



CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet

Progress Notes: Successfully Documenting Casework Contacts with Children in Foster Care

Revised March 2016

The federal Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-288), which was signed into law on September 28, 2006, includes requirements for caseworker visits with children in foster care. The law requires that a casework contact be made with each child in foster care, at least once in every calendar month, for each whole month the child is in foster care – including any trial discharge or AWOL periods. Partial months of foster care are not counted. The majority of these contacts must occur where the child resides. Contacts should be well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the children's safety, permanency, and well-being. The requirements pertain to children placed in-state, as well as out-of-state. All such contacts must be documented in CONNECTIONS progress notes and it is essential that entries be made contemporaneously with the event.

Correctly Coding Casework Contacts in CONNECTIONS

In order to show that you have met the federal requirement for monthly casework contacts with foster children, the following data fields and values must be used when recording a progress note in CONNECTIONS to document your contacts:

- Type – **Casework Contact**
- Method – **Face-to-Face**
- Child as both the **Focus** and **Participant** of the contact
- Location as adoptive home, foster home or congregate care facility;
- Location for child on trial discharge as case address, parent's home or relative's home

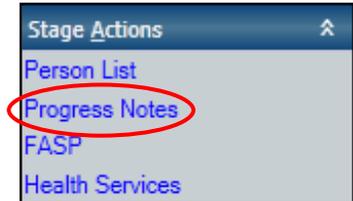
FP	Focus	Name
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Patrick
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Thomas
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Tyler



Only a contact recorded with these values will be counted as "successful" for federal reporting purposes.

Documenting a Casework Contact

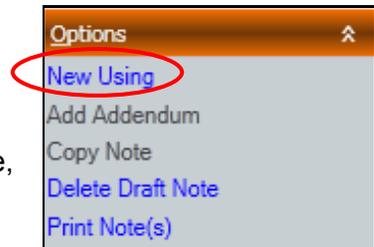
1. From your Workload, select the Family Services Stage.
2. Click the **Progress Notes** link in the Navigation Pane.



The Progress Note window opens.

3. Click the **New** button at the lower right of the Progress Note grid to begin a new note **OR** select an existing note that is similar to the note you wish to create and click the **New Using** link in the Navigation pane.

The Progress Note Detail window opens.



When using the New Using link, Type, Method of Contact, Location, Other Participant and Purpose pre-fill to match the selected note. Any pre-filled fields may be modified.

- Enter the **Event Date**.
- If creating a new note, click the drop down arrow to select **Casework Contact** as the Type.

REMINDER:

More than one contact type can be selected if your contact encompassed more than one type of interaction. (e.g., Casework Contact, Collateral Contact, Court, Visitation).

NAVIGATION PANE

Select type(s):

Types
<input type="checkbox"/> Attempted Casework Contact
<input type="checkbox"/> Attempted Collateral Contact
<input type="checkbox"/> Attempted Family/Primary Discharge Resource Visitation
<input type="checkbox"/> Attempted Sibling Visitation
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Conference
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Casework Contact
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collateral Contact
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Court
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Primary Discharge Resource Visitation
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Visitation

TIP: You can check the **Select All** checkbox to save time if all stage members were participants.

Family Participant / Focus Select All

FP	Focus	Name	Age	PID
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Thomas	39	17200224
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Patrick	12	17200225
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Tyler	1	17200227
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Kristy	31	17200223
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collins,Kimberly	8	17200226



IMPORTANT: A child cannot be chosen as the Focus or Participant in a progress note if the child has been ended from the stage. Be sure all Casework Contacts have been recorded *before* marking a child as Freed for Adoption and creating a Child Case Record (CCR) stage.

DO NOT select "Summary" as the type. Summary notes are not tabulated as casework contacts for federal reporting purposes even if a casework contact is described in the narrative

- Select **Face-to-Face** as the Method of Contact.
- Select the **Location** where the contact occurred. The majority of the contacts must take place where the child resides.
- Use the **Family Participant/Focus** checkboxes to indicate who participated in the contact.

When a family member is chosen as a family participant (FP) by checking the checkbox next to their name, the corresponding Focus checkbox automatically pre-fills.

If a participant was NOT also a focus of the contact, uncheck the focus box for that participant.

Reminder: To meet federal casework contact requirements, the child visited must be selected as both focus and participant.

- Enter the narrative describing the contact in the narrative field. Narratives should address the safety, permanency and well-being of the child.
- Save the note by selecting the **Save as Draft**, **Save as Final** or **Save and Enter New Note** button.

Save as Final Save as Draft Save and Enter New Note

Notes saved as Draft will automatically become Final after 20 calendar days. All fields remain modifiable while the note is in Draft status. Notes in this status can also be deleted.

The fields in a note saved as Final cannot be edited,

Save and Enter New Note saves the note as draft and immediately opens a blank note in the same stage so that another progress note can be entered. This feature is helpful when entering several notes in the same stage.

NYS CASE CONTACT REQUIREMENTS



IMPORTANT! New York State regulations differ slightly from the federal requirements.

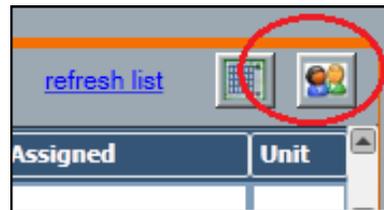
Pursuant to 18NYCRR Section 441.21 (c), contacts must be made monthly with all foster children by the child's case worker, case planner or case manager. During the first 30 days of placement, casework contacts are to be held with the child as often as is necessary to implement the services tasks in the family and children's services plan but must occur at least twice. At least one of the two contacts must be held at the child's placement location. After the first 30 days of placement, casework contacts are to be held with the child at a minimum of once a month. At least two of the monthly contacts every 90 days must be at the child's placement location.

Checking the Workload for Missed Casework Contacts

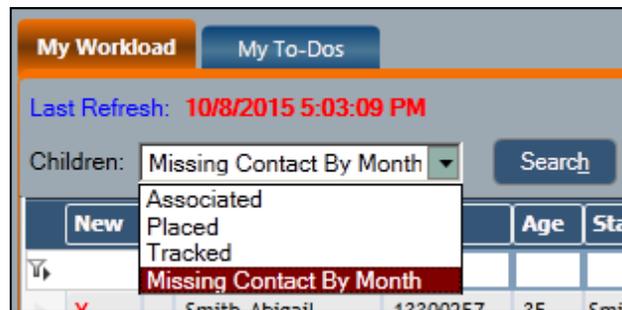
Workers and others with access to their workloads are able to check in real time whether children on their caseload with a Program Choice of Placement are missing one or more documented Casework Contacts.

To do this,

1. Click on the Person View button on the workload.



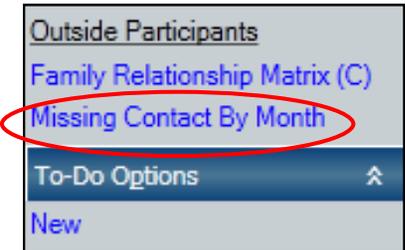
2. Use the drop-down menu to select **Missing Contact By Month**.
3. Click the **Search** button.



A list of children who are missing documented contacts for one or more months of the current reporting period displays.

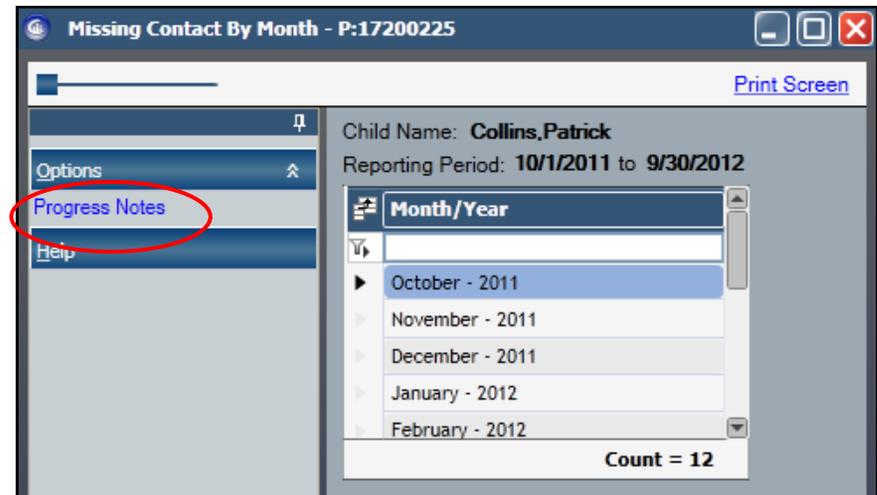
If no names are returned, there are no placed children missing documented contacts on this workload.

4. Highlight a child's name.
5. Click on the **Missing Contact by Month** link in the Navigation pane.



A list of all months without a documented contact for that child displays.

- If current date is between October 1st and November 15th, children are listed with missing casework contacts in both the previous and current reporting period.
 - Missing contacts will not display if the child is no longer active in the stage.
4. Click on the **Progress Notes** link to navigate directly to the Progress Notes window of that stage to document a contact.



Hint: It is extremely useful to check for missing casework contacts *before* creating a Child Case Record for a freed child.

Adding Progress Notes to Closed Family Service Stages

Under certain circumstances, it is possible to add a progress note to a closed FSS stage. This can only be done by district workers who are assigned the Enter Prog Note Business Function and:

- are the Historical Case Manager for this closed FSS stage,
or
- are in the same Jurisdiction as the Historical Case Manager of the stage,
or
- are a Unit Approver in the same jurisdiction as the Historical Case Manager.



For closed CCR stages where an adoption has not been finalized, the user must also have the Acc Sealed Adop Business Function.

All new notes entered in a closed stages must be saved as final.

Data Warehouse Casework Contact Reports

A number of Casework Contact reports are also available through the Data Warehouse. Some reports can be used to track the number of successful and attempted contacts with tracked children or their biological parents.

IBM Cognos Navigator	
Cognos > Public Folders > Global Reports > OCFS > OCFS Data Warehouse > Casework Contact Reports > Local Districts an	
Name	Description
Details	
Tracked Child Contacts by Case	
Tracked Child Contacts by Child Name	
Tracked Child Contacts by Worker	
Tracked Child Contacts description	Provides a detailed list of tracked children and their "Casework Contact" or "Attempted Casework Contact" Progress Notes during a specified month. (Updated on the 15th and last day of every month.)
Case Manager: Tracked Child Contacts by Case	
Case Manager: Tracked Child Contacts by Child Name	
Case Manager: Tracked Child Contacts description	Provides Local Districts with a detailed list of tracked children and their "Casework Contact" or "Attempted Casework Contact" Progress Notes from Case Managers and all staff working with the Case Managers during a specified month. (Updated on the 15th and last day of every month.)
Case Manager: Tracked Child Contacts Summary	
Case Manager: Tracked Child Contacts Summary description	Provides an overview of tracked children with and without contacts from any district or agency staff member. There

Other reports show missed casework contacts for children based on a Program Choice of Placement or by placement coding (M910) in the Activities window of CONNECTIONS. There are separate versions for districts and voluntary agencies. Reports are updated on the 15th and the last day of each month, allowing workers to identify which children still need contacts made before the month is over.

Foster Care Children - No Successful Contact Summary (LDSS)	Foster Care Children - No Successful Contact description	Provides the overall number of children with a CONNECTIONS Program Choice of 'C' (Placement) that have been in care for an entire month with no Progress Note Casework Contact entered. Contains a link to a drill-thru report with more details about these children.
Foster Care Children - No Successful Contact FAQ	Foster Children Contact Summary (LDSS)	A list of Frequently Asked Questions
Foster Children Contact Summary (LDSS)	Foster Children Contact Summary - description & FAQ	Provides the overall number of CCRS children in care for one or more full calendar months, the number contacted, and the number not contacted. Includes links to detailed reports containing more information on the children.



You must have been granted access to the Data Warehouse to obtain these reports.



For information on obtaining access to the Data Warehouse, please see the Data Warehouse page of the CONNECTIONS website at <http://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/datawarehouse/dwaccess.asp>

Resources

- CONNECTIONS Job Aids and Tip Sheets:
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/jobaides.asp>
- CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Staff:
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/contact.asp>
- CONNECTIONS Application Help Mailbox:
ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.state.ny.us
(NOTE: address contains an underline)
- CONNECTIONS Communications Mailbox:
connections@ocfs.ny.gov

ITS Enterprise Service Desk
1-800-697-1323