



April 27, 2005

Dear Local Social Services District Commissioner:

**New York State  
Office of  
Children & Family  
Services**

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has purchased and is making available 2,500 licenses of Dragon Naturally Speaking (version 8.0) software to Local Districts. This software is designed to assist staff in entering narrative data into computer applications such as CONNECTIONS. Dragon Naturally Speaking is a voice recognition software product, which has been tested and determined to work effectively with CONNECTIONS.

George E. Pataki  
*Governor*

John A. Johnson  
*Commissioner*

Staff will use the Dragon Naturally Speaking software by speaking into a microphone attached to a headset. Once the user trains the software to recognize his or her voice, the spoken word is translated into text that then may be copied into CONNECTIONS narrative fields, such as in Progress Notes, or into other large text fields. It may also be used with e-mail and WORD documents. A Question and Answer document providing additional details about Dragon Naturally Speaking is attached.

During 2004, OCFS collaborated with four Local Social Service Districts to test Dragon Naturally Speaking. The key to successful implementation was to have a "local champion." This individual was responsible for installing the software locally and providing on-site training and technical assistance to his or her peers. The pilot demonstrated that Local Districts that assigned a "local champion" to be responsible for project implementation, as well as train and support co-workers, reaped the greatest benefits in terms of staff acceptance and effective use of the software. Districts that provided limited or no structured on site support had less positive results with the software.

**Capital View Office Park**

52 Washington Street  
Rensselaer, NY 12144-2796

Each participating District will be assigned a specific number of Dragon Naturally Speaking licenses, and will receive a CD to be used for installing the software, along with a headset for each license. Additionally, OCFS will sponsor regional "train-the-trainer" sessions that will be led by Dragon Naturally Speaking trainers. These "train-the-trainer" sessions will be three-hour sessions designed to prepare the designated District staff person ("local champion") to assist users at their sites. Attendance at this session is mandatory in order to be assigned licenses.

As OCFS has not purchased technical support for the Dragon Naturally Speaking software, it is unable to directly provide any technical support in the use of this product. As such, any problems with the Dragon Naturally Speaking application or headsets should *not* be reported to the Enterprise Helpdesk. It should also be noted that OCFS does not plan to support upgrades to this software.

Local Districts wishing to receive Dragon Naturally Speaking licenses should submit a letter of intent that describes the District's business plan to implement and support the deployment of this software. This letter should identify:



1. How many licenses are being requested;

2. The role of the staff person(s) that will use the software;
3. The District's plan to install the software;
4. Who will serve as implementation coordinator ("local champion") and how that individual will train and support users.

Requests for licenses that do not contain an adequate business plan will not be honored.

Letters of intent should be sent by the local social services district commissioner to [Ted.Salem@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Ted.Salem@dfa.state.ny.us) or sent by mail to:

NYSOCFS  
Attn: Mr. Ted Salem  
CONNECTIONS Project  
Ten Eyck Bldg  
52 Washington St  
Rensselaer, NY 12144

All requests must be received by June 1, 2005. In the event that the number of licenses requested exceeds the number available, OCFS will distribute the licenses on a proportional basis.

Any additional questions can be referred to: [CONNECTIONSCommunications@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:CONNECTIONSCommunications@dfa.state.ny.us)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William E. Travis, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and 'T'.

William E. Travis, Jr.  
Deputy Commissioner for Information Technology

cc: LDSS Implementation Coordinators, Directors of Services