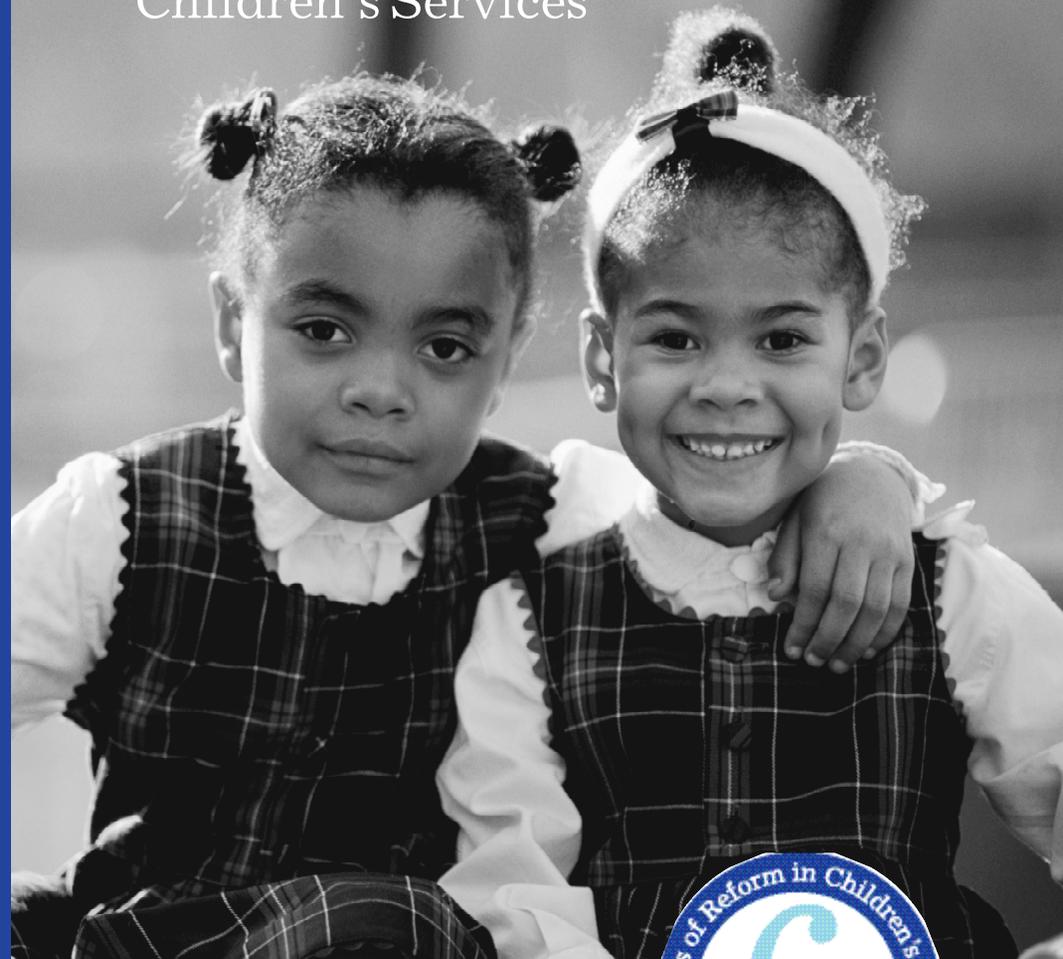


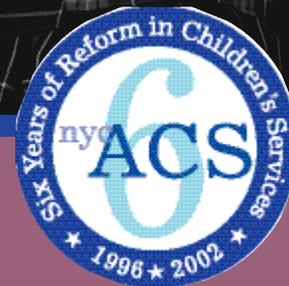
NYC Administration for  
Children's Services

“Over the past years, ACS has had a series of remarkable achievements...[Some changes] go beyond what we have seen leaders able to accomplish in virtually any other child welfare system.”

—Special Child Welfare Advisory Panel  
quoted in *Daily News*  
March 21, 2000



Produced by the ACS Office of Communications  
October 2002



Six Years of Reform  
in Children's Services

1996-2002 Reform Update

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg  
Commissioner William C. Bell



# ACS Service Directory

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

To report child abuse or neglect, call:  
New York State Central Register Child Abuse & Maltreatment Hotline

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
All calls are confidential.  
General Public . . . . . 1-800-342-3720  
Outside NY State . . . . 1-518-474-8740  
TDD . . . . . 1-800-638-5163

For information or help, call:  
Prevent Child Abuse New York  
Prevention Information  
& Parent Hotline . . . . . 1-800-342-7472

To request an ACS representative  
to speak in your neighborhood  
about child abuse awareness and  
prevention, call:  
ACS Office of Community Planning  
and Development . . . . . 212-341-3060  
Advocacy/Parents and Children's Rights  
. . . . . 212-676-9421

To learn more about becoming  
a foster or adoptive parent, call:  
ACS Parent Recruitment  
Hotline . . . . . 212-676-WISH (9474)  
or 877-676-WISH\*

To learn about child care  
or Head Start, call:  
ACS Agency for Child Development  
(ACD) . . . . . 718-FOR-KIDS  
(718-367-5437)

To inquire about Neighborhood  
Networks in your borough, call:  
Bronx . . . . . 212-227-6501  
Brooklyn . . . . . 212-341-2913  
Manhattan . . . . . 212-341-2910  
Queens . . . . . 212-341-2909  
Staten Island . . . . . 212-227-6376

Administration for Children's Services (ACS)  
150 William Street • New York, NY 10038  
1-877-KIDS-NYC (1-877-543-7692) • www.nyc.gov/acs

\*Toll-free number provided courtesy of **Wendy's Restaurants** in the Tri-State area

Design: Sarah Sills • Photography: Kali Holloway



## Six Years of Reform in Children's Services 1996-2002 Reform Update

“The Administration for Children's Services is far better managed than its predecessors; it has committed itself to policies, such as neighborhood-based services, that are in line with the best national thinking about child welfare reform; it has added substantial resources in critically needed areas; it is far better able than ever before to hold accountable private not-for-profit agencies, which provide the large majority of foster care and related services; and it is undertaking promising changes, such as the widespread use of family case conferences, to strengthen front-line practice. Mayor Bloomberg's appointment of William Bell, who has played a central role in the system's progress over the past six years, as the new ACS Commissioner, encourages us, and many other observers, to believe that these important efforts can serve as a foundation for even greater accomplishment in the future.”

— Concluding Report of the  
Special Child Welfare Advisory Panel  
March 18, 2002

## What They're Saying About Reform at ACS...

“For the first time in two decades, it is safe to say that the child welfare agency is making major progress...Sound administration and compassionate leadership have replaced the chaos that existed before ACS was separated from the city’s vast Human Resources Administration in 1996...ACS’ reinvention means that fewer young lives are being placed in jeopardy. Even if it’s only one little life, that’s worth cheering.”

—Daily News editorial “Saving the Children”  
December 8, 1999

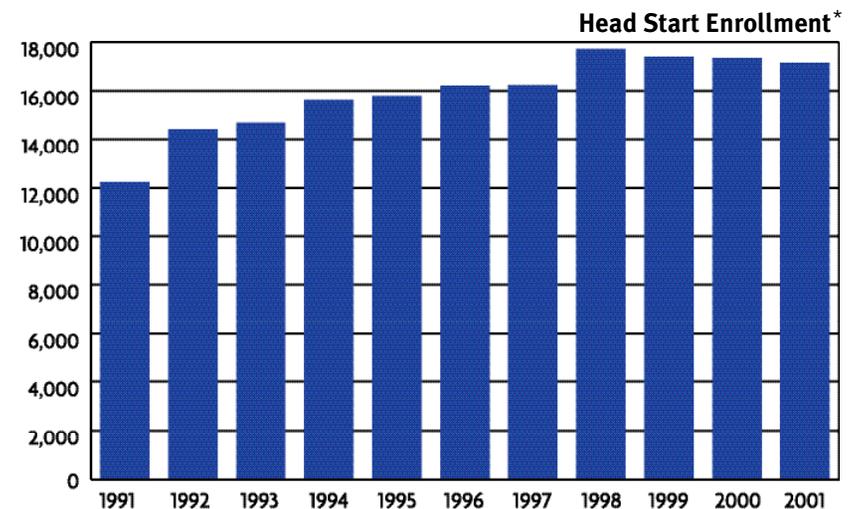
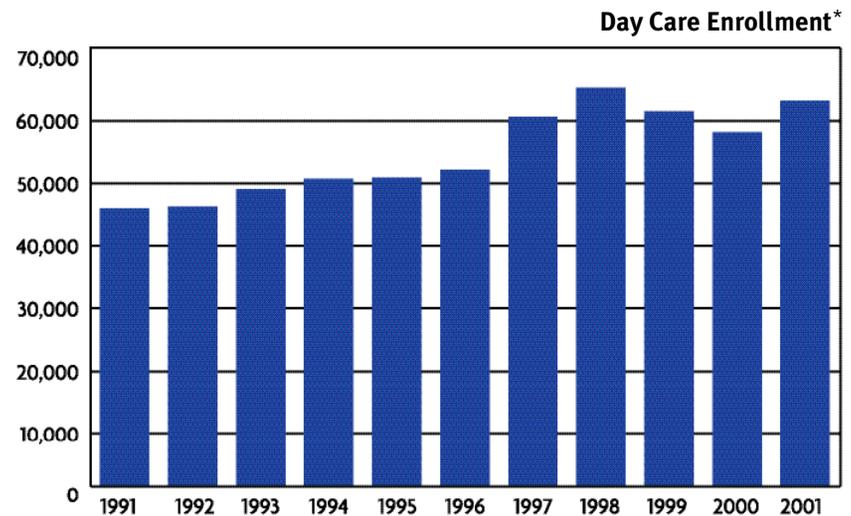
“We believe that ACS has engaged over the past several years in a sustained, intelligent effort to change a complicated and difficult system... The record of accomplishment already compiled by ACS should be the public’s best evidence that it can demand further change with confidence that it can be accomplished.”

—Final Report of the  
Special Child Welfare Advisory Panel  
December 8, 2000

“Recent reforms by the Administration for Children’s Services have helped to reduce the median length of a child’s stay in foster care... Adoptions have increased in the past three years. Equally significant is the drop in new admissions to foster care in the past year, suggesting that caseworkers are making better assessments about the need to remove a child from a troubled family. Caseworkers are now given more training, and more families are being offered counseling services so that children can stay home.”

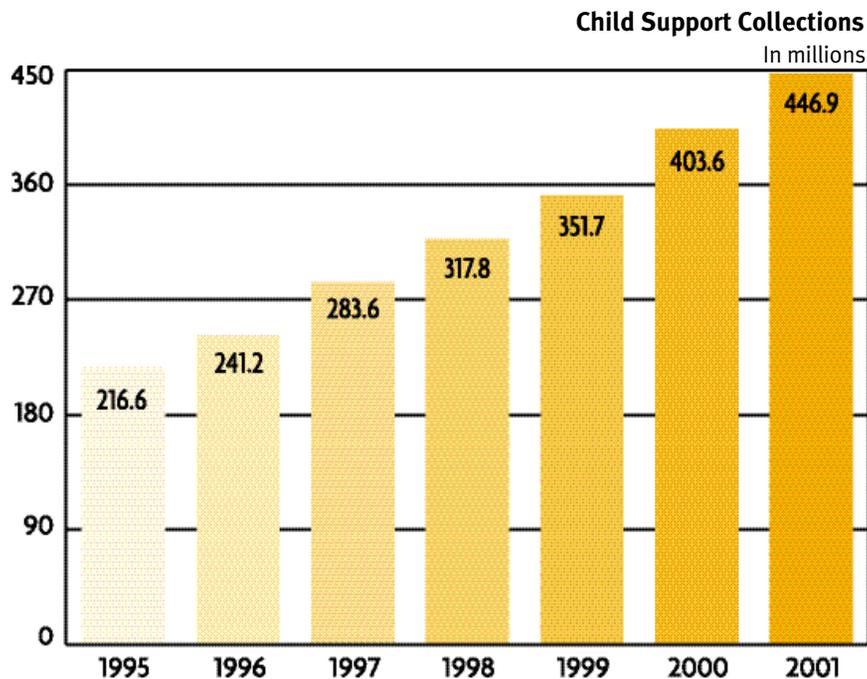
—New York Times  
December 7, 1999

and we’re **educating** tens of thousands in child care programs.



\*Total number of children receiving services during the June reporting period.

We've **doubled** child support payments . . .



## A New Phase of Reform

The road to reforming New York City's children's services system began in January 1996 with the establishment of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS).



For the first time in the City's history, all child protective, foster care, adoption, child support and child care services were placed in one, independent agency, with its own budget, management structure and vision for the future.

In just six short years, ACS transformed a child welfare system that was deeply flawed. A panel of five national child welfare experts cited "remarkable progress" and noted that ACS had done more to transform itself into a modern, compassionate system than any other such child welfare agency in the United States.

Now the new City administration led by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the new leadership team at ACS have embarked on an ambitious second phase of reform. During this phase, ACS will continue to build a strong and effective neighborhood based children's services delivery system across our City. We will continue to expand preventive services and child care initiatives so families can get the support they need and children can remain safely at home when appropriate. And we will also continue to support our ACS staff with better training, supervision and career opportunities. Above all, we will continue to protect the children of New York City.

This booklet highlights many of the remarkable accomplishments that ACS staff and our contract agency partners have achieved over the past six years. I am proud of them and grateful to Mayor Bloomberg for his support and leadership.

During the past year, we have faced tremendous challenges. But New York City's spirit remains strong. Most important, we are united like never before in our goal to better serve families and children in every community across our great City.

William C. Bell, Commissioner  
October 2002

# The Road to Reform Leads

The child welfare reform effort got under way when Mayor Rudolph Giuliani established the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) in January 1996 and named Nicholas Scoppetta as Commissioner of the City's first independent agency to serve and protect the children of New York.

Remarkable progress has been achieved since then but much more remains to be done. Under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Commissioner William C. Bell, the road to reform continues and a new phase is underway in the neighborhoods of our city.

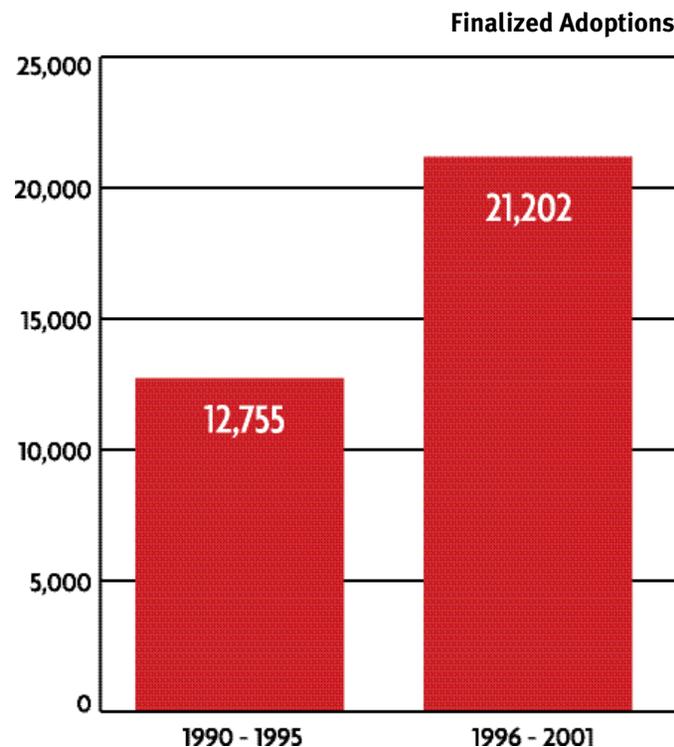
ACS's vision for future reform is outlined in *A Renewed Plan of Action for the Administration for Children's Services* published in July 2001. The plan was developed during a two-day conference in 2001 attended by two hundred ACS staff who worked closely

with hundreds of representatives from every stakeholder group in the system. They included parents, foster parents, contract agency staff, youth, specialists from other service systems and state and federal agencies.

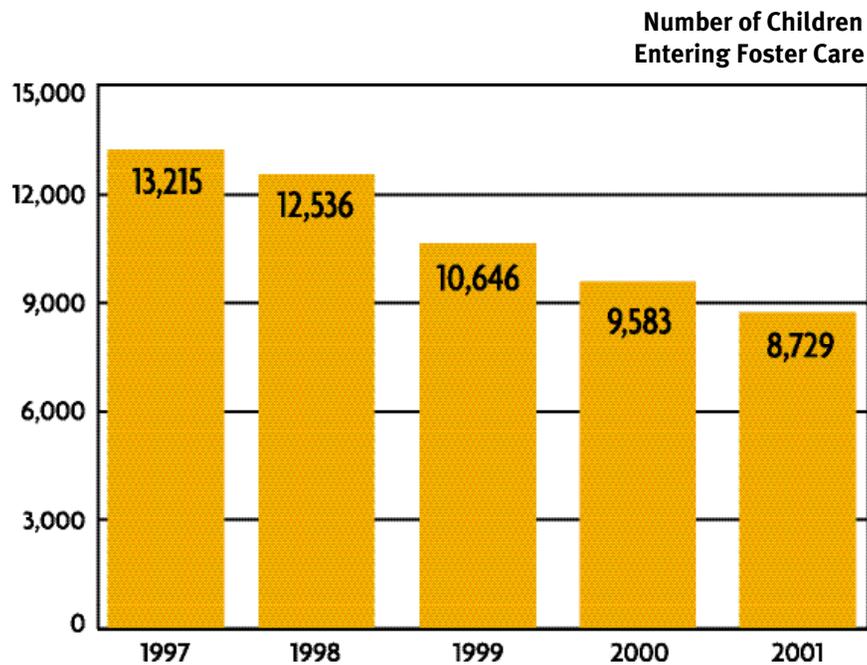
Out of this collaborative effort came a plan that builds upon the first ACS reform blueprint. It focuses on four key themes:

- Building effective Neighborhood Networks throughout the City involving families, schools, churches, hospitals and community organizations.
- Acting with greater urgency around family engagement and permanency for children.
- Implementing systems of quality improvement in all ACS programs and using data to measure performance and support programs.

and almost **doubled** the number of adoptions.



We've **reduced** the number of children entering foster care each year . . .



## Into Your Neighborhood

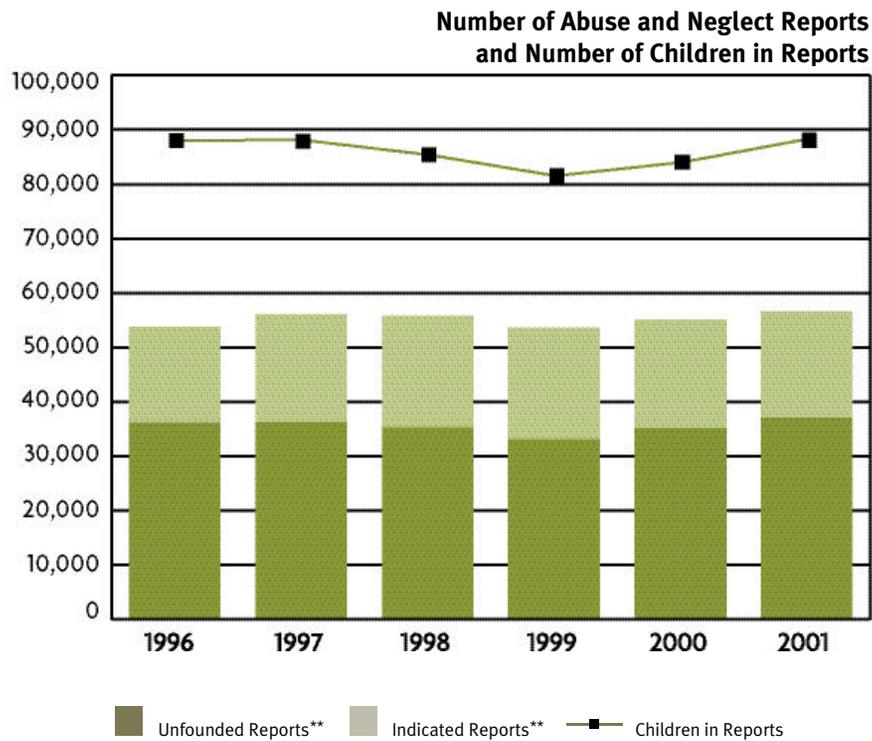
- Providing affordable, quality child care and integrating child care programs into ACS Neighborhood Networks.
- **Adolescent Services:** Improve the system's approach to adolescents and expand services for them.

In developing the new reform plan, ACS also focused on eight initiatives which, among others, were considered to be critical in further reforming the children's services system. They are:

- **Preventive Services:** Continue the growth and development of effective preventive services to strengthen families and keep children safe.
- **Family Court:** Improve Family Court processes to expedite permanency for children.
- **Family Team Conferencing:** Maximize the value of conferencing by partnering with families, communities and contract agencies.
- **Placement:** Develop policies to minimize the trauma to children during the foster care placement process.
- **Clinical Services:** Ensure that clinical considerations are integrated into case practice.
- **Contractor Performance:** Integrate administrative data into the quality improvement and planning process of contract agency management.
- **Training:** Ensure a well-trained children's services staff and provide opportunities for greater collaboration between program areas.

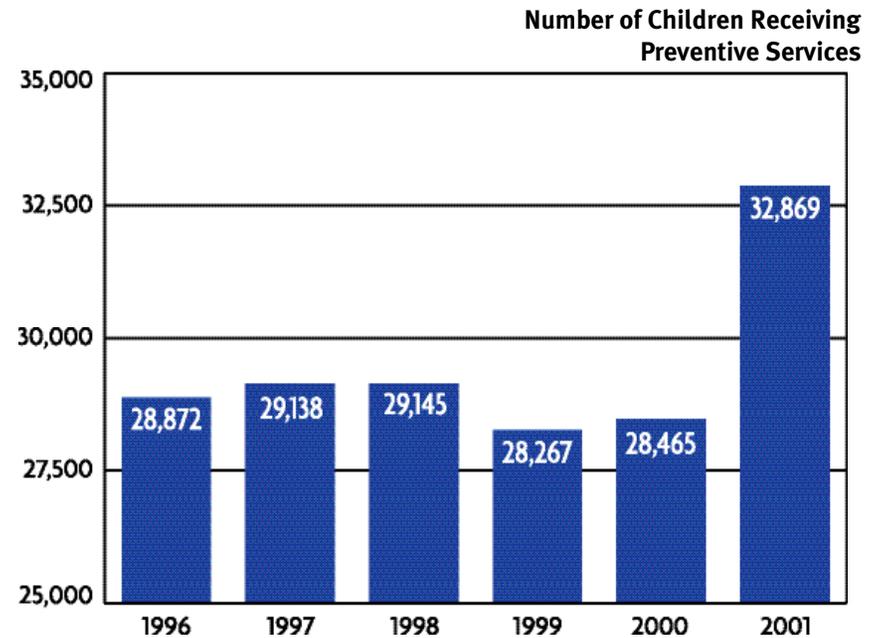


At ACS, we **protect** children by investigating every report of abuse and neglect . . .



\*\* If there is no evidence of abuse or neglect, the report is considered "unfounded." If there is evidence, it is "indicated." Approximately one-third of the reports from the last three years were indicated.

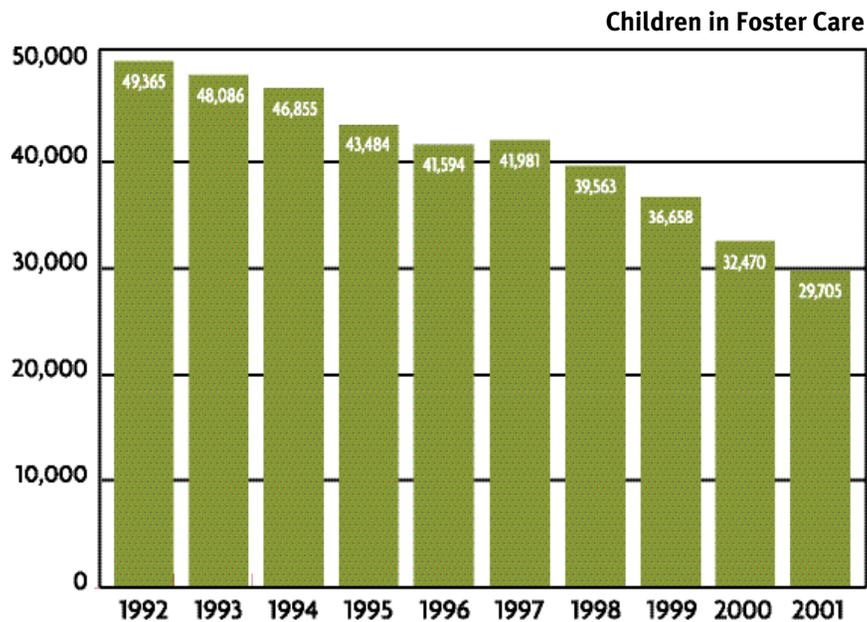
and **increased** preventive services to children.



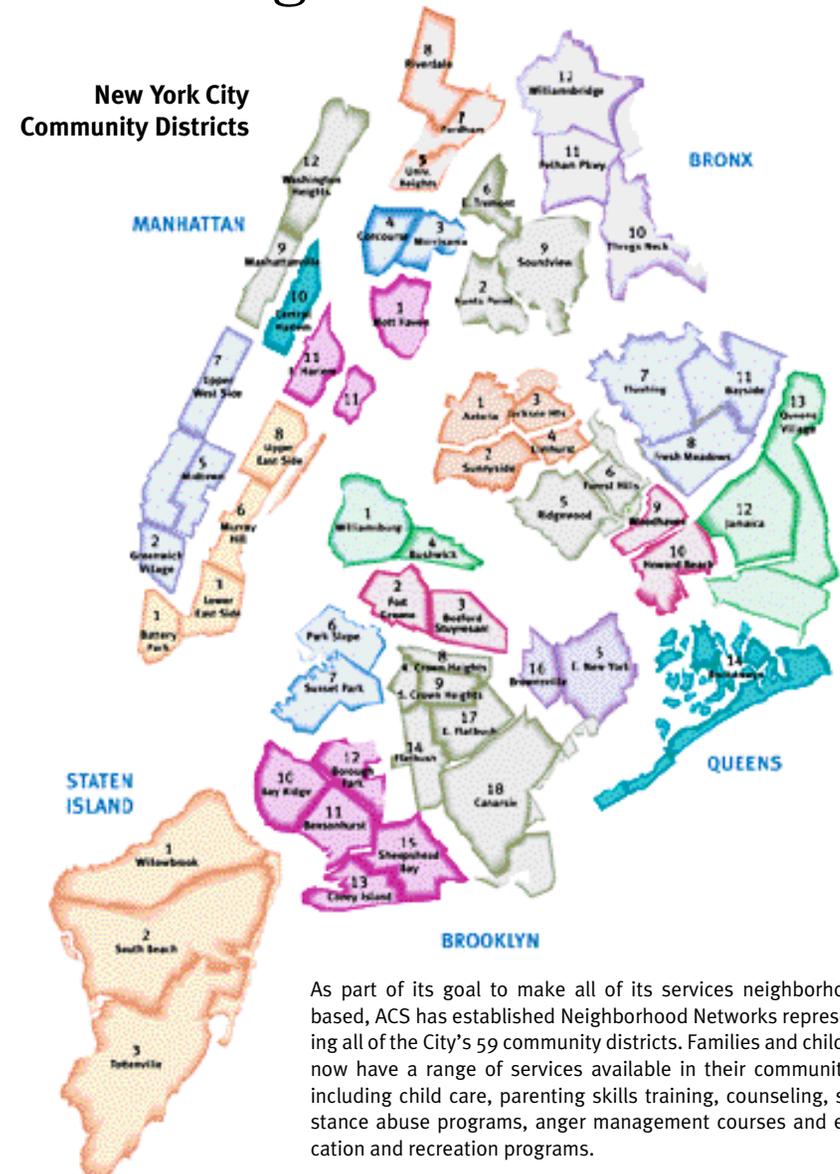
*By referring more families to agencies that provide preventive services such as counseling, parenting skills training and substance abuse programs, ACS ensures that children are placed into foster care only when they cannot remain safely at home.*

\*Figure as of July 2002

We've **lowered** the number of children in foster care . . .



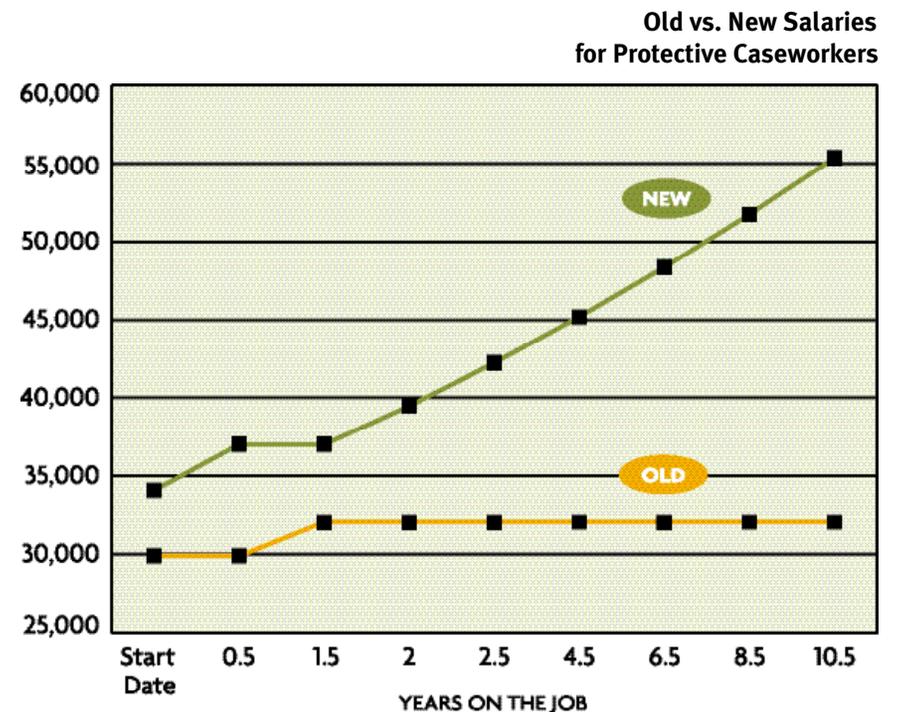
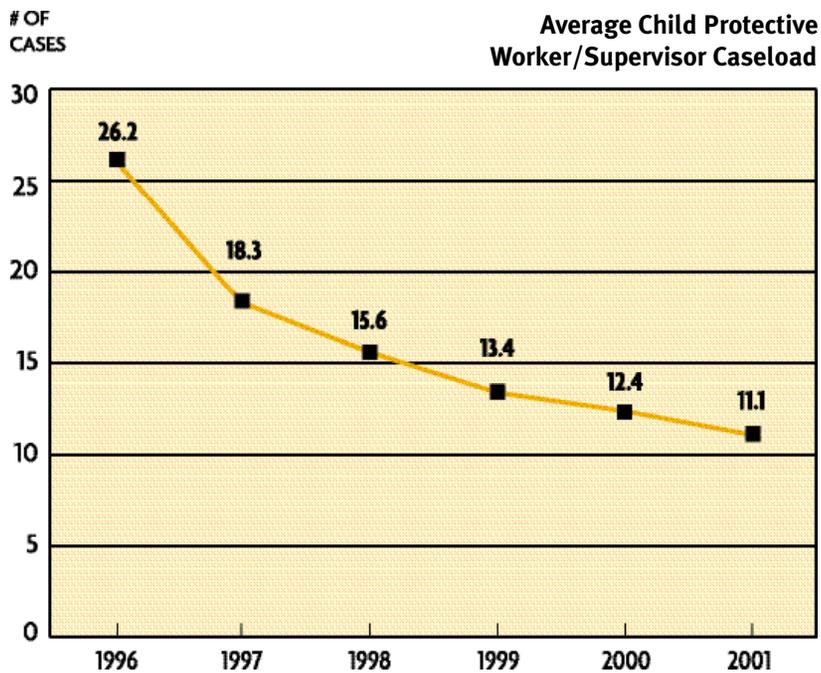
and we **serve** families through ACS Neighborhood Networks.



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 now 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.

We've **lowered** caseloads for caseworkers and supervisors ...

and **raised** salaries and standards.



**INCREASED STANDARDS.** In 1998, New York City created the first civil service positions specifically designed for child welfare workers. The new positions require tougher eligibility standards, carry higher salaries, award merit increases based on performance and require caseworkers to work toward a Masters of Social Work (MSW) or equivalent degree in order to be promoted to supervisory levels. ACS also established an annual \$3 million scholarship program that provides full tuition for up to 200 employees each year to work toward an MSW degree.