



CONNECTIONS

NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes

Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes

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

CONNECTIONS

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes

Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes

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.

On Saturday, January 24, 2009, OCFS will implement the fourth Quarterly Improvement Plan of this year (a/k/a Q4-08). Q4-08 will include important enhancements to the CONNECTIONS application that support programmatic changes, as well as several system improvements. The “Ease of Use” enhancements 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.

The areas of the application that are affected by the enhancements in Q4-08 are:

- ❖ Family Services Stage, Approvals, Permanency Hearing Report (PHR), Progress Notes, Investigation Stage, Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD), as well as System Messaging

Definitions of the terms used in this document

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.

CONNECTIONS

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes

Resource Tools

- Q4-08 Highlights
- Q4-08 Release Notes
- Q4-08 Impact Analysis - Allowing the Investigative Actions Task to be Optional
- CONNECTIONS Q4-08 Job Aid
- An update to On-line HELP (within the CONNECTIONS application)

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 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 Customer Care Center 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

CONNECTIONS

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes

Q4-08 Improvements

Functional Area	Issue Description	Fix Impact	SIR ID
Progress Notes	The “New Using” option, which offers the worker an efficiency by allowing data fields in an existing note to be used in a new note, has been underutilized by workers since the option has not been viewable on the Progress Notes window.	With implementation of Q4-08 the “New Using” option will be placed directly on the Progress Notes Search window, replacing the “Sort” pushbutton. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The “Sort” function will also be enhanced to allow sorting directly on the Progress Notes Grid in ascending or descending order. The worker can modify the default sort order (descending by date) by clicking on a column heading in the Search Results grid. This will sort by the selected column in ascending or descending (alpha or numeric) order.▪ When a column is sorted in ascending order, an upward pointing arrow will display in the column heading. For descending order, a downward pointing arrow will display in the column heading.	9145
Progress Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Currently, when saving a Progress Note in the INV or FSS Stages, or when saving the Safety or Risk Assessment in the INV Stage, a pop-up message is displayed notifying you that changes have been saved to the database. The only option available is to click ‘OK’. There is no	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The fix will remove the pop-up window when saving a Progress Note as ‘draft’ (INV and FSS), when selecting Save and Enter New and when saving a Safety Assessment or Risk Assessment in an INV stage.▪ The fix will add a message when ‘Save as Final’ is selected on the Progress Notes	9149

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

	<p>option to “back out” of the save. The message, and the acknowledgement of it (the “OK”), have been determined to be an extra step that is of no value.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently, in the Progress Notes Module, if ‘save as final’ is selected in error (rather than “save as draft”) the system does not allow you to cancel the Save. 	<p>window, in both the INV and FSS stages, and offer the option of canceling the save. The worker can then save the note as draft.</p>	
Progress Notes	<p>CID dates are not populating the Progress Notes tab for ADVPO stages as they should</p>	<p>The CID date will populate on the Progress Notes tab for ADVPO stages.</p>	9187
Progress Notes	<p>The Show /Hide Instructions menu item in the Options menu is displaying incorrectly. When the corresponding “Show Instructions” window button is selected, the instructions are displayed and the button switches to “Hide Instructions.” The menu option should work the same way...when “Show Instructions” is selected, the instructions should appear and the menu option should switch to “Hide Instructions;” however, in production, when “Show Instructions” is selected, the menu option continues to display “Show Instructions” Selecting “Show Instructions” while the instructions are already in view could result in loss of data on the window.</p>	<p>Show/Hide Instructions menu item will display correctly. When “Show Instructions” is selected, the instructions will appear and the menu option will switch to “Hide Instructions”.</p>	9432
To-Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When there is more than one approver for an Approval Task To Do, there is no way for higher level workers to know that the task is ready for them to approve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approval Task To Dos that are not yet ready for higher level approval will be highlighted with a gray background. The background will change to white when it is ready for 	9139

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval To Do's for Rejected Tasks remain on higher level approver's To Do list in COMP status and are not deleted from the list. 	<p>approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval To Dos for rejected tasks will be deleted from the higher level approver's To Do List 	
To-Do - Approval	Q3 -08 provided the ability for a unit approver to reassign an Approval To Do however, the newly assigned worker is unable to approve the To Do.	<p>Transfer of the Task To Do by the unit approver, will replace the old approver's name with the new approver's name on the Approval window, and the newly assigned worker will be able to approve the reassigned To Do.</p> <p>The data-fix for SIR 9363 will also correct all Approval Task To Dos that were reassigned after Q3-08 that the newly assigned worker has been unable to approve. This fix applies to any reassigned Task To Do that is Pending Approval for any stage type - CPS, FSS, FAD. The fix replaces the old approver's name with the new approver's name on the Approval window.</p>	9384/ 9363
FSS/PHR	The e-mail address field for outside participants is only 38 characters long. In many cases the limited field for e-mail addresses does not allow the complete e-mail address to be added to the case record.	A maximum of 50 characters will be allowed, so that longer e-mail addresses can be accommodated.	5930
FSS	When there is a Date of Birth marked as approximate and then a complete DOB is entered and saved in an FSS Stage Composition window, any person demographic change causes the DOB to recalculate to an approximate value, e.g. 1/1/97.	Stage\Person Maintenance will not revert to an approximate DOB when a complete DOB has been previously entered and saved.	8321

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

FSS	In some circumstances, an end dated phone number was displaying in the Case Summary window.	Only the current phone number for individuals will be displayed within all windows in CONNECTIONS.	8685
FSS/ Progress Notes	Currently the event date of a Progress Note may be backdated only up to the FSI date. When the CID is earlier than the FSI date, you receive the following message when trying to backdate the Progress Notes Event Date before the FSI date: "The event date must not be prior to the Family Services Intake Date. Please change the event date of the Progress Note."	The event date of a Progress Note may be backdated up to the earlier of the two dates – CID or FSI date. Thus allowing the entry of a Progress Note with a date equal or greater than the CID, and before the stage opening.	8459
FSS/ Education Tab	In the education tab, the date drop-down will not allow selection of the previous or future academic years. This restricts caseworkers and education specialist's ability to record the information for school years other than the current one.	Edits on the date field in the Education tab, that limited the entry date to the current or previous academic years, have been lifted in Q4-08. This change will provide caseworkers and education specialists with flexibility to record pertinent information as soon as it becomes available. The date drop-down on the Education Detail window will now allow selection of current academic year, a previous year, and the next academic year. The system will default to the current year. Note: Since Effective Date is used by the system to determine access to historical information, workers who record future information for an upcoming year, who are then end-dated prior to the start of that year, will be unable to view that recorded information.	8983

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

FSS/ Case Search	<p>When accessed from Case Search, the Event List and Progress Notes windows list event dates only up to the date of the first un-assignment of the worker when the worker has been assigned and unassigned to the stage more than once. This occurs when the last un-assignment of the worker is the same as the FSS closure date, and the worker has no other security attributes allowing them to see those events.</p>	<p>The worker will be able to see events up to the last date of un-assignment when the worker had also been assigned and unassigned earlier in the case.</p>	<p>8966/ 8215</p>
FSS/ Non CPS Risk Assessment	<p>The FSS Preventive Risk Assessment window opens with empty Primary/Secondary Caretaker names after Primary/Secondary Caretaker names are modified for the FSS.</p>	<p>After the implementation of the fix, the Primary/Secondary Caretaker names will populate on existing and all new Preventive Risk Assessments.</p>	<p>9201</p>
FASP	<p>A number of changes are required in the FASP to save steps for workers and assist in everyday navigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently the order in which incomplete components appear in “Check FASP Detail” and Removal Update windows does not match the order in which they are displayed on the FASP tree. ▪ When the FASP window opens, the worker must click the “+” signs to expand the FASP Tree resulting in numerous extra mouse clicks. ▪ When launching a FASP or Plan Amendment, the system presents messages sequentially. The worker must 	<p>After the implementation of the fix, the following changes will be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The order of the incomplete components will match the order of components displayed in the FASP tree. ▪ For an ‘In Process’ FASP, the FASP tree will be expanded upon window entry. All the sub-nodes will be displayed. ▪ Error messages generated at the time of launching of a FASP will be combined and displayed to a worker at one time as a Message List. ▪ Refer to the Q4-08 Job Aid for more specific information 	<p>9134</p>

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

	<p>correct one error before becoming aware of another, related problem. For example, when a worker attempts to launch a FASP before completing the Family Relationship Matrix and the Primary/Secondary Caretaker, the system displays two separate error messages.</p>		
FASP	<p>Users identified the following issues with the FASP Due Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The application does not currently return the "next" FASP due date correctly. When a FASP (with a future due date) is in process, the Next FASP Due Date field currently displays the due date of the next not launched FASP and not the future due date of the 'In Process' FASP. ▪ The "FASP is Overdue" message did not take into consideration the "In Process" FASP. ▪ The inability to identify the due date of all FASPs on the FASP tree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The next FASP due date field will display the due date of the earliest future FASP either 'In Process' or 'Not Launched'. ▪ The "FASP is Overdue" message should display if the earliest not launched FASP is overdue or, if the 'In Process' FASP is overdue. ▪ The Due Date of the FASP should be displayed in the FASP tree for FASPs in the following status: 'Not Launched', 'In Process' and 'Pending'. FASPs that have been approved should continue to display the approval date. 	9135
FASP/ Plan Amendment	<p>In the Plan Amendment Component "Child Entering/Re-Entering Foster Care" tab "Continuity of Culture for American Indian Children" the worker can not change the answer for the children for the following question: "Is the child in placement an American Indian Child?"</p>	<p>The user will be able to change the answer to this question and Save will enable.</p>	8703

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

FASP/ Due Date	If the worker selects the Reassessment FASP to be launched, receives an error message, and then selects OK, the “Due Date” of the FASP is repeated multiple times on the “Choose Reassessment to Launch” window.	The FASP due date will display correctly.	9441
FASP/ Case Planner Summary	<p>When there is only a Case Manager or Case Planner on an FSS stage, the system defaults to the Analysis Node/all tabs, Family Update Node/Case Update tab, and the Service Plan Node/ Family Involvement button windows when selecting them from the FASP tree.</p> <p>This results in the Case Planner/Case Manager having to navigate through windows designed to capture case-worker submissions when no submissions were entered.</p>	<p>This option will be available only if there is no case worker assigned to the FSS and there never has been another worker who entered and saved notes on the Case Planner Summary window.</p> <p>After the change, when accessing the Analysis node from the FASP tree, the system will default to the Case Planner Summary window for the first tab (Family View). When accessing the other tabs from the Assessment and Analysis window, the user will navigate to the Case Planner Summary window when choosing any tab on the window.</p> <p>When accessing the Family Update Node from the FASP tree the system will default to the Case Planner Summary window on the Case Update tab if no Emergency Services were selected on the FSI stage and a program choice of protective does not exist.</p> <p>When accessing the Service Plan from the FASP tree and choosing the Family Involvement button,</p>	9157

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

		<p>the system will default to the Case Planner Summary window.</p> <p>No change has been made in navigation from the Check FASP Detail window.</p>	
FSI	Workers receive an error when viewing the case list from the FSI>Demographics>Search> Case List path and then selecting the row from the Case List grid.	Workers will no longer receive an error when accessing the case list via the identified path.	8759
PHR	There are times when the “Hearing Date Certain” as recorded in CCRS is not accurate due to lag reporting, entry error or re-scheduling. When that occurs, and the user enters an amended date certain in CONNECTIONS on the Court information window, the “Hearing Date Certain” in the Child List Grid and PHR Summary Grid on the PHR tab appear to be inconsistent.	On the PHR tab, the label will be changed on the Child List grid from “Hearing Date Certain” to “Hearing Date Certain from CCRS”. On the Permanency Report Summary grid, a checkbox will be added that will pre-fill if the Hearing Date Certain is changed on the Court Information window. The checkbox will be titled “Amended Date Certain” and will help clarify why the “Hearing Date Certain” in the Child List grid may be different from the “Hearing Date Certain” in the Permanency Report Summary grid.	9131
CPS Investigation Actions	The Investigation Actions Task in the INV stage is felt to be redundant and users reported that it does not provide any support to the caseworker.	<p>Districts can decide whether they want the Investigation Actions checklist to be required for submission of Investigation Conclusion for approval, or not.</p> <p>If the district opts to no longer require Investigative Actions, the Investigative Actions Task will remain</p>	9133

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

		<p>on the INV Stage Task List, and will remain as an Event on the Event List. The status of the Event will be updated to PEND and “APRV” (Approved) based on the approval of the Investigation Conclusion.</p> <p>Please note: Districts that opt to no longer require the Investigation Actions Checklist will need to notify OCFS in advance of the Build.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CONNECTIONS Implementation staff will work with districts to facilitate this process. ▪ All CPS workers will need to be made aware of this new option, and district specific expectations. ▪ The rules of the District with Primary Responsibility for the Investigation determine whether Investigative Action is required. 	
FAD	Workers who don't have access to the Resource Detail window cannot determine if a resource is a dual purpose home. A dual purpose home is eligible to receive both foster care and adoption subsidy payments.	After the implementation of the fix, an Adoption Subsidy checkbox will appear on the Resource Detail window for all facilities and will be system checked if it is checked on the FA Home License window.	6506
FAD	Effective October 1, 2008, the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006 requires the mandatory disqualification of prospective foster/adoptive parents who were convicted of certain categories of felonies. Also, if a current foster/adoptive parent is convicted of a crime in	A new FAD Closure Reason will be added to support implementation of the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006. “Criminal History - Mandatory Disqualifier” reason will be available to select from the drop-down on the Close Home window.	9333

CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q4-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*

	this category beginning October 1, 2008, their certification/approval must be revoked. Currently there is no “Criminal History - Mandatory Disqualifier” reason available to select from the drop-down on the Close Home window for FAD homes.		
Staff Search	The name of St. Regis tribal nation displays incorrectly on the Staff ID List.	After the implementation of the fix, the name will be displayed correctly.	9211
<u>CPS ACS only</u>	ACS has requested modifications to their local protocol template to remove redundancy with entries now supported in Progress Notes and Progress Notes Instructions.	The fix will condense and modify the ACS local protocol template to reflect information now supported in other places, especially Progress Notes, in the application.	9155
<u>CPS ACS only (Progress Notes)</u>	ACS requested modifications to their Progress Notes instructions to reflect changes to the local protocol template to remove redundancies.	The fix will modify ACS Progress Notes instructions to include text removed from their local protocol template.	9156