



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 8, 2021

Contact: mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ANNUAL "PREVENTION FAMILY EXPERIENCE SURVEY": RESULTS OVERWHELMINGLY SHOW THAT FAMILIES BELIEVE ACS PREVENTION SERVICES HAVE HELPED THEIR FAMILIES

Survey Builds Upon ACS's Work to Address Racial Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System By Elevating & Incorporating the Voices Of Parents With Lived Experiences

NEW YORK, NY – Today, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) released the findings from its annual "ACS Prevention Family Experience Survey" which showed that families are overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of services they received, found prevention services to be useful, and would recommend services to a friend or family member. The purpose of the annual survey is to better understand the actual experiences of families participating in prevention services, which are services designed to help families overcome challenges – including trauma, poverty, isolation, mental health, substance misuse, domestic violence – that ultimately help keep children safely at home and in their communities. Nearly all survey participants said they are happy with the prevention services their families received (93%), and the overwhelming majority of participants said that they would recommend these services to a friend and/or family member (87%).

"We're gratified by the results of this survey, which suggest that children and families are benefitting from our prevention services," **said Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "By listening to and elevating the voices of parents with lived experiences in the child welfare system, we can achieve more equitable outcomes for families across New York City. We and our prevention service providers are committed to incorporating what we learned from families through this survey into our work."

The goal of prevention services in New York City is to support families in building skills to manage crises, maintain safety and stability within the home, and strengthen their ability to thrive within their community. With the help of a network of over 45 community-based providers, administering over 135 programs, more than 20,000 families each year receive supports like family therapy, mental health counseling, substance misuse treatment, and domestic violence interventions, as well as help accessing concrete supports, including food, diapers, cribs, benefits and housing supports. ACS's nationally recognized continuum of 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 New York City children in foster care – a historic low. Additionally, there is strong evidence that ACS prevention services reduce repeated involvement of families in the child welfare system. Families that completed child welfare prevention services were nearly half as

likely to have an indicated investigation (one in which there is evidence of child abuse or neglect) within one year, compared to families that were referred to prevention but did not participate. Furthermore, families that completed child welfare prevention were almost four times less likely to have a child placed in foster care within one year, compared to families that were referred to prevention but did not participate.

In July 2020, ACS launched its redesigned prevention services system, which provides increased support to children and families in every neighborhood across New York City. For the first time, the new system offers universal access to the full range of programs to all families across the City, regardless of where they live. Additionally, the new system expands therapeutic supports to families, aims to increase parent voice and choice in service delivery, and requires provider agencies to implement efforts to address racial disparities and promote racial equity in all programs.

In collaboration with provider agencies, the annual “ACS Prevention Family Experience Survey” was offered to families receiving ACS prevention services. Thirty-three percent of families participating in prevention services during the point in time of survey administration chose to participate in the survey. The survey included questions about household demographics, the type and quality of services received, interactions with case planners, and suggestions for improvements.

Highlights from the survey suggest:

- Nearly all survey participants were satisfied with the prevention services they received (93%), agree prevention services are useful (91%), and would recommend services to a friend or family member (86%). One participant said, “My family has progressed so much with the help of Preventive Social Services. If my children and I were to need services again, I wouldn’t hesitate reaching out to the Agency.” When asked about improvements, a small number of participants suggested providing more information in the future about what exactly to expect when receiving services.
- The overwhelming majority of survey participants reported they trust their case planners (95%), feel safe speaking to their case planners about their families (96%), and feel their case planners respect their families’ cultural practices (96%). A large number, ninety-seven percent of survey participants said they “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” their case planners listen to their ideas when setting goals. One participant said, “My social worker is very kind and assists my family with the resources available in the community. They also help with translating with doctors and school.” Another participant said, “My case planner makes me feel heard and listens and tries to explore support for my daily struggles.” Another participant said, “My prevention worker has informed me on all programs and activities and things that are available to us. My worker also supports my family a great deal and I appreciate everything she does. My prevention worker has helped me in many ways.” When asked about improvements, participants recommended having the option of meeting with their case planners over video.
- The overwhelming majority of survey participants (87%) said the referral to prevention services from ACS was helpful for their families and 76% of survey participants reported their opinion of ACS improved after receiving prevention services. One participant said, “I am thankful for all the help that the preventive agency and ACS has provided for our family.”

- The overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) reported their case worker is available to them when they need them. One participant said, “My case planner has done a remarkable job for myself and my daughters.” Another participant said, “I actually found a good friend and listener and enjoyed my services with my case planner.”

To read the full 2021 Prevention Family Experience Survey Report click [here](#).

#