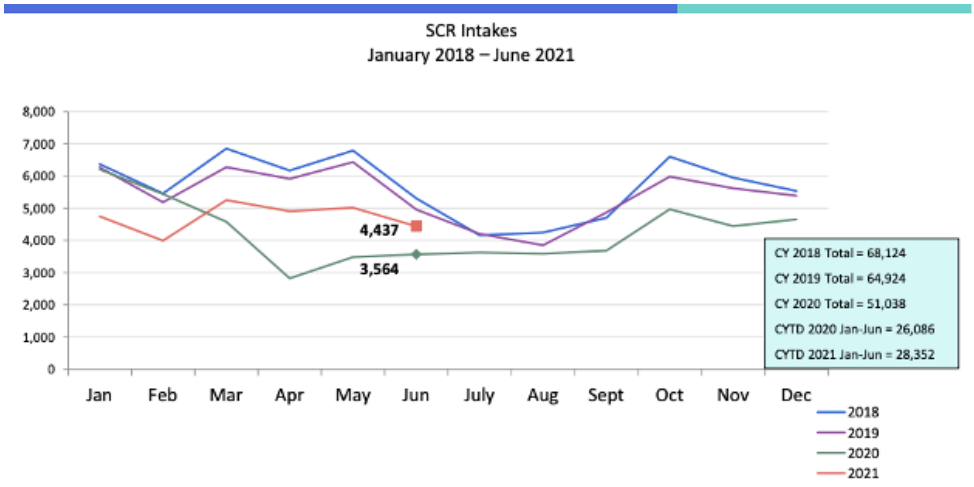
Data Breakdown: Child Welfare in the Pandemic

During the early months of COVID-19 and continuing today, much in child welfare changed because of the pandemic, including the number of hotline calls as well as investigative protocols, court structures and ACS services. This brief summarizes the specific data points that members of the Narrowing the Front Door Work Group wanted to understand.

Hotline Calls and Investigations

Comparing April-June 2020 with April-June 2019, the number of reports to the State Central Register regarding children in New York City fell by more than 40 percent, to 9,848 from 17,347 (Arons, p11).

Reports from families and community members dipped by only 21 percent, but reports from mandated reporters plummeted by 53 percent. Reports by school personnel (who are normally responsible for 25% of all hotline calls in NYC) fell by 83 percent. Reports by medical providers and social service personnel dropped by around 40 percent, and reports by law enforcement fell by 33 percent (Arons, p11).



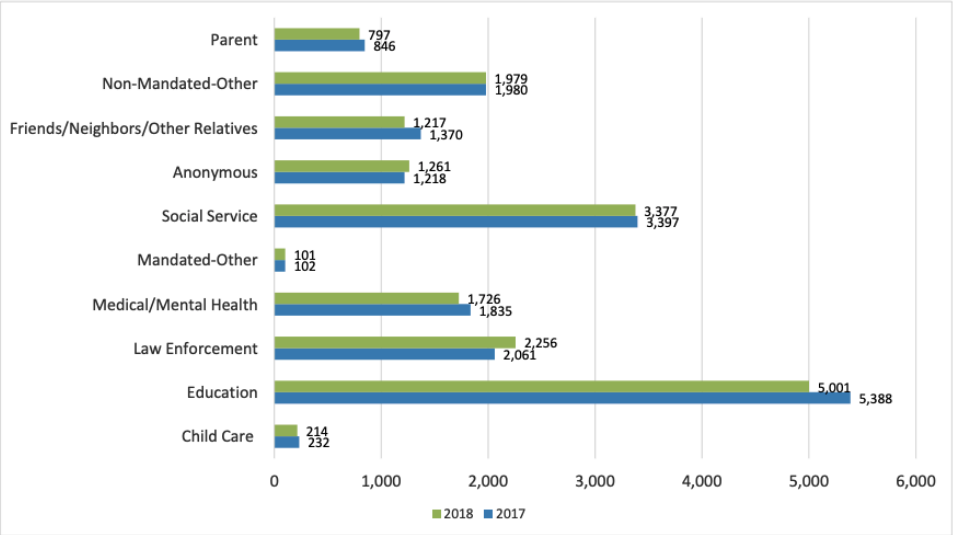
In that timeframe, the types of allegations (physical or sexual abuse, or neglect) were about the same as the year before.

Physical abuse reports dropped to 2,000 calls from 5,000, with 75% unfounded in 2020 against 70% unfounded in 2019. Investigations related to child fatalities – the type of tragedy least likely to avoid public review – dropped by 25 percent against the prior year (Arons, p16).

In fall 2020, there was no "rebound effect." From Sept-Dec 2020, when approximately 25% of NYC school children returned to classrooms and online school became more routinized. From Sept-Nov 2020, hotline calls by school personnel remained down 35% and all hotline calls remained 17% below that period in 2019 (Arons, p18).

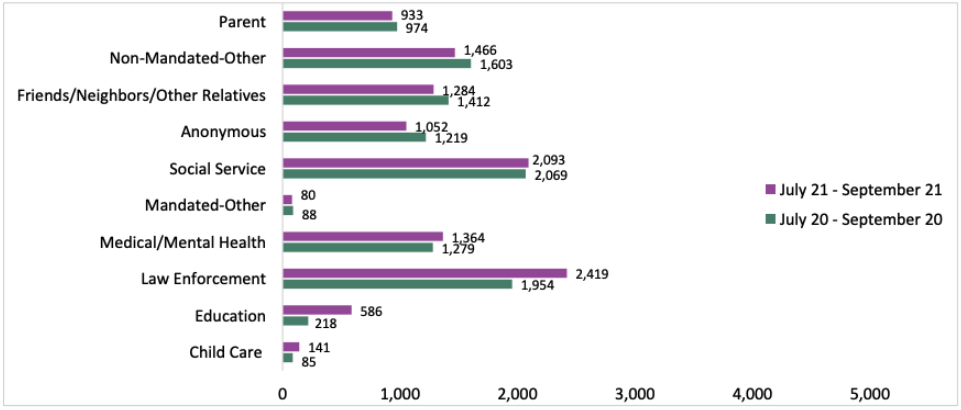
The percentage of reports from school personnel remained low through September 2021, rebounding in October 2021:

Figure 2: Citywide SCR Intakes by Reporter Group, OCTOBER 17 – DECEMBER 17 and OCTOBER 18 – DECEMBER 18



Appendix

Figure 1: SCR Intakes by Reporter Group, July 20 - September 20 and July 21 - September 21



From Jan-June 2021, hotline reports remained below 2019 numbers and previous years. Hotline calls ("SCR Intakes") in the first six months of 2021 (Jan-June 2021) were not much higher than in the first six months of 2020, which included 3 pandemic months, with 28,351 calls Jan-June 2021 compared to 26,086 in Jan-Jun 2021.

In fall 2021, when school re-opened for all NYC children, hotline reports rose, but remained below 2019 levels.

SCR Intakes by month, Jan 2019 to Oct. 2021 (provided by ACS)

Month	2019	2020	2021
January	6226	6177	4749
February	5151	5424	3998
March	6254	4567	5263
April	5910	2827	4907

May	6413	3495	5024
June	4966	3571	4450
July	4202	3629	3574
August	3845	3593	3676
September	4818	3684	4183
October	5960	4968	5378
November	5597	4452	
December	5305	4598	

Allegation types remained stable throughout the pandemic, although the percent of cases with domestic violence or mental health concerns rose considerably in 2020 and 2021.

SCR Intakes by allegation type, Jan 1-Nov 20 of 2019, 2020 and 2021 (provided by ACS)

By allegation type*	**Jan 1-Nov 20, 2019**		**Jan 1- Nov 20, 2020**		**Jan 1-Nov 20, 2021**	
with abuse allegations only	920	1.6%	590	1.3%	705	1.4%
with abuse & neglect allegations	13,376	23.3%	9,559	21.3%	10,733	22.0%
with neglect allegations only	43,176	75.1%	34,831	77.4%	37,412	76.6%
Total SCR Intakes	**57,472**		**44,980**		**48,850**	

***** Mutually exclusive categories: Each intake is counted only once

Investigation and CARES cases with DV and/or mental health concerns noted in first seven days (provided by ACS)

	Jan 1 to Nov 20, 2019		**Jan1 to Nov 20, 2020**		**Jan 1 to Nov 20, 2021**	
with Mental Health	7,276	14.4%	6,461	16.7%	6,556	15.5%
with Domestic Violence	11,279	22.4%	10,308	26.7%	11,260	26.7%
INV/CARES (FAR) cases	**50,431**		**38,593**		**42,218**	

Investigations Substantiated

The rate of substantiation did not change in spring 2020. It was 37-39% in April-June of 2020 and 35-38% in that period of 2019. It remained consistent in fall 2020 (Arons, p12).

However, in winter 2021 the substantiation rate dropped, averaging 33.5% in Jan-April 2021 and reaching a low of 31.6% in April 2021 (ACS Flash Indicator Report-July 2021, p6).

Court Filings for Removal

In the first three months after the shutdown, ACS filed 50% fewer new abuse/neglect cases (Article 10 filings) than in that timeframe the year before, 1,482 filings compared to 3,205 (Arons, p12).

Arons wrote: “Strikingly, in a time where families were under increasing pressure, ACS requested remands in approximately *half* as many cases, a decrease that outpaced the decrease in reports received.”

Surprisingly, there were fewer Article 10 filings in Jan-June 2021 than in Jan-June 2020, which included the height of the pandemic, dropping to 765 from 954. (ACS Flash Indicator Report-July 2021, p10).

Removals

The number of children removed and placed in foster care during April-June 2020 was down about 50% as well, 375 children in 2020 compared to 700 in 2019 (Arons, p13).

Comparing March 2020 to February 2021 with the period of March 2019 to February 2020, 38% fewer children were removed and placed in foster care (ACS Flash Indicator Report-July 2021, p18).

Court-Ordered Supervision

During much of 2020, the Family Court was only hearing emergency matters, which did not include Court-Ordered Supervision (unless there was also an order of protection excluding someone from the home.) Based on court closure and practice changes, court-ordered supervision fell 33%. Existing supervision cases were not heard and new supervision cases were not filed, although some court-ordered supervision cases were resolved through stipulation. (ACS testimony and communication)

ACS data show that approximately 60% of Article 10 filings from Jan-June 2021 resulted in court-ordered supervision. Those cases reflect cases involving court-ordered supervision or types of court supervision that a judge may ordered when ACS files for removal but it isn’t granted. For instance, one parent can be removed from the home while the child remains with the other parent; a child can be placed with a family member or friend through court supervision instead of formally through foster care; or a removal can be refused by the court but supervision continues until fact-finding while the child remains at home.

In recent years, ACS filings for supervision has ballooned, rising from 6,383 cases in FY15 to 10,033 in FY18 before declining to 6,778 in 2020. (CWW 2021)

Overall Court-Involvement of Families

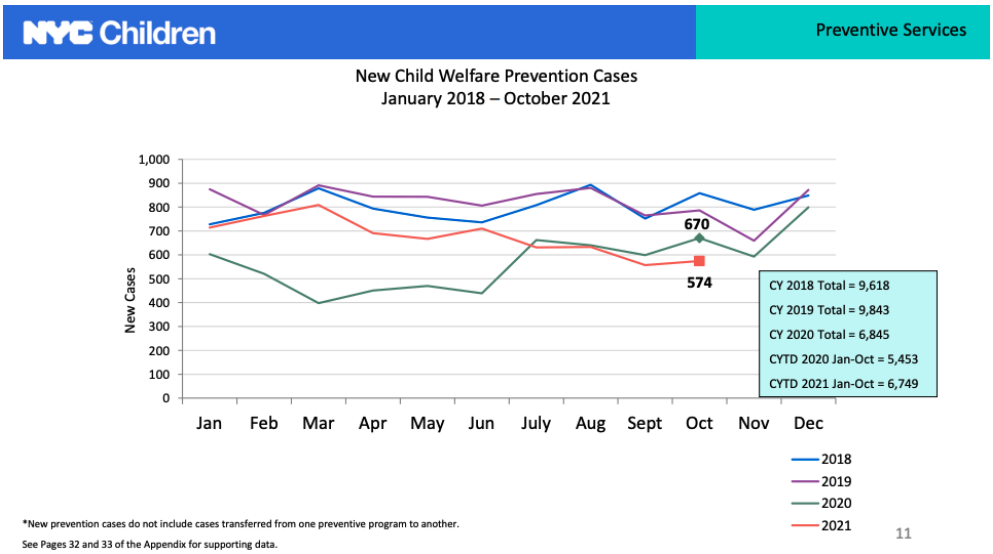
Overall, ACS filed 4,115 fewer article 10 petitions to monitor or separate children from their families in 2020 than in 2019. Filings remain down in 2021, impacting 6,960 children Jan-Oct 2020 and 6,799 Jan-Oct 2021. (Flash report, Nov 2021)

Child Deaths

Deaths of several children known to the system were covered in detail by NYC media in recent months. However, the number of child homicides in NYC in 2021 was 13 as of late October, consistent with the city average of 15 deaths annually. (New York Times)

Preventive Services

Preventive service referrals dropped by 27% and new preventive cases dropped by 45% in the first months of the pandemic. (Arons, p12), and remained sharply down through June 2021. Although preventive cases have risen since summer 2021, they remain lower than in 2019 or past years. (Flash report, Nov 2021)



Number of Children in Foster Care

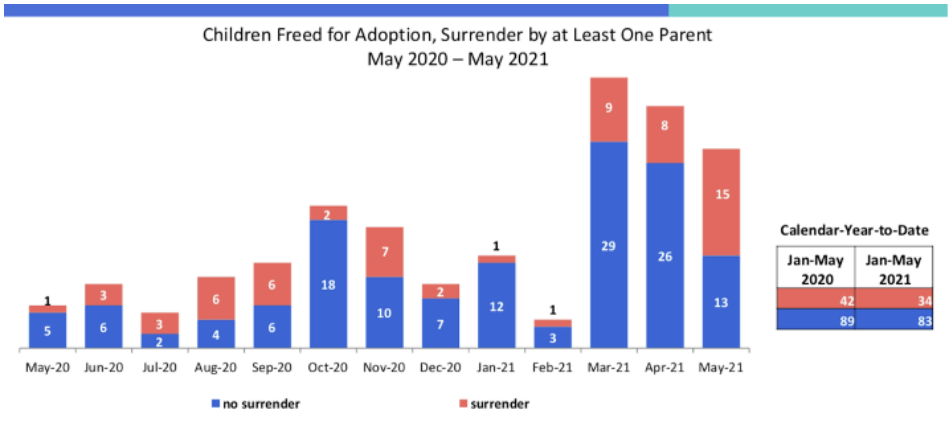
The number of children in foster care dropped from 8,000 just prior to the pandemic to 7,600 today. (ACS testimony, p4).

Permanency Outcomes

35% fewer children were discharged from foster care during the period of March 2020 to February 2021 compared to the previous year, March 2019 to February 2020. The courts did not hear reunification cases for much of 2020, and some children returned home by stipulation during that time (ACS testimony, p4).

Termination of parental rights

Very few parents' rights were terminated in the first months of the pandemic, but TPRs escalated in fall 2020 and dramatically increased in 2021. In the chart below, "no-surrender" is a euphemism for termination of parental rights.



Other Changes in System Practice

- Safety assessments were sometimes done outside the home or remotely, and workers called ahead to establish whether the home was safe to visit because of COVID.
- Filing for court-ordered supervision was not an option, and prevention was underutilized.
- 4,000 case reviews were held to expedite reunifications, which ACS plans to continue (ACS Testimony COVID, p14).
- ACS itself addressed material needs more than usual, handing out $1.5 million in cash and $3 million donated items to address basic needs (ACS Testimony COVID, p7).

Data Sources

- Anna Arons: An Unintended Abolition: Family Regulation During the COVID-19 Crisis
- ACS written testimony to the General Welfare Committee meeting June 14, 2021
- City Council General Welfare Committee June 2021 video
- ACS July 2021 Flash Indicator Report
- ACS July 2020 Flash Indicator Report
- ACS November 2021 Flash Indicator Report
- New York Times, "These Children Were Beaten to Death. Could They Have Been Saved?"
- CWW Watching the Numbers Feb. 2021
- Mayor's Management Report Sept. 2021