



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMISSIONER DAVID A. HANSELL ANNOUNCES NEW ACS DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING**

*New Division will focus on disrupting disparities & breaking barriers by promoting community partnership opportunities*

**New York, NY** – The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell today announced the creation of a new agency division— **the Division of Child and Family Well-Being**. Announced at the [Harlem Children's Zone](#), this new division will be led by Deputy Commissioner Lorelei Vargas and will elevate ACS' work to promote family and child well-being citywide.

“We are incredibly proud to announce the new Division of Child and Family Well-Being, focused on providing families with the tools and resources they need to thrive and succeed in life,” said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “This division prioritizes strengthening families and communities citywide with early-care and education as its foundation. Today ACS takes a bold step toward reaffirming our commitment to support children, parents and caregivers citywide.”

“Today is an exciting day for families with young children across New York City,” said **Deputy Mayor Dr. Herminia Palacio**. “The de Blasio administration understands that focusing on family well-being in the long term is critically important to the work ACS does every day. Commissioner Hansell's announcement today is a great step towards accomplishing that vision, and I am glad to welcome Lorelei Vargas into her new role leading this division.”

**The Division of Child and Family Well-Being** will focus on a two-generational approach that not only strengthens our programs to create a solid foundation of success for children and families, but also leverages partner relationships to build on the *strengths* of our diverse families— [training parent leaders](#), [addressing parent's healthcare concerns](#), and [encouraging family engagement](#) and connection to community resources. This is part of an ongoing effort to disrupt disparity and break down barriers to promote opportunities and establish accessible resources for at-risk families— from healthcare, to housing, quality education, and employment.

ACS offers programs that assist with public assistance applications, domestic violence interventions, child care, substance misuse treatment and counseling.

This new Division will work collaboratively with other city agencies, and with our provider and community partners as well as advocates. One of ACS critical resources— Early Care & Education— will serve as the foundation of this new Division. As data shows, high-quality early care and education is an important asset in reducing inequity, and benefits children facing the challenges of poverty during the most crucial years of growth and brain development. ACS is proud to serve about 100,000 children in New York City through our Early Care & Education programs.

“We are thrilled to be able to build on the success of our early care and education system to broaden access to primary prevention services, using a two-generation approach for families across the city,” said **ACS Deputy Commissioner Lorelei Vargas**. “As this new ACS Division takes shape, we continue our unrelenting work to help transform for the better the lives of our children, families, and communities.”

“We must go above and beyond for our children – more than just safety, we must also prepare them for the success they deserve,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin**. “I have been so encouraged by the vision and leadership of Commissioner Hansell to continuously raise the bar for the standard of care provided to the community. This new division is a bold step towards a brighter future for our children.”

Over the last several years, ACS has embarked on numerous initiatives the Safe Sleep Initiative—our citywide campaign promoting modern medical safe sleep recommendations that save lives. The campaign has been featured in bus shelters, hair and nail salons, bodegas and laundromats in East and Central Harlem, throughout Brooklyn and the Bronx, and parts of Queens and Staten Island. Additionally, ACS has implemented a trauma-informed curriculum at our EarlyLearn centers—the largest initiative of its kind in the country—to develop the social and emotional resilience of our children.

Today’s ACS is focused on not only helping families in our system, but disrupting the factors that brought them to us in the first place. A core principle in public health is that the best treatment is prevention; and today’s ACS is driven by a historic investment in high-demand preventive services, to help families address underlying issues before they become crises.

ACS is proud to partner with the Harlem Children’s Zone, a national model for using a holistic approach—integrating health, education, recreational and cultural programming to lift up and serve better the community.



Deputy Mayor Dr. Herminia Palacio, ACS Commissioner David Hansell, ACS Deputy Commissioner Lorelei Vargas and Harlem Children's Zone CEO Anne Williams-Isom



**About the New York City Administration for Children's Services:**

*The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of*

*New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster care services for children not able to safely remain at home. ACS is aggressively implementing a [Foster Care Strategic Blueprint](#) to improve outcomes for children in foster care. The most recent status report indicates a 25% increase in children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship, and a 5% increase in children adopted from FY 2015 to FY 2016, even as the overall number of children in foster care continued to decline, among other significant progress made to improve case practice and outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. In juvenile justice, ACS manages and funds services including detention and placement, intensive community-based alternatives for youth, and support services for families. In early care and education, ACS coordinates and funds programs and vouchers for close to 100,000 children eligible for subsidized care.*

*For more information about NYC ACS, please visit [www.nyc.gov/acs](http://www.nyc.gov/acs)*