

## **Strong Families Intervention for Infants and Toddlers: Attachment Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC) Overview**

### **What is ABC?**

- ◆ ABC is an evidence-based intervention that works with infants and toddlers, along with their primary caregivers, to support healthy brain development in young children who have experienced early adversity. As part of Strong Families NYC, ABC will be provided to infants and toddlers involved in the foster care system, both while in foster care and when the child is returned home or placed with another permanent resource.

### **ABC Goals:**

- ◆ ABC teaches nurturing and responsive caregiving behaviors that are directly linked to addressing the child's adverse experiences. Infants and toddlers in foster care have experienced a lot of stress and often need a special kind of parenting to support their healthy development. ABC will help the caregiver to best meet the unique needs of the child in their care.
- ◆ ABC will reduce the effects of trauma and stress on participating infants and children. This will support the development, behavioral health and well-being of infants and children as well as promote readiness for permanency goals including reunification, adoption, and kinship guardianship (KinGap).
- ◆ ABC services given to birth parents will strengthen parenting skills while promoting healthy parent-child bonds and reducing the likelihood of repeat maltreatment.

### **ABC Components:**

- ◆ ABC is delivered by trained ABC coaches, who will conduct weekly one-hour home visits to help caregivers develop nurturing caregiving behavior and strengthen supportive bonds between the child and caregiver via a 10-week dyadic coaching intervention.
- ◆ During ABC sessions, the ABC coach provides in-the-moment coaching as the primary caregiver interacts with the child, reviews video clips with the parent and talks with the parent about ways to best support the child's development in ways that are responsive and appropriate, given the adversity the child has experienced.
- ◆ Infants who participate have been shown to have higher rates of improved natural regulation of stress, better behavior and emotional regulation, than those children who did not receive ABC. Research shows ABC can have long-term positive effects on child well-being.

### **Who will get ABC?**

- ◆ Infants and toddlers between the ages of six (6) months and 36 months placed in any regular family foster care program and their primary caregivers will be eligible. Primary caregivers include the foster parent while the child is in care and the birth parent or other discharge resource once the child is in their full-time care.
- ◆ In its first year, ABC will be piloted in Brooklyn for infants and children between six and 24 months of age. Over the next three years, it will expand to all boroughs and serve children between six and 36 months of age.

### **Who Provides ABC?**

- ◆ ACS has partnered with Power of Two, to provide ABC as part of Strong Families NYC. Power of Two will recruit, train and supervise ABC coaches with additional oversight of model fidelity provided by the ABC model developer, Mary Dozier at the University of Delaware.
- ◆ Case planners and their supervisors will be trained by Power of Two in child development, trauma and the ABC model, and coached on how to engage families in the service and reinforce ABC goals in work with families.