



Foster Care Research & Analysis Findings

Presentation to Child Welfare 20/21 Advisory Board

July 11, 2018

The Current Context: NYC Progress

Few children in Foster Care: At the end of FY 2017 there were **fewer than 9,000 children in care** compared to more than 50,000 children 25 years ago.

Investment in Prevention: Increases in prevention services paralleled a dramatic decline in the number of children in care with **entries into care dropping by 44%** between 2006 and 2016.

Historically low caseloads: ACS lowered foster care provider caseworker caseloads to **10-12 per worker** and reduced the **supervisor to worker ratio to 1 to 4**.

Increases in Adoption and Kinship Guardianship: From FY 2015 to FY 2016, ACS increased the number of children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship (**KinGAP**) by **25%** and **adoption by 5%**. The numbers of children exiting foster care to **KinGAP** has steadily increased from **119 in FY 2013 to 275 in FY 2015 to 378 in FY 2017**.

The Current Context: NYC Progress (continued)

More foster homes recruited: Through May 2018, **27% more foster homes** were recruited compared to FY17.

Increased resources to improve education and employment outcomes for youth: ACS established a new Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives dedicated to improving employment outcomes for youth in the foster care and justice systems, and which has launched multiple new programs.

Scaling of Evidence-Based Services: Foster care agencies are using a nationally recognized screening tool to assess trauma, and proven interventions are being delivered to help children, parents, and families cope with trauma.

Cutting Edge Training: The ACS Workforce Institute has trained more than **5,000 ACS and provider agency staff**.

The Current Context: National Comparison

How does NYC compare to other jurisdictions?

- The number of entries into foster care is low.
- New York has long ranked among the best performers nationally on the Federal CFSR measure for placement stability.
- Permanency performance after 12 months in care ranks poorly (48th to 50th) in comparison to other states.
- The rate maltreatment in care (MIC) is higher than other jurisdictions.

The Current Context: Demographics & Needs

Children & Youth in Foster Care

- 20% of children entering care are babies (consistently the largest single age at entry).
- A lot of pre-school & teens enter foster care too.
- Family group sizes are stable year to year: 71% are single children
- Black children are over-represented in the foster care system – while 23% of the child population, they are more than 53% of the children in foster care.

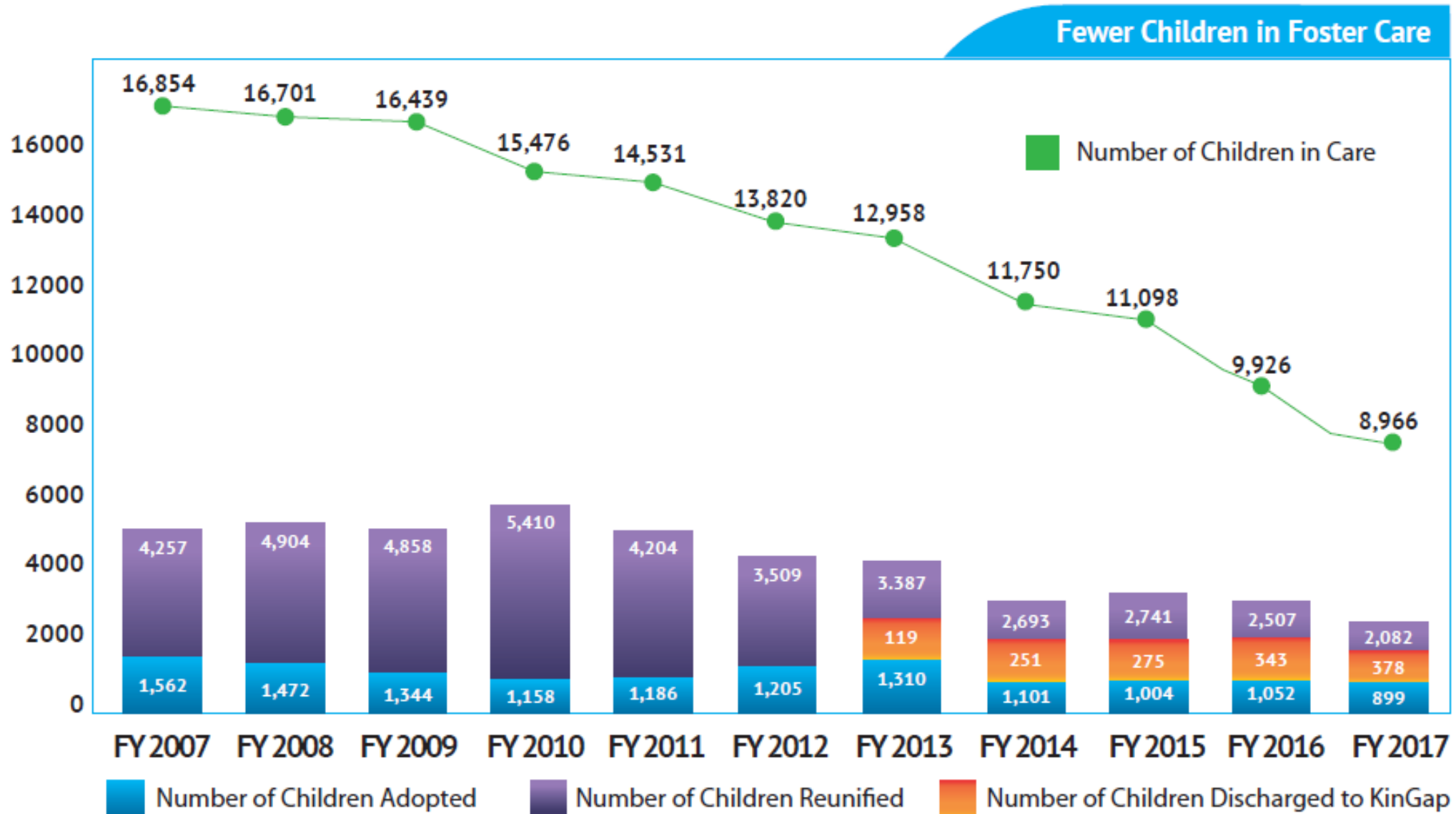
Needs

Research & our own continuing work in New York City underline that families who touch our child welfare system & have a child or children placed have complex, multiple needs. It is the intersection of these multiple needs that can create the crisis resulting in placement. (E.g. Bromfield

et al, 2010).

- **Untreated or under-treated caregiver mental illness impacting parenting**
- **Social isolation**
- **Untreated or under-treated caregiver substance misuse impacting parenting**
- **Severe poverty (>200% below the poverty line) including lack of housing, food & other basic needs**
- **Domestic violence impairing a caregiver's ability to keep children safe**
- **Parent or family trauma**

The Current Context: Declining Census



Findings & Opportunities

- Wrap Around Services & Practice Models to Support Children & Families
- Permanency Through Kinship Care
- Foster Home Capacity & Supports for Foster Parents
- Increase and Improve Family Time to Support Reunification
- Permanency for Older Youth

Wrap Around Services & Practice Models to Support Children & Families

- Children & parents need trauma-informed services and concrete supports to help become healthier and build capacities required to achieve permanency.
- Evidence-based and informed service models provide cohesive, intensive services to families and help to expedite reunification and reduce re-entries.
- Many of these models promote family well-being by addressing trauma and adversity for children and their parents. Parents are supported through therapeutic services and parenting training that promote healthy relationships, minimize family stressors, and create behavior changes that address the reasons for child welfare involvement.
- Parents and youth benefit from peer advocate support models.

Wrap Around Services & Practice Models to Support Children & Families

ACS is implementing evidence-based/informed services and promising practices to address trauma.

Title IV-E Waiver

- Parenting Through Change (PTC)
- Keeping Foster and Kinship Parents Supported (KEEP)
- Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC)
- Partnering for Success (PfS)

Prevention

- Family Functional Therapy-Child Welfare (CW-FFT)
- Multisystem Therapy for Child Abuse & Neglect (MST-CAN)
- Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Trauma Systems (TST)

Permanency Through Kinship Care

Why are Kin Placements Better? According to national research...

Reunification more likely & guardianship becomes an option

Lower rates of behavioral issues

More stability

Improved parent-child & sibling visitation rates

Improved emotional well-being

Lessened trauma



Foster Home Capacity & Supports for Foster Parents

- Our foster home capacity shrank significantly over the last 7 years.
- The Home Away from Home (HAFH) initiative is turning this around. Through May 2018, 27% more foster homes were recruited compared to FY17.
- Foster Parents need ongoing support beyond their contact with case planners.
- Support is critical to maintaining the initial investment in bringing new caregivers on-board, as well as to ensuring caregivers can meet the needs of children and youth placed with them.

Increase and Improve Family Time to Support Reunification

- One in three children go home in one year, but after the first year the process slows down.
- Many children do not reunify with their parents until four years after entering care.
- Research shows that frequent & quality Family Time (aka parent-child visitation) is the best route to frequent, timely & lasting reunification.
- NYC has a strong visitation policy – right in line with best practice.
- ACS made it priority to offer lots of training to the agencies – and this helps inform staff and stakeholders.
- It is clear staff understand how important visitation is to children and families.

Permanency for Older Youth

Teens 14 years and up are 21% of our entries

- Increase rate and timeliness of reunification.
- When reunification isn't possible, facilitate guardianship or open adoption in keeping with federal standards.
- Increase KinGAP and adoption rates and timeliness for all children, but especially for teens who currently have a below-rate level of permanency.
- Reduce the number and rate of youth aging out of care in recognition that youth who age out are more likely to be homeless, more likely to experience detention, jail or prison, more likely to give birth early, more likely to be unemployed, and less likely to complete high school or college.
- Facilitate one on one academic tutoring and long term (over one year) mentoring for teens. Mentoring for teens combined with employment training can be particularly effective.

ACS Youth Experience Survey: Youth reported on home life, school, work, healthcare & made recommendations that will inform every area of practice.

What are we doing well? What are the opportunities for improvement?

- **71** percent of youth living in a foster home (n=959) report they can turn to their caregiver for help.
 - **61** percent report feeling very supported by their foster family, with 27% reporting somewhat supported.
- **92** percent are enrolled in school or a GED program,
 - **45** percent report having an IEP.
 - 51 percent asked for tutoring help and 77% report receiving it.
 - Overall, our young people want more academic supports, help with transportation, emotional support and financial help for school.
- One in four of our young people are working. Overall, youth want more help finding work & support to keep work.

- We learned that youth are turning to their caregivers for help – and we have to help our caregivers so they can meet more of the needs of our youth.
- The majority of youth reported they received what they needed from their agencies – with housing the low at 71% & educational help the high at 88%. Nonetheless, that leaves room for improvement – whether its on dental care where 1 in 8 need help or 1 in 6 who wanted help with permanency.
- A need for more financial support came up in several areas whether it was transportation to school or a job or money for school or money to participate in activities.

Acknowledgements

The Foster Care Gap Analysis was supported by the following individuals:

- Loren Ganoë, Family Permanency Services
- Molly Armstrong, Public Catalyst
- Tim Ross, Action Research
- Kara Mergl Robles, Policy, Planning and Measurement
- Shelby Arenson, Policy, Planning and Measurement

Questions on the Findings--

Let's discuss what you learned in these presentations—

Were there any “ah-ha” moments?

What were some of the strengths you agree with in these findings?

What needs more focus and work?

Wrap Up & Assignment for 7/24/18

Please review the research and planning presentations and come prepared with feedback on the findings. If you could please identify two or three findings your agency would like to prioritize, as well as two or three areas you would like further research findings.

Submit your feedback to Jaime by COB on 7/13/18 → Jaime.Madden@acs.nyc.gov

Thank you for your time and energy today! We will see you next week for more progressive work we can do!

“
the best WAY
TO PREDICT THE FUTURE
IS *to* **CREATE** *it.*
”

— ABRAHAM LINCOLN