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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES: LEADER IN COMPREHENSIVE
IMPLEMENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED MODELS**

NYC offering widest range of free evidence-based preventive services for at-risk families

New York, NY – The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today announced the release of **Implementing Evidence-Based Child Welfare: The New York City Experience**, a report by Casey Family Programs and the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN).

In this [new report](#), the organizations highlight ACS as a national leader and innovator in comprehensive implementation of Evidence-based Models (EBMs) of preventive services into New York City's child welfare system. EBMs are services that have been shown to be effective through documented, rigorous scientific research. Compared to similar programs, EBMs have a proven ability to achieve better results for families. Additionally, EBMs require staff to participate in intensive training, and contain a quality assurance system to ensure that staff is delivering the model properly.

Preventive services are designed to address stresses families may experience that, without such intervention, might otherwise lead to safety risks for children. Like preventive health services, ACS's preventive services are intended to address child welfare concerns before they reach the point where more aggressive action may be necessary.

ACS's investment in preventive services (particularly EBMs) has paralleled a dramatic decline in the number of New York City children in foster care, suggesting that these up-front interventions are succeeding in keeping children safe while reducing the trauma associated with family separations.

The report describes the process through which ACS adopted EBMs into the agency's portfolio of services, the progress of implementation, and what impact these EBMs have had on children and families as well as overall practice. Such models focus on developing services that are effective in addressing a range of issues such as trauma, substance abuse, and behavioral health.

“We are proud to offer the widest range of free, evidence-based behavioral health services in the nation for struggling families. We know that high quality evidence-based interventions can help change the trajectory of a family in crisis,” said **David A. Hansell, ACS Commissioner**.

“Building on what we know about the effectiveness of preventive health services, we have made a historic investment in preventive child welfare services – one that this report tells us is working. In fulfilling our mission to keep our city’s children safe and strengthen families, we remain committed to addressing trauma, substance abuse, and other issues that may serve as a barrier to wellbeing.”

“ACS now operates an impressive array of evidence-based and evidence-informed preventive programs,” said **David Sanders, Executive Vice President of Systems Improvement at Casey Family Programs**. “The strengths, challenges and the lessons learned through NYC’s pioneering efforts can inform jurisdictions around the country—and the broader child welfare field—in implementing evidence-based models in their systems, many of which are doing so through the federal Child Welfare Demonstration Waivers.”

Preventive services are focused on keeping families safely together through addressing underlying obstacles and challenges before they threaten the safety and well-being of children. This means that services must address the individual needs of children and the needs of the family members residing with children, while recognizing the socio-economic realities which impact their daily lives. For families that may be struggling, these services help protect children and reduce the need for foster care placement by creating a community of care.

The agency’s focus on preventive services follows an increased demand by families, met by this administration with a \$54M investment into such services for FY2018.

These programs have demonstrated effectiveness in preventing foster care placements; expediting reunification; expediting adoptions for those transitioning out of care; and preventing the return of youth into care.

In 2011, ACS began introducing evidence-based and evidence-informed practice models into its continuum of preventive family support services to meet the widely varied and complex needs of the City’s families, and broadly expanded the effort four years ago to include 11 different models. Casey Family Programs provided technical assistance, in partnership with the National Implementation Research Network, to ACS in support of the implementation of EBMs.

“NYC ACS has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring high quality implementation of evidence-based models, so that the potential of these models for improving child and family outcomes is fully realized,” said **Allison Metz, Associate Director at the National Implementation Research Network**. “NYC ACS has built an infrastructure for the evidence-based models that allows for the models to be scaled and sustained. NYC ACS is a national example of doing what it takes to effectively use research evidence for impact in publicly funded child welfare systems.”

“The implementation of evidence-based and evidence-informed preventive programs in NYC represents a system reform by a public-private child welfare system that is unprecedented

anywhere else in the country,” said **Diane DePanfilis, Professor at the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, City University of New York and developer of one of the EBMs, Family Connections.** “The array of EBMs makes it possible to individualize and tailor the match of interventions to the complex unique needs of families. And, the effort taken by ACS to use a solid implementation science framework will increase the likelihood that these early positive outcomes will be sustained over time.”

“The work at ACS serves as an exemplar to child welfare agencies nationwide about the level of intention and resources that are required to meaningfully integrate research and evidence-based models with daily practice,” said **Kim DuMont, Senior Program Officer at William T. Grant Foundation.** “Of particular note are the supports and sustained attention ACS has devoted to introduce, implement, and improve the use of EBMs by child welfare agencies. I am hopeful that such a thoughtful approach will bolster child welfare agencies’ efforts to promote the well-being of children and prevent their need foster care services.”

Today, ACS serves about 20,000 families per year in child welfare preventive programs, providing more than 5,000 of them with evidence-based and evidence-informed services.

Programs range from those for families with children at low risk, to those with very high levels of need. ACS contracts with nonprofit providers to deliver EBMs. The partnership between ACS, EBM developers, and nonprofit providers has been critical to the EBM success. The use of implementation science (the study of factors that influence the full and effective use of innovations in practice) has provided a valuable framework to the initiative.

EBM services meet families in their home, which significantly increases accessibility to services such as family therapy, trauma-informed therapy, home safety, substance-abuse treatment or supports to help parents encourage healthy early childhood development. Families receiving EBM support have demonstrated an ability to satisfy and complete programs—leading to case closure—in a shorter time period (often in 4 to 10 months, which is shorter than traditional ACS prevention services).

In FY2018, ACS is expanding access to evidence-based services for families that the Family Court has determined need court-ordered supervision of the home so that children do not enter foster care. Court-ordered supervision may include specific instructions, such as drug treatment or counseling, that a parent must follow while being monitored. These services will also build the capacity of the preventive administrative systems to sustain and make the best use of these research-based model programs.

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

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