



Memo of Support
Child Welfare Preventive Services Reporting Bill
A10513 (Hevesi) / S8421 (Persaud)

Recent protests have made our collective commitment to racial justice more urgent, and child welfare is not immune from this public conversation. Community-based child welfare preventive services are an essential component of New York's commitment to racial equity, serving Black and Latinx communities over-represented in the child welfare system and hardest-hit by the COVID-19 crisis. Because most CPS calls are allegations of neglect—not abuse—these kinds of supports can address the root cause for concern and have helped reduce the number of children in foster care by half. Understanding the availability and utilization of these supports is more important now than ever to ensure that all families across the State have equal access to services that help children stay at home with their parents. This is why the Children's Defense Fund-NY and the New York State Child Welfare Coalition supports A10513 / S8421.

The Children's Defense Fund-New York (CDF-NY) office has a unique approach to improving conditions for children, combining research, public education, policy development, community organizing, and advocacy. A recognized authority in the endeavor to protect children and strengthen families, CDF-NY serves as a resource and partner for children, families, and organizations throughout New York State. We leverage our national influence to eliminate the harmful and disproportionate impact that poverty has on children in New York and to eliminate race and gender inequities in the areas of education, health, youth justice and child welfare.

Bill Summary

This bill requires the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to collect and publicly report data about critical safety net and preventive child welfare services in communities, namely: the number of children and families receiving preventive services; the average length of time preventive services were provided; a descriptive list of both child welfare preventive and primary preventive services in communities and rates of utilization; the number of children entering foster care who received preventive services during the prior year; and any other information the commissioner deems pertinent to the provision of preventive services.

Obtaining this information is essential now to better support communities that will be increasingly vulnerable due to the health, social, and economic challenges that COVID-19 presents, especially poor and minority communities. It is also essential to understand the array of services available to parents as the State approaches the 2021 implementation date for new federal child welfare legislation known as Family First, which is intended to keep more children with their families and reduce reliance on foster care.

For more information about this bill, please contact: Julia Davis, Director of Youth Justice & Child Welfare, Children's Defense Fund-NY, jdavis@childrensdefense.org.