



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 24, 2019

Contact: mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov

**AS PART OF 'NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH,' NYC
ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES & CITY LEADERS SHINE A
LIGHT ON CRITICAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THAT KEEP FAMILIES STRONG**

*Along Iconic Brooklyn Bridge, New Yorkers Show Support for New York City's Children
By Participating in Annual Bridge Walk for Child Abuse Prevention*

NEW YORK, NY – Today, as part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell joined City leaders, provider agencies, families and children for the City's Fifth Annual Bridge Walk. The event aims to highlight the many programs that help keep New York City's kids safe and New York City's families healthy and strong. Following the walk, participants were invited to plant a pinwheel, the national symbol for child abuse prevention.

New York City is one of the few jurisdictions in the country where families have access to free, comprehensive, holistic continuum of prevention services and supports to strengthen families and prevent entry into foster care. Each year, ACS and its 54 non-profit Prevention Service agency network connect approximately 20,000 families citywide to supports like family therapy, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and domestic violence intervention. In addition to reducing the possibility of placement into foster care, children in families receiving prevention services are less likely to experience subsequent abuse or neglect.

ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell said, "A strong foundation for preventing child abuse is supporting families who need a helping hand—something ACS does in multiple ways, through prevention programs, early care and education programs, homemaker services, and more. However, it takes much more than ACS to keep children safe and prevent abuse; the entire city needs to serve as that bridge of support for families in need. Thank you to the many people throughout New York City who work each day to help keep kids safe and thank you all those who support New York City's Fifth Annual Bridge Walk."

"Every child deserves to grow up feeling safe and the opportunity to live a healthy life, both mentally and physically," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "ACS plays an important role in supporting families and preventing child abuse citywide. I am proud to walk together with those that have dedicated their lives to protect our children and ensure they have fair shot at a happy and successful future."

"Our office is proud to partner once again with ACS to shine a light on the vital importance of child abuse prevention," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. Every one of us has a role to play in being effective community guardians who watch out for our children's welfare.

This bridge walk is an opportunity to highlight the value of early care and prevention services that help to strengthen families and safeguard children.”

Each year, frontline ACS staff investigate approximately 60,000 child abuse or neglect reports that are called into the state hotline. ACS has made enormous strides in the NYC child welfare system in keeping children safe, while keeping families intact. As a result, the foster care population in New York City is at a historic low, dropping from 50,000 children in 1992 to under 17,000 in 2007 to under 9,000 in 2018. In contrast, in 2018 over 44,000 children received prevention services.

In the vast majority of cases where ACS identifies a concern, families are able to engage in prevention services that provide assistance and coaching to families experiencing serious challenges and obstacles. ACS funds over 200 programs that provide prevention services ranging from case management to high intensity evidence-based interventions for families with significant mental health or other challenges. One of the important hallmarks of New York City’s prevention services system is the ability to offer a continuum of services and match a family to the services they need, both in terms of intensity and specialization.

Just recently, ACS created a new division, the “Division of Child and Family Wellbeing,” that is developing approaches to reaching families at the earliest possible stages and intervening to build on family and community strengths, address family challenges and forestall child welfare involvement altogether. The new division aims to connect children and families to support before problems arise that can cause long-term harm and trauma.

For more information on the prevention programs offered to New York City families, visit the ACS website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/child-welfare/preventive-services.page>.

###