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Yes, please. What? Okay, I'm gonna go ahead and get started. I wanna say thank you everyone for joining us tonight.

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I'm gonna go ahead and get started with our. Interpretation announcement. So we have Spanish interpreters here working on a separate line.

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Thank you to them for being here with us and providing this vital service to our families. I would ask that all participants please speak slowly to allow the interpreters to keep up.

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The interpreters will now announce instructions for attendees who may wish to dial into the Spanish line at this time.

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Hello, good evening. And we won the following message of be said and Sponge offering interpretation services.

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When I notice, Yes, thank you.

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Thank you, Marcela. First I want to thank everyone for being here. This evening, we really appreciate you coming to your our know your right seminar.

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My name is Whitney Tucson. I'm the president of CEC. 30. We represent the school district 30 in Queens and I want to just thank our presenters from JMAC for families coming this evening to give this vital information.

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To our community. So I'm not going to take up any more of their time because they have a lot of information that they want to share with us tonight.

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So I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Kristen and Kamaria.

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Thank you so much, ladies.

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Hi everyone, thank you so much for allowing us in to this space today. We are going to get started with sharing some slides.

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So Kristen, whenever you're ready, feel free to. Put the slides up for folks to see, but my name is Kamar Excel.

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I you see her pronounced and I'm the director of project management here at JMAC for Families.

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I will start today with just like a grounding of like why this work is important and for folks to be able to know what their rights are and especially you know with the communities that we serve.

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At JMAC, which is centering black and brown folks, we have experience the harms of family separation surveillance.

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So I'll pause there to let Chris and introduce themselves and then we'll get started.

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Yeah, and I do wanna know. Come if you can show the slides. That would be helpful. Thank you.

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So my name is Kristen and Nandez. I am the director of policy and advocacy here with Jay Mac for Families.

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I'm an attorney that worked in parent events prior to entering this policy space and I'm very excited to be here with you all today.

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So we were supposed to be joined by our executive director, Joyce Mcmillan, who's pictured here on the slides.

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But our fearsome leader, our fearless leader is unfortunately under the weather. And so you are, will proceed with Kamari and myself.

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Nice. Amazing. Thanks so much, Kristen. So who are we for those who aren't familiar with our work at JAMA for families?

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We are a group of impacted parents and youth social workers, attorneys, lawyers. Folks who work in media, grassroots individuals who have all come together to be able to do the work of ultimately uprooting, shrinking, and then abashing what we know and what we call family policing system.

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As you hear us use that term, family policing today, it's really to show the ways that, our current child welfare system as is commonly called, surveils criminalizes and punished as families of color for what we know is systemic harm in a generational harm that really, you know, has its

roots in, the afterlife have been slaveman and indigency ratio that then gets put onto individual families as a

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problem, but we know systemically issues of poverty, our failures of our government and of our economic system.

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So just to kind of ground us in who are these spaces speaking to you today. So, continue with our grounding, right?

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We'll start there. We'll get into more of the actual meat and potatoes of like what are your rights when you are navigating and experiencing ACS and then we'll in kind of on a, you know, call to action to you all of, you know, whether that be support that folks are seeking and you know how to say involved with the work that we do.

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Either you know through our plan coalition, our Hill program and we'll you know also share some other resources.

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I want to call your attention to the chat at any point in time. Feel free to introduce yourselves in there if you'd like to share, you know, where you're joining from, your name, etc, as much information or as little as you feel comfortable.

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And then also you are free to at any point in time be using the QA function to kind of stack questions.

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And then when we get to the end of our time tonight, we'll go ahead and take questions from that QA.

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Any questions that we don't get to, you know, we'll try and find ways to share that information out.

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So little bit more on what family policing is. So we define this as a system of surveillance, criminalization and punishment that weaponizes ideas of safety and the effects of family separation to control people's behavior.

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Specifically those that are just disproportionately targeting Black, Indigenous, Latina, and low income and disabled parents.

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The system includes and is driven by child protective services, agents, police, mandated reporters, service providers, lawyers, judges, and lawmakers.

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And we really see family per releasing in tandem with other systems of surveillance such as a criminal legal system and these things are, you know, we tend to look at them.

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Historically, as budding systems, but really revolving doors to show the way that like surveillance is constant, especially in the lives of the folks that we center and our work.

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And what does this mean for families, right? Means that families are entering into the family policing system for many different avenues, right?

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From something as simple as being able, to ask for care and support and that, you know, simple outreach for help, which we know many people are struggling with, then leads to, you know, years of investigation and criminalization of a family.

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And we know that like children don't come with instruction manuals, right? Parenting is very, very hard.

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And we live in a system that doesn't acknowledge that and instead, you know, says you are feeling as a parent versus the systems around us are actually the failures.

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And so I can take it from here, Kamaria. And so in thinking about, you know, some of the things that come Maria has touched upon, right, and thinking about how invasive, right, a child protective investigation or an investigation by New York, New York City called the Administration for Children's Services or ACS.

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That's the body that, is in charge of investigating and often prosecuting, cases involving abuse or neglect or harm to children.

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In New York City, right. Because ACS can be so invasive, right? It's vitally, it's vital to know, you know, what it looks like when ACS gets involved in your family and what your rights are.

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So. An ACS investigation starts with a phone call to a state hotline. So it's a New York State hotline called the State Central Register where people can call and anonymously report allegations of harm to children.

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And so. As the slide indicates, New York State receive a hundred 48,048 reports in 2022.

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This, didn't investigate every single one of those reports, but those are calls made into, this hotline that and those phone calls often initiate, right?

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ACS starting to investigate a family. So only if a report meets certain criteria, will there be an investigation.

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And so that criteria as defined by, the child protective specialist manual for New York State. It's allegations made by the caller.

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That if true must constitute. Child abuse or child maltreatment. Right, and we see that can mean a range of things that can mean, for example, leaving a child home alone or, leaving a child in the care of a, an older sibling that, you know, Might not meet the states or ACS's definition of an appropriate caretaker.

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That could be not having food in your fridge, right? Your child goes to school and might say, I'm hungry.

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Right, that can lead to an investigation or. Potentially right having a cluttered home could lead to an investigation, right?

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There whole slew of things that can lead and trigger a call to the State Central Register and these calls can be made by anyone.

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Typically in New York State, those calls are largely made by what's called a mandated reporter and a mandated reporter is someone who has a legal obligation to call the State Central Register if there is suspicion of harm to a child and that includes teachers, school personnel.

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Doctors, therapists, all are mandated reporters and their whole, there's a whole long list of who's considered a mandated reporter in your state.

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And so If there's an investigation by ACS. ACS has 60 days to investigate. So of this number of the 148,000.

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Reports received in New York State in 2,022 approximately a hundred 29,000 actually had an investigation which means the remaining where I either it was determined that there was no need for an investigation there wasn't enough information or

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A good chunk of those, 12,931 were diverted to a program called family assessment response or in New York City.

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Collaborative assessment response, engagement and support also known as CARES. In those cases, there was a call made to the register.

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There was no investigate, of no formal investigation by ACS, but parents are offered voluntary services, right?

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Even though those cases don't move forward. Your participation in those programs could mean further investigation and could potentially lead to family court involvement.

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So even if there isn't an actual, investigation of your family, right? And you move into a program called CARES, that could still potentially lead to further involvement, including a case filed against you in family court further down the line.

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So in those cases where ACS did accept a case for investigation, right? After investigating, ACS will determine whether or not the report is indicated or unfounded.

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Unfounded basically means that there's no believable evidence of neglect or abuse or harm to a child.

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Where is an indicated case means that ACS did find by and this is a this standard by a fair preponderance of evidence or more likely than not that there is abuse or neglect.

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That does not mean that a court of law or a judge has determined that there is an actual case of abuse or neglect.

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But that there's some evidence of harm. Right, that could escalate and become a court case.

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However, of the investigations that ACS did make into 2022 76.1% were unfounded meaning that there was no credible evidence.

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I know that is kinda beyond the scope of this conversation. If your case is considered indicated for neglect, there will be a record.

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Of your name and your case kept with the State Central Register. Great. That will remain. On this registry that can be seen by certain.

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That can be seen by ACS and can be seen by adoption or foster agencies. So if you decided you wanted to adopt a child or foster a child, right, that report can be seen.

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After 8 years. For an indicated case of neglect. Your cases automatically sealed on the register but it's not expunged.

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So employers ACS adoption and foster agencies can see that there was some kind of ACS involvement, but can't get information as to the details of that involvement.

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If your case is unfounded, the record is automatically sealed, but it will stay on that register for 10 years.

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And if your case is indicated, you'll receive a letter. Saying that your case was indicated.

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For allegations of abuse or neglect. And you'll have an opportunity to amend that record in a fair hearing.

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But once you receive that letter, you have 90 days from the date on that letter. To provide notice that you plan to challenge that record.

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And so you can learn some more about this process here at this. Link.

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To get a clear sense of how that process works, right? But it is important to note that there is a record and a registry even if ACS does not move forward with your case, right?

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So say there's an ACS investigation. ACS deems that your case is indicated, right?

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Outcomes very across the board. ACS can say, you know, this is indicated, but we won't be involved any further.

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Or ACS can say, you know, this case was indicated and we recommend that you engage in these voluntary services which are voluntary but also there could be repercussions if you don't participate in those services.

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And then ACS could file a case in family court. What's called an Article 10 case, which is then.

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Could have a lot of different long term outcomes and short term outcomes. That very depending on the allegations and, you know, your level of participation in the court process.

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That what happens after an investigation if there's a family court case is a training for a different day.

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I will note that first date in court if ACS does decide to file a case against you. And involving your family.

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Your first day in court, a judge will make temporary decisions, Barry and I stress temporary decisions about the kinds of contact you can have with your child during the life of your case, which could last years.

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Next slide.

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So going off of, you know, the very rich information, and oftentimes, right, undisclosed information when we talk about these cases, right?

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That everything Kristen just laid out is information that people don't find out until they're in the midst and typically trying to navigate these things.

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So, you know, if, if you're feeling like, whoa, that was a lot, like, I'm happy that you're here and we're able to talk through these things.

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Cause yeah, it's just so important. But going off of what Kristen just laid out, we're able to talk through these things. Cause yeah, it's just so important.

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But going off of what Kristen just laid out, it's like, what does an investigation look like?

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Right now that you have a little bit more about information now about like, okay, how can this thing get started?

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What is, you know, the kind of on the ground, look of an investigation. So I think people are most familiar with home visits, right?

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And I want to just from the top of this slide, just say that all of these are extremely. Intrusive methods and tactics, which is why we say surveillance and policing, but one home visits, right?

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So, and that's not just like, you know, keep will knock on your door and you know, ACS, and it's like, oh, what's going on, right?

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No, this is in your home, checking your refrigerator, your cabinets, assessing to see if there's dirty laundry around.

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Oftentimes, another kind of funnily neck once ACS is in your home as if they notice substances or even prescription medication, right?

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Like everything once ACS is in your door can be used against you essentially. Phone calls. I've had parents tell me that they've gotten calls outside of, phone calls. I've had parents tell me that they've gotten calls outside of even ACS operating hours, right?

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Like There have been many stories and we work with a lot of parents that have actually had, you know, their children taken away right after giving birth and that is something that ACS does do.

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Very commonly. For is interviewing your children at school, which is why it's so important that after tonight you take the information that you learn and explain to your children, you take the information that you learn and explain to your children, you know, what ACS is.

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That's a common practice that you learn and explain to your children, you know, what ACS is.

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That's a common practice that now many parents in our network are taking on because they've been shocked to send out many parents in our network are taking on because they've been shocked by ACS showing up to their network are taking on because they've been practice that now many parents in our network are taking on because they've been shocked by ACS showing up to their child school and asking them I'm speaking to your neighbors.

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your relatives, school staff officials. And all folks in this case have the right to refuse to speak to ACS, but as Kristen was saying, boy, that doesn't mean that that's not without.

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Consequence, right, or perceived. Yeah, issues with you being quote unquote private, right? But it is something that is well within your right not to do.

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Body checks? This was something that, you know, even during COVID we saw virtual body checks where parents were being asked to show under diapers via the camera or, you know, to literally show their child's body also happens in person as well.

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Very intrusive and we know that that has repercussions that can last and stay with the child for forever, essentially, right?

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That's a trauma. At this next one here is request for medical records and information. Many a times violates HIPAA, even if you are citing something, we often see the intersections of, you know, maybe language barriers where you are not really sure what you're assigning or, you know, even if it's written in the language that you commonly speaker can read in, sometimes.

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right, legal language is very confusing. And if you don't have that knowledge, it's very hard to understand what is on the paper in front of you.

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So that's another major thing. We always recommend that if you are unsure of what you're signing to hold off to seek legal counsel.

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But before you, you know, sign your name on anything. And the last one here is background checks and reviewing prior ACS history, which Kristen just like so beautifully laid out of like this is not, private information, right?

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ACS has access to be able to go back and review that and so do foster agencies. Anything you want to add to this slide but like I missed or just to emphasize.

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Yeah, I also wanna note right. Those phone calls are not just to in those conversations are not limited to you, right?

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ACS will often try to, contact your relatives, other loved ones, other people in the home, your neighbors, if you live in a shelter, shelter workers, right?

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And so It's also very important to remember, right, you can control. The information that you give, right?

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But ACS will also seek other means to try to get information and a lot of that information. Will be used to draft what's called a petition.

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Which is a legal document or can be used to draft what's called a petition, which is a legal document that initiates a case against a parent or involving a family in family court and ACS will document.

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Right. Home visits, phone calls. Interviews in their notes in their case notes. And those case notes can become evidence in a court of law through various hearings and even at a trial.

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Where you're fighting allegations of, harming your child, right? So it's important to remember, right, that ACS workers are creating this record.

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Of every point of contact that they have with you with your children's schools, with your loved ones, but There are things that you can do to try to.

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Take control over this process and, and to, exercise your rights in this process, which brings us to our next slide.

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So your rights in an ACS investigation. So you do not have to speak to ACS or child policing agents.

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You do not have to speak to the person who knocks on your front door and says like, oh, hey, I'm hoping to talk to you about your child.

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Great. You actually don't have an obligation to speak to ACS about the allegations in this case at any point.

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Right, they cannot force you to give information about their allegations, but we'll talk a little bit about the risks of doing that.

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So that not only will you be armed with knowledge of your rights, but also an understanding of the potential consequences if you were to exercise those rights, right?

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You do not have to participate in services. So very often ACS will come and we'll say, you know, these are allegations and this is your service plan.

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These are the services that we want you to participate in to kind of get us out of your life. Right, and you do not have to participate in those services ops in a court order.

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You do not have to participate in a mental health evaluation, absent a court order. You do not have to participate in a drug screen or drug use evaluation or assessment also called KSAC.

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You don't have to do that without a court order. And you don't have to comply with drug screens.

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Unless there's a court order.

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You do not have to allow ACS into your home. With out a court order. Right. You can ask.

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ACS to produce a court order called an entry order that would authorize them to come into your home and search your home but you do not have to allow them into your home and even if they are with police officers you do not have to allow them into your home unless they have a court order or a warrant.

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You do not have to produce your child for ACS questioning. And you do not have to let ACS physically examine your child or children.

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Thanks so much, Kristen. I think one of the major things is really getting folks to understand about the court order, right?

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Because that's I mean, we don't know that. We don't know that that's, you know, that you can say to these agents when they come to your door and it's a very right scary frightening thing and you know if they have police officers to be like, okay, actually you legally need this thing to be able to enter my home.

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So if you know you don't get anything else from us today, I hope you're getting a lot, but also the importance of like a court order.

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You know.

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I also wanna add Kamar really quickly. I think in less than I believe the statistic is in less than 1% of cases.

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Do ACS workers actually get a core order before entering your home?

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Yeah, and what a difference that makes to like also hold them to kind of boo and be like, no, you're missing a part of your job.

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I didn't know it was less than 1%. And given the stats that you gave earlier, it becomes scary, right?

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Cause that's so few people that then are asking them to produce that core order. Reminder folks that if you have questions at this point to be, you know, flooding them in the Q&A portion and we'll, you know, start to get to those in a little bit.

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And feel free also to, you know, use the chat if things are coming up for you.

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To use that function. So, you know, continuing on what are your rights during an investigation?

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I think the number one thing here on the slide that so all of these are super important but one that we often times realize that folks are missing is you can ask to speak to a lawyer or legal advocate before speaking to ACS.

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As a part of the send out, and information that we'll share, we work very closely with the Defender Services in New York and they're very close partners of ours and we often talk about how important early legal counsel is and so all of those folks have early defense teams and it's so important to be able even if you don't think and I talked to Aaron talk the time they're like I had no idea they

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were gonna be in my life for this long. So even if you feel like you can back them yourselves, even though we know that more times and not, families are not doing anything wrong, just experiencing the symptoms of poverty and you're like, I have not harmed in my children in any way still seek legal counsel, right?

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Having, legal support to, help demystify the process to help get at, you know, many of the things that were on the previous slide that Kristen broke down.

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It's just so important to have. And the second one here is you can ask ACS to get a court and once again, right, to enter your home, re emphasizing that.

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You can actually more time before talking to ACS, right? Sometimes it can feel so urgent right there after door is happening right there's right sometimes it can feel so urgent right there after door is happening right now so it's very big and scary but you always have that right to be like, your door is happening right now, feels very big and scary.

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But you always have that right to be like, actually I need more time. Please come back. At whatever time as you have the court order.

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This fourth one here in the screen, you can ask ACS to use an interpreter to communicate in the, which most comfortable with you.

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So, so, so important. We also know that, you know, IS another metric of family policing in those entities often work very closely with ACS.

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And so sometimes folks don't know that they can act for that rate, but it's so important.

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Same with, you know, utilizing services such as ASL that is a language, right? So ensure that you have whatever communication interpreter is needed for you, you can advocate for that.

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I mean, that's how also ACS is able to get away with a lot of things, right?

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If we're not speaking the same language, if a barrier is there, you know, there's room for tons of correction to happen.

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And so you want to make sure that you are protected in that way. And so I never, no, fourth one here in the screen, you can ask ACS to return at a time that we're especially once again and then you can provide connect access to provide information about the allegations against you.

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I feel like so many times silks are saying I didn't even know like why did I get the call who called on me what am I being accused of and that is information that you are allowed to call who calls on me, what am I being accused of? And that is information that you are allowed to be privy to.

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So please, you know, once again, being accused of and that is information that you are allowed to be privy to.

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So please, you know, once again, advocate for yourself and act like, you know, what are the allegations that are against me?

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And, be adamant about receiving those and that goes right along right with legal support and council so that you know what you're being accused of and it you know helps inform your case a lot more.

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Kristen passing it to you to re emphasize, you know, add to any of these.

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Yeah, I think you've hit it all. Always wanna re-emphasize, you can ask to speak with the lawyer ACS won't provide you a lawyer you will have to independently reach out to a defender service or private counsel, but you should absolutely speak with a lawyer or advocate and in your conversations with ACS workers if you connect with the defender office you can always ask to have an advocate present during those

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conversations.

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Let's move along to the next slide, which is under say understanding and evaluating the risk, right?

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So just because. You have the right to do all of these things doesn't mean it's not without.

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Complication, right? So, consequences for non compliance, right? So just because you say, Hey, you need to come back here with a court order.

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They have to produce that of course, but it doesn't mean that it won't. Impact the way that your pace takes shape in the sense of like.

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Hostility or ways that you know. Agents will speak to you or you know framing you as difficult.

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Or oftentimes seeing those things as more guilty because you're going through measures to protect yourself right so want to be clear that just because you do all of these things.

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Does not essentially mean you will come out on the other side with a quick case, but it does really help to support you and your family in the sense of you are advocating for your needs from the beginning.

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Consequences also hear the second point for sharing information. So removing your children, using your words against you and the information that other provide against you and that we know that's a tactic that ACS uses all the time.

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Well they'll say oh hey your neighbor told me this or hey when I came up to the school your child told me this piece of information right so we know there's a lot of twisting and manipulation that can happen even with you from the beginning.

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Following all the rights. The right that you have clearly can still lead to. Too long case times.

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Kristen, anything else with that?

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Yeah, I mean, I've been working. In family defense representing parents accused of abuse and neglect.

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Or neglect, excuse me, very often. Parents will say, you know, I thought that if I participated and I was open as open as possible, right, like that would help move this case along, right?

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And so the same way that there are consequences for not participating in an ACS investigation, right? Also wanna stress the consequences like of the things that you say because very often things that you might consider to be very benign or like not a big deal at all, right?

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Like those things and those statements can come up. In the in like the space of a trial, right?

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If ACS were to bring you to court and we were to have a trial down the line, like all of your statements can be used against you.

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All of your statements that are considered contrary to your interest. So like anything that you say that can be seen as like negative.

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Can be used against you. So you want to be very mindful about the things that you do say.



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I.

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That said, very all. That said very often, right? It will come up in court if there is a court finally like.

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Very often comes up if you didn't participate. And so I think it's important to also stress that like you know your family.

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You know? What risks you're willing to take. And that it's so important to understand and be able to evaluate what works best for you and what makes the most sense for you in your given situation before deciding how to act.

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And very often, right, defender offices, attorneys, advocates are there that can help guide you in making the choice that is, it that makes the most sense for you and your family.

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So more on how to advocate for yourself. When I, I think this like bubble here is probably, great to start with, it's like when a doubt contact a lawyer, right?

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Even if you feel like it's small or am I new to Kristen's point of like, things that you don't say, things that you do say can all be, you know, things that compound your the look and the outcomes of your case.

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And so. Defender services, pro bono legal support, like those are all great references and checkpoints, even if you feel like you don't need it, right?

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So just a few questions here that we have on the side that could be helpful. This is first one here of do you have a warrant or a court order?

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Can you show me a quote or, please sleep it under the door if you have one. The knock is happening right to know that you don't need to actually have to physically open the door right you can be speaking through the door and say hey Now it's not a good time.

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Please come back with corridors, slip whatever information you have under the door. That's totally, within your legal right.

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I'm the second one here, if you do not have a court order respectfully, I'm not going to let you inside my home or speak with my children, right?

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And I love these like points because they're, They give just enough information, right? Because sometimes, right, when we are even like over explaining, like once again, all of that information can be used, right?

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If you're saying, oh, you know, I'm not feeling well today. We have a lot going on.

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This is happening in the house that right too much information. And I know that seems like so simple. You're just saying what's happening, but in reality that could be used again.

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So just giving these right like short answers. Less is often times. The best in these instances.

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This, fourth point here, I want to be as cooperative at cooperative as possible, but I'm going to have to consult with a lawyer before I speak to you, right?

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I want my children to be safe, but they are safe from home with me, right? I'm gonna have to speak with the lawyer before I speak to you, right?

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And so on and so forth as the. Other points below that kind of represent of just being very clear and concise, about what is happening.

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And you all are like free to like use these if Hopefully right it never becomes a situation that you have to navigate but to share with your you know your community members and folks that you are family relative friends etc. so that they can also you know have this information.

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Isn't any of these like convert these point? I was in the same calm conversation starter, but like advocacy like prompts I should say is probably better words for them.

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I do wanna know, right, that ACS also will document not just the words you say, but your demeanor and your behavior, right?

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And so like, being mindful of how you wanna come across, right? I there many times when.

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Parents. Come to court where in front of a judge and the ACS worker will come up and say like, oh, well, like they yelled at me that they weren't gonna open the door or they they were aggressive and they use all of these like deep this deeply racially coded language, right?

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To try to demonize parents and paint parents as cooperative and therefore, right, because they're on cooperative, their children aren't safe, right?

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Things that are very separate from the reality of a situation because it is understandable that when if ACS were to knock on your door right like you will feel upset you will be frustrated.

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Right? They will ask invasive questions. That is infuriating, right? And so it's just an important note.

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Right, even though it's unfair, right? Just be mindful of. How you respond and not just mindful, but like intentional about how you respond.

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When, and, or if ACS were to ever become involved in your life.

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Yeah, and I think that's why the point you were making earlier, because in stone point of like going slow and asking for more time so that you can't have it and you shouldn't have to regulate your emotion.

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You should be able to be like, this is really messed up. I'm very angry, right?

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But we know that on the back end that gets really twisted in turn especially for folks of color and then within that especially for black and brown mothers.

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We just we have the numbers we know how it gets racialized and so to Kristen's point about being mindful and intentional.

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Good. Do you want to talk about family Miranda?

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Yeah, so I do wanna raise attention to 2 bills that are currently in front of city council in this legislative session.

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That make up what we consider, family Miranda rights. Like the almost the equivalent of Miranda in policing, right?

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Having, a bill that requires ACS to inform you of your rights and investigation. That first time that they knock on your door.

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The first point of contact. That a parent has with ACX, right? These bills would require ACS workers to inform you of your rights verbally.

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And in writing. So these are 2 separate bills. The first one, INT, 8 56, 22 is sponsored by a city council member, so that would require ACS to say your rights out loud to read you your rights and to tell you what your rights out loud to read you your rights and to tell you what your rights are.

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Where's this other bill? I am T 2 9 4 22. Introduced and sponsored by city council members.

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Sandra on would require ACS to inform you of your rights in writing and in the language that you are most comfortable with at the start of an ACS investigation.

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So at this point is our understanding that there's some movement around I and T, 2 94, 22, right?

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But we consider these to be a package deal. Thinking about language access, thinking about justice in language, parents should be able to have.

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Information communicated to them. In the way that they're most comfortable with, something that they're told upfront in person out loud and something in writing that they can refer to.

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An ACS investigation or an ACS case. It's also super important that these bills be passed together.

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Especially thinking about. People's different literacy, right? And also thinking about. Parents who might have, might process information differently.

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I know I am much better if I'm reading something than hearing it, right? And so we're hopeful that these bills will be passed by the city council.

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And in our next slide, we do have some potential action items if you feel so inclined to engage to try to push our city council to.

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Pass these bills as a package.

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And just want to emphasize that these like this legislation, these bills are not, privileges. These are everyone's rights, right?

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Like, we should have this information. We should know these things like the fact that, you know, we have to even create this because of the harm that exists is a problem in itself.

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So let me get to the next slide. So you all can see ways to get involved.

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Yeah, it's also just so basic because it doesn't create anything new. It just requires that ACS tell you what your rights are so that it's not just the people in this space that like know how to respond and navigate.

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Any potential ACS involvement, but that every parent will be able to know what it is. That they are legally entitled to already legally entitled to.

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If they ever have ACS contact and we also know that You know, this is a racial justice bill, right?

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Like we know that the parents that have, that are disproportionately, impacted by ACS and that are more likely to have contact with ACS, our black and brown families, and that most ACS calls and most ACS investigations take place in our in low income communities and in communities.

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People of color. Right, the data is there. And so this is to protect all families and also to like safeguard, you know, the rights of black and brown families in these process.

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In involved with ACS.

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So ways for and I see some folks have put things into the QA, which is perfect because we're coming up on that time.

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I'll check the chat in one moment, but just ways to get in Bob is joining the parent legislative action network, AKA plan, which Kristen alluded to the 8 year in the SCR earlier that is actually legislation that Jay Mac for families as well as mini, you know, advocates and activists in New York were able to shift.

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It used to be that you would be on the state central registry until your youngest child turned 28 so every you know say if you had more than one child that time would get longer and longer to that youngest.

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You know tiny human turn 28 and now it's a standard 8 years and was able to be retroactive.

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So like this work is moving is shaking and we would love for people to continue if we be a part of it, you know, pushing family Miranda, pushing informed consent and the other legislations that we're really championing and to Kristen's point of like racial justice social justice issues and we know that these are major and necessary for us to be able to live safely and have a time which is all rights that we have as humans, right?

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Not privileges. And the second point here is to reach out to New York, not privileges. And the second point here is to reach out to New York Council, privileges.

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The second point here is to reach out to New York Council member Carlina Rivera's office to ask her to move forward family Miranda, right?

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So an action item. We have tons of scripts on our social media. So like if you are a person that kind of clams that maybe when you have to make a phone call or gets really nervous.

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I resonate with that and so the cost grips and action items that you can find on our website and on our Instagram, and action items that you can find on our website and on our Instagram, are all, really helpful in our website and on our Instagram, and action items that you can find on our website and on our Instagram, are all, really helpful in being able to kind And then

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lastly, to spread the word, right? This, you know, was a recorded, presentation tonight.

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So like, once you get the link, share it with your community, share with folks that you are close with so that you know this information is not.

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You know, this isn't something that we need to get, right? Like these are all of our collective rights and the more we know that the more we can band together in community and the more that we can divest from harmful systems and practices that don't keep us safe, that keep us away from joy that keeps our family separated and so you know we we strongly believe here you know once you got the medicine share it out to

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other folks. And so, you know, we, strongly believe here, you know, once you got the medicine, share it out to other folks and other people.

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And then in a moment, I'll drop the link to our website for folks to, you know.

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Rouse that find out how to continuously stay involved after. But I'll pause there Christian if there's anything you want to add to this one.

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Yeah, with spread the word like echoing Camaria, right? These rights, everyone should know them.

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And until we have legislation that make sure that all the parents of New York City and New York State have are given access to information about their rights, like one of the ways to make sure that we in our communities like know what it, how to respond in an ACS investigation and what our rights are is to share with communities and loved ones.

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I also shared 2. I shared 2 documents in the chat. One is a.

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Talks about your rights when ACS knocks and it also gives a list of local family defense offices and ways to get in contact with them.

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So if ever, ACS contacts you or reaches out to your family, you can reach out to them immediately.

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And then another, document that, talks about what you can expect when interacting with ACS and some do's and don't.

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How to navigate that contact.

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And the cards that Kristen has put in the chat are also printable, which I think is really great.

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So like you can print them out, share them with other folks. If you see us around town, we oftentimes will like have those printed off.

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So yeah, print them, use them. We have 2 questions in the chat question. The first one is I know this is New York specific, but are there any groups people doing similar work as you all are specific, but are there any groups people doing similar work as you all are specific, but are there any groups people doing similar work as you all or resources you can share or work as you all or resources you can share for New Jersey or PA.

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I know we have some folks in our repeal, or resources you can share or resources you can share for New Jersey or PA.

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I know we have some folks in our repeal, for New Jersey or PA. I know we have some folks in our.

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I know we have some folks in our repeal capital coalition that are New Jersey and Pennsylvania base, that are like them individually. They are attorneys.

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I can drop the Kristen, can you think of any? I'm like trying to get specific like entities, but nothing for me in the moment, but.

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I'm not sure of specific entities. No, I'm gonna though, and I'm happy to.

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I'm happy to follow up and I'm gonna drop my email in the chat so we can connect to with the folks that we do know who are in Jersey, anyone who's interested.

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I do wanna note before we get to the next question. I believe there are some other council members here that want to introduce themselves.

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If they want to take them a moment to do that at this time.

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Thanks Christine for doing that. So we do have some of my fellow CC members here tonight and you know if they want to introduce themselves I just wanted to come on and say hello and talk to the parents here we have an attendance.

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Because they look so cool. I'm gonna go to Victoria first and then you could pass it to the next person.



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Thank you. So much. Thank you for that presentation. Thank you, Whitney.

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That was very informative. I have a quick question about anecdotally that I've heard, a situation in another school.

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If there If a parent states that there was a false claim made within their school, what would your next, recommended step be for that parent or family?

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Yeah. And so to clarify, you mean if a call a false allegation was made and now ACS is involved.

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Right within this. Yeah, right.

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Contact a local defender office. And get very specific. Legal consult on how to proceed. This unfortunately happens all the time, right?

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Where people will, can and do. You know, use the fact that they can make this phone call to get ACS involved in people's lives.

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And so there's actually legislation that JMAC is supporting anti-harassment in reporting, right, that tries to address what happens in a situation when false reports are being made or when, someone is using this process and this system to retaliate against someone else in their family.

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My number one advice if ACS is involved, if ACS is already there, contact and advocate contact, public defender office, even if there's not an active case in family court.

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Okay.

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Those offices provide early defense support. I can give advice and help in navigating, before it escalates to, a filing in family court.

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Thank you.

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And, Tray, I just stopped the link in the chat for our active legislations, which includes anti-rac that Christmas is saying.

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I appreciate it. Thank you. I'll save it. Thank you.

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It looks like Winnie's putting something in the oops. Awesome.

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At all shrinky, he's calling. No, yeah, so we'll go to, if you go to a next council member, I'm just gonna start calling on people so they could talk really quick.

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So the next person is I see is Jonathan Greenberg. Hi Jonathan.

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Hello everyone, I'm Jonathan Greenberg, CC. 30. Thanks. Thanks to the presenters for that really great presentation.

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Thanks, Jonathan. Linda.

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Hi, everyone. Sorry, I'm, my son's basketball practice. I'm like standing outside.

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But thank you for such a informative. Session. Yeah, I didn't know there were that much.

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Information that we didn't know about and the rights. Thank you so much. Oh, my name is Linda.

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Hi.

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Thanks, Linda.

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Hi everyone, thank you again for that presentation. Information was very, very informative. Thank you.

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I wanted to ask just about the like local defenders. Where could families find information for local defenders?

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Where could they, what's that that go to place, in case they don't know anyone.

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To.

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Yeah, so one of the documents that I dropped in the chat, I'll drop it again has conflict information for local defenders offices.

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I believe Queens is the center for family representation, but in the other boroughs there's in the Bronx, there's Bronx defenders in Brooklyn, there's Brooklyn Defender Services, Harlem has neighborhood defender service of Harlem and both Queens and Manhattan have the center for family representation.

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Thank you, Kamaria, for dropping that at the bottom of that document. Just shared has the phone number, and email addresses and addresses for the defender offices so that families can reach out.

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Thank you.

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And I'll say, I think me and Kristen were both doing this. We were accidentally dropping the links to just the host and panelists.

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So I just like dropped all of the links that we have been referencing. I did not realize they were just going to us on the back end.

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So I'm dropping, this. One that Chris and drop way earlier on your family, your rights.

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So just give me a moment to drop that here. But I believe we've gotten the chat up to date now with the links that we were referencing, referencing this whole time.

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There is 10, sorry. Go ahead, Kristen.

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I was gonna say and your family your rights.org this website is a comprehensive resource that talks about your rights during an ACS investigation.

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What you should know if ACS does file a family court case against you, how to clear your name from the state central register, which is that kind of database.

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Families who have had ACS contact and also how you can, communicate about ACS to your children's school.

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So there's a ton of information there and I strongly encourage folks to take a look, especially if they have very specific questions about what happens after an investigation.

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Thank you so much. Okay, we have 2 more council members left. So, Kelly, if you would in mind.

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Hi Prince, I'm on call this evening. Sorry, actually I'm I legally for my job cannot turn on.

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Yes. Mostly.

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I'm at my desk at work so I can't turn it on but I hear you I see you this is such an important conversation I actually went to grad school in outside of Boston.

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And I did some interning. I have MP JD and I did some interning at DCF and this is such an important conversation and I'm also a product of the foster care system in Florida myself.

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So in an out, I have gone to this process as a child and I volunteered as an adult and it's so important to see how this situation and the system is manipulated and also the good work that it does in situations where people use it as unfortunately a you parked in front of my driveway now I'm going to call and I mean this literally like in the neighborhood that I grew up in, this was a regular

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occurrence and it's really tragic what happens to children and any way that I can support and I can help and resources that I have.

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You know this is Whitney thank you for bringing this to the forefront of a conversation and thank you all for your time this evening.

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And I wish I could turn on, give you guys all the biggest like round of applause ever but I'll be fired so then I'll be a problem but thank you friends. Thanks.

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Please don't lose your job. We don't want that to happen. I, Victoria, before we, that one person we just wanna, I think let them go to the Q&A and then we can answer your question if that's okay.

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Thanks so much so Kristen and come on I'm turn it back over to y'all to answer that question and then Victoria has a question she wants to ask.

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And then parents. So if you are watching attendees, Guardians, anyone else who is here representing our district, if you have a question, please drop it in the Q&A or raise your hand and we can answer verbally but before we do the open QA for people speaking we are going to stop the recording just in case you know if you want to talk about something confidential we don't want that recorded so

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we're just gonna go to the general questions in the QA and then we really will stop the recording before we go to the open questions. To everyone else.

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Big, there is a question here on statistics that show how many children with disabilities. I'm assuming are involved maybe just This question means just involved in the system holistically versus those who are not.

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I don't have that data on hand. That could be one of the follow up things that we send out.

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Kristen, do you know data on hand?

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So I don't know. On hand, how many children with disabilities and I also wanna highlight that, right?

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There is and has been in recent times more calls for transparency and data in data and information sharing. In child protective services nationally and in New York State, right?

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Getting more information about demographics and also. Services, things of that nature. And so they're there are statistics around children with disabilities.

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And so I'm looking at One about children who Left. Or who no longer have A/C or ACS or CPS involved in their lives in New York.

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Date. And that's not. Children with disabilities that have investigations or that are involved in investigations, but this is, children who, no longer have ACS involved for one reason or another, that could be adoption, guardianship, they're reunified with their families.

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Or others. And so for 2021 the number is 2,533. But that's not representative of.

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You know, children with disabilities that are the subject of ACS investigations or CPS. Investigations across the state.

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Victoria looks like. Opportunity to ask your question if you're ready, cause we've cleared out the questions that were in the QA.

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Yeah. Chris and kind of touched on it, so I'm good. Thank you very much.

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Awesome. Other questions that folks want to put in the QA, if not? Free time to ask just general, so Winnie's point about us stopping the QA.

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Oh, great question here. Are there resources for you reunification and inhaling of families who have gone through this and are having difficulty re-establishing parent and child relationships.

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Such an excellent question. At Jama, her families, we have the Hill program, which is a 12 week parent advocacy program for parents that have been impacted, but we are also starting up in the next month or so a reunification support group.

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And so I can drop my email in the chat if you want to reach out and ask more questions about that.

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But yeah, that's continues to be a big, gap in, in all of this, right?

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Families go through years of separation and the trauma of that, you know, shout out to Dorothy Roberts, Shattered Bonds.

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And then it's like you reunify your family. It's like, okay, good luck.

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Bye, you know, hopefully you all can get that together. And so that's something that we're constantly thinking about on this end and giving family the support and the care that they need of life.

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And trauma makes us look different. Trauma, you know, we are changed often times after major moments like this.

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And so I'll drop my email for that, but Kristen, if there's anything

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The one thing I would know, right, if you are. Seeking you know if you're doing or engaging in family therapy.

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And it's not court ordered. You don't have an obligation to tell ACS that you are.

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Seeking out the support of services for your family. If you have an active ACS case and I note that to say right like very often when you seek out services independently or supports independently and ACS does discover that, right?

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They can then try to get access to those records or medical records that then, you know, could prolong the case if something were to come up.

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That raised alarms. And so that's specifically if you have an active ACS case and that's not part of your court ordered or any court ordered service plan.

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Okay, alright, we have another question in the chat and Kristen, I'm gonna turn this to you because I need to slip out for another meeting that is occurring right now but at what age of a child doesn't ACS investigation close for example after graduating high school.

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Yeah, so if your child is 18 and a call is made to the State Central Registry, ACS won't proceed to investigate that.

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Case because your child is above the age of 18. Now, ACS investigations typically close after 60 days.

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There are instances where if your child is 17 during an ACS investigation, they'll and turns 18, ACS will still work to close out that investigation beyond the age of 18.

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If ACS has filed the case against you in family court and your child is not in your care, meaning your child is not home with you and they turn 18, right?

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They're considered in foster care or they're with what's called a kinship guardian, a relative that

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That is providing, care for your child, right? That case can go on your level of participation in that case depends on you and how you want to

proceed, but there are situations where children will remain in the foster system beyond the age of 18.

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And in those instances, right, it's called another planned living arrangement that will be arranged and your child.

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That child could be eligible for. Foster care funds or other forms of assistance from ACS beyond the age of 18.

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Though technically at that point right there's not an investigation. A case has been filed and there's likely been a determination in a court about.

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Whether or not a judge finds enough evidence for to determine whether there's been neglect or abuse.

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So I'm seeing another question in the chat. What can be done for ex partners that file false reports during a legal custody battle.

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Are there repercussions for that person filing a false report? Especially if it seems as those false reports were used as retaliation against another parent.

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I think this is a complicated question and it really depends on where you are. In both your custody case and in.

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The life of this ACS case because of ACS is still investigating. Right, that would mean something different than if ACS has.

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Has determined that your case was quote unquote indicated or there was evidence that that report was true and they decide to file a case in court.

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Typically, if there is an active. Article 10 case or case involving allegations of neglect or abuse, right?

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In my experience, that case can be combined with a with your custody case and the judge that oversees your article 10 case or neglect or abuse case will then oversee your custody case and will have No knowledge and information about.

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The ACS investigation that's now no longer an investigation, it's a filing. It really depends on your given circumstances.

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If this is happening and you're in the middle of a custody proceeding and ACS shows up once again contact a defense or office.

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So I'm seeing another question. How can a report be made against the father if his order is up yet no change in behavior?

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I don't know if participants are able to unmute.

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But what I'm understanding is some kind of order

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Court order. Miss Kennedy, can you actually provide a little bit more context so that I can better answer your question?

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And also, if it's a very specific question, I cannot give legal advice, but if you

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Reach out to me, we can connect you with folks who are better able to. Answer that question in a very specific way.