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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES FEWER THAN 8,000 CHILDREN IN NYC'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM – A HISTORIC LOW

Under Mayor de Blasio, NYC's Foster Care System Has Decreased By More Than One-Third, While Much of the Nation Has Seen an Uptick in Recent Years

NEW YORK, NY – Today, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell highlighted a dramatic decline in the number of children in New York City's foster care system. New York City began the year with a historic low of fewer than 8,000 children in foster care, compared to approximately 11,695 when Mayor de Blasio first took office. Comparatively, 25 years ago, there were nearly 50,000 children in New York City's foster care system, and nearly 17,000 just a decade ago.

"Through targeted reforms and an investment in prevention services, New York City has successfully reduced the number of children in foster care to an historic low of fewer than 8,000—down from about 17,000 just a decade ago," **said Commissioner Hansell**. "While much work remains, New York City is moving the needle in the right direction by keeping more and more children safely in their homes when we can, reducing the amount of time children spend in foster care, and improving outcomes for those children who must be in foster care."

"I want to express my appreciation and congratulations to Commissioner Hansell and all of the staff at ACS, who handle incredibly difficult situations every day, on this monumental achievement. These results must serve as a model for all counties throughout New York State and are particularly important in light of next year's implementation of the Federal Families First Act, which requires moving more children out of foster and congregate care settings," **said Assemblyman Hevesi**.

"I applaud the continued focus on bringing down the number of children in foster care. We recognize that the goal must be to keep families together whenever possible. That means providing resources and meaningful support to avoid separation and allow families in trouble to succeed," **said Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the City Council General Welfare Committee**.

New York City's downward trend counters the national uptick in foster care cases in recent years. [According to the most recent data available](#), nationally, the number of children in foster care grew from approximately 414,259 in 2014 to 441,071 in 2017. The number has only recently begun to decline, with approximately 437,283 in 2018.

Through a series of targeted reforms and investments in prevention services, ACS has kept more and more children safely out of foster care and implemented strategies to improve the system's capacity to move children and youth to permanency, and out of foster care, more quickly. On any given day, ACS prevention programs provide supportive services to families representing more than 24,000 children across New York City, safely keeping children at home

and families together. ACS partners with community-based non-profit providers to deliver services such as substance abuse counseling, domestic violence intervention, and mental health services so families can remain safely together.

In December, ACS announced a new prevention services portfolio, which will provide a full range of supportive services for the highest-need families across New York City. The new portfolio, which will be implemented by July 2020, will offer specialized prevention services and the expansion of family support frameworks to stabilize families and further reduce the number of children who require court supervision or who must enter foster care.

In addition to reducing the number of children in foster care to an historic low, Commissioner Hansell significantly strengthened New York City's foster care system in just the last three years. [According to a recently released report](#), New York City has:

- **Reduced length of stay in foster care:** The number of children in foster care for two years or more dropped by 22% from FY17 to FY19 and by more than 40% since FY14. An independent evaluation by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago released in 2019 found that ACS and its foster care agencies have reduced length of stay in foster care by 9 percent overall (an average of 50 days per child).
- **Increased the proportion of children in foster care living with relatives/friends:** Research shows that children fare best with kin (relatives, close family friends, or other people who are already in a child's life). From FY17 to FY19, ACS and its foster care agency partners increased the proportion of children in foster care placed with kin from 31% to 39%.
- **Increased foster home recruitment:** ACS increased the number of new foster homes recruited by 50% from FY 2017 to FY 2019, turning around a previous six-year decline in the number of new foster homes recruited. ACS redesigned foster parent recruitment and support by utilizing best practice strategies, conducting targeted data and business process analysis and providing intensive workshops, trainings and technical assistance to support the foster care agencies' work.
- **Expanded programming for older youth:** During the last three years, ACS significantly increased specialized education and employment programming for older youth through our dedicated Office of Education and Employment Initiatives and partnerships with DYCD, DOE, CUNY, Columbia University, FirstStar, multiple foundations and other partners. Youth are participating in mentored internships, summer youth employment, career clubs, college readiness programs the CUNY dorm program and more. In October, Commissioner Hansell announced a first-of-its-kind effort to connect thousands of youth in New York City foster care to dedicated coaches. As part of the effort, coaches will be matched to youth in foster care between the ages of 11 and 21 in order to provide them with social and emotional support to build life skills, set academic and career goals, plan for successful transitions from foster care and more.

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