

2016 Year-End Foster Care Strategic Blueprint Status Report

ACS is aggressively implementing a Foster Care Strategic Blueprint to improve outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. The Blueprint identifies key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results across the foster care system—from family reunification to kinship placement to adoption to supporting older youth. This focus, combined with an unprecedented investment by the de Blasio administration of **\$122m** to strengthen child welfare, is yielding promising results:

Significant 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%**, even as the overall numbers of children in foster care continued to decline;

Declining Foster Care Census

Fewer than 10,000 children are in foster care due to better child protective investigations more preventive services and improvements in foster care case practice;

Historically Low Caseloads

Foster care caseworker caseloads are at an historic low, averaging **10-12** children per worker;

Cutting Edge Training

A new ACS Workforce Institute has trained **more than 5,000** ACS and provider agency staff;

Evidence-Based Services

ACS is now scaling the evidence-based services that were launched in 2015—**proven interventions** to address trauma, mental health and other challenges faced by children and families; *and*

Data Driven Decision Making

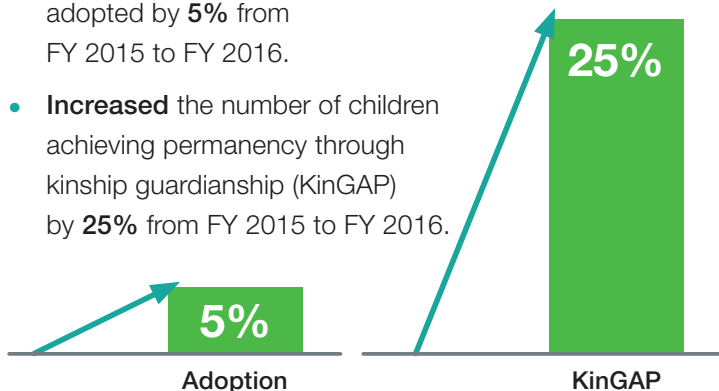
ACS is utilizing data analytics and structured business process improvement approaches to **streamline and improve services** to children and families.

No Time to Wait— Shortening Lengths of Stay in Foster Care

Helping More Children Achieve Permanent Families through Adoption and Kinship Guardianship (KinGAP)

Using multiple strategies that include staff training and streamlining processes, ACS and our foster care agency partners:

- **Increased** the number of children adopted by **5%** from FY 2015 to FY 2016.
- **Increased** the number of children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship (KinGAP) by **25%** from FY 2015 to FY 2016.



ACS launched an “**Open Adoption**” initiative in 2016. Research shows that an ongoing relationship between members of the birth family and adoptive family generally benefits all members of the extended family of adoption. We held trainings and panels with **600 case planners, supervisors, attorneys, and court personnel** to explore open adoption as an option with youth, parents and foster parents.



Reunifying Families

- The majority of children who enter foster care are able to return home to their families. **2,500 children** were reunified in FY2016.
- The proportion of children who re-entered foster care post-reunification decreased from 9.1% in FY2015 to 7.9% in FY2016.
- ACS revamped our training on “**Family Time**” (aka family visiting, the time children spend with their parents while they are in foster care) and provided this training to **more than 1,450 staff at 85 trainings** across the foster care agencies in 2016.
- We have launched a new project to analyze and advance **Family Time** practice that will lead to further improvements in 2017.



2,500 Rapid Permanency Reviews

ACS launched “**Rapid Permanency Reviews**” in partnership with Casey Family Programs to review the cases of **2,500 children** who have been in foster care for more than two years in order to address barriers to permanency. We reviewed more than **600 cases** in 2016, and will complete the remaining reviews in 2017.



ACS implemented new tracking and analysis tools to help foster care agencies **evaluate and manage progress** in foster care cases.

Enhancing Work with Children and Families

The **Strong Families NYC** federal waiver initiative was launched in 2015 and is now being scaled:

- Foster care agencies **screen every child** who enters family foster care to assess their level of exposure to trauma using a nationally recognized screening tool. This assessment helps agencies to identify specific services to meet the unique needs of each child.
- **Attachment and BioBehavioral Catch-Up (ABC)**, a proven intervention for addressing trauma in infants and toddlers, is now available to all children ages 6 months to four years old while they are in foster care and after they go home.
- **Partnering for Success** is a program that expands access to mental health resources and improves the integration of child welfare and mental health services, ACS has trained more than **700 child welfare staff and mental health providers** to implement Partnering for Success and hundreds of children have been referred to the proven intervention Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Plus (CBT+).



Increasing ACS Support to Strengthen Foster Care Agency Case Practice

ACS has an intensive provider oversight, accountability and quality assurance system that includes:

- **Monthly safety checks** of each provider to ensure that every child and family is being visited and seen on the appropriate schedule.
- **Monthly data reports** with key indicators directly related to the goals of the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint.
- **Statistically representative case review audits** performed twice a year on every provider.
- **Quarterly outcomes analyses** of each provider's key targets, along with quarterly monitoring sessions.
- **Annual provider Scorecard** assessing each agency's overall performance.
- **Heightened Monitoring and Corrective Action plans.**



In 2015 and 2016, ACS added significant case consultation and program technical assistance resources for foster care providers:

- **Implemented Collaborative Quality Improvement (CoQI)**, a process in which every provider, regardless of performance, develops and implements an improvement plan that is tracked, monitored and supported by ACS.
- Expanded ACS capacity to provide case consultation support to foster care agencies. We out-stationed **ACS Senior Practice Consultants** at six agencies and will be exploring expansion of this pilot. We also increased the number of ACS staff in the Office of Shared Response (OSR) so that each foster care agency has a dedicated ACS OSR staff person.
- Established the **Office of Strategic Program Support**, which provides technical assistance to help foster care agencies implement best practices, business process improvements and enhanced performance management strategies.

Exploring Innovative Methods of Child Welfare Financing

ACS held a **two day conference** with national experts in child welfare financing to explore new financial models that will better align how services are funded with our goals for those services. ACS is now developing demonstration projects that we will implement in 2017 to test these approaches.

5,000

The ACS Workforce Institute trained **more than 5,000** foster care and preventive services provider agency and ACS child protection staff in how best to engage families and effectively supervise frontline staff.

Improving Foster Care Placements to Enhance the Well-Being of Children

Our **Home Away from Home (HAFH)** initiative is redesigning the way we recruit and support foster parents in order to improve child well-being. In 2016, we:

- Completed the diagnostic phase of HAFH, which included **intensive data and process analysis** and a review of best practices.
- Released an EOI (Expression of Interest) application to providers with **\$2 million in additional funding** to pilot new foster parent recruitment and support strategies. Awards to be made in early 2017.
- Improved customer service for prospective foster/adoptive parents by upgrading our technology for the **ACS WishLine** (212-876-WISH) where New Yorkers interested in fostering or adopting call for information.
- Established a **uniform foster parent application form** across all foster care agencies.
- Re-launched intensive training for foster care agencies on **foster home certification**.



3 New Youth Reception Centers

Expanded specialized placements for older youth with **three** new **Youth Reception Centers** and a new **Host Homes** program of specialized family foster homes for older youth.



Implemented major enhancements at the **ACS Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center** including hiring dozens of new child care, clinical and child development staff, enriching programming, and providing intensive staff training on trauma sensitive interventions.

Improving Education & Employment Outcomes and Pathways to Adulthood for Youth in Care

In 2016, we established a new **ACS Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives** dedicated to improving employment outcomes for youth in the foster care and justice systems .



Partnered with the **City University of New York (CUNY)** to launch major new college program, **Fostering College Success**, providing year-round housing, as well as financial and social service supports for foster youth in college. In 2016, the program served 50 students and will expand to serve 200 students by 2018.



Partnered with **First Star**, a national organization that works with universities and child welfare agencies to create long-term education support programs for high school youth in foster care, and the **CUNY College of Staten Island (CSI)** to establish the **First Star CSI Academy**. This program will provide school-year and summer academic and social-emotional support to help 30 ninth grade foster youth stay on track for high school graduation and prepare for higher education.



Partnered with CUNY and the **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** to launch the **Transition Age Youth (TAY)** program providing additional supports including housing and internships for 150 foster youth in the CUNY ASAP program.



Launched a new **Young Adult Internship Program Plus (YAIP Plus)** with the **NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)** serving youth in the foster care and juvenile justice systems.



Launched a partnership with **The Workplace Center Columbia University**, that is helping foster care agencies improve employment outcomes for foster youth.



Hosted the first **NYC Foster Care Hackathon** which brought together leaders in NYC's child welfare field, the tech sector, government, non-profits, and other agents of change to "hack" some of the NYC foster care system's most pressing challenges with the goal of improving outcomes for children and families.

Our Partnerships

Foster Care Agencies

Abbott House
Cardinal McCloskey
Catholic Guardian Services
Cayuga Centers
Children's Aid Society
Children's Village
Coalition for Hispanic
Families Services
Edwin Gould Services
for Children and Families
Forestdale, Inc.
Good Shepherd Services
Graham Windham
Heartshare St. Vincent's Services
The Jewish Board of Family
and Children's Services

JCCA
Leake & Watts
Little Flower Children
and Family Services
Lutheran Social Services
Martin De Porres
MercyFirst
New Alternatives for Children
The New York Foundling
OHEL Children's Home
and Family Services
SCO Family of Services
Seamen's Society for
Children and Families
Sheltering Arms
St. Dominic's Home
St. John's

National Experts and Foundations:

Action Research Partners
Casey Family Programs
Chapin Hall
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Dave Thomas Foundation
Joseph LeRoy and
Ann C. Warner Fund
National Implementation
Research Network
National Center for Evidence-Based
Practice in Child Welfare, University
of Maryland, School of Social Work
New York Community Trust
New Yorkers for Children
Public Catalyst
Redlich Horwitz Foundation
Tiger Foundation
Pinkerton Foundation