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**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER A DECADE, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES LAUNCHES REDESIGNED PREVENTION SERVICES SYSTEM TO BETTER SUPPORT CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD ACROSS NEW YORK CITY**

*Prevention Services Have Helped Drive Down the Number of Children in NYC Foster Care to a Historic Low; New System Strengthens That Work By Making Services More Accessible, Incorporating Family Voice & More*

**NEW YORK, NY** – Today, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) launched its redesigned prevention services system, which serves thousands of families involved with the child welfare system in their homes. The new system will, for the first time, offer universal access to the full range of programs to all families across the City, regardless of where they live. Additionally, the new system will expand therapeutic supports to families, increase parent voice and choice in service delivery and promote racial equity through mandated efforts to address racial disparities in all programs. The new system, which includes 119 provider programs, builds upon the agency's existing prevention services system, which is already recognized as a national model, and represents the first full and complete restructuring of that system in over a decade.

The goal of prevention services is to support New York City families in building skills to manage crises, maintain safety and stability within the home, and strengthen their ability to thrive within the community. With the help of a network of community-based providers, over 20,000 families each year receive supports like family therapy, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and domestic violence intervention, as well as concrete support, including food, diapers, cribs and more.

"Prevention services are our best strategy for keeping children safe, and ensuring that they grow up in healthy, nurturing families, and that's why we made sure our redesigned system meant equal access to these prevention services regardless of where in the City a family lives," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "The new system also expands therapeutic supports to families and increases parent voice and choice in service delivery so that families have a say in the type of services they're being provided. I am proud of all that we've accomplished in New York City through the use of our prevention services, and I believe the newly redesigned system will provide even better services to families and help us address racial disparities in service access."

"ACS and our network of non-profit agencies are committed to delivering high-quality services in a socially just manner and ensuring services provided are of such quality that families will voluntarily seek to enroll in them regardless of involvement in the child welfare system," **said ACS Deputy Commissioner of Prevention Services Jacqueline Martin.** "We are excited to

have arrived at this transformative moment in our history to better meet the needs of children and families in NYC.”

"The nonprofit agencies' program directors are eager to continue to improve and expand the excellent prevention work that has been pioneered in New York City," **said Jim Purcell, President and CEO of the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA)**. "We are glad to partner in the continual evolution of these services that strengthen families while keeping children safely at home and look forward to the next chapters of innovative child welfare practice."

“University Settlement is thrilled to partner with New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services as it rethinks and expands prevention services,” **said Melissa Aase, Executive Director of University Settlement**. “This thoughtfully refreshed program will help our communities navigate systemic inequities, keeping children safe by ensuring that all families across the city are able to access supports that help them manage crises and build on their strengths.”

"The need for Prevention Services has never been so evident as at present, while we respond to families across NYC devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our Prevention Services work with families from those communities that have faced a disproportionate burden of losses and unemployment," **stated Bill Weisberg, Executive Director of Forestdale Inc.** " The broad, deep array of Prevention supports thoughtfully designed by ACS, rolling out today, include exactly the concrete material supports, counseling, or employment and housing assistance that families in distress are desperately seeking. Forestdale is thrilled to be among a great team of Prevention agencies rooted in the community that will work closely with ACS to respond to families struggling to claim victory in the face of poverty and inequity, and chart a path toward family stability, individual success, and collective justice."

ACS prevention services have safely reduced the utilization of foster care. There were nearly 50,000 New York City children in foster care 25 years ago, and 17,000 just a decade ago. Today there are fewer than 8,000 NYC children in foster care, a historic low. Earlier this year, ACS released the results of its first-ever “[Prevention Services: Family Experience Survey](#),” which asked families receiving prevention services about their experiences in the services. Approximately 94% of survey participants said they are happy with the prevention services their families received; and 71% of participants said that they would recommend these services to a friend and/or family member. Overall, 86% of the parents participating in the survey said prevention services helped them reach their parenting goals. Additionally, there is strong evidence that ACS prevention services reduce repeated involvement of families in the child welfare system. Families that successfully complete prevention services (and more than 80% do) are five times less likely to have another “substantiated” investigation (one in which there is evidence of child abuse or neglect) in the following six months than families that do not complete services.

The redesigned prevention services system builds upon the existing system in four major respects:

- **Universal service access:** For the first time, all prevention models will serve every borough and every neighborhood, so that services are equitably distributed and more accessible to families that need them, and families can be better matched to appropriate services no matter where they live.

- Family choice: While ACS currently prioritizes regular feedback from families, the improved prevention services portfolio will better address the suggestions raised by family members, by incorporating more parent voice and choice in order to ensure services reflect what families want and need. In addition to strengthening parent voice in the development of service plans, the improved system will promote family voice in the organization's decision-making and program improvement activities.
- More therapeutic and treatment services: The improved system will expand New York City's investment in evidence-based and research-informed models. And for the first time, therapeutic and treatment models will make up the majority of prevention slots.
- Addresses racial disproportionality: Specifically, provider agencies will be required to incorporate efforts to address racial disparity in their organization and service provision, including through the formation of racial equity committees that include all levels of staff representation.

Today's announcement is the result of two years of rigorous research by engaging over 300 stakeholders including parents, family members, parent advocates, all levels of staff at prevention programs. In addition to the input from stakeholders, the new system reflects extensive research of national models. In January, ACS released the list of prevention programs selected for awards from the RFP. For the past six months, ACS has successfully undertaken a significant transition process to prepare for July 1<sup>st</sup>; focusing on keeping children safe and working closely with providers and families to ensure there was little to no disruption in services to families and children.

To view a map of the prevention programs being offered through this new system, please see the attached document.

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