



**Foster Care  
Progress  
Report**  
*Fiscal Year 2025*

## Letter from the Commissioner

The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) is pleased to share the Fiscal Year 2025 Foster Care Progress Report in accordance with Local Law 143/2016. In FY25, meaningful achievements have been made across our foster care continuum. Our collective efforts remained centered on strengthening supports for families, expanding resources and opportunities for youth, and promoting the overall well-being of children and families we serve.

As part of our steadfast focus on family well-being, we listened and worked to amplify the voices of families and youth to guide improvements in service coordination, responsiveness, and trauma-informed care. From Parent Advocates to the Youth Leadership Council, the Administration for Children's Services values and continues to integrate the expertise of those with lived experiences to improve the foster care system.

Through intentional collaboration with our foster care providers, families, and youth, we also have expanded critical supports and resources, ensuring greater access to education, behavioral health services, permanency planning, and life-skills development. These efforts have empowered families and young people to build resilience, pursue their goals, and transition out of the foster care system with needed supports and increased stability.

These achievements reflect the dedication, compassion, and collaboration of staff, caregivers, providers, and community partners. Together, we are building a foster care continuum that is more supportive, responsive, and focused on long-term well-being.

Thank you to all for the continued commitment to children, youth, and families. We look forward to building on this progress and continuing our shared work to ensure every family has the support they need to thrive.

Sincerely,



Jess Dannhauser  
ACS Commissioner

## OVERVIEW

# Four Core Collective Priorities

FY25 foster care practice continued to be guided by the four Core Collective Priorities (outlined below). These priorities align with ACS' values and promote safety, permanency, and improved well-being for New York City children, youth and families. The FY25 progress report highlights successes, identifies opportunities for improvements, and details new and continued commitments for lifting the voices of youth and parents and providing more robust and comprehensive services to meet their needs and strengthen the system's capacity to improve child and family well-being.

LINK

For additional information on FY24-FY28 ACS Foster Care Five-Year Plan and FY24 progress update

### 1 Meet the Present Need

- Create capacity to accept and care for children and youth with complex needs entering care.
- Work with foster care agencies to significantly revamp recruitment and training for foster parents and ensure foster parents have the support they need to increase the network of high-quality, certified foster families.
- Focus on identifying and supporting kinship parents of children and youth.
- Leverage resources, funding, and other supports to invest in staff of foster care programs.

### 2 Focus on Family

- Provide respectful and responsive case practice leading to timely permanency
- Proactively plan and assess for the safe reunification of children.
- Consistently involve youth in permanency planning and service plan development.
- Effectively engage parents in the case planning process through the use of parent advocates.
- Expand access to mental health and supportive services for children, parents and families.
- Intentionally place children with kin, which can increase the use of KinGAP (kinship guardianship) as a permanency option if reunification is not possible.
- Develop and streamline business processes on Adoption and KinGAP.

# Four Core Collective Priorities

## 3 Create Safety and Stability

- Provide safe, stable placements for children and youth in foster care.
- Implement robust foster parent support, recruitment, and certification strategies.
- Offer training for foster parents and staff.
- Support children and youth with higher needs in both family-based and residential programs.
- Provide guidance and technical assistance around case planning best practices and policy adherence.
- Closely monitor and review service provision to ensure safety and stability.

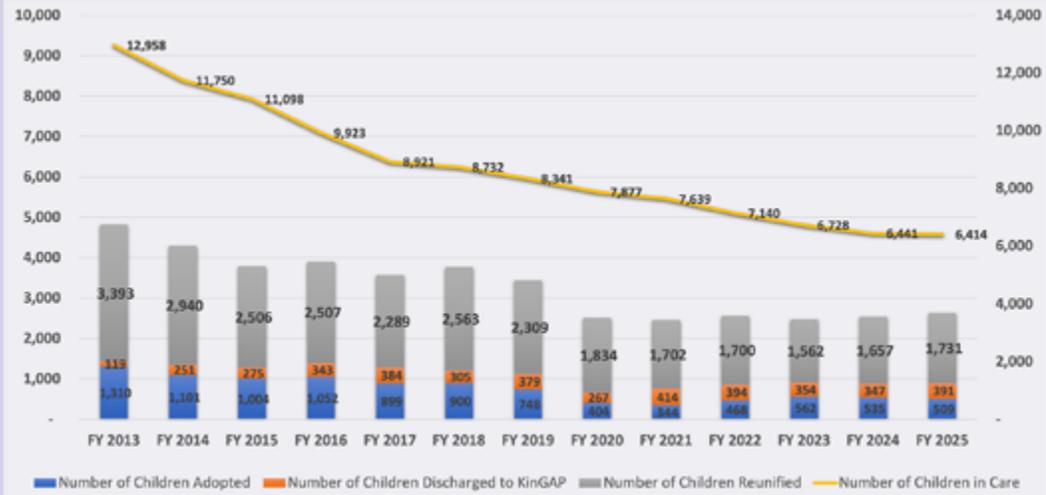
## 4 Ensure Success and Improve Well-Being

- Enhance partnerships with the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and Department of Youth and Community Development to expand academic enrichment and supports for children and youth in foster care.
- Leverage Fair Futures to provide dedicated coaches; tutors; and education, employment, and housing specialists for youth in foster care or to those who exited between the ages of 11 to 26.
- Promote housing options and share information on housing resources for youth and families.
- Scale college bound and support programs for youth in foster care and continue to develop initiatives to enhance youth readiness for the world of work.
- Implement workforce development initiatives and link youth in foster care to viable career opportunities.

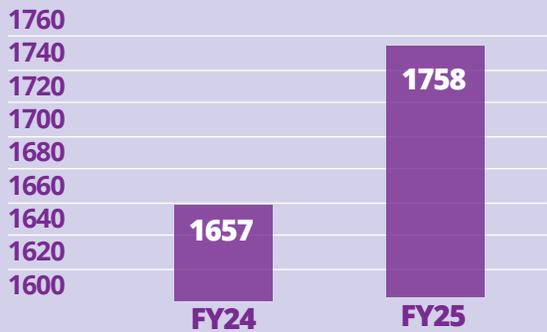
# Highlights

## Foster Care Census Reduction and Permanency Achievements

**FY13-FY25**  
Number of children in foster care and number of children who achieve permanency



### Youth Achieving Permanency

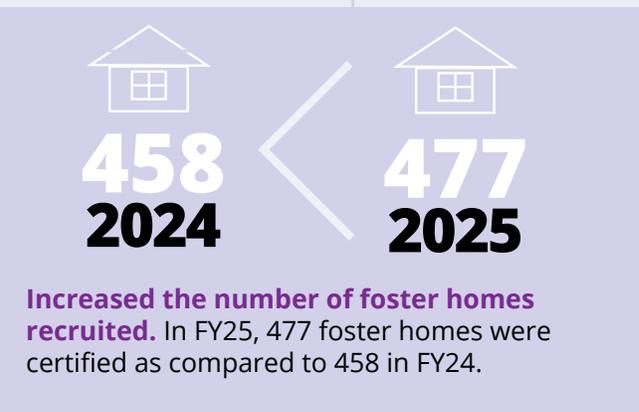


**Increased the number of children and youth achieving permanency.** In FY 2025, 1758 youth were reunified compared to 1657 in FY24. There were 522 children adopted in FY25 compared to 535 in FY24. The number of children who achieved permanency through kinship guardianship (KinGAP) was 396 in FY25 compared to 347 in FY24.

### Children in Foster Care

**Maintained low number of children in foster care.** The average number of New York City children in foster care in FY25 reached a low of 6414, dropping from 6,441 in FY24, well below historic averages.

### Foster Homes Recruited



**Increased the number of foster homes recruited.** In FY25, 477 foster homes were certified as compared to 458 in FY24.

# Highlights

## Residential Care Lowered



**In the residential care continuum, New York City continues to limit use of residential care for children in foster care.** The number of youth in residential care continued to remain low, 552 in FY25, as compared to 554 in FY23.

## Family Based Settings

**Continued to place more children in a family-based setting. Consistent with FY24, in FY25, 44 % of children were placed with kin and 47% of children were placed in a non-kin foster home.**

## Expanded Services



**Expanded education and employment services for children and youth through Fair Futures coaches and tutors, virtual internships, and multiple other initiatives. In FY25, 4,349 youth were served through the Fair Futures Program up from 4,115 in FY24.**

### Connected youth to housing supports.

Collaborated with Anthos Homes to support over 150 youth to access housing. As part of aftercare services and supports, Anthos | Home conducts regular check-ins and offers ongoing assistance with voucher recertification, community resource connections, and emergency financial help when needed, ensuring long-term housing stability.

**Support young people in foster care to attend college.** Provided tuition assistance, housing support, academic advisement and a stipend through the ACS's College Choice Program. As of September 2025, over 450 students were enrolled.

### Increased opportunities to expand parent voice in foster care planning

through the implementation of the Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) program and collaboration with the ACS Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PEP program is a core component of the Enhanced Family Foster Care (EFFC) model and the ACS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) partners with FPS to inform foster care related initiatives and case practice approaches.

FPS is aiming to increase the number of parent advocates embedded in foster care systemwide, strengthen case practice to improve parent participation in service planning, and ensure parent voice is not only heard, but used to inform policies and protocols.

## Prevention



After a series of fiscal years where there was a decline in maltreatment in care rates from 5.1 in FY22 to 3.0 in FY24, **there was a slight increase in the rate of maltreatment in care to 3.1 per 100,000 care days in FY205.** ACS takes every allegation of maltreatment in foster care very seriously and will continue to work with foster care agencies to prevent and address it from occurring.

2025

## Year in Review

The Foster Care Five-Year Plan aligns with ACS' overall efforts to strengthen families and enhance the well-being of young people in foster care. FPS is dedicated to the following ACS Strategic Priorities.

### Expanding & Sustaining Fair Futures

Fair Futures is a professional coaching program guided by youth voice serving over 4,392 young people across NYC's foster care and juvenile justice programs.

With the help of the Youth Success and Safety Initiative, a \$40 million+ annual investment, **Fair Futures has grown with the support of a city-funded investment of over \$30 million per year to over \$54 million starting FY27.**

The program has been supporting youth ages 11 – 26 with tutoring and coaching services through the collaboration with the Center for Fair Futures, ACS foster care provider agencies, and over 4,349 foster care and juvenile-justice involved youth.

### Expanding Mental Health Treatment Options for Youth

ACS, in partnership with the Center for Fair Futures continues to advance the Soul Care Pilot, a partnership to enhance mental health and wellness for foster youth ages 13-26. The Soul Care pilot includes collaboration with five foster care providers and Fair Futures Coaches. Pilot providers, coaches, and the NYC Youth Wellness Collective continue to receive Training and targeted support.

Art Pharmacy (a program offering creative and therapeutic art experiences through social prescribing) has been engaging youth in the pilot and reported that **member enrollment continues to grow with most members' attendance rates increasing by 66%.** The Wellness Collective also provide alternate services to promote mental health and wellbeing, such as boxing and hip-hop therapy.

2025

## Year in Review

### Expanding Educational, Internship, Vocational and Employment Initiatives for Older Youth.

Using the lessons learned from College Choice and the successful vocational programs, such as V-CRED, ACS launched the Career Choice program in FY26. Career Choice recognizes that a traditional college pathway may not suit all post high school aged youth. This program will afford youth in foster care support to attend a vocational or job-readiness training and financial assistance to successfully complete the program as a pathway to independence.

**Additionally, Career Choice includes an ACS partnership with DYCD Advanced and Earn program. Career choice will be able to support over 150 youth in FY26.**

### Promoting Family Reunification and Safely Ending ACS Involvement

ACS continued to host Third Thursdays, which brings together ACS and provider agency case planning staff for robust, topic-focused sessions every third Thursday of the month. Since launching in 2024, on average, nearly 150 participants have joined these sessions each month. Examples of Third Thursday sessions include connecting families to Prevention Services and partnering with Fair Futures Coaches to support permanency for youth in care. In addition to Third Thursdays, ACS has launched a new technical assistance framework focused on permanency. The framework examines and utilizes agency-specific and macro level data to identify best practices and inform business process improvements. **These efforts are designed to support case practices to increase the likelihood children and youth can achieve safe and timely permanency.**

ACS also continues to expand Parents Empowering Parents (PEP), which involves parent advocates with lived experience of the child welfare system working with case planning teams to support parents on the path to reunification with their children. Parent advocates have a unique ability to build relationships with parents, offer guidance about how to navigate child welfare processes, and elevate parents' voices in the case planning process. **PEP has increased to nearly 80 Parent Advocates systemwide.**



2025

## Year in Review

### Trauma Training for All Foster Parents and Staff

ACS partners with our contracted family foster care agencies to ensure that all foster parents and staff are trained in the National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC) with Trauma-Responsive Informed Parenting Program (TRIPP) Principle. NTDC is a learning program that tackles separation, loss, grief, trauma, and differences of race and culture in foster care and adoption. TRIPP is designed to increase foster parent and staff capacity to support children and youth with complex needs.

**As of September 2025, 99% of the system's non-kin foster parents are therapeutically trained. Across the system, 196 trainers have completed training of trainers for NTDC with TRIPP Principles.**

### Reducing Stays at the Children's Center

Pre-placement at the NYC Children's Center is intended to be a short-term approach to caring for children while an appropriate foster care placement is identified. Finding kin such as relatives, close family friends, or other familial resources is one of our key strategies for shortening stays at the Children's Center. **ACS and our contracted agencies have increased the proportion of children placed with kin upon entering foster care from 30.1% in FY17 to 42.4% in June 2025.**

Between August-October 2025, the average daily census at the Children's Center decreased to 58, compared to 78 in 2024 and 89 in 2023.

Other efforts to reduce pre-placement focuses on increasing foster home capacity, which grew with over 500 newly recruited foster homes in FY25. Furthermore, ACS is working proactively to place children in loving homes through direct outreach to foster care agencies and using veteran Family Permanency Services Staff to engage long stayers about their next steps.

2025

## Year in Review

### **Working with the Youth Leadership Council, Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board and Other Youth Groups**

The ACS Youth Leadership Council (YLC), which is composed of youth with lived experience in the child welfare system, is working closely with ACS on helping youth both in and out of foster care and juvenile justice to better understand their rights.

The YLC is working on recruitment efforts and advocacy for youth currently in and transitioning out of foster care. The YLC continues to facilitate info sessions to provide robust understanding of supports and services that ACS offers such as housing. **The YLC has facilitated 6 info sessions in FY25 and continues to partner with OCFS to facilitate the annual statewide Youth Summit.** In addition, the YLC is working closely with the Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board in hosting quarterly meetings to initiate feedback from youth representing the 25 agencies on services and supports they are receiving and may require.

The Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is redesigning the YAB to represent 25 foster care provider agencies. It is currently focused on advocating for more and better quality housing in safe, desirable neighborhoods that are fully integrated; addressing housing discrimination and improving voucher processes increasing the rate of youth aging out to highly stable housing; and has launched a Know Your Rights campaign for transition-aged youth, which includes streamlining documents and communication so young people ages 13+ have the key information they need to make informed decisions.



Look Ahead

# 2026 Planning and Priorities

Supporting families relies on a commitment focused on deepening and strengthening our efforts to improve foster care practices and enhancing the resources available for children and families. As we move ahead, the Core Collective Priorities will continue to guide our work through:

■ **ACS's ongoing efforts in Meeting the Need** of youth in foster care are driven by the foundation laid in the past four years: increasing foster home capacity, technical assistance, and data-driven strategies for recruitment and placement, all aligned with FPS's priority areas. The need for specific foster homes—including those for sibling groups, teenagers, and children with special medical needs—remains essential in preventing prolonged stays at the Children's Center, particularly for children ages 0-4 and those with complex needs.

■ **Enhancements in permanency support**, peer-to-peer learning and technical assistance for agencies are guided by the Focus on Family and Safety and Stability values. Collaborative work with foster care providers to address a recent increase in the number of children/youth re-entering foster care and ensure all foster care discharges are done timely and safely.

Furthermore, ACS's creation of a Foster Care Onboarding (FCO) training for newly hired case planners and supervisors, piloting in 2026, ensures staff are equipped to deliver high-quality, responsive care and case planning. Staff engagement, supported by ongoing collaborative forums and technical assistance, is vital to achieving quality outcomes and continuous improvement for children and youth.

■ **Improving Well-Being and Ensuring Success for youth in foster care is** furthered through innovative programs such as HER, targeted at young women to address disparities in education, employment, justice, and health. The Career Choice program, which provides pathways to vocational and trade careers, and expanded housing options, ensure that youth exiting foster care transition into safe, stable, and supportive environments. These initiatives, supported by increased discharge grants and partnerships such as with Anthos Home, reflect a holistic commitment to long-term success and empowerment.

Throughout all initiatives, ACS and its agency partners remain steadfast in their dedication to ensuring children's and family's needs are at the center of every service, decision, and innovation. All these efforts will remain guided by the Core Collective Priorities — *Meeting the Needs, Focus on Family, Safety and Stability, and Improving Well-being*. The work is not without its challenges, but through partnership, innovation, and a shared vision, progress continues—ensuring a brighter, more secure future for every child and youth in foster care. ■