



CONNECTIONS

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

Q3-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10) 10/6/08

Q3-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes

(CONNECTIONS Build 18.10)

-- Implementation Date: October 10, 2008 --

[The purpose of this document is to provide an in-depth description of the improvements, modifications, enhancements (SIRS), and impacts that are included in this Quarterly Improvement Plan.]

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On October 10, 2008, OCFS will implement the third Quarterly Improvement Plan of this year (a/k/a Q3-08). Q3-08 will include important enhancements to the CONNECTIONS application that support programmatic changes, as well as several system improvements. Two major programmatic changes included in Q3-08 are:

- ❖ a redesigned Safety Assessment tool, which is the result of extensive work with a statewide team of users who partnered with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services; and
- ❖ improved wording of risk factors in the Risk Assessment Profile to clarify the circumstances that contribute to risk of future abuse/maltreatment.

Q3-08 also includes system support for districts participating in the Family Assessment Response initiative.

The other enhancements included in Q3-08 are recommendations from the Child Welfare System Information Transformation Business Team. These recommended enhancements are based on a collaborative effort on the part of OCFS, local district and voluntary agency casework and supervisory staff.

Other System Enhancements

- There will now be a choice, in Print Preview mode, of displaying and printing Progress Notes in the current default (8pt) or larger (12pt) fonts
- The Unit Approver will now be allowed to locally maintain To Do's
- In Progress notes, once a family participant has been selected, the "Focus" checkbox will be automatically pre-filled. This supports compliance with required casework contacts for children in foster care. If a family member is a participant but is not to be considered the 'focus', the caseworker must deselect the checkmark in the "Focus" checkbox for that individual family participant

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FAD Changes

- Enhancements to Criminal History Record Checks
 - Added Fingerprint Results value of Mandatory Disqualifier to comply with federal Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006 (functionality available as of 10/1/08)

- Revised Fingerprint Outputs to conform to the Mandatory Disqualifier changes
 - Notice (English and Spanish)
 - Denial/Revocation letter (English and Spanish)

Family Assessment Response Initiative

The Q3-08 Improvement Plan will contain system support for the Family Assessment Response initiative. Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007 authorized LDSSs, other than in New York City, to apply to the NYS OCFS to use a family assessment and services approach for a subset of families reported to the SCR for child maltreatment. This is a non-adversarial approach to the traditional investigative response in select CPS report scenarios; no determination of the SCR report is made. Six applications were received and approved. The participating counties are: Westchester, Orange, Onondaga, Tompkins, Chautauqua and Erie.

CONNECTIONS' newly added system support allows participating districts to identify CPS Investigations for Family Assessment Response and open a Family Services Intake (FSI) and Services Stage (FAM) to document case activity. The FAM stage includes the following: progress notes, safety assessment, preventive risk assessment and education. Participating districts have their own Job Aid to assist them. Non-participating districts and voluntary agencies will receive an Informational Memorandum with further information about this initiative.

Definitions of the terms used in this document

CONNECTIONS improvements, implemented in response to SIRs and Change Requests, are called Quarterly Improvement Plans. The Plans (previously called CONNECTIONS Builds) began to be implemented every three months since January 2008.

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The following describes the terms used in this document. The *Functional Area* section identifies the part of the application that is involved in the improvement, modification, enhancement or fix. The *Issue Description* section describes the issue that will be resolved. The *Fix/Impact* section describes what the improvement is expected to accomplish (impact), and the *SIR ID* section identifies the internal tracking number of that request.

Resource Tools

- An update to online HELP (within the CONNECTIONS application)
- An Impact Analysis document entitled: *CONNECTIONS Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Impact Analysis - Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes*
- A Job Aid entitled: *Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid*
- A CBT refresher on Risk and Safety Assessments (coming soon)
- An updated Safety/Risk Field Guide (coming soon)
- An Informational Letter about the Family Assessment Response (FAR) Initiative (for non-participating districts)
- A Family Assessment Response Job Aid (for participating districts) entitled: *CONNECTIONS Family Assessment Response Job Aid for Participating Districts*
- Teleconference entitled: *Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment*

Questions, please refer to the following resources

- If you have questions about local practice, policy or procedures, we ask that you first review these procedures with your supervisor.
- For all other CONNECTIONS related questions you can contact:
 - the APP HELP mailbox by filling in the form titled: *CONNECTIONS Application Help Request* (posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the CONNECTIONS Forms page) and emailing the completed form to the following address: ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.state.ny.us. A few points about the address: please note that there is one underscore in the address, and the underscore has to be typed into the address in order for the email to be directed to the correct mailbox, and if you are emailing 'out of our

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network' we ask that you tack on the following piece to the address: @dfa.state.ny.us or, @nysemail.state.ny.us

- the NYS OFT Enterprise Help Desk 1-800-697-1323
- WMS questions should be directed to the OCFS-IT Customer Support Help Line at 1-800-342-3727
- BICS issues should be reported to the BICS hotline at 1-800-342-3010
- SSPS issues should be reported to either Nancy Pare at 212-383-1382 or Maureen Godwin at 212-383-2483

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Q3-08 Improvements (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10)

Implementation Date: October 10, 2008

Functional Area Safety Assessments	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
Safety Assessment	Revise the CPS and FSS Safety Assessment to reflect workgroup recommendations.	<p>A new version of the Safety Assessment is being implemented. System changes include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Users will navigate immediately to the Safety Definitions via a new Light Bulb icon available on the windows within the module. 2) Safety Factors selected during the SCR Intake stage will no longer be carried forward to the initial Safety Assessment in the CPS Investigation stage. 3) There will be two new tabs on the Safety Assessment window that contribute to a new Safety Plan output; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Parent/Caretaker Actions/Safety Plan tab will be the third tab on the new window and replaces the Mitigating Strengths/ Resources tab. Users will enter a narrative related to the specific actions taken by the parents to protect the children. ii. The Controlling Interventions/Safety Plan tab will be the fourth tab on the new window and replaces the Safety Interventions tab. Users select from a list of the interventions that have been implemented and enter a narrative related to the controlling interventions and other actions they have implemented. 4) The prompt above the immediate dangers list box will be changed to: "Select those safety factors that place the child(ren) in immediate or <i>impending</i> danger of serious harm." 	8263

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<p>Functional Area Safety Assessments (cont.)</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none">5) Users will be required to enter a separate comment for each Safety Factor selected.6) The 5 Safety Decisions have been reworded for additional clarification.7) When a user selects certain Safety Decisions, the third and fourth tabs on the Safety Assessment window will be enabled so that a safety plan can be documented. When no Safety Factors are found, the Parent/Caretaker Actions/ Safety plan tab and the Controlling Interventions/Safety Plan tabs will be disabled.8) When a user deselects the Safety Factors, tabs (that may have comments in them), will become disabled and all data existing on the tab will be deleted.9) Users will have the ability to print selected Safety Assessments from the main CPS Safety Assessment tab.10) The layout and wording of the CPRS report will be modified to reflect changes to the Safety Assessment window.11) The Assessment Summary report will display the safety factors and safety decisions in their entirety (no longer as abbreviated) for FASPs containing the Q3-08 version of the CPS Safety Assessment.12) The Safety Plan Output resulting from information entered on the two new tabs is described further in SIR 8327. <p>Note: All Investigation (INV) stages with a <i>post Q3-08</i> implementation start date will contain the new version.</p> <p>All INV stages opened <i>prior to Q3-08</i> implementation will continue to support the old version.</p>	
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<p>Functional Area Safety Assessments (cont.)</p>		<p>A new safety assessment in an Investigation stage will be pre-filled from the most recent approved safety assessment in an <i>open</i> Investigation stage within the same case, if the previous safety assessment has an approval date of 60 days or less from the date of accessing the new safety assessment.</p> <p>For FSS CWS stages, all FASPs launched <i>post-implementation</i> will contain the new version. In-Process FASPs will support the new version if no data has been saved on the Safety Assessment window. FASPs with a status of PEND, APRV, or REJT will continue to support the old version.</p> <p>If a Safety Assessment is completed within the last 7 days as part of the INV stage for the same case, the information from the Safety Assessment will be carried forward to the CPS Safety Assessment of the Initial FASP at the time the Safety Assessment is opened. However, if the INV Safety assessment is <i>pre-Q3-08</i> and the FSS Safety Assessment is <i>post Q3-08</i>, no data will be pre-populated.</p> <p>More specifics are available in the <u>Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid</u> that is available on the CONNECTIONS intranet web site at (http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/).</p>	
<p>Safety Plan Output</p>	<p>Users requested a document to share with families that pulls together the Safety Plan information from the Safety Assessment.</p>	<p>The Safety Plan Output will contain information from the Safety Assessment windows: Parent/Caretaker Actions/ Safety Plan tab, the Controlling Interventions/Safety Plan tab and the Placement sub-window, if applicable.</p> <p>The Output can be accessed and printed via the Reports menu on the FASP tab when there is an In-</p>	<p>8327/8285</p>

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		<p>Process or Pending FASP and a tracked child in the stage. Any user with access to Safety Assessments via the CPRS will also have the ability to access and print a safety plan.</p> <p>Note: Users will not be able to print a stand alone Safety Plan from Plan Amendments. Users can print the entire Plan Amendment if it is still in-process.</p>	
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Functional Area CPS	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
CPS	<p>OCI Investigation Monthly Management Report shows cases with Safety Assessments & Investigation Conclusions as outstanding that have been closed. If the worker has an overdue report and closes the stage prior to the batch, this stage is excluded from the report.</p>	<p>OCI report will now include overdue reports on stages closed between the end of the month and the day the batch is run.</p>	4059
CPS Person Detail	<p>Users are not able to change the role from Confirmed Abused (CA) to Confirmed Maltreated (CM) even though the only abuse allegation is unsubstantiated. Currently, the only way to change the role from CA to CM is to delete the allegation of Fatality or Sexual Abuse (FATL or SXAB) and then change the role manually from CA to CM. Even though the allegation is unsubstantiated, the system will not allow a change in the role with that allegation present in the investigation.</p>	<p>The worker will have the ability to update the child's role on the Person Detail window from CA to CM if the abuse allegation (FATL or SXAB) is Unsubstantiated.</p>	6578

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Functional Area CPS/FSS - RAP	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
Risk Assessment Profile (RAP) INV,FSS	<p>The RAP is designed to guide decision-making by having the system (CONNECTIONS) calculate a risk score that is a valid predictor of the likelihood that a child will be abused or maltreated in the future. Research and review of cases uncovered, however, that there are common errors in interpreting and applying the risk elements in the RAP.</p> <p>RAP elements were clarified so that users will make less errors in completing the RAP and its utility in predicting the level of risk of future abuse or maltreatment will be increased</p>	<p>Risk Elements in the RAP will be reworded in order to increase the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correctness in interpretation and application of risk elements; • accuracy of risk scores in order to better assist decision making regarding opening a services case post investigation • Accuracy of risk scores in order to assist decision making regarding focus of service plans, permanency and case closing decisions; and • precision of forecasted likelihood of recurrence of abuse or maltreatment. <p>Note: The scoring of the RAP will not be impacted. The non-CPS version of the FASP will not change.</p>	8328 and 8329
Risk Assessment Profile - Implementation Notes	<p>Any new RAP started after Q3-08 implementation in the Investigation or the FASP will include the new RAP questions. The wording of questions in a RAP that is in process at the time of implementation, however, may be modified as a result of the Q3-08 implementation approach.</p>	<p>In the INV Stage, or in an Initial FASP, a RAP that is in-process (information saved to the RAP module), pending, or approved, at the time of Q3-08 implementation will be presented with the pre-implemented version of the RAP question.</p> <p>In Comprehensive and Reassessment FASP's that were in-process (information was saved to the RAP module), or pending approval at the time of Q3-08 implementation, the RAP will contain the post-implemented version of the RAP (when it is accessed after Q3-08 is implemented). This will be seen only in those situations where the user returns to the RAP windows or generates the RAP component report prior to the final approval of the FASP.</p> <p>Once Comprehensive and Reassessment FASPs that</p>	8408

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		were pending approval at the time of Q3-08 implementation are approved, the Full FASP report will contain the pre-implemented version of the RAP questions.	
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Functional Area CPS/FSS	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
CPS INV & FSS - Progress Notes	In situations in which the worker's Role in the Stage was changed while the case was open, historical access to progress notes was not working correctly.	Workers will be allowed access to progress notes according to the worker's <u>complete</u> Historical Role in the case.	8215
CPS INV & FSI/FSS FAM	These changes support new legislation that allows local districts to participate in a project to develop differential response programs for some CPS investigations (INV, FSI, and FSS Stages in CONNECTIONS). The participating pilot counties are: Westchester, Orange, Onondaga, Tompkins, Chautauqua and Erie.	<p>To support the Family Assessment Response demonstration project, modifications will be made across multiple areas of the INV, FSI and FSS stages to support the identification, processing, and tracking of cases in the FAR project.</p> <p>In the INV Stage, the system will require an approved safety assessment before allowing a Family Assessment Response. Workers will identify Family Assessment Response cases using a checkbox that has been added to the Investigation Conclusion window. The Family Assessment Response INV Stages will remain <u>open</u>, and can be reassigned to a designated OCFS workload.</p> <p>After designating Family Assessment Response in the INV Stage, the FSI and FSS for Family Assessment Response (FAM) can be opened. The FSS/FAM stage will include progress notes, safety assessment, preventive risk assessment, and education. A FSS/FAM can be converted to a full services (FSS/CWS) Stage.</p> <p>Additional support for case management activities will be included on the Open Caseload Inquiry (OCI) and other Reports, by uniquely identifying these cases as FAM.</p> <p>Additional detailed information is available in the</p>	8320

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Functional Area CPS/FSS (cont.)		<i>CONNECTIONS Family Assessment Response Job Aid for Participating Districts</i> and a soon to be released INF for non-participating districts.	
CPS INV & FSS - Progress Notes	Users requested an increase in the font size of the progress notes in both the print preview and print versions. Currently the font size can only be set to 8 pt.	Users can now choose between 8 pt and 12 pt font size for either viewing or printing progress notes. Both the online print preview version and the printed version will be displayed/ printed accordingly.	8554
CPS INV & FSS - Progress Notes	Progress notes that record visits with foster children are often not counted towards meeting the federal requirement because incorrect data values were selected by the user. One of the most frequent issues is the failure of the worker to identify the child as a “Focus” of the Progress Note.	As per the Business Team Recommendations, whenever an individual from the Family List is selected as a Participant in the Progress Notes Detail window, the individual should also be identified as the Focus. Options will be available to deselect, and to add additional individuals from the focus list, even if they are not a participant.	8576

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Functional Area FSS	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
Reports - FASP	The Risk Assessment Profile (RAP) is not displaying in the Assessment Summary when applicable. Only the information that raises the risk level is displaying.	The Assessment Summary now includes all RAP information.	4583
FASP	When there is no Case Initiation Date (CID) set in the Family Services Stage (FSS), the CID displays as 12:00:00 AM on the Permanency Tab.	When there is no CID in the FSS the CID on the Permanency tab will not be displaying any time.	8062
Bridges To Health (Regarding DJJOY)	<p>In order to enroll a child (NYC and Upstate) in the B2H Waiver in Connections, the child must be tracked and have a Program Choice of Placement. Since DJJOY children placed in OCFS facilities are only opened in Connections to enter and track B2H Waiver information, it is not necessary for the child to be tracked or have a Program Choice.</p> <p>NYC DJJOY children placed in OCFS facilities are authorized Medicaid on Downstate WMS. Currently, when a user enrolls a child in a NYC stage in the B2H Waiver a transaction is sent to the Upstate Restriction/Exception Subsystem. If the child is not in receipt of Medicaid on Upstate WMS, the transaction is rejected and the B2H Waiver cannot be saved in Connections. Therefore, NYC users must open an Upstate Services case with a POS line in order to generate Medicaid coverage (SERMA) on Upstate WMS. The entry of the waiver on Connections also sends an unnecessary transaction to the Restriction/Exception Subsystem on Upstate WMS. Once the waiver is entered, the user must end date the POS line to terminate Medicaid (SERMA) on Upstate WMS and also end date the waiver on the Upstate Restriction/Exception Subsystem.</p>	<p>Create a new Person Identifier - DJJOY Case #.</p> <p>The edit that requires a Program Choice of Placement in order to enter B2H Waiver information in Connections will not apply if the child has a DJJOY Case #.</p> <p>Connections will no longer send a transaction to the Upstate Restriction/Exception Subsystem if the child has a DJJOY Case # Person Identifier and is in a NYC stage, as determined by the agency code of the case manager.</p> <p>User should only enter DJJOY Case # Person Identifier for DJJOY children who are residing in an OCFS operated facility. User will receive a warning message "A DJJOY Case Number should only be recorded if the child is currently placed in an OCFS operated Facility. Continue?" The user can select "Yes" to continue with the selection of "DJJOY Case #" or "No" to cancel out of the selection.</p> <p>NYC users should also be advised that Connections will not send a transaction to the Upstate Restriction/Exception Subsystem if the child has a</p>	8179

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Functional Area FSS (cont.)		DJJOY Case # Person Identifier.	
FSS - Health Window	User receives error message on Early Intervention window when a child with an early intervention record who is 4 years old or less is selected and another child is selected who does not have the same responsible agency as the worker or does not have any historical health information.	User will no longer receive error.	8303
AFCARS	AFCARS removal information is required for all children in foster care, including children freed for adoption. If removal information for a child was not entered in the CWS stage, there is no method for entering it in the CCR stage. There may also be a need to correct removal information that was recorded in the CWS stage incorrectly.	A Removal tab will be added to the CCR. The most recent Removal record from the CWS stage will be carried forward to the CCR. Users will only be able to modify the most recently entered Removal record- including the one carried forward from the CWS stage. No alerts will be generated for the CCR stage.	8251

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Functional Area PERMANENCY	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
Permanency Report	The “Find and Replace” button on the toolbar replaces words from the protected and un-protected areas on the PHR.	The “Find and Replace” button will only replace words in the un-protected areas of the PHR.	8371
Permanency	When typing in the text area, or, when copying from Progress Notes and into the Permanency Report, the page jumps. Upon clicking to paste between existing texts, a group of words will be highlighted and the page jumps.	The page will no longer jump under these circumstances.	8823

Functional Area FAD	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
FAD	Due to federal legislation, a value of “mandatory disqualifier” must be added to the Fingerprint Results drop-down window. Certain crimes will disqualify persons from becoming certified or approved foster or adoptive parents after 10/1/08.	A value of “mandatory disqualifier “ will be added to the Finger Print Results drop-down box on the Household Member detail window. Users can choose this value as of 10/1/08 as that is the date that the law goes into effect. Technically this SIR is not part of Q3-08 but is related to the changes in the Fingerprint letters in SIR 8567.	8567
FAD	The federal Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006 eliminates the ability for states to "opt out" of the Title IV-E criminal history record check requirements for prospective foster and adoptive parents. As of October 1, 2008, it becomes New York State's standard to require that applicants to become foster and adoptive parents who were convicted of certain categories of felonies, or persons who have already been certified or approved to be foster or adoptive	The Fingerprint Notice (both English and Spanish versions) and the Denial/Revocation Letters (both English and Spanish versions) will be updated to reflect the Mandatory Disqualifier language in the law. Note: An ADM containing these revised documents has been issued to LDSS and voluntary agencies (8-OCFS-ADM-06).	8634

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	<p>parents who are subsequently (after October 1, 2008) convicted of certain categories of felonies, must be disqualified from becoming foster or adoptive parents, or must have their certification or approval revoked. This disqualification/revocation is "Mandatory".</p>		
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Functional Area OTHER	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
Person merge/split	Upon a person split, demographic information should revert back to what was present prior to a Person Merge. This is not happening, however, for the individual who was identified as the Closed/Merged individual during the Merge. Instead, the demographics of the "Going Forward" merged person are being incorrectly associated to the "Closed" individual after a Split.	<p>The original solution to this problem was to roll-back all demographics to what they were prior to the Person Merge. Analysis of solution was found to have implications however, with regard to the way CIN is handled in WMS for a merged or split person. A fix to the problem presented in this SIR will require the related WMS issues also be addressed. This will be a much bigger effort for a future build.</p> <p>For Q3-08 (Build 18.10) a Warning Message will be added to warn the user to merge with care where there is a WMS CIN on the person closed, and none on the person forward. The person forward will carry the CIN from the person closed, and all of the forward person demographics will be carried to that CIN in WMS.</p> <p>The message will read, "Services CIN from Person Closed will be merged to Person Forward. Continue?"</p>	7700
TO - DO	Currently, if a worker leaves employment he/she cannot be end dated if there are existing Task (T) To Do's associated with his/her account. Currently supervisors and managers must request a Data Fix to remove the Task To Do's and allow the agency\district to end date the worker in CONNECTIONS.	Unit Approvers will be allowed to Assign the Task To Dos to another worker for completion.	8279
Common	Yonkers Regional Office/YRO/Yonkers is now known as Spring Valley Regional Office/ SVO.	The name of Yonkers Regional Office/YRO/Yonkers will be changed to Spring Valley Regional Office/ SVO/Spring Valley wherever it appears in the CONNECTIONS application.	8409