



Dear Provider Community:

After the tragic death of 4-year-old Myls Dobson on January 8th, Mayor de Blasio requested that ACS conduct a review of our involvement with Myls' family, as well as the Family Court proceedings and court ordered supervision, which ended in August 2013. I want to share with you the key recommendations arising out of that review.

Based on the issues that we identified, ACS is in the process of implementing the following recommendations to improve practice at the agency and raise awareness of child safety across the City:

- Require an end-of-supervision court appearance. Court-ordered ACS supervision should not end without a full exploration of the child's well-being and approval from a Family Court judge.
- Conduct a review of all current cases that include court-ordered ACS supervision. ACS will conduct a review of all open cases that include court-ordered ACS supervision to ensure that court orders are being followed and children remain safe.
- Conduct a thorough review of the Family Support Unit (FSU). ACS will conduct a review of FSU and lay out clear expectations, including how frequently FSU personnel must contact a probation or parole officer when a caregiver or parent is on probation or parole.
- Expand ACS access to court databases. ACS currently has access only to court information regarding criminal convictions. ACS will seek to amend both the Executive Law and Social Services law in order to: 1) allow the agency access to information about active arrests, not just convictions; and 2) allow all caseworkers, not just those investigating a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, to access arrest and conviction information for any person coming forward as a resource for the child, at any time during the case.
- Introduce legislation to strengthen ACS' authority to supervise parents who are not the subject of a child welfare investigation but are caring for a child who is under ACS supervision.
- Work with the Office of Court Administration to establish interagency collaborations with the New York State Department of Parole and the New York City Department of Probation. If a caretaker under the supervision of the Family Court is on parole or on probation, the Office of Court Administration or ACS would send court orders notifying the respective agencies.
- Enhance Department of Correction intake procedures. ACS will establish an interagency agreement with the NYC Department of Corrections directing correction officers to ask incoming inmates who are primary caregivers about what arrangements they have made for their child.
- Form an interagency Children's Cabinet to facilitate interagency collaboration. Mayor de Blasio will convene an interagency Children's Cabinet consisting of representatives from ACS, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Health and Hospitals Corporation, Department of Education, and the New York Police Department. The Cabinet will establish or bolster existing means of interagency communication.
- Launch a public awareness campaign. The campaign will encourage New Yorkers to not only speak out when they see abuse, but also take proactive steps to get involved in the life of a child, such as signing up to be a mentor.

Child safety and protection are shared responsibilities with our partners and New Yorkers across the City. Thank you for your efforts and dedication to help us improve the safety and protection for our City's most vulnerable children.

Sincerely,

Gladys Carrión
Commissioner

Cross Divisional

Webinar on Child Welfare Response to Child Trafficking

The International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA) and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) have partnered to implement a comprehensive child welfare response to child trafficking called "ChildRight: NY." One aspect of their project involves the development and testing of a scientifically validated screening tool to identify victims of child trafficking. Please join IOFA and OCFS for a webinar on Tuesday, January 28th from 1:30-2:30 pm to learn more about the tool, its purpose, and to consider whether your agency would like to partner in the testing of this tool. Any agency serving vulnerable children or youth in New York State is welcome to join the call:

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Audio for the webinar will be available through the following number: (866) 394-2346 Conference code: 2700431701. The webinar will be hosted on ILINC.

To access the webinar, guests may use <http://ilinc.ocfs.state.ny.us/Linc/join/hwmbc>. Please test this link early and contact Technical Support at 1-800-810-1349 if needed.

If you have any questions, please contact ChildRight: NY Project Director Madeline Hannan at mhannan@iofa.org.

Foster Care

Consent to Remain in Care

Youth who wish to remain in care after the age of 18 are required to give written consent. ACS Family Court Legal Services has developed a standardized form to be used by case planners in the Family Courts. [Please click on this link to read the memo from FCLS Deputy Commissioner Alan Sputz outlining this practice](#). For questions, contact FCLS Associate Commissioner Nancy Thomson at (212) 341-2713, nancy.thomson@dfa.state.ny.us [Click on this link for the standardized form](#).

Back to School Package

New Yorkers For Children will support young people who have transitioned out of foster care by continuing to send Back to School packages while the student is enrolled in college. Once the young person leaves foster care, they can apply for the package on their own, using the program application form.

Eligibility Requirements:

- under 25 years old
- transitioned out of foster care in New York City in 2013
- previously received at least (1) Back to School Package while in foster care
- enrolled in an undergraduate degree/vocational training program for the upcoming semester

To apply, submit an application form, unofficial college transcript and class schedule to Phyllis Brodsky at Phyllis.brodsky@dfa.state.ny.us or fax to 917-551-7374. For more information, or an application form, please contact Phyllis Brodsky at 212-341-3318 or Magda Santiago at 212-341-3312. You may also [click on this link to download the application](#).

Housing Academy Collaborative

The Housing Academy Collaborative offers housing readiness training to youth in care ages 16 to 21 to better prepare them to rent an apartment and maintain it long term. The trainings are interactive and explain the housing application process, as well as provide information on employment service support, education resources, financial literacy, household living skills, and a general knowledge of landlord and tenant rights. Trainings will be held on January 22, 29, February 5th 4-6pm at 150 William Street. To register or for more information about additional training dates please contact Titilayo Morgan at Titilayo.morgan@dfa.state.ny.us or (212) 341-3357.

Well-Being Events for Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care

The Teen Specialist Unit has collaborated with provider agencies and community stakeholders to find innovative ways to support the well-being and improved outcomes for pregnant and parenting youth and their children.

Mother and Toddler Movement Class

Through a partnership with the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn, young parents can participate in a 6-week mother and toddler movement class that provides an opportunity to enjoy movement, dance, song, games and drums with their child.

Young parents can also attend Zumba, jazz, hip hop, samba, Afro-Caribbean dance, movement and much more. [Click on this link to download the flyer](#).

Domestic Violence Retreat

The Teen Specialist Unit will host a Kawakawa – Domestic Violence Retreat at the Akwaaba Mansion Bed and Breakfast in Brooklyn to focus on healthy relationships. There will also be an Outward Beauty Workshop, facilitated by a MAC cosmetics technician, to address self-esteem and strong personal image.

For more information about these well-being events for pregnant and parenting youth, please contact the Teen Specialist Unit at acs.sm.tsu@dfa.state.ny.us or Vicki Mitchell at (212) 513-7765.

Preventive Services

Selecting a Pre-Admission Certification Committee (PACC) Point Person

The Pre-Admission Certification Committee (PACC) reviews all applications submitted by Agencies for youth to attend a residential treatment facility (RTF). In order to improve the quality and accuracy of the application packets, ACS is asking that each agency designate at least one staff to serve as the PACC referral packet point person. This person will be charged with reviewing all packets before they are sent to the committee, which will optimally increase the number of children that are approved for RTF placement. In many agencies, this designee is also the Mental Health Coordination Unit (MCHU) contact.

In order for a child or youth to be admitted to a Residential Treatment Facility (RTF), each youngster needs to be certified as eligible by the Regional PACC. The Committee reviews each case and determines whether a child is eligible for admission.

The PACC makes this determination only if the child is diagnosed with a mental illness and meets certain criteria. Many times when the referral packet submitted to the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) is incomplete and/or contains errors, it prevents the child from being approved and placed on the RTF waiting list.

We hope to improve this process by having each agency designate a PACC point person to review the paperwork prior to submission to OMH. Our goal is to help alleviate the issue of having our children wait for the appropriate treatment. Training will be provided to all designees by Nancy Chapman, the ACS PACC designee and Cathy Moran, the New York State Office

of Mental Health, NYC Residential Treatment Facility Program Director.

Please e-mail Nancy Chapman at nancy.chapman@dfa.state.ny.us, complete contact information for your designee to ensure that this person receives all RTF referrals for review prior to PACC submission. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Nancy Chapman.

Juvenile Justice

There are no Juvenile Justice announcements in this edition.

Early Care and Education

UPK Enrollment

UPK Enrollment during the expansion period must be completed by 4pm on Friday, January 31, 2014 (UPK eligible children are entered into the PreKIDS Vendor Portal and the completed enrollment packages are at the DOE Field Office. Please be sure to include the WES number on the packet).

Please review your WES roster of enrolled EarlyLearn children to identify the children born in 2009; and immediately enroll those children that:

1. were attending your program, but were not able to get enrolled into the DOE PreKIDS Vendor Portal by the initial October 2, 2013 BEDS deadline, AND those that:
2. were enrolled in your programs after October 2, 2013.

Until you hear otherwise from ACS, all programs are to enroll all of their EarlyLearn four-year olds in UPK. Let's take this opportunity to continue to maximize the UPK enrollment in EarlyLearn programs; it is imperative that we meet the target to ensure financial stability of EarlyLearn.

Please reach out to Ayleen Guzman at 212.393.5156 with any questions.

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