

Governor's Children's Cabinet Report of Accomplishments and Recommendations

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Submitted by the New York State
Council on Children and Families on behalf of the
Governor's Children's Cabinet

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Report Prepared by the Council on Children and Families
Karen Chavis, Executive Assistant
Elana Marton, Counsel

Children's Cabinet

Chair, Kristin Proud, Deputy Secretary for Human Services, Technology and Operations and Senior Advisor to the Office of Taxpayer Accountability
Vice-Chair, Duffy Palmer, Deputy Secretary for Education

Children's Cabinet Advisory Board

Co-chair, Geoffrey Canada, President and Chief Executive Officer, Harlem Children's Zone
Co-chair, Karen Schimke, President and Chief Executive Officer, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Workgroup on Disconnected Youth

Co-chair, Patricia Fahy, Associate Commissioner for Intergovernmental Affairs, New York State Department of Labor
Co-chair, Elaine Spaul, Executive Director, The Center for Youth

Subcommittee on Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice

Co-chair, Joyce Burrell, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth, New York State Office of Children and Family Services
Co-chair, Laura Velez, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services, New York State Office of Children and Family Services

Subcommittee on Children with Incarcerated Parents

Co-chair, Jacquelyn Greene, Director of Juvenile Justice Policy, New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services
Co-chair, Elba Montalvo, Executive Director, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families



Deborah A. Benson
Executive Director

NYS Council on Children and Families

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OVERVIEW OF THE CHILDREN'S CABINET

The New York State Governor's Children's Cabinet was established by Executive Order No. 16 on June 12, 2007 to advise and make recommendations to the Governor on his Birth to Five Agenda (see Appendix I). Since its formation, the Children's Cabinet has facilitated a significant expansion of health insurance coverage for children and a substantial increase in the number of pre-kindergarten programs in New York. With these accomplishments well underway, the Children's Cabinet shifted its focus to older youth who face significant challenges that may lead to them becoming disconnected from school and work.

The Children's Cabinet is chaired by the Governor's Deputy Secretary for Human Services, Technology and Operations and Senior Adviser to the Office of Taxpayer Accountability, Kristin Proud, vice-chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Education, Duffy Palmer, and staffed by the Council on Children and Families, an independent state entity charged with coordinating the State's health, education, and human services agencies to provide more effective systems of care for children and families. Along with representation from the Governor's Office, the membership of the Children's Cabinet includes the commissioners and heads of the following State agencies:

Board of Regents	Division of Housing and Community Renewal
Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities	Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives
Consumer Protection Board	Division of the Budget
Department of Agriculture and Markets	Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
Department of Environmental Conservation	Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Department of Health	Office of Children and Family Services
Department of Labor	Office of Mental Health
Department of State	Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Department of Taxation and Finance	Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Developmental Disabilities Planning Council	State Education Department
Division of Criminal Justice Services	

Efforts of the Children's Cabinet are aided by an Advisory Board, a diverse group of experts from outside New York State government who have been appointed by the Governor. Co-chaired by Karen Schimke, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, and Geoffrey Canada, President and Chief Executive Officer of Harlem Children's Zone, the Advisory Board is composed of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills to assist the Children's Cabinet in implementing its goals (see Appendix II for Advisory Board membership).

Additionally, in response to the requirement to establish or designate State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care contained within The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Governor Paterson reorganized the Children's Cabinet Advisory Body and established a new body – the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The ECAC is a public-private entity, co-chaired by Robert Frawley, Deputy Director of the Council on Children and Families, and Karen Schimke, President and Chief

Executive Officer of the Schuyler Center for Analysis, and Advocacy, and is comprised of over 40 members who represent early care and education, health care, child welfare, and mental health programs, as well as state agencies, advocacy organizations, foundations, higher education, unions, and others involved in the provision of services to young children and their families (see Appendix III for ECAC membership). Moving forward, the ECAC will lead the Children’s Cabinet early childhood agenda (see Appendix IV for the ECAC Strategic Plan).

INITIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Staff from the Children’s Cabinet’s member agencies, along with members of the Advisory Board, have been meeting since June 2007 to develop recommendations for the Governor in accordance with the mission of the Children’s Cabinet. Below are recommendations that have been adopted and successfully implemented to date. See Appendix V for a complete list of major accomplishments of the Children’s Cabinet.

IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL CHILDREN’S HEALTH INSURANCE

New York has made significant strides in achieving the goal of providing access to health care coverage to all youth. With the Governor’s expansion of Child Health Plus to 400 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) in September 2008, all uninsured youth are eligible for comprehensive and affordable health care coverage through Medicaid and Child Health Plus. This translates to more than 90 percent of the State’s uninsured children being eligible for subsidized coverage through these programs, and the families of the remaining children now can buy into the Child Health Plus program. In addition to expanding coverage, New York has simplified eligibility rules and made applying for and maintaining coverage easier for families. Further accomplishments include:

- **Enrollment gains in Medicaid and Child Health Plus.** New York has achieved a steady increase in children’s enrollment since January 2008. Enrollment of children in Medicaid and Child Health Plus grew by 160,000 between January 2008 and November 2009 (most recent data available for combined enrollment). More than 102,000 of these children have been enrolled since the expansion in September 2008. Today, New York provides health care coverage to more than 2 million children or approximately 40 percent of the State’s children. Nearly 1.7 million of these children are covered by Medicaid and the remaining 390,000 children by Child Health Plus.
- **The number of uninsured children in New York declined in 2008.** In September, the U.S. Census Bureau released the 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey. The results of this survey indicate that the number of uninsured children under the age of 19 in New York State decreased from 434,000 in 2007 to 343,000 in 2008—a decline of 91,000 children (a 21% decrease).
- **In 2009, New York continued to expand access to health care for children.** Medicaid coverage is now automatically extended for all 18, 19 and 20 year olds leaving foster care until their 21st birthday. As well, the Child Health Plus program expanded access to critical services by implementing mental health parity.

- **In June 2009, New York received federal approval and support for Child Health Plus expansion to 400 percent of the FPL.** This approval provides federal matching funds for the expansion retroactive to September 2008 when the State implemented this expanded coverage. In addition, this approval includes two new exceptions to the six-month waiting period. Now, no child under the age of 5 and no family that must contribute more than 5 percent of its income to purchase employer sponsored health insurance is subject to the waiting period.
- **The Connections to Coverage Campaign brought information on New York's health insurance programs to more than 40,000 families across the State.** Campaign staff conducted or participated in more than 900 events and activities that promoted Child Health Plus and Medicaid.
- **Children's Cabinet Advisory Board Children's Health Insurance Workgroup.** Since its formation in 2007, the Workgroup has focused on identifying new opportunities to enhance children's health insurance enrollment and retention. Along with developing the Workgroup's priorities for 2010, current efforts include:

Addressing language access in public health insurance outreach and enrollment. The Workgroup is closely examining the issue of language access and its implications for developing outreach and enrollment strategies which are linguistically and culturally appropriate and meet the needs of those that have limited English proficiency.

Outreach through state agencies. To ensure that the remaining uninsured children in the State, approximately 7 percent, have health coverage, work continues with state agencies, including the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), Consumer Protection Board, and Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), to develop strategies to promote children's coverage.

Improving recertification. The Workgroup continues to look at ways to strengthen relationships between local departments of social services (LDSS) and facilitated enrollers.

IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Ensuring all children have access to high-quality universal pre-kindergarten (UPK) programs is one of the Governor's highest priorities. Over the past few decades, major advances in understanding child development have been made. The research provides dramatic new information on children's brain development, but more importantly has demonstrated that the quality of relationships and the degree of cognitive stimulation have a profound impact on children's cognitive, emotional, and social growth.

The Children's Cabinet has played a catalytic role in expanding access to the UPK program for four year olds across the State. The convergence of state agency leaders focused on this issue brought tremendous leverage, support, and resources to the expansion of UPK. Working together, the Children's Cabinet and its Advisory Board have been instrumental in accomplishing the following:

- Starting in 2007, the New York State Education Department (SED) shifted from a pre-kindergarten district-by-district grant approach to a **strategic statewide plan**. With the assistance of a UPK

Implementation Workgroup, a regional approach to strategic planning was begun. Data was compiled by county and then examined across regions of the State. The plan included different strategies:

A **superintendent buddy system** for almost fully implemented regions was developed. This resulted in superintendents who championed UPK reaching out to districts that had not yet implemented UPK.

Eleven **statewide meetings** were held in regions with low UPK participation to present information on the benefits to students having pre-kindergarten experience. These meetings were supported by the attendance of senior SED staff.

The Governor’s staff convened and led **meetings with major collaboration partners**.

Targeted strategies were put into place **for low performing districts** without pre-kindergarten.

Over **1,500 phone calls were placed** to districts that needed technical assistance or support.

State agencies, particularly OCFS, and Head Start programs that were successful UPK partners **reached out** to districts to encourage participation.

GROWTH IN UPK AS A RESULT OF CHILDREN’S CABINET WORK

	# of Districts Eligible to Participate in UPK	# of Districts Participating	State Expenditures on UPK (In Millions)	Children Served
2006 - 2007 (Before Children’s Cabinet)	284	259	\$241.7	62,929
2007 – 2008	672	397	\$348.6	92,173
2008 – 2009	672	452	\$375.7	100,208

2009/2010 figures will be available after confirmation of Basic Education Data System and mid-year data.

Other efforts to expand UPK and to improve the quality of these programs include:

Regulatory Action. With support from the Children’s Cabinet and outreach by SED senior staff, the Board of Regents acted upon regulatory changes to allow districts with new funding the opportunity to implement UPK mid-year. This action provided flexibility for districts that wanted to implement UPK using the new funding but had insufficient enrollment in the fall to do so.

Contract Simplification. With many different agencies and providers at the table, new ideas for contracting emerged. For example, a streamlined contracting process was initiated between the New York City Department of Education, community-based organizations, and the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS).

Early Learning Standards. Learning standards for children participating in UPK and for children birth to five have been developed. Representatives from SED, OCFS, CCF, local early childhood agencies, institutes of higher education, and teachers of children ages birth

through eight provided guidance and reviewed multiple drafts. Care was given to align these early learning standards with the revision of the K-12 learning standards.

Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) – Collaborative work by OCFS, SED, and their partners continued on the development of QUALITYstarsNY, New York’s Quality Rating and Improvement System for center- and family-based early care and education programs. QUALITYstarsNY is currently being field tested in 13 communities around the State.

Preschool Special Education Task Force – Parallel to initiatives undertaken by the Children’s Cabinet, a Governor’s Task Force focusing on preschool special education was formed and developed recommendations to expand UPK to increase participation in integrated settings. Many members of the Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board and the Children’s Cabinet were members of the Preschool Special Education Task Force.

REENGAGING DISCONNECTED YOUTH

In New York, approximately 199,000 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 are “disconnected”: out of school and out of the workforce, neither employed nor looking for work.¹ The disconnected rate for New York City males (16.2%) stands at more than twice the national rate (7.7%).² These youth are overwhelming persons of color: 43 percent are Latino and 30 percent are black.³ Many young adults with developmental disabilities are also out of school and out of the workforce. The needs of these youth, who are often not connected to any social institution, are complex and multi-faceted. Over the course of their lives, many of these youth have faced a myriad of challenges, such as chronic poverty, early parenthood, placement in and out of the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, lack of educational continuity and family stability, developmental disabilities, substance abuse dependency, and mental health issues.

Given the breadth of the needs of the disconnected youth population, the Disconnected Youth Workgroup formed under the Children’s Cabinet subdivided into two Subcommittees, each focusing on a discrete population. The **Subcommittee on Child Welfare /Juvenile Justice** was formed to focus on youth 14 through 24 years of age who have been in, or are transitioning out of foster care, including youth residing informally with kin who receive child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants and youth on probation, or in juvenile justice or criminal justice facilities and also youth who were formerly or transitioning out of such facilities (see Appendix VI for member listing). The **Subcommittee on Children with Incarcerated Parents** was formed to examine and respond to the unique issues faced by children and families with a parent who is incarcerated (see Appendix VII for member listing).

¹ Back On Track: Reconnecting New York’s Disconnected Youth to Education and Employment, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, June 2009.

² “Out of Focus: City is Failing Disconnected Youth,” Community Services Society of New York, July 2008.

³ “Out of School, Out of Work...Out of Luck? New York City’s Disconnected Youth,” Community Services Society of New York, January 2005.

Covenant House Study ⁴

A recent study of youth from the Covenant House shelter for homeless young people in New York City found that 62 percent of 444 youth between the ages of 18 and 21 sampled for its study were neither working nor in school. Sixty eight percent of that same group of homeless youth did not have a GED or high school diploma and 78 percent of the youth were unemployed. Nearly half of the young people surveyed had experienced physical punishment at home with 41 percent of the young people reporting histories of family violence. Over one third of the youth reported histories of foster care placement and youth with foster care histories reported an average of 3 placements while in care. Almost half of the young people reported a criminal justice history and over one third of the youth reported that they had a family member who used drugs regularly. Mental health issues were also significant, with 36 percent of the youth reporting that they had previously been in counseling and 21 percent of the young people reporting histories of medication for mental health needs.

As the Covenant House study shows, disconnected youth are young people who have likely experienced the convergence of childhood trauma, violence, school failure, poverty, and mental health or chemical dependency issues. Not only does disconnection often lead to negative outcomes for the youth themselves, but for communities and the State as a whole. Notably, disconnected youth are more likely than other youth to engage in criminal activities, become incarcerated, and rely on public systems of support. Historically, youth already have among the highest unemployment rates and during this current, prolonged recession, they continue to be among the most vulnerable workers. The economic future of New York depends on youth becoming ready for college, work and life. Sadly, however, many young people are reaching adulthood without the skills and competencies they need to succeed.

Integrated cross-systems initiatives are critical to this effort. Youth currently access available services according to particular labels. Youth aging out of foster care are presumptively eligible for Medicaid until they turn 21 years of age. Young people returning from juvenile justice placement are eligible for aftercare services generally for a minimum of six months, and similarly those on probation are eligible for certain community-based support services. Homeless youth have a right to stay in their school of origin. Children being raised by relative caretakers have the right to receive a child-only temporary assistance grant. The demographics of and barriers faced by all of these youth are likely to be quite similar; in fact, the very same young person may well experience each of the aforementioned systems. Accordingly, New York State must begin to look at disconnected youth not as a foster care youth, a juvenile justice youth, a high school drop-out, but as a young person in need of comprehensive and coordinated services that support his or her successful transition from adolescence to adulthood. Comprehensive responses made now, will help reconnect these youth and secure their future.

⁴ Youth in Crisis – Characteristics of Homeless Youth Served By Covenant House New York, March 2009.

Below are principles that have guided the Workgroup on Disconnected Youth, formed under the Children's Cabinet, to focus on the needs of youth ages 14 to 24 that are disconnected or at risk of disconnection.

DISCONNECTED YOUTH WORKGROUP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Increased **collaboration and coordination** between state agencies and between state and local government and community-based organizations is critical.

Alignment of programs, policies and funding for youth initiatives is essential, and, to further such efforts, the development of future data systems by child-serving agencies should be linked.

Children and youth require strong and **consistent connections** with their families, caring adults/mentors, and communities in order to thrive.

Communication of a **shared vision** – that includes youth input – for our State's vulnerable youth is critical to turning policies into practice at the state and local levels.

Initial accomplishments of the Workgroup on Disconnected Youth have included:

- **Summer Youth Jobs.** As a result of additional federal stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) (P.L. 111-5), the number of youth enrolled in New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) increased by 21 percent, from 43,113 youth enrolled in 2008 to 52,225 youth enrolled in 2009. As a result of joint outreach effort by OCFS, OTDA, and DOL to all counties in New York, specialized services were added to the program for vulnerable youth (those in foster care or in juvenile justice facilities or who are homeless), with 1,000 vulnerable youth enrolled in 2009. In addition, three out of four administrators surveyed noted that the additional federal ARRA funds available in 2009 made it possible to employ youth with high risk behavior who would not typically have been placed.
- **Career Planning.** In 2009, OCFS conducted six one-day forums throughout the State focused on career planning for youth transitioning from foster care or juvenile justice placements. The forums were designed to educate providers, case workers and foster parents working with adolescents in care on post-secondary educational and job training opportunities ranging from vocational training to four-year college. Participants received a Statewide Educational Resource Directory containing the location of two- and four-year colleges and one-stop centers. A total of six more forums are planned for 2010: New York City on June 30, regions 1 and 2 on July 27, region 5 on August 3, region 4 on August 26, and a region 3 forum date will be scheduled.
- **College Class Enrollment.** In 2009, 44 OCFS youth enrolled in post GED/high school classes through the community college network.

- **Data Collection.** The launch of a multi-agency data collection initiative where none existed before to quantify the number and needs of children with an incarcerated parent, as well as information sharing regarding the unique needs of children with an incarcerated parent.
- **Foster Care Higher Education On-line Resources.** The joint development [between OCFS and the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC)] of an on-line resource of all the higher education tuition assistance programs available to youth who have been in foster care.
- **DOL Youth Grants.** Distribution of \$5 million for a DOL Disconnected Youth Request For Proposal (RFP) to serve about 1,600 disconnected youth ages 14 through 24 by improving attitudes, expanding career awareness, providing dropout prevention and developing foundation work skills and competencies needed to motivate youth to achieve and succeed in their adult and work life.
- **DOL Worker Grants.** A \$15 million investment in a DOL Emerging and Transitional Worker RFP was distributed to provide emerging and transitional workers ages 18 and older with necessary skills and competencies to obtain employment and advance their careers. Populations targeted include young adults with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and who are out of school or who have had contact with criminal justice services.
- **Career Development.** The launch of a Career Development and Youth Initiatives Office within DOL to serve as a single point of information on youth-specific issues and single point of contact with SED, OCFS, other youth-serving agencies, and statewide youth initiatives. The duties of this Office include promoting youth services and programs, developing a website and youth training curriculum, and providing technical assistance on best practices.
- **CareerZone.** The expansion and continued marketing of DOL's free CareerZone website and the Career Portfolio tool to encourage career development and career planning to be used by youth serving agencies, schools and community-based organizations. According to the 2002 Final Evaluation Report of the New York State Education Department Career Plan Training Initiative, graduates with a career plan "are more certain of their career directions, more confident in their ability to secure meaningful employment in their fields of interest, and where employed, more often have jobs related to current educational programs and their long-term career plan goals than students with little or no career planning experience." The CareerZone System is made available at no cost to users.
- **Parental Rights for Incarcerated Parents.** The Governor, on June 15, 2010, signed into law legislation that authorizes foster care agencies to delay filing a petition to terminate parental rights where a parent is incarcerated or participating in a residential treatment program where the delay would be in the best interest of the child (Chapter 113 of the Laws of 2010). This legislation, which is a result of successful collaboration, represents a tremendous victory for families separated by the criminal justice and child welfare systems.
- **Bridging Corrections, Courts, and Human Services to Meet the Needs of Children.** A resource guide was compiled containing all family programs within the Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) and was then disseminated to family court judges statewide. Training was developed for local departments of social services on facilitating visits between children in foster care and their incarcerated

parents. Moreover, in general, the groundwork has been laid for future cross disciplinary initiatives to better meet the needs of children with incarcerated parents.

- **“Be Sure Your Child is Cared For and Safe” Flyer.** Members of the Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee participated in the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children’s workgroup to develop a flyer to help incarcerated parents plan for their children, by describing and providing forms to temporarily designate a person in a parental relationship so that their children have caregivers who have the legal ability to make education and medical decisions for their children while they are incarcerated.

ONGOING AND FUTURE WORK OF THE CHILDREN’S CABINET

The Children’s Cabinet has accomplished a great deal during its first two years. Following are highlights of efforts underway as well as recommendations for future work to address both the early childhood needs of children and the needs of vulnerable youth as they transition into adulthood and independence.

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN’S HEALTH INSURANCE

In 2010, the DOH Office of Health Insurance Programs with support from the Children’s Cabinet will continue to promote and simplify New York’s public health insurance programs for children and families through:

- The **Maximizing Enrollment for Kids grant** awarded to New York State by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This grant will be used to explore the potential to enroll even more children in coverage through the use of express lane eligibility, which will significantly simplify the enrollment process for families.
- The **elimination of the face to face interview** requirement for Medicaid applicants and pilot testing the use of telephone recertification.
- The **Connections to Coverage Campaign**, which will continue to partner with community-based organizations, faith groups, schools, health and human service providers, and others across the state to link uninsured children and families to facilitated enrollers in their communities.
- The **implementation of the agreed upon priorities for 2010** to continue to enhance children’s health insurance enrollment and retention.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

The ECAC held its first meeting in May 2009. Over the past year, the ECAC has ratified its vision, mission, set of guiding principles, and its strategic plan and applied for \$5.42 million in federal funding in accordance with the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (42 USC 9801 et. seq.) and under ARRA.

Vision

All young children are healthy, learning, and thriving in families that are supported by a full complement of services and resources essential for successful development.

Mission

The ECAC provides strategic direction and advice to the State of New York on early childhood issues. By monitoring and guiding the implementation of a range of strategies, the ECAC supports New York in building a comprehensive and sustainable early childhood system that will ensure success for all young children.

Guiding Principles

The ECAC defines a comprehensive early childhood system as a unified network of public and private supports and services that together prepare young children for success in school and life. Essential components of New York's system include early care and education, physical health, social-emotional development, and family support and education.

In their efforts to develop a comprehensive early childhood system to support New York's young children and their families, the members of the ECAC are guided by the following principles:

- New York's plan encompasses all children and all families with recognition of the diversity of cultures, languages, abilities, and family structures.
- Healthy development includes the intertwined domains of physical health, oral health, cognition, and social-emotional development. The underpinnings of healthy development begin before birth.
- Parents and families are the most influential people in a child's life. The term 'parent' includes all people with primary responsibility for nurturing children.
- Families are best supported with strong public policy and services promoting economic stability, self-sufficiency, and strong and resilient relationships.
- New York's plan can only be achieved by building connections among state, regional, and community strengths and by integrating resources into one unified system that works for children and families.

Organization and Funding

The work of the ECAC focuses on four domains: early learning, healthy children, strong families, and coordinated and responsive systems. In an effort to continue ongoing cross-systems efforts and to meet the goals of each domain, the ECAC is currently organized into six workgroups: data development, early learning workforce development, finance, promoting healthy development, quality improvement, and strong families. Additionally, several existing initiatives focused on improving outcomes for young children will fall under the ECAC, including the Home Visiting Initiative, the Early Learning Standards Social-Emotional Workgroup, and the New York State Parenting Education Partnership.

The ARRA made available federal funds to support the work of councils like the ECAC. New York State's allocation is \$5.42 million to be used over three years. The application was submitted in early June 2010 and includes a set of priority strategies selected from its wider strategic plan. Those priorities are to:

- Establish QUALITYstarsNY as the framework for unifying and aligning New York State’s system of early care and education.
- Develop recommendations for the creation of a statewide, unified early childhood data system.
- Develop a unified, competency-based career development system for the early care and education workforce.
- Establish a finance workgroup charged with maximizing resources for and access to the early childhood system, as well as improving the planning, coordination, and quality of New York’s early childhood system.
- Establish required criteria that ensure that all New York State early care and education funding opportunities advance the ECAC’s early learning objectives.
- Support the New York State Parenting Education Partnership’s work to empower parents and caregivers through the provision of high-quality, accessible information on positive parenting practices, early learning, and healthy development.
- Guide the establishment of a system of universal screening and the expansion of assessment activities that identify families in need of additional supports and services at the earliest possible point.
- Develop a system for providing comprehensive home visiting services for vulnerable expectant and new families.
- Build capacity among service providers in all child-serving systems to identify and respond to the social-emotional needs of young children and their families.
- Strengthen and expand current efforts to promote health and safety in early care and education settings through the development of standards, training, and consultation.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with existing public health programs and initiatives on achieving key outcomes for young children, including healthy weight, nutrition, asthma, and social-emotional development.

REENGAGING DISCONNECTED YOUTH

At the outset, the Disconnected Youth Workgroup recognized that a wide variety of youth are at particular risk for disconnection, including youth in the foster care system, incarcerated youth, youth with disabilities, immigrant youth, youth from low-income families, and youth who have parents involved in the criminal justice system. While the Workgroup would have liked to address the needs of all these populations, in order to undertake a manageable task that would help youth in the immediate to near future, the scope of the Workgroup was narrowed. Two subcommittees were created each focusing on a distinct population of vulnerable youth: the Subcommittee on Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice and the Subcommittee on Children with Incarcerated Parents. The work of both Subcommittees was organized into five domains: 1) access to basic needs (supportive housing; quality health and mental health services); 2) education; 3) training and employment; 4) connectivity to family and community; and 5) sharing data and financial resources.

The remainder of this report is divided into key findings and recommendations broken down by these five domains. For the most part, the recommendations apply to a particular domain, yet there are a few recommendations that are more universally applicable, such as recommendations regarding the transfer of educational records, school enrollment, and access to public benefits.

DOMAIN #1: Access to Basic Needs (Supportive Housing, Quality Health and Mental Health Services)

Key Findings

Youth – like all people – need to have their basic needs met, including health care, mental health services, supportive and stable housing, and adequate nutrition, to be successfully independent. For youth who lack adequate supports, transitioning to independence can be especially challenging. Recently, a study conducted by Chapin Hall portrayed a dismal outlook for youth who are thrust into adulthood from the foster care system, and recommended that public institutions work together to successfully assist youth in making the transition to adulthood.⁵ In New York, there currently is no one agency vested with overall responsibility for youth at risk of disconnection or who are disconnected.

Chapin Hall Study ⁶

Since exiting foster care and at age 23 or 24, over two-thirds of the young adults in the Midwest Study had lived in at least three different places, including 30 percent who had lived in five or more places. Even more concerning, 24 percent of these young adults had ever been homeless, 28 percent had ever couch surfed, and 37 percent had ever been homeless or couch surfed since exiting foster care. One-half of the young people who had been homeless had been homeless more than once. Repeated episodes of couch surfing were even more common, with two-thirds of the young people who had couch surfed having done so on more than one occasion.

With respect to specific needs, youth exiting foster care, juvenile justice facilities, or local correctional facilities or youth who are on probation are at a disproportionate risk of experiencing housing instability and homelessness. Most housing support services are geared toward adults, and services that are available for youth do not often focus on preventing homelessness. For example, New York City requires a homeless shelter stay in order for youth, but not adults, to gain eligibility for independent living services.

The federal Foster Care Independence (or Chafee) Act (P.L. 106-169) and the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351) are examples of laws geared toward the development of policies and programs that provide more support to a vulnerable population of youth. The latter federal law allows states to use Title IV-E funds to care for and support foster youth until the age of 21 provided that the youth are engaged in an educational or employment program or employed. While New

⁵ “Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Conditions of Youth Preparing to Leave State Care: Executive Summary,” Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 2010.

⁶ “Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Ages 23 and 24,” Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 2010.

York has chosen to implement these extended benefits, including medical coverage and housing assistance, for youth exiting foster care, implementation of these extended supports are only in the beginning stages.

Unlike the child welfare population that is protected and served in accordance with federal law, juvenile delinquents (youth older than the age of 7 and younger than the age of 16 who commit an act which would be a crime if he or she were an adult) are provided with aftercare services upon their return to the community in accordance with OCFS policy, whereas juvenile offenders (youth between the ages of 13 to 15 years of age who are charged and tried as an adult for committing one or more designated crimes) are not required to be offered any transitional services specific to youth through their release on parole. Yet, both these groups of youth reportedly have difficulty reenrolling in school, finding employment, or, for those who lack an adult caregiver, locating a suitable home. Many also must cope with substance abuse or mental health issues without adequate services. While some transition planning occurs, it is clear that discharge planning and reentry practices for these youth need to be vastly improved to help them transition from care to independence.

Efforts Underway

- To aid eligible foster care youth obtain and keep Medicaid coverage until their 21st birthday, in August 2009, OCFS issued an Administrative Memorandum (ADM) requiring that a letter be sent to all youth exiting care detailing the information and documents needed to secure Medicaid coverage under the Chafee legislation. The ADM advises service providers of their responsibility to assist youth in obtaining any required documents that are missing and to inform the Medicaid office of the youth's discharge address.
- OCFS issued another ADM, later in August 2009, followed by emergency regulations, providing guidance to LDSS for transition planning for foster care youth focusing on housing, educational/vocational needs and health insurance coverage. OCFS has developed training to assist workers with the implementation of transition plans.
- An interagency team is developing a white paper on housing for vulnerable youth that will help determine: the need for supportive housing, the number of youth needing supportive housing, effective supportive housing models and the cost of such models, as well as potential funding streams.
- Tip sheets are being developed to aid staff and youth in obtaining vital and key documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security card, non-drivers photo identification, educational records).
- OCFS will be launching a Youth in Care website that will provide information on a range of issues to assist older youth transitioning out of foster care (e.g., housing; health care, education, etc.). The website is expected to be live in August 2010.

Recommendations

- **Reentry for Court-Involved Youth.** Begin reentry planning at the time of placement of a youth in the juvenile justice system or a local correctional facility to ensure the timely implementation of individualized reentry plans that link the youth to needed services, including health and substance abuse

services, appropriate educational supports, stable housing, job and life-skills training. Actively engage different stakeholders in this process.

- **Transitional Services for Youth Aging out of Foster Care.** Improve and further ensure that essential transitional services are obtained by youth exiting the child welfare system.
- **Housing.** Expand supportive housing opportunities for homeless or marginally-housed transition age youth by directing state agencies to collaborate and to the extent possible give priority to providing housing options for this population. Create a consistent state-level definition of *'special needs'* populations when identifying housing priorities.
- **Medicaid.** Maximize the number of juvenile offenders and juvenile delinquents who have Medicaid upon release into the community. Ensure that youth aging out of foster care, who are presumptively eligible for Medicaid, receive this coverage until they turn 21 years of age, as authorized by the federal Chafee Act and in accordance with current state policy.
- **Coordinated Care.** Engage stakeholders – including youth, families and caregivers, permanency resources, treatment providers, and other staff – to design, implement, and invest in a coordinated services and programs that address the full range of youth needs. Research shows that youth with access to a diverse array of supports and opportunities are less likely to experience school failure, substance use, and delinquency.⁷
- **Necessary Documentation.** Ensure that youth exiting foster care, juvenile justice facilities, or local correctional facilities obtain critical identification documents, such as social security cards, state identification cards, and educational records, prior to release, so that they can reenroll in school get a job, or apply for public benefits.
- **Child-only TANF Grants.** Publicize the availability of child-only TANF grants for children who are being cared for by relatives who are not their parents.

DOMAIN #2: Education

Key Findings

Typically, youth lose up to six months of academic growth each time they change school, home, or facility placements, and many youth at risk of disconnection or those who have become disconnected have experienced multiple educational placements. For example, youth who spend time in institutional settings experience a disruption in their education as they move between their home school and the educational setting provided by the institution. Critical components of individualized education plans are often lost in transitions. It is not always known what grade a youth should be placed in and valuable classroom time can be

⁷ Butts, 2008, citing Richard F. Catalano, M. Lisa Berglund, Jean A. M. Ryan, Heather S. Lonczak, and J. David Hawkins (2004), "Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs." *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 591, no. 1 (2004):98-124; and Peter C. Scales and Nancy Leffert, *Development Assets: A Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Search Institute Press, 2004).

lost due to incorrect placement. Youth in foster care often attend multiple schools due to movement between foster homes, and youth involved in the probation system through either a Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) or Juvenile Delinquency (JD) matter experience school disruptions and adjustment difficulties.

It has been reported that a one year increase in the average years of schooling completed reduces violent crime by almost 30 percent, motor vehicle theft by 20 percent, arson by 13 percent and burglary larceny by 6 percent.⁸

The Alliance for Excellent Education reported in 2006 that a 5 percent increase in male graduation rates would produce an annual national savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses. In New York this would mean an annual savings of more than \$458 million.⁹

The Fostering Connections Act, which applies to youth in foster care, recognizes the importance of educational stability. Accordingly, this legislation requires that, whenever possible, a youth should remain in his or her school of origin, or, if not, be promptly enrolled in a new school. Yet, again, implementation remains an open question. Furthermore, this policy does not extend to other vulnerable populations.

It has been reported that a one year increase in the average years of schooling completed reduces violent crime by almost 30 percent, motor vehicle theft by 20 percent, arson by 13 percent and burglary larceny by 6 percent.⁹

Youth in Local Correctional Facilities. Unique barriers exist that affect the educational opportunities for youth in local correctional facilities. The New York State Association of Incarcerated Education Programs, Inc. highlighted some of the more glaring education issues. For instance, a person under 21 years of age who has not received a high school diploma and who is incarcerated in a correctional facility maintained by a county or by the city of New York or in a youth shelter is entitled to, but not mandated to, participate in educational programming. Moreover, budgeting for these programs is challenged because budgets are developed based on current year enrollments at a point in time rather than on a base or prior year. Programs therefore must plan conservatively in the event of a last minute increased enrollment. Finally, there is no existing funding stream dedicated to supporting transition planning for youth leaving local correctional facilities as they move back into local communities.

Efforts Underway

- OCFS and HESC have received funding and an MOU has been signed to pursue funding under the College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACG) to help increase the number of youth in care who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.
- Governor David Paterson held a Summit on School Engagement and Dropout Prevention in 2008 co-sponsored by America's Promise and attended by members of the State Board of Regents and leadership of state agencies, associations, organizations, school districts (including students), and other key stakeholders. Participants aligned with state regions or with state organizations committed to developing

⁸ Justice Policy Institute Brief, Education and Public Safety, August 30, 2007.

⁹ Effective Investments in Public Safety: Education, Justice Policy Institute, www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload07-02_FAC_Education_AC-ps.pdf.

initial broad consensus of goals essential to improving success and to follow-up planning. As a result of the Summit, representatives of numerous organizations began meeting to improve communication and coordination across organizations. By September 2009, this Statewide Organizations Group had grown to approximately 100 organizations. It continues to meet regularly to focus on improving student engagement, decreasing the dropout rate, improving the graduation rate, and enhancing student post-secondary educational and career opportunities.

- Through partnerships with Education Opportunity Programs, Higher Education Opportunity Programs, College Discovery, and Seeking Elevation Education and Knowledge, OCFS is exploring opportunities to make it easier for youth at risk to access SUNY and CUNY College Supportive Service Programs. Potential strategies may include: identifying foster care status on the SUNY/CUNY application and then have this result in an automatic waiving of the application fee and referral to the appropriate college support program(s), giving priority to youth in care in these programs, and providing on-campus housing for youth in care during school breaks.
- OCFS and SED are exploring a data sharing agreement to track the educational progress of youth in care to address the lack of educational information for many of these youth who experience multiple school placements. Currently, a data sharing agreement is being piloted between the New York City Administration for Children's Services and New York City Board of Education.
- The enacted State Fiscal Year 2010-11 Budget creates a new Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) "independent schedule," increasing the award for youth in foster care, which will apply to academic year 2010-2011.

Recommendations

- **School Credit.** Require school districts to accept credits earned by students at education programs in juvenile justice facilities operated by OCFS, rather than allowing local school districts to continue to exercise discretion to accept credits or partial credits even though the educational programs are approved by SED. This requirement would prevent a student from falling further behind.
- **Uniform Enrollment Documentation.** Require that local school district enrollment documentation requirements are uniform for all of New York State and clearly post the requirements on the SED website. Also, require schools to immediately enroll and to provide enrollment assistance (including helping the youth obtain needed documents) to certain at-risk youth similar to protections and transition services provided for homeless and runaway youth by the federal McKinney-Vento Law.
- **Remaining in School of Origin.** In accordance with the Fostering Connections Act, require that, whenever possible, foster care youth remain in the same school or, if not, be promptly transferred to a new school. This policy of educational stability should be expanded to youth returning from the juvenile justice system as well.
- **Education Records.** When a youth transfers schools, ensure that his or her educational records (school transcript and Individualized Education Plan, if any) promptly follow to enable the youth to be placed in the appropriate classroom and grade level.

- **Education Immersion.** Provide access to a high-quality education within local correctional and juvenile justice facilities operated by OCFS to prepare youth for success in the community. Time in an institutional placement facility can provide youth a window of opportunity to address fundamental gaps in their education and reconnect to learning. Invest in books, technology, and tutoring and mentoring services to enhance educational programs offered to incarcerated youth.
- **Education Requirement.** Require that all youth under the age of 21 who are eligible under New York State Education Law (those who have not passed their GED test or who do not have a high school diploma) participate in educational programs while incarcerated. A youth's stay in a local correctional facility can be as long as several years depending upon how long his or her case is pending, and, accordingly, should be viewed as an opportune time for intense immersion in education and training.
- **Improve Education Curriculum.** Conduct a thorough examination of the educational and vocational curricula used in local correctional and juvenile justice facilities operated by OCFS. Designing and implementing an intensive curriculum is challenging, particularly in under-resourced classrooms with youth of different ages and skill levels. The educational curricula in facilities should be thoroughly assessed and a strength-based curriculum be developed that responds to the needs of youth in custody and increases collaboration with local school districts.
- **Minimize Educational Transitions.** Minimize the number of educational transitions youth in out of home care experience to the greatest extent possible while maintaining child and community safety.
- **Provide Budget Predictability for Jail Educational Programs.** Support legislation proposed by the Association of Incarcerated Education programs that would change the funding mechanism for jail educational programs to enable improved budgeting for these programs by using the previous two year full time equivalent as a basis for computing State Aid. This would help establish budget predictability and ensure a higher percentage of funding being utilized.

DOMAIN #3: Training and Employment

Key Findings

Most young people without a high school diploma lack the requisite skills for success in even entry-level employment. As a result, these young people tend to work less and earn less, making them far more likely to remain in poverty. On average, high-school dropouts earn 27 percent less than high-school graduates and 58 percent less than college graduates over the course of a lifetime.¹⁰

¹⁰ "A Collective Responsibility: Supporting the Path to Positive Life Outcomes for Youth in Economically Distressed Communities," Center for Law and Social Policy, May 2008.

The youth labor force declined by 1.5 million workers during 2008 and 2009, as the recession boosted the unemployment rate among those aged 16 to 24 from 11.8 percent in December 2007 to a record 19.2 percent in September 2009. In 2009, the proportion of young people who were employed in July was 51.4 percent, the lowest July rate on record for the series, which began in 1948. And, as of January 2010, young workers, both male and female, accounted for 26.4 percent of all unemployed workers, roughly double their 13.5 percent share of the U.S. labor force.¹¹

In 2009, the proportion of young people who were employed in July was 51.4 percent, the lowest July rate on record since 1948.¹²

With respect to workforce readiness, further collaborations and partnerships across systems (education, employment and training services, criminal justice, and employers) are necessary for helping youth access training and jobs. For example, partnerships have been forged with apprenticeship programs whereby disconnected youth are targeted for participation in the programs. But reports indicate that the youth are frequently not successful in completing the program due to lack of workforce readiness skills. Recently, on both the federal and state levels, there has been a renewed focus on developing more collaborative programs, but more work remains to break down the barriers and challenges that youth must overcome to gain, sustain and advance in the workplace.

Summer Youth Employment Programs have been invaluable in providing youth with early exposure to work and providing critical early work experience (as well as the practical value of a pay check). Participation in this program has been challenging for some youth because not all have the required paperwork, e.g., social security card, original birth certificate, or photo identification to enroll in this program. What's worse is that many of the disconnected youth do not have the means or family connections to acquire these documents.

Individuals involved with the justice system experience higher rates of unemployment than the general population. The 16 to 21 year old population sentenced to probation accounts for 27.6 percent of those on probation.¹² The reasons contributing to unemployment for the entire probation population include a criminal record, an inadequate education, and a lack of job readiness skills and work experiences. For youth, this is particularly concerning because the older one gets without being connected to the world of work, the less likely that connection becomes. Educational achievement and successful employment are critically linked and can have lifelong impacts. Offenders frequently have minimal educational and inadequately developed job-seeking and job-retention skills. Data from the US Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates less educated inmates were more likely than those with more education to have been sentenced as a juvenile. About 1 in 5 adult inmates without a high school diploma or with a GED and 1 in 10 with a diploma or some college had been incarcerated as a juvenile.¹³

Efforts Underway

- The 2009 Summer Youth Jobs Program was almost doubled as a result of the federal stimulus bill (ARRA) that passed in February 2009, which included separate funding for youth summer jobs through

¹¹ Economic Policy Institute EPI Briefing Paper #258.

¹² NYS DPCA Integrated Probation Registrant System; NYS DCJS OJRP (6/16/2008).

¹³ US Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003).

the Workforce Investment Act for the first time since its enactment in 2000. Most of these funds were used in the summer of 2009 to employ about 24,000 low-income youth across New York State and proved to be a successful stimulus for youth employment. DOL and other members of the Children's Cabinet will be advocating for additional funds for summer 2010 as Congress is rapidly beginning to develop new federal legislation on job creation and retention. The popularity of the 2009 program locally has already helped to generate interest for 2010. Pending legislation to provide \$1 billion dollars for Summer Youth Employment Programs has passed the U.S. House and is currently being considered in the Senate, however, most youth are out of school for the summer and as of early July 2010, new funds have not been allocated.

- In September 2009, DOL launched a Career Development and Youth Initiatives Office to serve as a single point of contact to work with other youth serving agencies. Career development is an integral part of youth development that assists young people in building the skills to become competent, confident and connected adults. To that end, the Career Development and Youth Initiatives Office was established to support the DOL CareerZone/JobZone systems, which assist youth and young adults in exploring options and developing career plans for future success. In addition, the Office supports the following five strategic functions:
 1. Establishing policy and supporting efforts to ensure limited DOL youth funds are effectively coordinated to connect, communicate, and collaborate to engage youth and the programs that serve them across New York State.
 2. Providing technical assistance to local areas, state agencies, and community-based organizations serving youth with a special emphasis on building the new literacy and work-readiness skills to compete in the global economy.
 3. Developing youth-appropriate curriculum and tools to prepare youth for high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations in the 21st century.
 4. Developing curriculum and materials for professionals working with youth to support the implementation of programs that address individual and cultural differences, the development of youth-centered plans, and a youth development approach.
 5. Identifying and sharing best practices from youth programs across the state, the nation and the globe.
- The Career Development and Youth Initiatives Office is currently partnering with SED to support an Educator Academy to provide professional development to assist teachers seeking to implement a learning model built on the use of personalized career plans and portfolios (through the use of the DOL CareerZone system) as a means of engaging youth in thinking about and planning for their future. This includes identifying strategies to help develop and support resiliency in youth especially those at risk of becoming disconnected.
- The Department of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) and DOL, along with county probation departments, have collaborated in the formation of a three part employment program, Pathways to Employment. The program is facilitated by Offender Workforce Development Specialists

who are trained and qualified to assist individuals with criminal records with making informed decisions relative to job and career choices based on their abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

- The Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), SED, and DOL have partnered in three cities (New York City, Rochester, and Syracuse) with the objective of increasing employment readiness assets (knowledge, skills and abilities or “KSA”) for incarcerated students and facilitating the transfer of these KSA’s to the community. The emphasis on a comprehensive and coordinated seamless delivery system will benefit not only the participants in the program, but also strengthen the current system as a whole.

Recommendations

- **DOL CareerZone.** Expand the use of DOL’s CareerZone System. This includes enhancing the assessment functions to assist youth in matching interests, work values and skills to education and training opportunities that lead to employment. An important task will be the development and distribution of a CD-ROM version of CareerZone for use with incarcerated offenders in local correctional facilities and prisons where internet access is prohibited.
- **Career Guide.** Create a New York State Career Guide for youth and adults that will serve as a companion to the CareerZone and JobZone websites. The Career Guide will provide information to build lifelong career decision-making skills and will connect youth and jobseekers to resources covering all aspects of career exploration and outline what is necessary for success in the 21st century learning and work environments. The Career Guide will be available online and also as a PDF for printing.
- **Vital Records.** Assist youth in obtaining their necessary vital records, including birth certificates, social security cards, working papers, and educational records. Develop and post on-line tip sheets on how to obtain these records.
- **Apprenticeships.** Work to reduce the barriers for youth to participate in Union Apprenticeship programs (e.g., transportation, workforce readiness).
- **Expand and Promote WOTC.** Expand the use of the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit, particularly the newest one targeted at disconnected youth, which acts as an incentive to reduce the cost of doing business and to help those in need gain skills and experience while on the job.

DOMAIN #4: Connectivity to Family and Community

Key Findings

Without appropriate support, children are more likely to have difficulties in school, experience emotional troubles, and become involved in the criminal justice system themselves. A stable, caring adult can help youth who have dropped out of school or stopped working. The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy noted in its report, “Disconnected Youth: An Answer to Preventing Disengagement,” October 2007, that “an ideal system would ensure that the children and youth in these systems [in this case, child welfare and mental health] would have at least one adult in their lives whom they can count on. The concept of social capital

applies to all of us. We are aided, influenced, and supported by those around us. Those relationships – in particular with siblings and with their community of origin – should be encouraged and nurtured. Children need consistency, and ongoing relationships are imperative to their sense of security, safety, and self.”

When a young person has an incarcerated parent, it also is challenging to maintain connectivity with a parent. It is estimated that almost 80,000 children have a parent in New York’s prisons, including nearly 5,240 children with an incarcerated mother, and that youth of color are disproportionately affected.¹⁴

Research and experience indicate that establishing and maintaining connectivity between incarcerated parents and their children has benefits for both. Parents who maintain contact with their children are more motivated toward employment and other pro-social behaviors upon release and less likely to recidivate than those whose relationships with their children are severed. Children can benefit from their incarcerated parents’ continued involvement through face-to-face visits and other forms of contact, especially if those are appropriately planned and facilitated. The experiences of programs providing visiting services to children reveal benefits to children such as enhanced educational achievement, increased engagement in employment training and career

It is estimated that almost 80,000 children have a parent in New York’s prisons, including nearly 5,240 children with an incarcerated mother, and that youth of color are disproportionately affected.¹⁵

pursuits, increased self-esteem, reduced aggressive behaviors, and increased stability in the home environment. However, face to face visits are challenging because the location of the family is rarely considered when assigning an incarcerated person to a prison, and arranging visits with parents is frequently quite difficult. Reasons for these difficulties include the distance between child’s home and a parent’s facility; limited access to free transportation; difficulty coordinating transportation with facilities “visiting” days;

understanding a particular facility’s visiting policy as these vary from facility to facility; children under 16 need an escort to visit a parent (one escort per child); and, rules prohibiting “group visits” where one escort could take a group of children to visit their individual parents.

While DOCS has recently started collecting information about whether an inmate is a parent, this information is limited and, in general, there is a paucity of data regarding this population. It should also be noted that a new initial interview assessment form that is gender specific is under development. This form will allow for the collection of additional data regarding the family.

There is a need to raise awareness among professionals who serve children regarding the impact of arrest/incarceration on children. Many workers directly touch the lives of children with incarcerated parents, e.g., from the police officer that arrests a parent for a DWI while the child is in the car to school social workers that counsel a child experiencing grief and loss over their parent’s incarceration to the public benefits worker who determines a non parent caregiver’s eligibility for financial support for the child. Yet, there is little formal guidance or training for any of these workers.

Note: Some of the issues and associated efforts underway and recommendations previously mentioned for youth involved with the child welfare and/or justice systems apply to children with incarcerated parents as

¹⁴ Women in Prison Fact Sheet, Women in Prison Project, Correctional Association of New York State, April 2009.

well, especially those related to the transfer of educational records and school enrollment and access to public benefits namely health insurance and housing assistance.

Efforts Underway

- DOCS remains committed to family-focused programs and family reintegration and has made significant progress on these issues. Specific activities include:
 - The expansion of the Family Reunion Program with the opening of the Albion Correctional Facility site in July 2009.
 - Statewide parenting program training was facilitated in the summer of 2009 for staff from 20 correctional facilities. This expansion has resulted in 10 additional parenting programs being started for a total of 33 facilities now offering the program.
 - DOCS, in conjunction with the Osborne Association, has begun a community-based tele-visiting program between children in the New York City area and their mothers at Albion Correctional Facility.
 - A new initial interview assessment form that is gender-specific is being developed. This form will allow for the collection of additional data regarding the family.
 - For the 29th year, the Summer Program at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility was held. Participants included 108 children, 75 mothers, and 32 host families. The Summer Program allows for a five-day visit with structured activities, good food to eat, and overall parenting support.
 - All family services RFP's require that awarded contractors develop training for staff to facilitate understanding of family issues and the impact of incarceration on families.
 - In 2009, the Family Reunion Program, which continues to provide selected inmates and their family members the opportunity to meet for an extended period of time in privacy, provided 3,358 children visits with their parents and there were over 14,000 civilian participants and more than 8,000 incarcerated participants.
 - In 2009, The Family Visiting Program (Free Bus) provided transportation for 25,560 family members and friends.
- In the summer of 2009, a resource guide was developed and disseminated for family court judges to inform them about the family programs available to children and parents at each DOCS facility so that this information can be used to connect children who are the subjects of petitions in their courts with family services at the facilities where their parents are incarcerated.
- The Council on Children and Families received a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation for a data collection effort regarding the impact on children of having an incarcerated parent. As of June 1, 2010, 14 focus group sessions have been conducted with caregivers, young children, young adults and incarcerated mothers. Several more are scheduled in the coming months.
- A cross-systems training on the importance of connectivity between children and their incarcerated parents and the nuts and bolts on how to arrange a visit between a child in foster care and his or her

parent who is incarcerated in a DOCS prison was developed. It was presented at a conference of the New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) and will be presented again in July of 2010 at a New York City training of Court Appointed Special Advocates

- The subcommittee partnered with the New York State Kincare Coalition in the planning and implementation of a statewide kincare summit with a focus on kinship families caring for children because of parental incarceration. The summit was held in June of 2010 and a set of recommendations regarding the needs of children in kinship care as a result of parental incarceration are under development as a result of the summit.
- Training curricula enhancements are being proposed for workers (across health and human service as well as criminal justice agencies) who may come in contact with a child of an incarcerated parent with the goal of providing sensitivity training tailored to the unique needs/feelings of these young people. The training emphasizes the ongoing positive influence that incarcerated parents often maintain over their children's educational and employment and training efforts and their mental health. A component regarding addiction and its influence on this population will also be included. Staff are currently working with Schenectady county probation department to develop a curriculum for probation officers.

Recommendations

- **Stable Adult Connections.** Support programs that connect youth with stable, caring adults.
- **Executive Order.** Issue an Executive Order to institute cross-agency collaboration and ensure ongoing commitment to caring for the needs of children with incarcerated parents. Specifically task a group or state agency with developing and implementing recommendations, fostering interagency and community partnerships, and commissioning data gathering efforts about these children.
- **Gather Data.** Conduct a survey of DOCS' inmates to determine the number of incarcerated individuals with children and the issues faced by these children so that beneficial services can be more targeted.
- **Guiding Principles.** Develop guiding principles to be adopted by state agencies that work with children of incarcerated parents.
- **Videoconferencing.** Expand the use of videoconferencing as a means to supplement face to face visits between incarcerated parents and their children.
- **Post Visiting Policies.** Make it easier to access and understand facility visiting policies by posting this information on the DOCS' website.
- **Train Local Social Services Departments.** Provide training and technical assistance to local departments of social services on how to involve incarcerated parents in service plan review meetings and facilitate visits between children in foster care and their incarcerated parents.
- **Face to Face Visits.** Support a therapeutic visiting model for children and their incarcerated parents.

DOMAIN #5: Sharing Data and Financial Resources

Key Findings

Although not a specific domain that the Disconnected Youth Workgroup agreed to focus on, members of the Disconnected Youth Workgroup agreed it was important to highlight the issue of sharing data and financial resources.

It is generally understood that improving child outcomes is a universal goal of child-serving agencies. Frequently state agencies pursue their goals in isolation from one another, particularly when it comes to sharing data. At times, there is little understanding of what data is available and what the bridge is to link data systems.

The complex array of funding streams, rules, and requirements among the state and federal government is one of the most frequently identified impediments to the delivery of comprehensive and accessible child and family services. Each funding stream has its own mandated reimbursement methodology, reporting requirements, allowable services, and accountability standards, which limit flexibility, cause confusion, and increase administrative costs for service providers. From the state agencies' perspective, categorical, single-agency funding streams limit the ability to understand and address the growing number of issues that cross agency boundaries. These problems are compounded for service providers attempting to piece together multiple funding sources in order to provide a comprehensive set of services.

As data systems are developed and enhanced, it is fundamental that during the planning process opportunities to share data and link systems are considered to the extent possible. In such a way, government can be held more accountable.

Recommendations

- **Master Contract.** Explore the feasibility of replicating the master contract that currently is used with The Door, a New York City comprehensive youth service program in lower Manhattan. The Door's master contract combines seven state contracts with three state agencies into one "master contract." The goals of the interagency master contract for not-for-profit agencies are to simplify administration and increase flexibility for multi-funded local service providers; improve the ability to set and coordinate program direction as well as monitor program effectiveness; and strengthen fiscal accountability. The master contract has the following features:
 - A single, interagency contract boilerplate with provisions for multi-year contracting with simplified annual renewal;
 - A coordinated set of program objectives that reflects the missions of each of the funding agencies and places greater emphasis on outcome measures;
 - A uniform budget format that combines categorical state funds into one funding stream and provides additional information on all non-state funding sources;
 - A coordinated audit approach and standardized definitions of allowable costs; and,
 - A consolidated payment and reporting system.

- **Cross-Systems Technology.** Develop and implement a policy requiring agencies to collaborate on the development of cross systems technology systems to explore ways for data to further support youth programs.
- **Performance Measures.** Improve and expand the use of data and other performance measures to guide decision-making, enhance accountability, and drive system improvement.
- **Review of Request for Proposals.** Require state agencies to review every RFP through the lens of how it impacts disconnected youth.

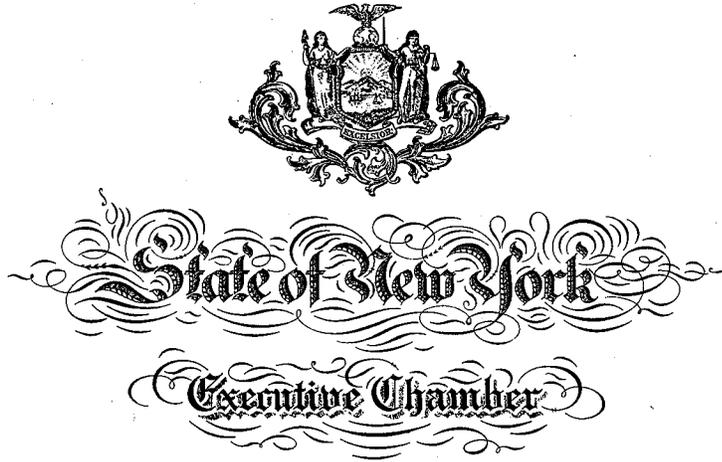
CONCLUSION

The Governor's Children's Cabinet recommends that the collaborative interagency and public and private work of the Children's Cabinet continue. These joint efforts have already led to significant accomplishments and streamlining of processes. In 2010, the Children's Cabinet will focus on:

- Partnering with state agencies to develop successful applications for federal early childhood initiatives.
- Promoting and simplifying New York's public health insurance programs for children and youth.
- Raising awareness among all state agencies to make the needs of disconnected youth a statewide priority by requiring agencies to consider the impact of proposed regulations and policies and funding opportunities on youth at risk of disconnection or already disconnected.
- Supporting youth to successfully transition from adolescence to adulthood, with a particular focus on youth exiting the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
- Coordinating the efforts of agencies to obtain youth's vital records, including birth certificates, social security cards, working papers, educational records, and photo identification to enable successful community reintegration.
- Ensuring seamless health care coverage for all eligible youth exiting the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, as well as stable housing and assistance in connecting with school and employment opportunities.
- Exploring the replication of the Master Contract model with multiple state agencies.
- Collecting data about children with incarcerated parents and creating a dashboard of indicators for youth who are disconnected from work and school.
- Training professionals in best practices to meet the unique needs of youth with incarcerated parents.
- Enhancing educational and career opportunities for youth in New York State.
- Identifying opportunities for increased cooperation and coordination among existing early childhood programs and services.
- Developing recommendations for the development of a statewide, unified early childhood data system.
- Completing the pilot test of the Quality Rating System for early care and education programs in preparation for implementing QUALITYstarsNY.

APPENDIX I

EXECUTIVE ORDER



No. 16

EXECUTIVE ORDER

ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNOR'S CHILDREN'S CABINET

WHEREAS, improving services to children in the areas of health, education, safety and general welfare is essential for their well-being and future and the success and development of this State; and

WHEREAS, the needs of children are increasingly complex, and the networks of services available to them are managed by a myriad of agencies, often with differing goals and objectives; and

WHEREAS, the foundation of human development is formed during a child's earliest years, and early childhood development requires a comprehensive, coordinated approach to a child's care and learning; and

WHEREAS, governmental programs must collaboratively develop and implement effective, efficient and coordinated service delivery to ensure that all of New York's children are given an equal opportunity to reach their full potential; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that New York State be made a better place for our children to grow up and live their lives; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to New York State children that issues affecting their well being be considered at the highest level of State government;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Eliot Spitzer, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of New York, do hereby order as follows:

1. There is hereby established the Governor's Children's Cabinet ("Children's Cabinet").
2. The Children's Cabinet shall consist of members appointed by the Governor, including the following individuals:

(a) the Director of State Operations, who shall serve as Chair;

(b) the Deputy Secretary for Education and the Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services, who shall serve as Vice-Chairs;

(c) the Deputy Secretary for the Environment, the Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, the Chairperson of the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, the Chairperson of the Consumer Protection Board, the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, the Commissioner of Health, the Commissioner of Labor, the Chairperson of the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, the Director of the Budget, the Commissioner of Criminal Justice Services, the Commissioner of Housing and Community Renewal, the Director of the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, the Commissioner of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, the Commissioner of Children and Family Services, the Commissioner of Mental Health, the Commissioner of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Executive Director of the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Commissioner of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the Secretary of State, and the Commissioner of Education.

(d) Each agency represented on the Children's Cabinet shall designate an individual to serve as the staff contact.

3. The Children's Cabinet shall oversee the development and implementation of reforms required for the success of New York's children. In particular, the Children's Cabinet shall advise and make recommendations to the Governor on the most effective policies and programs that promote the Governor's Birth to Five Agenda and other priorities, including but not limited to:

(a) implementation and expansion of a plan to provide universal health insurance for children;

(b) implementation of the phase-in of universal pre-kindergarten throughout New York State; and

(c) development of a legislative program focused on the Governor's Birth to Five Agenda.

4. There shall be external advisory groups to the Children's Cabinet, appointed by the Governor from time to time as he deems necessary, to assist and advise the Children's Cabinet on: (a) developing and implementing plans to effectuate universal access for children to health insurance and pre-kindergarten and other goals as identified by the Cabinet; (b) identifying policy, program, and systemic barriers that prevent State and local governments from effectively and efficiently serving the needs of children; and (c) formulating remedies and solutions to identified problems.

5. No member of the Children's Cabinet or external advisory groups shall be disqualified from holding any public office or employment, nor shall he or she forfeit any such office or employment by virtue of his or her appointment hereunder. Members of the Children's Cabinet and external advisory groups shall receive no compensation for their services. All members of the Children's Cabinet and external advisory groups shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor, and vacancies shall be filled by the Governor. The Governor may remove and name additional members to the Children's Cabinet and external advisory groups at his discretion.

6. Every agency, department, office, division or public authority of this State shall cooperate with the Children's Cabinet and

furnish such information and assistance as the Children's Cabinet determines is reasonably necessary to accomplish its purposes.



G I V E N under my hand and the
Privy Seal of the State
in the City of Albany
this twelfth day of
June in the year two
thousand seven.

BY THE GOVERNOR

Secretary to the Governor

APPENDIX II

CHILDREN'S CABINET ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Kenneth Adams	Business Council of New York State
Steven Blatt, MD	SUNY Upstate Medical University
Richard R. Buery, Jr.	Children's Aid Society
Geoffrey Canada	Harlem Children's Zone
Evelyn Castro	Long Island University – Brooklyn Campus
Janice Charles	The Children's Clinic
Kathleen DeCataldo	NYS Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
Susan Hager	United Way of New York State
Sally Herrick	
Wayne Ho	Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
Lourdes Iglesias	Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, Inc.
Richard Kreipe	University of Rochester Medical Center
Jennifer March-Joly	Citizens Committee for Children of New York, Inc.
Kristen Monroe	Cortland County Department of Social Services
Elba Montalvo	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc.
Warren Moses	
Maria Neira	NYS United Teachers
Gwen O'Shea	Health and Welfare Council of Long Island
Jennifer Rojas	The Children's Defense Fund
Karen Schimke	Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Elaine Gallina Spaul	The Center for Youth Services
Nancy Wackstein	United Neighborhood Houses of New York
Michael Weiner	United Way of Buffalo and Erie County
Meredith Wiley	Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
Peggy Wozniak	Binghamton City School District

APPENDIX III

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ingrid Allard	Albany Medical College
Evelyn Blanck	New York Center for Child Development
Phil Cleary	NYS United Teachers
Sherry Cleary	NYC Early Childhood Professional Development Institute
Pedro Cordero	Council of School Supervisors and Administrators
Rachel de Long	NYS Department of Health - Bureau of Maternal and Child Health
Chris Deys	Prevent Child Abuse New York
Denise Dowell	CSEA - Early Learning and Care Programs
Recy Dunn	NYC Department of Education - Early Childhood Services
Andre Eaton	Parent Child Home Program
Maggie Evans	Agri-Business Child Development
Bob Frawley	NYS Council on Children and Families
Dana Friedman	The Early Years Institute
Doris Fromberg	NYS Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators
Cindy Gallagher	NYS Education Department - Early Education & Reading Initiatives
Denise Harlow	NYS Community Action Association
Melanie Hartzog	NYC Administration for Children's Services -Division of Child Care & Head Start
Liz Hood	NYS Education Department - Office of Cultural Education
Mark Jasinski	NYS Prekindergarten Administrators Association
Jackie Jones	Infant/Toddler Specialist and Early Head Start
Ira Katzenstein	NYS Head Start Association
Kristen Kerr	NYS Association for the Education of Young Children
Debby King	1199 SEIU and NY Union Child Care Coalition
Nancy Kolben	Center for Children's Initiatives
Lee Kreader	National Center for Children in Poverty
Trudy Lackner	NYS Family Child Care Association
Linda Landsman	Rauch Foundation
James Langford	Children's Aid Society
Patti Lieberman	A.L. Mailman Foundation
Dina Lieser	Docs for Tots NY
Karen McGraw	NYS Council of School Superintendents
Jim McGuirk	Astor Services for Children and Families
Mary McHugh	NYS Office of Mental Health - Division of Children and Family Services
Anne Mitchell	Early Childhood Policy Research
Janice Molnar	NYS Office of Children and Family Services - Division of Child Care Services
Elba Montalvo	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Gwen O'Shea	Health and Welfare Council of Long Island
Monique Rabideau	NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Division of Child Support Enforcement
Sandy Rybaltowski	NYS Education Department, Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
Carol Saginaw	Early Care & Learning Council
Karen Schimke	Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Maryanne Schretzman	NYC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
Mary Shaheen	United Way of New York State
Meredith Wiley	Fight Crime Invest in Kids NY

APPENDIX IV
EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGIC PLAN

Strong Families

GOAL - All families of young children are supported in their parenting and have the knowledge, skills, confidence, and resources they need to raise their children in healthy and nurturing environments.

OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

OUTCOMES

Increase opportunities for all families to gain the knowledge, skills, confidence, and social supports needed to nurture the health, safety, and positive development of children.



ACTION

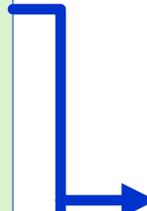
- Support the New York State Parenting Education Partnership's work to empower parents and caregivers through the provision of high-quality, accessible information that supports positive parenting practices, early learning, and healthy development.
 - Increase the availability, quality, and scope of parenting education activities.
 - Advance an outreach strategy that promotes parental understanding of child development and **QUALITYstarsNY**.
 - Develop a New Parent Kit.
 - Improve coordination and access to evidence-based family supports and services.
- Develop a statewide campaign to promote support for families that incorporates the core principles of parental resilience and enhancing protective factors as a framework for all health, education, and human service programs.
- Develop recommendations for policy and program changes to promote adequate and equitable income for all families with young children.

Increase the proportion of vulnerable/at-risk families that are identified and provided with needed supports and services.



ACTION

- Guide the establishment of a system of universal screening and the expansion of assessment activities that identify families in need of additional supports and services at the earliest possible point.
- Develop a system for providing comprehensive home visiting services for vulnerable expectant and new families.
- Develop recommendations for incorporating family and caregiver relationships into the delivery of mental health treatment services for young children.



CHILD-FAMILY OUTCOMES

- Increased number of families utilizing evidenced-based parenting education.
- Increased number of families utilizing home visiting programs with measurable outcomes.
- Increased percentage of families with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to nurture the health and well-being of their children.
- Increased percentage of families that seek, utilize, and actively participate in supportive services.
- Increased percentage of children living in safe and healthy environments.

SYSTEM OUTCOMES

- Increased number of evidence-based parenting programs.
- Increased number of home visiting programs with measurable outcomes.
- Availability of a New Parent Kit.
- Increased use of family support principles in all child and family service settings.
- Increased number of mental health providers trained in relationship-based mental health treatment of young children.

Healthy Children

GOAL - All young children are healthy and thriving, and have access to comprehensive health care services

OBJECTIVES

Expand the practice of healthy behaviors in the preconception, prenatal, and postpartum periods, including use of early and comprehensive prenatal care.

Promote optimal health and development in all domains, including social-emotional development, for young children.

Provide children with safe and healthy environments in which to grow and develop.

STRATEGIES

MONITOR

- Engage all pregnant women in high-quality, comprehensive, and early prenatal care, with an emphasis on reaching at-risk/vulnerable populations.
- Support efforts to eliminate Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) in New York State through universal screening of pregnant women.
- Increase protection, promotion, and support for breast feeding when mothers return to the workforce.

ACTION

- **Build capacity among service providers in all child-serving systems to identify and respond to the social-emotional needs of young children and their families.**
- Promote innovative models for the delivery of health care services within child-serving settings, including the co-location of social-emotional services, nutrition services, and early preventive screenings for vision, hearing, and dental.
- Increase efforts to ensure that children with specific vulnerabilities-including children in foster care, children in homeless families, and children whose parents are struggling with addiction, mental illness, and/or domestic violence are screened for developmental and social-emotional issues and given needed supports and services.

MONITOR

- Establish and strengthen cross-system partnerships to increase enrollment of young children in health insurance programs.
- Expand the use of medical and dental homes for all young children, including children with special health care needs.
- Provide early childhood oral health screenings for low-income children through dental partnerships and other educational and preventive measures.
- Promote routine developmental screening, including autism screening, of young children as part of well child care, consistent with AAP/Bright Futures guidelines.
- Monitor evolving national professional guidelines on expanded social-emotional screening for children and screening for maternal depression.

ACTION

- **Strengthen and expand current efforts to promote health and safety in early care and education settings through the development of standards, training, and consultation.**
- **Identify opportunities to collaborate with existing public health programs and initiatives on achieving key outcomes for young children, including healthy weight, nutrition, asthma, and social-emotional development.**

MONITOR

- Support efforts to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in New York State.

OUTCOMES

Child-Family Outcomes

- Increased percentage of children born in optimal health.
- Increased percentage of young children enrolled in adequate health care coverage.
- Increased percentage of young children receiving health care within a medical home.
- Increased percentage of children who have optimal physical, emotional, and cognitive development.
- Increased percentage of young children with good to excellent oral health.
- Decreased percentage of young children who are overweight or obese.
- Increased percentage of young children receiving social-emotional screening with a validated tool.
- Increased percentage of mothers of young children screened and appropriately referred for maternal depression.
- Increased percentage of young children free from preventable injury and/or illness.

Systems Outcomes

- Increased availability of social-emotional/behavioral consultation and treatment services.
- Increased number of child-serving providers trained in social-emotional development.
- Increased number of dentists conducting early childhood oral health exams.

Red text indicates a 2010 priority.

Early Learning

GOAL - All young children will be successful in school and life.

OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

OUTCOMES

Align the current diverse set of early care and education programs and services to become a unified and integrated system.

ACTION

- Establish **QUALITYstarsNY** as the framework for unifying and aligning New York State's system of early care and education.
 - Establish required criteria that ensure all New York State early care and education funding opportunities advance the 3 early learning objectives.
 - > Establish an interagency process for analyzing early learning program funding, and recommending changes to ensure integration and improved access and quality.
 - > Propose changes in UPK, child care, and other program funding and legislation to maximize support for more effective service integration.
 - Establish uniform standards for all early care and education programs.
 - > Establish Early Learning Standards as the foundation for all pre-service and in-service early childhood professional development and unified program standards and ensure they are integrated into instruction/program practices and aligned with SED learning standards.
 - > Ensure that **QUALITYstarsNY** incorporates early care and education program standards from OCFS, SED, Head Start/Early Head Start, and relevant New York City regulatory agencies .
 - > Develop uniform workforce standards that align with the program and Early Learning Standards.
 - Establish a uniform system of program monitoring for all early care and education programs.
 - > Recommend a common system for early care and education program monitoring by OCFS, SED, Head Start/Early Head Start, and relevant New York City regulatory agencies.
- Develop a more coherent statewide structure for the child care subsidy system that promotes greater efficiency, accessibility, and quality.
- Develop a coordinated system of screening, referral, and provision of health, social-emotional, disability, and family support services for children in early learning programs.

Increase the knowledge and competencies of the early care and education workforce.

ACTION

- Develop a unified competency-based professional development system for the early care and education workforce.
 - Develop a data system to approve training and track the qualifications and professional development of the early care and education workforce.
 - Articulate career pathways and build accountability and quality into leadership development and pre- and in-service teacher preparation/education.
 - Establish recruitment and retention strategies, including recognition and adequate compensation.
 - Revise the New York State Core Body of Knowledge.

Increase the ability of communities to effectively respond to the needs of young children and their families.

ACTION

- Develop strategies for increasing community awareness of the importance of early learning opportunities and for taking responsibility to increase those opportunities within their community (e.g., libraries, parks, museums, pediatrician offices, etc.)
- Develop community-based strategies to engage and empower parents and caregivers and support positive parenting practices that enhance early learning.

Child-Family Outcomes

- Increased percentage of eligible families receiving child care subsidies.
- Increased percentage of children who enter kindergarten ready for school.
- Increased percentage of children birth through five years of age enrolled in high quality of early care and education programs.
- Increased percentage of children who are competent in English Language Arts and Mathematics by the third grade.
- Increased number of children with special needs receiving consistent supports and services Increased number of children with special needs receiving consistent supports and services in integrated settings.

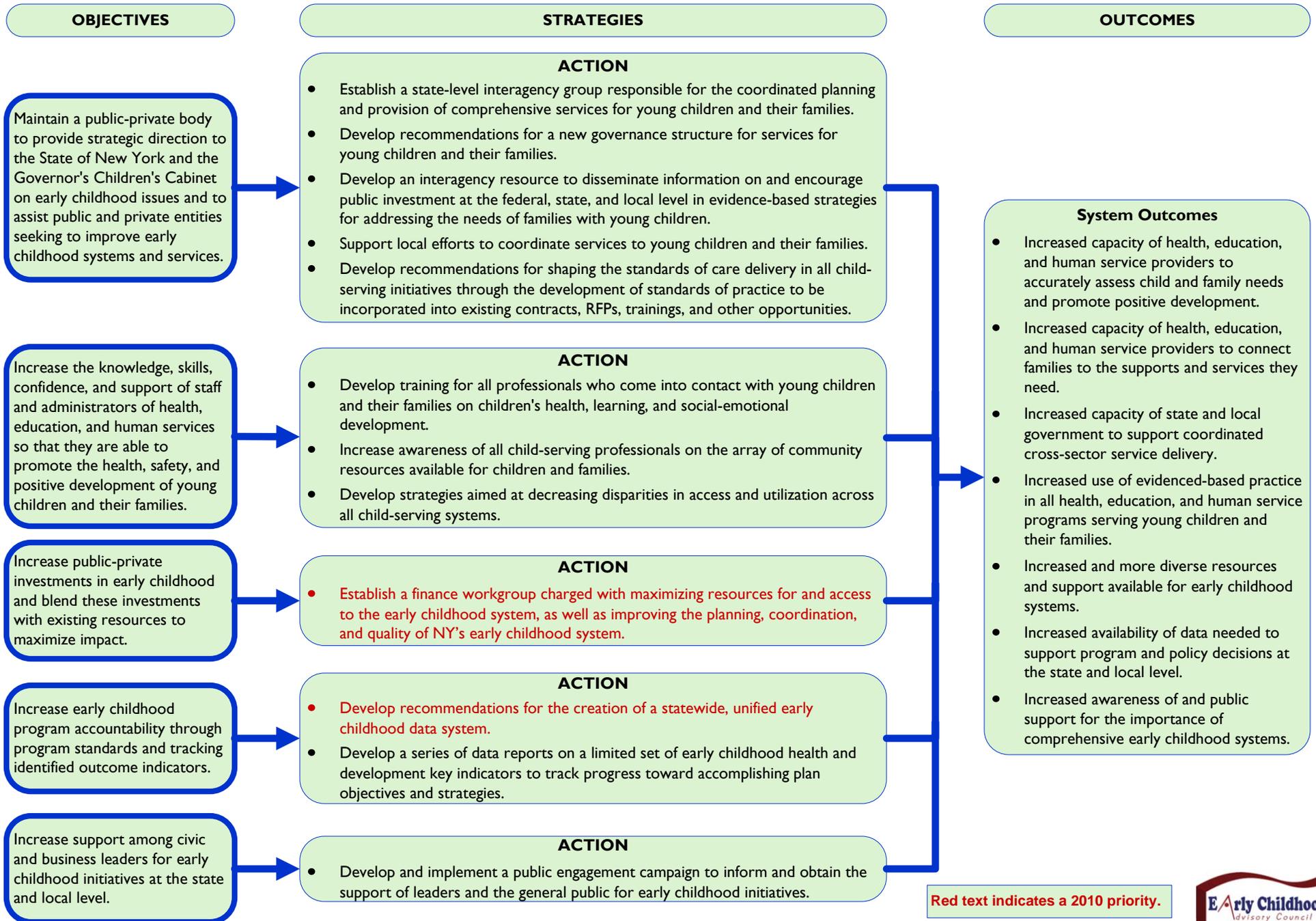
System Outcomes

- Increased public investment for early care and education.
- Increased coordination of funding and service delivery among early care and education programs and settings.
- Increased consistency of early care and education funding priorities among state agencies.
- All children have access to state-funded PreK and full-day kindergarten.
- Increased quality of early care and education programs.
- Increased use of appropriate, consistent, and comprehensive assessments by public and private early learning programs.
- Increased coordination of program monitoring among authorized agencies.
- Creation of an integrated data system.
- Increased number of early care and education professionals who have degrees and/or credentials in early care and education.
- Increased number of community initiatives that promote early learning.

Red text indicates a 2010 priority.

Coordinated & Responsive Systems

GOAL - Public and private sectors that serve young children and their families are committed to collecting and utilizing data to inform decisions; developing a sustainable infrastructure and a fully-trained, properly-compensated, and well-supported workforce; and establishing policies for accountable approaches that promote healthy children, strong families, and early learning.



APPENDIX V

CHILDREN'S CABINET MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

- **Enrollment Gains in Medicaid and Child Health Plus** – New York achieved a steady increase in children's enrollment with 160,000 new enrollments (or a 8% increase) from June 2009 to November 2009. These two programs now provide health care coverage to more than 2 million children.
- **Decline in the Number of Uninsured Children in New York** – The number of uninsured children under the age of 19 in New York decreased by 21 percent from 434,000 in 2007 to 343,000 in 2008 – a decline of 91,000 children.
- **Expanded Access to Health Care** – Medicaid coverage is now automatically extended for all 18, 19 and 20 year olds leaving foster care until their 21st birthday. As well, the Child Health Plus program expanded access to critical mental health services.
- **Federal Approval and Support for Child Health Plus Expansion to 400 Percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)** – Federal matching funds were authorized and provided for the 400 percent FPL expansion retroactive to September 2008 when the State implemented this expanded coverage. In addition, this approval included two new exceptions to the six-month waiting period for certain vulnerable children and youth.
- **The Connections to Coverage Campaign Brought Information on New York's Health Insurance Programs to More Than 40,000 Families in the State** – More than 900 events and activities were conducted to promote Child Health Plus and Medicaid throughout New York State.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AGENDA

- **Increase in the Number of Districts Implementing Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK)** – Since the creation of the Children's Cabinet, the number of children served by UPK has increased from 62,929 to 109,000 or by 58 percent.
- **Increased Flexibility** – With support from the Children's Cabinet and outreach by State Education Department (SED) senior staff, the Board of Regents amended regulations to allow districts to implement new UPK programs mid-year. This allowed newly eligible districts who were not able to start programming in the fall to make use of this funding opportunity.
- **Contract Simplification** – With support of the Children's Cabinet, a portion of UPK funds allocated to New York City were transferred directly to the NEW YORK CITY Administration for Children's Services (ACS). This allowed ACS to place the UPK funds directly into existing contracts that they have with child care centers and Head Start programs to provide UPK.
- **Early Learning Standards** – Learning standards for children participating in UPK and for children birth to five have been developed. Efforts are being made to align both of these sets of standards with the revision of the K-12 learning standards.
- **QUALITYstarsNY** – Collaborative work by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), SED, and their partners continued on the development of QUALITYstarsNY, New York's Quality Rating and Improvement System for center- and family-based early care and education programs. QUALITYstarsNY is currently being field tested in 13 communities around the State.

RE-ENGAGING DISCONNECTED YOUTH

- **Foster Youth Tuition Assistance Increase** – The enacted State Fiscal Year 2010-11 Executive Budget creates a new Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) “independent schedule”, increasing the award for youth in foster care.
- **College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACG)** – OCFS is pursuing funding under CACG to help increase the number of youth in care who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. OCFS is proposing to jointly develop with the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) a *Foster Care Corner* which would address specific issues related to youth in care and paying for college. The *Foster Care Corner* would be modeled after the current Military Corner on the HESC website. In addition, under this grant OCFS would: develop youth in care regional ambassadors; hold college and career planning forums for service providers, foster parents, as well as for youth in care; and, develop college preparation videos, posters and printed materials for human services professionals and disconnected youth.
- **College Class Enrollment** – In 2009, 44 OCFS youth enrolled in post GED/High School classes through the community college network.
- **Geographic Information Center (GIC)** – During 2009, information on higher education, vocational training and employment and training services/programs were added to the GIC, which already includes information on child care services, Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY) facilities and congregate care programs. The GIC enables local district and voluntary agency staff to view programs and services within a specified location.
- **Transfer of Educational Records** – Pilot programs (Rochester, Syracuse and New York City) have been established to ensure the transfer of educational records when a youth moves from a local correctional facility to a state correctional facility.
- **Career Development and Youth Office Launched** – The launch of a Career Development and Youth Initiatives Office within the Department of Labor (DOL) to serve as a single point of information on youth-specific issues and a single point of contact with SED, OCFS, and other youth-serving agencies and initiatives.
- **DOL Disconnected Youth Grants** – Distribution of \$5 million for a DOL Disconnected Youth RFP to serve about 1,600 *disconnected youth* ages 14 through 24 by expanding career awareness, providing dropout prevention, and developing work skills and competencies needed to motivate youth to achieve and succeed in their adult work life.
- **DOL Worker Grants** – A targeted \$15 million investment in a DOL Emerging and Transitional Worker RFP was distributed to provide emerging and transitional workers ages 18 and older with necessary skills and competencies to obtain employment and advance their careers. Populations targeted included young adults with disabilities or limited English proficiency who are out of school or have had contact with the criminal justice system.
- **Career Planning** – In 2009, OCFS conducted six regional educational forums throughout the State focused on post- secondary education and career planning for local districts, voluntary agencies, and foster parents working with youth transitioning from foster care or juvenile justice placements (six more forums are planned for 2010). Also, OCFS expanded upon its higher education resource directory to include a vocational training component and educational and vocational resources by region, and renamed this directory as “The New York State Education and Career Planning Resource Directory.”

- **CareerZone** – The expansion and continued marketing of DOL’s CareerZone website, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and the Career Portfolio tool to encourage career development and career planning to be used by youth- serving agencies, schools, and community-based organizations.
- **Summer Youth Jobs** – As a result of additional stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the number of youth enrolled in New York City’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) increased by 21 percent from 43,113 youth enrolled in 2008 to 52,225 youth enrolled in 2009. As a result of joint outreach effort by OCFS, OTDA, and DOL to all counties in New York, specialized services were added to the program for vulnerable youth (those in foster care, juvenile justice facilities or homeless), with 1,000 vulnerable youth enrolled in 2009. In addition, three out of four administrators surveyed noted that the additional federal funds available in 2009 made it possible to employ youth with high risk behavior who would not typically have been placed.
- **Subcommittee on Children with Incarcerated Parents** – The creation of an interagency subcommittee on children of incarcerated parents that bridges, for the first time, criminal justice and human services to address the needs of this population. This Subcommittee includes representatives from the following state agencies: OCFS, Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Council on Children and Families (CCF), Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), DOL, SED, Department of Health (DOH), Office of Court Administration (OCA), Division of Parole and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA), OTDA, and Division of the Budget (DOB), and advocacy organizations.
- **Data Collection** – The launch of a multi-agency data collection initiative where none existed before to quantify the number and needs of children with incarcerated parents.
- **Bridging Corrections, Courts, and Human Services to Meet the Needs of Children** – The compilation and dissemination of all family programs within DOCS to family court judges statewide. This effort has laid the groundwork for future cross-disciplinary initiatives to better meet the needs of children with incarcerated parents.
- **Workshop to Promote Connectivity Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents** – To promote connectivity between incarcerated parents and their children, DCJS and DOCS created a workshop providing information to case workers on the benefits and logistics of arranging visits between incarcerated parents and their children. The first workshop was conducted at NYPWA in January 2010 and was well attended and well received, and the group is looking for future venues to present.
- **“Be Sure Your Child is Cared For and Safe” Flyer** – Members of the Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee participated in the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children’s workgroup to develop a flyer to help incarcerated parents plan for their children, that in particular, describes and provides forms to designate a person in a parental relationship so that their children have caregivers who have the legal ability to make education and medical decisions for their children.

APPENDIX VI

MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILD WELFARE / JUVENILE JUSTICE

Joyce Burrell	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Steven Blatt	SUNY Upstate Medical University
Linda Brown	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Evelyn Castro	Long Island University
Janice Charles	The Children's Clinic
Karen Chavis	NYS Council on Children and Families
Janelle Cleary	NYS Council on Children and Families
Keturah Colbert	NYS Education Department
Kathleen DeCataldo	Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
Patti Donohue	NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives
Pat Fahy	NYS Department of Labor
Diana Fenton	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Felipe Franco	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Maria Galarza	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Victoria Gray	NYS Department of Labor
Jacquelyn Greene	NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Stan Hansen	NYS Education Department
Kim Heroth	NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Wayne Ho	Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
Lorraine Hogan	NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Richard Kreipe	University of Rochester Medical Center
Kristine Mesler	NYS Department of Health
Jennifer Marino Rojas	The Children's Defense Fund
Elana Marton	NYS Council on Children and Families
Maria Morris-Groves	NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Shelley Murphy	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Jenn O'Connor	Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Gwen O'Shea	Health and Welfare Council of Long Island
Paula Perna	NYS Department of Labor
Jennifer Pringle	Advocates for Children of New York
Kristin Riley	NYS Office of Mental Health
Kate Shoemaker	Harlem Children's Zone
Elaine Spaul	Center for Youth
Karen Schimke	Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Laura Velez	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Meredith Wiley	Fight Crime Invest in Kids NY
Gwen Wright	NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

APPENDIX VII

MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS

Serena Alfieri	Correctional Association of New York
Tania Allard	NYS Department of Health
Cate Bohn	NYS Council on Children and Families
Eric Brettschneider	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Karen Chavis	NYS Council on Children and Families
Janelle Cleary	NYS Council on Children and Families
Sharon Davis	NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Ana Enright	NYS Division of Parole
Pat Fahy	NYS Department of Labor
Pat Fitzmaurice	NYS Division of Parole
Travis Franti	NYS Division of the Budget
Elizabeth Gaynes	The Osborne Association
Jacquelyn Greene	NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Stan Hansen	NYS Education Department
Kim Heroth	NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Sally Herrick	
Lorraine Hogan	NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Timothy Howard	NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Tamar Kraft-Stolar	Correctional Association of New York
Tanya Krupat	The Osborne Association
Denise Landy	NYS Department of Labor
Toni Lang	Office of Court Administration
Myrna Lopez-Squillini	Rockland County Department of Probation
Elana Marton	NYS Council on Children and Families
Elba Montalvo	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Margaret Moree	The Business Council
Anthony Ng	United Neighborhood Houses of New York, Inc.
Rodney Pride	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Courtney Ramirez	NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Kate Shoemaker	Harlem Children's Zone
Nancy Simboli	NYS Department of Health
Alicia M. Smith-Roberts	NYS Department of Correctional Services
Elaine Spaul	Center for Youth
Jinnie Spiegler	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Allen Wong	NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services

APPENDIX VIII

2010 SHORT- AND LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKGROUP ON DISCONNECTED YOUTH

RECOMMENDATION 1: Charge executive agencies to prioritize the needs of disconnected youth via funding, policy making and continued cross agency collaboration.

STRATEGY:

- Issue an Executive Order.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Structure state funding opportunities across multiple agencies to maximize services for disconnected youth.

STRATEGY:

- Replicate models that have proven effective such as the “master contract” – a contract that combines multiple state funding streams into one contract with a non-profit provider to simplify administration and increase flexibility for the service provider.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Facilitate the attainment of youth’s vital records (including birth certificates, social security cards and DMV photo identification) to enable successful community reintegration.

STRATEGIES:

- Centralize ‘how-to’ information for providers and youth (e.g, enroll in school, obtain vital records, enroll in college, etc.).
- Develop and implement any necessary policies and Memorandums of Agreement to issue identification for youth released from care or incarceration.
- Develop a Youth in Care Web Site (providing a one-stop web site for ‘how-to’ info).

RECOMMENDATION 4: Institutionalize (at the state level) uniform discharge planning requirements for adolescents leaving juvenile justice, foster care, and criminal justice settings.

STRATEGIES:

- Require a discharge plan for all youth returning to the community that specifically identifies and facilitates stable, permanent housing, enrollment in school, an evaluation of eligibility for public benefits, and other necessary services.
- Require that any youth discharged from out of home placement to a setting other than his or her family is connected with a stable adult who is willing to be a long-term permanency resource for the youth.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Ensure that eligible youth continue to receive Medicaid once they return to the community.

STRATEGIES:

- Review the implementation of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Administrative Directive to ensure Medicaid coverage for youth returning to the community.
- Enable Medicaid coverage for juvenile offenders to be active upon return to the community.
- Create an automated process to ensure that youth have an open Medicaid case the day they are released to the community.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Enhance educational stability, attachment, and achievement among disconnected youth.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) equity for foster care youth and non-foster care youth.

- Work with the State Education Department (SED) to encourage school districts to accept credits earned by students in education programs in OCFS facilities.
- Require schools to expeditiously enroll certain at risk youth as well as provide enrollment assistance by helping youth obtain needed documents.
- Mandate that all youth under the age of 21 who are eligible under NYS Education Law participate in educational programming while incarcerated. A youth's stay in a correctional facility can be as long as several years and should be viewed as an opportune time for intense immersion in education and training.
- Promote Foster Care Higher Education On-line Resources. Launch an on-line resource of all the higher education tuition assistance programs available to youth who have been in foster care jointly developed by OCFS and Higher Educational Services Corporation.
- Explore opportunities for more timely transfer (electronic solutions) of student data (SED / OCFS).

RECOMMENDATION 7: Increase disconnected youth's access to employment opportunities.

STRATEGIES:

- Seek additional federal funds for the Summer Youth Employment Program and conduct outreach to ensure expanded participation by disconnected youth.
- Expand use of Department of Labor's (DOL) CareerZone in juvenile justice facilities and in county jails, and by aftercare providers.
- Create a New York State Career Guide for youth and adults that will serve as a companion to the CareerZone and JobZone websites. The Career Guide will provide information to build lifelong career decision-making skills to connect youth and jobseekers to resources covering all aspects of career exploration, and to outline what is necessary for success in the 21st century learning and work environments.
- Work with SED to require school districts to use CareerZone as part of the school curriculum.
- Fully utilize and publicize the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, particularly the new provisions that expand federal eligibility to disconnected youth.
- Implement a pilot in Rochester, Syracuse and New York City to increase employment readiness for students incarcerated in local jails in a partnership with Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), SED, and DOL.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Ensure supportive housing for homeless adolescents.

STRATEGY:

- Develop a cross agency vision for developing and maintaining supportive housing for homeless, disconnected youth, with a clear lead agency and clear partner agency roles—particularly Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and OCFS.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Highlight and address the needs of children with incarcerated parents across state agencies that have varying levels of responsibility for these youth.

STRATEGIES:

- Issue an Executive Order to institute cross agency collaboration to address the needs of children with incarcerated parents and designate DCJS with lead responsibility.
- Develop and adopt, across agencies, a set of 'guiding principles' for agencies and localities working with children of incarcerated parents.
- Provide training on best practice protocols (e.g., DCJS training curriculum) for those working with children of incarcerated parents.
- Conduct workshops throughout the state to raise awareness of the issues.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Gather data regarding children of incarcerated parents to identify these often hidden children and learn more about the services that can benefit them and their family members.

STRATEGY:

- Conduct survey of Department of Correctional Services' (DOCS) inmates to determine the number of children with incarcerated parents and the issues faced by these children.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Promote connectivity between incarcerated parents and their children.

STRATEGIES:

- Pilot the use of videoconferencing as a visiting option for children in foster care.
- Expand creative connectivity opportunities, e.g., parents recording books on tape.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Develop a plan to reduce teen births and improve outcomes for teen parents and their children with a special emphasis on the needs of high-risk foster care youth.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide comprehensive training to adults who work with foster care youth on the sexual risk-taking behavior found in this population.
- Provide all foster care teens access to needed mental health services.
- Develop strong connections between comprehensive home visiting programs and pregnant/parenting foster care teens.
- Replicate successful models providing an array of services for parenting teens in foster care and their children.
- Provide sex education and access to reproductive health services, including contraceptives, to all children and youth in foster care.
- Evaluate pregnancy prevention programs for their effectiveness in the foster care population.
- Use the National Youth in Transition Database to capture needed information on pregnant and parenting youth and youth who have aged out of foster care.
- Fund pregnancy prevention and parenting programs that provide coordinated mentoring experiences.