

A History of Service

Massachusetts has a rich history of innovative programs and organizations established for the care and protection of children and families. The Home for Little Wanderers' lineage dates back to one of the earliest—the Boston Female Asylum—a legacy program of Boston Children's Services. Below are a few highlights of our journey to the vibrant organization that exists today:



- 1799** Boston Female Asylum established as an orphanage (Abigail Adams was a founding contributor), later became the Boston Society for the Care of Girls. In 1922, became part of Children's Aid Association.
- 1849** The Children's Mission to the Children of the Destitute of the City of Boston formed from an idea by the nine-year-old daughter of a Unitarian minister. After more than a century of pioneering social service programs, changed its name to Parents' and Children's Services. Merged with The Home in 2003.
- 1865** Union Mission & Home for Little Wanderers formed by 10 Boston businessmen to care for children orphaned by the Civil War; name changed to Baldwin Place Mission & Home for Little Wanderers to reflect its location: a run-down church on Baldwin Place in the North End.
- 1865** The agency began sending children out west on "Orphan Trains" for adoption
- 1867** The Massachusetts Infant Asylum, the first foundling hospital in the U.S., and the North End Mission, a child-care agency and Sunday school, were founded. Both organizations were later merged with the Children's Aid Association
- 1883** Boston Children's Friend Society, an adoption agency, formed
- 1889** Baldwin Place Mission & Home for Little Wanderers name changed to The New England Home for Little Wanderers (NEHLW)
- 1914** NEHLW took occupancy of Knight Children's Center at 161 South Huntington Avenue
- 1922** Children's Aid Association formed by the merger of Boston Children's Aid Society and the Boston Society for the Care of Girls
- 1940** NEHLW took over Longview Farm program and moved it to a 160-acre site in Walpole
- 1960** Boston Children's Services was formed through the merger of the Children's Aid Association and the Boston Children's Friend Society
- 1998** NEHLW acquired a number of programs from The Charles River Association, including the mental health clinic in Roslindale
- 1999** The Home for Little Wanderers formed by the merger of NEHLW and Boston Children's Services
- 2003** Parents' and Children's Services merged with The Home