

CONNECTIONS

Build 16 Highlights

CONNECTIONS Build 16 includes enhancements and modifications to Child Protective Services functions and the Safety Assessment. It also implements the Risk Assessment Profile and Progress Notes in CONNECTIONS.

The new functionality will be present for all CPS Investigations where the Intake was system entered following the production implementation of Build 16. These investigations are referred to as implemented stages.

Safety Assessment

In Build 16, caseworkers will record Safety Assessments for implemented Investigation stages directly into the CPRS, using the new Safety Assessment window, which will be accessed from the Safety Assessment tab. The Safety Assessment task on the *Task List* for implemented stages will no longer be available.

The new Safety Assessment window is primarily comprised of four tabs that contain the following:

- Safety Factors;
- Mitigating Strengths and Resources;
- Safety Decision; and
- Safety Interventions.

The Safety Factors tab contains a list of Safety Factors, a narrative field for recording comments, and a list of Safety Factors that place the child(ren) in immediate danger of serious harm. A *No Safety Factors Identified check box* may also be selected if none of the Safety Factors apply.

Selected Safety Factors from the list will display automatically in the list at the bottom of the window. The lower list will be used to select *which* (if any) of these Safety Factors place the child(ren) in *immediate* danger of serious harm. The Comment field will be used to record a description of the relevant behaviors or circumstances related to the selected Safety Factor(s). There is only one Comment field for *all* of the selected Safety Factors, which will have a Spell Check button.

The Mitigating Strengths and Resources tab will record the narrative describing any family strengths, or neighborhood or community resources that are available, and how they mitigate or address safety concerns for the children.

The Safety Decision tab will be broken down into five choices from which only one Safety Decision is to be selected. At least one Safety Factor on the Safety Factors tab must be selected before a Safety Decision on *this* tab can be

selected. Safety Decision 2, 3 and 4, require the completion of other windows to support the decision.

The Safety Interventions tab will be used to select interventions that control for the immediate health and safety of each child. The Safety Interventions tab is separated into two sections: a list of interventions on the left side; and, on the right side, a narrative field for recording comments. There is only one narrative field for *all* of the Safety Interventions.

Risk Assessment Profile

Build 16 introduces Risk Assessment Profile (RAP) functionality to CONNECTIONS. The RAP is a research-based assessment tool that assists the user in determining the likelihood that child abuse or maltreatment will occur again in the future. The RAP is also designed to support the decision to open a case and the development of the service plan, by identifying areas where risk of future abuse or maltreatment needs to be reduced. With the implementation of Build 16, the RAP will be added to the Child Protective Record Summary in CONNECTIONS. Caseworkers will record information in the RAP, which will then generate a risk rating based on that information.

The Risk Assess Profile tab contains a set of 15 Risk Elements. Only one response for each Risk Element can be selected. Comments are encouraged for all Risk Element responses and are required for each Risk Element response that indicates the presence of risk.

The Elevated Risk Elements window contains a set of eight Elevated Risk Elements, which are *not* included among the 15 Risk Elements on the Risk Assess Profile tab. Responding “Yes” to *any* Elevated Risk Element will automatically raise the Final Risk Rating for the RAP to “Very High”. This window also contains a Comment field for the Elevated Risk Elements. Based on the responses to the Risk Elements and Elevated Risk Elements, the RAP will generate the Preliminary Risk Score, Preliminary Risk Rating and Final Risk Rating.

The Preliminary Risk Score is a total of all of the point values for the 15 Risk Elements, based on the responses. The Preliminary Risk *Rating* is based on the range in which the Preliminary Risk *Score* falls. The *Final* Risk Rating is based on the combination of the Preliminary Risk Rating and the presence or absence of any Elevated Risk Element. The risk ratings refer to the probability that a subsequent child abuse or maltreatment report will be received and indicated on the RAP family unit within the next two years.

Progress Notes

The *nature* of Progress Notes will *not* change in Build 16. *What* workers should record and *when* remains the same. Build 16 will change some of the tabs in the

CPRS for implemented stages. The information on the three narrative tabs currently being used—the Notes, Supportive District Notes and Supervisory Review Comments tabs—will be recorded using the new Progress Notes functionality for implemented stages.

The Local Protocol tab will provide a district-specific template for recording information required by a local district's policy and procedures. This tab will enable only for those local districts that have submitted a template: Delaware, Erie, Putnam, Schoharie and Suffolk Counties and ACS in New York City.

The Build 16 structure will provide data fields (such as Purpose and Method of Contact), as well as a narrative field with text control features (such as Spell Check and bulleted lists) similar to those found in Microsoft Word. These data fields will be used to search for specific Progress Notes or groups of Progress Notes and to filter and sort the search results.

Progress Notes can be saved in "Draft" status for up to 15 calendar days, during which time the note can be modified as necessary. Notes should be saved as "Final" as soon as possible, but no later than 15 calendar days. If a note is not saved as "Final" within that timeframe, CONNECTIONS will automatically change that note's status to "Final." Once a note is in Final status, the information will be frozen and will no longer be modifiable.

There will be an addendum feature for "Final" progress notes, which will enable caseworkers or supervisors to append text to a Progress Note. Build 16 will also enable copying an entire Progress Note to other stages within the same case and allow the user to print one, several or all Progress Notes.

CPS Functions

Build 16 supports a local district policy and procedural change of particular importance: Consolidated Investigations. The new functionality supporting this change enables a worker to close a Subsequent Investigation stage and consolidate it into an ongoing open Investigation stage if it meets system enforced criteria for time frames and matching of allegations and individuals. This process differs from (and goes beyond the scope of) changing an Intake report type to "duplicate." Duplicate report types reflect specific report criteria currently applied at Intake by the SCR; Consolidating Investigations, on the other hand, reflects the knowledge of the investigating district. Investigations may be consolidated regardless of whether the Subsequent report meets the current Intake criteria for a Duplicate report.

The Consolidated Investigations functionality is available to authorized CPS staff. Supervisory approval is required to consolidate investigations. This procedure was created in response to the needs of the field, Child and Family Service Review outcomes, and New York State's continued efforts to support strength-based child welfare practice and engagement of families.

There are some additional changes that Build 16 will make to CPS functions. These enhancements include:

- Changes to the CPRS, including restructured tabs and ease-of-use enhancements;
- changes to the *Task List* and *CPS Investigation Conclusion* window, including elimination of Safety Assessments for fatality reports confirmed to have no surviving children;
- changes to Local Data Maintenance to reflect the new RAP functionality and WMS Case Number recording;
- ease-of-use enhancements for copying and pasting within the CPRS; and
- an enhancement of the Auto Recovery function to enable you to retrieve certain documents without having to contact the Help Desk.

Training Supports

Job Aids - The training tools produced to support implementation of CONNECTIONS Build 16 include four new job aids titled:

- “System Build 16 Job Aid – Changes to CPS Functions”,
- “System Build 16 Job Aid – Changes to Safety Assessment”,
- “System Build 16 Job Aid – Changes to Risk Assessment Profile (RAP)”
and
- “System Build 16 Job Aid – Changes to Progress Notes.”

Copies of the job aids will be available in advance of Build 16. These Job Aids will also be available on the OCFS CONNECTIONS Intranet website (<http://sdssnet5/ocfs/connect>) on the Desk/Job Aids page and will be posted in the Public Folders>All Public Folders>Statewide>CONNECTIONS>Build 16.

The Build 16 Job Aids provide detailed, step-by-step instructions for using all the new features of the CONNECTIONS system that will be included in Build 16.

Training Videos- One brief video has been developed to introduce users to the key features of the Build in a less detailed format than the Job Aids. The video is designed to help introduce staff to the key changes in Build 16 and could be used in conjunction with the Job Aids or as a stand-alone introduction to the Build. A copy of the videos will also be distributed with the Job Aids to each Implementation Coordinator, Staff Development Coordinator, and Director of Services. Within ACS, in New York City, video distribution will be handled centrally.

Instructor Led Training in Computer Labs- Training sessions will be offered in the CONNECTIONS computer labs beginning on Wednesday, 11/12/03 and will continue through Friday, 12/19/03. The training will provide line workers, supervisors and interested managers with a basic orientation to the Build’s key features, and the material that is covered in the Job Aids will be reviewed here as well. In these sessions, local users will have the opportunity to practice using

CONNECTIONS with the Build 16 improvements in the training database with simulated data.

The schedule for these classes is available on the CONNECTIONS Intranet website. Registration is handled in the same way as for any other training. Contact the SUNY Training Strategies Group at 1-877-451-4835. For New York City ACS staff, Sandra Neville will handle registration centrally at 212-341-2665.

Implementation Supports

Build 16 Self Assessments/Action Plans

CONNECTIONS Regional Field Support staff have been meeting with local district Implementation Coordinators, local district Implementation Teams and Regional Implementation Support teams to review the new Build 16 functionality and any related implementation issues. Districts have completed Self Assessments and identified gaps that need to be addressed prior to Build 16 implementation. CONNECTIONS Regional Field Support staff continue to be available to assist with these preparation activities as needed.

Build 16 Preview Application

After completing lab-based training, staff will be offered the opportunity to practice on the new functionality through the use of a Preview application. Due to the nature of Build 16, where only intakes that are received after Build 16 implementation will have the new Build functionality, cases that were on the worker's caseload as of that date will appear as pre-implemented investigations containing the pre-Build 16 functionality. Therefore, workers who choose to use the Preview application will be working on test cases as they review the Build 16 system changes. Additional information regarding access and use of the Preview Application will be forwarded to all Implementation Coordinators over the next few weeks.

Day One Checklist

This checklist will be available for use by the district's Implementation Coordinator and Implementation Team in preparing for the changes they will experience after Build 16 is implemented in December 2003.

If you have questions regarding the implementation or content of Build 16, please contact the CONNECTIONS Regional Field Support staff listed below.

Region	Name	Phone Number
Rochester	Cynthia Brookins	(585) 238-8562

Syracuse	Cliff Pelton	(315) 423-5596
Albany	Mary Arnone	(518) 402-3075
Yonkers	Andrea Straker	(914) 377-2081
New York City	Mike Prendergast	(212) 383-1768
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