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BI-STATE AGREEMENT PROMOTES EXPEDITED PLACEMENTS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE WITH FAMILY OR CLOSE FRIENDS LIVING IN NY/NJ BORDER AREAS

New York/New Jersey support keeping families together

NEW YORK, NY – The New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) today announced a joint venture with New York State and New Jersey to better facilitate interstate placements of children and youth in cases involving parental abuse, neglect, or incapacitation.

Child welfare agencies across the country are required to comply with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) when placing children in foster care in other states. Under the ICPC, a child can only be placed in foster care in another state after the receiving state conducts a home study and approves the proposed placement.

Although border counties in New Jersey, like Bergen and Essex, are located just minutes from New York City, it can often take months to place a child in foster care with a relative in one of these locations because of federal ICPC rules. The “border” agreement being announced today will expedite placement of children in foster care with family or close friends living in New Jersey and New York border areas. Specifically, the agreement will maintain home safety and assessment protocols, while reducing processing times and potential emotional trauma to the children and families involved.

“When children must be placed into foster care, our top priority is to identify family members who can care for that child and this new agreement with New Jersey will help make that possible much more quickly for many children in need,” said **New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “ACS thanks the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for their shared commitment to improving the lives of children in foster care.”

“We are so pleased to partner with our New Jersey counterparts on a border agreement, which represents our joint commitment to a rapid response in locating kinship homes for children in New York City or the five bordering counties of New Jersey. The agreement will help us expedite out-of-home placement for children in emergency situations,” said **New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Sheila J. Poole**. “Placing children with relatives or others they have a close relationship with can mitigate some of the anxiety and disruption that occurs when children are removed from their homes. This agreement allows us to identify existing family ties, assess the new home and bring a child into a safe and loving placement as quickly as possible. The goal is to support what is best for our children by eliminating a delay created by a geographic boundary.”

“Many of our state’s counties are closer to New York City than they are to areas in-state,” said **NJ Department of Children and Families (NJ DCF) Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer**. “It’s not unusual for North Jersey families to have relatives or close friends living over the bridges. As sister agencies, we have a mutual desire to promote and support kinship placements when the removal of a child is necessary. It just makes sense that we should be working together to expedite these proximal placements, when it is determined to be in the best interests of the child.”

Each year, the agreement will impact an estimated 100 children under the jurisdiction of custody of New Jersey DCF’s Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) and an estimated 100 under the jurisdiction of the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). It allows children or youth removed from their parent/s or guardians to be placed in and by each state on an emergent basis, rather than waiting for a full ICPC request to be processed. A typical ICPC can take three to six months, and often much longer. By utilizing existing policies that permit each respective agency to place children with kin, like family or close friends, using “presumptive eligibility” standards, the timeframe will be reduced from months to seven days.

New Jersey and New York have long emphasized the importance of kinship connections for children in care. In this context, kin are defined as close relatives, friends and familiar faces to the child. Studies show that children removed from their parent/s [achieve better outcomes](#) when placed with people they know. They often are better able to adjust emotionally, maintain routine, engage in community, retain and cultural and religious affiliations.

The agreement is applicable to the New Jersey counties of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, and Union, as well as the New York counties of Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond. It allows each state to initiate a Temporary Emergency Placement Referral and within 7-days complete temporary home assessments, local background checks and family team planning for the child in care. The receiving state will coordinate supervision and services, while the sending state will be responsible for medical and financial support or subsidies. A full ICPC request will be processed once the emergency placement is complete.

To evaluate the success of the agreement, there is an initial pilot period of 12 months during which each agency will be required to perform no more than 10 emergency placement assessments per month. This period will allow the parties to track the impact of the agreement on workloads, to communicate with one another regarding issues that arise, and to make any necessary adjustments to ensure the agreement is operating efficiently.

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