



Background:

The federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) requires states to collect a number of data elements on children in out-of-home care, including the date of physical removal, the type of legal event associated with the removal and the condition(s) associated with that removal. Removal information is recorded in CONNECTIONS on the Removal Information tab on the Tracked Children Detail window. For each child with an M910 Placement Date recorded in CCRS, there must be an associated Date of Physical Removal in CONNECTIONS. These dates may differ as will be illustrated in the scenarios that appear on the next page. **Nothing in this tip sheet is intended to modify the criteria or procedures for determining Title IV-E eligibility.**

Removal Information Rules:

- The Removal Information tab enables when there is a current Program Choice of Placement or Non-LDSS custody.
- A placement “episode” is defined as a child being placed in a foster care setting (M910 - Child’s Placement Begins) and has no discharge recorded in CCRS (either an M990 – Child’s Placement Ended” or an M999 – Child’s Track Closed). Only the most recent placement episode is reported for AFCARS.
- ⚠ **Note:** a child on trial discharge is still considered to be in care. Therefore, if they return to placement from trial discharge, no matter the length of the trial discharge period, this is treated as part of the same episode as the placement that preceded the trial discharge.
- For each placement episode, it is necessary to record on the Removal Information tab:
 - Date of Physical Removal
 - Conditions Associated with Child’s Removal (**select all conditions that apply**)
 - Type of Legal Event Associated with Removal
- In most instances, the date of physical removal is the date when a child is removed from her or his home for the purpose of being placed into foster care or non-LDSS Custody. There are certain situations that require special consideration in determining the removal date. The typical scenarios follow below:
 - ⚠ **Note:** If the gap between date of physical removal and placement into foster care (M910) exceeds 30 days, the child may remain on the AFCARS Removal/Placement report. If data is properly entered in CCRS and CONNECTIONS, this entry can be ignored.

Scenario	Systems Implications	Example
<p>#1: <u>Child removed from home, remanded to a detention facility and then placed in foster care</u></p>	<p>CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this data element is the date that the child enters the foster care setting. <p>CCRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M910 Date is the date that the child enters the foster care setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date child detained = 2/1/13 Court transfers custody to LDSS = 2/15/13 Child remains in detention = 2/15-2/17/13 Child transferred to foster care setting = 2/18/13 <p>Therefore, Date of Physical Removal field in CONNECTIONS = 2/18/13 M910 date in CCRS = 2/18/13</p>
<p>#2a: <u>Child brought to hospital by parent/careaker due to child's health or clinical needs (e.g., severe emotional disturbance), following hospitalization child enters foster care and is placed in a foster care setting</u></p>	<p>CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this data element is the date that the child enters the foster care setting. <p>CCRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M910 Date is the date that the child enters the foster care setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date child leaves home and enters hospital = 2/1/13 Child transferred from hospital to foster care setting = 2/15/13 <p>Therefore, Date of Physical Removal field in CONNECTIONS = 2/15/13 M910 Date in CCRS = 2/15/13</p>
<p>#2b: <u>Child removed from home by CPS; child brought by CPS directly to a hospital and thereafter, goes from the hospital to a foster care setting</u></p>	<p>CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this data element is the date that the child enters the foster care setting. <p>CCRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M910 Date is the date that the child enters the foster care setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child removed from home and enters hospital = 2/1/13 Child enters foster care setting – 2/5/13 <p>Therefore, Date of Physical Removal field in CONNECTIONS = 2/5/13 M910 Date in CCRS = 2/5/13</p>
<p>#3a: <u>Child removed from home and is placed by the court with a relative (Non-LDSS Custody) under Article 3, 7 or 10 of the Family Court Act. The child is</u></p>	<p>CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYS treats the initial Non-LDSS custody placement with the relative as a removal episode (although a non-foster care episode); therefore, removal data is recorded. The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this (non-foster care) removal episode for NYS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date child leaves home to reside with relative (non-LDSS custody) = 2/1/13 <p>Therefore, Date of Physical Removal in CONNECTIONS = 2/1/13 M910 Date in CCRS = not applicable</p>

<p><u>thereafter physically removed from the relative and enters a foster care setting</u></p>	<p>tracking purposes is the date the child leaves home to reside with the relative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The date the child is placed in foster care or the date the court transfers custody to the LDSS (whichever is earlier), becomes the AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for this second (foster care) removal episode. <p>Note: The conditions associated with this second removal may differ from the conditions that prompted the child to reside with the relative. These condition(s) should be recorded for the second removal episode.</p> <p>CCRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no corresponding M910 entry or date for the non-LDSS custody placement (first non-foster care removal episode). M910 Date is the date the court orders the child into foster care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date child transferred from relative to foster care setting via CPS removal = 2/14/13 <p>Therefore, Date of Physical Removal in CONNECTIONS = 2/14/13 M910 Date in CCRS = 2/14/13</p>
<p>#3b: <u>Child removed from home and the court places the child with a relative (Non-LDSS Custody) under Article 3, 7 or 10 of the Family Court Act. The relative thereafter becomes a foster parent; custody transferred to LDSS and child remains with the relative (constructive removal)</u></p>	<p>CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with the Scenario 3a, the initial non-LDSS custody placement with the relative is treated as a removal episode. The date the child leaves home to reside with the relative becomes the AFCARS Date of Physical Removal field for NYS tracking purposes. When the court transfers custody to LDSS, there is no new date of physical removal. <p>CCRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no corresponding M910 entry or date for the non-LDSS custody placement (first removal episode). M910 Date is the date the court orders the child into foster care, provided the child is in a foster care setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date child leaves home to reside with relative = 2/1/13 Date transfers custody of child to LDSS who remains with relative, now an approved/certified foster home = 2/15/13 <p>Therefore, Date of Physical Removal in CONNECTIONS = 2/1/13 M910 Date in CCRS = 2/15/13</p>
<p>#4 <u>Child placed in OCFS facility and then stepped down to a VA and/or the child is stepped up to an OCFS facility.</u></p>	<p>See the tip sheet entitled: System And Casework Contact Implications For Youth Moved Into And Out Of OCFS Facilities</p>	

Data clean-up and workarounds:

When working with the AFCARS Removal/Placement report to address missing AFCARS removal data, a listed child may no longer have a current Program Choice (PC) of Placement or Non-LDSS custody. To address this situation:

- Temporarily enter a Placement PC, enter the removal information, then end-date the Placement PC.
- You can use the same date to start and end the temporary Placement PC, but the Effective Date cannot be prior to the approval date of the last FASP or prior to the end-date of the last end-dated PC/PPG.
- Use the pop-up box that will display when you again end-date the Placement PC and the associated PPG, to explain that the temporary change was for the purpose of entering missing AFCARS information.
- If the child is 18+ years old, it is not possible to change the Program Choice to Placement. Because of the implications of changing the child's DOB to be under 18, it is recommended that these situations be sent to the App Help mail box (ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.state.ny.us).
- Be sure information is being entered for the correct child! The default on the Removal Information tab is to highlight the first child on the list.

The AFCARS Removal Information clean-up report includes entries where the Date of Physical Removal Date is more than 30 days earlier than the M910 date. If, after review, the assigned caseworker determines that these are both valid dates, no change should be made in CONNECTIONS.

Reminder: *In all areas of CONNECTIONS, you can press F1 for help*

Resources:

CONNECTIONS Intranet:

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/>

CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Staff:

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/contact.asp>

CONNECTIONS Application questions:

ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.state.ny.us (NOTE: address contains an underline)

NYS ITS Customer Care Center # 1.800.697-1323
