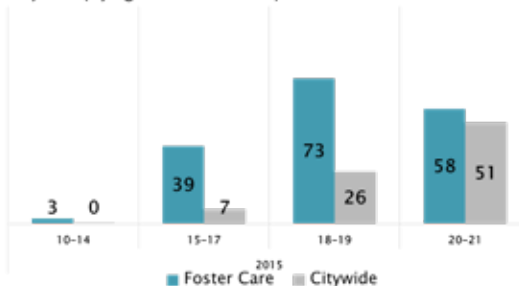
Health Status of Youth in Care based on the *Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)* screening tool*

*Data from the last CANS approved for the child (from 10/27/2016 to 6/12/2017)



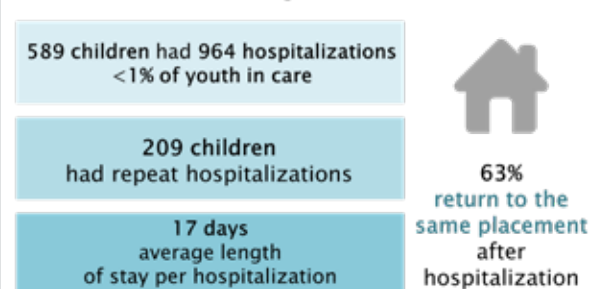
Expecting and Parenting Youth in Foster Care

Birth Rate (per 1,000) for Girls in Foster Care is higher than the Citywide (by Age at Time of Birth)



Acute Inpatient Psychiatric Hospitalization

Youth in foster care under age 18 in CY2016



Major Challenges: Lack of access to key data

- Medicaid
- PSYCKES *Psychiatric Services and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System*
- SPARCS *Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System*
- Early Intervention
- Pre-school Special Education
- School-Based Health

Health Insurance for Youth Aging out of Care

Currently youth exiting foster care are eligible for Medicaid up to age 26



Post-Secondary Education and Employment

47% of youth nationally who grew up in foster care are unemployed

College Students in Foster Care

355 youth in foster care in NYC are attending college



College Success Programs in NYC

57 Students

Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)
Program assisting students in earning associate degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports

48 Students

CUNY Start
Program providing intensive preparation in academic reading and writing, pre-college mathematics, and "college success" advisement for students with significant remedial needs

83 Students

Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) and College Discovery (CD)
Programs designed to assist high-potential, low-income students who otherwise might not be able to pursue a college degree because they are not academically well prepared for college-level work

NYC Education Stipend

162 students \$28-30 per diem



ACS/CUNY Dorm Partnership

200 students living in college dormitories by fall 2019

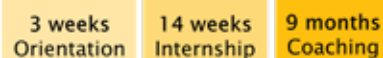
Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

600 14-24 year old vulnerable youth involved in the Child Welfare system participated in 2016



Young Adult Internship Program + (YAIP+) in partnership with DYCD

105 16-24 year olds



100 youth in foster care projected to participate in the Driver's Education Program



Building Agency Capacity to Support Foster Youth

YA-WORC (Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers)

ACS partnership with Columbia University: 5 foster care agencies implementing a curriculum and Career Clubs

Pinkerton Foundation Internships

9 foster care agencies implementing mentored in-house internships for youth in care with dedicated employment supervisors

Civil Service Pathways for Youth

All agencies will have a youth-friendly curriculum available to help youth in care prepare for civil service examinations

Challenges to Employment

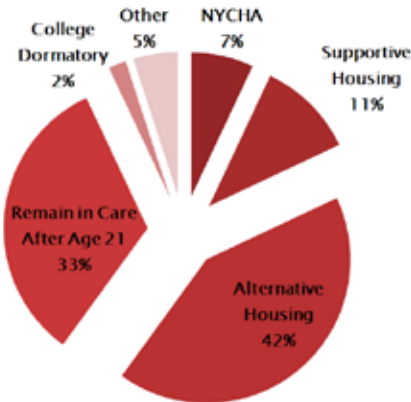
There are unique challenges youth in foster care may face finding and thriving in employment

- Need to be absent for court dates
- Need time off for family visitation
- Difficulty forming trusting relationships
- Still developing skills to handle conflict
- Lack of experience in the workplace



Housing

Housing for Youth Exiting Foster Care in 2016 (N=758)



NY/NYIII Supportive Housing

1,053

Youth currently or formerly in care who **submitted NY/NY III applications** in 2016

107

Youth currently or formerly in care who **obtained NY/NY III housing** in 2016

Housing as a Barrier to Reunification

23%

of a sample of reunification cases had **housing identified as a barrier to reunification**

NYCHA Family Unification Assistance



295

reunifying families submitted **applications for NYCHA**

Prevention Assistance Temporary Housing

75-100

estimated number of families reunify each year by **entering or re-entering the shelter system**

NYCHA Housing

1.5 Years

Average wait time for youth submitting a NYCHA application to become tenants

738

Youth in care who **submitted NYCHA applications** in 2016

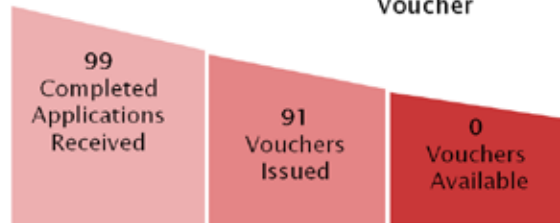
249

Youth **obtained NYCHA tenancy** in 2016 (Includes youth who applied in previous years)

Section 8 Voucher Pilot Program

As of March 2018

Up to **\$1,590/mo.** Voucher



Special Grant Subsidy

51%

youth exiting care received this one-time subsidy

Up to **\$1,800** Furniture and rent deposit

Up to **\$1,800** Rent arrears

Recurring Subsidy

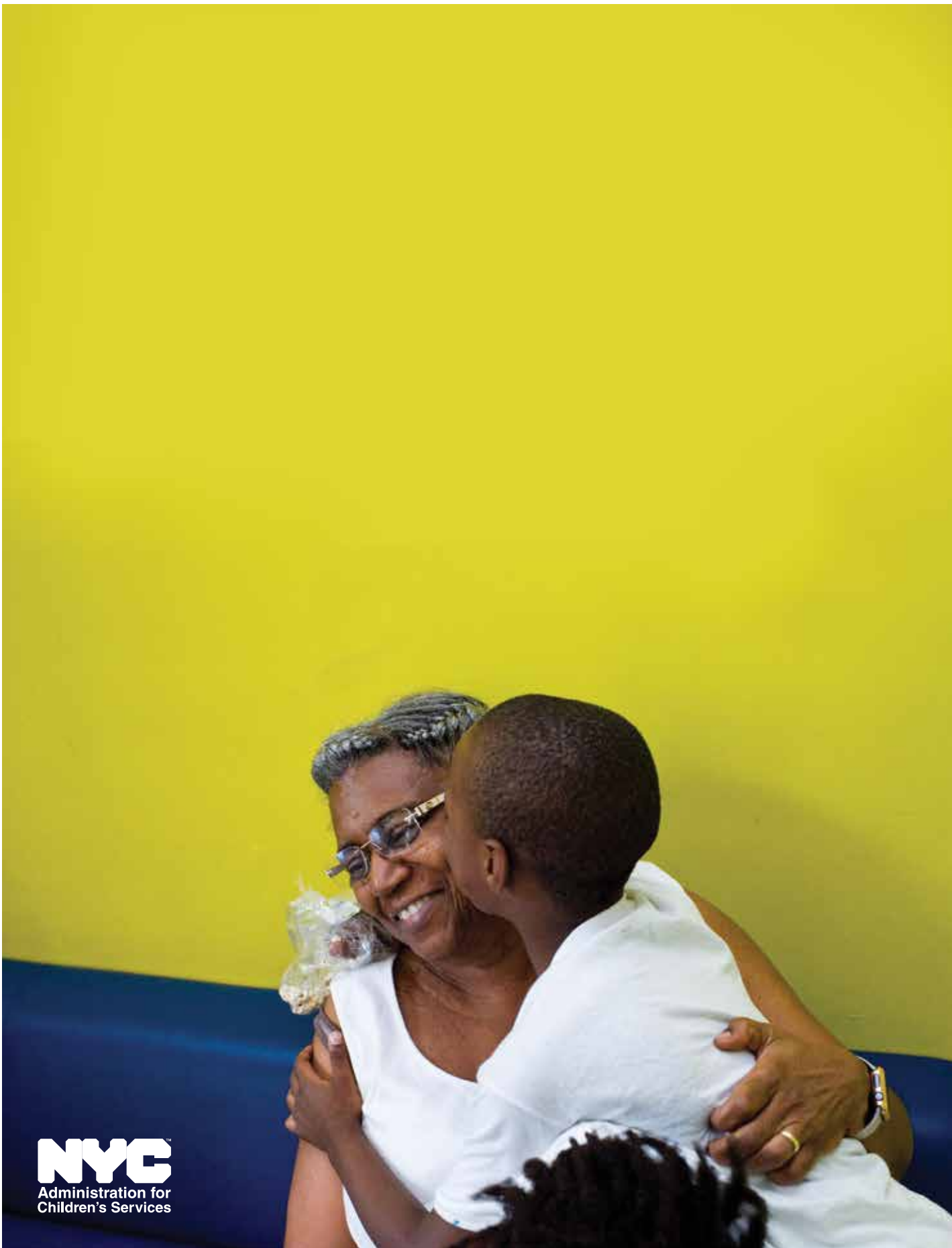
Up to **\$300/mo.** Current Subsidy





FY 2017

FOSTER CARE
STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT
STATUS REPORT



NYC
Administration for
Children's Services

ACS is aggressively implementing a Foster Care **Strategic Blueprint** that identifies key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results for children and families in the foster care system—from family reunification to kinship placement and adoption to supporting older youth. While much work remains, this focus, combined with the unprecedented investments by the de Blasio administration to strengthen child welfare, is yielding promising results.

We are building the foster care system’s capacity to improve outcomes for children and families through the implementation of proven models, providing cutting edge training to the foster care workforce and using data analytics to target and fix administrative processes that cause delays in achieving permanency. Through our new ACS Accountability Office and intensive provider monitoring systems, ACS closely tracks and measures both ACS and provider performance to identify bright spots and practice concerns, and take the necessary steps to scale the bright spots and address the concerns. Through new functions established in 2016, ACS continues to provide a range of technical assistance resources to our foster care agency partners.

In June 2017, ACS convened the first meeting of the Foster Care Interagency Task Force, which was established through legislation introduced by City Council Member and Chair of the General Welfare Committee Steven Levin and signed by Mayor de Blasio. The task force includes foster youth, parents, advocates, foster care agencies and leadership from the City Council, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Department of Social Services (DSS/HRA/DHS), the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the City Housing Authority (NYCHA). The Task Force will produce a report with recommendations in 2018. This kind of interagency collaboration is critical to improving outcomes for kids and families. We look forward to incorporating these recommendations into the Foster Care Blueprint and to partnering with our sister agencies and other stakeholders to implement them.

There are few responsibilities more important than caring for children who have been removed from their families and working to achieve family reunification, adoption or kinship guardianship. We want to acknowledge the dedicated work of ACS staff, the foster care agencies, the legal advocates and the Family Court who are working day in and day out to improve outcomes for children and families, as well as our foundation partners and other stakeholders who are partnering with ACS to help advance the reform initiatives described in this report.

Sincerely,

David A. Hansell, Commissioner

Julie Farber, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Family Permanency Services

The ACS Foster Care **Strategic Blueprint** identifies key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results across the foster care system—from family reunification to kinship placement and adoption to supporting older youth.



The Strategic Blueprint is yielding promising results.

HISTORICALLY LOW CASELOADS

Consistent with best practice standards, family foster care caseloads average 10-12 children, and the majority of case planners have caseloads under 12.

CUTTING EDGE TRAINING

The ACS Workforce Institute is providing training and professional development to significantly enhance the capacity of the child welfare workforce.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

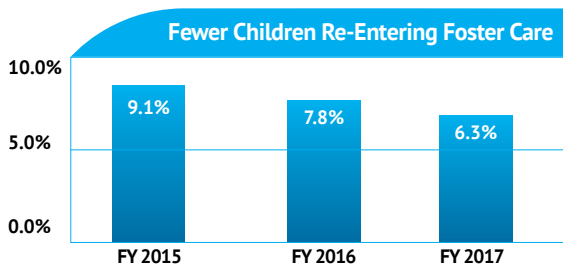
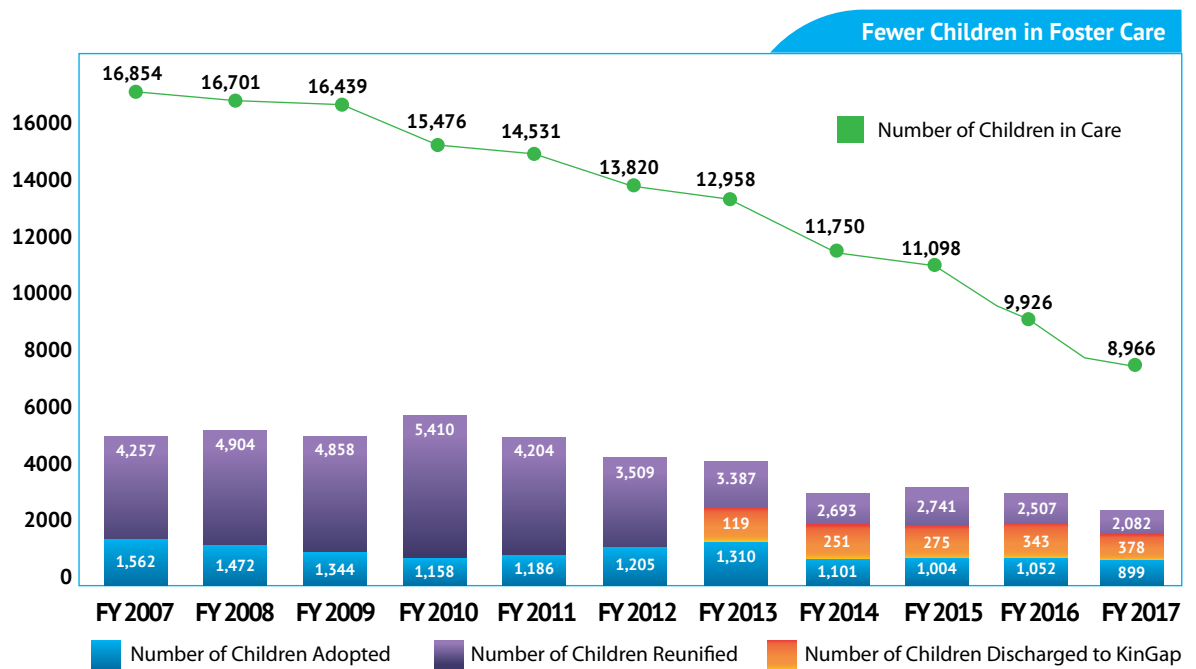
ACS has implemented proven interventions to address trauma, mental health and other challenges faced by children and families.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

ACS is using data analytics and improving processes in order to accelerate permanency for children and families in the foster care system.

PROGRESS

ACS has made significant progress, dramatically reducing the number of children in foster care and narrowing the gap between the number of children in care and the number exiting to permanency.



Fewer children are returning to foster care. The proportion of children re-entering foster care following reunification or KinGAP (kinship guardianship) has declined substantially from 9.1 percent in FY 2015 to 7.8 percent in FY 2016 to 6.3 percent in FY 2017.

No Time to Wait

Shortening Lengths of Stay in Foster Care

REUNIFYING FAMILIES

The majority of children who enter foster care return home to their families. More than 2,000 children were reunified in FY 2017. A sharp reduction in new entries to foster care in FY 2016 contributed to a 17 percent decline in the number of reunifications from FY 2016 to FY 2017.

IN FISCAL YEAR 2017, ACS:

Delivered more than 100 trainings on Family Time (aka family visiting, the time children spend with their parents while they are in foster care) to 2,000 staff across 27 foster care agencies and the ACS' Division of Child Protection (DCP).

Collaborated with Rise and the Osborne Association on **projects to strengthen parental voice** in visiting practice and heighten visibility of children in foster care with parents who are incarcerated.

Worked with Public Catalyst to develop **a new assessment tool** that is being implemented in FY 2018 to help **improve agency visiting spaces**.

Worked with foster care providers to **enhance approaches to supporting families during the time of reunification** (i.e., trial/final discharge). Providers are receiving additional ACS funding in FY 2018 to implement these new models.

RAPID PERMANENCY REVIEWS



In FY 2017, ACS partnered with Casey Family Programs and our foster care agencies to conduct "Rapid Permanency Reviews" (RPRs) of 2,500 children who had been in foster care for more than two years. These reviews identified case, agency and system level barriers to permanency. Based on the RPR findings, ACS is streamlining administrative processes and providing targeted technical assistance to foster care agencies to reduce time to reunification and accelerate adoption and KinGAP in appropriate cases.

No Time to Wait

Shortening Lengths of Stay in Foster Care

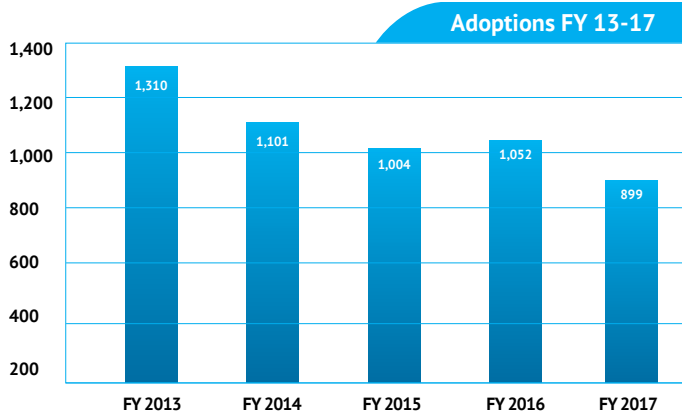
ADOPTION

899 children were adopted in FY 2017.

The vast majority (91%) of children who are eligible for adoption, (i.e., children who are legally free and have a court-approved goal of adoption), are

already placed with the family who is on track to adopt them. ACS is working with the foster care provider agencies and key stakeholders to speed up legal and administrative processes.

In FY 2017, ACS provided “open adoption” trainings to more than 700 provider agency staff and ACS attorneys, and organized open adoption learning exchanges with legal advocacy organizations and the Family Court in all 5 boroughs. Research shows that an ongoing relationship between members of the birth family and adoptive family can benefit all members of the extended family of adoption.



AN \$11 MILLION PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION



Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption®

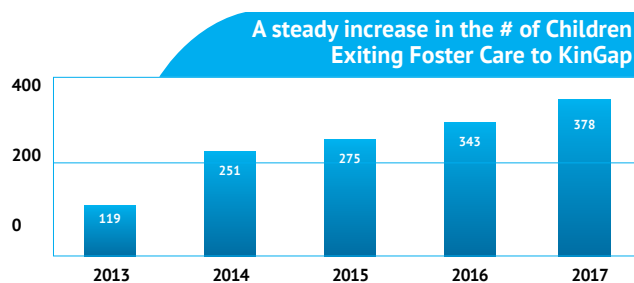
Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

Beginning in FY 2018, in partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation, ACS will expand the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids (WWK) child-focused adoption recruitment model to increase the number of older children and children with special needs who exit foster care to adoption or KinGAP. Through this \$11 million partnership, by Fiscal Year 2020, a total of 43 WWK recruiters will be working across the city to identify forever families for children in foster care.

KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP

The movement of children to permanency through kinship guardianship (KinGAP) continued an upward trend. The number of children exiting care to KinGAP

increased by 10.2 percent from 343 children in FY 2016 to 378 in FY 2017.



Enhancing Work with Children and Families



STRONG FAMILIES

Through ACS' largest foster care initiative ever, Strong Families NYC, ACS lowered caseworker/supervisory caseloads, implemented a universal trauma screening and scaled evidence-based models. Launched in 2014 with funding flexibility provided through a federal waiver initiative, ACS has implemented the following:

LOW CASELOADS: Caseloads averaging 10-12 per worker and Supervisor to Worker ratio of 1 to 4.

TRAUMA SCREENING: Screen every child who enters family foster care to assess their level of exposure to trauma using a nationally recognized screening tool (CANS). This assessment helps agencies to identify specific services to meet the unique needs of each child.

ATTACHMENT AND BIOBEHAVIORAL CATCH-UP (ABC): A research-proven intervention for improving parent/child interactions to reduce the effects of traumatic stress on children. ABC is now available to all children ages 6 months to four years old while they are in foster care and when they are reunified with their parents.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS: Expands access to mental health resources and improves the integration of child welfare and mental health services. Child welfare and mental health staff have been trained and are implementing this model, which includes Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Plus (CBT+), for children and families in the foster care system.

Preliminary data suggest promising results. Chapin Hall is conducting a full evaluation of Strong Families NYC.

Strengthening Foster Care Agency Case Practice

OVERSIGHT

ACS implements an intensive provider oversight, accountability and quality assurance system that includes:

- Monthly safety checks of each provider to ensure that every child and family is being visited and seen on the appropriate schedule.
- Monthly data reports with key indicators directly related to the goals of the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint.
- Statistically representative case review audits performed twice a year on every provider.
- Quarterly outcomes analyses of each provider's key targets, along with quarterly monitoring sessions.
- Annual provider Scorecard assessing each agency's overall performance.
- Heightened Monitoring and Corrective Action plans when necessary.

CASE CONSULTATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In 2017, ACS continued to leverage new case consultation and other resources that were established in 2015 and 2016 for foster care providers:

- ACS' Office of Strategic Program Support provided technical assistance to help foster care agencies implement best practices, business process improvements and enhanced performance management strategies.
- ACS' Office of Shared Response and Senior Practice Consultants stationed at several agencies provided consultations on thousands of individual cases.
- Every foster care agency developed and implemented a Collaborative Quality Improvement (CoQI) plan. These have resulted in measureable improvements in key practice areas including casework contacts with parents, parent/child visits and supervision of case planners.

NEW FISCAL MODELS

In FY 2018, ACS is launching a major multi-year project to identify and develop new fiscal models that will inform the ways that both our preventive and foster care systems are re-procured. Through this work, ACS is developing funding structures that are better aligned with our desired outcomes for children and families and are sustainable for providers.

THE ACS WORKFORCE INSTITUTE

In FY 2017 the ACS Workforce Institute – a partnership with CUNY – provided a range of critical training and professional development to foster care agency staff including:

- Training in evidence-based models serving children and families in foster care:
 - Attachment and Bio-Behavioral Catch Up (ABC);
 - Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS-NY); and
 - Partnering for Success (PFS).
- Training on open adoption, delivered in partnership with **Fostering Change for Children**.
- Training to build the capacity of staff to prepare youth for careers and the world of work, delivered in partnership with the **Workplace Center at Columbia School of Social Work**.
- In addition, foster care agency staff participated in foundational courses provided through the Workforce Institute in Motivational Interviewing and Building Coaching Competency as well as specialized courses in the following:
 - Safety and Risk: Investigation, Synthesis, and Assessment
 - Child Sexual Abuse: Protective Strategies
 - Motivational Interviewing: Engaging Families with Repeat Involvement in the Child Welfare System
 - Motivational Interviewing: Engaging Girls and Young Women
 - Motivational Interviewing: Engaging Fathers
 - Engaging Parents with Cognitive and Other Developmental Limitations
 - Using Case History to Inform and Strengthen Practice
 - Case Review for Managers: Synthesizing Information

Improving Foster Care Placements to Enhance the Well-Being of Children

HOME AWAY FROM HOME (HAFH)

Our Home Away from Home (HAFH) initiative is focused on increasing placement with kin, redesigning the way we recruit and support foster parents and enhancing all parts of our placement continuum, in order to improve child well-being.

Fiscal Year 2016

- Received a \$1.1 million grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to support the HAFH initiative.
- In partnership with national experts Public Catalyst and Action Research Partners, completed the diagnostic phase of HAFH, including intensive data and process analysis and a review of best practices.
- Upgraded the technology for the ACS WishLine (212-876-WISH) where New Yorkers interested in fostering or adopting can call for information.
- Established a uniform foster parent application form.
- Expanded specialized placements for older youth with three new Youth Reception Centers in partnership with Good Shepherd, Mercy First and HeartShare, and added a new Host Homes program with specialized family foster homes for older youth in partnership with Children's Aid Society.
- Implemented major enhancements at ACS' Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center including hiring dozens of new child care, clinical and child development staff, enriching programming, and providing intensive staff training on trauma sensitive interventions.

Fiscal Year 2017

- Increased the number of newly certified foster homes.
- Awarded \$2 million in additional funding to providers to launch a two-year pilot to implement and test new foster parent recruitment and support strategies.
- Established a \$300,000 flex fund to cover certain expenses to become a foster parent.
- In partnership with Public Catalyst and Action Research Partners, provided intensive technical assistance to foster care agencies to increase placement with kin and enhance foster parent recruitment and support.
- Developed and implemented new tracking and management tools to support foster care agencies.
- In partnership with Sheltering Arms, developed a new, trauma-sensitive reception center for younger children in the Bronx that opened in September 2017.
- **Redesigned the Children's Center Nursery and implemented additional enhancements in staffing and programming.** ▼



Improving Education & Employment Outcomes and Pathways to Adulthood for Youth in Care

- ACS expanded our **Fostering College Success Initiative** partnership with **CUNY**, which provides year-round housing, with financial, academic and



social service supports for foster youth in college. As of FY 2018, the program expanded from 50 to 93 students and now includes dorm sites at **Queens College, College of Staten Island and City College**. The program will ultimately grow to serve 200 students. The **New York Foundling**, a leader in educational services and supports for children in foster care, is providing 24/7 on-campus support services at each of these locations. An additional 113 students residing on campus at several public and private colleges are also receiving financial support. **Goldman Sachs** has partnered with ACS to serve as mentors for foster youth in college and held a Career Day for students.

- 25 foster youth completed the **FirstStar** summer academic academy at the CUNY College of Staten Island. The First Star CSI Academy program provides school year and summer academic and social-emotional support to help ninth grade foster youth stay on track for high school graduation and prepare for higher education.



- Our **ACS Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives** (established in 2016) continued to develop and support a range of initiatives to enhance youth readiness for the world of work:

- ACS launched a new **Drivers Education Program** and enrolled more than 100 youth.

- ACS partnered with The **Pinkerton Foundation** to fund a **mentored-internship program** that will launch in January 2018 and serve approximately 200 youth across eight foster care agencies – Catholic Guardian Services, Children’s Aid Society, Children’s Village, Graham Windham, Good Shepherd Services, HeartShare St. Vincent’s, New York Foundling and Sheltering Arms.

- More than 100 current and former foster youth have enrolled in the newly established **Young Adult Internship Program PLUS (YAIP+)** developed by the **NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)** in partnership with ACS.

More than half (56 percent) completed their internships and were hired into permanent jobs. An additional 30 percent have continued to advance their educational goals.

- ACS partnered with DYCD to support the **Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)**. ACS and foster care provider agencies referred more than 750 youth to SYEP.

- Six foster care agencies (Children’s Aid, Forestdale, Heartshare St. Vincent’s, JCCA, Leake and Watts, The Children’s Village) are implementing the **Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers (YA WORC)** model, with intensive training and support from The Workplace Center at **Columbia University**.

Our Partnerships

FOSTER CARE AGENCIES

Abbott House
Cardinal McCloskey
Catholic Guardian Services
Cayuga Centers
Children's Aid Society
Children's Village
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families
Forestdale, Inc.
Good Shepherd Services
Graham Windham
HeartShare St. Vincent's Services
The Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services
JCCA
Leake & Watts
Little Flower Children and Family Services

Lutheran Social Services
Martin De Porres
MercyFirst
New Alternatives for Children
The New York Foundling
OHEL Children's Home and Family Services
SCO Family of Services
Seamen's Society for Children and Families
Sheltering Arms
St. Dominic's Home
St. John's

NATIONAL EXPERTS AND FOUNDATIONS:

Action Research Partners
Casey Family Programs
Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)

Chapin Hall
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Dave Thomas Foundation
Doris Duke Foundation
Fostering Change for Children
Ira W. DeCamp Foundation
Joseph LeRoy and Ann C. Warner Fund
Foster America
National Implementation Research Network
National Center for Evidence-Based Practice in Child Welfare, University of Maryland, School of Social Work
New York Community Trust
New Yorkers for Children
Public Catalyst
Redlich Horwitz Foundation
Tiger Foundation
Pinkerton Foundation
The Workplace Center at the Columbia School of Social Work