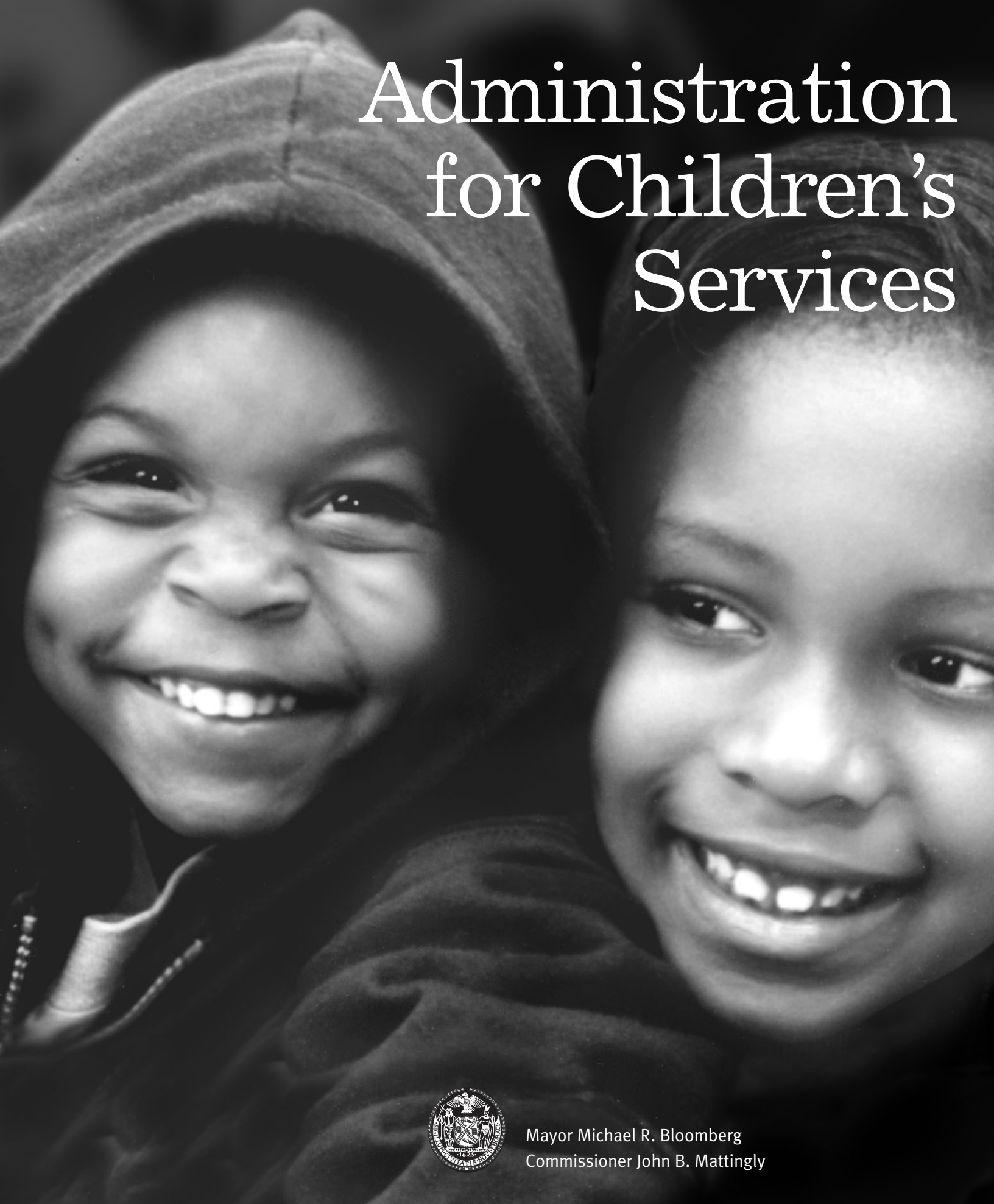




Administration for Children's Services



Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
Commissioner John B. Mattingly

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

To inquire about any ACS service or program, call 311, the City of New York's non-emergency number for government services. A live operator will direct you to the appropriate contact within ACS. One hundred seventy languages are spoken.

To access 311 outside of New York City, call 212/NEW-YORK.

Services for the hearing impaired are available by calling 212/504-4115.

To report child abuse or neglect, call the
**New York State Central Register
Child Abuse and Maltreatment Hotline**

Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
All calls are confidential.

General Public [800/342-3720](tel:8003423720)

Outside NY State [518/474-8740](tel:5184748740)

TDD [800/638-5163](tel:8006385163)



NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS)
150 William Street
New York, NY 10038
www.nyc.gov/acs

NYC Administration for Children's Services

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This booklet is an introduction to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), New York City's children's services agency. It describes the services ACS provides and where families and individuals can go for help or more information.

About ACS

ACS's mission is to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of all New York City children and to strengthen families.

On January 10, 1996, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) was created as the first free-standing agency in New York City's history devoted solely to serving children and their families. ACS's mission is to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the 1.9 million children in New York City and to strengthen families. To fulfill this mission, ACS:

Protects children by investigating more than 50,000 reports of abuse and neglect each year;

Helps families through counseling, referrals to substance abuse programs, parenting classes and other preventive services;

Recruits and trains foster parents and caregivers to provide safe homes for children living in foster care;

Assures that children living in foster care find safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible, either with their birth or adoptive parents;

Supports youth development and permanency for teens and adolescents, as well as a range of programs and services to help young people prepare for adulthood by developing skills and relationships that will last a lifetime;

Provides childcare and Head Start programs for thousands of children throughout the City;

Facilitates neighborhood networks across the City that are designed to engage stakeholders from every community in the child welfare and Children's Services mission.

Our Principles

Thank you to all of our partners throughout our communities for the support they provide to our work on behalf of New York City's children and families. It is Children's Services commitment that we will continue to do our best to ensure that children grow up in safe, permanent homes with strong, loving families. Our work will be guided by the following key principles:

- Our overarching mission at Children's Services is to protect all of New York City's children from abuse and neglect.
- It is crucial that all children touched by Children's Services have strong families that support them and protect them from harm.
- Whenever it can be done safely, children's birth and extended families should be strengthened and supported to provide a strong network of support for children.
- A critical partner for strengthening families and protecting children is the network of community supports available to birth families, relative caregivers, foster families and adoptive families.
- It is not enough for children involved in our system to be safe. All of their needs – developmental, emotional, educational, etc. – deserve and require attention.
- We at Children's Services cannot protect children and strengthen families alone. To succeed in our mission, we need to build strong partnerships with families, communities and other agencies.



Commissioner
John B. Mattingly

- The needs of children and families should drive the support and help they get. These services need to be family-centered, flexible and mobile.
- The special needs of very young children, and teens and adolescents, require particular and targeted attention from the system.
- Child Care and Head Start are integral parts of the children's services system in New York City and will be involved in preventive services, foster care and reunification services.
- We will measure our success by the results we achieve for children, their families and their communities.

I look forward to continuing to work with and learn from staff, supporters, community members, our families, our advocates and all of our stakeholders to achieve our goals. It is an honor for me to serve New York City's children and families.

Child Abuse & Neglect

How You Can Help Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

Studies have shown that neighbors can reduce violence and crime in a community simply by increasing their awareness and working together. Similarly, neighbors can help stop child abuse and neglect.

Here are some things you can do to help keep children and families safe and secure in your neighborhood:

Understand the causes and effects of abuse and neglect. If you know a parent who is under stress, encourage him or her to seek help. To locate a parenting program that can provide guidance and support, call 311.

Learn to **identify** the warning signs of child abuse and neglect (see opposite page). Abuse can include physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Neglect is the failure by a caretaker to provide a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision or emotional support.

To learn more, call 311 to access the ACS Neighborhood Based Services Unit (NBS). You can request a copy of the *Parents' Guide to New York State Child Welfare Laws*. NBS can also send a representative to speak in your community about child abuse and neglect.

Report any known or suspected case of abuse or neglect that you observe. Reporting abuse can protect children from further harm and help a family address its problems. All reports are confidential and may be made anonymously.

How to Report Child Abuse and Neglect

Reports of child abuse and neglect can be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 311 to access the **New York State Central Register (SCR) Child Abuse and Maltreatment Hotline**. The SCR relays calls to ACS to begin an investigation when appropriate. When making a report, you will be asked for the following information:

- the name and address of the child and family members
- the child's age, sex and primary language
- the nature and extent of the child's injuries, if apparent
- the type of abuse or neglect, including evidence of prior history of maltreatment of the child or siblings
- any additional information that may be helpful



If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

To report child abuse or neglect, call the **New York State Central Register Child Abuse and Maltreatment Hotline**

General Public
800/342-3720

Outside NY State
518/474-8740

TDD
800/638-5163

Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

Many people fear that reporting child abuse or neglect may compromise the family unit. The truth, however, is that getting help can protect a child from further harm and assist the family in facing and overcoming its problems. Additionally, not every report results in the removal of a child. Many families receive services to help children remain in the home and parents to get the help they need.

We can all help end child abuse by becoming aware of the signs and reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Some signs of child maltreatment include:

ABUSE

Physical abuse

- Bruises, welts or swelling
- Sprains or fractures
- Burns
- Lacerations or abrasions

Sexual abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Torn, stained or bloody clothing
- Pain or itching in the genital area; bruises or bleeding in the external genital area
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy

NEGLECT

Physical neglect

- Lack of adequate supervision, nutrition or shelter
- Frequently at home with no caretaker
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate dress

Educational neglect

- Infrequent attendance in school

Medical neglect

- Unattended medical or dental needs

Emotional neglect or abuse

- Speech disorders
- Delayed physical development
- Substance abuse

Behavioral signs of abuse or neglect can include

- Discomfort with physical contact
- Low self-esteem
- Behavior extremes, such as appearing overly compliant and passive or very demanding and aggressive
- Lags in physical, emotional or intellectual development

Protection & Prevention

Preventive services are designed to ensure that children remain safe in the home and families get the support they need to be strong.

Protective and Preventive Services

When ACS receives a report of child abuse or neglect from the State's hotline, an ACS caseworker visits the family's home to investigate. During an investigation, the caseworker interviews the child, his or her siblings, the parents, other members of the household, teachers, neighbors, clergy and other significant people involved in the child's life to determine whether there is credible evidence of abuse or neglect. The caseworker then identifies the services necessary to protect the child and help keep the family together.

Neighborhood-based preventive services may be offered or, if there is imminent risk to the child's safety, the caseworker may remove the child from the home and place him or her in foster care.

Preventive services are designed to ensure that children remain safe in the home and to prevent children from entering foster care. These services, provided by ACS and its network of social service organizations, can include professional counseling, parenting skills training, substance abuse treatment, homemaking services or housing assistance, to name a few.

An ACS caseworker may recommend preventive services as a result of a child protective investigation, but many community organizations offer these services directly to families upon request.

General Preventive Services include a wide range of professional counseling programs for families with children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Parenting Skills Programs provide training for birth parents and foster parents, as well as educational programs for children in foster care. To locate a program, call 311 and inquire about the Prevention Information and Parent Helpline.

Family Rehabilitation Programs serve families for whom parental substance abuse is a problem. ACS makes these services available for parents involved in a child protective case. Parents not involved with ACS who are seeking drug or alcohol rehabilitation can apply directly to a community-based program for services.

Housing Subsidies are rental assistance payments that are designed to help prevent foster care placement or accelerate the return of children to their families who were placed in care due to inadequate housing or homelessness. The subsidies are available to parents with children in foster care and parents with children at risk of being placed in care.

Family Preservation Program (FPP) is for high-risk families who are part of a child protective case. FPP provides intensive, at-home crisis intervention and family preservation services through trained caseworkers/mentors who work with only two families at a time. Caseworkers/mentors provide extra support, parenting advice,

tutoring for children and help with job and education searches. Mentors remain with their families for up to 10 months, typically involving 20 hours per week, although schedules are flexible. To learn more about becoming a mentor to a family through FPP, please see the Volunteering section of this booklet on page 19.

Family Service Units help monitor families' progress, offer specialized counseling and help coordinate other preventive services families may be receiving. This type of service is available through the ACS field offices when a Family Court judge has recommended it.

Teen Age Services Act Program (TASA) provides services to pregnant or parenting adolescents under age 20 who are receiving public assistance. TASA operates in all five boroughs.

Family Violence Prevention Project offers preventive programs that provide special training and ongoing help for families in which adult domestic violence is occurring. The primary focus is on safety for all family members and services for the entire family.

Family Home Care Services provide childcare, home management and personal care services to families who need help providing a safe, nurturing environment for their children. Through training and support, home care service providers help families to manage their households independently.



- Parenting Skills
- Family Rehabilitation Program
- Housing Subsidies
- Family Preservation Program (FPP)
- Family Service Units
- The TASA Program
- Family Violence Prevention Project
- Family Home Care

When children enter foster care, ACS works to place them in the best family setting possible.

Types of Foster Care

If it is determined after preventive services have been provided—or during a child abuse investigation—that a child cannot remain safely in his or her home, he or she will be placed in foster care. ACS and its network of nonprofit agencies provide foster care services to children throughout the City (see page 22 for a list of ACS contract agencies). During a child’s stay in foster care, ACS and caseworkers work with birth families and foster families to create a service plan for the child that leads to permanency as quickly as possible. Children enter foster care in one of three ways:

Order of the Family Court

When evidence shows that child abuse and neglect has occurred and the child cannot remain safely at home, ACS brings the case to the Family Court. After hearing evidence, the Family Court judge decides whether or not the child should be placed in foster care.

Parents’ Request

Parents may voluntarily request the placement of a child in foster care. However, ACS usually provides preventive services for parents before accepting voluntary placements.

ACS encourages parents considering a voluntary placement to request assistance with their children by connecting to services.

Parents may also bring a PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) petition before the Family Court if a child needs more supervision than the parents feel they are able to provide. Again, prior to bringing a PINS petition, ACS will engage families in preventive services in an effort to divert a PINS placement through ACS’s Family Assessment Program (FAP). Often, with appropriate services this diversion can be achieved.

The program’s goal is to connect families to community-based preventive services as an alternative to seeking intervention through out-of-home placements. Experienced social workers meet with parents and their children to help the family understand services available to them. They also help families make informed decisions that may help keep the family safe and intact. Immediate intervention is offered to de-escalate volatile situations and a short assessment of the family dynamic is conducted. Recommendations for next steps and referrals to appropriate services are then given to the family.



Emergency Placement

If a child's life or health is in imminent danger, an out-of-home placement may be necessary. ACS must obtain a Family Court order approving the placement.

When children come into foster care, ACS works to place them in the most family-like setting possible. Whenever possible, ACS tries to place children with relatives, keep siblings together and place children in homes in their own neighborhoods.

Types of foster care include kinship foster homes where a certified relative cares for the child or sibling group and fos-

ter boarding homes where a recruited, certified foster parent cares for the child or siblings. All foster parents receive intensive training as well as subsidies to help care for the children.

In addition, ACS operates group care facilities. Group homes are residences in which several older (ages 12 and up) youth live under the care of trained staff. Diagnostic Reception Centers (DRC) and Residential Treatment Centers (RTC) assess and serve children and young adults with special needs.

Parent Recruitment



311

• **ACS Parent
Recruitment Hotline**

• **Out of State
Toll Free Number*
877/676-WISH
www.nyc.gov/acs**

How to Become a Foster Parent

Each year, thousands of children from varied backgrounds, ranging in age from infants to teenagers, enter foster care. Foster parents provide these children with safe and nurturing temporary homes. Foster parents ensure that their foster children receive not only the basics—food, a bed, clothes and medical attention—but also plenty of love and care during a very difficult time in their lives. They also often work with parents of children living in foster care to help speed the reunification process. To learn more about becoming a foster parent, call 311 or log on to www.nyc.gov/acs.

Adoption

Foster care should be a temporary intervention; it does not offer children the necessary stability of a permanent family. The primary goal of a foster care caseworker is to make sure children return to their homes as quickly as possible—but only if those homes are safe. If it is determined that a child cannot return home safely, the best means to achieve permanence is through adoption.

In recent years, ACS has completed adoptions for an average of 3,000 children annually. Adoption staff and contract agencies recruit potential adoptive parents, give orientations, evaluate the suitability of pre-adoptive homes and coordinate the adoption process from initial planning to the adoption finalization court proceedings.

How to Become an Adoptive Parent

If you are interested in becoming an adoptive parent, call the ACS Parent Recruitment Hotline at 212/676-WISH for help and guidance. In addition, Hotline staff can tell you the nearest location to review the *New York City Family Album*, which contains the biographies and color photographs of the many children waiting for adoptive parents, and can also be found online at www.nyc.gov/adopt in the *Meet Our Kids* section.

*Toll free number provided courtesy of Wendy's restaurants in the Tri-state area.

Child Care

ACS Child Care administers the largest publicly funded childcare system in the country, serving more than 60,000 infants, toddlers and preschool age children in the City of New York.

Children are cared for in group childcare centers, family childcare homes or informal childcare homes. Eligibility for ACS child care is based on social and financial considerations. To find out more about ACS Child Care call 311.



Head Start

ACS administers Head Start programs throughout New York City. This federally funded program serves nearly 20,000 preschool age children (ages 3 to 5) from low income families.

The goal of Head Start is to improve the social competence, learning skills, health and nutrition of children enrolled in the program so they begin school with a solid early childhood education foundation on which to build. Head Start also focuses on family support and assisting parents toward greater self-sufficiency. Children are eligible to participate in Head Start if they are from low income families or if their families are eligible for public assistance. To find out more about Head Start call 311.



311

- Child Care and Head Start

Youth Development



311

- Youth Development Programs
- The G.A.T.E. Program
- ACS Employment Initiatives

Youth Development

To thrive and transition into healthy, productive and self-sufficient adulthood, an adolescent needs education, basic life skills, a work ethic and, perhaps most importantly, strong and lasting connections with family and caring adults. ACS strives to provide these supports through youth development services. The Office of Youth Development (OYD) focuses on youth age 14 and older living in foster care.

The G.A.T.E. Program*

Preparing for and financing college is a difficult process for most students—for young people in foster care, it is often overwhelming. The G.A.T.E. (Gaining Access Through Education) Program, which includes the pre-college and college program, is designed to increase the number of youth in foster care who successfully complete high school and/or postsecondary education. The G.A.T.E. Program provides teens with educational enrichment courses, college counseling, SAT preparation courses and college visits. An ACS OYD College Counselor also provides ongoing help with education issues, finances and career planning.

Employment Initiatives

Every year, hundreds of young people age 18 and older in New York City emancipate from foster care. For many of them, a first job can put them on track for a productive adult life. ACS created the Employment Initiatives Unit to assist NYC youth living in foster care in preparing for their first work experiences. The unit serves as a clearinghouse for resources and referrals for employment readiness, vocational training and job placement. ACS's goal is for all youth to have the tools and skills necessary to develop self-sufficiency and experience job stability when they leave foster care.

*These programs are made possible through a partnership between ACS and New Yorkers For Children (see page 19).

Youth Leadership

Project D.E.E.P.

To face the challenges of adolescence and transition smoothly into adulthood, all young adults need supportive peer networks, leadership skills and self-confidence. Project D.E.E.P. (Development, Education, Empowerment, Practice) offers youth in foster care between the ages of 14 and 21 the opportunity to develop these critical assets. Office of Youth Development staff work with Project D.E.E.P. participants to foster youth participation, give youth the chance to feel a sense of belonging, provide youth a forum in which to discuss how they receive ACS services and offer the opportunity to build skills beyond the academic. Project D.E.E.P. also strives to ensure that youth receive accurate and valuable information on key life issues as well as create connections with caring adults.

P.A.S.S.

The Office of Youth Development supports programs that deliver effective group training in 14 crucial areas to youth between the ages of 14 and 21 living in foster care. P.A.S.S. (Preparation for Adulthood Skills and Services) trainings are provided so that youth develop their skills and knowledge in valuable areas such as money management, health and community resources.



311

- Youth Leadership Programs
- Project D.E.E.P.
- P.A.S.S.

Parental Rights

It is important to remember that you are still the most important person in your child's life, even if your child is living in foster care. That's why you should:

- Work to address the problems which led to your child's placement into foster care.
- Comply with Family Court orders and agency recommendations.
- Keep records of all information about your case.

What Are My Rights?

It is important that you know and understand your rights and responsibilities as a parent if your child is in foster care. As a parent of a child in foster care, you have the right to:

- Be informed about the reasons for your child's placement into foster care.
- Be informed about which foster care agency is handling your child's case.
- Request that your child be placed with a member of your family, together with siblings, and/or in a setting that is reflective of and responsive to your child's culture, religion and background.
- Be informed of what needs to happen so your child can return home.
- Receive prompt notification of and attend any Family Court hearings about your child or about your parental rights (except if the Court acts in an emergency).
- Appear in Family Court. If you are incarcerated, you should be aware of your right to be "produced" for all Court hearings.
- Consult with a lawyer at any time and be represented by a lawyer in any Court action concerning your child or affecting your parental rights.
- Quickly receive services that support the goal to return your child home.
- Attend all service plan reviews – meetings held every six months to discuss your case and decide the best plan for you and your child – and be immediately consulted whenever a change in the service plan for you and your child is being considered.
- Apply for housing subsidies and other assistance to obtain housing if your child has been in foster care for at least 30 days and if lack of adequate housing is the primary factor preventing the return of your child.
- Receive regular updates from your caseworker on your child's health, mental health, development, behavior and progress in school.
- Visit your child and request transportation if you are unable to pay for transportation once an appropriate visitation schedule is determined.
- Request that your children visit each other if they are placed in separate homes.
- Have your complaints listened to and

responded to by either ACS or the foster care agency where your child is placed. You also have the right to contact the ACS Parents' and Children's Rights Unit to resolve a problem with your case.

- File a complaint against your lawyer if you believe she or he has violated the code of professional responsibility.
- Receive notification as soon as possible of any serious medical emergency, and/or if your child receives any medical treatment.
- Call the New York State Central Register (SCR) Child Abuse and Maltreatment Hotline at 800/342-3720 if you suspect your child is being abused or neglected in a foster home. This right must not be abused – false reporting is a crime.
- Request referrals to receive financial help and/or clothing and furniture for your child upon your child's return home.

Where Can I Go for Help?

Your Agency Caseworker Whenever you have a problem with your case or a complaint, the best person to talk with is your agency caseworker. An open discussion will often settle the matter. If you and your caseworker cannot solve the problem, ask to speak to your caseworker's supervisor.

Your Lawyer You should also speak with your lawyer regularly, and keep her or him informed about the services you are receiving and any concerns you have. Court-appointed lawyers are often very busy, so

be persistent in contacting them and do not be discouraged if they are hard to reach.

The Parents' and Children's Rights Unit

If you are unable to resolve problems with ACS or the foster care agency caring for your child, you should contact the Parents' and Children's Rights Unit at ACS (part of the Office of Advocacy). Examples of reasons to contact this office include:

- You are not receiving your scheduled visits with your child.
- The agency is not properly planning with you for the return of your child.
- ACS or your agency is not providing you with information about your child.
- The Parents' and Children's Rights Unit acts as an impartial body to resolve complaints made by parents, foster parents and children. A worker will hear your complaint and then contact the appropriate agency or ACS program area. Once the Unit worker has collected all the information, he or she will discuss the findings with you and work to resolve the problem.
- Any parent, child, foster parent or other concerned person involved with ACS who needs assistance resolving an issue involving a child welfare case may contact the ACS Office of Advocacy Parents' and Children's Rights Unit by calling 311. A message may be left at this number at all other times.



311

• **Legal Services**

Legal Services

Legal Services staff provides legal representation and advice to ACS and works with all parts of the agency to ensure high-quality services. More than 180 Children's Services attorneys appear in New York City's five borough Family Courts on more than 100,000 proceedings involving children each year. For example, the law requires that when ACS believes a child should be removed from his or her home, the facts of the child's case must be presented to a Family Court judge. At this initial appearance, an ACS attorney presents evidence supporting ACS's position and the Court appoints a law guardian to represent the child, as well as a lawyer for the parents if they cannot afford one. Prior to such court appearances, which often initiate child protective proceedings, the ACS attorney and caseworker discuss the facts of the case and strategize together about safe alternatives to removal.

ACS attorneys also collaborate with contract agency caseworkers and ACS case managers to determine the appropriate permanency planning goal for each child in ACS custody. Once they have agreed on a goal, the ACS attorney presents the plan to the Family Court judge. ACS presents permanency plans every six months for Court review.

ACS legal staff also works with children and families during the adoption process, reviews and proposes child welfare legislation and ensures that ACS complies with federal, State and City laws.

Community Outreach

The mission of the Office of Community Affairs (OCA) is to protect and enhance the lives of New York City's children and families and to reduce the risk of out-of-home placements. This task requires the participation of every New Yorker. OCA comprises several units that are solely dedicated to making alliances and coordinating efforts with other organizations that work to strengthen families and communities.

The **Neighborhood Based Services (NBS) Unit** manages 25 Neighborhood Networks throughout the five boroughs. These networks are designed to promote support for children and families in their communities. NBS staff collaborates with community-based organizations including community boards, houses of worship, service providers, schools and all other stakeholders in the development of strategies to increase awareness about child abuse prevention, reporting child abuse allegations, as well as foster and adoptive services. If you are interested in having an ACS representative speak in your community or group, call 311 and ask for the ACS Neighborhood Based Services Unit.

The **Office of Housing Policy and Development (HPAD)** works to maximize the availability and effective utilization of housing resources for children and families in ACS's care. To this end, HPAD administers ACS-related housing programs, operates the Housing Eligibility Unit, develops transitional and permanent supportive housing for current and former

ACS clients, provides training and technical assistance on accessing rent subsidy programs and developing supportive housing, and works with private landlords and realtors to increase the availability of appropriate housing units for families and Independent Living youth. HPAD also conducts research focusing on the housing needs of individuals and families with foster care histories.

The **Office of Advocacy** provides information to the public about child welfare policies and procedures in an effort to ensure that parents, foster parents and youth are aware of their rights and responsibilities and obtain their due process. Through its interaction with clients, the Office of Advocacy provides feedback that can help ACS and its voluntary agencies improve services to children and families.

Communication and Government Affairs

The **Office of Intergovernmental Affairs** provides guidance on child welfare legislation and works with elected officials on child welfare policy issues, programs and constituent matters.

The **Office of Interagency Affairs** works with other City agencies involved in children's welfare including the Human Resources Administration, Board of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Probation.



311

- **Neighborhood Based Services Unit**
- **Office of Housing Policy and Development**
- **Office of Advocacy**
- **Office of Intergovernmental Affairs**
- **Office of Interagency Affairs**

Working at ACS

Areas of work at ACS include but are not limited to child protection, child welfare, child care and Head Start, foster care, adoption, community relations and educational outreach.

Candidates for child specialist positions must have completed a bachelor's degree with 24 credits in social work or a related field, pass an English language proficiency exam and take the appropriate civil service exam.

For information about civil service exam dates and test status, call 311 to access the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

As part of its continuing effort to enhance the professional qualifications of its workforce, each year ACS offers qualified caseworkers full Master of Social Work (MSW) scholarships at one of the seven metropolitan-area schools of social work.

In addition, ACS sponsors a Summer Internship Program for qualified students of social work and law who are interested in child welfare.

Education & Training at ACS

The **James Satterwhite Training Academy**, established in 1984 and located in Jamaica, Queens, trains all new caseworkers, offers continuing education for ACS supervisors and staff and provides on-site training through its video training series. The Academy also administers the MSW Scholarship Program.

Becoming a Volunteer

Your abilities and life experience may be of great help to a child or family in a time of need. ACS is committed to creating and sustaining meaningful and potentially long-lasting relationships between its Children's Services community partners and youth living in foster care and at-risk families.

Mentor

At an age when most teenagers are learning how to manage their own affairs and take responsibility for their futures, young people in foster care may be grieving for lost family, adjusting to different schools or communities or coping with emotional scars. For young people who are living through particularly challenging times, a stable adult in their lives can be invaluable.

Mentors can provide friendship, support and act as role models to help young adults take charge of their own lives, learn about future options, make important decisions, and become successfully integrated into the community. **The Central Mentoring Office** seeks to:

- Aid existing mentoring programs with recruitment and training;
- Articulate "best practice" for mentoring programs serving youth in foster care;
- Create additional mentoring programs for youth in high-need areas; and
- Enhance New York City residents' understanding of the value and rewards of mentoring.

For those who are interested in mentoring as a way of making a difference in the lives of youth in foster care, ACS offers:

- **Mentor Referral Service** – The Central Mentoring Office can help you find a mentoring opportunity that matches your interests and availability.
- **ACS Family Preservation Program** – Matches mentors who are 18 years or older with individual families that have been involved with Children's Services. For more information, see page 7.

New Yorkers For Children



New Yorkers For Children (NYFC) is a not-for-profit organization created to support ACS's efforts to improve the lives of children and families known to ACS. With a particular focus on adolescents who are in foster care, NYFC funds a variety of programs and initiatives that support ACS's goal of protecting children and strengthening families. The group holds an annual fall gala, numerous special fundraisers throughout the year and earmarks funding specifically for The G.A.T.E. and other programs.

You can support ACS youth and families through NYFC by contributing a financial gift, providing job training or placement opportunities for youth, donating tickets to cultural events or making an in-kind donation.

To learn more about how to support children and families who are engaged with ACS through NYFC, call 311 or log on to www.newyorkersforchildren.org.



311

- **The Central Mentoring Office**
- **New Yorkers For Children**

NYFC is wholly dependent upon contributions which are fully tax-deductible to the extent permissible by law.

Child Welfare History

ACS builds upon New York City's historical commitment to children and families and works to meet their changing needs.

Child welfare programs in New York City date back to 1832, when the first laws governing the treatment of children were passed. The modern day children's services system began to take shape over the last three decades. However, most government child protective agencies in the United States, first created in the late 1960s and 1970s, were not designed to handle the growing number and complexity of cases of recent years. Today's challenges require innovative solutions by child welfare professionals. The Administration for Children's Services builds upon New York City's historical commitment to children and families and works to meet their changing needs.

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--|
| 1800s | 1832 | Almshouse Department established when laws regulating the treatment of children are passed. |
| | 1895 | Almshouse Department abolished and replaced by the Department of Public Charities and Correction. The City begins to make payments to private charitable institutions, known as contract agencies, to care directly for destitute and abused children. |
| 1900s | 1940 | Bureau of Child Welfare (BCW) created as part of the Department of Welfare. |
| | 1949 | Division of Foster Home Care established under BCW as the City begins providing its own foster care services directly. |
| | 1962 | Division of Homefinding created within BCW to locate suitable foster homes and investigative applicants. |
| | 1964 | First Child Protection Unit established, eventually evolving into five borough offices. |
| | 1966 | Human Resources Administration (HRA), a social services superagency, is created, incorporating BCW. |
| | 1974 | BCW becomes Special Services for Children (SSC), continuing as a division of HRA. |
| | 1989 | SSC renamed Child Welfare Administration (CWA), continuing as a division of HRA. |
| | 1996 | CWA abolished. Administration for Children's Services (ACS) created by Executive Order as a stand-alone agency. |
| 2000s | 2000 | ACS dedicates the Children's Center, the first building in New York City's history specifically designed for children entering foster care. |
| | 2001 | In November, New York City votes to make ACS a permanent agency, making it the first free-standing, City-chartered agency in the City's history solely devoted to children and families. Thanks to an emphasis on neighborhood-based preventive services, ACS reaches a crucial milestone when the number of children receiving preventive services surpasses the number of children entering foster care. |
| | 2004 | Children's Services Commissioner John B. Mattingly appointed by New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. Commissioner Mattingly comes to ACS with more than 30 years experience working with children and families. |

Internet Resources

To Learn More

For the latest news on Children's Services, visit the ACS website at <http://www.nyc.gov/acs>. The site includes information on recent ACS initiatives, statistics, the *New York City Family Album* and links to other important resources.

American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law

<http://www.abanet.org/child>

American Bar Association Juvenile Justice Center

<http://www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus>

Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://www.aecf.org>

Child Abuse Prevention Network

<http://child-abuse.com>

Children's Defense Fund

<http://www.childrensdefense.org>

Child Welfare League of America

<http://www.cwla.org>

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

<http://www.davethomasfoundationforadoption.org>

Freddie Mac Foundation

<http://www.freddiemacfoundation.org>

National Adoption Information Clearinghouse

<http://naic.acf.hhs.gov>

National Adoption Center

<http://www.adopt.org>

National Child Care Information Center

<http://www.nccic.org>

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information

<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

New York State Department of Family Assistance

Office of Children and Family Services

<http://www.ocfs.ny.us>

New York State Family Court

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/fcindex.htm>

New Yorkers for Children

<http://www.newyorkersforchildren.org>

Prevent Child Abuse America

<http://www.preventchildabuse.org>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Service

Administration for Children and Families

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

<http://www.wkkf.org>

ACS Contract Agencies

*The following social service agencies contract with ACS to provide preventive, foster care and adoption services to children and families.**

Abbott House
Alianza Dominicana
Angel Guardian Children and Families Services
Arab-American Family Support Center
Association to Benefit Children
Astor Home for Children
Berkshire Farm Center for Children
and Services for Youth
Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC
Boys and Girls Harbor
Bronx Lebanon Hospital
Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service
Builders for the Family and Youth
Cardinal McCloskey Children and Family Services
Catholic Guardian Society of New York
Catholic Home Bureau
Child Development Support Corporation
Children's Aid Society
Children's Village
Chinatown YMCA
Chinese-American Planning Council
Church Avenue Merchant Block
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Community Counseling and Mediation
Community Mediation Services
Concord Family Services
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
Day Care Council of New York
Dominican Sisters Family Health Services
Dominican Women's Development Center
The Door
East Harlem Council for Community Improvement
Edwin Gould Services
Episcopal Social Services
Family Consultation Services
Family Support Systems
Flatbush Haitian Center
Forestdale
Good Shepherd Services
Graham Windham
Green Chimneys
HANAC Inc.
Harlem Children's Zone
Harlem-Dowling West Side Center
for Children and Family Services

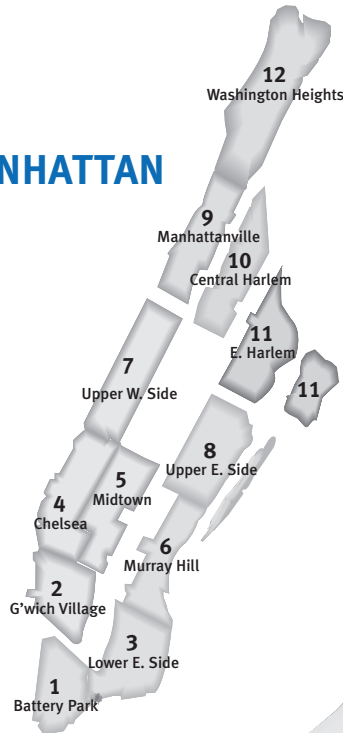
Heartshare Human Services of New York
Highbridge Community Life Center
Inwood House
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services
Jewish Child Care Association
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center
Lakeside Family and Children's Services
Leake & Watts Services
Little Flower Children's Services of New York
Little Sister of Assumption Family Health Service
Lower East Side Family Union
Lutheran Social Services of Metropolitan New York
MercyFirst
Neighborhood Youth and Family Services
New Alternatives for Children
New World Communities
New York City Mission Society
New York Foundling
New York Urban League
Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership
Northside Center for Child Development
Ohel Children's Home and Family Services
Partnership with Children
Pathways for Youth
Protestant Board of Guardians
Puerto Rican Family Institute
Queens Child Guidance Center
Rosalie Hall
Safe Space (Center for Children and Families)
Salvation Army Social Services for Children
SCAN – New York
SCO Family of Services
Seaman's Society for Children and Families
Sesame Flyers International
Southern Queens Park Association
St. Barnabus
St. Cabrini Home
St. Dominic's Home
St. John's Residence and School for Boys
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center
St. Vincent's Services
Staten Island Mental Health Society
Steinway Children and Families
The Valley
Visiting Nurse Service of New York
Women's Prison Association and Home

**List as of July 2005.*

NYC Community Districts

New York City Community Districts

MANHATTAN



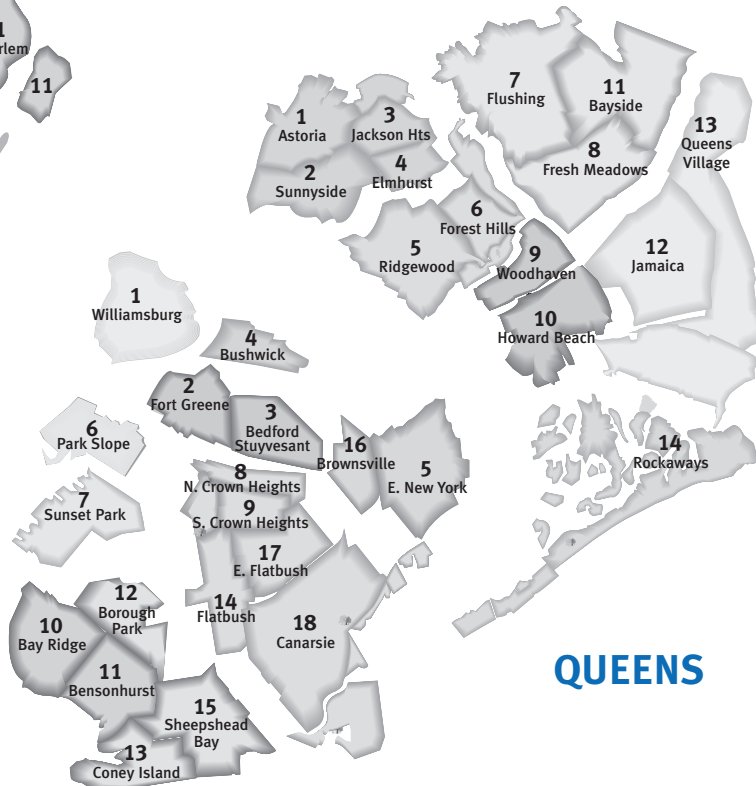
STATEN ISLAND



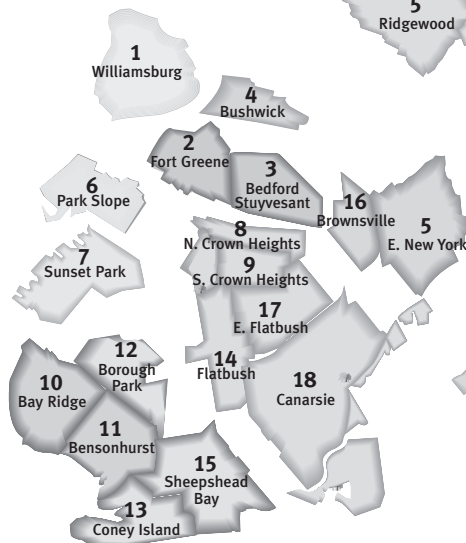
BRONX



QUEENS



BROOKLYN



As part of its goal to make all of its services neighborhood-based, ACS has established Neighborhood Networks representing all of the City's 59 community districts. Families and children have a range of services available in their communities, including child care, parenting skills training, counseling, substance abuse programs, anger management courses and education and recreation programs.

nyc
ACS
Protecting Children
Strengthening Families

