



## An Overview of ACS's partnership with the DOE

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*Over two decades of keeping New York City families safely together*

*Ysmerlyn Murshed, Director Early Defense*

# CFR'S MISSION

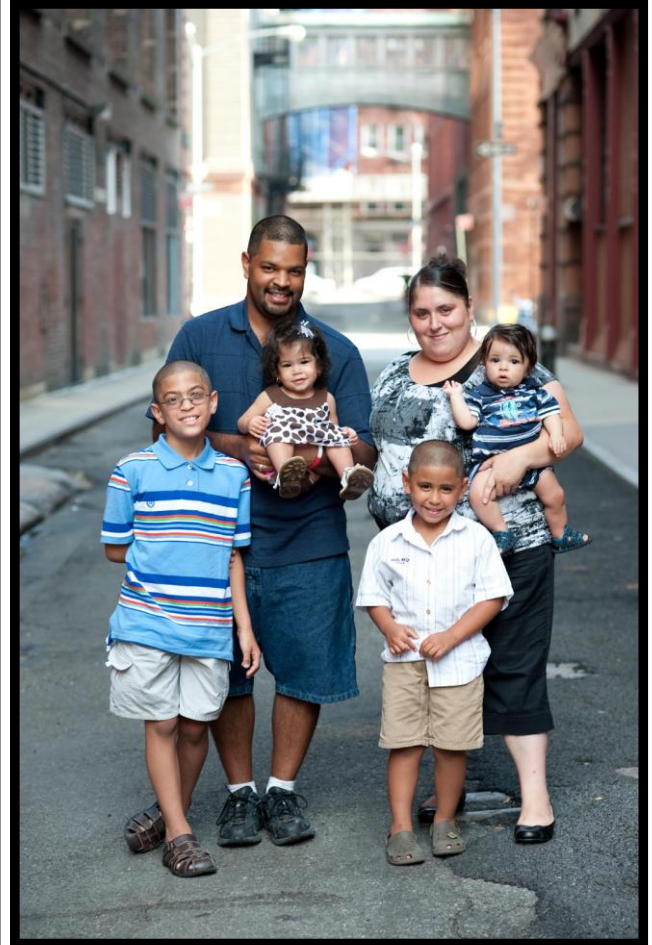
**CFR's mission is to defend the rights of parents and youth through free, holistic interdisciplinary legal and social work representation.**

We fight for the integrity of families, primarily low-income Black and brown parents and youth targeted by systems of family regulation and incarceration. CFR's model supports parents in raising their children with self-determination, reduces reliance on the foster system and youth incarceration, and addresses the underlying causes of family instability. We represent parents and youth in the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens; we provide training and technical assistance to more than 500 practitioners annually from around the country; and we work to promote systemic change that dignifies and benefits youth and families.



# WHAT WE DO

- CFR is a **holistic legal** and social work advocacy organization **founded in 2002**
- Interdisciplinary parent teams and peer/parent advocate support
  1. Provider of indigent defense for parents in neglect/abuse cases in Manhattan, Queens, Bronx, and Staten Island and a secondary provider in the Bronx for both respondent and non-respondent parents.
  2. Youth Defense (children 7-17 years of age) (Queens, Manhattan, Bronx)
  3. State Central Register representation (4 boroughs) which helps amending any investigation or reports regarding ACS
  4. Early Defense (4 boroughs)
  5. Home for Good Practice (Immigration, Civil and Criminal Defense)



# THE LANDSCAPE

“Citywide, almost 45% of Black and Latinx children experience an investigation of their family by age 18. **In a city where about 60% of children are Black and Latinx, they account for about 90% of children in the system.** As ACS’s 2019 race equity plan documented, Black families are less likely than other families to be mandated to services in place of removal, are disproportionately separated, and experience longer spans in foster care.”

(Narrowing Front Door Report, December 2022, *available at* [https://www.narrowingthefrontdoor.org/\\_files/ugd/9c5953\\_2a2cf809f5d34d989b7ec4459e72930a.pdf](https://www.narrowingthefrontdoor.org/_files/ugd/9c5953_2a2cf809f5d34d989b7ec4459e72930a.pdf))

**FURTHERMORE:** ACS investigates about 55,000 families annually. **Of those, nearly 80% in New York City alone — turn out to be unfounded or false, according to city data. 7.6% of investigations end up in court.**



# KYR if ACS Knocks at your Door

- ACS has certain powers (emergency removals, inter agency collaboration, investigations and prosecutorial powers, emergency entry orders)
- Seek Legal Representation and Support!
- Regardless of you have representation or not
  - No information given to ACS is confidential and can be used to prosecute you
  - ACS is supposed to give you a Notice of Investigation
  - ACS to provide information about **where to access legal services for parents or guardians** after ACS makes contact for the first time with such parents or guardians **at the onset** of an ACS child protective investigation, or an ACS child protective response. (City Council Bill Enacted March 2025 )
  - Gather information (first and last name of CPS, CPS supervisor, concerns on ACS call with specificity)

# You have rights!

- Home
- Yourself
  - The right to stay silent/not incriminate yourself (5th Amendment)
  - Medical and Mental Health Services
  - Participation in the investigation
- Your Children
  - Medical and Mental Health
  - Strip Searches
  - Interview



# ACS and the DOE

Regulation of the Chancellor, Number: A-750, CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT PREVENTION

## II. PROCEDURES FOR COOPERATING WITH CPS INVESTIGATIONS OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR MALTREATMENT

- CPS worker may be provided with access...to all **student records** relating to the child who is named in the report and his or her sibling(s) if they attend the same school...
- CPS worker must be permitted to conduct an investigation. If requested by the CPS worker **or the child**, a member of the school staff familiar to the child may be present to observe any interview with the child.
- Where a CPS worker wishes to **question a student** about an allegation of suspected child abuse or maltreatment against the student's parent, **the school must not contact the student's parent.**
- **CPS workers may remove a child's outer garment** (but only if ) there is a second CPS worker, school official or school nurse present



## **Preventing Educational Neglect and Supporting Families for Attendance Improvement**

**Joint guidance from NYC Public Schools and NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS)**

**March 2025**

- When is an SCR report warranted?, Skipping School, School Avoidance
- Family Assessment Program (FAP) at [fapinquiry@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:fapinquiry@acs.nyc.gov) or the Support Line [connect@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:connect@acs.nyc.gov)
- The school may assist with referrals to support the student through a family or community health provider or seek assistance **via the Support Line**

# Strategies to Minimize Harm

- Talk with child
  - ABC might happen. You can consent or not consent to 1- interview 2- body check.
- Contact School
  - Talk and Email
  - Ask school personnel
    - Ask my child if he/she/they want to talk to ACS FIRST
    - Be present for interview
    - Who is your lawyer ?
- Assert rights with ACS CPS pr ACS FCLS
  - Script “I do not consent to interviews or strip searches of my children at their school.”  
via writing
- Consider affirmative litigation - <https://fjlc.org/>

# CFR in Action

CFR's policy work is focused on reducing harm for families experiencing family policing and separation and ultimately dismantling systems of family policing, surveillance, and separation altogether.

- Family Miranda Rights Act
- Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act
- Maternal Health, Dignity, and Consent Act
- Preserving Family Bonds Act
- NYS Cash Alliance



# Get involved

- JMAC for Families ( <https://jmacforfamilies.org/> )
- RISE ( <https://www.risemagazine.org/> )
- Voices of Women (VOW) ( <https://vownow.org/> )
- Black Families Love Unite (BFLU) ( <https://vownow.org/> )

# THANK YOU!

*Any comments or questions?*



## Contact us

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