



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 29, 2021

Contact: [mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov)

**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES RELEASES NEW REPORT  
HIGHLIGHTING THE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE TO  
STRENGTHEN NYC'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, INCLUDING THROUGHOUT THE COVID-  
19 PANDEMIC**

*In New Report, ACS Announces Fewer Children in Foster Care, Reduced Length of Stay in Foster Care, More Children in Foster Care Living With Family & Friends, Expanded Education & Employment Services for Youth and More*

**NEW YORK, NY** – The NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today released the "[FY 2020 Foster Care Blueprint Progress Report](#)," illustrating the results of the significant work that has been done to improve outcomes for children and families in New York City's foster care system. New data included in the report shows that ACS has continued to reduce the number of children in foster care and their length of stay in foster care; and a greater proportion of youth in foster care are placed with relatives or other close connections. ACS also launched the Fair Futures program in partnership with private philanthropy, significantly expanding the range of services to improve education and employment outcomes for youth in care.

The new report also highlights the important work that has been done over the past year to support children and youth in foster care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As soon as the pandemic hit, ACS immediately pivoted and implemented a range of new protocols, informed by public health guidance, in order to continue essential child welfare work. ACS provided PPE and necessary technology to youth, foster parents, foster care agency staff and others. We launched new approaches to accelerate safe reunification of children with their families in the context of the Family Court's limited operations. Foster parent recruitment, orientation and training sessions as well as foster parent support groups were shifted to online platforms.

During this time, ACS also significantly advanced its work across the child welfare system to combat racism and racial inequity, including working to reduce the number of unnecessary reports to the State child abuse and neglect hotline for ACS to investigate; routing more families to alternative non-investigatory approaches at the front door of the child welfare system; expanding prevention services that provide support and resources to families while keeping them together; and meaningfully increasing youth and parent voice in all of our work. In October 2020, we launched a significant new parent advocate initiative, Parents Supporting Parents (PSP), to empower parents with children in foster care and improve reunification and race equity outcomes.

"This progress report shows that our Foster Care Strategic Blueprint strategies are working and producing positive results: New York City continues to set the national bar in reducing the

number of children in foster care and implementing focused strategies to improve outcomes for youth,” **said Commissioner David A. Hansell.** “I am also proud of the work we have done and continue to do throughout the pandemic to support youth and their families. Many of the creative strategies we have implemented during this health crisis will live on beyond the pandemic, because they have proven themselves beneficial for children and families.”

ACS strives to keep families together by providing prevention services and additional support; however, when a child must be removed from a home due to safety reasons, ACS works to ensure that children receive tender care and that children and families receive needed services. Most children in foster care return home safely to their families. For those who cannot, ACS works to ensure permanent families for children through adoption or kinship guardianship. Approximately five years ago, ACS announced its “Foster Care Strategic Blueprint,” which outlines the agency’s key priorities and strategies to strengthen the foster care system and improve outcomes for children in care. ACS issues annual reports on its progress.

The just-released “FY-2020 Foster Care Blueprint Progress Report” summarizes the agency’s work and the progress made. Key highlights include:

- **Fewer children in foster care:** The number of New York City children in foster care at the end of FY 2020 reached a historic low of 7,800, which is a 6% decrease from FY 2019.
- **Reduced length of stay in foster care:** The number of children in foster care for two years or more has continued to decrease, dropping by 3% from FY 2019 to FY 2020, and by 25% from FY 2017 to FY 2020.
- **More children in foster care live with relatives/friends than ever before:** Research shows that children fare best with kin (relatives, close family friends, or other people who are already in a child’s life). ACS and its foster care agency partners have increased the proportion of children in foster care placed with kin from 31% in FY 2017 to 42% in FY 2020, and this increase has continued even during the pandemic.
- **Increased services for older youth:** In FY 2020, ACS launched the Fair Futures initiative through a public private partnership with a group of committed foundations, the Fair Futures Coalition and the Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board. Fair Futures provides youth in foster care with dedicated coaches that provide social and emotional support to build life skills and set academic and career goals. Thousands of young people ages 11-21 are receiving tutoring, coaching, college assistance, internship and employment assistance, and other resources to help improve educational and employment outcomes.
- **COVID-19 support and resources:** Given the nature of child welfare work, ACS and foster care provider agencies never shut down during the pandemic. In the context of the Family Court’s limited operations, ACS and its contracted foster care agencies launched intensive reviews of the cases of children with the goal of reunification to identify cases that could safely move forward. These efforts contributed to a significant increase in the number of children reunified with their parents during the pandemic. We implemented virtual internship programs so that young people in foster care could continue to develop their skills to prepare them for employment. We partnered with New Yorkers For Children to establish the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund, raising and dispersing more than \$1.5 million to address children and families urgent needs during the pandemic.

To read the ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint Progress Report for FY 2020 click [here](#).

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