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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES PROGRESS IN PLACING CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE WITH FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS – ON TRACK TO MEET NYC GOAL OF FORTY-SIX PERCENT BY 2020

When Foster Care is Absolutely Necessary, Identifying Family & Friends Who Can Provide Care is a Top Priority; Following Recs from the NYC Foster Care Task Force, ACS Successfully Increased the Proportion of Youth Placed With Kin to 38 Percent

Following recommendations made by the NYC Foster Care Interagency Task Force, Administration for Children's Services Commissioner David A. Hansell today announced major progress in placing youth in foster care with kin, such as relatives or close family friends. ACS strives to keep families together by providing preventive services and other support, however, when a child must be removed from a home due to safety reasons, ACS works hard to place the child with a kinship guardian. Studies show that children placed with kin have increased stability and higher rates of behavioral and emotional wellbeing than children placed with non-kin caregivers. In March 2018, ACS announced a goal to increase the proportion of children placed with kin upon entry to foster care from 31% to 46% by the end of 2020. In its just-released [Foster Care Task Force Progress Report](#), ACS revealed that New York City is on track to meet that goal; the proportion of children in foster care placed with kin rose from 32% to 36% by the end of FY 2018 and is up even further to 38% in the first quarter of FY 2019.

In addition to increasing the number of youth in foster care with kinship guardians, ACS has also successfully increased the number of newly certified foster parents by 32 percent -- turning around a previous six-year decline in the number of new foster homes recruited.

"We continue to make strides in our work to strengthen and support families and keep families together when safely possible; however, when children must be removed from their home due to safety reasons, we work hard to identify family members or friends who can provide kinship foster care," **said ACS Commissioner Hansell.** "Children fare best when they maintain strong ties to their families, and that's why I am proud that we have been able to safely increase the proportion of children in foster care placed with family and friends. Thank you to the Foster Care Interagency Task Force for prioritizing this important effort."

In March 2018, The Foster Care Interagency Task Force issued a report which included sixteen recommendations to improve services and outcomes for youth in and aging out of foster care. In its just-released Foster Care Task Force one-year progress report, ACS outlined the numerous strategies aimed at increasing placement of NYC foster children in foster care with kin.

- **Kinship Specialist Positions Established:** ACS established 10 new kinship specialist positions in the ACS Division of Child Protection (DCP). These staff have the dedicated function of finding and engaging kin caregivers for children entering foster care. ACS

engaged with the nationally known kinship care organization, "A Second Chance," to train these staff. Kinship Specialists focus on fully engaging family networks and community connections in order to place children with caregivers they know.

- **ACS Staff Education:** Through the "Find Family and Friends First" campaign, all existing and new Child Protective Specialists receive training and education materials on how to safely place youth with kin.
- **Public/Private Partnership for Kinship and Foster Home Recruitment:** Building on a major grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation supporting ACS' foster home recruitment work, last year, five foundations (New York Community Trust, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Joseph Leroy & Ann C. Warner Fund and Tiger Foundation) made grants totaling \$750k to five foster care agencies to advance ACS' *Home Away from Home* (HAFH) kinship and foster home recruitment work. This initiative has been highly successful in increasing foster home recruitment while simultaneously improving kinship placement and support for kin caregivers.
- **Technical Assistance and Innovation at Foster Care Agencies:** ACS, in partnership with national experts Public Catalyst and Action Research, is providing intensive technical assistance on kinship placement and foster parent recruitment to foster care agencies through ACS' HAFH initiative. This work includes analyzing data, assessing administrative processes and implementing best practices to improve kinship placement and foster parent recruitment and support.
- **Kin Pilot:** ACS launched a pilot in Fall 2018 with two foster care provider agencies, Children's Village and Little Flower. These agencies received funding to implement kin placement strategies such as dedicating staff to search for kin, engaging experienced kinship foster parents as peer advocates and enhancing assistance for kin caregivers in the home study process.

The announcement comes at a time when New York City's foster care system is undergoing significant transformation. The Foster Care Task Force recommendations have been incorporated into ACS' Foster Care Strategic Blueprint which outlines the key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. The foster care population is at a historic low, dropping from 50,000 children in 1992 to under 17,000 in 2007 to under 9,000 in 2018.

To view the full Foster Care Task Force one-year progress report, click here:

<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/testimony/2019/TaskForceReport.pdf>