PARENTING MATTERS

Stronger Families. Safer Chicago.

A two-generation family stabilization strategy that makes parents and caregivers frontline partners in youth safety, opportunity, and neighborhood recovery.

$1.376B	72 HOURS	43%	30.5%
Youth-engagement awards since 2019	Family stabilization response target	Reduction in violent-crime arrests in READI evidence	Average payment coverage on major youth awards

THE CENTRAL CHALLENGE

Chicago has built a broad youth-serving network, but families in crisis still confront separate programs, separate intake systems, and slow referrals. A parent seeking help at night may wait days or weeks to reach housing, income, health, school, or behavioral-health support.

> **This is not simply a funding gap. It is a coordination, execution, and accountability gap.**

Since 2019, the City has awarded more than $1.376 billion to major youth-engagement organizations. The policy question is whether those investments operate as one family-stabilization system with measurable outcomes - or as disconnected contracts.

THE PARENTING MATTERS OPERATING MODEL

TIER 1 UNIVERSAL PREVENTION	School-linked family support hubs, parent leadership stipends, peer navigator networks, and early connection before a crisis escalates.
TIER 2 TARGETED STABILIZATION	A 72-hour response for high-risk referrals, with rapid connection to housing, income, healthcare, behavioral support, and school liaisons.
TIER 3 INTENSIVE INTERVENTION	Family conferencing, cognitive-behavioral supports, employment pathways, and integration with diversion and violence-intervention programs.

THE 72-HOUR FAMILY STABILIZATION PATHWAY

1	2	3	4	5
Referral	**Contact**	**Triage**	**Connection**	**Follow-through**
School, DFSS, diversion, or trusted partner	Navigator reaches family within 72 hours	Immediate needs and risk factors assessed	First service referral initiated in same window	Family retention and outcomes tracked

FROM POLICY TO EXECUTION

A disciplined first-100-day launch, a common performance system, and reinvestment in what works.

WHAT CHANGES IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

DAY 1	**Mayoral priority**	Executive action establishes Parenting Matters as a citywide operating priority and assigns lead accountability.
DAY 30	**Pilot launch**	A 72-hour stabilization-response pilot begins in three high-need community areas.
DAY 60	**Family hubs**	School-linked family support hubs are designed, sited, and prepared for Year 1 launch.
DAY 90	**Navigator network**	Parent and peer navigators operate under shared intake, triage, referral, and follow-up protocols.
DAY 100	**Public dashboard**	A performance dashboard reports response speed, referral completion, family retention, and verified outcomes.

PERFORMANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND FISCAL DISCIPLINE

COMMON MEASURES

- Families contacted within 72 hours
- Time from referral to first completed service
- Family retention at 30, 90, and 180 days
- School connection, attendance, and youth engagement
- Housing, income, health, and employment stabilization

GOVERNANCE CHANGES

- One intake and referral architecture across participating programs
- Contracts aligned to family outcomes, not activity counts alone
- Award-to-payment deployment tracked in public view
- Quarterly performance review and corrective-action authority
- Verified efficiencies reinvested in frontline family supports

Parenting Matters does not ask Chicago to replace parents. It asks City Hall to stop forcing families to navigate crisis alone.

WHY THIS MATTERS

PUBLIC SAFETY

Family stability is prevention. Early support reduces the conditions that allow youth disconnection and violence to deepen.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

Young people do better when caregivers are connected to work, healthcare, housing, schools, and trusted support.

TAXPAYER VALUE

Chicago should measure whether existing youth investments reach families quickly and produce visible, durable outcomes.

THE GOVERNING POSITION

Chicago cannot arrest its way out of youth disorder, and it cannot spend its way out of fragmentation. The City must organize its existing youth, school, workforce, health, housing, and violence-prevention assets around the family. Parenting Matters is the operating framework: intervene earlier, respond faster, measure results, and reinvest in the neighborhood supports that keep families stable.

Strong families are Chicago's first line of prevention - and a competent city government should help them succeed.

Source basis: City of Chicago Annual Appropriation Ordinance books (FY2019-FY2026); campaign analysis of youth-engagement awards and payments; READI Chicago evaluations; NIJ, OJJDP, and CDC evidence reviews. The 30.5% figure reflects payment-to-award coverage in the campaign data snapshot and should be tracked over time.