

Narrowing the Front Door

By the Numbers:

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF NEW YORK CHILD WELFARE ON FAMILIES

New York has been successful in reducing family separation and the foster care census. But CPS overreach continues, subjecting thousands of falsely accused families to invasive, lengthy and harmful investigations each year.

Over the past 20 years, foster care admissions in New York have decreased by 60%; however, CPS investigations have declined by only 6% during this period.

60% DECREASE IN
FOSTER CARE ADMISSIONS

6% DECREASE IN
CPS INVESTIGATIONS

Mandated reporter requirements encourage overreporting to the SCR because workers fear failure-to-act consequences, such as professional suspension and criminal liability. This widespread reporting triggers family policing practices that infringe on parental rights and disproportionately affect communities of color.

This policing response to poverty is not only incredibly harmful to families, it also wastes valuable taxpayer dollars to punish rather than strengthen families.

- **85% of investigations are due to accusations of “neglect”** which often conflate poverty & race with perceived child maltreatment.
- **76% of investigations were deemed unfounded** due to a lack of evidence to substantiate the claims of maltreatment.
- NYS spends an estimated **\$348 million annually** on these investigations of innocent, low-income families.

Imagine the good we could do by reallocating this money to provide families with what they say they need to thrive. Families are clamoring for direct cash supports, childcare, and safe, affordable housing, among other concrete material needs.

THERE IS A GROWING CONSENSUS:

It’s time to reexamine and reimagine our approach to child and family wellbeing.

With legislative champions, we can stop punitive policies and redirect public funds to expand community-driven supports that keep New York families intact and ensure that the small percentage of children at risk of physical harm remain safe and supported.

NEW YORK STATE IN 2022

192,700

children were subject to traumatic investigations

15%

Only 15% of investigations were related to suspected child abuse

85%

85% of investigations were due to accusations of “neglect” which often conflate poverty & race with child maltreatment

76%

76% of investigations were deemed unfounded due to a lack of evidence

\$348 M

NYS wastes an estimated **\$348 million annually** on these investigations of innocent, low-income families

6x

Black families are 6x as likely to be investigated as White families

EVERY 3 MINUTES

A family experiences a CPS investigation

1/2

50% of Black children will experience a CPS investigation by age 18

Published April 2024

www.rhfdn.org
info@rhfdn.org
twitter.com/rhfdn_NY