CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet

Managing Family Assessment Response (FAR) in CONNECTIONS

October 2012

Family Assessment Response (FAR) is a short-term (60-90 day) CPS intervention/response alternative to a traditional CPS investigation. The descriptions of how CONNECTIONS functions in regard to FAR apply only to those districts that have implemented the program and will remain in effect until the implementation of full CONNECTIONS support for FAR in the future. This guide deals specifically with the current CONNECTIONS support for FAR and provides only basic practice guidance.

General Guidance

Upon receipt of the Intake (INT), an initial decision is made as to whether the report meets your county's FAR criteria in addition to meeting the statutory criteria. If it does, when the INT is stage progressed to an INV it is to be assigned to a FAR worker. The FAR worker has until the completion of the 7 Day Safety Assessment to decide if the case should remain FAR. Documentation (including Progress Notes) for that period should be done in the INV stage.

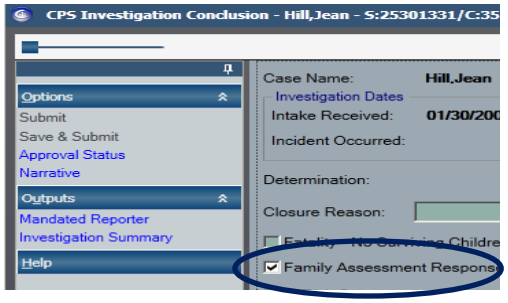
Once the decision is made to continue on the FAR track, the worker opens an FSI, using the OTI/FAM Stage Type (see below for further guidance) and immediately stage progresses it to an FSS (same Stage Type) where all of the remainining work is recorded.

Investigation (INV) Stage Rules for FAR

- Initial or Subsequent CPS Familial reports can be tracked as FAR when they meet the county's established FAR criteria.
- If an INV is to be tracked as FAR:
  - No individual can have a role of Abused Child (AB).
  - No DOA/Fatality allegation or Date of Death can be recorded for any child.
  - The 7 day safety assessment must be completed and approved. Multiple safety assessments are permitted.
  - The most recently saved/approved Safety Assessment must have a Safety Decision value of 1 or 2.
  - Case activities must be documented in progress notes in CONNECTIONS.
  - Off-line CPS Notification letters (FAR version) must be used.
  - Refer to *Documentation Guidelines for Family Assessment Response (FAR) Cases* for more details.
- If an INV is designated as FAR, the CPS FAR worker does **not**:
  - Obtain supervisory approval of the INV in CONNECTIONS.
  - Complete *a CPS Risk Assessment Profile.*
  - Address (Substantiate/Un-substantiate) report allegations
  - Complete *Investigative Actions.*
- Only the Primary Worker for an Investigation (INV), or someone with access to that worker's workload, can mark the report as FAR.

Recording the FAR Tracking Decision in the INV

Indicate that this is FAR by checking the **Family Assessment Response** checkbox on the *CPS Investigation Conclusion* window.



- The Primary Worker can uncheck the **Family Assessment Response** checkbox any time prior to the creation of a Family Services Intake (FSI). If a FSI or FSS is created in error, it must be closed before the checkbox in the INV can be unchecked.

Status of INV after making the FAR decision

An INV recorded as FAR:

- While it is open and assigned to an LDSS workload, it has the same security as an "under investigation" INV.
- Remains on your workload until you determine that FAR services are no longer required. You should then re-assign the INV to the OCFS workload (the only party to whom the INV [FAR] can be re-assigned).
- On the Case List tab, the Status of the FAR case will display as "OPN" because it remains open on the OCFS workload. On the Case Summary tab, the worker displays as "Closed, FAR" and there is no date recorded in the Closed column.
- As long as the INV stage is on your workload, you are able to consolidate any Subsequent SCR reports into your original FAR case. This is only appropriate when the Subsequent report(s) meets your county's FAR criteria and you plan to track it as FAR. Consolidation for FAR reports is subject to the same date restrictions and requirements applied to CPS Investigations. See the *CONNECTIONS Step-by-Step Guide: Training for CPS Workers* for a full list of requirements.
    - The subsequent report intake date must be within 53 calendar days from the prior report intake date.
    - The process of consolidating investigations must be completed within six (6) calendar days of the subsequent report intake date.
    - All Alleged Subjects, MA/AB Roles and Other Persons named in the subsequent investigation must be listed in or added to the prior investigation.
- If any Subsequent reports are received that require a CPS Investigative response (i.e. they do NOT qualify for FAR), you must end any FAR work with the family after discussing the reasons. This includes reassigning the INV (FAR) stage to the State workload and closing the FSS/FAM.

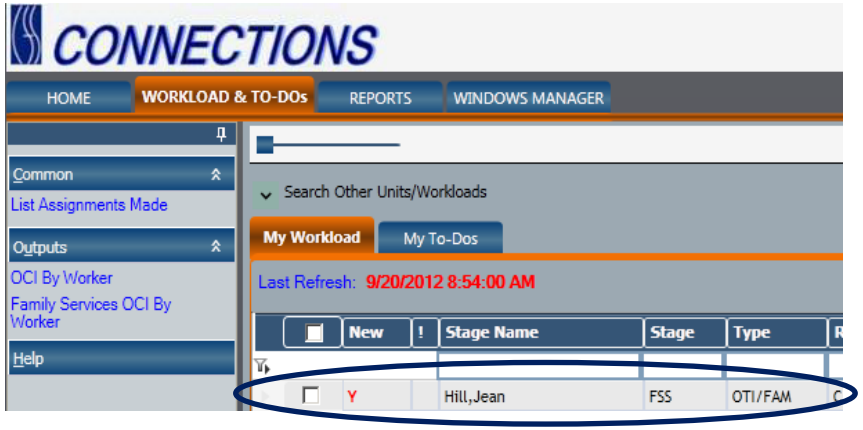
Completing the FSI for FAR

The interim CONNECTIONS solution for FAR included the conversion of the FSI/FSS Out of Town Inquiry (OTI) stage type to OTI/FAM. In this tip sheet, these are referred to as FSI/FAM and FSS/FAM and are where you document your FAR work.

- Create the FSI/FAM by selecting the INV on your workload and clicking the **Record FSI** link in the NAVIGATION PANE.
  Remember: you must have checked the **Family Assessment Response** checkbox on the *Investigation Conclusion* window to generate the FSI with the correct stage type (OTI/FAM).
- As Primary Worker for the INV, you are assigned the Caseworker role in the FSI/FAM.
- The FSI/FAM cannot be split into two cases/stages or linked to an active or closed case number.
- If an FSI or FSS (any type) is already open in the case within your local district:
    - You may still check the **Family Assessment Response** checkbox in the INV stage;
    - You may reassign the INV to the OCFS workload when FAR services are completed;
    - However, there are some restrictions due to current system limitations: you must document FAR services in progress notes **ONLY** within the INV in order to segregate the information from the open case and protect confidentiality.
- The Family Assessment Response indicator will display above the tabs.
- All four FSI tabs display but it is only necessary to complete the **Narrative** and **Decision Summary** tabs.
- On the **Narrative** tab, record a very brief statement concerning the family's eligibility for FAR services in the narrative section. This can include the original DSS concerns noted in the SCR report. Although the sub-tabs are enabled, they are optional and it is recommended that they not be completed.

- On the **Decision Summary** tab, record the decision to open an FSS/FAM or close the FSI/FAM in the **Decision** field.

- Saving a decision to Open FSS will create an FSS with the OTI/FAM stage type on your workload, as illustrated below:



Documenting FAR Services in the FSS

- In an FSS/FAM the **Stage Comp.**, **Progress Notes**, **Education** and **Case Summary** tabs are available.

- A Safety Assessment and the non-scored Preventive Risk Assessment (both optional) may be generated via the **Stage Maintenance** menu.

- Other workers, including voluntary agency workers, may be assigned secondary roles.

- No program choice or permanency planning goal (PPG) is recorded.

- There is no WMS interface.**

- The Family Led Assessment Guide (FLAG) should be pasted into progress notes in the FSS/FAM once it is completed. Use the **unformatted** version of FLAG to prevent corrupting the progress note. (Do not copy templetes into progress notes.)

***Authorization for wraparound goods and services must be done directly in WMS. See 12-OCFS-LCM-04.*

- If a Safety Assessment (optional) is generated in an FSS/FAM:
  - It will be pre-populated with the last approved Safety Assessment from the INV.
  - It does not require approval; however, if it is submitted for approval, it must be approved prior to closing the FSS/FAM.

- If longer term child welfare services beyond the FAR intervention are deemed to be required, the FSS/FAM should be closed and a new FSI/FSS with a CWS stage type created.

- Close an FSS/FAM:
  - As you would any other FSS via the *Case Summary* window.
  - Supervisory approval is needed.
  - Re-assign the related INV (FAR) to the OCFS workload.

Resources:

For more information about Family Assessment Response*:*

Documentation Guidelines for Family Assessment Response (FAR) Cases

Family Assessment Response (FAR) Practice Guide

For more information about CONNECTIONS functioning:

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 OFT Enterprise Help Desk: 1.800.697-1323
***Reminder**: In all areas of CONNECTIONS, you can press F1 for help*