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CONNECTIONS

Step-by-Step Guide

Training for FAD Caseworkers

The Complete Guide to Support Foster and Adoptive Home Development

CONNECTIONS Training Project
SUNY Training Strategies Group

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CONNECTIONS Step-by-Step Guide:
Training for FAD Caseworkers
The Complete Guide to Foster and Adoptive Home Development

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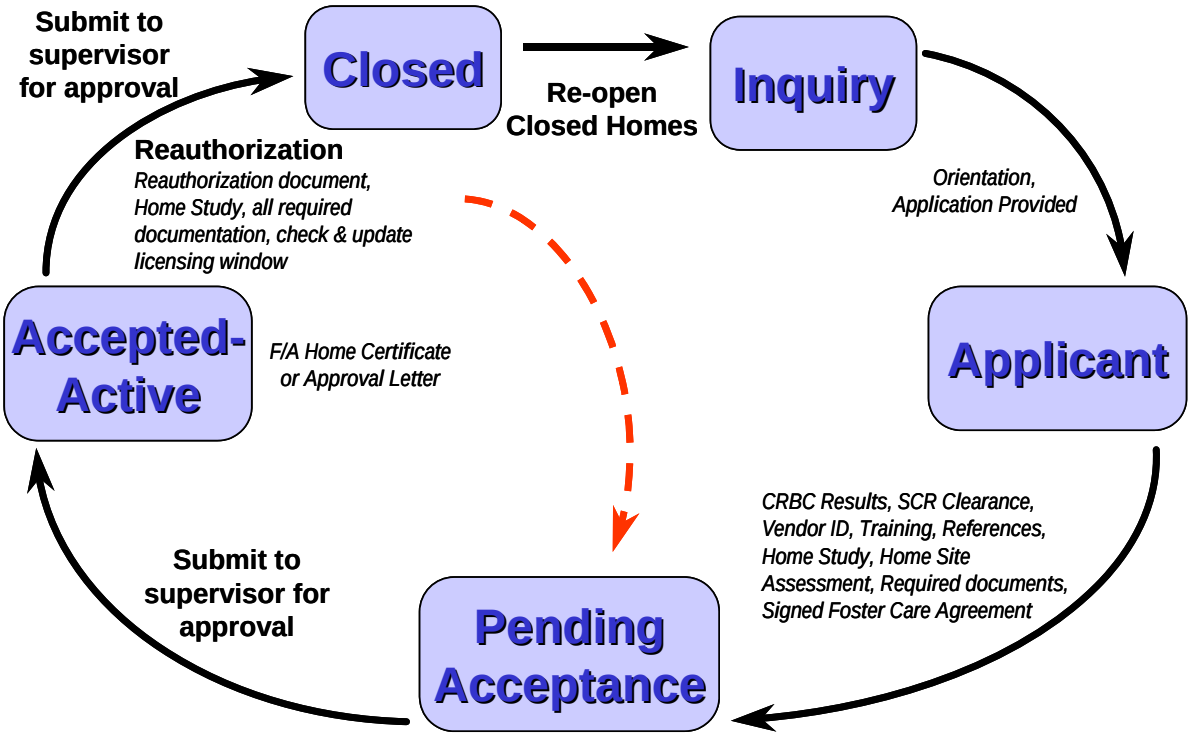
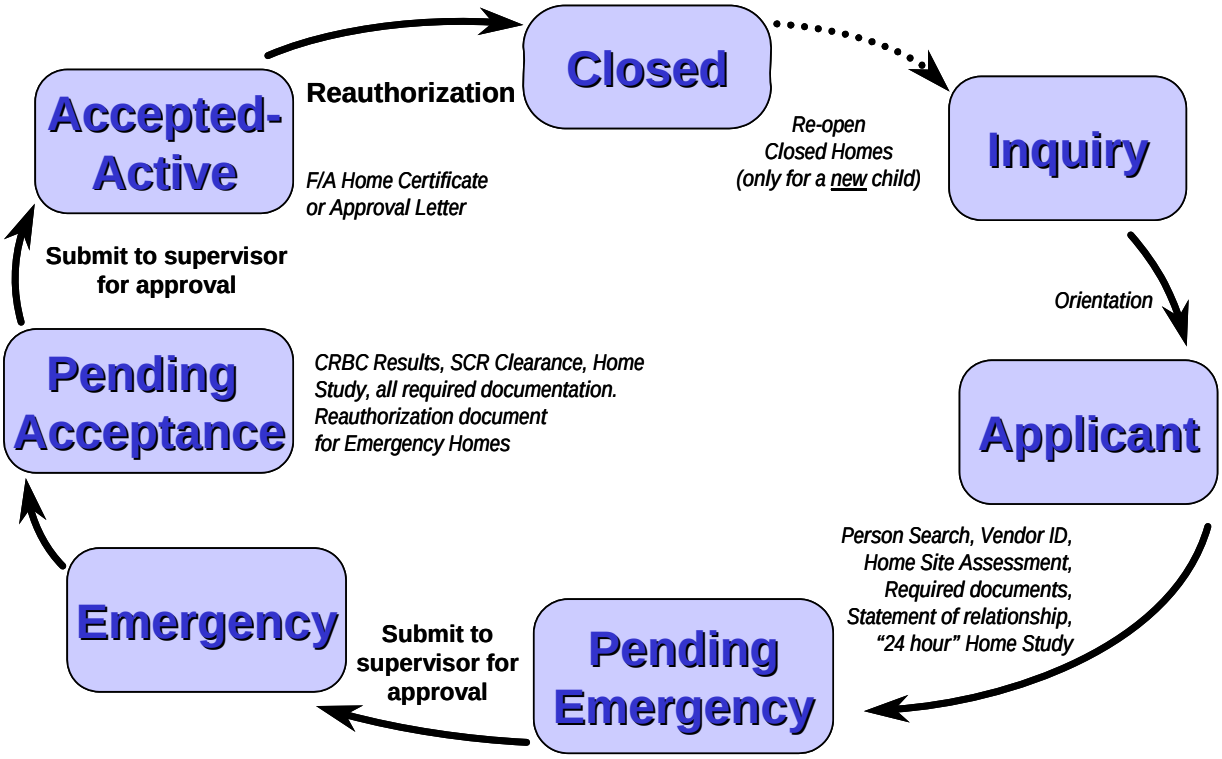
Foster and Adoptive Home Development Life Cycles

FAD Home Life Cycle



FAD Emergency Home Life Cycle



Welcome and Participant Information

As a new caseworker responsible for certifying or approving foster homes, you are taking on a vital role in promoting safety and permanence for children placed in foster homes. Child welfare practice in New York State strives to achieve the following five outcomes for children and families:

- Children are safe
- Families are preserved, consistent with the safety of the children
- Children are adopted when their birth family cannot be preserved
- Children leaving care at the age of majority can live independently
- Children and youth in care develop normally

You, the caseworker, have a primary role in achieving these outcomes within the child welfare system. In these modules, you will learn how to use CONNECTIONS, New York State's automated child welfare information system, to record your efforts to protect the health and safety of children in foster care.

CONNECTIONS is the official system of record. Where the CONNECTIONS system is not operative or does not support data entry, information must be recorded and retained in the External Foster Home Case Record. All information must be recorded accurately and in a timely manner.

This guide provides various techniques for using the CONNECTIONS system effectively and efficiently. It also provides best practice methods for documenting casework activities. You will find information ranging from approved shortcuts, such as the best ways to copy and paste, to information about state regulations and their impact on documentation requirements.

The Content of this Guide

The *Complete Guide to Support Foster and Adoptive Home Development* begins by covering general computer skills and navigation in CONNECTIONS.

Throughout the first five modules, you will find the following information:

- How to manage your *Assigned Workload* using the *Task List* and the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS),
- How to use search features (e.g., Person Search, Case Search) to access case and person information, and
- How to use the Online Help system and the New York State Help Desk to solve your CONNECTIONS questions.

The *Complete Guide to Support Foster and Adoptive Home Development* continues beyond basic computer skills. In the remaining modules, this guide leads you through the CONNECTIONS functions involved in foster home certification/approval, recertification/reapproval, and numerous other casework activities encountered throughout the life of a foster or adoptive home. For each casework task performed in CONNECTIONS, you will find detailed step-by-step instructions. Introductory remarks are provided at the beginning of each set of instructions to describe casework context and offer hints on how to carry out tasks efficiently and effectively.

Note:
Any visible identifying data in this guide is simulated.

This guide also includes New York State regulatory requirements. These mandates must be met, and documented in CONNECTIONS and in the External Foster Home Case Record. The majority of this guide focuses on the life cycle of Certified or Approved Foster Boarding Homes. However, time is spent considering the special requirements for Adoptive Homes (*Module 21*) and Emergency Homes (*Module 20*).

The *Complete Guide to Support Foster and Adoptive Home Development* concludes by providing a variety of supplemental information. In the back of the guide, you will find an Appendix section, and a grouping of practice exercises. The practice exercises require you to use the CONNECTIONS Training Database to accomplish work activities you will perform as a FAD caseworker. Practice Exercises may be used during a SUNY Training Strategies Group class.

Two features of this guide help you quickly identify the information you need:

- **Tips**, set apart in margin boxes, provide information to help you carry out CONNECTIONS tasks efficiently and effectively. Icons in the boxes help focus your attention on two kinds of tips:

  Helpful hints

  Things to watch out for

-
  Regulation Guidelines provide instructions for meeting qualitative standards for foster or adoptive home development. They are based on OCFS policy and are presented to assist you in documenting FAD casework.

We hope you find this to be a useful aid in completing your foster and adoptive home development responsibilities!

Using the Training Database with this Guide

You can use this guide in two ways: as a training tool to develop new skills, and as a job aid for your daily work in CONNECTIONS. In either case, we suggest that you use this guide while working directly in CONNECTIONS, in the Training Database or in the Preview Application.

The Training Database

The Training Database provides a safe environment for workers to learn and practice CONNECTIONS skills using simulated case data. SUNY Training Strategies Group acts as custodian for a prescribed number of sign-on IDs to the Training Database. These sign-on ID numbers are referred to as Desktop User (DU) numbers and Instructor Led (IL) numbers. Sign-on numbers begin with either DU or IL, and are followed by four digits.

The Training Database has the look and feel of the CONNECTIONS system currently in production. When you sign on to the Training Database using a DU number, you will see a simulated environment displaying the *Assigned Workload* of a fictitious worker, Darryl Wilson. Darryl Wilson has been assigned stages of service, including two FAD homes/stages. These homes/stages have been created specifically for training purposes. In the New York City training labs, you will use IL numbers, which display the *Assigned Workload* for a fictitious worker named Jamie Miller.

As Darryl Wilson or Jamie Miller, you have the ability to complete the tasks necessary to maintain and progress each home/stage. You will be able to complete tasks specific to foster and adoptive home development, such as:

- re-opening or creating a foster home in “Inquiry” status;
- adding or relating a person to a home/stage;
- viewing and editing information using the FRS;
- making changes to the *F/A Home License* window; and
- recording a home closure.

The Training Database also includes features commonly used by FAD caseworkers and other CONNECTIONS users (e.g., CPS caseworkers). These features include:

- Person Search;
- Resource Search; and
- *Staff To-Do List*.

Darryl Wilson has the ability to access the *Assigned Workload* of his supervisor, Sally May. Jamie Miller has the ability to access the *Assigned Workload* of his supervisor, Cassie Landers. You may approve work submitted by Darryl Wilson by opening Sally May's *Staff To-Do List* and completing related approval tasks. Work submitted by Jamie Miller is approved by opening the *Staff To-Do List* for Cassie Landers.

Information is deleted when the computer system is refreshed each night; any data you enter into the system is available only until the end of that day.

The ability to approve your own work is a feature of the Training Database only.

It has been created to enhance the training experience and does not reflect actual case practice.

In production, you will have to submit work to a supervisor or unit approver for approvals.

The Preview Application

The CONNECTIONS system is periodically enhanced and new elements are introduced to make the system more efficient. Updates to the system are referred to as Builds. In an effort to gradually introduce CONNECTIONS users to builds, OCFS makes a preview of the enhanced system available prior to the actual build.

This extra application, referred to as the "Preview Application" can be found on your CONNECTIONS desktop during the time frame prior to the build implementation date. The preview application is actually a snapshot of your workload as it will look with the new build changes. Since the information comes from your *Assigned Workload*, you will need to use your own User Name and Password to log on, *not a DU or IL number*.

Some builds contain enhancements that require special Business Function Profiles. The Security Coordinator at your agency must assign the new BFP('s) to your security profile, or you will not be able to perform new build functions in the Preview Application.

Logging On to Your PC

The CONNECTIONS application can be accessed only by designated individuals on computers that are set up to run the application.

Once you have completed logging on to Windows, the step-by-step instructions in the next section will show you how to access CONNECTIONS.

Your agency should be following established OFT password standards, which you must be following habitually. (See Appendix I: Security Awareness Materials.) Here are some ways to keep your password protected:

- **Make it difficult**
  Select a password that is easy for you to remember, but difficult for others to guess. Don't be stingy—make your password as long as possible (at least 8 characters and up to a maximum of 13 characters), in order to help reduce the likelihood of allowing someone to guess it. You cannot use all or part of your logon ID in your password, nor can you reuse any of your last 13 passwords.
- **Mix it up**
  Your OCFS password *must* contain *at least* one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter *and* one number. CONNECTIONS users must *never* use symbols in their passwords.
- **Keep it to yourself**
  Don't share your password with others. Never display your password; if you need to write it down, don't keep the information at your desk or anywhere it can be easily seen by others.
- **Embrace change**
  You must change your password periodically—*at least* once every 90 days. If you think your password has been compromised, *change it immediately*. (Don't forget to report the situation to your LAN/Security Administrator as soon as possible!)
- **Be yourself**
  Use *only* your logon ID and password; *never* use a current or former co-worker's ID or password.
- **Let your fingers do the walking**
  Never store passwords in macros or automatic log-on features. Enter your password manually every time.

Step-by-Step:
Logging on to Your Computer

1. Press the **Ctrl** + **Alt** + **Delete** keys on your keyboard at the same time.
   A Confidentiality warning displays.
2. Click on the **OK** button in response to the Confidentiality warning.
   The Log On to Windows dialog box displays.
3. Enter your user name, password and domain in the respective fields.
   If pre-filled, make sure that your user name and domain (HSEN) are listed correctly in the log on dialog box.
4. Click on the **OK** button.
   Your local desktop displays.

Accessing CONNECTIONS

The CONNECTIONS application is made available to users in three different ways:

Production Database The Production Database contains “live” data. This is the database that all workers use to record information in CONNECTIONS.

Training Database The Training Database contains simulated data and allows you to practice functions necessary for your casework activities. It mirrors the functionality of the Production Database. (See “The Training Database” on page 6 for more information.)

Preview Application The Preview Application contains a “snapshot” of actual case data. Information entered into the Preview application does not carry over to the Production database.

The Preview Application provides the opportunity to preview changes and enhancements planned for the CONNECTIONS system. The Preview Application is available for a limited time when changes to the system are made. You will receive special notice when the Preview application becomes available.

To distinguish between the Training Database and the Preview application, keep in mind that the Training Database contains simulated data, while the Preview application is a “snapshot” of actual case data. The Training Database allows you to practice functions necessary for your casework activities. Information entered into the Preview application **does not** carry over to the Production database.

Using the CONNECTIONS Production Database, you can access your *Assigned Workload* from any CONNECTIONS workstation throughout New York State. All you need is a valid User ID and password to gain access to your workload. This Citrix desktop covers your local desktop and remains open for the length of your Citrix session. Citrix uses Windows 2000. The Citrix desktop also has an easily recognizable background.

On the Citrix desktop, program icons appear directly on the desktop, rather than in Program Group windows. Double-clicking an icon starts the application represented by that icon, opening a window on your desktop for that application.

The **Task Bar** at the bottom of the Citrix desktop provides a method of organizing the application windows that you have open in Citrix. You can have more than one window open on your desktop at a time. Minimize a window by clicking on the **Minimize** button ( ). The minimized window displays as a button on the Task Bar. This makes room for other windows you need to use at that moment. To re-open a window, click on its button on the Task Bar; the window displays as the active window, placing it “on top of” any other open windows.

Clicking on the **Start** button (in the lower left corner of the Citrix desktop) displays the **Start** menu, which provides access to the *Citrix Log Off* procedure (see page 11 for details on this procedure).

When you log on to Citrix via the **Connections Desktop 95 Percent** icon, three icons display on the Citrix desktop:

- Connections
- CIN/PID (Data Warehouse; limited to designated users)
- Policy Library

Double-clicking one of these icons opens the corresponding application.

Step-by-Step: Launching CONNECTIONS (Production)

1. From your local desktop, double-click the **CONNECTIONS and other Citrix Applications** icon.
   The Program Neighborhood (PN) Agent displays the CONNECTIONS and other Citrix Applications window, containing icons of applications that are available to you based on your NT logon.

2. Double-click the **Connections Desktop 95 Percent** icon.
   A Confidentiality Warning message displays.
3. Click on the **OK** button in response to the Confidentiality Warning.
   The Citrix desktop displays and your Citrix session begins.
4. Double-click the **Connections** icon.
   When the CONNECTIONS Production Database has launched successfully, the CONNECTIONS Toolbar displays, reading: Production – CONNECTIONS Toolbar – <Your Name>.

Step-by-Step: Launching CONNECTIONS (Preview Application)

1. From your local desktop, double-click the **CONNECTIONS and other Citrix Applications** icon.
   The CONNECTIONS and other Citrix Applications window displays, containing icons of applications that are available to you based on your NT logon.
2. Double-click the **Connections Preview** icon.
   A Confidentiality Warning message displays.
3. Click on the **OK** button in response to the Confidentiality Warning.
   The Citrix desktop displays and your Citrix session begins.
4. Double-click the **Connections Preview** icon.
   When the CONNECTIONS Preview Application has launched successfully, the CONNECTIONS Toolbar displays. The title bar reads: Preview – CONNECTIONS Toolbar – <Your Name>.

Closing CONNECTIONS and Logging Off Your PC

When you have finished your work in CONNECTIONS, you should close *both* CONNECTIONS and your Citrix session. This is best done as a two-step process: first close CONNECTIONS, then log off of Citrix. Doing so (as opposed to logging off of Citrix while CONNECTIONS is still open) reduces the likelihood of problems occurring during the log off procedure.

At the end of your workday, it is important to *log off* your PC; if you completely shut down (turn off) your computer, it will not be able to receive any updates that may occur overnight. Leaving the computer logged off (but with the power still on) will enable it to receive these updates.

The step-by-step instructions below will assist you in closing down your system when you have completed your work.

Step-by-Step: Closing CONNECTIONS and Logging Off Your PC

1 Click on the **File** menu (represented by the **Globe** icon in the upper left corner of the CONNECTIONS Toolbar) and select **Close**.
*You may need to use the vertical scroll bar to scroll up on the desktop to reveal the **Globe** icon (**File** menu) on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.*

2 Click on the **Start** button in the lower left corner of the Citrix desktop and select **Log Off <User name>** from the resulting menu.
The Log Off Windows dialog box displays the following message:
"Are you sure you want to log off?"

3 Click on the **Yes** button.
***This does not log off your machine; it only ends your session with the Citrix server**. Your local desktop displays.*

4 Close all applications still open on your local desktop.

5 Click on the **Start** button and select the **Shut Down…** command.
*The Shut Down Windows dialog box displays. If necessary, click on the drop-down arrow and select **Log off <user name>**.*

6 Click on the **OK** button.

> The **Shut Down** command in the **Start** menu provides four choices:
>
> - **Log off [User Name]**
> - **Shutdown**
> - **Restart**
> - **Stand by**
>
> Select the **Log off** command to exit the system and leave your computer powered on; this will enable your computer to receive automated system updates.

Module 1:
CONNECTIONS and the Child Welfare System

An understanding of CONNECTIONS' role in New York State's child welfare system helps provide context for the work you perform as a FAD worker. This module introduces you to the history of the CONNECTIONS system, its role in the state's child welfare system, basic concepts used in CONNECTIONS, and how CONNECTIONS ensures the confidentiality of records.

By the end of this module you will be able to describe:

- what CONNECTIONS is;
- how CONNECTIONS supports New York State's child welfare system and the foster home certification/recertification and approval/reapproval process;
- what cases, stages and tasks are in CONNECTIONS—including the specific functions that support FAD casework activity; and
- how CONNECTIONS ensures the confidentiality of records.

What is the CONNECTIONS System?

CONNECTIONS is a child welfare computer system that allows for documentation of information about families and children in New York State. The CONNECTIONS system is part of a Federal initiative called the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

As a CONNECTIONS user it is very important for you to understand your role and responsibilities regarding the security of the information in the system. Workers have an obligation to protect and preserve all information in a consistent and reliable manner. As a CONNECTIONS user staff, you are responsible for ensuring that appropriate [physical, logical and procedural] controls are in place to preserve the security properties of confidentiality, integrity, availability and privacy of CONNECTIONS information. Information must be protected and classified based on security best practices, as defined in the International Security Standards ISO/IEC 17799, *A Code of Practice for Information Security Management*. This information can be found at *www.iso-17799.com*.

In 1993, the Federal government provided financial incentives for states to develop statewide automated child welfare processes in an effort to provide more efficient and effective administration of programs and Federal reporting. CONNECTIONS is the name of the statewide automated data management system for child welfare in New York State. Many other states have similar systems with other names.

CONNECTIONS is designed to create a single, statewide, integrated system for the collection and recording of child protective, preventive, foster care and adoption service information. The CONNECTIONS system currently interfaces with existing New York State “legacy” systems—the Welfare Management System (WMS), the Child Care Review Service (CCRS) and the Benefits Issuance Control System (BICS). However, only the BICS system interfaces with the Foster and Adoptive Home Development functionality in CONNECTIONS (for payments). In the future, CONNECTIONS will replace some of these “legacy” systems.

CONNECTIONS has been implemented in a series of packages, originally called Releases. Release 3 was the last production release. Currently, updates to the system are rolled out as Builds (e.g., Build 18).

How CONNECTIONS Supports the Child Welfare System

No matter what our roles may be in the child welfare system, each of us shares and contributes to the mission of child welfare: to promote safety and permanence for children. To achieve this mission, child welfare practice must remain focused on the five child welfare outcomes:

- Safety of children
- Family preservation/reunification
- Adoption when the birth family cannot be preserved
- Independent living
- Normal child and youth development

Foster and Adoptive Home Development is a specific area of the child welfare system that strives to achieve the following outcomes:

- Find prospective foster and adoptive parents/homes.
- Certify/approve foster and adoptive parents.
- Provide ongoing quality assurance (maintenance) of foster and adoptive homes.

CONNECTIONS supports child welfare's mission and achievement of the outcomes stated above by providing a way to manage information related to work with children and families, and to save that information for future reference.

Specifically, CONNECTIONS assists the foster home certification and approval process by:

- maintaining a database of all foster care facilities, including foster homes;
- maintaining a database of all individuals residing in foster homes;
- providing automated recording of home certification/approval and recertification/reapproval;
- providing automated recording and tracking of foster home certification and approval history;
- providing automated documentation of services rendered to foster homes (e.g., training of foster parents); and
- supporting state and local regulations, policies and procedures.

Caseworkers need to document their efforts in order to facilitate the management of their workloads. Documentation provides an historical record of information to others involved with the foster and adoptive home, including supervisors, subsequent workers, etc. Information in the system is also used to conduct the required background checks (e.g., conducting a Person Search to check on any previous CPS history) needed to clear staff for work with children and families. Workers continue to conduct background and clearance checks outside of the system using the LDSS-3370 State Central Register Database Check form; CONNECTIONS provides a means for workers to document this information.

Understanding Cases, Stages and Tasks in CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS organizes information about a family or individual situation into *cases* and *stages*:

Case – The term *case* is used to define a grouping of one or more stages of services. In CONNECTIONS there is *only* one type of FAD stage; therefore, the term *case* is not frequently used.

Stage – The term *stage* (stage of service) is used to identify a logical grouping of related casework activities. In FAD, "stage" is also referred to as a foster home, facility, or resource.

The following stages exist in the CONNECTIONS:

- CPS Intake (INT)
- CPS Investigation (INV)
- Foster/Adoptive Home Development (FAD)
- Administrative Review Investigation (ARI)
- Family Services Intake (FSI)
- Family Services Stage (FSS)

Stages are organized further into *tasks*—predefined activities—which must be performed. CONNECTIONS tasks mirror and document the casework activities you do in developing and maintaining foster homes. FAD caseworkers use the *Task List* to access casework and/or record tasks for a given FAD home/stage. The CONNECTIONS *Task List* for FAD contains the following 13 tasks:

- Maintain Non-Licensing Information
- Maintain Licensing Information
- Maintain Person
- View Home Placements *(not currently functional)*
- View Home History
- Home Study
- Annual Reauthorization
- View FAD Record Summary *****
- Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance *(for NYC only)*
- Corrective Action Plan *****
- Serious Incident *****
- Waiver/Exception *****
- Close Home

Asterisk (*****) indicates task not required to perform

You may repeat some of these tasks and perform them at several key intervals throughout your work with foster and adoptive homes.

Understanding Your Role in a Stage

As a FAD caseworker, you will be assigned as either a Primary or Secondary worker on a stage. These roles describe different levels of responsibility for a stage or overall case.

> **Primary Worker** — A *Primary* worker has overall responsibility for a home/stage. Primary workers can view and maintain (modify) information in the home(s)/stage(s) to which they're assigned. There can be only one Primary worker for a stage.
>
> **Secondary Worker** — There can be any number of *Secondary* workers also assigned to work on a home/stage. Secondary workers also can view and maintain (modify) some information in the home(s)/stage(s) to which they're assigned.

Basic Concepts About Security in CONNECTIONS

All CONNECTIONS users receive security profiles that determine the windows or types of information they can open and view, as well as which windows they can modify or "maintain." Security profiles are based on the tasks that workers perform and the level of access to records needed to complete those tasks. CONNECTIONS users' security profile may be composed of multiple Business Functions based on their job responsibilities. These security attributes are designed to protect the confidentiality of client records in CONNECTIONS.

Before you see what information is available to you, we need to discuss some important security guidelines that you need to be aware of when using CONNECTIONS.

Access to information in CONNECTIONS is restricted to those individuals for whom access is necessary in the normal performance of their job responsibilities. Each CONNECTIONS user is granted a unique User ID.

CONNECTIONS information needs to be maintained in a secure, accurate and reliable manner but also be readily available for use by workers needing information.

All connections from the OCFS network to any external network must be approved in writing by the OCFS Information Security Officer.

Some agencies may find it necessary to allow workers to complete their job functions outside of the office. When working from a remote location the following security controls need to be considered and are not limited to:

- the existing physical security of the remote location;
- the communication security requirements;
- the sensitivity of the information that will be accessed and transmitted; and
- the threat of unauthorized access.

Confidential information should not be stored on (or transmitted from/to) portable computer devices. If workers must store or transmit confidential information, protective measures must be implemented. When using mobile computing devices such as laptop computers, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and cellular phones, special care should be taken to ensure that information is not compromised.

When traveling, CONNECTIONS staff using portable computers should not check these items in airline luggage systems. No wireless connections to CONNECTIONS should ever be made.

Dial-up modems should not be connected to computer systems that are on a LAN or another internal communication system, unless approved by OCFS. Also, no wireless network or wireless access point should be installed without performing a risk assessment and obtaining appropriate *written* approval from the OCFS Information Security Officer.

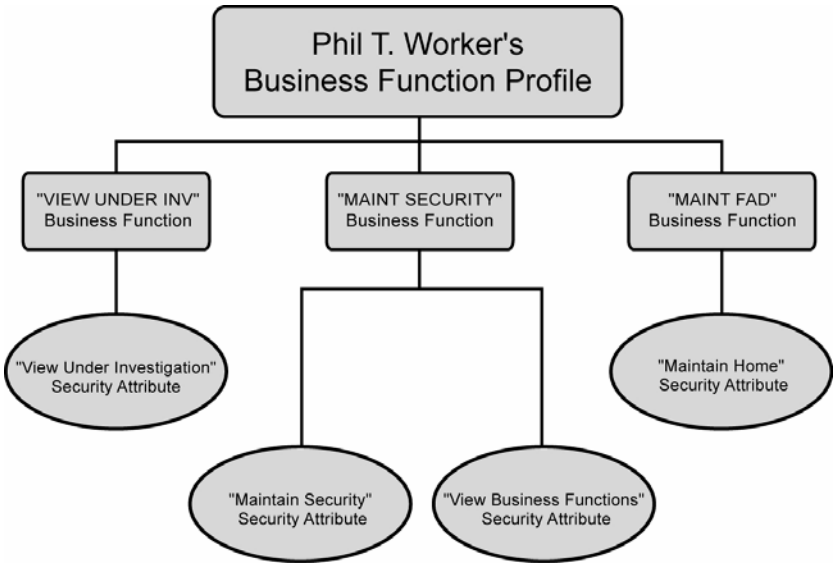
Workers should avoid using internet, third-party or wireless fax services to send or receive faxes containing confidential information. If it is necessary to send confidential information via fax, workers need to verify the phone number prior to sending the fax and contact the fax recipient to ensure the fax is picked up immediately. Workers should also avoid sending teleconference call-in numbers and passwords to a pager if sensitive information will be discussed in the conference; confirm that all participants are authorized to participate prior to starting any discussion.

Precautions need to be taken when exchanging information over the telephone. All employees should take care that they are not overheard when discussing confidential matters on the telephone. Workers should avoid leaving sensitive or confidential messages on voicemail systems. Confidential CONNECTIONS information should not be exchanged over a messaging system, unless authorized by management after a formal risk assessment of the situation is performed. Workers must take extra precautions when using mobile devices in public areas outside of the workplace. Any use of wireless or cellular phones should be avoided when discussing sensitive or confidential information.

Workers should not have any expectation of privacy in the information stored in or sent through CONNECTIONS, as the Security Coordinator reserves the right to monitor or search the system at all times. The Security Coordinator may need to monitor network events.

All CONNECTIONS users should be aware of the procedure for reporting security incidents that may have an impact on the security of information. Workers must report any incidents to their appropriate supervisor and/or the Security Coordinator.

In CONNECTIONS, a collection of Business Functions for a particular worker is called a Business Function Profile. Business Functions are developed by OCFS. Security Coordinators at the local district and voluntary agency level assign specific BFPs to staff in their offices. Business Functions commonly assigned to FAD workers are MAINTAIN FAD and MAINTAIN FAD HISTORY.



As you use CONNECTIONS, you may see buttons and menus, which are gray instead of black. The gray color indicates that this function is disabled and, therefore, not available to you. Features are sometimes disabled based on your BFP. For example, the **UNIT** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar is gray for most FAD caseworkers, since this function is usually available only for supervisory staff. If you feel there is information on the system that you need to access in order to complete your work, but that information is not available to you, talk with your supervisor.

Viewing Your Own Security Profile

If you are working on a home/stage and cannot view or modify information that relates to your job responsibilities, you should review your security profile with your supervisor to make sure the Business Functions you have been assigned are adequate for the work you are doing. A special Business Function, VIEW SECURITY PROFILE, lets you review your own security profile in CONNECTIONS to find out what Business Functions are assigned to you. If, in reviewing your profile, you find that you do not have the security access for a task you need to complete, speak with your supervisor and your office's Security Coordinator.

Step by Step:
Reviewing Your Security Profile

1. Click on the **Options** menu at the top of the CONNECTIONS Toolbar and select **Security**.
   The Security fly-out menu displays.
2. Click on **View Staff Security…** from the fly-out menu.
   The Staff Search Criteria window displays.
3. Enter your first and last names in the Person section at the top of the *Staff Search Criteria* window.
4. Click on the **Search** button.
   The Staff List displays.
5. Click on your name to select it from the *Staff List*.
6. Click on the **OK** button.
   The Staff Security window displays. Within the window is a Business Function list box containing Business Functions that have been assigned to you.
7. Use the scroll bar inside the Business Function list box to view your security profile. The Business Functions assigned to you are identified with red check marks.
8. When you are done, click on the **Cancel** button to close the *Staff Security window*.
   The CONNECTIONS Toolbar displays.

Module 2:
Getting Started in CONNECTIONS

The CONNECTIONS system is a Windows-based application. Therefore, many features found in CONNECTIONS are common to other Windows-based applications. This module focuses on two items:

Navigation — You will also be introduced to the main navigation methods in CONNECTIONS (e.g., closing, minimizing windows, copying and pasting information).

Basic Tasks — You will learn how to accomplish basic system tasks that are similar to other Windows-based applications.

By the end of this module, you'll be able to:

- use CONNECTIONS Toolbar buttons;
- use CONNECTIONS menus;
- use buttons in CONNECTIONS windows.
- minimize and maximize windows;
- use scroll bars and "mega scroll" buttons;
- switch between windows using the **Alt**+**Tab** keyboard shortcut; and
- copy and paste information in CONNECTIONS and (specifically) in the FRS.

Getting Around in CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS consists of a number of windows, all linked at the highest level through controls on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.

The principal methods for navigating in CONNECTIONS are:

- buttons on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar;
- commands in menus from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar and on many other windows in the application; and
- buttons on CONNECTIONS windows.

Sometimes buttons and menu commands will be disabled. Features are disabled either because that function is not available from that window, or because your security profile does not allow you access to that information

Using CONNECTIONS Toolbar Buttons

The CONNECTIONS Toolbar is always available at the top of your window when you are working in CONNECTIONS. It is the gateway into the CONNECTIONS system. Sometimes the Toolbar may display beneath another window on your desktop. Click on the title bar to bring the Toolbar to the forefront of all of your open windows.

The CONNECTIONS Toolbar

The first two buttons on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar (**TO-DO** and **WORK**) help you organize your day-to-day work. The **TO-DO** button opens the *Staff To-Do List*, containing items needing your attention. The **WORK** button opens the *Assigned Workload*, a list of your stage assignments. This is the method you use to access your tasks in CONNECTIONS.

The third button, **UNIT**, opens the *Unit Summary* window, which is available only to CONNECTIONS users with a special Business Function. For example, supervisors assigned this Business Function can access to the Assigned Workloads of the caseworkers they supervise.

The next four buttons (**PERS**, **CASE**, **RSRC** and **STAFF**) are search buttons which enable you to search for people, cases, resources (including foster homes, agencies and service providers), and staff in CONNECTIONS.

The following list provides more information about each of these buttons.

PERS This button opens the *Person Search* window, which is used to search for individuals in the CONNECTIONS system.

CASE This button opens the *Case Search* window, which is used to search for specific cases within CONNECTIONS.

RSRC This button opens the *Resource Search Criteria* window, which is used to search the CONNECTIONS system for resources (e.g., agencies, facilities) that provide services to children involved with the child welfare system.

STAFF This button opens the *Staff Search Criteria* window, which is used to search for employees of child welfare agencies that are CONNECTIONS users.

The final button, **RPRTS**, opens the *Report List*, which provides access to reports you have generated (or "launched") from within the application. Monthly management reports are also downloaded directly to the **RPRTS** window for people with special Business Functions.

Using CONNECTIONS Menus

Just above the buttons on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar (and at the top of every window opened within CONNECTIONS) is the Menu bar, a row of key words that, when clicked, open menus (see the CONNECTIONS Toolbar graphic on the previous page).

Commands available from the menus vary by window and are related to the actions you may need to perform at that point. They provide an alternative way to open windows available from buttons, as well as serving as a means for opening additional CONNECTIONS windows.

Step by Step:
Navigating Using Menus

1. Click on a key word from the Menu bar at the top of any window.
   A menu displays with commands related to the selected key word.
2. Click on a command from the resulting menu.

Using Buttons in CONNECTIONS Windows

Most windows contain additional buttons, often near the bottom of the window. These buttons serve as shortcuts to frequently performed functions or frequently visited windows from that window. A partial list of these buttons appears in the chart below.

Partial List of Buttons and Their Functions

Button	Description
Add	Adds information to a list on certain windows. To save to the database, you also need to click on the **Save** button.
Cancel	Ignores any changes, closes the window and returns you to the previous window.
Clear	Clears detail fields from certain windows, or criteria from search windows.
Close	Closes the window and returns you to the previous window.
Delete	Deletes information from the database. You will usually receive a confirmation message before the item is deleted.
Detail…	Opens a window with detailed information for a selected item.
Generate Report	This button is used to display the *Generate Report* window in the FRS, where you can choose any/all of the FRS tabs to be formatted into a single document that can be printed.
Help On Narratives	This button displays the Online Help index, including the Online Help for using the Home Study and Reauthorization narratives in the FRS.
Modify	Modifies existing information in a list on certain windows. To save to the database, you also need to click on the **Save** button.
New…	Creates a new Detail window with blank data entry fields.
OK	Responds to a message box and returns to the previous window. Also accepts a selection from a list.
Save	Stores new or modified information in the database.
Search	Displays all records that match the search criteria.
Submit	This button initiates the Save and Submit process from the FRS once changes have been made that require supervisory approval.

Basic Windows Skills in CONNECTIONS

When you launch the CONNECTIONS application, the CONNECTIONS Toolbar displays. The CONNECTIONS Toolbar contains buttons and menus that enable you to open CONNECTIONS windows. Since CONNECTIONS is a Windows-based application, to use it effectively you need to be familiar with how Windows works.

Understanding Windows

Every window, like the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, has buttons and menus. These features enable you to change information on the window and/or navigate to other windows in CONNECTIONS. Each window also includes a **Close** button (☒) located in the upper right corner of the title bar (the colored bar at the top of the window) that you can use to close the window.

Important Note: It is recommended to click on the upper left corner of the window and select the **Close/Exit** command, rather than the **Close** button (☒) to prevent the loss of information.

Some features of CONNECTIONS windows are different than windows in other applications. For example, you cannot resize CONNECTIONS windows.

You can have more than one window open within CONNECTIONS and have multiple applications (e.g., email, Microsoft Word) open within Windows, each with its own window. When you have a number of windows open, they will be stacked one on top of another, like sheets of paper. The "active window" will be topmost in the stack. You can only work in the active window.

The ability to have multiple windows open ("multi-tasking") is a feature that lets you use a number of applications at once, but it can be confusing. This section explains how to manage and manipulate multiple windows.

Moving Windows

Windows in the CONNECTIONS application are slightly smaller than the size of your screen. Although you cannot resize them, you can move them to see the windows that are open but may be displayed underneath the active window.

To move a window, position your cursor over the title bar and hold down the left mouse button while you drag the mouse ("click & drag").

Minimizing and Maximizing Windows

While you cannot change the size of most of the windows in CONNECTIONS, you can manipulate some (e.g., Microsoft Word documents that you open within CONNECTIONS and CONNECTIONS Help windows). These windows can be minimized or maximized like windows in other applications. To understand how this works, it is helpful to know a bit about window states.

At any point a window displays one of three states: *normal*, *maximized* or *minimized*. A *normal* window partially fills the screen and can usually be resized. A *maximized* window fills the entire screen. A *minimized* window is still open, but is represented only by an icon on the task bar.

Most CONNECTIONS windows are set to a uniform size and cannot be maximized or minimized. You can, however, change the size of Microsoft Word and CONNECTIONS Help windows by using the **Minimize** ( ) and **Maximize** ( ) buttons in the top right corner of the window.

When you minimize a window, the application displays as an icon on the Task Bar. To open the window again, click on the icon. This returns the window to its previous state, either normal or maximized.

Scrolling

The vertical and/or horizontal scroll bars display on the right side and bottom, respectively, of windows whenever there is more information than can be displayed on a window at one time. There are three ways to scroll through a document:

- Click on the top or bottom (or right or left) arrow on the scroll bar to scroll up or down (or side to side) through the document in increments.
- To scroll more quickly, click and drag the center block in the scroll bar up or down (or right or left) until you locate the appropriate section of the document.
- In some windows, “mega-scroll” buttons (which look like dog-eared pages) display at the juncture of the vertical and horizontal scroll bars. Use the mega-scroll buttons to move beyond the last record you can view with the scroll bar.

Switching Between Windows Using the Alt and Tab Keys

The **Alt** and **Tab** keys enable you to move between CONNECTIONS and an open window in another Windows application (e.g., between CONNECTIONS and a Microsoft Word document).

Step by Step:
Switching Between Windows Using Alt+Tab

1. Hold down the **Alt** key.
2. Briefly press the **Tab** key to cycle through open application windows.
   *With each press of the **Tab** key, a message window displays with the name of an open application*.
3. When you see the name of the application you want to access, release the **Alt** key.
   The open application you selected becomes the active window.

Using **Alt+Tab** does *not* close your Citrix session. If you leave CONNECTIONS open while viewing another application (e.g., Microsoft Word), the Citrix session for CONNECTIONS locks after 15 minutes and times out after 30 minutes of inactivity.

Copying and Pasting

In CONNECTIONS, as in other Windows-based applications, you can use the Copy and Paste functions to duplicate information without retyping it. This is handy for transferring notes from a Microsoft Word document into a Microsoft Word document within CONNECTIONS, or copying information from one location to another within CONNECTIONS.

You can copy and paste only in those windows where your security profile allows you to maintain information.

Be careful when using the copy and paste function so that information is not inadvertently lost or misplaced. See the boxes on the right side of these pages for more Copy/Paste tips.

To save time, use Copy and Paste to copy information while recording Home Study narratives.

See “Copying and Pasting Using the FRS” on page 2-8.

Step by Step:
Copying and Pasting

1. Hold down the mouse button while you drag the over the text you want to copy.
   The text highlights as you drag the mouse.
2. Click on the **Edit** menu and select **Copy**.
   (If an Edit menu is unavailable on a particular CONNECTIONS window, use the hot-key method described on the next page.)
   The system copies your highlighted text onto the Windows clipboard. It will remain on this clipboard until you copy another selection of text or close the application.
3. Click in the location where you want to paste the text. If you are moving from a stand-alone Word document to an open Word document in CONNECTIONS, use **Alt**+**Tab** to move from one document to the other, or minimize the first document by clicking on the **Minimize** button in the top right corner of the window.
4. Click on the **Edit** menu and select **Paste**.
   (If an Edit menu is unavailable, use the hot key method on the next page.)
   The copied text pastes next to the cursor.
5. To save the newly transferred information, click on the **File** menu and select **Save**.

Save the document you are copying from *before* minimizing and/or pasting.

Make sure the paste location is large enough for the text you have copied. If it is too small, CONNECTIONS will paste only what fits. Most comments boxes can contain 200 characters of information, but some hold only 40 characters.

“Hot Key” Method for Copying and Pasting

If an **Edit** menu is unavailable on a window where you want to copy and/or paste, you can use the following keyboard method to copy and paste.

Step by Step:
“Hot Key” Method for Copying and Pasting

1. Highlight the text you wish to copy.
2. Press the **Ctrl** and **C** keys on your keyboard at the same time.
   The highlighted text is copied onto the Windows clipboard.
3. Click in the location where you want to paste the text.
4. Press the **Ctrl** and **V** keys on your keyboard at the same time.
   The copied text pastes next to the cursor.

Be careful when using “Select All,” a command in some **Edit** menus. It selects everything on the page for copying, including headers, footers and template commands.

Using this may delete the template style of the document into which you are pasting text.

Copying and Pasting Using the FRS

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) is the primary location for recording the Home Study and Annual Reauthorization narratives and for recording information in a variety of Comment Boxes. Narratives and comments can be typed directly into the FRS. CONNECTIONS will maintain a historical record, allowing you to continue to add new information without losing previously recorded information.

You may choose to copy information from outside of the FRS and paste it into a narrative or comment box in the FRS. For example, home study documents may be created in Microsoft Word, and pasted into the FRS. Or, you may want to paste information from a Microsoft Word document into one of the many comment boxes found in the FRS.

In this section, we offer insight into some elements of Word documents that may affect your ability to successfully copy and paste information from one Word document to another.

The “Copy and Paste” method of arranging text is recommended over the “Cut and Paste” method.

The “Cut” function on the **Edit** menu removes highlighted text from your document and saves it temporarily to a system clipboard. Highlighted text can easily get deleted and lost.

Templates and Formatting

The Home Study and Annual Reauthorization Word narratives located in either FRS or in CONNECTIONS are completed in templates. Templates contain pre-formatted sections where information is recorded in designated text fields. Sections of a template can be protected or unprotected. If you've completed a Home Study narrative in a locally saved Word document, it may or may not be in the form of a template. If you are not sure, you can check with staff in your own district or agency to determine if the locally created document contains protected fields.

Information is recorded in the unprotected areas of Word templates. These areas may display with a shaded background. In the Home Study narrative in the FRS, shading indicates where information can be entered. Click at the beginning of a shaded area to begin typing in your text. When text exists in a shaded area, you can copy and paste that text from one section to another (see "Hot Key" method on page 2-8).

Protected areas in a template act as field labels and other instructional information. These areas are *not* shaded. You cannot type over these areas. Copying and pasting these protected areas can prove problematic if not done properly. Your goal will be to copy the information out of the document, and paste it into the narrative or comment box as "unformatted text." Instructions on how to do this are located in the next section of this module.

Many problems that occur when copying and pasting between documents can be avoided. Here are two tips to keep in mind when copying and pasting information:

- Typing information directly into the Home Study and Annual Reauthorization templates is the easiest way to avoid having to copy and paste. Additionally, you do not have to format text when you record it directly in the appropriate sections of formatted documents.
- When recording and saving information outside the FRS, use a blank Microsoft Word document and do not add formatting (e.g., headings, protected sections). Using a new Word document without pre-formatted fields and labels simplifies the process of copying and pasting into the FRS narratives and Comment boxes.

Copying and Pasting Word Documents into the FRS

Many of the same steps are used to copy information from a separate Microsoft Word document into the FRS. You may choose to take information from a Home Study, or another record you maintain outside of CONNECTIONS, and paste it into the FRS narratives or comment boxes.

Remember that CONNECTIONS and the FRS are running in a Citrix session. To access your locally saved Home Study document, you will need to switch to your local desktop.

Step by Step:
Copying and Pasting from a Separate Microsoft Word Document into the FRS

1. Switch to your local desktop by pressing down the **Alt** key and pressing the **Tab** key until your open Microsoft Word document displays as an icon.
2. Release the **Alt** and **Tab** keys.
3. Open your Word document.
4. Highlight the portion of the document that you wish to bring into the FRS.
5. Click on the **Edit** menu and select **Copy**.
6. Switch back to your Citrix session by pressing down the **Alt** key and pressing the **Tab** key until the Citrix session appears with a box around it.
7. Release the **Alt** and **Tab** keys.
8. Access the Home Study or other document/comment box in the FRS.
9. Click in the area where you want to paste information.
10. Click on the **Edit** menu.
11. If there are no protected fields in the document you are copying, select **Paste**. If you do have protected fields, select **Paste Special**.
    (*Note: you may have to click on the down arrow at the bottom of the menu to reveal this command*).
12. If you have selected **Paste Special**, click on **Unformatted Text**.
    The information displays in the chosen area, and can be edited as needed.

If you do not have the document open, hold down the **Ctrl** and **Esc** keys. You can then select the path to the document.

You may copy and paste information from your own documents (outside of CONNECTIONS) into FRS comment boxes. However, special formatting (e.g., tab sets, fonts, styles) is lost when copied text is pasted into an FRS comment box. To avoid problems, keep the formatting of your source document as generic as possible.

Module 3:
Managing Your Workload

CONNECTIONS provides tools to help you manage your caseload. These tools include the *Assigned Workload*, Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS), and *To-Do Lists*.

The *Assigned Workload* — The *Assigned Workload* is your gateway into CONNECTIONS for documenting the casework activities you complete for the foster and/or adoptive homes assigned to you. The *Assigned Workload* provides a structure for the information you record for each home assigned to you. From the *Assigned Workload*, you can choose to access tasks for completion, or access different windows to view and print information. In this guide, you will find that the *Assigned Workload* is often the starting step in each set of instructions for a task.

The *Task List* — CONNECTIONS provides a central listing of casework activities. Use this list to navigate to view and edit home and person information.

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) — The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) is a single, multi-tabbed window that displays all current information recorded for a selected foster or adoptive home. This unique structure provides easy access for viewing and printing, and access to comment boxes and specific fields where you can record and modify additional information.

To-Do Lists — The *Staff To-Do List* and *Case To-Do List* support the completion of timely work required by state regulations. More than one worker may be involved in completing work on a home/stage. To-Do Lists organize information and facilitate communication. They also help manage shared responsibilities for foster and adoptive homes, particularly between caseworkers and supervisors.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- sort the *Assigned Workload* to manage your caseload and navigate to tasks;
- complete tasks using the **Options** menu;
- access the FRS,
- name the different sections of the FRS;
- complete and save Contact Notes in the FRS;
- use the *Staff To-Do List* to manage necessary tasks, send To-Do's to yourself or others, and navigate to tasks;
- keep track of necessary tasks using the *Case To-Do List*; and
- use the *Event List* to keep track of events that have occurred in your homes/stages and navigate to view details of specific events.

Managing Your *Assigned Workload*

The *Assigned Workload* is an important workload management tool in CONNECTIONS. It lists all of the homes/stages assigned to you, as either a primary or secondary worker, along with basic information about the home/stage (e.g., home/stage name, the date you received the assignment). You can sort stages in different ways to organize the work you need to do.

New assignments are highlighted in gray and displayed at the top of the window when it is initially opened. They remain highlighted until the assigned worker displays the home/stage information on screen. New assignments do not automatically display on the *Assigned Workload* if it is open at the time of the assignment. It is necessary to Refresh your workload for these assignments to appear. To refresh the *Assigned Workload,* click on the **Options** menu and select the **Refresh** command, or click on the **Refresh** button at the bottom of the window**.**

Opening the *Assigned Workload*

Step by Step:
Opening the *Assigned Workload*

1 Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar
The Assigned Workload displays.

The following columns on the *Assigned Workload* provide an abbreviated view of relevant information about each home/stage assigned to you.

! This column displays an exclamation point (!) if a case has been marked "sensitive."

Role This column denotes your assigned role in the stage. The roles that display depend on the type of stage.

For CPS Investigation and FAD stages, the following roles are available:

- "PR" indicates that you are the *Primary* worker for the stage.
- "SE" indicates that you are the *Secondary* worker for the stage.

For Family Services Stages (FSS), the following roles are available:

- "CM" indicates that you are the *Case Manager* for the stage.
- "CP" indicates that you are the *Case Planner* for the stage.
- "CW" indicates that you are a *Caseworker* assigned to the stage.
- "WM" indicates that you are the *CPS Worker/Monitor* for the stage.

Stage Name FAD homes/stages are usually named for the foster or adoptive mother.

County Represents the county where the home/stage is located.

Zone Displays a code for New York City addresses only.

Stage The stage of service the selected item represents.

Type Describes the type of home/stage. In FAD, the type is always Regular (REG) in CONNECTIONS.

Start The date the home/stage is first opened/reopened in CONNECTIONS.

Assigned The date the home/stage was assigned to the caseworker.

Unit This column indicates the unit to which the worker is assigned.

Stage ID and Case ID The Stage ID and Case ID numbers are unique, system-generated identification numbers assigned to cases and stages, respectively. Each stage has a unique Stage ID; all stages related to the same case will share the same Case ID.

The *Assigned Workload* for ACS caseworkers (New York City) displays three additional columns:

HPF	Indicates the ranking of the High Priority safety factor associated with the CPS stage.
*****	An asterisk (*) in this column indicates that the CPS stage has more than one High Priority factor.
CD	Displays the Community District (CD) code for the address associated with the stage.

Sorting the Assigned Workload

Your *Assigned Workload* may have more foster homes/stages than are visible on the window at one time. You may need to organize the data in the list to find a particular home/stage. You can change the sort of your assignments, which by default sorts in alphabetical order by new assignment then by alphabetical order previous assignments, on the *Assigned Workload* by using the **Sort** menu. When you close your *Assigned Workload*, the next time you open it your stages return to the default sort order.

You can arrange your assignments using one of the following sorts:

Case	Sorts assignments by Case ID number.
Alphabetical	Sorts assignments in alphabetical order by Stage Name.
Worker Role	Sorts based on the worker's assigned role (e.g., Case Worker).
Stage of Service, Stage Name	Sorts assignments by Stage of Service (e.g., FAD), then alphabetically by Stage Name.
County	Sorts assignments by County code.
Chronological	Sorts assignments by Start date, earliest (oldest) date first. If two or more stages have the same Start date, a secondary sort is performed by Stage ID, with Stage IDs listed from lowest to highest.
Reverse Chronological	Sorts assignments in reverse order by Start date, most recent (latest) date first. If two or more stages have the same Start date, a secondary sort is performed on Stage ID, with Stage IDs listed from highest to lowest.
Date Assigned	Sorts assignments in order of the date on which the CPS report was assigned to the caseworker, based on the Intake Start date for Intake and Investigation stages. If two or more stages have the same Date Assigned, a secondary sort is performed on Stage ID, with Stage IDs listed from lowest to highest.

Step by Step:
Sorting the *Assigned Workload*

1 On the *Assigned Workload*, click on the **Sort** menu.

2. Click on a sort command from the menu.
   The Assigned Workload displays according to the sort command you selected.
3. To change the sort, click on the **Sort** menu again and select another sort command.
4. To return the sort to the default setting, click on the **Refresh** button at the bottom of the *Assigned Workload*.

The Options Menu

The **Options** menu on the *Assigned Workload* is a drop-down listing of commands that help you accomplish a variety of tasks. Some commands simply reorganize the look of the *Assigned Workload*, and others complete tasks such as retracting an assignment.

Clicking on the **Options** menu displays the following commands (you may find that all commands are not enabled, depending on your security):

- Accept
- Reject
- Intake Priority/Closure…
- Case (Stage) Name/CD
- Assign…
- Case To Do's…
- Case Summary…
- Person List…
- Record Family Services Intake
- Create Family Services Stage
- Unlink FSS Stage
- Stage Progression…
- Task List…
- Event List…
- List Assignments Made…
- Workload Filter…
- Refresh

In this section we will take a look at two of the commands on the **Options** menu.

Step by Step:
Using the Options Menu

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select the foster home/stage you want to work on.
3. Click on the **Options** menu and select a command.
   The window associated with the selected command displays.
4. To return to the *Assigned Workload*, click on the **Close**, **Cancel** or **Save** button on any open window.

Workload Filter

The **Workload Filter…** command on the **Options** menu opens the *Workload Filtering* window. You can use this window to view a sub-set of assignments from the *Assigned Workload*. This is especially helpful if you have a very long listing of home/stage assignments.

Your *Assigned Workload* can be filtered according to **Stage ID**, **Case ID**, and **Match Retrieve by Stage Name**. Once the filter is in place, the title bar on the *Assigned Workload* reads:

***Assigned Workload* - <worker's name> (Filtered).**

Step by Step:
Filtering the *Assigned Workload*

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Click on the **Options** menu.
   A drop down menu displays.
3. Select the **Workload Filter** command.
   The Assigned Workload (filtered) displays.
4. Enter information in the **Stage ID**, **Case ID** or **Match Retrieval by Stage Name** field.
5. Click on the **Search** button.
   The Assigned Workload displays the results of the filter.
6. To remove the filter from the *Assigned Workload*, click on the **Refresh** button.

A minimum of two characters of the stage name (recorded as case-sensitive; i.e., first letter capitalized, remainder lower-case [e.g., Smith]) must be entered in the **Match Retrieved by Stage Name** field to enable that particular filter.

List Assignments Made

This command, also found on the **Options** menu of the *Assigned Workload*, provides access to the *List Assignments Made* window. You can use the *List Assignments Made* window to view assignments you have made to other workers, and to cancel assignments that may have been made in error. This window only displays assignments that have not yet been accessed by the assignee. If the assignments have been accessed, the following message displays:

"No Assignments to Retrieve. All Assignments Retrieved by Assigned Worker."

An assignment is considered to have been "accessed" when the assignee selects the home/stage from his/her *Assigned Workload* and selects an **Options** menu command or clicks on the **Tasks…** button. An assignment can only be cancelled if it displays on the *List Assignment Made* window, and therefore has not yet been accessed by the assignee.

Once the cancellation has been completed, the home/stage is removed from the original assignee's *Assigned Workload*. The original assignee and his/her supervisor receive an Alert To-Do that reads:

"Stage #### was reassigned by <worker name>."

Step by Step:
Listing Assignments Made

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Click on the **Options** menu.
   A drop down menu displays.
3. Select the **List Assignments Made…** command.
   The List Assignments Made window displays.
4. Select the assignment (home/stage) to be canceled, and click on the **Assign…** button.
   The Assign window displays.
5. Reassign the home/stage to the correct worker, by selecting the appropriate staff person's name from the Available Staff list at the top of the *Assign* window.
6. Click on the **Primary** or **Secondary** button, as applicable.
   Clicking on the Primary button displays the following message:
   "This action will remove the current primary worker from the stage. Continue?"
   - Clicking on the **Yes** button adds the selected worker to the **Assignments** grid.
   - Clicking on the **No** button does not add the worker as Primary.
   - Clicking on the **Help** button displays Online Help.
7. Click on the **Save** button.
   The List Assignments Made window displays.
8. Click on the **Close** button to return to the *Assigned Workload*.

The *Task List*

As a caseworker responsible for completing the home certification or approval process, you must access areas of CONNECTIONS that allow you to complete and record your casework activities. These activities must be documented in CONNECTIONS (the system of record) or in the External Foster Home Case Record.

The *Task List* is a tool provided by CONNECTIONS to help caseworkers conduct/document their work in an organized fashion. The *Task List* for a foster home stage identifies 13 tasks that you may complete in CONNECTIONS during the certification or approval process. These tasks reflect many of the processes that caseworkers complete in the course of foster home certification or approval—from gathering and evaluating specific types of information, to making decisions about certifying or approving a foster home. The CONNECTIONS *Task List* is used to guide this information documentation and decision making process.

FAD Tasks in CONNECTIONS

Maintain Non-Licensing Information	This task opens the *Home Demographics* window (and associated windows). Use this task to record and maintain demographic information about the resource home (*see Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry).*
Maintain Licensing Information	All licensing processes are recorded via this task. This task opens the *F/A Home License* window, where you identify all licensing requirements; **Facility Type**, **Program Type**, **Home Study**, **Capacity**, etc.) and submit information for supervisory approval (*see Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information*).
Maintain Person	This task enables a caseworker to add, modify, delete and view information regarding persons associated with the selected stage (*see Module 7: Maintaining Person Information*).
View Home Placements	This task is not currently supported.
View Home History	This task opens the *F/A Home History* window, which is used to retrieve historical home records. It contains a listing of all licensing and status changes that have transpired since the home was initially created in the system. The ability to modify information on this window requires a specific Business Function Profile (BFP).
Home Study	This task provides access for viewing and updating information about the home, and the ability to create and update home Study narratives.
Annual Reauthorization	This task provides access for viewing and updating information for the home, and the ability to update Home Study narratives and complete the Annual Reauthorization process. This task is only available during the 90 days prior to the home's recertification/reapproval date.

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View FAD Record Summary	This task provides view-only access to information and any in-process Home Study or Annual Reauthorization narratives for the home.
Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance	This task opens the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window, which enables workers to maintain beds (e.g., add beds, delete beds, modify bed characteristics) for a home/facility in Accepted-Active or Applicant status. Performing this function in a timely manner allows agencies to optimize their placement potential. The buttons for this task enable based on your Business Function Profile.
Corrective Action Plan	This task opens a window to access a Microsoft Word document where you can document an agreement with foster or adoptive parents to correct a violation of state regulations.
Serious Incident	This task opens a window to access a Microsoft Word document where you can record information about a serious incident that has occurred in the foster or adoptive home.
Waiver/Exception	This task opens a window to access a Microsoft Word document where you can record a request for a waiver or exception to particular state regulations. Only Relative Foster Homes are eligible to request waivers/exceptions.
Close Home	This task enables you to document the reasons for a home closure and to submit that information for supervisory approval to officially close the home in CONNECTIONS. Supportive documentation for home closure must be recorded in the External Foster Home Case Record.

Navigating from the *Assigned Workload* to Accomplish Tasks

From the *Assigned Workload*, you accomplish tasks either by opening the *Task List* or by navigating to specific tasks through the **Options** menu.

Using the *Task List*

The *Task List* includes all of the tasks associated with a particular home/stage and provides an entry point to each of these tasks. Follow the steps below to open the *Task List* from the *Assigned Workload*.

Step by Step:
Opening the *Task List*

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select the foster home/stage you want to work on.
   *The **Tasks...** button enables.*

3 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays for the selected stage.

4 To close the Task List, click on the **Close** button.
The Assigned Workload displays.

Reassigning a Home/Stage

The *Assign* window is used to reassign a foster home from your *Assigned Workload* to that of another worker in CONNECTIONS. By default, this window contains available staff within your unit or district.

Assignment of foster homes in CONNECTIONS does not override policy parameters or off-line procedures/communications that are often required prior to transferring or assigning a home/stage.

The top half of the *Assign* window, the Available Staff grid, lists the eligible unit staff to whom you can reassign a foster home/stage. A list of the staff currently assigned to the home/stage is displayed in the Assignments grid at the bottom of the window. If you were assigned the Primary role and that role is reassigned to another worker, the stage will no longer display on your *Assigned Workload*.

Step by Step:
Reassigning a Home/Stage

1 Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
The Assigned Workload displays.

2 Select the foster home/stage you need to reassign.

3 Click on the **Assign…** button.
The Assign window displays.

4 Select another worker in your unit from the Available Staff section.

5 Click on the **Primary** button.
The following message displays:
"This action will remove the current primary worker from the stage. Continue?"

- Clicking on the **Yes** button adds the selected worker to the **Assignments** grid.
- Clicking on the **No** button does not add the worker as Primary.
- Clicking on the **Help** button displays Online Help.

6 Click on the **Save** button.
The Assigned Workload displays.

You can search for additional staff by clicking on the **Options** menu and selecting the **Staff Search Criteria** command.

A **Staff Search** needs to be conducted when reassigning a home/stage to a caseworker from a different unit or district.

Step by Step:
Conducting a Staff Search when Reassigning a Home/Stage

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select the appropriate home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*, and click on the **Assign…** button.
   The Assign window displays.
3. Click on the **Options** menu in the *Assign* window and select **Staff Search Criteria…**
   The Staff Search Criteria window displays.
4. Enter the name or **Person ID** number of the caseworker to whom you want to reassign the foster home.
5. Click on the **Search** button.
   The Staff List displays. The name you entered in the search criteria displays at the top of the Staff List.
6. Select the name at the top of the list.
7. Click on the **OK** button.
   The Assign window displays with the selected caseworker's name highlighted in the Available Staff section.
8. Click on the **Primary** button.
   The following message displays:
   "This action will remove the current primary worker from the stage. Continue?"
   - Clicking on the **Yes** button adds the selected worker to the **Assignments** grid.
   - Clicking on the **No** button does not add the worker as Primary.
   - Clicking on the **Help** button displays Online Help.
9. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Assigned Workload displays.

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS)

In addition to using CONNECTIONS to manage and access caseload information, you will need to use CONNECTIONS to record case notes and narratives in an organized manner. Supervisors and managers also need to access case notes and narratives for review.

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) provides a comprehensive view of the FAD information you record in CONNECTIONS. This is accomplished through the use of a single, multi-tabbed window that provides you access to maintain, view, and print FAD home information easily. This multi-tabbed window is organized to be consistent with the existing foster/adoptive home development process. Comments and contact notes may be recorded at appropriate points throughout this process.

Currently, not all of the information you see in the FRS can be updated within the FRS. Much of the information presented in the FRS is drawn from other CONNECTIONS windows, and can only be updated in those windows. However, most tabs do allow for the recording of various types of comments and notes. The Home Study Narrative and Annual Reauthorization tabs, allow for the creation and editing of narratives directly within the FRS.

In each module of this guide, the use of the FRS will be discussed for each topic covered, as applicable. For example, in Module 6 (*Responding to an Inquiry and Recording Inquiry Information)* you will learn how the FRS is used, in addition to the traditional *Task List*, to record and view information for each foster home inquiry.

The Layout of the FRS

Before learning how to access the FRS, let's take a moment to consider the major features and the layout of the FRS.

Information in the FRS is organized into three sections; the **Heading** (top portion of window), the **Tab Section** (middle portion) and the **Buttons** (lower window).

Heading

This section is always present when the FRS is open. It includes the following information:

- Resource Name
- Authorized From Date
- Vendor ID
- Resource ID
- Authorized To Date
- Agency Name/Resource ID

Buttons

The buttons found at the bottom of the FRS window are always present when the FRS is open. The table below lists each button and provides a brief description of their uses.

Submit	This button initiates the **Save and Submit** process. Clicking the **Submit** button opens the *F/A Home License* window, allowing you to **Save and Submit** the FRS and the Home license information together. The **Submit** button is disabled when the FRS is entered in view-only mode or if no changes have been saved to the FRS since opening it.
Help on Narratives	This button accesses help information on how to use the Home Study and Annual Reauthorization documents. If you click on the Help on Narratives button while on the Home Study or Annual Reauthorization tabs, you will open help information about that document. (Clicking on the button while on any other tab will open an index of help topics relating to these narratives.) This separate help is made available to provide information on completing the narrative documents. (*see Module 5: Getting Help When You Need It*)
Generate Report	Clicking on this button will open the *Generate Report* window. This window lets you choose any or all of the FRS tabs to be formatted into a single document that can be printed (*see Module 11: FAD Reports*).
Close	Clicking on this button will close the FRS and return you to the window from which you entered the FRS, either the *Task List* window or the *Event List* window.

Tabs

The home information is separated into nine major areas that make up each tab. Tabs appear, from left to right, in the following order (the tabs can be accessed in any order):

- Home Demo.
- Licensing Information
- Household Member Detail
- Home History Events
- Agy./Worker Information
- Home Study Narrative
- Annual Reauth. Narrative
- FAD Checklist
- Contacts

Each of the nine tabs is briefly introduced below. Use the references following each description to locate information on how to complete the FAD Recording Process using the FRS.

Home Demographics Tab

The **Home Demo.** tab contains demographic information taken from the *Home Demographics* window. Demographic information on this window is *general* information about the home. For example, the **Religion** field is filled in with the item that best indicates the overall Religion practiced in the home. Specific information about the religion practiced by each individual in the home is located on the **Household Member Detail** tab.

This tab also contains two buttons: **Emergency Back-up** and **Directions to Home**.

- Clicking on the **Emergency Back-up** button displays the *Emergency Comments* window where you can record any additional contact information such as names, telephone numbers and addresses of emergency contacts.
- Clicking on the **Directions to Home** button displays the *Directions to Home Comments* window where you can record information related to the facility/home, such as driving directions or a physical description of the facility/home.

When the FRS is accessed via the *Event List* or View FAD Record Summary tasks, it displays the **Home Demo**. tab by default. Accessing the FRS through other venues may cause a different tab to be viewed first (See *Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry*).

Licensing Tab

The **Licensing Information** tab displays information taken from the *F/A Home License* window. Most of the information on the **Licensing Information** tab is view only and cannot be updated from within the FRS.

This window contains two buttons: **Child Characteristics** and **Child Race/Eth/Rel/Languages** that display comment boxes when selected. These comment boxes provide a place to record and modify the following information:

- "Child Characteristics Accepted"
  (i.e., the characteristics preferred by the foster parents)
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Languages

Protected check boxes next to each button automatically display a checkmark once comments have been recorded and saved to the database. (See Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information in CONNECTIONS).

Household Member Detail Tab

The **Household Member Detail** tab displays information from the *Person Detail* window organized into two main grids.

UPPER GRID	
Name	Sex
Date of Birth	Age
Language	Religion
Marital Status	Ethnicity
Race	Rel/Int
Date Added to Stage	

LOWER GRID	
Medical Exam Date	FP Cards Sent
FP Cards Recd	† FP Results
† Safety Asmnt Dt	† SCR DB Check Sent
† SCR DB Check Recd	† SCR Results

† The last five columns of the lower grid *can only* be updated from within the FRS.

The **Household Member Detail** tab includes buttons that allow you to access comment boxes. Comment boxes provide you with a place to record and edit FAD information. Below is a list of buttons that open related comment boxes on the **Household Member Detail** tab:

- Training Comments
- Med/CHRC and SCR Comments
- Employment Comments

A check box next to each button becomes system-filled with an “X” once comments have been recorded and saved in the appropriate comment box.

The **Household Member Detail** tab contains another set of buttons to allow viewing access for associated *sub-windows*. These sub-windows display information recorded in CONNECTIONS via the **Maintain Person** task. *These windows cannot be updated from within the FRS*:

- A.K.A. Names
- Person ID
- Case List
- Person Detail FA
- Training Details

This tab is also discussed in Module 7: Maintaining Person Information.

Home History Events Tab

The **Home History Events** tab lists all events that relate to the history of the home. This includes all approvable events and any assignment events where the agency or sub-agency has changed. The information on the **Home History Events** tab is view-only.

The following columns display in the **Home History Events** tab:

Event Date	The date an event was completed, as recorded on the specific window or during the events evaluation. If no date was recorded, the **Event Date** column will be blank for that event.
Tx Date	The system transaction date, which is the date an event was updated by the worker using one of the Save functions (i.e., Save, Save and Submit, Save and Close, Save and Stay).
Event Status	Status of the event (i.e., new, proc, pend, rejt, comp).
Event Type	The type of event generated (e.g., Home, Assignment).
Event Description	A description of the event (e.g., New Home Created).

Although the titles are similar, the **Home History Events** tab of the FRS does not display the same information as the *F/A Home History* window found elsewhere in CONNECTIONS. (See *Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS* for information about accessing the *F/A Home History* window.)

Agency/Worker Tab

Information found on the **Agy./Worker Information** tab identifies the primary worker and any other individuals working in the facility/home. An arrow displays to the left of the worker currently selected on the **Agy./Worker Information** tab. This information is view-only.

This tab contains the following columns:

Worker Role	The worker's assigned role in the stage.
Worker Name	The worker's name as recorded in CONNECTIONS.
Worker Phone	The worker's office phone number, if recorded in CONNECTIONS.
Agency Name	The agency of the assigned worker.
Agency Code	The agency code.

Home Study and Annual Reauthorization Narrative Tabs

The FRS has mechanisms for recording FAD Home Study narratives and Annual Reauthorization narratives. Using the FRS to create these narratives eliminates the need for duplicate entry of information into external documents and CONNECTIONS. OCFS templates are provided for recording these narratives. The result is a more complete online record for each home.

Each time a new Home Study or Reauthorization is initiated, a new FRS is created. CONNECTIONS maintains an historical listing of all narratives for the home. To avoid confusion, only one active FRS will exist at a time. Because of this historical listing, each home study template can be maintained to reflect changes in address, household composition or other status updates (*Refer to Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes*).

FAD Checklist

The FAD checklist is an organized listing of the tasks required for certification, approval, recertification, and reapproval of foster homes. It is strongly recommended that you use this checklist to date each task as you complete it, or as a review to make sure you have finished all tasks necessary for the licensing goal you are working on. (See *Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes).*

Contacts Tab

The **Contacts** tab provides a place for workers to record all contacts made for a home, creating a contemporaneous document. The use of the **Contacts** tab is discussed later in this module.

Accessing the FRS

The FRS can be accessed in two ways, through the *Task List* and through the *Event List*. Any worker able to access a FAD Home from their workload can also access the FRS via the Home Study, Annual Reauthorization or View FAD Record Summary tasks on the *Task List*.

Accessing the FRS from the Task List

The *Task List* contains three tasks, which allow you to access the FRS for different reasons. Descriptions of the tasks are listed below:

Home Study —- This task provides access to view and update the current active FRS. Use this task to create and update current Home Study narratives, contacts, and home and person information.

Annual Reauthorization —This task provides access to view and update home and person information, update Home Study narratives, and complete the Annual Reauthorization narrative. *This task can access the FRS only during the 90 days prior to the home's recertification or reapproval due date*.

View FAD Record Summary — This task provides *view-only* access for an in-process FRS. If there is no in-process FRS buttons do not enable once you select the task. When the FRS is accessed using this task, changes cannot be made in the windows displayed.

The buttons at the bottom of the *Task List* are affected by whether or not the FRS has been accessed and/or saved in the past.

New vs. Use Prior

When opening the FRS to start an Initial Home Study, only the **New** button enables. At other times, you will have a choice between **New** or **Detail**. Also, in the process of opening the FRS to complete an Interim Home Study, you will notice that two buttons enable on the *Task List* — **New** and **Use Prior**. Use Prior becomes enabled when one Home Study or Reauthorization narrative already exists for the home. You are given the option to use information you have already entered, or to start with a blank document.

Let's take a closer look at what these different options mean.

New This button displays a version of the FRS where all data fields are pre-filled with current information from the CONNECTIONS database. The Home Study and Reauthorization narratives will contain blank templates and all comment boxes will be blank. Information can be entered in the Home Study narrative and comment boxes.

Use Prior This button displays a version of the FRS where all data fields are pre-filled with current information from the CONNECTIONS database. The Home Study and Reauthorization narratives and all comment boxes will contain information from the latest approved/frozen FRS. The Home Study narrative and comment boxes can be modified or added to as necessary.

Detail… This button can be selected any time you have an in-process FRS that requires editing.

Step by Step:
Accessing the FRS from the *Task List*

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select a FAD home and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays three tasks that can open the FRS window.
3. Select the task that best reflects why you are opening the FRS.
   For example, select Annual Reauthorization when you need to complete the Annual Reauthorization Document.
4. Click on the corresponding button.
   *For example, if you select the **Home Study** task you would click on the **New** or **Use Prior** button.*

Accessing the FRS from the Event List

The primary reason for accessing the FRS via the *Event List* is to view a Home Study or Annual Reauthorization narrative. Such events are referred to as "navigable events." This means that you may select the event, and use the **Detail** button to view information related to that event.

Events with a status of PROC, PEND, or REJT allow view-only access to the current FRS. Events with a status of APRV allow *view-only* access to frozen/approved Home Study or Reauthorization documents.

The *Event List* can be displayed using the **Options** menu on both the *Assigned Workload* and on the *Task List*. The directions below begin from the *Assigned Workload*.

Step by Step:
Accessing the FRS from the *Event List*

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Event List** command.
   The Event List window displays.
3. Select the appropriate "navigable event," and click on the **Detail…** button.
   The FRS displays in view-only mode.

Completing Progress/Contact Notes in the FRS

Contact notes may be recorded in the Contact Tab of the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). Documenting casework contacts and activities in this tab, keeps all information about a home/stage together in one record, unlike writing notes in MS Word and saving these files separately.

The Contacts tab is simply a listing of separate notes documented for casework contacts and activities. The following information is displayed (in columns) for each contact:

- Date/Time Recorded
- Contacted By
- Purpose
- Contact Date
- Method
- Location

Three buttons display at the bottom of the tab. Use the **Add New** button to record new contact notes. The **Contact Details** button displays a selected contact note, and the **Delete** button will remove a selected contact.

The directions on how to access the Contact tab and complete a Contact Note are described below. Instructions on how to Delete a contact follow.

Step by Step:
Creating and Saving Contact Notes in the FRS

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the FAD home/stage you need to update and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Home Study** task.
3. Click on the **New**, **Detail** or **Use Prior** button (**Detail** is enabled when there is an in-process FRS).
   The FRS displays.
4. Click on the **Contacts** tab, and click on the **Add New** button.
   The Contacts window displays.
5. Complete the following fields: **Contact Date**, **Contacted By**, **Method**, **Participants**, **Location**, **Purpose** and **Comments**.
6. When you are finished, click on the **Save** button to store information in CONNECTIONS (click on the **Cancel** button to leave the window without saving information).
   *The FRS displays with the **Contacts** tab active.*
7. Click on the **OK** button in response to the following message:
   "Changes have been saved."

Step by Step:
Deleting Contact Notes in the FRS

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the FAD home/stage you need to update and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Home Study** task.
3. Click on the **New**, **Detail** or **Use Prior** button (**Detail** is enabled when there is an in-process FRS).
   The FRS displays.
4. Click on the **Contacts** tab.
5. Select the contact you would like to remove from the list.
6. Click on the **Delete** button.
   *The **Delete** button disables when the selected contact is part of an FRS that has already been approved and frozen.*
7. Click on the **Yes** button in response to the following message:
   "Are you sure you wish to delete this Contact?"
8. Click on the **OK** button in response to the following message: *"Delete successful."*
   The FRS displays with the contact deleted from the list.

Additional Features of the FRS

Saving your work

You have probably already heard that saving your work and saving often is imperative – especially when writing long narratives like a Home Study or Annual Reauthorization.

This is important because the CONNECTIONS Citrix servers will "time out" when a connection to the system that has been idle for 15 minutes. If you receive a phone call, or experience any other type of interruption while writing in a narrative, make a habit of saving your work right away. Any narratives that are open when the Citrix server times out will be closed down without saving. Only work last saved by you or Microsoft Word will appear in the narrative when reopened.

Microsoft Word is set to periodically "AutoSave" your document. Every three minutes, your machine will automatically save whatever changes you've made to the document. These changes are made to an alternate copy of your document (known as an auto recover document). The locally saved document can be located by clicking on the **Start** button in the Citrix window, and selecting the **Local Save** folder. The information remains available for 30 calendar days and can be copied and pasted into the appropriate document.

The auto recover document is intended for use if your original document is damaged or lost. It is a safety net; do not depend on this function as the only protection for your work.

The procedure for saving narratives in the FRS is very similar to that for the rest of CONNECTIONS.

Step by Step:
Saving Narratives in the FRS

1. Click on the **File** menu on the *Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary* window and select **Close**.
   The following message displays: "Save Changes?"
2. Click on the **Yes** button.
   *If you click on the **No** button, your changes will not be saved*.
3. Click on the **Retrieve/Edit Narrative** button to reopen the narrative and continue working on it.

When reading a narrative that you have accessed in view only mode, closing that document will not result in seeing these Save reminders.

Enhanced Narrative Locking

The FRS utilizes a feature called "Enhanced Narrative Locking" to protect the save process involved when working on narratives, such as the Home Study and Reauthorization narratives. This feature allows you work to be saved even when two caseworkers are working on the same document and try to save their work at the same time.

If you try to save your work after another worker has just modified the same document, the following message displays:

"Unable to Save! Save Failed: The Data has been changed by another user.
Press Yes to Save a local Copy or No to Discard."

Click on the **Yes** button to see the following message:

"Narrative <document number.doc> Saved in Start – Local Save"

The locally saved document can be located by clicking on the **Start** button in the Citrix window, and selecting the **Local Save** folder. The information remains available for 30 calendar days and can be copied and pasted into the appropriate document.

Additional Features in Word

As you use the Word templates in the FRS to create the Home Study and Annual Reauthorization narratives, you will find that there are several features available in Word in the FRS that are not always available when using other word templates in CONNECTIONS.

This includes the following features:

Spell Check — Spell Check identifies spelling errors in your narrative by underlining them in red. This makes it easy for you to find and correct them.

Grammar Check — Grammar Check underlines grammatical errors and provides suggestions if you right-click on the mouse with your cursor on the word.

Auto-Correction — Auto Correction will automatically correct common misspellings. For instance, if you mistakenly type "t-e-h", Auto-Correction would automatically change it to "t-h-e" without you having to take any action.

Online Help in the FRS

The FRS Help system is an enhancement to the CONNECTIONS Online Help System that provides information specific to the functions and windows of the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS).

The FRS Online Help System contains several unique features, including:

- A Table of Contents allowing access to all Help information.
- Index and Search functions provide alternate means of finding information.
- Interactive graphic examples of FRS elements.
  Clicking on certain portions of a graphic within FRS Online Help will open explanations of that element.
- Hyperlinks appear throughout the Help information.
  These links will take you directly to related information such as definitions and procedural guidelines.
- Context Sensitive Help.
- Help on Narratives for the Home Study and Reauthorization narratives in the FRS.

The complete Online Help System is a combination of separate sections. Some of these exist currently in CONNECTIONS, and others are being developed. Once you are in the Help system, the Table of Contents allows you to have access to help information on these other elements of FRS.

The table on below highlights each element of the FRS Help System.

Sub-Sections of the FRS Online Help System (accessed via the Table of Contents)	
Section	**Description**
FRS Overview	This section of Online Help provides a high level summary of the FRS, including a listing of its features and functions. This overview can be accessed directly by clicking the word Help that appears in the upper left corner of the FRS window and then clicking on FRS Help which appears in the small menu.
"How Do I?" Help	This section includes information on how to navigate within the FRS and how to best utilize its functions.
Glossary	This glossary provides definitions of terms commonly used in FAD casework, and definitions of FRS elements and concepts.
Guidelines	This section provides background on the legal, policy, and procedural guidelines followed by FAD workers as they develop and record the information viewed in the FRS.
Help on Help	This section provides instructions on how to use the FRS Online Help system.

Context Sensitive Help

Context sensitive help information is available for all elements of the FRS including tabs, grids, buttons, and individual fields.

To access context sensitive help, click on an element (e.g., field name) to make that element "active," and press the **F1** key on your keyboard. Information about that element of the FRS will be displayed.

The **F1** key will not activate FRS Help when you are viewing the Home Study or Annual Reauthorization narratives. Help for these documents is available through the Help On Narratives button.

Help on Narratives

The **Help on Narratives** button on the FRS provides quick access to the section of the Online Help System that discusses how to use the narratives found in the FRS. When this button is clicked while in a Home Study or Reauthorization narrative, the Help System opens directly to this portion of the Table of Contents. You will have easy access to definitions and information on how to navigate while in a narrative.

The **Help on Narratives** button is "hidden" when a narrative is actually open, because the Word document covers the entire *FRS* window. You need to minimize the narrative you are working on in order to locate the **Help on Narratives** button.

To-Do Lists

CONNECTIONS provides two *To-Do Lists* to organize information and assist in communications regarding homes/stages. These lists are, the *Staff To-Do List* and the *Case To-Do List*. To-Do Lists are useful workload management tools in CONNECTIONS.

Staff To-Do List — Your *Staff To-Do List* is a listing of To-Do's sent to you. These To-Do's may be from the CONNECTIONS system, co-workers or supervisors. You can even send reminder To-Do's to yourself. The *Staff To-Do List* contains To-Do's that are about the homes/stages on the *Assigned Workload*, and To-Do's regarding non-case related items.

Case To-Do List — The *Case To-Do List* includes displays To-Do's related to a specific home/stage. To access this list, you must start by selecting a home/stage.

Types of To-Do's

Three types of To-Do's can be found on either of the To-Do Lists. They are: Alert To-Do's, Reminder To-Do's and Task To-Do's.

Alert Alert To-Do's are created by CONNECTIONS to notify workers that something has happened or needs to happen. For example, you are sent an Alert To-Do when you receive a new assignment. Alert To-Do's are identified by an "A" in the **Type** column of a To-Do List. You can delete Alert To-Do's at any time. Because they are not directly task-related, you cannot navigate directly from Alert To-Do's to task-related windows.

Reminder Reminder To-Do's are created by CONNECTIONS users and are not related to a task from the *Task List*. You might create this kind of To-Do to remind yourself of an upcoming appointment. You can also send Reminder To-Do's to other people. Reminder To-Do's can be deleted at any time. Reminder To-Do's are identified by an "R" in the **Type** column of a To-Do List. Because they are not directly task-related, you cannot navigate directly from Reminder To-Do's to task-related windows.

Task Task To-Do's can be either system- or user-generated to notify workers that there is a task they must complete. Task To-Do's are identified by a "T" in the **Type** column of a To-Do List. System-generated Task To-Do's cannot be deleted; the only way to remove them from your *Staff To-Do List* to complete the Task. Task To-Do's received from another worker can be deleted by entering a Completed Date on the *Task To-Do Detail* window.

Creating a Task To-Do can be useful if you need another worker to complete a task for your case. The person receiving the Task To Do **must** enter a Completed Date on the Task To Do to remove the To-Do from his/her *Staff To-Do List*.

System Alerts

The CONNECTIONS system sends Alert To-Do's to notify you of actions you must perform, as well as events that occur regularly during the certification/recertification or approval/reapproval process. It is recommended that you organize your To-Do Lists. You can keep the list current by completing task To-Do's, deleting outdated To-Do's, and reassigning To-Do's that should be handled by another worker.

Below is a table of Alert and Task To-Do's that are system-generated by CONNECTIONS. This table is *not* a complete listing of system-generated To-Do's; it illustrates how much communication does occur with each casework activity.

To-Do Type	Description
Alert	To the primary worker when a new assignment is received.
Alert	To the primary worker's supervisor(s) when a new assignment is received.
Alert	To the primary worker when secondary workers unassign themselves.
Alert	To secondary workers' supervisor(s) when secondary workers unassign themselves.
Alert	To secondary workers' supervisor(s) for new secondary assignments.
Alert	To secondary workers when another worker unassigns them from a case.
Alert	To secondary worker when a new assignment is received.
Alert	To the primary worker when a secondary worker Saves and Submits the Home Demographics or Case (Stage) Name/CD window for approval.
Alert	To the Unit Approver if a worker Saves and Submits an item to anyone other than the Unit Approver.
Alert	To the primary worker when s/he Saves and Submits a home name or address change for approval.
Alert	To the primary worker when a submitted name and/or address change is approved.
Alert	To the primary worker when Saving and Submitting name or address changes; informs the worker that these changes require the completion of a Home Study update.
Alert	To the primary worker when a FAD Record Summary event is approved; reminds the worker to print a copy of the F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter for the foster parents.

Continued on next page ▶

To-Do Type	Description

(Continued from previous page)

Task	To the supervisor when the FRS is submitted for approval (e.g., initial certification or approval of a home/stage, recertification/reapproval of a home/stage).
Task	To the primary worker when a submitted name and/or address change is rejected.
Task	To the supervisor when the *Case (Stage) Name/CD* window is Saved and Submitted.
Task	To the supervisor when the Home Name, Primary Address or Business Address is changed in the *Home Demographics* window and the window is Saved and Submitted.

Viewing To-Do's on the *Staff To-Do List*

The *Staff To-Do List* contains all of the To-Do's assigned to you, regardless of which stage they relate to.

Step by Step:
Viewing To-Do's on the *Staff To-Do List*

1. Click on the **TO-DO** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Staff To-Do List displays.
2. Click on a To-Do to select it from the list.
3. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The To-Do Detail window displays for the selected To-Do.
4. To close the *To-Do Detail* window, click on the **Cancel** button.
   The Staff To-Do List displays.
5. To close the *Staff To-Do List*, click on the **Close** button.

By default, the To-Do List is sorted by date and includes To-Do's with due dates up to seven (7) days into the future.

New To-Do's appear at the bottom of the list. You can change the way they are sorted (see "Sorting To-Do Lists" in this guide), but To-Do's revert to the default sort each time you open the To-Do List.

Viewing To-Do's on the *Case To-Do List*

The *Case To-Do List* contains all of the To-Do's for a specific case, regardless of assignment.

Step by Step:
Viewing To-Do's on the *Case To-Do List*

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select a foster home/stage.
3. Click on the **Options** menu on the *Assigned Workload* and select **Case To Do's…**
   The Case To-Do List displays with To-Do's for the selected case.
4. Click on a To-Do to select it from the list.
5. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The To-Do Detail window displays for the selected To-Do.
6. To close the *To-Do Detail* window, click on the **Cancel** button.
   The Case To-Do List displays.
7. To close the *Case To-Do List*, click on the **Close** button.
   The Assigned Workload displays.

> Voluntary agency staff cannot view case information in CPS Intake and Investigation Stages.

Navigating from Task To-Do's

From a Task To-Do, you can navigate directly to the window needed to complete the task. For example, if you receive a Task To-Do from your supervisor notifying you to complete the Home Study, you can navigate directly to the Home Study for that home/stage. This feature is available only for Task To-Do's.

Step by Step:
Navigating from Task To-Do's

1. Open the *Staff To-Do List* or *Case To-Do List*, using the instructions in *Module 3: Managing Your Workload.*
2. Click on a Task To-Do to select it from the list.
   *The **Navigate…** button enables.*
3. Click on the **Navigate…** button.
   The task-related window associated with the selected To-Do displays.
4. If you make changes in that window, save your work by clicking on the **Save** button.
   The To-Do List displays.
5. To close the window without saving changes, click on the **Cancel** button.
   The To-Do List displays.

> When supervisors receive Task To-Do's to review work completed by staff, they can use the **Navigate…** button to go directly to the work submitted for approval.

Sorting To-Do Lists

To-Do Lists can be "sorted" to assist you in setting priorities, organizing information, and maintaining the lists. The tables below and on the next page illustrate the sorts available on the *Staff To-Do List* and the *Case To-Do List*.

	Sort Name	Primary Sort	Secondary Sorts
***Staff To-Do List* Sorts**	**To-Do Type**	Sorts To-Do's by type of To-Do.	Items of the same type are sorted by date, then by Stage ID.
	Event Status	Sorts To-Do's by Event status (NEW, PROC, PEND, REJT, COMP).	Items with the same status are sorted by type, then by date.
	Date	Sorts To-Do's in ascending order by date.	Items with the same date are sorted by type, then by stage ID.
	Case Name	Sorts To-Do's alphabetically by Case Name.	Items with same Case Name are sorted by stage ID, then by type, then by date.
	Created By	Sorts To-Do's alphabetically by the To-Do creator's initials.	Items with the same creator are sorted by type, then by date.

	Sort Name	Primary Sort	Secondary Sorts
***Case To-Do List* Sorts**	**To-Do Type**	Sorts To-Do's by type of To-Do.	Items with the same type are sorted by date, then by Stage ID.
	Event Status	Sorts To-Do's by Event status (NEW, PROC, PEND, REJT, COMP).	Items with the same status are sorted by type, then by date.
	Date	Sorts To-Do's by ascending date.	Items with the same date are sorted by type, then by Stage ID.
	Stage ID	Sorts To-Do's by Stage ID.	Items with the same Stage ID are sorted by type, then by date.
	Assigned To	Sorts To-Do's alphabetically by the initials of the worker to whom the To-Do is assigned.	Items with the same assignees are sorted by type, then by date.
	Created By	Sorts To-Do's alphabetically by the To-Do creator's initials.	Items with the same creator are sorted by type, then by date.
	Worker Role	Sorts To-Do's based on the assigned worker's role.	Items with the same worker role are sorted by role type, then by date.

Step by Step:
Sorting To-Do Lists

1. Click on the **Sort** menu from either To-Do List.
2. Click on a sort command to indicate how you want to sort the list.
   The To-Do List displays in the order of the selected sort command.

Searching for To-Do's

When first opened, the To-Do List includes all outstanding To-Do's created before the current date, as well as To-Do's that will be due up to seven days into the future. If you to want to plan ahead and see what will be due beyond that seven-day period, you can extend this date by completing a search from within the To-Do List.

Step by Step:
Searching for To-Do's

1. Click on the **From** field at the top of the To-Do List and enter the date from which you want to *start* your search.
2. Press the **Tab** key to move to the **To** field and enter the date through which you want to *end* your search.
3. Click on the **Search** button.
   To-Do's display which fall within the selected time period.

When you send a Task To-Do to another worker, you give that person access only to the CONNECTIONS window required to complete the task, not the entire home/stage.

Creating or Reassigning Task To-Do's

CONNECTIONS allows you to create a Task To-Do and send it to another worker, or reassign one of your Task To-Do's to another worker. In either case, the other worker can navigate directly from this Task To-Do to windows related to the task, then view or update information on those windows.

Step by Step:
Creating a Task To-Do

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select the stage for which you want to create a To-Do.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables*.
3. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays for the selected stage.
4. Click on the task for which you want to create the To-Do.
   *The **To Do** button enables when you select a Task which can have a Task To-Do created (e.g., Maintain Non-Licensing Information window).*

5 Click on the **To Do…** button.
The To-Do Detail window displays. The short description field on this window is pre-filled with the name of the task you selected from the Task List.

6 From the *To-Do Detail* window, click on the **Staff…** button.
*The Staff Search Criteria window displays. The **Agency** field is pre-filled and the **Active** check box is selected*.

7 Enter search criteria—either the **Person ID** number or the staff member's last name. (Just a portion of the last name is enough, unless you are searching for a common name in a large agency.) If you are searching for a worker outside your agency and you know that person's agency code, enter it in the **Agency** field.
*The **Agency** field defaults to your own agency code*.

8 Click on the **Search** button.
The Staff List displays with the results of your search.

9 Click on the staff person's name from the Staff List.

10 Click on the **OK** button.
The To-Do Detail window displays. The Assigned To field at the top of the window displays the name of the selected staff member.

11 You can add a description of the To-Do or extra notes in the **Descr./Notes** field. You can add a due date by clicking in the **Due** field and entering the due date.

12 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.

To conduct a search for a worker outside your agency when you do not know the Agency Code, complete the following steps:

1. Click on the PERS icon on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar and complete a Person Search (see the "Person Search" section in Module 4 of this guide).
When you click on a staff member's name in the Person Search List, CONNECTIONS displays the following message: "This person is an Employee. For more information, use Staff Search.

2. On the results list of the completed search, note the worker's Person ID (write it down).

3. Close the *Person Search* window by clicking on the **Cancel** button.
The Staff Search Criteria window displays.

4. Enter the worker's Person ID number in the **Person ID** field.
This is the only field you need to complete.

Step by Step: Reassigning a Task To-Do

1 Click on the **TO-DO** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
The Staff To-Do List displays.

2 Click on a To-Do from the list to select it.

3 Click on the **Detail…** button.
The To-Do Detail window displays for the selected To-Do.

4 Follow **steps 6-12** above to assign the To-Do to another staff person.
Remember, once it is reassigned, the To-Do no longer displays on your Staff To-Do List.

Creating a Reminder To-Do

There are two types of Reminder To-Do's: Stage Related Reminders and "Generic" Reminder To-Do's.

Stage Related Reminder To-Do's — These To-Do's are directly associated with your assigned homes/stages. Once created, they will appear on both your *Staff To-Do List* and on the *Case To-Do List* for that home/stage. You might create a stage-related Reminder To-Do to alert you of upcoming home visits or court dates.

"Generic" Reminder To-Do's — These To-Do's are not associated with a stage and therefore can only be viewed on the *Staff To-Do List*. You may create a generic reminder to remember meetings such as Foster Parent Orientations, or MAPP Programs.

The directions below instruct you on how to create generic, and stage related reminder To-Do's, respectively.

Step by Step:
Creating a (Generic) Reminder To-Do

1. Click on the **TO-DO** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Staff To-Do List displays.
2. Click on the **New** button.
   The To-Do Detail window displays. The short description field on this window is empty, since you have not associated this To-Do with a task. To send the reminder to another worker, refer to **Step II** *under "Creating a Task To-Do."*
3. Enter information in the **Short Description** field and the **Description/Notes** field, if desired.
4. If you want to send the Reminder To-Do to another worker, follow **steps 6-12** of "Creating a Task To-Do" on page 30.
5. If the Reminder is for you, click on the **Save** button.
   The new To-Do is saved and displays on the Staff To-Do List.
6. Click on the **Close** button to close the *Staff To-Do List*.
   The CONNECTIONS Toolbar displays.

Step by Step:
Creating a Stage-Related Reminder To-Do

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Click on the appropriate foster or adoptive home/stage.
   The ***Tasks…*** *button enables.*
3. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays for the selected stage.
4. Click on the **To-Do…** button.
   The To-Do Detail window displays with the name of the selected foster home/stage.

5 Change the date in the **Due** field by entering it in the field.

6 Enter a subject for the To-Do in the **Short Desc.** field.

7 Enter information in the **Description/Notes** field, if appropriate.

8 If you want to send the Reminder to another worker, follow **steps 6-12** of “Creating a Task To-Do” on page 30.

9 If the Reminder is for you, click on the **Save** button.
The new To-Do is saved and the Task List displays.

10 Click on the **Close** button to exit the *Task List*.
The Assigned Workload displays.

11 If you sent the Reminder to yourself, click on the **TO-DO** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar to view the new Reminder To-Do.

Deleting Alert and Reminder To-Do’s

It is strongly recommended that you delete Alert and Reminder To-Do’s that you no longer need. Otherwise, your *Staff To-Do List* will become so long that you may have difficulty finding the To-Do’s you need.

You can delete only Alerts and Reminders. Task To-Do’s received from another worker can be removed by entering a Completed Date on the *Task To-Do Detail* window. You cannot delete system-generated Task To-Do’s. Once completed, these To-Do’s are removed from the list automatically.

Step by Step:
Deleting Alert and Reminder To-Do’s

1 Click on the **TO-DO** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
The Staff To-Do List displays.

2 Click on the Alert or Reminder To-Do(s) you want to delete.

3 Click on the **File** menu and select **Delete**.
The selected To-Do is removed from the list.
You cannot delete system-generated Task To-Do’s.

4 To close the Staff To-Do List, click on the **Close** button.

Deleting Alert and Reminder To-Do’s facilitates your ability to find To-Do’s on your *Staff To Do List*

Completing a system-generated Task To-Do is the only way to remove it from your *Staff To-Do List.*

Using the *Event List*

Event Lists in CONNECTIONS display tasks and case/stage-related activities that have been completed or are in progress. CONNECTIONS automatically updates *Event List*s each time casework activities are performed (e.g., when you receive a new assignment, or when a supervisor approves or rejects a submission). The *Event List* in CONNECTIONS can be accessed via the **Options** menu from the *Assigned Workload*, or the *Task List*.

Event Lists can be accessed via homes/stages that are currently open and from homes/stages that are closed. You may need to open the *Event List* for a variety of reasons, some of which are covered in this guide.

When you return to the *Event List* after examining other windows, the *Event List* displays the previous scroll position, with the previously selected Event still highlighted.

Some of these reasons are:

- To view the status of supervisory approval (see Module 9: Checking the Status of Approvals Submitted for FAD Homes)
- To access Historical F/A Certificates and Approval Letters (see Module 10: F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters)

Events also can be viewed as a printed report. The **Event History Report** contains events for a stage or a case (*see Module 11: FAD Reports*).

In the next few pages, you will find instructions on how to access the *Event List* for open and closed homes, how to navigate from the *Event List*, and how to search for events that match specific criteria.

Opening the *Event List* for an Open Home

Step by Step:
Opening the *Event List* for an Open Home

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select a stage.
3. Click on the **Options** menu and select the ***Event List…*** command
   The Event List displays for the selected stage.

Opening the *Event List* for a Closed Home

Step by Step:
Opening the *Event List* for a Closed Home

1. Click on the **CASE** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Case Search Criteria window displays.
2. Enter the Case ID, Stage ID or Case Name in the respective fields.
3. Click on the **Search** button.
   The Case List displays the case that matches the search criteria.
4. Click on the case to select it from the *Case List*.
5. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Event List…** command.
   The Event List displays for the selected case.

Navigating from the *Event List*

For task-related events, you can navigate to detail windows directly from the *Event List*.

Step by Step:
Navigating from the *Event List*

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select a stage.
3. Click on the **Options** menu and select the ***Event List*…** command
   The Event List displays for the selected stage.
4. Click on an event to select it from the *Event List*.
   If there are details to view, the **Detail…** *button enables.*
5. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The task-related window associated with the selected event displays. For example, if you select an event related to an approved Home Study, clicking on the ***Detail…*** *button opens the formalized Home Study.*
6. To close the window, click on the **Cancel** button.
   The Event List displays.

Searching for Events

Step by Step:
Searching for Events

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Click on a stage to select it.
3. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Event Search…**
   The Event Search Criteria window displays.
4. Enter search criteria in this window. To search by date, enter a date range. To search by event type, select from the list box by double-clicking a type. (You can select more than one type.)
5. Click on the **Search** button.
   The Event List displays with events matching the search criteria.
6. Click on the **Close** button to close the *Event List*.
   The Event Search Criteria window displays.
7. Click on the **Close** button to close the *Event Search Criteria* window.
   The Assigned Workload displays.

Module 4:
Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS

In the previous module you learned how to use CONNECTIONS to manage your *Assigned Workload*, view information about casework tasks, and record progress notes. In this module, you'll learn how to use CONNECTIONS to retrieve information recorded into the system by CONNECTIONS users.

State, local district, and voluntary agency staff record the results of their work with children and families into CONNECTIONS. This includes data regarding residents of FAD facilities; individuals named in Child Protective Service (CPS) reports and investigations; state level, local district and voluntary staff; and community resources. CONNECTIONS can be used to locate information related to your assignments — including the insights of staff who worked with a particular individual or family before you.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- determine if a person is known to CONNECTIONS and access detailed information about a person;
- locate information about a case;
- obtain information about providers of child welfare services in New York State; and
- locate information about offices, units and other CONNECTIONS users.

Person Search:
Locating Person Information in CONNECTIONS

The CONNECTIONS database includes information about individuals associated with foster or adoptive homes; child protective cases; Family Services Intakes and Family Services Stages, and state, local district, and voluntary agencies. As a FAD caseworker, you may need to locate information regarding some of these individuals. Person Search is a tool that locates information about people in CONNECTIONS.

Person Searches are used:

- to determine if a person is known to CONNECTIONS; and
- to find specific information on a person in CONNECTIONS.

In the course of your work, you may need to add a family member to the *Person List* for a home/stage. Before doing so, you need to conduct a Person Search to determine whether that individual is already known to the CONNECTIONS database. This precaution prevents the creation of duplicate records for the same person in CONNECTIONS.

Routes to the *Person Search* Window

All Person Searches are conducted from the *Person Search* window. The *Person Search* window can be accessed via two routes, and your ability to use each route is affected by job function and security level. The two routes to accessing the *Person Search* window are:

- from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, and
- from the **Maintain Person** task within a stage.

The ability to access the *Person Search* window via the CONNECTIONS Toolbar is referred to as a "stand alone" search. This means that it is purely a search function, and *cannot be used as a method for finding and adding/relating a person to a home/stage*. FAD caseworkers will generally conduct Person Searches via the **Maintain Person** task *because this is the only way to add or relate a person to a home/stage*.

Accessing the *Person Search* Window

The directions on how to begin a "Stand Alone" Person Search and a Person Search from within a home/stage are detailed below.

Step by Step:
Opening the *Person Search* Window from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar

1 Click on the **PERS** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
The Person Search window displays.

Step by Step:
Opening the *Person Search* Window from a Home/Stage

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select a stage.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
3. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays for the selected stage.
4. Click on the **Maintain Person** task.
5. Click on either the **New** or **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
6. Click on the **New…** button.
   The Person Search window displays.

Person Search Methods

The *Person Search* window includes a **Search Type** field that provides a means for you to select one of three methods for conducting a person search. The three methods are: Phonetic Name Search, Exact Search, and Phonetic Address Search. Each of three methods is discussed in the following sections.

Required fields on the *Person Search* window display in yellow when the search type is selected. Fields that are not available for a given search type disable when that search type is selected.

If you want to search again using other criteria, click on the **Clear** button to clear the fields prior to conducting the new search.

Phonetic Name Search

Person Search defaults to the **Phonetic Name** search type. Phonetic Name search returns matches that sound similar to the search criteria, which usually produces the largest pool of results. You can use Phonetic Name search even if the name you are searching for is not spelled correctly. The **Last** name field is required to enable a Phonetic Name search. It is recommended that a first *and* last name be used to conduct a Phonetic Name Search.

Exact Search

An Exact search looks for names that match the search criteria *character for character and space for space*. You can use Exact search when you know the exact spelling of the name of the person for whom you are searching. This is also useful if you want to narrow the search results; this assumes the name was recorded accurately the first time.

Required fields for an Exact Search:	**Last** Name	
	Street 1	
	Social Security Number (**SSN**)	
	Client Identifier Number (**CIN**)	⇦ "Identifiers"
	Person **ID**	

Only one of these five fields needs to have data entered to execute the search. Once information is entered into the first Identifier field (**SSN**, **CIN** or **ID**) the remaining Identifier fields disable. Likewise, once a non-Identifier criterion is entered, the other Identifiers fields disable.

You can also filter **Exact** search results by using other search criteria; this helps you retrieve the best possible results for your search. When you use filters, the criteria you enter (other than one of the required criteria) acts as a filter to the selection criteria's original pool.

If you enter address criteria, validating the address criteria before executing the search increases the likelihood of receiving address matches, since most addresses in the system are validated when they are recorded.

Entering Partial Name in the Search Criteria does not work when conducting an Exact Search. Search Results display only exact matches to the Search Criteria.

For example, if you enter "John" when attempting to search for "Johnston," the search results will only display results where the last name is "John."

Phonetic Address Search

A **Phonetic Address Search** returns results that *sound like* the information entered in the Address section of the *Person Search* window. A Phonetic Address Search creates a large pool of potential matches by including search results that are based on partial address information. Results can be scored and/or filtered, depending on how much information is entered in the **Street 1** field, and whether information is added into additional address fields.

To achieve a "scored" Phonetic Address search result, you must enter a *minimal* amount of information into the **Street 1** field. Enter no more than the street name in the **Street 1** field. By doing this, you receive all results in the database that include streets of the same or similar sounding names — including results with the same/similar street name, but different street numbers and cities. This is the broadest Phonetic Address Search that can be conducted.

It is advisable to conduct a Phonetic Address search using only the street name (without a house number or suffix) in the **Street 1** field.

This reduces the likelihood of filtering out a valid match.

Entering more than just a street name in the **Street 1** field (e.g. a street number and the street name), creates a filtered search returning a smaller and more select pool of results. The table below provides examples of possible Phonetic Address Search results.

A Phonetic Address Search using the following criteria:		Produces the following results:
Street 1	**City**	
Willow	Apple City	Willow, Apple City Willow, Beachville Willow, Chippertown 5 Willow, Apple City 5 willow, Beachville 63 Willow, Beachville The results in this example would continue, including all matches that are phonetically similar to the **Street 1** search criteria.
5 Willow	Apple City	5 Willow, Apple City 5 Willow, Beachville 5 Willson, Beachville 5 Willout, Chippertown The results in this example would all have “5” in the **Street 1** field. House numbers greatly influences the search results.

Instructions on how to conduct a Phonetic Address Search are located on page 4-12.

Choosing a Search Method

When conducting a search, you can conduct a Phonetic Name search, Phonetic Address Search, or an Exact search. The system defaults to a Phonetic Name search, which returns records with names that *sound similar* to the search criteria. For example, if you conduct a Phonetic Name search for “Stewart,” CONNECTIONS may also return “Stuart” in the results. Phonetic Name search also returns common equivalencies for names (e.g., searching for “James” also returns matches for “Jim” and “Jimmy”).

You can also use the Phonetic Name search type to search for all forms of hyphenated last names in a single search. Results for all potential hyphenated name combinations are important, since the person you are searching for may have had only one of the two names originally recorded in the system, or the hyphenated last name may originally have been recorded in the opposite order from the way the current search is entered.

This feature applies to the **Last** name field only, not for First or Middle names. In order to use this feature effectively, you need to add a hyphen between the two names listed in the last

name search field. Without the hyphen, the system will only search on the two last names as a multiple last name in the order in which they appear in the search field.

A Phonetic Name search on these criteria:		Produces a single candidate pool consisting of the following names:
First Name	**Last Name**	
Mary	Smith-Jones	Mary Smith-Jones Mary Jones-Smith Mary Smith Mary Jones
Mary	Smith Jones (no hyphen)	Mary Smith Jones

Scoring and Filtering of Search Results

Results returned on the *Person Search* window are either *Scored* or *Filtered*.

Scoring — Scoring *ranks* the search results. Matches most similar to the search criteria display at the top of the list, followed by less similar matches.

Filtering—Filtering eliminates candidates from the pool of results that do not exactly match search criteria.

In a Phonetic Name search, names in the candidate pool are compared to the specific search information entered. Names phonetically further from the search criteria score lower, but *are* included in the results list. Entering additional search criteria during a Phonetic Name or Phonetic Address search affects scoring, but does not cause potential results to be eliminated (as in an Exact Search).

Since Phonetic Searches have the potential to generate long lists of results, you may need to use the scroll bar and/or “mega scroll” buttons to view all results in the list.

If you perform an Exact search, all names return which exactly match the search criteria. An Exact search returns matches that are *identical* to the search criteria. The ability to filter Exact search results by using other search criteria and the ability to validate the search address information using address validation allows users to retrieve the best possible results.

CONNECTIONS calculates the age from DOB information. If you do not know the exact date of birth, enter an approximate age.

CONNECTIONS identifies the type of date of birth with a code in the **T** column (DOB Type) on the *Person List*, Person Search Output and Person Search List.

- **E** (estimated) indicates a DOB converted from Legacy that has not been modified. These types are not considered when scoring candidates in a Person Search.
- **A** (approximate) indicates an approximate DOB.
- A blank column indicates an exact DOB.

The table below illustrates the differences between the results achieved by the search types offered on the *Person Search* window.

Search Results: Scoring vs. Filtering		
Result	**Description**	**Search Type (s)**
Scoring	Phonetic searches are "scored" by any and all additional search criteria entered in the *Person Search* window. Scoring ranks candidates in the pool of results, depending on how closely they match the search criteria.	Phonetic Name Search Phonetic Address Search
Filtering	Exact Searches are "filtered" by any and all additional search criterion entered. Filtering eliminates candidates from the pool of results.	Exact Search

Use the vertical scroll bar and "mega-scroll" buttons to view all of the results.

All Person Searches display a message on the Person Search List title bar. These messages provide a short description of the results. The message which displays depends on the type of search you conduct.

A Phonetic Search displays the following messages:

- **Phonetic Name Results Returned**: All records in the database that *sound like* the search criteria are returned in the Person Search List.
- **No Results Returned**: No records in the database match the search criteria.

A Phonetic Address Search displays the following messages:

- **Phonetic Address Results Returned**: All records in the database that sound like the search criteria are returned in the Person Search List.
- **No Results Returned**: No records in the database match the search criteria.

An Exact Search displays the following messages:

- **Exact Results Returned**: All records in the database that *exactly* match the search criteria are returned in the Person Search List.
- **No Results Returned**: No records in the database match the search criteria.

Deciding which search to conduct depends on the available search criteria. Here are some general rules of thumb to start your search:

- When you are not sure of the proper spelling of the name of the person for whom you are searching, begin with a Phonetic Name search.
- If you are certain of the exact spelling of the name you are searching for, conduct an Exact search. Be aware that if the person's name was previously entered incorrectly, an Exact search will not return the misspelled name. Exact searches do not always return the best results.
- When conducting a Phonetic Name search on a common name, it's a good idea to enter as much information as possible about the person you are searching for, in order to better score the search criteria.
- Selecting "M" (male) or "F" (female) in the **Sex** field ranks your search results, with records matching the selected criterion in the **Sex** field returning higher in the Person Search List, followed by records with other values in the **Sex** field.
- Phonetic Name search returns "flip-flops" (also know as Reverse Name Matches)—that is, results that reverse the first and last names (e.g., searching on "John Williams" returns matches such as "William Johnson"). These results appear at the bottom of the list in a Phonetic Name search. Flip-flop matches do not return in an Exact search.
- Entering an age and/or date of birth (DOB) also affects your search results. Results are listed by score. The results at the top of the Person Search List are the closest match to the name and age/DOB you entered. CONNECTIONS considers adults' ages a bit differently than children's ages:
    - If you enter an age/DOB representing an age of *18 or older*, the system returns matches within a ten-year range (+/- 5 years of the age/DOB entered) toward the top of the Person Search List.
    - If you enter an age/DOB representing an age *under 18*, the system returns matches within a six-year range (+/- 3 years of the age/DOB entered) toward the top of the Person Search List.

Conducting Person Searches

During the life cycle of a foster or adoptive home, you may need to add people to the *Person List* for that home. Every individual residing in the foster or adoptive home must be added to the *Person List*, and all known information about that person must be documented in CONNECTIONS.

Below are situations that require you to add individuals to the *Person List* for the home/stage:

- Following an adoption finalization, the adopted child must be added to the *Person List* and identified as a "son" or "daughter;"
- When a single foster parent marries, or a significant other moves into the household, the new individual must be added to the *Person List*;
- When a foster child has his/her 18th birthday, the child must be added to the *Person List* and identified as a "Foster Child;"
- When any individual (e.g., aunt, uncle, grandparent, niece, nephew) age 18 or older moves into the home on a temporary or permanent basis, that individual must be added to the *Person List*.

Person Search is also helpful for finding staff persons when you do not know their agency code. By conducting a Person Search in this situation, you can obtain the Person ID for a staff person, and then use the Person ID to conduct a Staff Search. You cannot obtain detailed information about a staff person in Person Search; use the staff person's Person ID to conduct a Staff Search in order to retrieve detailed information.

Step by Step: Conducting a Person Search from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar

1. Click on the **PERS** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Person Search window displays with Phonetic Name as the default search.
2. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Search Type** field and select the appropriate type.
   The Phonetic Name Search Type returns the largest number of search results.
3. Enter the person's first and last name in the name fields.
4. Enter the date of birth or approximate age, if known, in the **DOB** or **Age** fields.
5. Click on the **Search** button.
   CONNECTIONS performs a search based on your criteria and returns the results of your search in a list at the bottom of the Person Search window. Use the scroll bar to scroll down the list.
6. Review the results and determine if any match is the person you are searching for. You may need to revise the search, depending upon your results.

If you know the individual's Person ID number, just use that. This is the most efficient way to find people in CONNECTIONS. You must conduct an Exact search to search by any field in the Identifiers section.

7 If you find the person, see the tip box at right for information on how to review information about the person.
If your search resulted in no matches, the following message displays on the Person Search List title bar: "Person Search List - No Results Returned." You can try the search again with broader or different search parameters.

If your search returns one or more prospective matches, you need to determine which, if any, of the matches is the person for whom you are searching. Here are some tips for doing this:

- Review the information on the Person Search List. Use the horizontal scroll bar to view information to the right of the screen. Given clear differences in Dates of Birth, Sex, Ethnicity, Address information or Social Security number, a potential match may be ruled out right away.
- Review information on the individual's family. To do this, highlight a name on the list, click on the **Options** menu and select **Case List…**. Highlight a case and click on the **Comp** button. *The Case Composition window displays a list of the people associated with that case.*

Revising Search Criteria

1 Add any additional information you did not include in the original search by filling in fields like **Age**, Date of Birth (**DOB**), **Sex**, etc.

2 Click on the **Search** button to perform the new search.
CONNECTIONS performs a new search based on your revised criteria and returns the results of your search in a list at the bottom of the Person Search window.

3 Review the search results to determine if any match is the person you are searching for.
You may need to revise the search, depending upon your results.

Person Searches can also be conducted from within a stage/FAD home. The *Person Search* window is the same, but is *not* accessed from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar. To learn how to access the *Person Search* window from within a stage/FAD home, turn to page 4-3.

Detailed person information can also be accessed from the *Case Summary* window. Taking this route enables CONNECTIONS to verify that you have proper security rights to access detailed information on this case. If you do not have rights to view this information, buttons and options are disabled.

From the *Person Search* window (containing the results of your search), you can view detailed information about the person by following the steps below:

Step by Step:
Viewing Detailed Information About a Person

1. On the *Person Search* window, select a person's name from the Person Search List.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Case List…**
   The Case List displays a list of cases with which the individual is associated.
3. Click on a case to select it from the list.
4. Click on the **Summary** button.
   The Case Summary window displays with a list of all stages in the case.
   *The **Summary** button may not be enabled if you do not have the appropriate security to view the information (e.g., Voluntary Agencies are not allowed access to CPS INV stage information.)*
5. Click on a stage to select it from the *Case Summary* window.
6. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Person List…** command.
   The Person List displays.
7. Click on a person's name to select it from the list.
8. Click on the **Options** menu and select an enabled command.
9. When you are done reviewing information about the person, close each window by clicking on either the **Close** or **Cancel** button.

The *Case Summary* window provides a means you to view summary information for a specific case. The Case Name displays in the title bar to identify the FAD home for which the case summary information applies. On this window you will find: Vendor and Case ID information, current and historical primary/secondary assignment information, Community District (CD NYC only) information. Information displayed on this window cannot be modified from within the window itself.

Conducting a Phonetic Address Search

The **Street 1** field is required for a Phonetic Address Search. It remains highlighted in yellow until an entry is made.

Step by Step:
Conducting a Phonetic Address Search

1. Click on the **PERS** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Person Search window displays.
2. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Search Type** field on the *Person Search* window and select **Phonetic Address** from the resulting list.
3. Enter the street name in the **Street 1** field.
4. Enter other known information in the remaining address fields (e.g., **City**, **County**).
5. Click on the **Search** button.
   Search results display on the Person Search List at the bottom of the person Search window.

The *Person Search List* title bar displays a message indicating the results returned (see table below). The **Match** column on the *Person Search List* displays "ADDR," to indicate that a Phonetic Address Search was conducted.

Review the entire list of search results for possible matches. Street addresses from the same city will not score the same, and may display lower in the list of results. Use the scroll bar to proceed through the list.

The page up/page down buttons ( )indicate that there are more results on the list. Click on the page up/page down button, as applicable, to view the remaining search results.

If No Records Match	If Records Do Match
"No Results Returned"	*"Phonetic Address Results Returned"*

Case Search

Occasionally in Foster and Adoptive Home Development, it may be necessary to view information about a home that has been closed (*see also Module 15 Maintaining Closed FAD Homes/Stages*). Performing a Case Search enables you to retrieve and view historical information about a closed case.

> Voluntary Agencies do not have access to Case Search functionality.

A Case Search is a direct route to case information when you know the Case ID number or the Case Name. When searching by Case Name, the search criteria must match the CONNECTIONS Case Name *exactly* in order for the search to return a match. Other names in the Case Composition for that case will not return. (For example, if a home is named after Angela Jarret, her husband Marty will be included in the Case Composition, but will not return a match if the Case Search uses Marty's name as the search criteria.)

The *Case List* provides access to the *Case Composition* window, the *Case Summary* window and the *Event List* for the case. If the case you are viewing is outside your district (and you have no implied role) you are only able to view the *Case Composition* window and the *Case Summary* window. The primary worker's name is listed in the **Primary** column of the *Case List*.

Conducting Case Searches

A Case Search offers a direct route to case information when you know the Case ID number or Case Name. All Case Searches are conducted from the *Case Search Criteria* window, which is opened via the **CASE** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.

Since there is only one stage of service for foster and adoptive home development (FAD) in CONNECTIONS, the F/A Home Search is the preferred method for obtaining information about a foster home. This method of searching is described in *Module 1: Responding to an Inquiry* of this guide.

Conducting a Case Search by Case ID Number

The Case ID number is a unique, system-generated, 8-digit identification number. Using the Case ID in the search criteria is the most direct method for conducting a Case Search, since only one case will display in the search results on the *Case List*.

Step by Step:
Conducting a Case Search by Case ID Number

1. Click on the **CASE** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Case Search Criteria window displays.
2. Enter the eight (8)-digit Case ID number in the **Case ID** field.
3. Click on the **Search** button.
   The Case List displays with the only case that matches the search criteria.
4. Select the case from the *Case List* window.
   *Click on the **Comp** and/or **Summary** buttons to access specific case information, if desired.*

Step by Step:
Viewing Case Summary Information

1. Select a case from the *Case List*.
2. Click on the **Summary** button.
   *The Case Summary window displays with a list of stages in the selected case. You can access both person- and case-specific information from here by selecting a stage and clicking the **Options** menu, then navigating from these related windows.*
3. To return to the *Case List*, click on the **Close** button.

Step by Step:
Viewing Case Composition Information

1. Select a case from the *Case List*.
2. Click on the **Comp** button.
   The Case Composition window displays, containing a list of all individuals in the case. You can compare this family composition with the list of individuals in a stage you're working on to make sure the information is consistent.
3. Click on the **Close** button to exit the *Case Composition* window.
   The Case List displays.

Resource Searches

The Resource Directory is considered the “yellow pages” of CONNECTIONS. It contains information about providers of child welfare-related services throughout New York State.

A **Resource** is an entity or individual that provides services to children and families. When a Resource is created in CONNECTIONS, the system automatically assigns it a unique Resource ID number.

Each resource has a designated **Resource Type**. Six Resource Types exist in the CONNECTIONS Resource Directory:

- Agency
- Facility
- Hotline/Helpline
- Law Enforcement
- Provider
- School

You will generally be searching for a Facility, Agency or Provider.

When searching for a resource, selecting the appropriate Resource Type enables CONNECTIONS to return accurate results. For example, if you search for “Baker Hall” (which has a Resource Type of “Agency”), but select the Resource Type of “Law Enforcement,” CONNECTIONS returns no results.

A **Facility** is any foster care home, adoptive home, or congregate care facility such as an institution, runaway shelter, or intermediate care facility. Foster and adoptive homes can be certified or approved by local districts and voluntary agencies. Congregate care facilities are licensed by state agencies such as NYS/OCFS, NYC/OMRDD and NYS/OMH.

Providers are resources (non-foster/adoptive homes) that are paid for services. Local districts are responsible for recording and maintaining providers in the CONNECTIONS Resource Directory. Examples of such organizations and individuals that provide services for the local district are:

- Day Care
- Housing vendors (preventive)
- Adoption vendors

Providers in CONNECTIONS can only be maintained in CONNECTIONS. Only the district displayed as the maintainer for that provider can maintain it.

An **Agency** is a legally incorporated entity that has the authority to provide child welfare and other related services. A local district (LDSS) or a voluntary agency are examples of an agency.

Conducting Resource Searches

In the course of your casework, you may need to locate information on agencies, facilities or providers. The *Resource Search* window provides a means for you to conduct three different types of searches; Phonetic Name, Phonetic Address, and Exact/Directory.

The table below describes the different search types and the results they generate.

Search Type	Description
Phonetic Name (default)	This search type returns results that *sound* like the information entered in the **Resource Name** field.
Phonetic Address	This search type returns results that sound like the information entered in the Address section (the **Street 1** field is required to enable a Phonetic Address search). See the tip box and table on page 4-4 for more information about Phonetic Address search.
Exact/Directory	This search type returns results that exactly match the search criteria. You must enter at least two characters of a last name, when using this exact search.

CONNECTIONS returns all results that match the search type and search criteria, regardless of which search type is selected. Also, if you are looking for a resource that matches certain service and/or location characteristics, you can conduct a Resource Search using the resource's characteristics in the search criteria.

Step by Step: Conducting a Phonetic Name Resource Search

1 Click on the **RSRC** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
The Resource Search Criteria window displays.

2 If searching for a particular type of resource, click on the drop-down arrow for the **Resource Type** field and select from the resulting list.

3 If searching by the name of a resource, enter Resource Name in the **Resource Name** field. If you are not sure of the spelling, enter the name based on how it sounds (phonetic name).
*The **Search…** button enables. You don't need to enter any other search criteria, but you can do so if you want to narrow the search.*

4 If you know the resource's **Facility Type**, click on the drop-down arrow for that field and select from the resulting list.

5 Click on the **Search…** button.
The Resource List window displays, containing the results of your search. Use the scroll bars to view information that doesn't fit on the screen.
If no records match the search criteria, the following message displays:
"No matches were found for these search parameters."

From the *Resource Detail* window of an Agency listing, you can generate a report of all facilities in the agency. Here's how:

1. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Resource Relationships**.
2. Click on the **Reports** menu and select **Facilities by Agency/District**.

You will need to access the report from the **RPRTS** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.

Step by Step:
Viewing Detailed Information About a Resource

1 From the *Resource List* window, click on a resource to select it from the list.

2 Click on the **Detail…** button.
*The Resource Detail window displays. You can review a variety of information about the resource by clicking the **Address…**, **Phone…**, **Facility…**, **Svc Area…** and **Comments…** buttons on this window.*
If no records match the search criteria, the following message displays:

"No matches were found for these search parameters."

3 To close the *Resource Detail* window, click on the **Cancel** button.
The Resource List displays.

4 To close the *Resource List*, click on the **Close** button.

From the *Resource Detail* window of an Agency listing, you can launch a report of all facilities in the agency. Here's how:

1. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Resource Relationships**.
2. Click on the **Reports** menu and select **Facilities by Agency/District**.

You will need to access the report from the **RPRTS** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.

Step by Step:
Conducting a Phonetic Address Resource Search

1 Click on the **RSRC** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
The Resource Search Criteria window displays.

2 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Search Type** field, and select **Phonetic *Address*** *from the resulting list*.
*The **Street 1** field highlights.*

3 Enter the street name in the **Street 1** field.

4 Enter other known information in the remaining address fields (e.g., **City**, **County**).

5 Click on the **Search** button.
Search results display on the Resource List.
If no records match the search criteria, the following message displays:

"No matches were found for these search parameters."

Staff Search

You can use CONNECTIONS to locate contact information about staff who are also CONNECTIONS users. You can do a stand-alone Staff Search from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar or search from specific task windows when searching is part of the task, like sending a To-Do or reassigning a case to another worker.

Completing a Staff Search in CONNECTIONS is similar to looking for someone in a telephone directory. Names are listed alphabetically and the search information you enter brings you to a particular point on that alphabetical list. For this reason, if you are unsure of the exact spelling of the staff member's name, it is best to search on only the portion of the last name about which you are sure.

To locate basic information about a staff member, conduct your search from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar. If you are conducting a Staff Search in order to send a To-Do, conduct the search from within the *To-Do Detail* window.

Staff Search from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar

Step by Step:
Conducting a Staff Search from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar

1. Click on the **STAFF** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   *The Staff Search Criteria window displays. The **Agency** field is pre-filled and the **Active** check box is selected.*
2. Enter search criteria: either the Person ID number or the person's last name. (Just a portion of the last name is enough, unless you are searching for a common name in a large agency.)
3. If you are searching for a worker outside your agency and you know that person's agency code, type it in the **Agency** field and skip to **#8** (the Agency field defaults to your own agency code).
4. If you don't know a worker's agency code, click on the **PERS** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar and complete a Person Search (see the Person Search section of Module 4 of this guide).
5. When you have completed the Person Search, write down the individual's Person ID number from the *Person Search List*.
6. Click on the **Cancel** button to close the *Person Search* window.
   The Staff Search Criteria window displays.
7. Type the worker's Person ID number in the **Person ID** field.

If you are unsure how to spell the staff member's name, enter only the portion of the name that you know.

When you click on a staff member's name in the Person Search List, the following message displays:

"This person is an Employee. For more information use Staff Search."

This message helps you identify employees in the listing.

8 Click on the **Search** button on the *Staff Search Criteria* window.
The Staff List displays with the results of your search.

9 Click on a name to select it from the *Staff List*.

10 Click on the **Detail…** button.
The Staff Detail window displays.

11 To close the *Staff Detail* window, click on the **Cancel** button.
The Staff List displays.

12 To close the *Staff List*, click on the **Close** button.
The Staff Search Criteria window displays.

13 To close the *Staff Search Criteria* window, click on the **Close** button.

Module 5:
Getting Help When You Need It

When you're using CONNECTIONS, you may have questions that are not answered in this guide. There is a wealth of additional information available to you that will help you answer these questions.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- contact the Help Desk to get basic trouble-shooting questions answered;
- access Online Help for assistance in accomplishing CONNECTIONS tasks; and
- access Job Aids from the OCFS Intranet and Exchange public folders.

The Enterprise Help Desk

The New York State Office for Technology (NYS OFT) Enterprise Help Desk staff are available to answer basic questions related to your equipment, or to solve problems you're having with the CONNECTIONS application. If they cannot solve your problem, they will record your information and forward it to others who can.

Your agency may have procedures in place for contacting the Help Desk. Check with your supervisor before you call.

The Help Desk is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The telephone number is:

1-800-NYS-1323
(1-800-697-1323)

If the Help Desk is not able to resolve the issue while speaking with you on the telephone, you will be given a ticket number to use for tracking your issue and its resolution. Keep a record of this number; you will need it for any follow-up conversations with the Help Desk.

Online Help

The development of comprehensive Online Help is a continuing goal of the Office of Children and Family Services. Online Help provides comprehensive information about the area of CONNECTIONS being used, at the time you access help. This includes definitions, information on how to navigate within windows, and how to best utilize functions in CONNECTIONS.

Online Help exists in three areas of CONNECTIONS:

- **CONNECTIONS Online Help**
  (located on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar);
- **Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) Online Help**
  (located on the FRS window); and
- **Local Data Maintenance (LDM) Window Online Help**
  (located on the LDM window).

Additionally, **context sensitive help** is available while working in the *FRS* and *LDM* windows.

Accessing Online Help

The directions for accessing Online Help from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar begin below. Additional information is provided in the following locations:

LDM Help—For information on accessing Online Help for the Local Data Maintenance, see *Module 16: Maintaining Closed FAD Homes/Stages*.

FRS Help—For information on accessing Online Help for the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS), see *Module 3: Managing Your Workload*.

Step by Step:
Accessing Online Help

1 Click on the **Help** menu on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
Choose from the following selections:

Contents: *A table of contents for the help facility with links to major sections.*

How Do I?: *Step-by-instructions to help you complete tasks using CONNECTIONS.*

Window Descriptions: *Descriptions of windows in CONNECTIONS, along with information on various fields.*

DSS Policy: *Online OCFS policy handbooks, under revision.*

Help On This Window: *Window description help for the window you are on.*

Help for Help: *Instructions on how to use the help functionality.*

About CONNECTIONS: *Information about the current CONNECTIONS version and build loaded on the hard drive of the computer.*

You can also access a list of Hot Keys (keyboard shortcuts to specific tasks) from the Help Contents page.

2 Click on a command from the **Help** menu.
*The window related to your selection displays. In some cases, you will need to make another selection in that window to obtain instructions. At the top of each window, you'll see additional buttons and menus. Use the **Search** button to search for specific information in the Help function and use the **Back** button to return to windows you've just visited in Help. The **Glossary** button opens a list of important CONNECTIONS terms and the **Print** button allows you to print Help information.*

3 When you're done reviewing information in Help, close each Help window by clicking on the staple in the top left corner of the window and selecting **Close** from the resulting menu.
The system returns to the window your were using when you accessed help.

To keep a Help topic open while you work in CONNECTIONS, click on the Minimize icon ( ) in the upper right corner of the window.

Locating Training Materials on the Intranet

A CONNECTIONS home page is available on the New York State OCFS intranet site, where you can find a variety of training-related materials.

Step by Step:
Accessing the CONNECTIONS Intranet Site

1. From your desktop, click on the **Internet Explorer** icon.
   The NYS Human Services home page displays.
2. Click on the **OCFS** link on the state map.
   The Office of Children and Family Services home page displays. The URL (Website address) is http://ocfs.state.nyenet/.
3. Scroll down and click on the **Connections** link under "Programs & Services" on the left side of the window.
   The CONNECTIONS intranet site displays.
4. Click on a topic to access information.
5. To close Internet Explorer, click on the **File** menu and select **Close.**

Once the Intranet is open, you can type the following address into the Address Bar of the browser to navigate directly to the OCFS CONNECTIONS intranet site:
http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/

Public Folders

A variety of public folders are located in Microsoft Exchange. They contain a wealth of information related to various aspects of CONNECTIONS, including training schedules, Alerts and Notices, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's).

Step by Step:
Accessing Public Folders

1. Press and hold the **Ctrl** and **Esc** keys on your keyboard.
2. Click on the **Microsoft Outlook** icon.
3. On the left side of the window, double-click **Public Folders**.
   This only displays if it has been set up for you to access Public Folders.
4. Double-click **All Public Folders**.
5. Scroll down the list and double-click on *dfa.state.ny.us.*
6. Double-click **Statewide**.
7. Double-click **CONNECTIONS**.
8. Click on the folder you want to view.

You may have a shortcut on your desktop toolbar to access Outlook. If so, just click that and continue with **Step 3**.

Module 6:
Responding to an Inquiry

Responding to an Inquiry

Individuals inquire about becoming certified or approved foster parents in a variety of ways. They may contact a local district or voluntary agency after seeing a Public Service Announcement (PSA) or other advertisements in their community about the need for foster parents, or they may make an inquiry during a Foster Parent Recruitment presentation at their place of worship.

Upon receiving an inquiry from an individual who is interested in becoming a foster parent, an authorizing agency operating a foster boarding home program must undertake a series of activities in accordance with New York State regulations. Often, there are local policies and procedural requirements that also must be met. These regulations, policies and procedures translate into tasks/activities that must be implemented by the caseworker(s) assigned to work with the potential applicant through the certification or approval process.

For example, as the caseworker assigned to work on an inquiry from a person interested in becoming a certified or approved foster parent, State regulations require that you:

- respond in writing to the inquiring person within 10 days of the initial contact (this letter is not supported in CONNECTIONS; each agency must develop its own);
- offer an individual appointment to the person(s) or invite them to a group orientation on family foster care;
- provide an application for a Home Study and Medical Report form to the person(s) for completion at the time of the initial interview or at the orientation meeting; and
- provide a fingerprint notification letter and fingerprint cards.

You may want to create for yourself a Reminder To-Do to send the Orientation Letter to the prospective foster parent(s).

Orientation

The process for orienting prospective applicants who are interested in becoming certified or approved foster parents may vary by local district or voluntary agency, based on their own local procedures. However, regardless of the process, state regulations require that certain information be provided to prospective applicant(s) during the orientation. As the caseworker who is conducting an orientation meeting, it is your responsibility to inform prospective applicants of the application requirements, which include (but are not limited to):

- age (prospective foster parents must be age 21 or over);
- a Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) performed by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), which requires the fingerprinting of prospective foster parents and members of their household ages 18 and older;
- a joint application for married couples living in the same household;
- a medical report for each applicant;
- three personal references; and
- completion of a Home Study (18 NYCRR §443.2).

Consult New York State regulations and your supervisor for clarification and additional information regarding New York State Foster Boarding Home regulatory requirements.

External Foster Boarding Home Case Record

Throughout the process of preparing the prospective applicant for certification or approval, you need to maintain a record of all of the information you gather. The information/data that is obtained on the prospective applicant should be documented in CONNECTIONS, where possible.

Where the CONNECTIONS system is not operative or does not support data entry, information must be recorded and retained in hard copy/paper format.
This copy is referred to as the External Foster Home Case Record (00 OCFS INF-6).

The rest of this module will instruct you on how to record inquiry information in CONNECTIONS for a foster or adoptive home and assign it to a caseworker.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- conduct an F/A Home Search;
- record basic demographic information in the *Home Demographics* window;
- save and assign the home/stage; and
- open your *Assigned Workload*.

Recording the Inquiry in CONNECTIONS

All inquiry information should be recorded in CONNECTIONS regardless of whether or not the home becomes fully certified or approved. Record inquiry information about the prospective foster home as early as possible.

Maintaining the most current information in CONNECTIONS may help authorizing agencies with planning and recruitment practices.

F/A Home Search

The recording of an inquiry contact begins with a search of the FAD database to determine if there is a history of the home in CONNECTIONS. This search, the **F/A Home Search**, *is different from the Resource Search conducted via the RSRC button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar*.

The *F/A Home Search* window is accessed via the **Options** menu on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar. This search filters through foster homes of every status level (e.g., **Inquiry**, **Applicant**, **Accepted-Active**, **Closed**) and returns any homes meeting the search criteria you entered.

The F/A Home Search is the first step in creating a foster home in CONNECTIONS. This step is necessary to avoid creating a duplicate home in CONNECTIONS.

F/A Home Search is a separate process from Person Search.

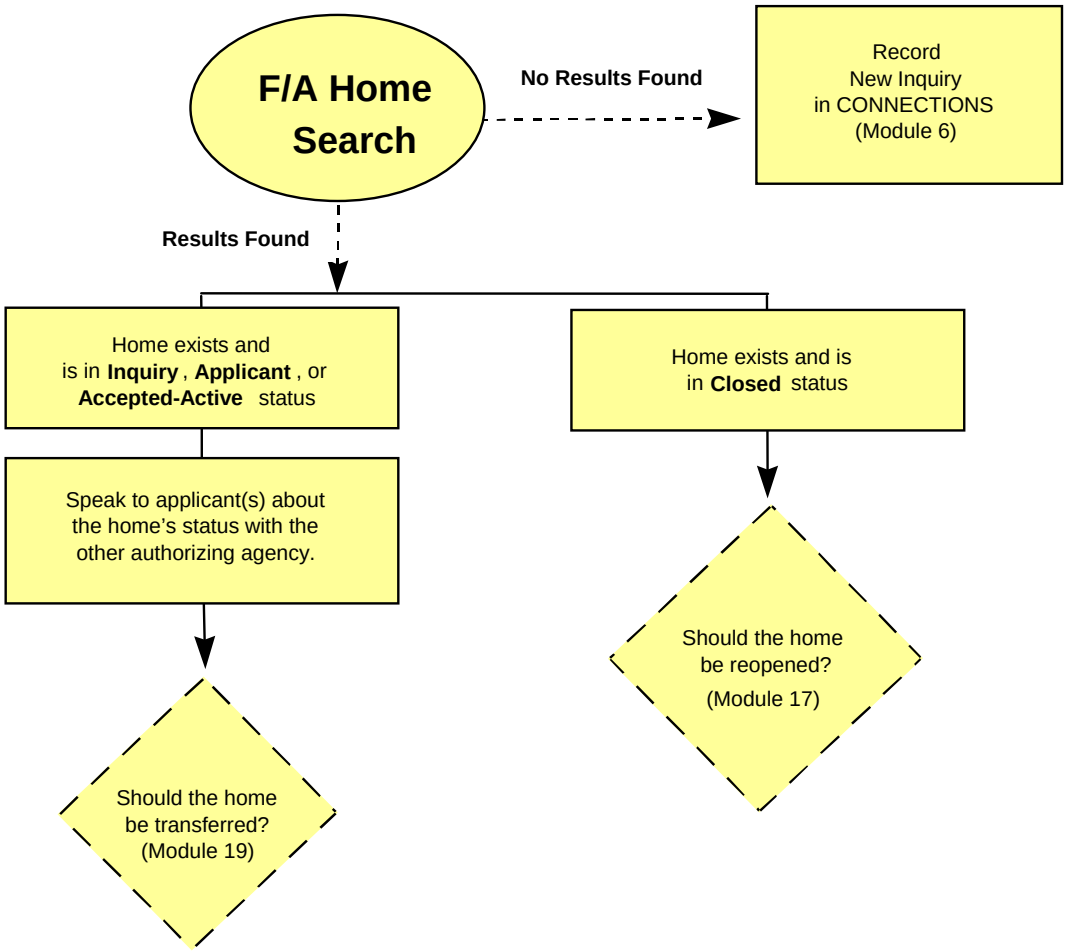
F/A Home Search runs a search of *all foster homes* known to CONNECTIONS; Person Search runs a search of *all individuals* known to the CONNECTIONS database (*see Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*).

Common vs. Uncommon Names

Some names are currently misspelled in the system. To increase the likelihood of generating a more complete list of results, enter partial name information when conducting a search. For example:

- Smith, Mary
- Smith,Mary (no space)
- Smith, M
- Smith,M (no space)
- Smyth, Mary
- Smyth,Mary (no space)
- Smyth, M
- Smyth,M (no space)

Search the database using all possible variations of *both* foster parents' names. If your F/A Home Search reveals that the home exists in CONNECTIONS, you need to determine the status of the home. The flowchart on the next page presents the possibilities you will find.



If the home exists in CONNECTIONS and is in **Inquiry**, **Applicant** or **Accepted-Active** status in another district/voluntary agency, you will need to speak with the foster parent(s). *Under no circumstances should you recreate the home*. A decision needs to be made about whether the home will remain with the current agency or be transferred to the agency now processing the inquiry (*see Module 19: Transferring Foster Homes*).

If the home exists, but is in **Closed** status, you need to review the closing information before proceeding with the inquiry (*see Module 17: Reopening Closed Foster Homes*).

F/A Home Search Types

The F/A Home Search function searches exclusively for foster homes in CONNECTIONS, regardless of home status (unless the worker enters search criteria in the **Status** field).

Search Type	Description
Phonetic Name (default)	This search type returns results that *sound* like the criteria entered in the **Home Name** field. All fields are enabled, but search criteria must be entered in the **Home Name** field to initiate a Phonetic Name search. If search criteria are entered in any of the Identifier fields (Resource ID, Case ID or Vendor ID), all other fields disable and the search type changes automatically to Exact.
Phonetic Address	This search type returns results that *sound* like the information entered in the Address section (the **Street 1** field is required to enable a Phonetic Address search). When the Phonetic Address search type is selected, all non-address fields disable. All address fields are enabled, but search criteria must be entered in the **Street 1** field to initiate a Phonetic Address Search. Refer to *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*, for more information on conducting this type of search.
Exact Search	This search type returns results that match the search criteria *character for character and space for space*. In an exact search, all fields are active. Entering search criteria in more than one field filters the search results. The search can be initiated once search criteria is entered in at least one of the following required fields: • Resource ID • Case ID • Vendor ID • Agency ID • Home Name • Street 1 • City • County • NYC Sub-Agency

Regardless of the search type chosen, F/A Home Search results will return all possible options. The resulting list does not have a pre-set limit.

Follow the steps below to conduct an F/A Home Search.

Step by Step: Conducting an F/A Home Search

1. Click on the **Options** menu on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar and select **F/A Home**.
   A fly-out menu displays.
2. Click on **F/A Home Search…** from the fly-out menu.
   The F/A Home Search window displays.
3. Click on the **Clear** button (or highlight the **Agency Code** and press the **Delete** key) to delete the Agency Code and perform a statewide search.
   *Once the Agency Code field is empty, the **Home Name** field highlights in yellow.*
4. Enter the name of the inquiring family in the **Home Name** field in the following format (Last Name,First Name).
5. Click on the **Search…** button.
   The F/A Home List displays. If the search does not return a match, the window is blank and displays the following message:
   "The criteria entered results in no information being returned."

Edits protect the **Home Name** field once you progress to the *Home Demographics* window.

When entering a home name for an F/A Home Search, use the following method:

Smith,Mary

Do not place a space between the first and last names.

On occasion a worker may create a FAD Home not realizing the home already exists in CONNECTIONS. The result is a duplicate home. This can lead to duplicate homes being reopened or reactivated.

Refer to *Module 15: The Close Home Task in CONNECTIONS* to close duplicate homes.

The F/A Home List

The *F/A Home List* displays the results of the F/A Home Search and includes the following information for each FAD home/stage returned:

- Resource Name
- Status
- Race
- County
- Zip Code
- Worker Phone
- VID (Vendor ID)
- Sub-Agency *(NYC only)*
- Address 1
- State
- Worker Name
- Ext.
- Setting
- Ethnicity
- City
- CD *(NYC only)*
- Case ID

To review information about a FAD Home/Stage on the *F/A Home List*, you can select the home/stage and click on the **Home Demographics** button (*see Module 17: Reopening Closed Homes for more information*).

If in your home search you do not find a result, you must click on the **New** button at the bottom of the F/A Home List to generate the *Home Demographics – New* window.

The Home Demographics Window

The *Home Demographics* window is used to record basic demographic information about the initial inquiry. Information you receive from the prospective foster or adoptive parent(s) must be recorded on the *Home Demographics* window.

To help streamline the FAD Home recording process, a significant amount of information is recorded on the *Home Demographics – New* window. The ability to record this much data on one window reduces the number of times you may have to move in and out of windows to enter information

The table on the following page summarizes the fields located on the *Home Demographics – New* window.

Definitions for field names can be found in *Appendix A: FAD Glossary*. Items in the glossary are arranged in alphabetical order.

Home demographic information can now be viewed on the **Home Demographics** tab of the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS).

See *Module 3: Managing Your Workload* to find out how to access the FRS and review home/stage information.

This information can be modified via the **Maintain Non-Licensing** task.

All information known about the home should be recorded when you open the *Home Demographics – New* window. (See "Completing the *Home Demographics-New Window*" on page 6-13 for step-by-step instructions on how to complete the window.)

For information on how to update this window once a home has been saved and assigned to a primary caseworker, refer to *Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS*.

An F/A Home Search that produces no results indicates the prospective foster parents have never been recorded (in CONNECTIONS) as providing foster care in New York State. To continue processing a new inquiry, we clicked on the **New** button (on the *F/A Home List*) to generate the *Home Demographics* window.

Fields to be Completed on the *Home Demographics* Window	
Upper Window	
Home Name	Legal Name
Setting	† Auth. Agency
† Sub-Agency (A66 Homes in NYC only)	Respite
Inquiry Source	† Status
Religion	Language
Marital	Ethnicity
Hispanic or Latino Origin	Race
Primary Address Section	
Street	Zip
PO Bx/Apt	Use as Business (check box)
City	Vendor ID
County	Sch District
‡CD (NYC Only)	Validate Button
State	Address… Button
Primary Phone Section	
Number	
Extension	
Phone… button	

† Indicates fields that are system-filled with applicable information once the home is saved and assigned.

‡ The Community Districts (CD's) for NYC homes are system-filled once the Address of the home is validated.

Home Name

This field is pre-filled with the information you entered in the **Home Name** field of the *F/A Home Search* window. Generally, the foster or adoptive mother's name is used for the Resource Name, not a combination of both parents' names. For homes without a foster or adoptive mother, the primary caregiver's name should be used as the Resource Name.

If the **Home Name** field is not completed in the proper format (*Smith,Mary*), CONNECTIONS will not allow you to save and assign the FAD Home/Stage. See the tip box to the right for more information.

> If information in the Home Name field is incorrect, click on the Cancel button and return to the F/A Home Search window. You will want to correct the name/name format in this field
>
> and,
>
> you must conduct your F/A Home Search on the appropriate home name to be sure you do not duplicate the FAD home/stage.

Legal Name

Located below the **Home Name**, this field indicates the official name of the facility. A Legal Name must be recorded to identify Foster and Adoptive homes and Congregate Care facilities. This name may or may not be the same as the Resource Name. If no legal name is entered, CONNECTIONS will automatically fill this field with the Home Name once the home is Saved and Assigned.

OCFS recommends that you use this field to record both Foster Parent names in the following format:

"Smith,Joan/Smith,John"

Setting

The **Setting** that the foster home will have must be identified on this window. The setting is just *one* of the elements that determines the type and amount of funding the home receives. Available **Settings** are **Congregate**, **Adoptive** and **Foster Home.** The **Adoptive** setting is used only for FAD homes that are receiving Adoption Subsidies (*see Module 21: Adoptive Homes*).

> Congregate Care facilities are not addressed in this guide, since they are created by OCFS staff, not by local districts or voluntary agencies.

FAD homes identified with the setting of **Foster Home** receive foster care payments and are further classified by Level of Care (also known as Facility Type). Foster Home **Facility Type** choices are: **Certified Foster Home**, **Foster/Adoptive Home** and **Approved Relative Home**. Facility Type will be discussed further when we cover the certification and approval process in *Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information*.

Respite

Select either "Accepted" or "Not Accepted" in this field to indicate whether or not the prospective foster home will accept temporary foster care placements for the purpose of providing respite services to other foster parent(s).

Respite care and services means the provision of brief and temporary care and supervision of children for the purpose of relieving parents or foster parents of the care of such children or foster children when the family or foster family needs immediate relief in order to be able to maintain or restore family functioning or to provide relief for foster parents from the stress of providing care for a severely handicapped or emotionally disturbed foster child or for a foster child with a chronic or recurring illness [18 NYCRR §435(d)].

Status

FAD homes progress through various status types in CONNECTIONS. A status type indicates the state the home is in, in relation to its progression through the certification or approval process. Some statuses (such as “Pending Emergency” for Emergency Homes) are used only with certain types of foster or adoptive homes.

The *Home Demographics-New* window has a pre-filled status of “Inquiry.” This is the entry point to the system for recording information on foster home applicants.

The statuses are listed below. Refer to “Appendix A: FAD CONNECTIONS Glossary” for the definitions of each status.

- Inquiry
- Pending Acceptance
- Emergency
- Pending Closure
- Extended Accepted-Active
- Applicant
- Pending Emergency
- Accepted-Active
- Closure
- Extended Emergency

Language

Select the appropriate choice to indicate the language used in the prospective foster home. You can only select one language; for bilingual households, select “Multiple” or the primary language.

Race and Ethnicity

CONNECTIONS allows you to record multiple races and clearly define ethnicity categories for the FAD home/stage and for individuals residing in the foster home.

In the **Race** (or Race Sub-Group) field, you can select from any of the following choices:

Race (or Race Sub-Group)
Black or African American
Caribbean
Haitian
Native African
Other – Black or African American
Alaskan Native
American Indian
Asian
Chinese
Indian
Japanese
Korean
Other Asian
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian PI
White

In the **Ethnicity** field, you are provided with two choices to identify the family: Hispanic or Latino origin *OR* non-Hispanic/Latino origin. If you select Hispanic or Latino origin, identify one or more of the following ethnic backgrounds:

- Central American
- Caribbean
- Cuban
- Dominican
- Mexican
- North American
- Puerto Rican
- South American
- Other

Primary Address and Primary Phone Section

A primary address, primary phone number, and business address must be recorded for every FAD home/stage in CONNECTIONS. The primary address indicates the physical location of the foster home, and the business address is the location where payments are mailed. These two addresses are usually identical.

CONNECTIONS will not allow the *Home Demographics –New* window to be saved if primary address and phone information is not recorded; this information can be recorded directly on the window. Once the primary address and phone numbers are recorded, you may select the **Use as Business** check box if the physical location of the home and the business address are the same. If the two addresses are not the same, click on the **Address** button to record the business address." Additional phone information can be recorded by clicking on the **Phone** button to access the *Resource Phone Detail* window.

> The business address must be entered, including the Vendor ID number, prior to submitting the home for certification or approval.
>
> When you submit the home for initial certification or approval, CONNECTIONS will alert you if the Vendor ID is missing. (*See Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information*).

Once address and phone information is recorded for the FAD home/stage, this information is used to streamline the process of entering the Person Information you record for each individual residing in the home. The primary address and phone information you enter in the *Home Demographic-New* window is used to pre-fill the address and phone information for each new individual added to the system. Refer to *Module 7: Maintaining Person Information,* for more information on this default feature.

Completing the *Home Demographics* Window

Step by Step:
Completing the *Home Demographics-New* Window

1. On the *Home Demographics-New* window, record all known information in the appropriate fields, except the Primary Address section (see below). *See the table in Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry, for a table of fields to complete*.
2. To record the Primary Address (the physical home address) section, begin by entering information in the following fields: **Street**, **PO Bx/Apt**, **City**, **County**, **State**, **Sch Dist**, **Zip**.
3. If the business address is the same as the physical location you have just recorded, click on the **Use as Business** check box.
   A checkmark displays in the check box.
   *If the addresses are not the same, record the business address via the **Address** button (see Recording Additional Address information on page 6-15).*

> **Where am I?**
>
> *Toolbar > Options > F/A Home > F/A Home Search > Search button > New button*

> Once you have saved the *Home Demographics* window, the information can be reviewed in the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). Refer to *Module 3: Managing Your Workload* for more information.

4. Click on the **Validate** button.
   The address validation window displays.
5. Check the accuracy of the address listed in the address validation window (see the tip box below).
6. Click on the **Yes** button to accept the validated address.
   The Resource Address Detail window displays.
7. Enter information in the **Number** and **Extension** fields of the Primary Phone section.
8. Review the window before clicking on the **Save and Assign** button (see page 6-16).

Address validation accepts a PO Box address as long as a number symbol (#) is recorded on the **PO Box** field (e.g., #203). Recording anything other than
a number in the **PO Box** field (e.g., PO Box 203, or Apt.) creates problems with the address validation process.

Validation of Addresses Recorded in CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS launches a search to verify the validity of the address and format it to comply with U.S. Postal Service standards. When you click on the **Validate** or **Add** button, the address validation window displays with the validated address and a message asking if you would like to replace the address you recorded with the validated address.

Compare the address you have recorded to the address provided by the address validation process.

If the address provided does not match your entry, verify the address with the prospective foster or adoptive parent. If the address you have is correct, do not accept the replacement. If a message displays stating that the address is invalid, it may be that the address you recorded is new and has not yet been recorded in the Postal Service database. It is also possible that the address is invalid and needs to be verified and corrected.

Note:
If an address is rejected, check to see if you have the correct ZIP code and County.

Recording Additional Address and Phone Information

Step by Step:
Recording Additional Address information

1. On the *Home Demographics- New* window, click on the **Address…**button.
   The Resource Address Detail window displays.
2. Click on the **Type** field and select the appropriate type for the address you are adding.
   *Select **Business** if you are recording a business address that is different from the primary address; this is where payments will be mailed*.
3. Record the street address.
4. Record a PO Box number, if appropriate.
5. Record the city.
6. Record the ZIP code.
7. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **County** field and select the appropriate county (New York City counties/boroughs appear at the end of the list).
8. Use the **Comments** field to record additional narrative.
9. After recording all the address information in the *Resource Address Detail* window, click on the **Validate** button.
   The address validation window displays.
10. Check the accuracy of the address listed in the address validation window.
11. Click on the **Yes** button to accept the validated address.
    The Resource Address Detail window displays.
12. Click on the **Add** button to transfer the information to the list section of this window.
13. Verify that the information is correct.
14. Click on the **OK** button.
    The Home Demographics window displays.

Where am I?

Toolbar > Options > F/A Home > F/A Home Search > Search button > New button

Only use this method to record Addresses and Phone Numbers *that are different* from the Primary Address and Phone Number. For example, this method can be used to record information about where a foster parent works.

If you recorded a business address on the *Home Demographics* window, the following message displays at the bottom of the *Resource Address Detail* window when recording a business address:

"Perform Business Address updates on the Home Demographics window."

Step by Step:
Recording Additional Phone Number Information

1. Click on the **Phone** button on the *Home Demographics- New window*.
   The Resource Phone Detail window displays.
2. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Phone Type** field and select a type (do not select "Primary," as the Primary phone number is recorded on the *Home Demographics* window).
   If you select Primary, the following message displays in the footer of the window:
   "Perform Primary phone updates on the Home Demographics window."
3. Record the telephone number in the **Number** field.
4. If there is an extension number, record it in the **Extension** field.
5. The **Comments** field can be used to record additional information, such as the best time to call or whether or not there is an answering machine.
6. Click on the **Add** button.
   The phone information is added to the list section at the top of the Resource Phone Detail window.
7. Verify that the information added to the list section is accurate.
8. Click on the **OK** button.
   The Home Demographics window displays.

Where am I?

Toolbar > Options > F/A Home > F/A Home Search > Search button > New button

Only use this method to record Addresses and Phone Numbers *that are different* from the Primary Address and Phone Number. For example, this method can be used to record information about where a foster parent works.

Save and Assign the Inquiry

Once you have completed the *Home Demographics- New* window and, if necessary, the related *Resource Address Detail* and *Resource Phone Detail* windows, you need to **Save and Assign** the *Home Demographics-New* window.

Save and Assign is unique to the CONNECTIONS application. Completing this function saves the information in CONNECTIONS and assigns the responsibility of the ongoing development of the foster or adoptive home to a primary worker. Saving and assigning establishes the home as a prospective **resource** in CONNECTIONS and opens a **stage** on the *Assigned Workload* of the person(s) receiving the assignment.

The Assign Window

Selecting the **Save and Assign** command opens the *Assign* window. The purpose of completing this window is to identify who will have primary and, if applicable, secondary responsibility for completing the home certification or approval process.

This window is divided into two list sections. The top section displays an Available Staff list. This is a listing of staff members in your unit to whom you might assign work. The bottom section

displays the Assignments that have been made regarding the selected stage. CONNECTIONS assigns you as the primary worker, unless you assign this responsibility to another caseworker.

Once an assignment is made, this window will contain information regarding the local district or voluntary agency responsible for completing the home certification or approval process. The worker's name and agency code are found in the text for assignment events.

The role of **Case Manager** does *not* apply to FAD stages.

Step by Step:
Saving and Assigning Initial Inquiry Information

1. Click on the **File** menu on the *Home Demographics-New window* and select **Save and Assign**.
   -OR-
   Click on the **Save and Assign** button.
   The Assign window displays.
2. Click on the line of the staff person to be assigned from the **Available Staff** list at the top of the window.
3. Click on the **Primary** button to assign that worker as the primary worker for the home.
4. Click on the **Save** button to save the primary worker's assignment.

Where am I?

Toolbar > Options > F/A Home > F/A Home Search > Search button > New button

There are times when the staff member to whom you are trying to assign the stage may not be included on your Available Staff list. For example, you may work in a FAD Intake Unit and need to assign the stage to a supervisor in another unit, such as the Specialized Foster Care Unit.

The directions below will assist you in searching for a staff member within your own agency who is not on your Available Staff list.

Step by Step:
Adding Staff to the Available Staff List (within the same agency)

1. Click on the **Options** menu on the *Assign* window and select **Staff Search Criteria**.
   The Staff Search Criteria window displays.
2. Enter the first and last names of the staff person you are searching for.
   The Agency field is pre-filled with your agency code.
3. Click on the **Search** button.
   The Staff List displays, containing the search results.

Where am I?

Toolbar > Options > F/A Home > F/A Home Search > Search button > New button > Save and Assign button

4. Select the name of the staff person whom you want to assign and click on the **OK** button.
   The Assign window displays. The information for the person you selected is now included and selected on the Available Staff list.
5. Click on the **Primary** button.
6. Click on the **Save** button.

Homes in **Inquiry** status should not be assigned outside of your agency, *unless* specified by an agreement between the two agencies.

Module 7:
Maintaining Person Information

This module focuses on the many ways that CONNECTIONS supports documentation of person information. Much of the information you record in this module will come from the completed foster parent application.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- conduct a Person Search from within a stage in CONNECTIONS;
- view and interpret the results of a Person Search;
- add a new person to CONNECTIONS;
- relate a person (who is known to CONNECTIONS) to a stage;
- record address and telephone information for each member of the home;
- copy and paste address and telephone information;
- record information on the *Person Detail FA* window (e.g., CHRC results);
- record information about trainings completed by foster or adoptive parents; and
- add A.K.A. names for individuals; and
- view person information in the FRS.

The Maintain Person Task

The **Maintain Person** task is used to document demographic, training and other required information/data on the prospective foster parent(s) and each person who currently resides in the home. This information can be recorded when the home is in **Inquiry** or **Applicant** status—upon receipt of a completed application from the prospective foster parent(s) or at any time during the course of certifying or approving the home.

Complete and accurate information is vital to protecting the health and safety of children living in foster care settings. New York State Foster Home Certification and Approval regulations require you to obtain and document specific information about the prospective foster parent(s) and each person who will be residing in the home if the home is to be certified or approved for the placement of foster children. The information you gather and record in CONNECTIONS and in the External Foster Home Case Record will support your (and your supervisor's) decision to either accept or deny an individual's application for a Home Study or home certification or approval. It also supports New York State OCFS's ability to meet federal child welfare data reporting requirements.

There are a number of ways in which caseworkers obtain this information:

- foster parent application—used to elicit information including, but not limited to, age, sex, health, occupation, income, ethnicity, religion, physical functioning, marital status, employment status, employment history, names of individuals residing in the home, prior foster care or adoption history;
- physician's report;
- criminal attestation;
- personal references, personal interviews, home visits, home site assessments, results of foster parent training; and
- external record checks—State Central Register (SCR) Database Check, Criminal History Record Check (CHRC).

Selecting the **Maintain Person** task and clicking the **List** button displays the *Person List*. As you create FAD homes, you will use this list to identify each person residing in the foster home (excluding foster children under the age of 18 years). CONNECTIONS requires to you conduct a Person Search to begin this process, in order to avoid duplicating individuals that already exist in the system.

Person Search

The CONNECTIONS database contains information on foster care providers, as well as individuals associated with child protective cases, Family Services Intake and Family Services Stages, state and local district staff, and voluntary agency personnel. Person Search is a tool for locating information about persons in CONNECTIONS.

Person Search is used:

- to find out if an individual is known to CONNECTIONS; and
- to find specific information about a person in CONNECTIONS.

An individual may have been recorded in CONNECTIONS if he or she is currently or has previously been:

- an employee of a state, district or voluntary agency that uses CONNECTIONS;
- a subject or other person named on a Child Protective Service report; or
- a foster or adoptive parent, or an individual residing in a foster or adoptive home, or
- Family Services Intake and/or Family Services Stages.

Searching for an individual in the CONNECTIONS database is separate from completing the SCR database check. Conducting "good" searches and relating when necessary will significantly reduce data integrity problems.

When adding a person to a home/stage that has been assigned to you, you need to conduct a Person Search to determine whether that individual has a history in CONNECTIONS. CONNECTIONS requires you to conduct a search prior to adding an individual. This functionality is intended to preserve data integrity by preventing the creation of duplicate records.

Search Types

Once you access the *Person Search* window, you will first need to decide which type of a search to conduct. There are three options in the Search Type list box:

- Phonetic Name (default)
- Phonetic Address
- Exact

Refer to *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS* for more details on conducting Person Searches.

Each Search Type is described in the table below:

Search Type	Description
Phonetic Name (default)	This search type returns results that *sound* like the criteria entered in the Home Name field. All fields are enabled, but search criteria must be entered in the **Last Name** field to initiate a Phonetic Name search. If search criteria is entered in any of the Identifier fields (**Social Security Number**, **CIN**, and **Person ID**), all other fields disable and the search type changes automatically to Exact.
Phonetic Address	This search type returns results that *sound* like the information entered in the Address section (the Street 1 field is required to enable a Phonetic Address search). When the Phonetic Address search type is selected, all non-address fields disable. All address fields are enabled, but search criteria must be entered in the **Street 1** field to initiate a Phonetic Address Search. Turn to Phonetic Address Search in *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*, for more information on conducting this type of search.
Exact Search	This search type returns results that match the search criteria character for character and space for space. When this search type is selected, all fields enable. The **Search** button becomes enabled once search criteria is entered in a required field (e.g., **Person ID** field).

The **Phonetic Name Search** is usually the preferred Person Search method, since it returns the largest pool of results. A Phonetic Name search searches the *entire* database for names that sound similar to the search criteria you enter. Ten results can be seen on the Person Search List at a time without scrolling. To view the remaining results, use the scroll bar. The mega-scroll buttons (which look like dog-eared pages and are located at the juncture of the horizontal and vertical scroll bars) can be used to view subsequent pages of results.

Selecting **Person Search List** from the **Forms** menu on the *Person Search* window allows you to print Person Search results.

If you conduct a Person Search on an individual with a common name, you can achieve better results by entering more search criteria (e.g., middle initial), if known, then performing the search again. As a result, the persons most closely matching all of your entered criteria display at the top of the Person Search List, while not excluding any potential matches. **Exact** searches also search the entire database and return all results that exactly match the search criteria.

F/A Home and Person Searches:
Two distinct areas of the CONNECTIONS database

"I already recorded the person's name when I created the home. Why do I have to put in the same information again?"

There are two distinct areas of the database in CONNECTIONS, which directly impact the development of FAD homes/facilities. The first is the F/A Home Search area of the database, which contains all homes and facilities that have been opened over the last 20 years. The second is the Person Search area of the database, which contains all people who are known to the CONNECTIONS system, including those known to the State Central Register (SCR), stage members in Family Services Intake stages and Family Services Stages, and people who provide care to children.

For *all* people (with the exception of foster children under the age of 18) living in the prospective foster or adoptive home, you must conduct a Person Search to support the accuracy of information in CONNECTIONS.

All FAD homes/stages must be created or reopened using the F/A Home Search functionality.

Step by Step:
Conducting a Person Search from Within a Stage

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Click on the appropriate FAD home/stage to select it.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
3. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
4. Click on the **Maintain Person** task.
5. Click on the **List…** button at the bottom of the *Task List*.
   The Person List displays. If you have yet to add any people in this home, the list is empty.
6. Click on the **New…** button at the bottom of the *Person List*.
   The Person Search window displays.
7. Enter search criteria in the appropriate fields in the *Person Search* window.
8. Click on the **Search** button in the bottom left corner of the *Person Search* window.
   CONNECTIONS performs the search and returns results which match the search criteria. Search results display in the Person Search List at the bottom of the Person Search window.

For directions on how to conduct a **Phonetic Address Search** see *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS.*

Checking the Results of a Person Search

There are two possible outcomes of a person search: the search criteria you enter does not match any individuals in the system, or the search returns all matches.

> For additional information about Person Search results, refer to *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*.

If the search criteria you enter does not return a match (and you have checked all variations of that person's name), begin the process of *Adding a Person* to the home. (See page 7-7.)

If the search returns a large number of matches, entering additional search criteria (e.g., sex, DOB) returns better search results.

If you find that an individual is already known to CONNECTIONS, you must determine *how* that person came to be known to CONNECTIONS. Steps in this determination process may include (but are not limited to):

- viewing the *Person Detail* window;
- viewing the *Case List* and *Case Summary* for the potential match;
- contacting the prospective foster or adoptive parent; and
- awaiting SCR Database Check results.

Step by Step: Viewing the Results of a Person Search

1. In the Person Search List, select the potentially matching name for which you want to view information.
2. Click on the **Options** menu on the *Person Search* window.
   Select each of the following commands to view information necessary in determining if the match is, in fact, the person you are trying to add to the home/stage: ***Address List/Detail…****,* ***Phone List/Detail…*** *and* ***Case List…***

> **Where am I?**
>
> *Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Person task > List button > New button > Search button*

If you determine that there are no matches, add this new person to CONNECTIONS, using the steps detailed in the next section. If there is a match, proceed with "Person Relate" on page 7-10.

Adding a New Person to CONNECTIONS

Once you have conducted a Person Search and learned that the person is *not known* to CONNECTIONS, you are ready to add the person. Biological children of the foster parent need to be recorded as daughter or son.

Completing this task successfully adds the individual to the FAD stage (i.e., to the foster or adoptive home) and to the CONNECTIONS database to be available for future searches.

Prospective foster or adoptive parents must be recorded with a Rel/Int code of "Foster Parent." If you do not select this Rel/Int code, you will not be able to progress the home to Accepted Active status. The following message displays if this identification has not been made when you attempt to submit the home for initial certification or approval:

"The home must have at least one foster parent identified."

Recording a Rel/Int code of "Foster Parent" adds their names to the F/A Home Certificate and/or the Approval Letter.

For a relative/kinship home, the relative caretaker still is identified with the "Foster Parent" **Rel/Int** code, *not* the actual familial relationship to the foster child (e.g., "Aunt"). Otherwise, you will not be able to progress the home to Accepted Active status. You also need this in order to have the relative caretaker's name appear on the Approval Letter.

Before we add a person to CONNECTIONS, let's take a closer look at the *Person Detail – NEW* window. This window contains a lot of information and should be completed correctly and with as much information as possible.

The Person Detail – New Window

Following a Person Search that does not produce a match, you will be ready to add a new person to the *Person List*. To do this, you will click on the **New** button of the *Person Search* window to generate the *Person Detail – New* window. Think of this window as being similar to a blank form you complete for each person recorded in CONNECTIONS.

The tables below illustrate the fields located in each section of the *Person Detail* window.

Fields to be Completed on the Person Detail – New Window

Top of Window	
† First Name	Middle Initial
† Last Name	Sfx: (Suffix)
†Status	

Current Stage	
† Type	† Role
Rel/Int (Relation/Interest)	

Demographics	
Sex	Language
Marital	Religion
DOB	Approx DOB (check box)
† Age (once DOB is recorded)	DOD
Approx DOD (check box)	Reason
Ethnicity	Race
Hispanic or Latino Origin List Box (see *page 7-9**)	

Primary Address Section	
† Street	† State
† PO Box/Apt	† Zip
† City	† Type
† County	Validate button
† CD (NYC only)	Address… button

Primary Phone Section
† Number
† Extension
Phone… button

† Indicates fields that are pre-filled by CONNECTIONS.

As noted earlier in this module, much of the information you record on this window comes from the Foster Parent Application. You will also want to discuss race and ethnicity with applicants to make sure you are recording an accurate reflection of their heritage.

As you record information you will notice that some fields are pre-filled by CONNECTIONS. For example, the **Type** field defaults to **PRN** (principal) for new individuals added to a home/stage. Other fields pre-filled by CONNECTIONS are noted in the above tables with the † symbol.

Some fields are required and will affect your ability to save information on the window. Examples include the **Marital Status**, **DOB**, **Ethnicity**, **Gender**, **Religion** and **Language** fields.

Race Fields

The **Race** (or Race Sub-Group) field can be filled in with any of the following choices:

Race (or Race Sub-Group)
Black or African American
Caribbean
Haitian
Native African
Other – Black or African American
Alaskan Native
American Indian
Asian
Chinese
Indian
Japanese
Korean
Other Asian
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian PI
White

Ethnicity Field

In the **Ethnicity** field, you are provided with two choices to identify the person: Hispanic or Latino origin *OR* non-Hispanic/Latino origin. If you select Hispanic or Latino origin, identify one or more of the following ethnic backgrounds:

- Central American
- Caribbean
- Cuban
- Dominican
- Mexican
- North American
- Puerto Rican
- South American
- Other

Address and Phone Information

As you look at the *Person Detail – New* window, you will notice that the Primary Address and Primary Phone information has been pre-filled by CONNECTIONS. These fields will, by default, contain the same information recorded in matching sections of the *Home Demographics* window. An exception is when relating a person found in an open CPS case, *and* the person's primary address and phone number are different from those recently entered on the *Home Demographics* window. CONNECTIONS alerts you to this situation by displaying the following message:

"*Addr/Ph does not match Home Addr/Ph. Contact worker(s) of open stage(s).*"

The Options Menu

The **Options** menu on the *Person Detail – New* window includes some commands that will help you find information without exiting the *Person Detail* window:

- A.K.A. Name List/Detail
- Address List/Detail
- Person Identifiers
- Phone List/Detail

Adding a Person to the FAD Home/Stage

Step by Step:
Adding a New Person to the FAD Home/Stage

1. Click on the **New** button at the bottom of the *Person Search* window.
   The Person Detail - New window displays.
2. Enter all known demographic information into the appropriate fields (e.g., **Sex**, **Marital Status**, **DOB**), selecting from the drop-down lists where necessary.
3. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Rel/Int** field and select the individual's relationship to the home.
   Your selection identifies whether the person is a foster child over the age of 18, foster parent, biological child, etc.
4. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Person List displays. The newly added person now appears on the Person List. Other information for that person may now be recorded (see "Recording Person Information" on page 7-12).

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Person task > List button > New button > Search button

Information that you record on the *Person Detail* window is transferred to other documents in CONNECTIONS and may be "frozen" there once the document is saved. Therefore, it is important to record all available information as accurately as possible.

Person Relate

There is always the possibility that your Person Search may reveal that the individual you searched for *is known* to CONNECTIONS.

If, after reviewing all available information, you determine that there is a match to the search criteria entered, you must *Relate* that individual. When an individual is "related" to a FAD home/stage, the "historical" person is selected in the Person Search and added to the current home/stage.

Correct use of the Relate function avoids duplication of records and maintains the integrity of the CONNECTIONS database.

To minimize the occurrence of misrelates, CONNECTIONS generates warnings if the following conditions are present when you attempt to relate two people in the system:

- If there is a DOB/age discrepancy of more than 5 years between the persons;
- If there is a gender mismatch between the persons;
- If there is a county code mismatch between the persons; and
- If the relationship/interest is Foster Parent (FP) for one person and not the other.

You must make every effort to acquire as much information as possible about the individual before proceeding. Thoroughly review information in CONNECTIONS, speak to the foster parent and consult with your supervisor prior to making a decision to use the Relate function.

If an individual is related incorrectly, you must remove the person by clicking on the **Options** menu on the *Person List* window and selecting the **Remove Person-Added in Error** command.

Step by Step:
Relating a Person to a FAD Stage

1. On the *Person Search* window, click on the name of the person you are going to relate from the Person Search List.
2. Click on the **Relate…** button.
   The Person Detail window displays.
3. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Rel/Int** field and select the relationship that the individual has to this stage of service.
   Complete any required fields.
4. Click on the **Save** button.
   The related person displays on the Person List.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Person task > List button > New button > Search button

If an individual is incorrectly related, you can delete that individual from the stage by selecting **Remove Person – Added in Error** on the **Options** menu of the *Person List*.
See Module 12 for more details.

Recording Person Information

In the course of foster home certification or approval, you will need to organize information you obtain about the prospective foster parent(s) and other persons residing in the home. Once you have completed the Person Search and added or related the individual to the home/stage, record other person information in CONNECTIONS.

The next five topics provide instruction on how to record the following data in CONNECTIONS:

- Person address information
- Person phone information
- Person Detail FA Home information (including CHRC data)
- A.K.A. name information
- Foster parent training information

As you use the techniques in this section, you might make mistakes recording information.

Refer to *Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS* for information about how to *modify* information.

Recording Person Address and Phone Information

The prospective foster parent(s) and all individuals residing in the prospective foster home (excluding foster children under the age of 18) *must* have a primary address and telephone number recorded that matches the primary address and telephone number of the foster home. This information is linked to the person's name and Person Identification number and is stored in the Person Search area of the CONNECTIONS database.

Primary address and telephone information is recorded in CONNECTIONS when the FAD home/stage is created or reopened (via the *Home Demographics – New* window). CONNECTIONS defaults to show home information recorded when the home was opened/reopened for each person *added* to the home.

Additional Address and Phone Information should only be added to CONNECTIONS when it is different from the Primary Address and Primary Phone Information already recorded in the system.

If an individual is *Related* to the home, and he/she is *not* currently involved in an open stage of service, CONNECTIONS displays the default primary address and phone information. If the Related individual is currently involved in an open CPS stage of service, and the address/phone information is different from the Home information, the following message displays:

"Addr/Ph. does not match Home Addr/Ph. Contact worker(s) of open stage(s)."

CONNECTIONS then displays the address and phone information from the open stage. You must speak to the individual, and/or a caseworker on the open stage, to resolve the conflict of information.

Having current information on file may directly impact the health and safety of a child. For example, the information you record may need to be accessed by a worker at the State Central Register who is taking a report of suspected abuse or maltreatment. The worker will view the person's address and phone number to make a positive identification—or to rule out a potential match.

Step by Step:
Recording Additional Person Address Information

1. On the *Person List*, click on the name of the person for whom you want to record information.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Address List/Detail…**
   The Address List/Detail window displays.
3. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Type** field and select the appropriate type.
4. Enter the street address.
5. Enter the PO Box/Apt where applicable.
6. Enter the City.
7. Enter the ZIP code.
8. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **County** field and select the appropriate county (New York City counties/boroughs display at the end of the list).
9. The **Comments** field can be used to record additional information, such as directions to the home.
10. After recording all of the address information in the *Address List/Detail* window, click on the **Validate** button.
    The address validation window displays.
11. Check the accuracy of the address listed in the address validation window.
12. Click on the **Yes** button to accept the validated address.
    The Address List/Detail window displays.
13. Click on the **Add** button to transfer the information to the list section at the top of this window.
14. Verify that the information is correct.
15. Click on the **Save** button.
    The Person List displays.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Person task > List button

The **CD** (Community District) field is required for New York City only.

Step by Step:
Recording Additional Person Phone Information

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Person task > List button

1. In the *Person List*, click on the name of the person for whom you want to record information.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Phone List/Detail…**
   The Phone List/Detail window displays.
3. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Type** field and select the appropriate type.
4. Enter the phone number for the person in the **Number** field.
5. Use the **Comments** field to record additional information.
6. Click on the **Add** button.
   The phone information displays in the list section at the top of the window.
7. Verify that the information displayed is accurate.
8. Using the same steps as above, add any other known phone types at this time.
   *Do not select the **Primary** check box for these other numbers, since there can be only one Primary phone number.*
9. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Person List displays.

Recording Information on the *Person Detail FA* Window

The *Person Detail FA* window is another area in CONNECTIONS where you can record important information for each person in the home, such as citizen status, level of education, Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) dates for materials sent and received, medical exam date, employment and other background information.

CHRC (Fingerprint) Information

Section 378-a(2) of the Social Services Law, as added by Chapter 7 of the Laws of 1999, requires that the following individuals be fingerprinted and undergo a CHRC as part of home certification/approval:

- All foster parent applicants; and
- All other persons age 18 and older residing in any of these homes, including foster children.

In the event that a foster home has a visitor for an extended period of time (e.g., more than 2 weeks with no plans for leaving, or for a visit of 6 months or more) or for frequent short term visits (e.g., a paramour who sleeps over in the home every weekend), the decision to fingerprint and collect medical exams for the visitors is made at the agency's discretion. It is expected that the agency will make the decision based upon the best interest of the foster child(ren) and in the interest of his/her safety.

In addition, OCFS regulation 18 NYCRR 430.11(c) (2) (vii) requires that the safety of the foster child is a primary consideration of the authorized agency and therefore, before a foster home allows visitors of any kind into the home, the agency must in *all* cases consider the safety of the foster child first. All of the following considerations should be made when allowing visitors into the home:

- That there is adequate space for sleeping,
- That sleeping accommodations follow OCFS regulations, and
- That the foster parent(s) will be able to adequately supervise the foster child with the addition of the visitor in the home.

The CHRC has three possible results (*see Appendix A for definitions*):

- No Criminal Record Found (or No Reportable Criminal Record Found)
- History of One or More Crimes (includes Presumptive and Discretionary Disqualifying Crimes)
- Pending Matter/Hold in Abeyance

CHRC Information in CONNECTIONS

Every person residing in the prospective foster home who is 18 years of age or older (including foster children) must send fingerprint information to OCFS for review by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Information related to the CHRC must be recorded on the *Person Detail FA* window, and the window must be saved each time it is updated.

Fingerprint cards should be sent to OCFS *on or after* the date that the foster parent inquiry is recorded in CONNECTIONS. Workers must include the CONNECTIONS Home Resource ID number and the person's CONNECTIONS Person ID number on the fingerprint cards (see Appendix K for further information).

The date that the fingerprint cards are submitted to OCFS and the date results are returned must be recorded in the **Date Card Sent** and **Date Results Received** fields on the *Person Detail FA* window.

The **Date Card Sent** cannot be prior to 2/11/99 (the date ASFA went into effect in New York State).

Fingerprint Notification Letters

The foster or adoptive caseworker is responsible for notifying applicants that they and all people age 18 or older residing in the prospective foster or adoptive home must be fingerprinted. CONNECTIONS provides the ability for caseworkers to generate and store these letters in the database and to print them as needed.

The FAD Fingerprints Requirement Letter (available in English and Spanish) is used to notify prospective foster or adoptive parents that they and all people age 18 years and older who reside in their home must be fingerprinted. The letter contains the following fields: **Resource Name** (the name of the FAD Home), **Date** (the date on which the letter was generated), **Supervisor**, **Agency Representative** (Primary Worker) and **Telephone** (Primary Worker's telephone number).

There is space at the top of the letter for your agency's letterhead. Be sure to print the letter on agency letterhead.

Step by Step:
Generating and Printing the FAD Fingerprints Requirement Letter

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the home for which you need to send the letter.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables*.
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. On the *Task List,* select the **Maintain Person** task.
4. Click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
5. Click on the **Reports** menu and select **FAD Fingerprint Req. Ltr. (E)** [English] or **FAD Fingerprint Req. Ltr. (S)** [Spanish], as required.
6. Click on the **OK** button in response to the following message*:*
   "The report has been launched. Check the Report List Window."
   Letters remain unopened on the Report List for seven days before being purged.
7. Click on the **RPRTS** (Reports) button on the far right side of the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Report List displays.

OCFS recommends that workers create a 30-day reminder **To-Do** for themselves from the date the prints are submitted to OCFS to remind them to look for the fingerprint results.

8. Confirm that the **Status** column reads “Done” for the letter you want to view. If it does not read “Done,” click on the **Refresh** button at the bottom of the window.
9. Click on the letter to select it.
   *The **Open** button enables.*
10. Click on the **Open** button.
    *The **FAD Fingerprints Req. Ltr.** displays as a Microsoft Word document.*
11. To print the letter, click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
    The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.
12. Click on the **OK** button to print.
13. To close the letter, click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
    The Report List displays.
14. To close the *Report List*, click on the **Close** button.
    The Person List displays.

Medical Exam Date Information

One of the foster or adoptive caseworker’s first casework activities when responding to a foster/adoptive inquiry is to provide the applicant(s) with Medical Report forms. Current and historical medical information about potential foster or adoptive parents and those who reside in their homes is an essential factor in determining whether or not to accept an applicant for home study.

Once a home has been accepted for home study and is certified or approved, medical exams continue on a regular basis. This information is required for the successful recertification or re-approval of all foster homes.

When completing an Initial Home Study or Re-Opening a Closed home the Medical Exam date must be within 18 months of the Authorization Date. For Reauthorizations the medical exam date must be within 24 months of the current Authorization To Date (the date the home will expire if not reauthorized).

“A written report from a physician on the health of a family, including a complete physical examination of the applicant, shall be filed with the agency initially and biennially thereafter.” [18 NYCRR 444.5(a)(2)]

The medical exam date is recorded in the **Medical Exam Date** field on the *Person Detail FA* window for each person who resides in the prospective foster home.

Once a valid Medical Exam Date is recorded and validated on the *Person Detail F/A* window for all foster parents, a check mark displays in the **Medical Dates Complete** check box on the *F/A Home License* window.

Valid medical exam dates must be recorded in CONNECTIONS for a home to receive initial certification or approval, and for a home to be successfully recertified or re-approved.

When approving an Out-of-State Foster Home, CONNECTIONS does not require that a Medical Exam Date or Fingerprint results be entered into the system.

Step by Step:
Recording Information on the *Person Detail FA* Window

1. On the *Person List*, click on the person for whom you want to record information.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Person Detail FA Home** command.
   The Person Detail FA window displays.
3. Enter all known information into the appropriate fields on the *Person Detail FA* window, selecting from drop-down lists where necessary.
   You can record and save information incrementally.
4. Record the date that the fingerprint card was mailed to OCFS in the **Date Card Sent** field.
5. Record the date the CHRC results were received by your agency in the **Results Received** field.
   *The system will not allow you to record a date in the **Date Results Received** field that is prior the **Date Card Sent** date.*
6. In the **Medical Exam Date** field, record the date that the medical exam was conducted.
   The date cannot be a future date. If a future date is recorded, the following message displays:
   "Date cannot be later than the current date."
7. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Person List displays.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Person task > List button

For *all* foster homes, including *all* new homes, separate fingerprint documentation must be recorded for each foster parent and each person age 18 and older currently residing in the household, including foster children.

If you need to modify any information recorded, simply click in the cell and click on the **Save** button when finished.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Training Information

Home Member Training information must be completed separately for each prospective parent. Training that is required for certification or approval of the foster home should be completed and recorded *prior* to submitting the foster home for supervisory review and approval.

"Authorizing agencies must provide training to each certified or approved foster parent in a training program approved by OCFS which will prepare the foster parent to meet the needs of children in their care so that the best interests of the children placed by the certifying or approving agency will be met." Foster parent training should prepare the parent with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide for the needs of the child and should continue after the placement of the child, as needed.
[18 NYCRR §443.2(e)(1)]

Information regarding the type of courses and training hours completed should be recorded on the *F/A Home Member Training List/Detail* window. FAD caseworkers use this window to maintain a cumulative log of all training completed by the prospective foster parents.

Step by Step: Recording Training Information

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Person task > List button

1. On the *Person List*, click on the name of the person for whom you want to record information.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Home Member Training List/Detail** command.
   The F/A Home Member Training window displays.
3. Record the date the training was completed in the **Date** field.
4. Record the title of the training in the **Title** field.
5. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Type** field and select the specific area of training.
6. Record the number of sessions completed in the **Session** field, if desired.
7. Record the number of hours completed for the training session in the **Hours** field, if desired. Leave this field blank if no training hours should be counted.
8. Click on the **Add** button.
   The training information is added to the list at the top of the window.
9. Repeat steps **3-8** if you are adding multiple trainings.
10. After recording all information for training completed by the prospective foster or adoptive parent, click on the **Save** button.
    The Person List displays.

A.K.A. Names

Prospective foster parents and members of their household may be known by more than one name. For example, a prospective foster or adoptive parent may have recently married. She may be known as Mary Smith (her maiden name) and as Mary Smith Johnston (her married name). You need to document both names in your records on this applicant, to maintain complete and accurate information.

Use the SCR Database Check Form as a source for AKA Name information.

CONNECTIONS allows you to record currently used names (called Primary names), maiden names and aliases (A.K.A. names). This can be accomplished using the **Maintain Person** task to open the *A.K.A. Name List/Detail* window.

Step by Step: Recording A.K.A. Names

1. On the *Person List*, click on the name of the person for whom you want to record information.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **A.K.A. Name List/Detail…** command.
   The A.K.A. Name List/Detail window displays.
3. Record the name you want to add in the appropriate fields in the Name Information section at the bottom of the window.
   *Do **not** select the **Primary** check box if this is not a name change. If you are recording a name change, click on the **Primary** check box.*
4. Click on the **Add** button.
   The name you have recorded is added to the list at the top of the window.
5. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Person List displays.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Maintain Person task > List button

Only use the **Invalid** button if the name in the record was *never* correct.

If a name is invalidated, there will be no historical record of that name.

Person Information and the FRS

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) provides a comprehensive view of the information added to CONNECTIONS via tasks, such as the **Maintain Person** task. The **Household Member Detail** tab displays the person information you have entered and maintained for each individual in the selected FAD Home. In addition to being able to view information, workers can record notes, comments and certain other information in the FRS.

The lower grid of the **Household Member Detail** tab contains the following information for each household member:

- Medical Exam Date
- FP Cards Sent Date
- FP Cards Received Date
- FP Results*
- Safety Asmnt Dt*
- SCR DB Check Sent*
- SCR DB Check Recd*
- SCR Results*

The information in the asterisked (*) fields can *only* be updated in the FRS. Details for recording these fields are described below.

Fingerprint Results

Clicking in this cell of the grid for the selected person opens a drop-down list with the following choices:

1. No Record Found
2. Presumptive Disqualification
3. Discretionary Disqualifier
4. Hold in Abeyance

If option 2, 3 or 4 is selected, the following message displays:

"Option selected for Fingerprint Results requires a Safety Assessment."

Safety Assessment Date
SCR Database Check Sent
SCR Database Check Received

In each of these columns, the date in question can be entered directly into the grid by clicking in the cell and typing in the date.

SCR Results

Clicking in this cell for the selected person opens a drop-down list with the following choices:

- No Record Found
- Record Found

Once information is recorded in any cell in the lower grid, the **Save** button enables so the worker can save the information to the database. The worker uses the **Cancel** button to move from this grid to other parts of the FRS *without saving information*.

The following person information can be edited directly in the FRS:

- Fingerprint Results;
- Safety Assessment Date;
- SCR Database Check Sent Date;
- SCR Results;
- The Safety Assessment;
- Training Comments;
- Medical, CHRC, and SCR Comments; and
- Employment Comments.

The following sub-windows *cannot* be updated within the FRS and must be updated via the *Person List*:

- A.K.A. Names
- Person ID
- Case List
- Person Detail FA
- Training Details

Step by Step:
Recording Information in the Household Member Detail Tab

1 From the *FRS* window, click on the **Household Member Detail** tab.

2 Select a person from the upper grid, click in the **FP Results** field and select from the resulting list.

3 If a Safety Assessment is required based on the fingerprint results, click on the **Safety Assessment Template** button and record information in the document.
The FRS Safety Assess Microsoft Word document displays.

4 Click on the **File** menu and select the **Close** command.
The FRS displays.

5 Click on the **Yes** button in response to the following message: *"Save changes."*

6 Click in the **Safety Asmnt Dt** field and record a date using the following format (5/5/2005).

7 Click in the **SCR DB Check Sent** field and record a date.

8 If appropriate, click in the **SCR DB Check Recd** field and record a date.

9 Click in the **SCR Results** field and select from the resulting list.

10 Click on the **Save** button.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Home Study task > New, Use Prior or Detail button

You can record information in any of these fields as appropriate and information can be recorded incrementally.

Recording Additional Comments

The **Household Member Detail** tab includes buttons that allow you to access comment boxes. Comment boxes provide you with a place to record and edit FAD information. Below is a list of buttons that open related comment boxes on the **Household Member Detail** tab.

- Training Comments
- Medical/CHRC and SCR Comments
- Employment Comments

A check box next to each button becomes pre-filled with a check mark once comments have been recorded and saved in the appropriate comment box.

Step by Step:
Recording Comments

1 On the **Household Member Detail** tab, select a person from the upper grid.

2 Click on a comment box (i.e., Training Comments, Medical/CHRC and SCR Comments or Employment Comments).

3 Record/edit comments.

4 Click on the **Save** button.
A check mark displays next to the

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Home Study task > New, Use Prior or Detail button

Module 8:
Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes

So far in this guide, we have looked at two major roles that CONNECTIONS plays in supporting foster and adoptive casework — maintaining a database for person and home information, and providing documentation of casework activities. CONNECTIONS also supports foster and adoptive casework by providing an automated recording of home certification/approval (see page 8-18). This role refers to the actual licensing of the FAD homes, which is the topic of this module.

The authorizing agency must balance two goals; the desire to place children who need foster care services, and the need to thoroughly assess the home environment. In the process of certifying or approving a foster home, two crucial decisions must be made by the authorizing agency that determines if the home progresses to Accepted-Active status and can accept child placement. These decisions are:

- the decision to accept or deny an applicant for Home Study; and
- the decision to accept or deny the home for full certification or approval.

This module reviews some of the criteria involved in making these decisions. Additionally, we will instruct you on how to use CONNECTIONS to document the licensing process and submit a home record for supervisory review. By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- use the **Maintain Licensing Information** task;
- open the *F/A Home License* window;
- progress a foster home/stage to Applicant status;
- record a Vendor Identification (VID) number;
- use the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) to complete and submit the Home Study narrative; and
- submit the entire home record for certification or approval.

Decision: Accepting an Applicant for Home Study

At this point in this guide, we have received the completed foster parent application and have begun collecting additional information about the prospective foster parent(s) and other members of the household, as well as the foster home itself.

The decision of whether to accept an application for Home Study must be based upon the information provided in the application, the medical report and (if results have been received) the results of the SCR Database Check and the CHRC. An agency has ten days, upon receiving the completed application, to inform the prospective foster or adoptive parents of its decision. Acceptance must be conditional on the submission of an acceptable medical report form.

A rejection of the application must be based solely upon the information noted in the paragraph above. When an application for Home Study is denied and the home is in Applicant status, the caseworker must take steps to close the home in CONNECTIONS that are consistent with New York State regulations. For example, the prospective foster or adoptive parents must be notified of the rejection in writing and the letter must contain the reasons for denial of the application (*see Module 15: Closing Foster Homes*).

Out of State Foster/Adoptive Homes in CONNECTIONS

When a child in the custody of a Local DSS Commissioner is placed in a Foster and/or Adoptive Home in a different state, it is the responsibility of the receiving state to certify or approve the home as being suitable for placement. As other states may have different licensing standards, such as criminal history background checks (fingerprinting) requirements, foster/adoptive parent's medical exams requirements, or home study and reauthorization requirements, CONNECTIONS does not edit for these items for "Out of State" homes. A home is designated as "Out of State" when this choice is selected in the County drop down field on the Home Demographics window.

When the worker receives confirmation from the NYS OCFS Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) that the home has been approved or certified by the receiving state, the home is to be opened in CONNECTIONS by completing the required information on the Home Demographics (making sure to select "Out of State" in the County dropdown) and Home License windows and entering the home members via the Maintain Person task. When the home has been approved and placed in Accepted-Active status, the Vendor ID would be sent to BICS and the LDSS can begin making payments.

Recording License Information

F/A Home License Window

Certification or approval of a foster home includes recording all required licensing information on the *F/A Home License* window. This window is closely tied to the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS), and other windows in CONNECTIONS; information recorded on this window (as well as other windows in the FAD stage) displays in the FRS. As we will learn in this module, when the FRS is submitted for supervisory approval, the *F/A Home License* window is generated, and the submission is completed on this window.

The table below highlights the fields on the *F/A Home License* window. Following this table are instructions on how to access the window from the *Task List*.

Field Name	Description
Setting	Upon opening the *F/A Home License* window, the **Setting** field is pre-filled with the setting selected when the foster home/stage was created (*see Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry*). Possible settings are “Foster Home,” “Congregate” and “Adoptive Home.”
Facility Type	For the Foster Home setting, Facility Type choices are “Certified Foster Home,” “Approved Relative Foster Home” and “Certified Foster/Adoptive Home.” For the Adoptive setting, the Facility Type of “Adoptive Home” identifies a home that is receiving an adoption subsidy.
Status	This field indicates the current the status of the home, in relation to the home’s certification or approval process. CONNECTIONS updates this field once supervisory approvals are logged. You will manually change this setting when progressing a home from Inquiry to Applicant, and when submitting information for supervisory approval.
Facility Type	For the Foster Home setting, Facility Type choices are “Certified Foster Home,” “Approved Relative Foster Home” and “Certified Foster/Adoptive Home.” For the Adoptive setting, the Facility Type of “Adoptive Home” identifies a home that is receiving an adoption subsidy.
Age Range	Use these fields to identify the age ranges accepted for both female and male foster children for whom that the home will be approved to provide care.
Renewal/ Extension	This section of the window is used to indicate when a home is submitted for annual reauthorization, and when the home status is extended because fingerprint results have not been received.

Continued on next page ▶

Field Name	Description

(Continued from previous page) ▶

Cert./Approval Requirements section	This section of the window is automatically updated by CONNECTIONS based on information recorded on the *Person Detail F/A* Home window (see Module 7: Maintaining Person Information) to include Medical Dates Complete and Fingerprint Results Complete check boxes.
Capacity	In this field, identify the number of children for whom the home will be certified or approved.
Open Slots	The number of open slots is pre-filled based on the home's capacity and the number of children in placement.
# **Placement**	This field displays the number of placements currently in the home. Currently, not supported in CONNECTIONS.
# Unavailable	This field displays the number of placements currently unavailable in the home/facility. Currently, not supported in CONNECTIONS.
Program Types	Upon selecting a Program Type, workers must also record applicable dates in the following fields (which fields enable depends on the Program Type(s) selected): Therapeutic, Special Needs, Regular and/or Emergency. See page 8-5 for detailed information about recording the Program Type.
On Hold check box	This status identifies a foster home/stage that has been certified or approved and may have existing placements, but intake to the home is closed for additional placements. *This function should not be used in CONNECTIONS; child placement information should be recorded in CCRS.*

Step by Step: Opening the *F/A Home License* Window

1. Select the appropriate foster home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*.
   *The name of the home is highlighted and the **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays for the selected stage.
3. Click on the **Maintain Licensing Information** task.
4. Click on the **New** button.
   *The F/A Home License window displays. If information has previously been recorded on this window, the **Detail…**button enables.*

Program Type

In CONNECTIONS, the Program Type selected in the *F/A Home License* window must reflect the foster home's actual classification. CONNECTIONS contains an edit to prevent improper relationships between the Program Type and the home's Setting. If you attempt to select an improper Program Type, the following message displays in the lower right corner of the window:

"The Program Type selected is invalid for the setting."

The Benefits Issuance Control System (BICS) pays foster homes for the services they provide to children placed in their care. BICS is being enhanced to pay Voluntary Agencies based on an established rate. The amount of these payments for Voluntary Agency-certified or approved foster homes is based on a number of factors, including the Program Type recorded on the *F/A Home License* window in CONNECTIONS. The Program Type reflects the degree of care and supervision in the foster home. For this reason, it is imperative that a foster home's Program Type accurately reflects the home's actual classification. To determine the appropriate Program Type for foster homes at your agency, see your supervisor or program director. The table below lists the available program types:

The following factors affect the amount of payment a foster home receives:

- Degree of care and supervision in the foster home;

  and

- Training completed by the foster parents.

BICS Program Type Group	Existing CONNECTIONS Program Types
Therapeutic	Therapeutic
Special Needs	Hard to Place* HIV + / AIDS Maternity* Mother/Child* Special Needs Behavioral* Special Needs Medical
Regular	Regular
Emergency	Emergency
Congregate Care	Diagnostic Reception Center Refugee Assistance Program Sex Offenders Supervised Independent Living Program

It is imperative that the Program Types in the above table marked with an (*) never be chosen with a setting of Foster or Adoptive Home.

At least one Program Type must be selected for a foster home; multiple Program Types may also be selected. If a worker attempts to save the *F/A Home License* window without recording a Program Type, the following message displays:

"You must have at least one program type checked in order to save."

A Facility Type must also be selected for each home/stage. This field is used to identify the specific type of home being certified/approved.

Completing the **Program Type** field and the **Facility Type** field are the two minimum steps necessary to progress a home from Inquiry to Applicant Status. Directions for completing this progression are listed below.

The determination of when to progress a foster home from Inquiry to Applicant status varies due to local policies and procedures, but must include the completion of the Application form by the potential foster or adoptive parent(s).

Keep in mind that the "Emergency" Program Type denotes a particular type of foster home that is certified to accept emergency placements on an ongoing basis.

This is not to be confused with a foster home that is in "Emergency" Status.

Step by Step:
Progressing the Home to Applicant Status (on the *F/A Home License* Window)

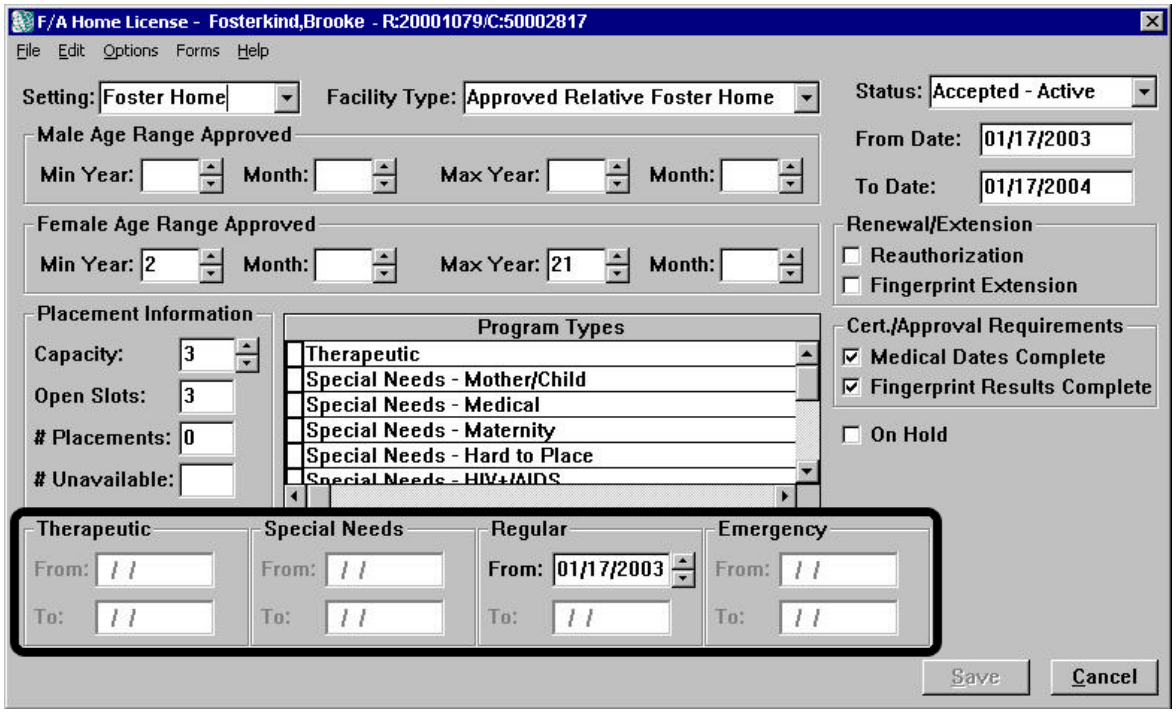
1. On the *F/A Home License* window, review the Setting to ensure it is accurate.
2. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Facility Type** field to record the appropriate Facility Type.
3. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Status** field and select **Applicant** from the resulting list.
4. Select the appropriate Program Type(s) by double-clicking on it.
   A red check mark displays to the left of any selected Program Type.
5. Record applicable From and To dates as required for each Program Type selected (i.e., Therapeutic, Special Needs, Regular and Emergency).
6. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Task List displays.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Maintain Licensing Information task>Detail button

Program Type Authorization Dates

Four pairs of **From** and **To** date fields are located on the *F/A Home License* window. Each pair of date fields corresponds to one of the BICS non-Congregate Care program type groups (Therapeutic, Special Needs, Regular and Emergency). These date fields will be required for any FAD home with a Setting of “Foster Home” and a Program Type selected from one of these four groups.



These From and To dates are *not* the same as the certification/approval (or recertification/reapproval) **From Date** and **To Date** fields in the upper right corner of the *F/A Home License* window. While the certification/approval **From Date** and **To Date** fields reflect the current certification/approval period for the foster home (and are system-generated when the certification/approval or recertification/reapproval is approved by the supervisor), the Program Type group **From** date fields at the bottom of the window reflect the dates when the foster home was authorized to begin operations in accordance with the corresponding Program Type. With the exception of the one-time data fix at implementation, the From type for the applicable Program Type group must be recorded by the worker.

For example, a foster home began operations as a Therapeutic foster home (and progressed to Accepted-Active status for the first time) on April 30, 2001; at that time, the home’s *certification* From Date and To Date would be 4/30/2001 – 4/30/2002. The home was recertified in April 2002, changing the *certification* From Date and To Date to 4/30/2002 – 4/30/2003. The Therapeutic (*Program Type*) **From** field still reads 4/30/2001, because that was the date on which the home first began operations as a Therapeutic foster home. Since the Therapeutic Program Type has never been deselected, the Therapeutic (*Program Type*) **To** field remains blank. Recertification/reapproval of a foster home does not change the *Program Type* **From** or **To** date fields.

For many foster homes in CONNECTIONS, the From date for a selected Program Type group will be the same as the date the home was certified or approved to provide care. There are,

however, situations in which a foster home's program type(s) may change. For example, a home may originally have been certified as a Regular foster home on 5/15/2002, but the foster parents subsequently met the regulatory requirements (including specialized training) and receive certification to provide Therapeutic foster care services on 10/23/2002. This particular change would result in a change in the amount of payment the foster parents would receive from BICS for affected children who are placed in the home. This change would be reflected not only in the **Program Type** field, but also in the corresponding Program Type **From** and **To** date fields, as applicable.

A BICS program type group is considered *selected* when *at least one* of its associated CONNECTIONS program types is selected; it is considered *deselected* if *none* of its associated program types is currently selected.

When one of these choices is selected in the **Program Type** field, the corresponding **From** date field highlights in yellow, indicating that it is a required field.

If a worker attempts to save the *F/A Home License* window after selecting an item in the **Program Type** field without recording a corresponding From date, the following message displays:

"Program Type From Date required for selected program type(s)."

Valid program type dates are defined as follows:

- Both the From date and, if applicable, the To date must be within the past two years.
- Both the From date and, if applicable, the To date must not be more than six months in the future.
- The value in the To date can never be less than the value in the From date.

If the worker records an invalid date in one of the date fields, one of the following messages displays, as applicable:

"Program Type Dates must be within the past 2 years."

"Program Type Dates must not exceed 6 months in the future."

"Program Type To Date cannot be less than From Date."

For both open and closed homes, the From date for each applicable program type group will be the date the home progressed to Accepted-Active or Emergency status for the first time. The **From** field must contain the date the foster home is authorized to begin operations. This date cannot be greater than the **To** date. The To date will always be blank until a particular home's program ends. (The worker must *deselect* the applicable Program Type and then enter the appropriate date in the **To** field for that Program Type group. The To date is *never* system-generated.)

When a worker opens the *F/A Home License* window, if the **Program Type** field is blank, the corresponding **From** and **To** date fields will enable when an applicable program type is selected. If a valid date is already present when the worker opens the *F/A Home License* window, the date is modifiable regardless of which program type is selected (or if no program type is selected).

Once a home has been progressed to Accepted-Active status, if a worker deselects a previously selected item in the **Program Type** field to another non-Congregate Care program type group, the To date must be completed for the deselected program type group.

If a worker records a program type From date and saves the *F/A Home License* window, but then needs to remove the entry, the worker must deselect the recorded program type, record the same value from the **From** field into the **To** date field and save the change. Each deselected program type group's **From** and **To** field should contain valid data.

If a worker attempts to save the *F/A Home License* window after deselecting an item in the **Program Type** field without recording a corresponding To date, the following message displays:

"Program Type To Date required for de-selected program type(s)."

If you modify the program type **From** and **To** date fields after the home has progressed to Accepted-Active status, you must obtain supervisory approval; you can modify the Program Type(s) and the corresponding dates prior to progressing the status.

CONNECTIONS will retain and display all saved Program Type **From** and **To** dates, regardless of the Program Type that is currently selected for the foster home.

Step-by-Step: Recording Program Types and Corresponding Program Dates on the *F/A Home License* Window

1 From the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate FAD stage and click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

2 Select the **Maintain Licensing Information** task and click on the **New** button.
*The F/A Home License window displays. The **Detail…** button enables once you have recorded a Program Type.*

3 In the **Program Type** field, double-click to select a program type.
A system edit requires you to select at least one program type; multiple program types may be selected. The program type(s) you select must be appropriate for the **Setting** and **Facility Type** recorded on the window.

4 If a Therapeutic, Special Needs, Regular or Emergency program type is selected, the corresponding **From** date field highlights in yellow, indicating that it is a required field.

5 Enter a valid date in the applicable **From** date field.

6 If the foster home is in any status **other** than Accepted-Active or Emergency, click on the **Save** button to save the changes to the window.

—OR—

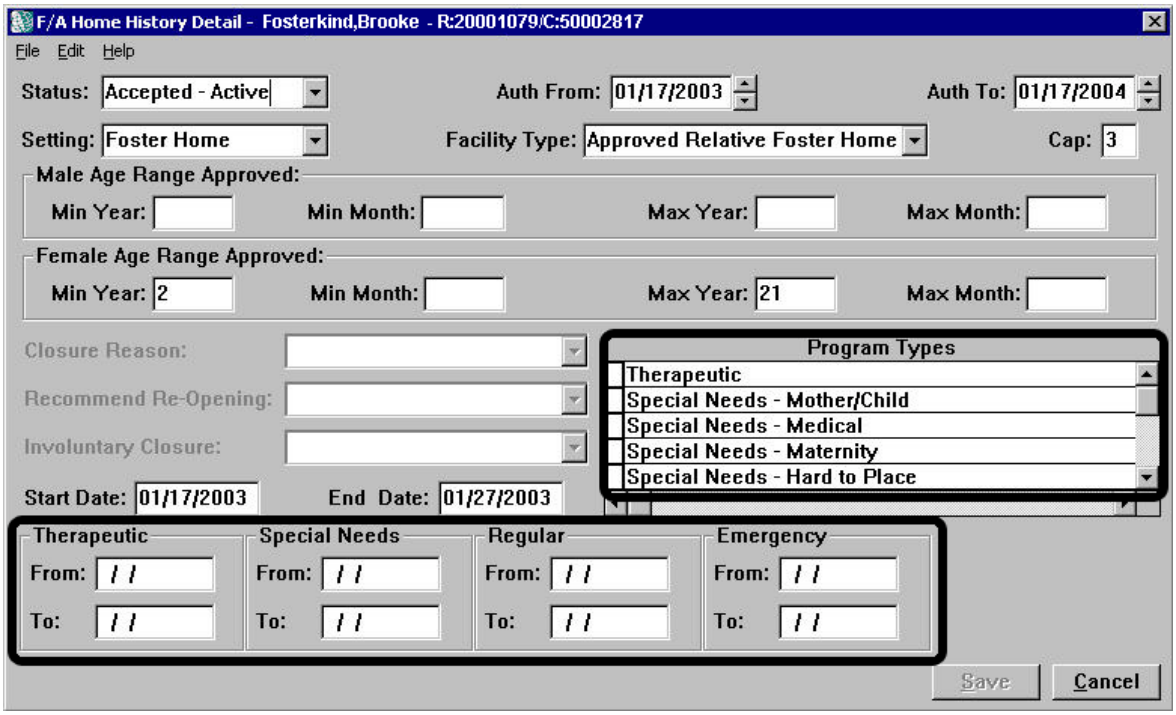
If the home is in Accepted-Active or Emergency status, click on the **Save and Submit** button to save the changes and submit them for supervisory approval.

Effect of Program Type Changes on F/A Home History

Every time the *F/A Home License* window (including the **Program Type** field and any applicable **From** and **To** date fields) is modified and saved, an event is generated on both the *Event List* and the *F/A Home History* window. This occurs regardless of the status of the foster home.

The historical record of these Program Type changes, as well as their corresponding From and/or To dates, can be viewed on the *Event List* or the *F/A Home History* window for a FAD home. The *Event List* provides view-only access to this information (on the *F/A Home License* window for an historical event).

Like the *F/A Home License* window, the *F/A Home History Detail* window will also contain the reclassified **Program Types** and corresponding **From** and **To** date fields. Historical **From** and **To** dates will display in this window.



When the *F/A Home History Detail* window is opened in modify mode, only the **Status**, **Auth. From** and **Auth. To** fields can be modified; all other fields are protected. When the Auth. From date is advanced, the new Auth. To date cannot exceed the Auth. To date that was first displayed on the *F/A Home History Detail* window. This ensures that the certification period is valid.

Step-by-Step: Viewing Program Type/Date Changes on the *Event List*

1. After selecting a FAD stage from the *Assigned Workload*, click on the **Options** menu and select the **Event List…** command.
   The Event List displays for the selected stage.
2. Select an event with a description of “maintained licensing information.”

3 Click on the **Detail…** button.
The F/A Home License window displays.

4 Click on the **Cancel** button.
The Event List displays.

Step-by-Step: Viewing Program Type/Date Changes on the *F/A Home History Detail* Window

1 From the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate FAD stage and click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays

2 Select the **View Home History** task and click on the **List…** button.
The F/A Home History window displays.

3 Click on a home history event to select it from the list, then click on the **History Detail…** button.
The F/A Home History Detail window displays for the selected historical event.
If you select the first (most recent) event on the list, the follow message displays when you click on the ***History Detail…*** *button:*
"The most current row was selected. Only the Auth. From date may be modified."
If you select any other event on the list (which does not have an End Date), the F/A Home History Detail window displays in view-only mode, unless you are assigned the MAINT FAD HIST Business Function.

Note for Supervisors:

The Program Type **From** and **To** date fields cannot be viewed from the FRS or via a Resource search. To view these fields, open the *F/A Home License* window from the *Event List* or the *Task List* (both lists can be accessed from caseworker's *Assigned Workload*). The instructions below open the *F/A Home License* window from the *Assigned Workload:*

1 Open the caseworker's *Assigned Workload* (via the *Unit Summary* window), select the applicable FAD stage and open the *Task List*.

2 Select the **Maintain Licensing Information** task and click on the **Detail…** button.
If the F/A Home Licensing window is pending approval, the following message displays: "Saving will invalidate the pending approval. Continue in modify mode?"

3 Click on the **No** button, since you only want to *view* (not modify) the information.
The F/A Home License window displays in view-only mode.

Vendor Identification Numbers

A Vendor Identification number (VID) must be recorded for each FAD home/stage in order for the home to receive reimbursement. A Vendor ID number (VID) is a unique eight-digit number (beginning with a zero). Only the specific number assigned by your voluntary agency or local district for the prospective foster home/stage by OCFS should be used for a home/stage you create. A home/stage that is missing a VID cannot become fully certified or approved.

Obtaining Vendor ID numbers is a local process; the worker should contact his/her supervisor, director of services, or implementation coordinator to obtain a VID. The supervisor, director of services, or implementation coordinator will have already obtained a block of numbers from OCFS for that particular agency *(see Appendix D for information about obtaining Vendor Identification numbers)*.

The Vendor ID (VID) number is recorded as part of the Business Address on the *Home Demographics* window. It should be recorded *after* the home progresses to Applicant status and *before* the home is submitted for approval. Prior to recording the VID, the following events should have occurred:

- The F/A Home application has been received;
- The Medical form has been provided to the applicant(s) and you are awaiting the report;
- The SCR Database Check Form has been submitted to the SCR;
- Fingerprints have been taken and submitted for all members of the household age 18 and older;
- The F/A Home status has been progressed to Applicant on the *F/A Home License* window; and
- The Facility Type has been recorded on the *F/A Home License* window.

Step by Step:
Recording the Vendor ID Number
(via the Maintain Non-Licensing Information Task)

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate foster home.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task.
4. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The Home Demographics window displays.
5. If the Primary Address is also the Business address, click on the **Vendor ID** field and enter the Vendor ID number.
   -OR-
   Click on the **Address** button and record the Vendor ID for the associated Business address by clicking in the **Vendor ID** field.
6. Click on the **Validate** button.
   The address validation window displays.

7. Click on the **Yes** button to accept the validated address.
   The VID number is added to the foster or adoptive home's record and displays in the ***Address*** *column in the list section at the top of the window.*
8. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Task List displays.

Preparing for Certification/Approval

New York State foster care regulations require authorizing agencies to complete a Home Study within four months after acceptance of a completed application, unless delays occur as a result of extenuating circumstances beyond the agency's control. The agency has six months to complete the entire certification or approval process. An application for certification or approval that is still pending after six months should be considered expired; a new application is required to continue the process.

Out of State Foster/Adoptive Homes in CONNECTIONS

When a child in the custody of a Local DSS Commissioner is placed in a Foster and/or Adoptive Home in a different state, it is the responsibility of the receiving state to certify or approve the home as being suitable for placement. As other states may have different licensing standards, such as criminal history background checks (fingerprinting) requirements, foster/adoptive parent's medical exams requirements, or home study and reauthorization requirements, CONNECTIONS does not support these tasks for "Out of State" homes. A home is designated as "Out of State" when this choice is selected in the County drop down field on the *Home Demographics* window (see *Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry*).

When the worker receives confirmation, from the NYS OCFS Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), that the home has been approved or certified by the receiving state, the home is to be opened in CONNECTIONS by completing the required information on the Home Demographics and Home License windows and entering the home members via the Maintain Person task (see page 8-3 & Module 7: Maintaining Person Information for more information). Once the home has been approved and placed in Accepted-Active status, the Vendor ID would be sent to BICS and the LDSS can begin making payments.

The Home Study and the FRS

The Home Study is a narrative summary of all of the information gathered on the prospective foster parents and household members, based on information provided on the application, personal interviews, family assessment, home site inspection, external record checks, etc. A home study is required for home certification or approval and must be completed in compliance with the certification criteria set forth in NYS regulations, Part 443 of the Social Service Law. In addition to age, medical, CHRC, SCR, employment and marital status, other factors that must be assessed by the caseworker and addressed in the home study include:

- the character of the prospective foster parents;
- ability and motivation to care for foster children;
- understanding of the role and responsibility in relation to the foster child, the agency, and the child's birth family;

- psychological readiness to assume responsibility for a child and ability to provide for a child's physical and emotional needs;
- attitudes of household members regarding foster care; and
- understanding of child development and approach to disciplining children.

Home Study narratives must comply with the standards set forth in 18 NYCRR Part 443. For further clarification on items you must cover in the Home Study, refer to New York State foster care regulations (18 NYCRR Part 443) and consult with your supervisor.

The Home Study in the FRS

Home Study narratives must be completed in CONNECTIONS. The **Home Study Narrative** tab in the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) is the primary tool for creating the Home Study narrative. The FRS can be accessed via three tasks on the *Task List*. How you access the FRS affects your ability to edit and view home study narratives. (See *Module 3: Managing Your Workload*.)

For information on Interim Home Studies refer to *Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS*.

In this module, we will focus on how to create the initial Home Study narrative. To initiate a Home Study narrative, click on the **Home Study** task on the *Task List* (see *Module 3: Managing Your Workload* for more information about the **New**, **Use Prior**, and **Detail** buttons on the *Task List*).

If you click on the **Use Prior** button, you cannot change the option format of the narrative

The **Home Study** tab is divided into two main sections:

- **Reason(s) for the Home Study** — You will complete this section first. Choose the reason you are creating the home study narrative, and click on the Save button before moving to the Home Study Narrative.
- **Home Study Narrative** — This section contains a listing of three options for Home Study narrative format. Use the radio button to select **Standard Home Study**, **MAPP/GPS Home Study**, or "**Other**." The "Other" option is a blank template that is available to all users. This area can used to paste a Home Study that has been completed according to an agency template.

For Help using the **Home Study Narrative** tab, minimize your document and click on **the Help on Narratives** button.

Once selections are made on the Home Study Narrative, the **Retrieve/Edit Narrative** button is used to generate the Home Study narrative in Microsoft Word.

When the FRS is approved, the Home Study and Annual Reauthorization documents are “frozen” and cannot be modified. Frozen documents are associated with their approval events and can be printed at any time.

These documents are formatted in two parts:

Part 1 is the formal document, which is given to the foster parents.

Part 2 contains supporting information, such as worker/contacts notes, supervisor comments and the FAD checklist. This part is *not* given to the foster parents; it is retained in the external case record.

Step by Step:
Beginning an Initial Home Study Narrative

1 On the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate FAD home/stage, and click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

2 Select the **Home Study** task, and click on the **New** button.
The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) displays.

3 Click on the **Home Study Narrative** tab.

4 In the Reason(s) for Home Study section, click in the box next to **Initial Home Study**.
A check mark displays in the box.

5 Click on the **Save** button to record this selection.

6 Click on the **OK** button in response the following message: *“Changes have been saved.”*

7 Under the Home Study Narrative section, select the appropriate Home Study template by clicking in the corresponding radio button. Choose **Standard Home Study**, **MAPP/GPS Home Study**, or “**Other**.”

8 Click on the **Retrieve/Edit Narrative** button.
A Microsoft Word template of the Home Study narrative is generated.

9 Record home study information.

10 When you have finished entering information, click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
*The **Home Study Narrative** tab displays.*

11 Click on the **Yes** button in response to the following message: *“Save Changes?”*.

For information on how to copy and paste information in the Home Study Narrative, see *Module 2: Getting Started in CONNECTIONS*.

The Home Study can be recorded and saved incrementally.

Step by Step:
Modifying an Existing Home Study

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate FAD home/stage, and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Home Study** task, and click on the **Detail…** button.
   The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) displays.
3. Click on the **Home Study Narrative** tab.
4. Click on the **Retrieve/Edit Narrative** button.
   A Microsoft Word template of the Home Study narrative is generated.
5. Record/modify home study information.
6. When you have finished entering information, click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
   The following message displays: "Save Changes?"
7. Click on the **Yes** button to save recorded information.
   The Home Study Narrative tab displays.

The FAD Checklist Tab in the FRS

The FAD Completion Checklist is a listing of all of the tasks that need to be completed in the process of preparing a foster home for certification or approval. You can use this as a tool to review and track progress completing specific casework activities.

The **FAD Checklist** tab contains items listed in 18 NYCRR Part 443. Some of the items contained on the FAD Completion Checklist include:

- Receipt of completed application;
- Sworn statement on criminal convictions;
- Verification of personal references (at least 3);
- Verification of employment references;
- Foster/Adoptive Parent orientation completed;
- Key/Health/Safety/Physical Plan standards met; and
- Home Study written.

The FAD Checklist Tab is divided into two sections. These sections identify casework activities that occur during the Application Process, and those that occur during the Home Study Process. Additional lists of casework activities are located via the **Emergency**, **Reauth/Renewal**, and **Additional Items** buttons. The Additional Items checklist can be used at any time to record casework activities specific to your agency.

All of these listings of casework activities are associated with **Date** fields. These fields are used to record the date the associated casework activity was completed. If you record an incorrect date or record a date in the wrong field, click on the **Cancel** button; clicking on the **Save** button stores newly recorded information. You do not have to click on the **Save** button for each date you enter; you can enter multiple dates and click on Save when you are finished.

The **FAD Checklist** tab is also used when working with Emergency Homes (see *Module 20: Certified and Approved Emergency Homes*) and when performing the annual recertifications and reapprovals (*See Module 14: Recertification of FAD Homes*).

Directions on how to access and record information in the **FAD Checklist** tab are detailed below.

Step by Step: Accessing and Recording Dates in the FAD Checklist Tab

1. From your *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate home and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Home Study** task and click on the **New, Detail…** or **Use Prior** button (if this is the first time accessing the FRS, only the **New** button will be enabled).
   The FRS displays.
3. Click on the **FAD Checklist** tab.
4. Record date information (format using month, day, year: 5/5/2005) in the appropriate section(s).
5. Click on the **Save** button to store information in CONNECTIONS.
6. Click on the **OK** button in response the following message:
   "Changes have been saved."
   Once the save is complete, you may move to another tab or close the FRS.
7. Click on the **Close** button to return to the *Task List*.

Decision: Determining Whether or Not to Recommend a FAD Home for Certification or Approval

As the primary caseworker responsible for completing the certification or approval process, you will make a recommendation to your supervisor or unit approver regarding whether or not a foster home should be approved or certified for the care of foster children.

Your decision should be based upon two types of information:

- the factual information you have collected regarding the prospective foster or adoptive parents (e.g., the application, CHRC results, Medical report, SCR Database Check, home site inspection); and
- your clinical/casework assessment, drawn from the interactions you have had with the prospective foster or adoptive parents (e.g., interviews you conducted while completing the home study, the applicants' interactions during training, references).

Both types of information will assist your supervisor or unit approver in making the decision to either accept or reject your recommendation regarding certification or approval.

Your decision for or against certification or approval must be consistent with New York State regulatory standards.

Throughout the course of the certification or approval process, you should have regular supervisory conferences to address the suitability of the prospective foster home.

See Printing a Formalized Home Study in *Module 9: Checking the Status of Approvals Submitted for FAD Homes* for details.

Per New York State foster care regulations, when an authorized agency decides to discontinue a home study, or to deny certification or approval upon completion of the home study, it must advise the applicant in writing of the reasons for the agency's decision and must offer an interview to discuss the decision. A plan to discontinue a home study or deny certification or approval for foster care must be reviewed and approved by one or more supervisory level personnel unless the home study was discontinued at the request of the applicant.

If certification or approval is denied due, in whole or in part, to the results of the SCR Database Check, the applicant must be informed of their right to request a hearing (18 NYCRR §443.2).

If the rejection is based upon the results of the CHRC, the applicant must be provided with a written statement that includes a summary of the criminal record history provided by OCFS (18 NYCRR §443.8).

Refer to New York State foster care regulations (18 NYCRR §443.8) and your supervisor for the complete steps you must take when a decision is made to deny certification or approval of a prospective foster home.

New York State foster care regulations require that foster parents be allowed to review and sign the completed and approved Home Study. A copy, with all required signatures, must be retained in the External Foster Home Case Record.

Submitting FAD Home Records for Approval

Once you have prepared the foster home for certification or approval, you must submit all certification and approval documentation to your supervisor or unit approver. This should include information maintained in the External Foster Home Case Record and information in the CONNECTIONS database.

Submission of a FAD home's record for certification or approval of the home should start from the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) in CONNECTIONS. One benefit of this process is that starting in the FRS provides the best way for you to review all information prior to submission.

Recording and saving any change in the *FRS* window enables the **SUBMIT** button whether or not all information (e.g., Home Study), is complete. Clicking on this button generates the *F/A Home License* window, which must be completed to finalize the submission.

If the **Submit** button is not enabled, review FRS tabs for missing licensing information, or you may need to enter the Home Study narrative, make a change in the FRS, save any changes and close it again.

The following messages may display upon trying to Save and Submit the Home License from the *F/A Home License* window if you are missing information:

"Fingerprint received date must exist for all person in the home over 18."

"The home must have at least one foster parent identified."

"A valid medical must be on file for all foster parents in the home."

"The home/facility must have a business address with a Vendor ID."

The directions for submitting the entire FRS for initial certification or approval are outlined below.

Step by Step:
Submitting a FAD Home/Stage for Certification/Approval

1. From Foster Adoptive Home Record Summary, click on the **Submit** button.
   The F/A Home License window displays.
2. If age ranges have not been recorded, record the minimum and maximum age ranges for male and female children for whom the home will be licensed to provide care by typing the numbers into the **Year** and **Month** fields or by using the up/down arrows for each field.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Home Study task>New, Use Prior or Detail button

The minimum age that can be recorded in CONNECTIONS is one month.

For children who are younger than one month old, record one month in the **Min. Month** field.

3 If the capacity has not been recorded, in the **Capacity** field (Placement Information section), record the number of children the home will be licensed to provide care for by typing the number into the field or using the up/down arrows.
*Once the capacity is recorded, the system automatically calculates the number of open slots. Since there is no placement yet in the home, the **Capacity** and **Open Slots** numbers will be the same. The **From Date** and **To Date** fields are automatically filled in by the system once the license has been approved; these date fields will reflect a one-year authorization period from the date of approval.*

> If the home that is being submitted for approval is an Out-of-State Foster Home with an Out-of-State address, you are not required to record medical exam dates or fingerprint results before the home can be submitted for approval.

4 Once all licensing information has been recorded and the Home Study is complete, click on the drop-down arrow for the **Status** field and select **Pending Acceptance** from the resulting list.

5 Click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Submit**.
*The To-Do Detail window displays. Your supervisor/unit approver's name displays in the **Assigned to** field.*

6 Record any relevant information in the **Description/Notes** field.

7 Click on the **Save** button.

8 Upon submission of the FRS, the status of the Home Study and Home License events change from PROC to PEND. Once the FRS is approved, the status will change to APRV. All information in the FRS is frozen, however as you open new FRS's you will have the option to use all previously recorded information (see New vs. Use Prior in *Module 3: Managing Your Workload*).

> If upon trying to save and submit the Home License you receive error messages, you must change the home status back to "Applicant" and navigate to each window to add the required information. Upon adding and saving the information, return to the *F/A Home License* window, change the status to "Pending Acceptance" and then Save/Submit.

Module 9:
Checking the Status of Approvals Submitted for FAD Homes

As the caseworker responsible for completing the certification or approval process for the foster home, you will be submitting the complete Foster and Adoptive Home Record (FRS) to your supervisor for review and approval. Upon review, the supervisor may approve or reject the certification or approval of the home.

CONNECTIONS provides methods for you to check the status of all submissions to your supervisor, and to view comments that may accompany the approval or rejection.

> Any action necessary to respond to supervisory comments should be taken in a timely fashion and the work resubmitted.

There are several ways to locate information about the status of approvals in CONNECTIONS:

- Via the *Event List*
- Via the *Approval Status* window
- Via the To Do List

This module begins by discussing the *Event List*, and then takes a closer look at the *Approval Status* window and the To-Do's generated by approvals/rejections. By the end of this module, you will be able to do the following:

- open the *Approval Status* window via the *Event List*;
- open the *Approval Status* window via the *F/A Home License* window;
- view information on the *Approval Status* window about the submission;
- qccess To-Do's from the *Staff To-Do List* to find more detail about approvals/rejections; and
- navigate from a Task To-Do to complete revisions and resubmit the FRS.

Event List

General information regarding the status of your submission is found on the *Event List (see also Module 3: Managing Your Workload).* The *Event List* displays the most recent case/stage events at the top of the list. The following information is provided for each event:

- Event Date
- Tx Date
- Type
- Stage
- Case ID
- Status
- Description
- Stage Name
- Caseworker Name.

Entries in the "Status" column of the *Event List* indicate the status of each event. Prior to supervisory review, the status column contains the code "PROC," which means it is "pending supervisory approval." The table below illustrates how the *Event List* changes as a supervisor completes an approval.

If the Submission is Approved…	**If the Submission is Rejected…**
• The status displayed on the *Event List* changes from "PROC" to "APRV." • You receive a system-generated alert on your *To-Do List* notifying you that the approval was completed.	• The status displayed on the *Event List* changes from "PROC" to "COMP." • The status change from PROC to COMP indicates that supervisor has completed the task of reviewing the submitted work. Since the status is not listed as APRV, it has been rejected. • You can open the *Approval Status* window (via the *F/A Home License* window or the *Event List*) to view comments from your supervisor regarding the rejection. • You receive a system-generated Task To-Do in your *To-Do List* notifying you of the rejection, and allowing you to navigate to the appropriate place to revise work and resubmit the FRS..

The Approval Status Window

CONNECTIONS provides a specific window that summarizes information about approvals and/or rejections submitted for supervisory review. This window, called the *Approval Status* window, lists each submission made for the FAD home. You can select each row/submission to view more information (including supervisory comments) about the approval or rejection.

Accessing the Approval Status Window

The *Approval Status* window can be accessed via the *Event List* and via the **Maintain Licensing Information** task. Instructions for both methods are below.

Step by Step:
Accessing the *Approval Status* Window via the *Event List*

1. In the *Assigned Workload*, click on the appropriate FAD home/stage.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select ***Event List…***
   The Event List displays for the selected home/stage.
3. Scan the *Event List* to locate the line containing the appropriate "Approve FRS/Home License Event" in the **Description** column.
4. Click on the appropriate Approve Home License event. The **Status** should read "COMP" to indicate the approval was completed.
   *The **Detail…** button enables.*
5. Click on the **Detail…** button to open the *Approval Status* window.
6. Select the appropriate approval status line in the Approval grid to view any comments recorded by the supervisor/Unit Approver.

> Note that the **Status** column uses several codes, including "COMP" (completed) and "APRV" (approved) and "PROC" (in process).

The *Approval Status* window can also be opened via the **Maintain Licensing Information** task. This path is convenient if you have been viewing or maintaining information on the *F/A Home License* window.

Step by Step:
Opening the *Approval Status* Window via the Maintain Licensing Information Task

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the FAD home/stage relating to the approval sent to the supervisor/unit approver.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Licensing Information** task.

4 Click on the **Detail…** button.
The F/A Home License window displays.

5 Click on the **No** button in response to the following message:
"Saving will invalidate pending approval. Continue in modify mode."
*Clicking on the **No** button enables you to access the window in view-only mode. Clicking on the **Yes** button invalidates the pending approval and opens the window in modify mode.*

6 In the F*/A Home License* window, click on the **Options** menu and select **Approval Status.**
The Approval Status window displays.

7 Select the appropriate approval status line in the Approval grid to view any comments recorded by the supervisor/Unit Approver.

Viewing Details on the Approval Status Window

The details of the approval action taken by your supervisor/unit approver are documented on the *Approval Status* window. If the approval is rejected, supervisory comments provide information about why the rejection occurred and what you are expected to do next.

You must highlight the approval event (this row also displays the supervisor's name) to check for and view any comments the supervisor entered for a completed approval or rejection. This also enables you to view the date and time the approval or rejection.

The *Approval Status* window lists the status of the approval using one the following identifiers:

Identifier	Description
PROC	The supervisor/unit approver has not addressed the approval.
APRV	The supervisor/unit approver accepted the work submitted.
REJT	The supervisor/unit approver rejected the work submitted (*in order to reject a submission, the supervisor must provide comments*).

Step by Step:
Viewing Supervisor/Unit Approver Comments

1. In the *Approval Status* window, click on the Approval Status line.
   *The fields below this line display information entered by the supervisor/unit approver (including the **Comments** field)*.
2. Click on the **File** menu and select **Print Screen**.
   The screen print will print to your default printer.
3. Click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
   The F/A Home License window displays.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button > Maintain Licensing Information task > Detail button > Options menu > Approval Status command

If the submission has been rejected, it is recommended that the worker obtain a screen print of the supervisor/unit approver's comments as an aid in making corrections to the appropriate tasks.

Using the To-Do List to Check the Status of Approvals

The *Staff To-Do List* is another way that CONNECTIONS allows you to keep track of the work you submit to your supervisor. When a supervisor completes the task of approving or rejecting a submission, CONNECTIONS automatically sends either an Alert To-Do or a Task To-Do to the primary caseworker for the FAD home.

The type of To-Do sent by CONNECTIONS is dependent on the determination made by the supervisor.

The table below shows the association between determination and type of To-Do sent:

See *Module 3: Managing Your Workload*, for information about accessing the *Staff To Do List*, reviewing the *To-Do Detail* window, and navigating with Task To-Do's.

Decision Made by Supervisor	To-Do Generated by CONNECTIONS
Approve the Submission	Alert To-Do
Reject the Submission	Task To-Do

Supervisor comments can be viewed by selecting the appropriate To-Do and clicking on the **Detail** button at the bottom of the *Staff To-Do List* window. For rejections, the receipt of a Task To-Do allows you to easily navigate to the task-related window that requires attention. This streamlines the process of making corrections and resubmitting the FAD home for approval.

Following Rejection or Approval of the FRS

When Foster Home Certification or Approval Has Been Rejected

Certification or approval of a foster home may be rejected if the home does not meet the regulatory standards set forth in 18 NYCRR Part 443. If certification or approval is denied, proper notification procedures must be followed.

Authorizing agencies must provide the applicant with a written statement setting forth the reason(s) for denial. For information on additional procedures that must be followed, see the table below.

Rejection due to…	Refer to…
Results of the SCR Database Check	18 NYCRR §443.2(b)(9)
Results of the CHRC	18 NYCRR §443.8 00 OCFS ADM-4
Findings in the Home Study	18 NYCRR §443.2(c)

When Foster Home Certification or Approval Has Been Accepted

If an application for home certification or approval meets all health and safety standards, and is approved by a supervisor, the home is progressed to Accepted-Active status.

Fully certified and approved foster parents must execute an agreement with the authorized agency, referred to as the Foster Parent Agreement. In signing this agreement, the prospective foster parents acknowledge their intent to provide the following (*this is not a complete list; see 18 NYCRR §443(b) for more information*):

- a family atmosphere of acceptance, kindness and understanding;
- an educational plan for school-age children;
- a safe home environment with proper supervision;
- appropriate food, served at regular hours and sufficient in quantity;
- appropriate clothing for all seasons; and
- a home that is accessible to authorized representatives of the agency.

In certain circumstances an application for certification or approval may be granted after the authorizing agency has been notified of either of the following:

- that the applicant is the subject of an indicated child abuse or maltreatment report on file with the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment; or
- the prospective or existing foster parent or any other person over the age of 18 who is currently residing in the home of the prospective or existing foster parent has a criminal history record. If an agency certifies a Foster Home with a criminal history record, a Safety Assessment must be documented within the FRS.

If either of these situations occurs, the reasons why the applicant was determined to be appropriate and acceptable to receive a foster care placement *must* be documented in the External Foster Home Case Record [see 18 NYCRR §443.2(f)].

Completed home study narratives contain a page referred to as a "signature page." Signatures are required on Home Study narratives to indicate that the involved parties have read the document and are in agreement about the contents of the narrative. Home Study narratives should contain the signatures of the prospective foster parent(s) and the caseworker.

In order to generate and produce a Home Study narrative that includes a signature page, you need to access the approved Home Study.

Step by Step:
Printing the Formalized Home Study

1. From the *Assigned Workload*, select the FAD stage.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Event List…** command.
   The Event List for this home displays.
3. Click on the Home Study event to select it.
   *The **Description** reads, "Home Study."*
4. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The Formalized Home Study displays in .pdf (Adobe Acrobat) format.
5. Click on the **Print** button.
   The Print window displays.
6. Click on the **OK** button.
7. Click on the **Close** button to close the Home Study.
   The Event List displays.
8. Click on the **Close** button to close the *Event List.*
   The Assigned Workload displays.

Module 10:
F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters

Certificates and Letters

State and federal regulations require authorizing agencies to issue a Certificate to Board (also referred to as the F/A Home Certificate) or Letter of Approval to homes that have successfully met all certification and approval criteria, and are ready to board and care for foster children. These Certificates and Approval Letters list important licensing information about the home, including (but not limited to): the names of the foster parents, dates of authorization, and information about the children accepted in the home. Certificates and Approval Letters should not be issued until the foster parents have reviewed and signed the Foster Parent Agreement.

> A home may have a **Setting** of "Foster Home "and a **Status** of "Emergency." Although an Emergency home is able to board and care for foster children it *does not* receive either an F/A Home Certificate or an Approval Letter.

A copy of the F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter must be given to the foster parents when the home is certified or approved. If changes occur during the license/approval year, a new Certificate or Approval Letter must be given to the foster and adoptive parents. Certificates and approval letters generated after a foster parent has been removed from the FAD home via the **Remove Person – Left Home** function (see Module 11: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS) do not show the former foster parent as a current member of the foster home. Foster parents are required by state regulations to have a copy of the certificate/approval letter in the home for examination by authorized personnel on request.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- generate, view and print an F/A Home Certificate; and
- generate, view and print an Approval Letter.

Certificate to Board (F/A Home Certificate)

A certificate to board permits an individual to receive remuneration from an authorized agency for the care and board of a child under the age of 18 years, or under the age of 21 years who is actively participating in an educational/vocational program and who entered foster care prior to his/her 18th birthday. Such a certificate may be issued by the public or private authorized agency purchasing such care
[18 NYCRR §443.1(b)].

A home that has a **Setting** of "Foster Home" and a Facility Type of either "Certified Foster Home" or "Foster/Adoptive Home" must receive an F/A Home Certificate (a.k.a. Certificate to Board) once the certification has been approved by a supervisor or unit approver. The home must be in **Accepted-Active** status in order for you to generate the certificate in CONNECTIONS.

The following instructions describe how to generate and print an F/A Home Certificate.

Step by Step:
Generating and Printing the F/A Home Certificate

1. From the *Assigned Workload*, click on the name of a FAD home/stage, making sure it is a Certified Foster Home or Foster/Adoptive Home.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks …**button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Licensing Information** task.
4. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The F/A Home License window displays.
5. Click on the **Forms** menu and select **F/A Home Certificate**.
   The F/A Home Certificate displays as a Microsoft Word document.
6. Review the F/A Home Certificate for accuracy.
7. Click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
   The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.
8. Click on the **OK** button to print.
9. To close the certificate, click on **File** on the menu and select **Close**.
   The F/A Home License window displays.
10. Click on the **Save** button to generate an event in CONNECTIONS.
    *The **Save** button enables on the F/A Home Licensing window only if the home is a Certified Foster Home or Foster/Adoptive Home.*

Foster Parents must be added to the FAD home/stage and identified with the **Rel/Int** code "Foster Parent" in order to generate a Certificate or Approval Letter.

The Approval Letter

A Letter of Approval permits a relative within the second or third degree of the parent(s) or stepparent(s) of a foster child to receive remuneration from an authorized agency for the care at board of a child under the age of 18 years, or under the age of 21 years who is actively participating in an educational/vocational program and who entered foster care prior to the age of 18 years [18 NYCRR §443.1(d)].

This letter is enabled for homes with a setting of "Foster Home" *only* when the Facility Type of the *F/A Home License* window is set to "Approved Relative Home" and the home is in Accepted-Active status, otherwise the **Approval Letter** command is disabled.

State regulations allow authorizing agencies to request (in writing) an exception for Approved Relative Foster Homes. An exception, if granted, can be documented on the Approval Letter. An exception refers to an arrangement made outside of the state regulations governing foster boarding homes.

Only Approved Relative Foster Homes may request exceptions. The exception will be granted only if the arrangement is necessary to board a child and is consistent with the health, safety and welfare of the child. Certified Foster Homes and Foster/Adoptive Homes are *not* eligible for exceptions.

Step by Step:
Generating and Printing the Approval Letter

1. From the *Assigned Workload*, click on the name of the home/stage, making sure it is an Approved Relative Foster Home.
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
3. Click on the **Maintain Licensing Information** task.
4. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The F/A Home License displays.
5. Click on the **Forms** menu and select **Approval Letter**.
   The Approval Letter displays as a Microsoft Word document. Review the letter for accuracy.
6. Click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
   The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.
7. Click on the **OK** button to print.
8. To close the Approval Letter, click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
9. Click on the **Save** button to generate an event in CONNECTIONS.
   *The **Save** button enables on the F/A Home Licensing window only if the home is a Certified Foster Home or Foster/Adoptive Home.*

Relatives must be added to the FAD home/stage and identified with the **Rel/Int** code "Foster Parent" in order to generate a Certificate or Approval Letter.

Workers do not record the relative's actual relationship to the child (e.g., Aunt).

Module 11:
FAD Reports

In the past five modules, we have followed the casework activities involved in creating a foster or adoptive home and progressing it through the certification/approval process. Although the home is now in **Accepted-Active** status, foster and adoptive casework is still required to maintain the home (*see also Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS*).

You can generate reports in CONNECTIONS to track the progress of a home/stage and generate mandatory forms for foster or adoptive parents. Some reports are located in the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS), and others are located through using the *Task List*.

In this module, we will look at these two general methods for finding reports. Then we will outline each report and provide instruction on how to generate, view and print them in CONNECTIONS. By the end of the module, you will be able to generate, view and print the following reports:

- FAD Home Information via the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS)
- F/A Home Member Training Log Report
- Event History Report
- Approval Report
- F/A Home Information Report
- Corrective Action Plan
- Serious Incident Report
- Waiver/Exception Report

In NYC, ACS has its own FAD Inquiry Tool that provides reports, summaries and exceptions.

Contact Javier Vega at (212) 341-2808 for more information (as of 9/18/02).

Your agency Data Warehouse contact can help you obtain other reports, such as a listing of the foster homes for your agency and foster parent reports.

Generating Reports Using the FRS

CONNECTIONS utilizes a specific window, the *Generate Report* window, to organize the printing of information displayed in the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). The *Generate Report window* lists the sections of the FRS that can be printed, and includes an option for printing the entire FRS. The *Generate Report* window is accessed via the **Generate Report** button, which is always visible at the bottom of the FRS window. Clicking on this button opens the *Generate Reports* window.

The first option displayed on the *Generate Report* window, is "All Tabs." Selecting this option and clicking on the **OK** button generates a report of all the information that is displayed in the FRS.

Under the "All Tabs" option is a listing of each section of the FRS that can be printed. These options include:

- Home Demographics;
- Licensing Information;
- Household Member Detail;
- Home History Events;
- Agency/Worker Information;
- Home Study Narrative;
- Annual Reauthorization Narrative;
- FAD Checklist; and
- Contacts.

You may choose one or more of these options to view and print. Click on the **OK** button to generate the report. All reports in the FRS open in the Adobe Acrobat Reader application. Once the report displays you may print the report.

The instructions for accessing the Generate Report window and printing a document are as follows:

Step by Step:
Accessing the Generate Report Window in the FRS

1 On the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate FAD home/stage and click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

2 Select the appropriate task to access the FRS (either the Home Study, Annual Reauthorization, or View FAD Record Summary task), and click on the **Detail** button.
*The **Detail** button does not always enable, in this instance use the **New** or **Use Prior** button.*

Refer to Module 3: Managing Your Workload for help deciding which task to use for accessing the FRS.

3 Click on the **Generate Report** button at the bottom of the FRS window.
The Generate Report window displays.

4. Select the type of information you would like to print (e.g., All Tabs).
5. Click on the **OK** button.
   Adobe Acrobat Reader opens, displaying the selected information in a formatted report.
6. Click on the **Print** button in the lower left corner of the window.
   Your selection will print.
7. Click on the **Close** button in the lower right corner of the document window, to return to the *Generate Report* window.
8. Click on the **Cancel** button in the lower right corner of the *Generate Report* window, to return to the FRS.

Additional CONNECTIONS Reports

The F/A Home Member Training Log Report

The F/A Home Member Training Log Report is a listing of all the trainings that the prospective foster parent or other family members has attended and the total number of training hours completed. This data can help determine if an applicant or current foster or adoptive parent has completed the required trainings for certification/approval or recertification/reapproval.

The F/A Home Member Training Log Report can be used to support the requirements for the approval of specialized/exceptional foster boarding home payment for children with special needs.

Step by Step:
Generating the F/A Home Member Training Log Report

1. Click on the appropriate FAD home in the *Assigned Workload*.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Person** task.
4. Click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.

Refer to “Accessing Reports from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar” on page 11-6.

5. Click on the person for whom you will generate the report.
6. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Home Member Training List/Detail…**
   The F/A Home Member Training window displays.
7. Click on the **Reports** menu and select **F/A Home Training Log Report**.
   The following message displays:
   “The report has been launched. Check Report List window.”
8. Click on the **OK** button.
9. To close the *F/A Home Member Training List/Detail* window, click on the **Cancel** button.
   The Person List displays.

The Event History Report

The Event History Report is a report of all events that have taken place with the home/stage over the course of its history in the system. It also displays the staff member's name and agency.

The Event History Report is generated from the *Event List*. This window can be opened via either the *Assigned Workload* or the *Task List*. The directions below instruct you on how to open the report via the *Assigned Workload*.

Step by Step:
Generating the Event History Report
(via the *Assigned Workload*)

1. Click on the appropriate FAD home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select ***Event List…***
   The Event List displays.
3. Click on the **Reports** menu and select **Event History…**
   The following message displays:
   "The report has been launched. Check Report List window."
4. Click on the **OK** button.
   The Event List displays.

Refer to "Accessing Reports from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar" on page 11-6.

The Approval Report

The Approval Report provides information about events that have been approved by a supervisor or unit approver. This report is generated from the *Approval Status* window and contains a listing of events requiring approval, the approver's name for each event and the current status of the home/stage following the approval.

Step by Step:
Generating the Approval Report

1. Click on the appropriate home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Licensing Information** task.
4. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The F/A Home License window displays.
5. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Approval Status…**
   The Approval Status window displays.
6. Click on the **Forms** menu and select **Approval Form**.
   The Approval Report displays as a Microsoft Word document.

7 Review the information.

8 To print the document, click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.

9 Click on the **OK** button to print.

10 To close the document, click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
The Approval Status window displays.

The F/A Home Information Report

The F/A Home Information Report compiles information from the *Home Demographics* window, the *F/A Home License* window, the *Maintain Person* window and the *Close Home* window (*see Module 15: Closing FAD Homes*), if applicable. This report is helpful if the worker needs a specific summary of current information for the home (e.g., the expiration date of the certification or approval).

Step by Step:
Generating the F/A Home Information Report

1 Click on the appropriate FAD home on the *Assigned Workload*.
*The **Tasks…** button enables.*

2 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

3 Click on the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task.

4 Click on the **Detail…** button.
The Home Demographics window displays.

Refer to "Accessing Reports from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar" on page 11-6.

5 Click on the **Reports** menu and select **F/A Home Information Report**.
The following message displays:
"The report has been launched. Check Report List window."

6 Click on the **OK** button.

7 To close the *Home Demographics* window, click on the **Cancel** button.
The Task List displays.

Viewing FAD Reports

Once any of the reports discussed in this section have been launched, you need to open the *Report List* window in order to view and (if applicable) print the report. The *Report List* window consists of the following columns:

Status Indicates whether the report is pending, done, or in error.

- DONE – report has been generated and can be viewed and (if applicable) printed
- PEND – report is still generating; either refresh the window by clicking on the **Refresh** button, or close the *Report List* window and try again in a few minutes. You need to wait for the report to generate fully before you can view it.
- ERR – an error has occurred; report must be re-launched.

Report Name Displays the name of the report launched.

Report Description Displays the name of the F/A home.

Gen Date Displays the date the report was generated.

Purge Date Displays the date the report will drop off the report list if report is not viewed.

Output Displays the application used to view the report.

The footer contains three buttons:

Open Displays the selected report.

Refresh Refreshes the *Report List* window to display new reports that have been received since the last time the *Report List* was opened or refreshed. New reports do not automatically display on the *Report List* window if it is open at the time of the assignment. It is necessary to refresh your *Report List* window for these reports to appear.

Close Closes the *Report List* window.

The directions for how to view and print the reports are listed below.

Step by Step:
Accessing Reports from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar

1. Click on the **RPRTS** button on the far right side of the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Report List displays.
2. Confirm that the **Status** column reads “Done” for the report you want to view.
   *If it isn’t, refresh the window by clicking on the **Refresh** button, or close the Report List and try again in a few minutes. You need to wait for the report to launch fully before you can view it.*

3 Select the report and click on the **Open** button.
The report displays as a Microsoft Word document.

4 Click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.

5 Click on the **OK** button to print.

6 Click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
The Report List displays.

7 To close the *Report List*, click on the **Close** button.

Opening the report from the Report List removes the removes the report from the list. The report can be regenerated if needed.

Reports on the FAD Task List

The reports listed below can be accessed from the *Task List* of each FAD home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*. The use of these reports is not required by OCFS. In many parts of New York State, these forms have been well developed by local districts and voluntary agencies to include an even higher level of detail than the reports in CONNECTIONS. However, many users still find these forms to be useful in documenting special circumstances in foster parent supervision.

Corrective Action Plan — This report can be used to document when a foster parent(s) or foster home is out of compliance with items outlined in New York State Foster Care Regulations (18 NYCRR). It includes a section where the user can describe the plan agreed upon to reconcile the issue, and a section for the signatures of all parties involved.

Serious Incident Report — This report can be used to document incidents that cause or potentially cause harm to the foster child. Examples include physical injuries, and discipline issues.

Waiver/Exception — This request form can be used to document a request to waive certain state regulations, such as the limit on child capacity in the home.

These reports can be accessed by selecting the appropriate report on the *Task List* window and clicking on the **New…**button (or the **Detail…** button if information was previously recorded). The *Output Launch* window displays.

Step by Step:
Accessing Reports from the FAD Task List Window

1 Click on the appropriate FAD home on the *Assigned Workload*.
*The **Tasks…** button enables.*

2 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List window displays.

3 Click on the appropriate report form (**Corrective Action Plan, Serious Incident Report, or Waiver/Exception**).
*The **New…** button enables. For existing reports, the **Detail…** button enables.*

4 Click on the **New…** button (or the **Detail…** button if information has been previously recorded).
*The Output Launch window displays. If a report has been started and saved click on the **Detail** button.*

Viewing Reports from the FAD Task List window

The window contains a title bar and a standard menu bar with the File, Edit Options, Help, commands. The window contains two system populated fields:

Output Type	Displays the report selected from the *Task List*.
Date Last Updates	This field is only system populated with the date for existing reports. The field remains blank until the new report is saved and/or submitted.

The footer contains three buttons and a checkbox:

Document	Displays the report selected.
Document check box	A checkmark indicates that a report was saved.
Save	Saves all updates.
Cancel	Closes the *Output Launch* window.

Step by Step: Accessing Reports from the FAD Task List Window

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>desired report task (Corrective Action Plan, Serious Incident Report, or Waiver/Exception) > New or Detail button

1. On the *Output Launch* window, click on the **Document** button.
   The selected report displays as a Microsoft Word document.
2. Review and/or record the information.
3. To print the document, click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
   The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.
4. Click on the **OK** button to print.
5. To close the document, click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
   The Output Launch window displays.
6. Click on the **Output Complete** check box.
   A check mark displays. If the check box is not checked, you will be able to save but not submit the report for approval.
7. Click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Submit**.
   *The To-Do Detail window displays with the name of the appropriate Approver in the **Assigned To** field. Proceed to Step 8 if complete. The name of the Approver can be changed by clicking on the **Staff** button, entering the new Approver's name, clicking on the **Search** button, and selecting the Approver from the resulting Staff List.*
8. Click on the **Save** button.
   The To Do and Output Launch windows close and the Task List displays.

Click on the **Save** button to save the report without submitting it for approval.

Module 12:
Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS

Throughout the life cycle of a foster home, changes may occur that require you to modify or update information in CONNECTIONS. These changes may include (but are not limited to):

- a change in foster family composition (e.g., foster mother has a baby);
- marriage or divorce of foster parents; or
- a change of address.

The CONNECTIONS system preserves historical information while accepting and organizing new data related to the FAD Home (e.g., names, addresses and phone numbers). Previously recorded information does not need to be deleted to record changes. In fact, it is very important that you *do not delete* information from the home/stage —all information recorded is essential to the home's history.

CONNECTIONS contains several functions that work to preserve historical information. One function is called *end dating*. End dating is available on several windows, (including the *Address List/Detail*, *Phone List/Detail* and *A.K.A. Name List/Detail* windows), and allows you to show the exact date that a specific change in status has occurred. Two other commands allow you to identify when and why an individual is removed from the *Person List*. These functions are: **Remove Person – Left Home**, and **Remove Person – Added in Error**.

Additionally, features such as the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS), the **F/A Home History Detail** task, and the *Historical Person List* provide comprehensive views of current and historical information pertaining to the FAD Home.

The functions noted above are just a few of many. Organizing FAD Home Maintenance into three types helps to present a clear picture of how CONNECTIONS can support changes to home and person information. These types are:

- Maintaining Person Information for Open FAD Homes;
- Maintaining Home Information for Open FAD Homes; and
- Maintaining Closed FAD Homes/Stages.

This module will provide you with instruction on using CONNECTIONS to support documentation of changes pertaining to foster homes found on the *Assigned Workload*. The Maintenance of Closed FAD Homes is discussed in *Module 16: Maintaining Closed FAD Homes/Stages*.

By the end of the module, you will be able to:

- change a Primary name for an individual;
- change a Primary address for an individual;
- change a Primary phone number for an individual;
- remove an individual from a FAD Home/Stage;
- utilize the Person Merge and Person Split functions;
- view and edit information in the Household Member Detail Tab of the FRS;
- view historical person information;

- make changes to home demographic information;
- complete an Interim Home Study;
- convert an Approved Relative Foster Home to a Certified/Approved Foster Home;
- maintain Stage (Case) Name/CD Consistency; and
- view Historical information about a FAD Home.

Maintaining Person Information

Changing a Primary Address

A change of address for any person residing in a foster home (except for foster children age 18 and older) is considered a major status change that must be documented in an Interim Home.

When an individual is leaving a foster home, it is recommended that you make changes to the address *prior to* using the Remove Person Functions (see this section) to complete the removal. Once the removal is complete, you will not have the necessary access to update address information.

CONNECTIONS will automatically assign an *End Date* to the former primary address, once a new address has been recorded and the **Primary** check box selected. The new primary address has a new Start Date, and the End Date column will be empty.

If an individual leaves the FAD home and a new address is not yet known, you may select the address line and click on the **Set End Date** button to indicate that the individual no longer lives in the FAD home.

Step by Step:
Changing a Person's Primary Address

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate home/stage you need to update.
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Person** task.
4. Click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
5. Click on the name of the person to be updated.
6. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Address List/Detail…**
   The Address List/Detail window displays.
7. Click on the **Primary** check box to select it.
8. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Type** field and select the appropriate type.
9. Record the corrected or changed address information.
10. Click on the **Validate** button.
    The address validation window displays.
11. Verify the accuracy of the address listed in the address validation window. Click on the **Yes** button to accept the validated address, if appropriate.
    The Address List/Detail window displays.
12. Click on the **Add** button to add the corrected or changed information to the list section at the top of the window.
13. Verify that the information is correct. Click on the **Save** button.
    The Person List displays.

If entire family moves updating the Interim Home Study and the Home Demographics window updates all household members' information. For more information on Interim Home Study, turn to page 12-22.

Changing a Primary Phone Number

CONNECTIONS preserves all phone number changes as a historical record. The system automatically assigns an *end date* to the former primary phone number when a new primary phone number is recorded. The new primary phone number will have a new Start Date and the End Date column will be empty. Necessary corrections to the primary phone number are recorded in the *Phone List/Detail* window and can be viewed on the Foster Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). Details can be found in this module, in the section "Viewing and Editing Person Information in the FRS."

Step by Step:
Changing a Person's Primary Phone Number

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate home/stage you need to update.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Person** task.
4. Click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
5. Click on the name of the appropriate person to select it.
6. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Phone List/Detail…**
   The Phone List/Detail window displays.
7. Click on the **Primary** check box to select it.
   A √displays in the check box.
8. Record the corrected or changed phone information.
9. Click on the **Add** button.
   The added information transfers to the list section at the top of the window.
10. Verify that the information displayed is accurate.
11. Click on the **Save** button.
    The Person List displays.

When updating the foster home telephone number using *Home Demographics* window updates all other household members' telephone number.

Changing a Primary Name

The need for a name change in CONNECTIONS may be precipitated by the marriage or divorce of the foster parent(s). When this occurs, information in CONNECTIONS must be updated.

CONNECTIONS preserves all primary name changes as an historical record available to be searched on in the Person Search section of the CONNECTIONS database.

A change to the household composition requires the completion of an Interim Home Study.

See page 12-22 for more information.

Name changes affecting the primary name of a foster parent require that a new F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter be generated and sent to the foster parent(s).

AKA Name Information can also be viewed in the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). Details can be found in this module, in the section "Viewing and Editing Person Information in the FRS."

Changing a person's Primary name *does not* change the **Stage/Case** name (the FAD home/stage name).

See page 12-20 for more information.

Step by Step: Changing a Person's Primary Name

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the appropriate home/stage you need to update.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Maintain Person** task.
4. Click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
5. In the *Person List*, click on the name of the person for whom you want to record information.
6. Click on the **Options** menu and select **A.K.A. Name List/Detail…**
   The A.K.A. Name List/Detail window displays.
7. Type the name you want to add in the appropriate fields in the Name Information section at the bottom of the window.
8. Click on the **Primary** check box to select it.
   A √displays in the check box; this identifies your entry as the Primary name to be used in CONNECTIONS.
9. Click on the **Add** button.
   The new primary name displays in the list section at the top of the window.
10. Verify that the information in the list section is accurate. The historical Primary name should have an End Date. The new Primary name should have a red check mark in the **P** (Primary) column and a Start Date**.** It should *not* have an End Date.
11. Click on the **Save** button.
    The Person List displays with the new Primary name. The new Primary name also displays in the Person Detail window.

The changing of martial status (e.g. married to divorce) changes the household composition. An *Interim Home Study* is required.

See page 12-22 for more information.

Removing a Person from a Stage

As we mentioned in the introduction to this module, CONNECTIONS contains features that allow for the removal of an individual from a FAD Home. Removal may be necessary for a variety of reasons. A foster parent or a family member to the foster parent may decide to move out of the foster home. An 18 year old (or older) foster child may decide to leave the home. Or, an individual may have been entered in error.

In some situations, you will want the information retained in the CONNECTIONS database, to show that the individual did reside in the home for a period of time. In a situation where the person has been added in error, there is no need to retain the person information in the system.

The **Remove Person – Left Home** function removes an individual from a FAD home, while maintaining the person's record in the database and preserving an historical record of that individual in the home.

The **Remove Person – Added in Error** function removes an individual from the home, but does not maintain an historical record of the individual's involvement with the home. This feature requires the user to have a special security attribute, "Remove person – Added in Error."

Remove Person —Left Home

The **Remove Person – Left Home** function can be used to record that an individual left a FAD home. It is just one of the updates you will make in CONNECTIONS when there is a change in household composition. A change to the household composition requires the completion of an Interim Home Study (see page 12-22).

Once the removal is complete, the individual's name will not be on the *Person List* or in the Household Member Detail Tab of the FRS.

However, CONNECTIONS will preserve an historical record noting that this individual spent time living in this FAD Home. Home history reports and historical foster home certificates will include individuals who were living in the FAD home, as applicable.

Remember that changes to address, phone number and any other person information should be made *prior to* using the **Remove Person — Left Home** command.

Step by Step:
Remove Person – Left Home

1. Select the appropriate FAD home/stage from the *Assigned Workload* and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Click on the **Maintain Person Information** task.
3. Click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
4. Click on the name of the person to be removed from the home.

5 Click on the **Options** menu.
A menu displays.

6 Select the **Remove Person – Left Home** command.
The following message displays: "Are you sure you want to Remove Person – Left Home?"

7 Click on the **Yes** button to remove the person from the FAD stage.
*Click on the **No** button to cancel the Remove Person – Left Home function.*

An *Interim Home Study* is required for changes to household composition.

See page 12-22 for more information.

Remove Person — Added in Error

The **Remove Person – Added in Error** function can be used to remove an individual who was added or related to a FAD home/stage in error. Unlike the Remove Person – Left Home feature, this command removes information from the stage and from the CONNECTIONS database. Because this is so final, certain precautions are necessary.

Not every CONNECTIONS user has the ability to use this feature. You need a specific that security profile that includes the REMOVE PERSON —ADDED IN ERROR Business Function. Additionally, you must have an assigned role in the FAD stage, or be in the primary worker's unit hierarchy.

A Note About Relating

Depending on when you realize a person has been related in error, you may have already "updated" the person's information in CONNECTIONS.

It is your responsibility to restore the correct person information *before* using the Remove Person function. If you have made changes since relating the person, the following message displays:

"Changes made to Person in this stage should be reset before continuing."

The following message displays prior to removing the person added in error:

Changes to restore person information must be made prior to removing the individual from your *Person List*. You will not have the necessary access to make changes once the removal is complete.

"Are you sure you want to Remove Person – Added in Error?"

Step by Step:
Remove Person – Added in Error

1 Select the appropriate FAD home/stage from the *Assigned Workload* and click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

2 Click on the **Maintain Person Information** task.

3 Click on the **List…** button.
The Person List displays.

4 Click on the name of the person to be removed from the home.

5 Click on the **Options** menu.
A menu displays.

6 Select the **Remove Person – Added in Error** command.
The following message displays:
"Are you sure you want to Remove Person – Added in Error?"
If person was related, the following message displays:
"Changes made to Person in this stage should be reset before continuing."
*Click on the **OK** button.*

> You must have the REMOVE PERSON – ADDED IN ERROR Business Function Profile (BFP) to use this CONNECTIONS feature.

7 Click on the **Yes** button to remove the person from the FAD stage.
*Click on the **No** button to cancel the Remove Person – Added in Error function.*

The Impact of the Remove Person – Added in Error Function

Once the person removal is complete, the following events happen:

Person Information: The individual's name will not appear on the *Person List* or in the Household Member Detail Tab of the FRS. Person information for that individual is completely removed from the FAD Home/Stage and no historical association to the home is maintained in CONNECTIONS.

***Event List*:** Additionally, a *Remove Person – Added in Error Event* is created. It includes an event description the indicates the Person ID (PID) has been removed from the stage. The event description reads: *"<PID> was removed from stage."*

System Purge: Individuals removed via the **Remove Person – Added in Error** function are purged from the database after 60 days, as long as they are not associated with any other cases.

To Do: An Alert To-Do also is generated to all workers assigned to an open stage involving the removed person. The description column reads:

"<Name> (<PID>) was removed from <Stage Name> (<Stage ID>)."

The Impact of the Remove Person – Left Home Function

The **Remove Person – Left Home** feature is significant because it allows a person to be removed from the current listing of household residents, while retaining information about their presence in the home in a historical record — the *Historical Person List*. Once the person removal is complete, that information is retained in the Historical Person List for the FAD home/stage.

> For more information about the *Historical Person List*, turn to page 12-17.

If an historical record does exist for FAD home, the following message displays in the lower left side of the *Person List*: *"Historical records exist."*

Effects of Historical Persons on Foster Home Certificates and Approval Letters

The **Remove Person – Left Home** function described on page 12-6 affects the historical record of a FAD home, including certificates and approval letters.

When an individual is removed from a FAD home with the **Remove Person – Left Home** function, the historical certificate or approval letter retains that person's name in a "frozen" historical document if the person was coded as the Foster Parent. This helps ensure that the historical home certificate or approval letter reflects accurate information for the historical period represented by that document.

Certificates and approval letters generated after an individual has been removed from the FAD home via the **Remove Person – Left Home** function do not show the person as a member of the foster home.

For information on accessing Historical F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters, see *Module 16: Historical F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters*.

Merge and Split Functions to Correct Duplicate and Accidentally Combined Records

The process of merging and splitting records is complicated and cannot always be fully undone. Notify your supervisor if you notice records that should be merged or split so that necessary corrections can be made.

The individual responsible for merging and splitting is subject to local district policy and procedure. This task may not fall under the scope of the individual caseworker's responsibilities.

In your work with CONNECTIONS, you may come upon multiple records for the same person, or records for two separate persons that have been accidentally combined into one.

Duplicate records can be created during Intake if an Intake worker has limited or unknown demographics on a person and, therefore, cannot relate that person to an already existing person in CONNECTIONS. Duplicates can also result if a caseworker misses a potential match during a Person Search; the worker would then add this person to the case rather than relating to the existing person in the system. The opposite situation—accidentally combined records—can result if a caseworker merges records for two individuals who seem to be the same person but, in fact, are not. **Regardless of the reason, duplicate records and accidentally combined records pose problems for accurate case management and need to be corrected once they are identified.**

Duplicate and accidentally combined records are corrected in CONNECTIONS with the Person Merge and Person Split functions. The **Person Merge** and **Person Split** functions in

WARNING!

Since it is not always possible to correct errors you may make when Merging and Splitting records, be sure to:

1. Talk with your supervisor before proceeding.
2. Be careful when merging and splitting records.

The individual responsible for merging and splitting is subject to local agency policy and procedure.

This task may not fall under the scope of the individual caseworker's responsibilities.

A specific Business Function is required in order to perform a merge or split.

CONNECTIONS exist to maintain data integrity. The **Person Merge** function merges two separate Person IDs (separate individual records) into the same record. The **Person Split** function separates person records merged in error.

The ability to perform Merge/Split functions is dependent on the worker's role and level of security access.

In order to perform a Person Merge or Split *in a closed stage*, the worker must have the MERGE/SPLIT Business Function *and*:

- be the historical Primary worker, Secondary worker or Case Manager; *or*
- be the historical Unit Approver or have a role above that of the Unit Approver in the unit of the Primary worker or Secondary worker *and* have the CASE/PERS SRCH Business Function; *or*
- have the ACCESS ALL DIST *and* CASE/PERS SRCH Business Functions (allowing access through a case search).

To perform a Person Merge or Split *in an open stage*, the worker must be assigned the MERGE/SPLIT Business Function *and*:

- have a role in the stage; or
- have maintain access to the *Assigned Workload* of a worker with a role in the stage; or
- be the Unit Approver (or have a role above that of the Unit Approver in the worker's unit) *and* be assigned the UNIT SUM ACCESS Business Function.

Person Merge/Split Functions

Before completing a Person Merge, a decision must be made regarding which person will be carried forward to further stages (the *Merged Forward Person*) and which person will be "retired" after the merge (the *Merged Closed Person*). The Merged Forward Person should be the person with the most history. This is generally the one with the Person ID number that has been in the system longer. It is important to understand how the merge affects each of these roles in CONNECTIONS.

When merging two Person Ids, if the Merged Closed Person is involved in an open Intake, the following message displays:

"The closed person is in open stages. Merge with extreme caution. Continue?

The Merged Forward Person:

- is carried forward to subsequent CONNECTIONS stages;
- appears on the *Person List* in the current open stage, any closed stages and any future stages; and
- is identified by a check mark in the **M/S** column on the *Person List*.

The Merged Closed Person:

- is "retired" after the merge and information for the new Merged Forward Person is used in all open and closed stages;
- cannot be related to a new stage; and
- cannot be involved in future system events.

There must be at least one Person ID in common with both cases/stages in order to perform a Case Merge.

A Person Merge results in the following system changes:

- The Merge List on the *Person Merge/Split* window is updated to reflect the action taken.
- The *Merged Forward Person* inherits the demographics that have been selected and appear in all open stages.
- The *Merged Closed Person* is no longer linked to any of the stages that were open at the time of the merge. These will now be linked to the Merged Forward Person.
- System-generated Alert To-Do's are sent to the *Staff To-Do List* of the primary and secondary workers for any open stages that involve the Merged Forward Person or Merged Closed Person.

The Person Forward Selection Window

The *Person Forward Selection* window enables you to select specific person information that will be applied to the Person Forward. The *Person Forward Selection* window contains the following information for both the Person Closed and the Person Forward:

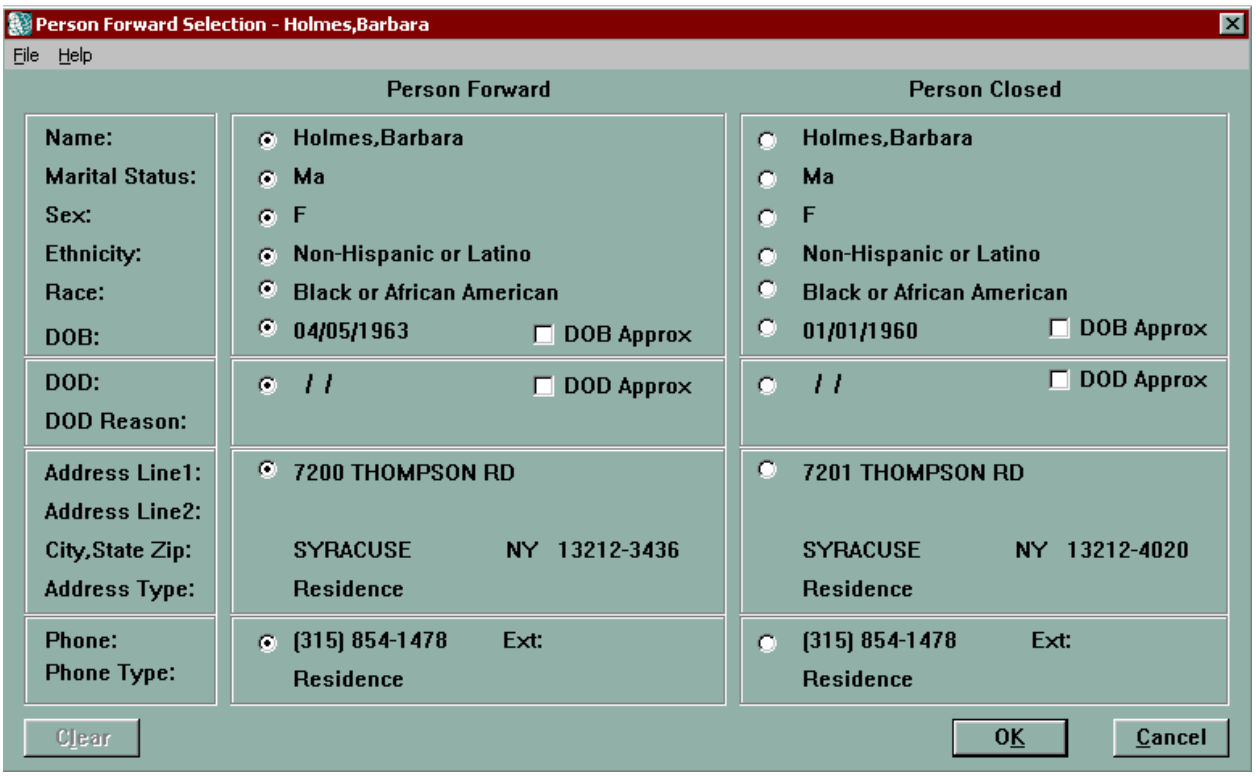
- Full Primary Name
- Primary Address
- Sex
- Primary Phone Number
- Ethnicity
- DOB (including Approximate indicator)
- Race
- DOD (including reason and Approximate indicator)
- Marital Status

Because of the complexity involved with restoring this information, merges should be completed with care.

Displaying all of the above information for both the Person Closed and Person Forward allows you to choose the most accurate information to be retained for the Person Forward. The type of information you select—and which person you select it from—affects the information that is retained for the Person Forward.

- If you are selecting information from the Person Closed, the primary information for the Person Forward is end-dated and the information from the Person Closed is copied to the primary record.
- Valid person identifier, Person Detail FA Home, Language and Religion information is retained from the Person Forward, unless the field is blank. If the Person Forward does not have this information recorded, the information from the Person Closed is copied to the Person Forward.

If you have been given approval to merge or split person records, perform the following steps to complete this task.



Step-by-Step: Completing a Person Merge Within the *Assigned Workload*

1. From the *Assigned Workload*, select the stage containing the person information that requires merging.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays for the selected stage.
3. Click on the **Maintain Person** task.
   *The **List…** button enables.*
4. Click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
5. Click on the name of the person to be merged.
6. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Person Merge/Split**.
   *The Person Merge/Split window displays. The highlighted name from the Person List pre-fills in the **Merged Persons Closed** section.*
7. Enter the **Person ID** of the Merged Forward Person.
   ***Note:** There must be at least one Person ID in common with both cases/stages in order to perform a Case Merge.*

If you determine that the person selected to be merged closed should, in fact, be merged forward, use the **Switch** function:

1. Click on the **Options** menu.
2. Click on the **Switch** command.

NOTE:

If you attempt to use the Switch function to perform a Person Merge between a person in an Investigation stage and a person in an *unprogressed* Intake stage, the following error message displays:

"The Person Closed is involved in an open intake."

Under these circumstances, you cannot use the Switch function. You need to enter the Person ID manually from the *unprogressed* Intake stage into the **Person Forward** field to perform the Person Merge.

8 Click on the **Validate** button.
The system checks for an open case and a valid Person ID. Warning messages (as listed in the box to the right) may display.
*When the check is complete, the **Merge** button enables.*

9 Click on the **Merge** button.
The following message displays when the Merged Closed Person is involved in an open Intake:
"The closed person is in open stages. Merge with extreme caution. Continue?"
The following message displays to confirm the merge
"Merge <ID#> into <ID#>?"
The first ID number listed is for the Merged Closed Person. The second ID number is for the Merged Forward Person.

***NOTE**: If you realize that you have made a mistake in selecting your persons, click on the **No** button.*

10 Click on the **Yes** button.
The Person Forward Selection window displays with the following information for both the Person Forward and the Person Closed:

- Name (First, Middle, Last, Suffix)
- Marital Status
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Race
- DOB (including Approximate indicator, if applicable)
- DOD (including Approximate indicator and reason, if applicable)
- Address Line 1
- Address Line 2
- City, State, ZIP
- Address Type
- Phone
- Phone Type

11 Select information from the *Person Forward Selection* window by clicking on the radio button next to each applicable field.
The type of information you select—and which person you select it from—affects the information that is retained for the Person Forward. See page 12-11 for details.

Person Merge Warnings and Error Messages:

When completing a person merge, you may see warnings and/or error messages. Warnings do not prevent you from completing a merge, but error messages do.

Reasons for Warnings:

- Both persons must be the same sex (if it is recorded).
- Both people must have a DOB that is within 5 years (if recorded).
- One of the persons is involved in a fatality report.

Reasons for Error Messages:

- Social Security numbers do not match.
- Medicaid number does not match.
- Entered ID is not found, verify ID.
- Services CIN must match.
- NYC Non-Service (NS) CIN's must match (NYC only).
- Merge will cause person to be a subject and MA/AB child in the same Investigation stage.
- The ID Person entered has the status of person closed from a prior merge.
- The Merged Closed Person is in an open Intake or Investigation stage.

12 When you have made all of your selections from the *Person Forward Selection* window, click on the **OK** button.
*The Person Merge/Split window displays. The name of the person logged on and the date of the merge display in the **Staff NM Merge** and **Date Merge** fields.*

13 Click on the **Save** button.
The change is saved in the system and the Person List displays.

Step-by-Step: Completing a Person Merge from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar

1 Click on the **PERS** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
The Person Search window displays.

2 Perform a Person Search.

3 In the Person Search List, click on the person who is to be listed in the Merged Persons Closed section of the *Person Merge/Split* window.

4 Click on the **Options** menu and select *Case List*.
The Case List displays.

5 Click on the desired case to select it.

6 Click on the **Summary** button.
The Case Summary window displays.

7 Click on the applicable stage.

8 Click on the **Options** menu and select *Person List*.
The Person List displays for the selected stage.

9 Select the person to be merged from the *Person List*.

10 Click on the **Options** menu in the *Person List* and select **Person Merge/Split**.
The Person Merge/Split window displays with the selected person's name pre-filled in the Merged Persons Closed section.

If you determine that the person selected to be merged closed should, in fact, be merged forward, use the **Switch** function:

Click on the **Options** menu, and Click on the **Switch** command.

11 Review the Name and Person ID information in the Merged Persons Closed section for accuracy.

12 Enter the **Person ID** of the Merged Forward Person in the Forward section.

13 Click on the **Validate** button.
*The system checks for an open case and a valid Person ID. The **Merge** button enables.*

14 Click on the **Merge** button.
The following message displays when the Merged Closed Person is involved in an open Intake:
"The closed person is in open stages. Merge with extreme caution. Continue?"
The following message displays to confirm the merge
"Merge <ID#> into <ID#>?"
The first ID number listed is for the Merged Closed Person. The second ID number is for the Merged Forward Person.

***NOTE**: If you realize that you have made a mistake in selecting your persons, click on the **No** button.*

15 Click on the **Yes** button.
The Person Forward Selection window displays with the following information for both the Person Forward and the Person Closed:

- Name (First, Middle, Last, Suffix)
- Marital Status
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Race
- DOB (including Approximate indicator, if applicable)
- DOD (including Approximate indicator and reason, if applicable)
- Address Line 1
- Address Line 2
- City, State, ZIP
- Address Type
- Phone
- Phone Type

16 Select information from the *Person Forward Selection* window by clicking on the radio button next to each applicable field.
The type of information you select—and which person you select it from—affects the information that is retained for the Person Forward. See page 12-11 for details.

17 When you have made all of your selections from the *Person Forward Selection* window, click on the **OK** button.
*The Person Merge/Split window displays. The name of the person logged on and the date of the merge display in the **Staff NM Merge** and **Date Merge** fields.*

18 Click on the **Save** button.
The change is saved in the system and the Person List displays.

Person Split

The purpose of a Person Split is to correct an incorrect Person Merge; a merge of two Person ID's that should have remained separate. Performing a Person Split reinstates the Person Closed to the CONNECTIONS database, but does not fully return the Person Closed to his or her original stage, however.

After a Person Split is performed, the Merged Closed Person's pre-merge information is not "reattached" by completing a Split. This person information can be accessed through the Person Detail window when conducting a Person Search. Maintenance of this information is up to the person performing the split. For open stages/homes, it will be your responsibility to:

- update all demographic information;
- "return" the Person Closed to all appropriate stages and events;

The Merge Forward Person *cannot* be deleted from the stages that were open at the time the Person Merge took place.

- restore events and allegations; and
- remove the Person Forward by performing the Remove Person – Added in Error function.

If the stage is closed, speak to your supervisor to see if Local Data Maintenance is an option.

A Person Split results in the following system changes:

- The previously Merged Closed Person becomes active again in the database, but is not re-associated with any open stages.
- The previously Merged Closed Person's pre-merge demographics remain available in CONNECTIONS.
- The events/activities associated with the reactivated person (and approved prior to the merge) require data maintenance to be associated with that person again.
- Events that occurred while the merge was in effect are *not* associated with the reactivated person.
- System-generated To-Do's are sent to workers assigned to open stages associated with the previously merged person.

Step-by-Step: Completing a Person Split

1 On the *Assigned Workload*, select the stage which contains the person information that was merged in error.
*The **Tasks…** button enables.*

2 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays for the selected stage.

3 Click on the **Maintain Person** task.

4 Click on the **List…** button.
The Person List displays for the selected stage.

5 Click on the name of the person who was merged in error.

6 Click on the **Options** menu and select **Person Merge/Split**.
The Person Merge/Split window displays. The system pre-fills the person's name into the Merged Persons Closed section.

7 In the list section at the top of the window, select the merge you want to split.
The system fills the merge information into the detail section of the window.

Things to Consider Before Splitting:

The Merge Forward Person ***cannot be deleted*** from the stages that were open at the time the Person Merge took place. The Merged Closed Person's pre-merge information is ***not*** "reattached" by completing a Split. Follow-up demographics and case/stage maintenance are necessary to complete the process.

You need to record that person's demographic information again and re-associate the person with the appropriate case(s)/stage(s).

The Person Data report contains the current and historical information of a person.

To run the report:

1 Select the person on the *Person List.*

2 Click on the **Reports** menu and select the **Person Data** command.
The following message displays: "The report has been launched. Check Report List window."

4 Click on the **OK** button.

5 Click on the **RPRTS** button.

6 Select the Person Data Report and click on the **Open** button.

This provides a hard copy of all information stored in CONNECTIONS about a specified person including merge/split history and demographic changes.

8 Click on the **Split** button.
The following message displays: "Split ID# from ID#?" The first ID number listed is for the Closed Person. The second ID number is for the Forward Person.

9 Click on the **Yes** button.

10 Click on the **Save** button.
The change is saved in CONNECTIONS; data maintenance is required to re-associate with events. The Person List displays.

Historical Person Information

We know that CONNECTIONS preserves information in the form of historical records. Historical records are maintained for individuals and FAD Homes/Stages. In this section, we will look at ways to view historical information about the individuals residing in the FAD Homes you are responsible for.

Historical Person List

The *Historical Person List* is different from the *Person List*, which only displays individuals *currently* living in the FAD Home. An *Historical Person List* is created when a FAD caseworker uses the **Remove Person – Left Home** function (see page 12-6).

The *Historical Person List* displays all of the individuals removed from a specific FAD stage, via the **Remove Person –Left Home** function. The list includes the date on which each person was removed. If a person has been involved in a merge, the *Historical Person List* displays the Person Forward information. If the person has been involved in a split, the original name displays with the original information prior to the merge.

Individuals removed from a FAD home because they were Added in Error (see page 12-7) do not display on the *Historical Person List*.

If an historical record does exist for a FAD home, the following message displays in the lower left side of the *Person List*: *"Historical records exist."*

Step by Step:
Accessing the Historical Person List

1 Select the appropriate FAD Home/Stage on the *Assigned Workload*, and click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

2 Select the **Maintain Person** task, and click on the **List** button.
The Person List displays. *The bottom left side of the window must display the following message, in order to access an historical Person List: "Historical Records Exist*."

3 Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Historical Person List** command
The Historical Person List displays.

4 Click on the **Close** button when finished.
The Person List displays.

Case List

The *Case List* displays a list of homes/cases that either meet the search criteria entered in the Case Search window or are associated with a specific person. The *Case List* provides important information that is valuable throughout the Life Cycle of the Home. For this reason, it can be accessed from a number of windows in CONNECTIONS, including (but not limited to):

- The *Person Search* window
- The *Person List*
- The *Person Detail* window
- The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS)

The *Case List* displays high-level case information, such as the Case name, Case ID, the local district or voluntary agency and the primary worker assigned to the most recent open stage of the case. Current and historical associations with a FAD case, as well as current and historical CPS cases are displayed.

To access *Case List* information for an individual that has left the FAD Home/Stage, you will need to conduct a Person Search on that individual (see *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*).

When the *Case List* is opened via the *Person Search window*, the *Person List* or the *Person Detail window*, the historical FAD cases are shaded in gray. The following message displays when the case is selected from the Case List and the person is no longer in the FAD home:

"Shaded rows represent historical involvement in FAD stages."

Step by Step:
Accessing the *Case List* from the *Person Search* Window (within a Home/Stage)

1. Select the appropriate FAD Home/Stage on the *Assigned Workload* and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Maintain Person** task and click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
3. Click on the **New** button.
   The Person Search window displays.
4. Enter search criteria and click on the **Search** button.
   Search results display in the Person Search List in the lower half of the Person Search window.
5. Select a name on the Person Search Results List.
6. Click on the **Case List** button.
   The Case List displays.

Step by Step:
Accessing the *Case List* from the *Person List*

1. Select the appropriate FAD Home/Stage on the *Assigned Workload*, and click on the **Tasks…**
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Maintain Person Information** task and click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
3. Select person from the Person List grid.
4. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Case List…** command.
   The Case List displays.

Step by Step:
Accessing the *Case List* from the *Person Detail* Window

1. Select the appropriate FAD Home/Stage on the *Assigned Workload*, and click on the **Tasks…**
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Maintain Person Information** task and click on the **List…** button.
   The Person List displays.
3. Select a person from the *Person List* and click on the **Detail…** button.
   The Person Detail window displays.
4. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Case List…** command.
   The Case List displays.

Maintaining Home Information

In this section we will consider information pertaining to maintaining FAD homes that are currently on your *Assigned Workload*.

For information on how to perform maintenance on Closed FAD Homes, refer to *Module 16: Maintaining Closed FAD Homes/Stages*.

The Home Demographics Window

Demographic information for FAD homes must be maintained in the *Home Demographic* window, which can be accessed via the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task. This window contains a significant amount of information about the FAD home, including:

- Home Name
- Legal Name
- Setting
- Auth Agency*
- Sub Agency* (NYC A66 Homes Only)
- Respite
- Inquiry Source
- Primary Address
- Vendor ID
- Sch Dist (School District)
- Status*
- Religion
- Language
- Marital Status
- Ethnicity
- Hispanic or Latino Origin (if applicable)
- Race
- Business Address Indicator
- Primary Phone
- Additional Address and Phone information

Although much of this information can be viewed on the Home Demographics Tab of the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS), maintenance of maintainable items must be made through the Maintain Non-Licensing Information task.

(**The items marked by an asterisk are system-generated based on information recorded elsewhere in CONNECTIONS*.)

Step by Step:
Opening the *Home Demographics* Window

1. Select the appropriate FAD home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*, and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task and click on the **Detail…** button.
   The Home Demographics Window displays.

3. Complete the fields that require updating/changing, and click on the **Save** button to save the information and close the window.
   The fields requiring Supervisory approval display the following message:
   "Supervisor approval is required for the action. Select Save and Submit."
4. Click on **File**, and select **Save and Submit**.
   A Task To-Do displays.
5. Enter comments, if desired.
6. Click on the **Save** button.

Changing Primary Address Information

The steps below provide instruction if you need to change *only* Primary Address information.

Step by Step:
Changing Primary Address Information

1. Select the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task and click on the **Detail…** button.
   The Home Demographics Window displays.
2. Modify the Primary Address information, and click on the **Validate** button.
   The address validation window displays.
3. Click the **Yes** button to access the validation.
   The Resource Address Detail window displays. *For more information on address validation, see the address validation tip box in Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry.*

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button

4. Make note of the **Vendor ID** number, and then de-select the **Use as Business** check box.
   All Business Address information is deleted from the record.
5. Click on the **Address** push button.
   The Resource Address Detail window displays.
6. Enter the unchanged business address information (including the Vendor ID number).
7. Click on the **Add** button.
   The validation window displays.
8. Click on the **Yes** button to accept the validation.
   For more information on address validation, see Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry.
9. Click on **File**, and select **Save and Submit**.
   A Task To-Do displays.
10. Enter comments, if desired.
11. Click on the **Save** button.

Home Demographic Information and the FRS

There are two areas in the Foster Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) where you can update Home Demographic Information – in fact, this information *must* be maintained in the FRS:

- Emergency Back-up Information
- Directions to the Home

See *Module 3: Managing Your Workload*, for information on how to access the Home Demographics Tab of the FRS.

The Interim Home Study

An Interim Home Study is a reassessment of the home and an updating of the home information due to changes that occur during the annual certificate/approval period. The foster parent's ability to continue providing foster care services is assessed, with consideration given to the impact that the status change has on the foster home.

After completing an Interim Home Study you may need to generate a new F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter.

Send a copy of the new certificate/letter to the foster parent(s) and place another copy in the External Foster Home Case Record.

An Interim Home Study ***does not change or extend the expiration date of the certification/approval period***. Depending on the type of changes made to the home's information, an Interim Home Study may trigger updates with the Resource Directory, BICS, and CCRS during the overnight batch.

The same status changes that make an Interim Home Study necessary, require changes to other information in CONNECTIONS. You will most likely need to make changes to one or more of the following tasks: **Maintain Person**, **Maintain Licensing Information**, **Maintain Non-Licensing Information**; **Home Study** (other areas of the FRS).

Below are some examples of status changes that must be documented in an Interim Home Studies. Notice that many of these events will require changes to the *F/A Home License* window, making a new F/A Home Certification or Approval Letter necessary:

- Change in Age Range/Gender
- Change in Capacity
- Change in Criminal Records Results
- Change in HH Comp
- Change in Level of Care
- Change in Martial
- Change in Program Type

Some types of status changes *may not* affect licensing information.. For example: a foster mother may have a baby and, due to the size of the home, this does not change the living accommodations of the foster children. This type of status change requires you to document the change in family composition in an Interim Home Study narrative (via the **Home Study** task) and update the *Person List* (via the **Maintain Person** task). However, the certificate/approval letter would not change.

Completing an Interim Home Study Narrative

One common status change is the marriage or remarriage of a foster parent. According to 18 NYCRR §443.10(c), the following activities must occur if an adult spouse of a foster parent comes into the home and applies for certification or approval:

- Completion of a new application for certification or approval, including an SCR Database Check;
- Completion of a CHRC;
- Completion of a medical exam for the applicant; and
- Review of the home study (update, as needed).

Once you have completed all of these casework activities, you will document the status change, as well as relevant information that you have collected using the appropriate tasks in CONNECTIONS.

New vs. Use Prior

In the process of opening the FRS to complete an Interim Home Study, you will notice that two buttons become enabled on the *Task List* —**New** and **Use Prior**. Because one Home Study narrative already exists for the home, you are given the option to use information you have already entered, or to start with a blank document.

Let's take a closer look at what these different options mean.

New—This button displays a version of the FRS where all data fields are pre-filled with current information from the CONNECTIONS database. The Home Study and Reauthorization narratives will contain blank templates and all comment boxes will be blank. Information can be entered in the Home Study narrative and comment boxes.

Use Prior—This button displays a version of the FRS where all data fields are pre-filled with current information from the CONNECTIONS database. The Home Study and Reauthorization narratives, and all comment boxes will contain information from the latest approved/frozen FRS. The Home Study narrative and comment boxes can be modified or added to as necessary.

The steps for opening, completing and submitting the Interim Home Study narrative for supervisory approval are outlined below.

Step by Step:
Accessing and Completing an Interim Home Study Narrative

1. Select the appropriate FAD home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*, and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List will display.
2. Select the **Home Study** task, and click on either the **New** or **Use Prior** button.
   The FRS displays.
3. Click on the Home Study Narrative tab.
4. On the left side of the tab, click the checkbox (or boxes) that correspond(s) with the reason(s) you are conducting the Interim study.

5. Click the **Save** button at the bottom of the list to save the Home Study Reason(s) to the database.
   The following message displays: "Changes Have Been Saved."
6. Click on the **OK** button.
7. For a Home Study accessed through a **New** FRS, select which narrative template you'll be using by clicking on the right side of the tab in the appropriate checkbox. (**Standard Home Study**, **MAPS/GPS Home Study** or **Other**).
8. Click the **Retrieve/Edit** button.
   An MS Word template opens. Selecting USE PRIOR in Step 2 displays template with previously recorded information.
9. Enter your home study information into the narrative.
   (*Include an explanation of why the interim Home Study is being conducted.*)
10. Click on **File**, and **Close** to close the Home Study Narrative when you are ready to leave the document (or save it).
    The following message displays: "Save Changes?"
11. Click on the **Yes** button to save your work.
12. Initiate submission of the Interim Home Study (and all updated information in CONNECTIONS) by clicking on the **Submit** button.
    The F/A Home License window displays. Proceed to Step 12.
    —OR—
    *Exit the FRS by clicking the **Close** button in the bottom right-hand corner of the FRS window. The **Task** list displays.*
13. Make any necessary changes to the *F/A Home License* window and change the Status field to "Pending Acceptance."
14. Click on **File**, and select the **Save and Submit** command.
    A Task To-Do is generated for your supervisor.
15. Complete the *To-Do Detail* window.
16. Click on the **Save** button to finalize the submission.

Update all information in the FRS, as applicable.

Interim Home Studies, like many narratives, take time to complete. An Interim Home Study can be completed in increments before you choose to submit it to your supervisor. Each time you access the FRS, you can open your Interim Home Study by selecting the Home Study task on the *Task List*, and clicking the **Detail** button. The "in-process" FRS will open with its narratives and comment boxes containing your last saved entries.

Closing the FRS after creating an Interim Home Study will generate a Home Study event with a status of "PROC." Selecting this event and clicking the Detail button on the *Event List* will access the FRS in view-only mode.

Once the FRS and Home Study are submitted to your supervisor, the status of the Home Study and Home License events change from PROC to PEND. See *Module 9: Checking the Status of Approvals Submitted for FAD Homes*, for information on how to find out when your submission has been approved.

Conversion of an Approved Relative Foster Home

The certification/approval requirements for relative and non-relative foster care homes are consistent, with *one* difference. Exceptions may still be granted for Approved Relative Foster Homes. Although basic training requirements are the same, the content of the curricula may vary.

Conversion of an Approved Relative Foster Home is considered a major status change. Depending on *when* the decision is made to change the Facility Type, you will need to complete either an Annual Reauthorization or an Interim Home Study.

CONNECTIONS keeps categories distinct by using the Facility Type of "Approved Relative Foster Home" (for homes that are approved to care for specific children and receive an approval letter) and the Facility Type of "Certified Foster Home" or "Foster/Adoptive Home" (for homes that receive a Certificate to Board).

For pre-existing Approved Relative Foster Homes that want to become Certified Foster Homes or Foster/Adoptive Homes, you need to change the Facility Type in the *F/A Home License* window, complete an Interim Home Study narrative, and ensure that all requirements are met for certification.

Before submitting the FRS and F/A Home License window, update all **Maintain Person** information as needed (e.g., Address List/Detail, Phone List/Detail, Person Detail, Home Member Training List/Detail). *See Module 6: Maintaining Person Information*.

Use the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task to update home information as necessary (e.g., Resource Address Information, Resource Phone Information). *See Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes*.

You will begin the conversion process by using the **Annual Reauthorization** task or the **Home Study** task to complete a narrative describing the changes in the FAD home.

After clicking on the **Submit** button at the bottom of the FRS window, the *F/A Home License* window displays. Follow the steps below to complete the conversion of the FAD home.

Step by Step: Completing the *F/A Home License* Window for Home Conversion

1. In the *F/A Home License* window (**Maintain Licensing Information** task), change the **Facility Type** from "Approved Relative Home" to either "Certified Foster Home" or "Foster/Adoptive Home," as appropriate.
2. Update **Age Ranges** and **Capacity**.
3. If necessary, modify **Program Type**(s).
4. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Status** field and select **Pending Acceptance** from the resulting list.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Maintain Licensing Information task > Detail button

5 Click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Submit**.
The To-Do Detail window displays for a task To-Do assigned to your supervisor/unit approver.

6 Type **Comments** to your supervisor/unit approver, if desired, in the appropriate field.

7 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.

You do *not* need to select the **Reauthorization** check box on the *F/A Home License* window.

You should select the **Reauthorization** check box *only* if you are documenting this status change as part of the Annual Reauthorization process.

Stage (Case) Name/CD Consistency

Maintaining consistency is a necessary part of preserving the integrity of CONNECTIONS data. In Module 6, we learned that FAD stages/cases are named after the foster or adoptive mother or other primary caretaker in the home. Therefore, if you change the primary name of the parent for whom the stage/case is named, you need to change the name of the stage/case itself.

The Primary name must first be updated in the *A.K.A. Name List/Detail* window before you can change the stage/case name of the FAD home/stage. If you do not do this, the desired name will not appear in the **New Name** drop-down list in the *Change Case Name* window.

Opening the Case (Stage) Name/CD window in View-only mode allows workers to view information; Modify mode allows workers to change the Case/Stage/Home name of a home (see the table on the next page for details regarding View-only and Modify mode).

If you open the *Case (Stage) Name/CD* window when a Home Name change is pending approval, the following message displays:

"Saving will invalidate the Pending approval. Continue in Modify mode?"

Clicking on the **No** button opens the window in View Only mode. Clicking on the **Yes** button opens the window in Modify mode.

Step by Step: Changing the Stage (Case) Name/CD

1 In the *Assigned Workload* window, click on the name of the appropriate FAD home/stage.

2 Click the **Options** menu and select **Case (Stage) Name/CD.**
The Change Case Name window displays.

3 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **New Name** field and click on the appropriate primary name to select it from the resulting list.

4 Click on the **Save** button.
The Assigned Workload displays with the updated FAD home/stage name. The following message displays for the homes with Accepted Active status: "Supervisor approval is required for the action. Select Save and Submit."

Only Primary names can be selected for changing the name of a FAD home/stage.

5. Click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Submit**.
   The To-Do Detail window displays for a task To-Do assigned to your supervisor/unit approver.
6. Type **Comments** to your supervisor/unit approver, if desired, in the appropriate field.
7. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Task List displays.

View Only vs. Modify Mode

Depending on how you access the *Case (Stage) Name/CD* window, you will have different abilities to modify information. Entering this window in "Modify Mode" allows you make changes or updates to the information. Entering the window in "View Only" mode means that you do not have the ability to change any information you are viewing.

The table below further illustrates the differences between View Only and Modify Mode, regarding the *Case (Stage) Name/CD* window.

View-only vs. Modify Mode	
View-only Mode	**Modify Mode**
• The **Current Name** and **Current CD** fields are protected (information cannot be changed). • The **New Name** and **New CD** fields are disabled. • The **Save** command (**File** menu) and button are disabled and all fields are protected. • The **Save and Submit** command (**File** menu) is also disabled. • Only the **Cancel** button and the **Exit** command (**File** menu) are enabled.	• The **Current Name** and **Current CD** fields are protected. • The **New Name** field is modifiable. • The **Save** command (**File** menu) and button enable when the **New Name** field is populated with a different name than the **Current Name** field. • The **New CD** field is disabled (CD information cannot be changed in this window). • The **Save and Submit** command (**File** menu) enables only when the stage type is FAD *and* the home is in Accepted-Active or Emergency status *and* the **New Name** field is populated with a different name than that of the **Current Name** field. • The **Cancel** button is enabled.

The Case (Stage) Name/CD window displays differently, depending on how you access the window. This next table illustrates the variations in how the window displays.

***Case (Stage) Name/CD* Window Display Variations**		
Path/ Window	**Display Mode**	**Display Details**
Assigned Workload	View-only or Modify	• The Current Name field displays the current case/stage/home name for the selected FAD home and the Current CD field displays the current CD for the selected home (NYC only). The Current Name and Current CD fields are always protected. • The New Name and New CD fields are blank. • If there is a pending Home License or Home Closure for the selected FAD home, the Case (Stage) Name/CD window is view-only. • If there is a pending Home Name Change, the following message displays: *"Saving will invalidate the Pending approval. Continue in Modify Mode?"* If you click on the No button, the window displays in View-only mode; if you click on the Yes button, the window displays in Modify mode.
Event List	View-only	• The Current Name field displays the current case/stage/home name before the Home Name Change was submitted for approval. • The New Name field displays the new case/stage/home name that was submitted for approval at the time the Home Name Change event was created. • The Current CD field is blank and protected. The New CD field is blank and disabled.
"Approve Home Name Change" Task To-Do	View-only	• The Current Name field displays the current case/stage/home name before the Home Name Change was submitted for approval. • The New Name field displays the new case/stage/home name that was submitted for approval at the time the Home Name Change event was created. • The Current CD field is blank and protected. The New CD field is blank and disabled.

Case (Stage) Name/CD Window Display Variations		
Path/ Window	**Display Mode**	**Display Details**
"Rejection Home Name Change" Task To-Do	Modify	• The Current Name field displays the current case/stage/home name for the selected FAD home. • The New Name field displays the case/stage/home name that was rejected after it was submitted for approval. • The Current CD field is blank and protected. The New CD field is blank and disabled. If you click on the No button, the window displays in view-only mode; if you click on the Yes button, the window displays in Modify mode.

Impact of Case (Stage) Name/CD Changes

Completing the Case (Stage) Name/CD window is only one step in updating CONNECTIONS when the name of a resource changes. CONNECTIONS provides different reminders to help you complete all updates to the system, and CONNECTIONS generates certain tasks and events. The listing below summarizes what happens once the Case (Stage) Name/CD window is submitted for supervisory approval:

For FAD Homes with NYC addresses, CD's are changed by validating a new primary address.

The new CD is generated once the address is validated.

- Once the window is submitted for supervisory approval, this message displays:
  "This change will also update the Resource Legal Name."
- As the primary worker, you will also receive an alert To-Do on your *Staff To-Do List*. The description field reads:
  "Update Home Study/Reauthorization RE: Address/Name change."
- A Task To-Do is created for the approver, who will navigate to the *Case (Stage) Name/CD* window from the Task To-Do on their *Staff To-Do List*.
- A new home event is created on the *Event List* when the *Case (Stage) Name/CD* window is Saved (or Saved and Submitted).
- If the **Legal Name** of the FAD home is different from the new **Resource Name**, the worker must change the **Legal Name** in the *Home Demographics window* to include both foster parents names, once the Home Name change is approved by the supervisor (see "Maintaining Home Information on page 12-20).

F/A Home History Detail

Maintaining FAD Home information can also include making adjustments to the home's history in specific cases. Before we discuss the F/A Home History Detail window, let's consider why history sometimes needs to be corrected in CONNECTIONS.

Example: When Changes are Made to the F/A Home History Detail Window

The certification or approval of a home may expire if a worker is unable to submit the Annual Reauthorization on time. If the caseworker and foster family have completed all activities showing that State regulations have been met by the home (and this is properly document outside of CONNECTIONS), this situation is referred to as a "Delayed" or "Late" System Entry (see Module 14: Recertification and).

Since FAD homes in CONNECTIONS cannot be reopened until one business day has gone by (*see Module 17: Reopening FAD Homes*), a lag is created in the history of the home's certification/approval of at least one day.

Caseworkers with the "Maintain Historic F/A Home" Business Function may use the F/A Home History Detail window to maintain historical records of FAD homes. Only dates and status data about the selected FAD Home record can be modified; all other fields are protected. If the most recent record is selected from the F/A Home History window, only the date in the Authorized From field can be modified.

System Edits

To conform with regulatory requirements and to ensure that the certification dates do not exceed one year, CONNECTIONS contains an edit that prevents an F/A Home History record from being modified until the home has progressed to **Accepted-Active** status at least once.

Another edit exits to make sure the home's certification period *will not extend* beyond one year. Therefore, changing **Authorized From** field on the F/A Home History Detail window causes the **Authorized To** field to be updated accordingly. This edit applies only to the current F/A Home History record. All ensuing F/A Home History records are adjusted accordingly, but F/A Home History records prior to the changed record are not affected.

Opening the F/A Home History Detail Window

The *F/A Home History Detail* window is accessed via the F*/A Home History* window, using the **History Detail** button. The Save button (as well as the Save command from the File menu) enables when any change is made to these fields.

Step by Step:
Opening the F/A Home History Detail Window

1. Select the appropriate FAD home on the *Assigned Workload,* and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **View Home History** task and click on the **List…** button.
   The F/A Home History window displays.
3. Select the appropriate FAD Home history record and click on the **History Detail…** button.
   The F/A Home History Detail window. *When selecting the most current row the following message displays:*
   *"The most current row was selected. Only the Auth From Date may be modified." Click **OK** to display F/A Home History window.*
4. Make the necessary changes to the record.
   The Save button enables.
5. When changes are complete, click on the **Save** button to save your work and close the window.

> The Business Function, "Maintain FAD Home History" must be added to your Business Function Profile (BFP) in order for you to make changes to the F/A Home History Detail Window.

Module 13:
Vacancy Control

The Vacancy Control function is designed to provide local district and voluntary agency workers with “real time” access to vacant bed information that meets the needs of the children in need of placement.

FAD workers can search for bed vacancies and maintain bed level vacancies and bed characteristics in Foster Boarding Homes (FBH) or Congregate Care Facilities (CCF) that they authorize.

Vacancy Control is primarily used by New York City/ACS workers, although other counties in New York State are currently exploring the use of Vacancy Control.

Kinship Homes are **not** included in Vacancy Control.

Several windows in CONNECTIONS help workers search for available beds and maintain new or existing beds and bed characteristics in facilities. These windows include:

- **Vacancy Control - Search** —Provides workers with the ability to search and reserve an available bed based on the information entered for the type of facility and bed desired. Only facilities in active status are returned in a search.
- **Vacancy Control - Bed Detail** —Provides workers with the ability to view all beds in a selected facility. Workers are able to select a Vacant bed(s) and “Reserve” or “Occupy” the bed(s) for a child or children in need of placement. Workers who reserve a bed (or a staff person in the unit hierarchy) are also able to change the status to Unreserve within the two-hour time limit for bed holds.
- **Vacancy Control - Bed Maintenance** —Provides workers with the ability to maintain beds (e.g., add beds, delete beds, modify bed characteristics) for a facility in accepted, active or applicant status. Performing this function in a timely manner allows agencies to optimize their placement potential.
- **Vacancy Control - Closed To Intake** —Provides designated OCFS and local district staff with the ability to remove facilities from the Vacancy Control Facility Search Results. The Closed To Intake status can be applied to a single facility, all facilities within an agency or a facility type within an agency
- **Vacancy Control - CD/Borough Award** —Provides NYC/ACS workers with the ability to maintain data that indicates which agencies have been awarded a neighborhood based service contract.

In addition, there are a number of reports that help track placement or notify individuals of Closed To Intake status changes applied to facilities.

- **Vacancy Control Placement Tracking Report** — Caseworkers and supervisors can create a report that contains information about selected beds that are in Occupied status.
- **Vacancy Control Closed To Intake Report** — This report contains statewide information on facilities that have a Closed To Intake status. It is available to all staff on the Closed To Intake Distribution List. The distribution list is maintained by NYS/OCFS.

- **Vacancy Control Reports** in the Data Warehouse — There are several reports available in the OCFS Data Warehouse that contain Vacancy Control data.

Vacancy Control Business Functions

In order to use the Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance function, your Business Function Profile (BFP) must include the **Vacancy Control - Bed Maintenance** Business Function. This Business Function is necessary in order to access the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window in *modify mode*.

Also, you must work for the same district/agency that authorizes the facility, ***or*** the facility must be on your *Assigned Workload*.

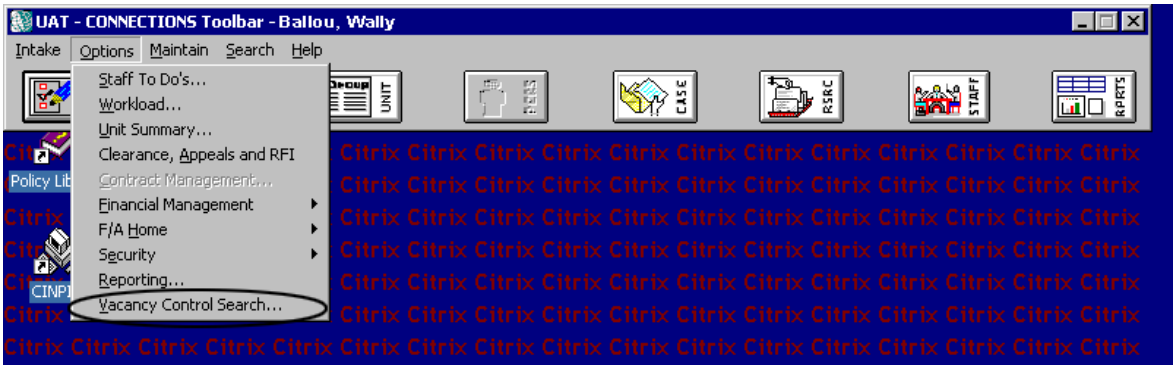
Any workers assigned to a FAD stage can *view* the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window from the *Task List,* if the district uses Vacancy Control. This provides necessary access for FAD workers who are not designated to maintain Vacancy Control. Such workers can view information contained in Vacancy Control that may be relevant to certification and licensing information, even though they do not the proper access to modify the information.

Vacancy Control Search

The *Vacancy Control Search* window allows local district and voluntary agency workers to enter child characteristics and search for a facility with a bed that matches the child's needs. Searches can be conducted for both an individual child or sibling groups. Workers can review the results of this search and select a facility from the list. Once a facility has been selected, workers can view the status of all beds in that facility and "Reserve" or "Occupy" a vacant bed(s). Two different types of vacancy control searches can be conducted from this window:

- An Element Search for vacancies in Foster Boarding Homes (FBH) or Congregate Care Facilities (CCF); or
- An Exact Search using either Resource ID or Vendor ID.

To access this window, select "Vacancy Control Search" from the **Options** menu on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar. Workers must have the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function to access this option.



The *Vacancy Control Search* window is divided into two sections, the tab section and a button section. The tab section has two separate tabs, the **Search** tab and the **Bed Characteristics** tab. Both contain fields and grids that allow workers to enter information that is used to conduct the search.

Conducting the Search

When the *Vacancy Control Search* window is first opened, only the **Search** tab is enabled. The **Bed Characteristics** tab enables after a type of search is selected. The type of search selected by the worker determines the:

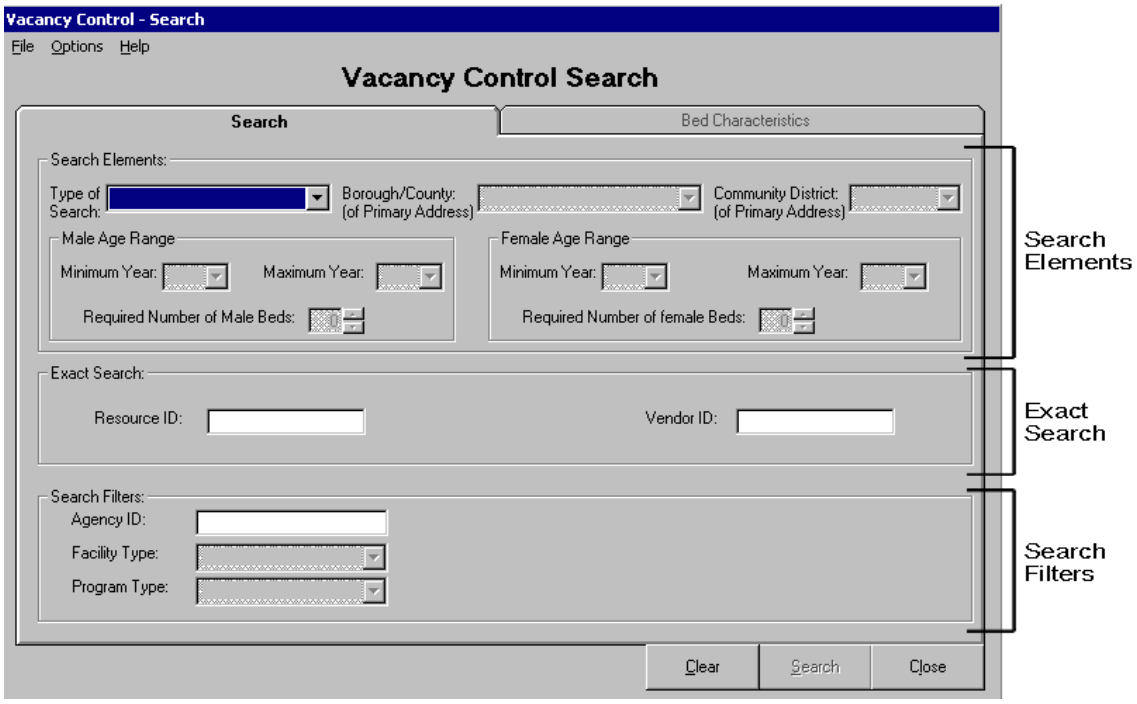
- required search criteria;
- filters that can be added to narrow the search; and
- type of results displayed in the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window.

Step by Step:
Opening the *Vacancy Control Search Window* via the *Toolbar*

1. Click on the **Options** menu on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   A list of commands display.
2. Select the **Vacancy Control Search…** command.
   The Vacancy Control Search window displays.

The Search Tab — Vacancy Control Search window

The **Search** tab is divided into three sections: Search Elements, Exact Search and Search Filters. To conduct a search using elements, workers must select either Foster Boarding Homes or Congregate Care Facilities from the **Type of Search** drop-down list located in the Search Elements section. Foster Boarding Homes include Certified Foster Homes and Foster Adoptive Homes. Congregate Care Facilities include Agency Boarding Homes, Group Homes, Group Residences and Institutions. Congregate Care facilities are not maintained in Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance at this time and, therefore, will not return in a search.



To conduct an Exact Search, workers must enter either the Resource ID or Vendor ID. Filtering eliminates results that do not match. Entering an Agency ID, Facility type or Program type that meets the child's needs, can also filter the search results. For more information on filtering a search, refer to "Search Filters" on page 13-5.

Search Elements

Vacancy Control Search provides workers with the flexibility to search for a single bed or for sibling groups. The information entered in the required fields will differ depending on whether the search is for a single bed or a sibling group. When searching for a single bed, the search criteria entered are specific for the child in need of placement. When searching for a sibling group, the search criteria entered represents an overall summary of the required number of beds by gender, age ranges by gender (widest range) and the Bed Characteristics (highest severity level).

Required fields for each search type highlight in yellow. When conducting a search for a Foster Boarding Home using Search Elements, the following fields on the **Search** tab are required:

- **Type of Search**
  Select Foster Boarding Homes.
- **Borough/County: (of Primary Address)**
  This field represents the borough for the child's last known primary address. This field allows a worker to conduct a search by selecting a specific borough, county, statewide, NYC wide, or out of state. The Borough Sort/Filter Option check box in the Search Filter section is only visible when a borough is selected from the drop-down list.
- **Community District: (of Primary Address)**
  *This field represents the NYC Community District (CD) for the child's last known primary address. This field is required when a NYC borough is selected in the **Borough/County** field.*

  *This field allows a search to be conducted for a bed within a specific NYC/CD. The **Community District Sort/Filter Option** check box in the Search Filter section is only visible when a Community District is selected from the **Community District** drop-down list. Select "Unknown" from the drop-down list when the CD is unknown. **Note:** When "Unknown" is selected from the CD drop-down list, the **Community District Sort/Filter Option** check box is not visible and the **Borough Sort/Filter Option** check box is disabled.*
- Male Age Range
  Minimum Year and **Maximum Year**

When searching for a large sibling group, workers may want to lower the number of required beds used in the search to increase the number of results. The beds listed in Vacancy Control represent the foster parent's preferred number of beds. Some Foster Homes may be certified for more beds.

To accommodate the placement of large sibling groups, a waiver may be requested to exceed the licensed number of beds for a facility (up to eight).

Age Range

When searching for a single bed, workers can either list the child's age in both the Minimum Year and Maximum Year fields, or an estimated age range based on the child's expected ages upon discharge.

When searching for a bed for a child less than 1 year old, enter "0" in the Minimum Year field. Enter "0" or the child's expected age upon discharge in the Maximum Year field.

When searching for a sibling group, enter the youngest child's current age in the Minimum Year and the oldest child's current age or expected age upon discharge in the Maximum Year field.

- Female Age Range
  Minimum Year and **Maximum Year**
- **Required Number of Male Beds** and/or **Required Number of Female Beds**
  *If "0" is entered for Required Number of Beds in a FBH search, at least one characteristic from the **Bed Characteristics** tab must be added. By entering "0," workers are able to search for beds that are not currently available and check the date the bed is expected to be vacant.*

Exact Search

When conducting an Exact Search the following fields on the **Search** tab are required:

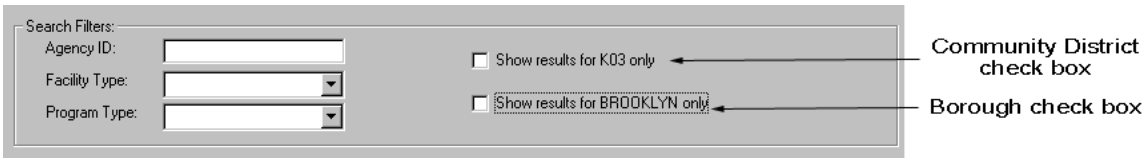
- Resource ID; or
- Vendor ID.

Only numeric entries are allowed in the **Resource ID** field. Alphanumeric entries are allowed in the **Vendor ID** field.

Search Filters

In addition to these required fields, one of the three optional fields located in the Search Filters section on the **Search** tab can be used to narrow the search. These fields are **Facility Type** (Certified Foster Home or Foster/Adoptive Home for FBH or Agency Boarding Home, Group Home, Group Residence or Institution for CCF), **Program Type** (e.g., Mother/Child, Emergency, Therapeutic) and **Agency ID** (the agency's three digit alpha-numeric identifier). When a search is filtered using one of these fields, the results of the search will only include beds that match the filter. For example, if you enter an Agency ID, your results will only include beds within that agency.

When workers from voluntary agencies enter the Vacancy Control Search window, their Agency ID is pre-filled in the **Agency ID** field. This field is view-only for voluntary agencies, allowing them to search for homes within their own agency only.



The Search Filters section may also display the following two sort/filter option check boxes:

- The **Show results for <Borough> only** check box displays when a New York City borough is entered in the **Borough/County** field. This check box is automatically selected when it displays. If the search is conducted with this check box selected, the search results are *filtered*, returning only the homes/facilities for the selected borough in the search results. If you de-select this check box, the search results are *sorted*, displaying facilities in all New York City boroughs with the targeted borough from the **Borough/County** field at the top of the list.
- The **Show results for <CD> only** check box displays only when you select a CD in the **Community District** field. When this check box displays, it is automatically selected and the **Show results for <Borough> only** check box disables. If the search is conducted with this check box selected, the search results are filtered,

returning only the facilities in the selected CD in the search results. If you de-select this check box, the **Show results for <Borough> only** check box enables. If both check boxes are de-selected, the search results are *sorted*; displaying facilities in all New York City CDs, with the targeted borough and CD at the top of the list.

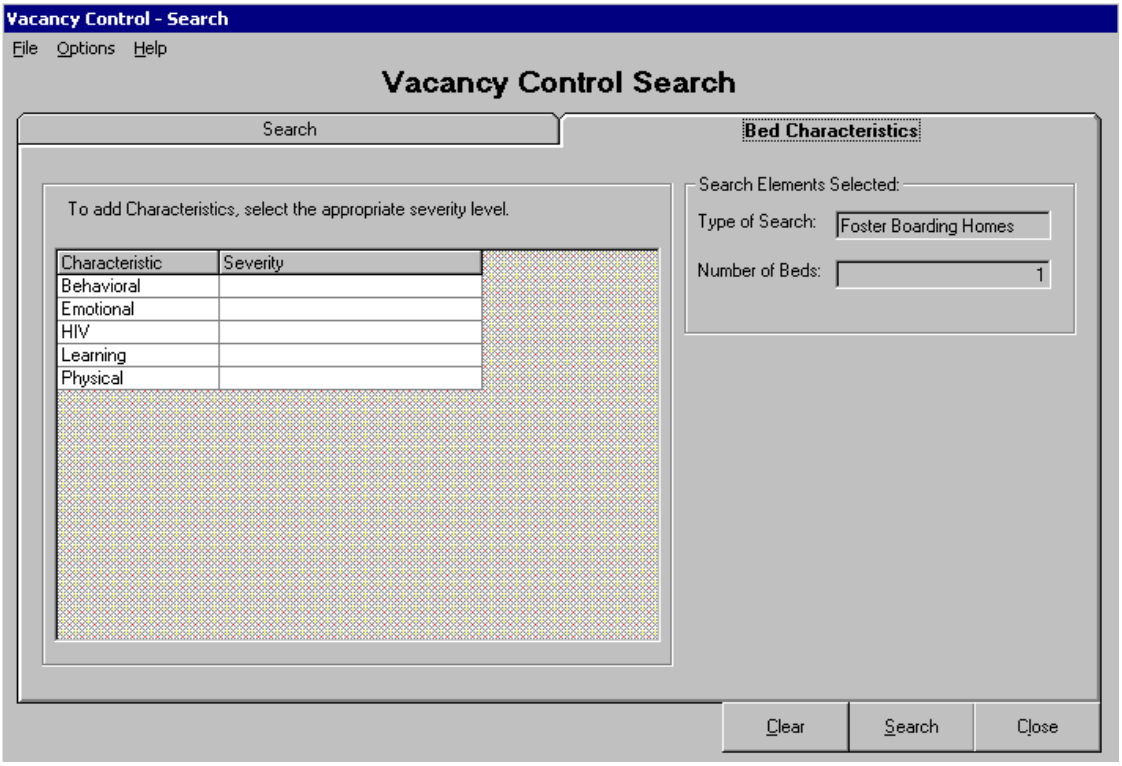
The Bed Characteristics Tab — Vacancy Control Search

The **Bed Characteristics** tab displays a list of all characteristics for the selected Type of Search (Congregate Care Facility or Foster Boarding Home). This tab provides workers with the ability to add characteristics to the search by selecting the severity level appropriate for the child in need of placement.

Foster Boarding Homes

When "Foster Boarding Homes" is chosen as the Type of Search, a list box with two columns displays. The **Characteristics** column displays a view-only list of characteristics (e.g., Behavioral, HIV, Educational) that are allowed for resources in that type of search. The **Severity** column allows workers to select the severity level for the associated characteristic by using a drop-down list.

Bed Characteristics Tab for Foster Boarding Homes



The minimum – maximum range for Foster Boarding Homes is 0-3. The choices for Physical, Learning, Emotional and Behavioral Characteristics are:

- 0 — NA (no known condition or problem)
- 1 — Mild
- 2 — Moderate
- 3 — Severe

The choices for HIV are “Yes” and “No.” Refer to Appendix N for the definitions for bed characteristic severity levels in Foster Boarding Homes.

The **Bed Characteristics** tab also displays the **Type of Search** and **Number of Beds** fields. These fields are view-only and display information entered on the **Search** tab.

The lower section of the window contains the buttons. The following table provides the name of each button and a description of the button’s function:

Button Name	***Description***
Clear	This button clears all search fields *Vacancy Control Search* window. (The **Clear** command can also be selected from the **File** menu.)
Search	This button initiates a search for facilities based on the criteria entered in the *Vacancy Control Search* window. The results of this search display in the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window. The **Search** button enables when all required fields have been completed for the desired type of search. (The **Search** command can also be selected from the **Options** menu.)
Close	This button closes the *Vacancy Control Search* window. (The **Close** command can also be selected from the **File** menu.)

Step by Step:
Conducting a *Vacancy Control Search*

1 From the *Vacancy Control Search* window, click on the drop-down arrow for the **Type of Search** field and select **Foster Boarding Homes** from the resulting list.
Required fields highlight in yellow.

2 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Borough/County** (of Primary Address) field and select appropriate county from the resulting list.
*If you select a NYC borough, the **Show results for <Borough> only** check box displays in the Search Filter section. This check box enables workers to conduct a search within that specific borough or throughout New York City.*

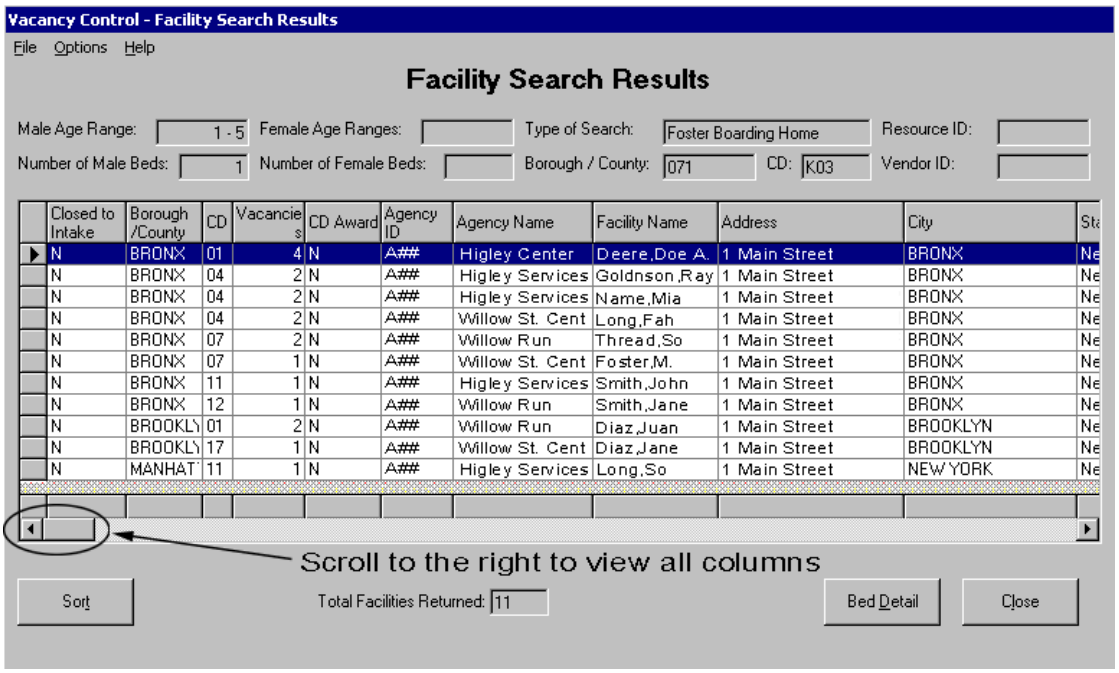
Where am I?

CONNECTIONS toolbar > Options menu > Vacancy Control Search command

3. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Community District** (of Primary Address) field and select the appropriate district from the resulting list. This field is required when a NYC borough is selected in the Borough/County field.
   *This field allows a search to be conducted within a specific Community District (CD). If you select a specific CD, the **Show results for <CD> only** check box displays in the Search Filter section in the lower part of the tab. This check box enables workers to conduct a search within a specific CD. If the CD is unknown, workers should select **Unknown** from the drop-down list.*
4. Record the desired minimum year and maximum year age range in the Male/Female Age Range sub-section.
5. Record the required number of beds.
   *If "0" is entered in this field (or in the **Required Number of Female Beds** field), at least one characteristic must be selected on the **Bed Characteristics** tab. By entering "0," workers can search for beds that are not currently available and check the date on which the bed is expected to be vacant.*
6. If appropriate, deselect the Show results for <CD> only check box.
   When selected, search displays vacancies only for the selected Community District.
7. If appropriate, deselect the Show results for <Borough> only check box.
   When selected, search displays vacancies only for the selected Borough.
8. Click on the **Behavioral Characteristics** tab.
   The Behavioral Characteristics tab displays.
9. Click in the **Severity** level cell to record characteristics.
   A drop-down arrow displays.
10. Click on the drop-down arrow and record desired severity level for the selected characteristics.
11. Click on the **Search** button.
    The Vacancy Control Facility Search Results window displays with the results of your search.

Reviewing the Results

A Vacancy Control Search returns facilities that meet or exceed the search criteria entered in the *Vacancy Control Search* window. Only facilities with the status of Accepted–Active are included in the results. Facilities in Applicant or Closed status will not return in the search. Facilities that are designated as "Closed To Intake," or facilities that are operated by an Agency that is designated as "Closed to Intake," are not included in the search results. The results display in the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window.



The maximum number of facilities returned is 200. If more than 200 facilities matched the search criteria, the following message displays:

"There were more than 200 facilities that match the Search Criteria entered. Only the first 200 facilities will be displayed."

If no facilities match the search criteria, the following message displays:

"No matches were found for the search parameters."

All elements in the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window (e.g., the **Male Age Range** and **Type of Search** fields) are view-only. This window is divided in to three sections. The header section at the top contains fields that are pre-filled with the search criteria entered by the worker in the *Vacancy Control Search* window. Only fields that were used in the search will be populated.

The middle section contains the facility results grid. This grid contains the following columns that provide specific information for each of the facilities returned in the results:

- Closed to Intake (Y/N)
- Borough/County
- CD
- Vacancies
- CD/Borough Award (Y/N)
- Agency Name
- Facility Name
- Address
- City
- State
- Zip
- Phone
- Vendor ID
- Resource ID
- Facility Type

Use the horizontal scroll bar at the bottom of the grid to scroll to the right to view all of the columns. Before viewing all of the columns, you may want to note the line number for the facility prior to using the scroll bar. The information displayed in these columns is view-only. If any of

this information needs to be updated, the worker who maintains records for the facility must make the changes in the appropriate windows.

Two of the columns display information from other Vacancy Control windows:

- The **Closed To Intake** column displays an indicator next to the facilities that are designated as Closed To Intake by another district or that are owned by an agency that is designated as Closed To Intake by another district. For more information on Closed To Intake, refer to "Vacancy Control Closed To Intake" on page 13-27.
- The **CD/Borough Award Indicator** column displays an indicator ("Y" for yes or "N" for no) next to facilities that are authorized by an agency that is awarded a neighborhood based service contract. For more information on CD/Borough Awards, refer to "Vacancy Control CD/Borough Award (NYC/ACS only)" on page 13-31.

The lower section of the window contains the **Total Facilities Returned** field and the **Sort**, **Bed Detail** and **Close** buttons. The following table provides the names for each button and a description of the button's function.

Button Name	***Description***
Sort	This button opens the Sort dialog box. Workers may select one, two or three columns to use to re-sort the *Facility Results* list.
Bed Detail	This button opens the *Vacancy Control Bed Detail* window. The **Bed Detail** button enables when a facility is selected from the list.
Close	This button closes the window. (The **Close** command can also be selected from the **File** menu.)

When the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window is first opened, the facilities are sorted based on the type of search that was conducted. The default sort for Foster Boarding Homes is:

- Borough/County
- NYC/CD (targeted CD displayed first with remaining CDs following in numerical order)
- NYC/CD Award
- Facility Name (alphabetically in ascending order)

For example, if you are searching for a bed in CD 04 in the Bronx, the results will list CD 04 in the Bronx first. All non-targeted CDs in the Bronx will display in numerical order after the targeted CD (04, 01, 02, 03, 05). Facilities with a CD Award will display higher on the list (within that CD) than other facilities from that CD.

Sorting the Results

The results on the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window can be re-sorted using either of the following methods:

- clicking on the column header or footer; or
- clicking on the **Sort** button.

Step by Step:
Sorting the Vacancy Control Search Results

1 On the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window, click on a column header.
The results are re-sorted in ascending order by the selected column.

OR

2 Click on the column footer.
The results are re-sorted in descending order by the selected column.

Where am I?

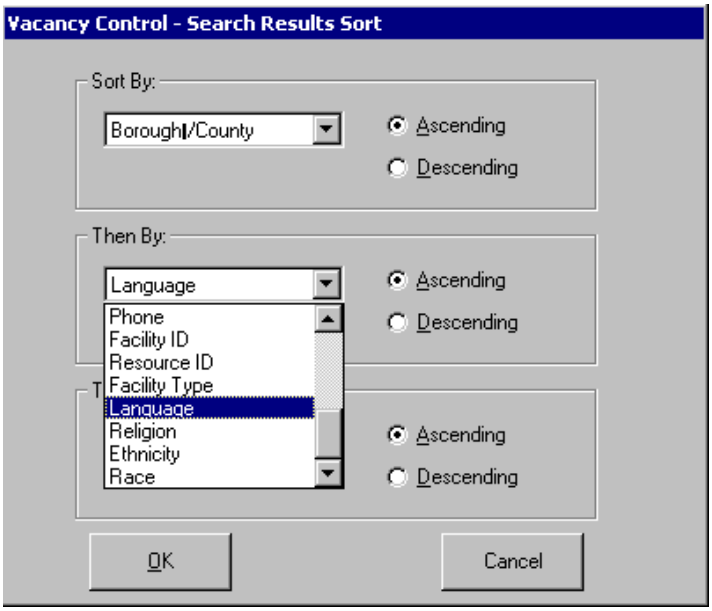
CONNECTIONS toolbar > Options menu > Vacancy Control Search command > Search button >

Step by Step:
Accessing the *Vacancy Control - Search Results Sort Window*

1 Click on the **Sort** button in the lower section of the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window.
*A **Sort** box containing three drop-down lists displays. These lists have the names of each column heading on the facility result grid. Workers are able to sort the list by selecting one, two or three columns.*

Where am I?

CONNECTIONS toolbar > Options menu > Vacancy Control Search command > Search button >



Step by Step:
Sorting the Vacancy Control Search Results Sort window

1. On the *Sort* window, click on the Sort drop-down arrow in the **Sort By** field and select from the resulting list.
   *The **OK** button and **Then By** fields enable.*
2. Click on either the **Ascending** or **Descending** radio button next to this field.
3. To further sort, click on the Sort drop-down arrow in the **Then By** field and select from the resulting list.
   *The next **Then By** frame enables.*
4. Click on either the **Ascending** or **Descending** radio button next to this field.
   Repeat steps 3 and 4 for additional sorting.
5. Click on the **OK** button to sort the results using desired choices.
   *The Vacancy Control Facility Search Results window displays, sorted in accordance with the selections in the Sort dialog box. Click on the **Cancel** button to return to the list without changing the sort.*

Selecting a Facility

A facility can be selected from *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window by clicking on the facility's row in the grid. Only one facility can be selected at a time. Once a facility is selected, the **Bed Detail** button enables. Click on the **Bed Detail** button to display the *Vacancy Control Bed Detail* window.

When selecting a bed, compare the child's needs to the bed characteristics. Select the bed that has the lowest severity levels and still meets the child's needs.

This will help ensure that children requiring beds with higher severity levels are not closed out of these beds by children with lower severity levels.

Viewing the Vacancy Control Bed Detail window

The Vacancy Control Bed Detail window displays a list of all beds and bed characteristics for the facility that was selected from the Vacancy Control Facility Results window. Workers are able to use this window to "Reserve" or "Occupy" a vacant bed or beds. This window is divided into three sections: the header, a middle section with two tabs and a lower section with buttons.

The header section at the top of the window displays the following view-only information for the selected facility:

- Resource Name
- Agency
- Resource ID
- Address
- Sub Agency
- Vendor ID
- Phone
- Borough/County
- CD (NYC only)
- Facility Type

The middle section of the window contains two tabs, the **Beds** tab and the **Bed Characteristics** tab. When the window is first opened, the **Beds** tab displays.

The Beds Tab — Vacancy Control Bed Detail

The **Beds** tab displays bed information on all beds for the selected facility. The information that is contained on this tab varies, depending on the type of facility (FBH or CCF) that was selected on the *Vacancy Control Search* window. The **Status** field is modifiable when the bed is vacant. The **Child Info** and **Date Bed Expected Vacant** fields are modifiable when the bed status is changed. The remaining fields are pre-filled with view-only information.

The **Status** field allows workers to view the availability of a bed. When the status of a bed is "Vacant," workers can select the bed and click on either the **Reserve** button or the **Occupy** button in the lower section of the window.

A bed can be left in Reserved status for up 2 hours before automatically changing back to Vacant status. The worker who reserved the bed or a staff person (supervisor or above) in the unit hierarchy is able to unreserve the bed within the two-hour limit. Unreserving the bed changes the status of the bed back to Vacant. When a bed is in Reserved or Occupied status, the **Reserved by Worker ID** field displays the ID of the worker who changed the status.

Workers must continue to follow current procedure and consult with the agency regarding the appropriateness of the placement prior to changing the status of the bed to Occupied.

Reserved Status

The two-hour limit refers to consulting with the agency regarding the placement. This limit does not imply that the child must be physically in the home within the two hours.

Workers can reserve up to five beds per child.

To find contact information in CONNECTIONS about the worker listed in the **Reserved By Worker ID** field, conduct a Staff Search from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar. For details on conducting a Staff Search, see *Module 4: Retrieving information in CONNECTIONS*.

When reserving or occupying a bed, the worker (or a worker in the unit hierarchy) is able to enter information into the **Child Info** field and the **Date Expected Vacant** field. Information in the **Child Info** field is removed when the bed status changes to Vacant or Temporarily Unavailable. Information in the **Date Expected Vacant** field is removed when the bed status changes to Vacant.

The child's gender and age (e.g., M 12/06/91) should be entered in the **Child Info** field in the first 10 spaces. To enter more information, you may use the remaining 15 spaces allotted for this field. This information is important and provides a more complete view of the home for other workers making placement decisions. If there is a known date that the child expected to leave placement (e.g., a Planned Discharge) then this date should be entered in the **Date Expected Vacant** field.

Five additional columns display on this tab for Foster Boarding Homes. These columns capture the characteristic severity levels for Behavior, Emotional, Physical Learning and HIV.

Column Name	***Description***
Physical **Learning** **Emotional** **Behavioral**	The following choices represent the severity levels for these four columns: • 0 — NA (no known condition or problem) • 1 — Mild • 2 — Moderate • 3 — Severe
HIV	The choices for HIV are: • No • Yes

The Bed Characteristics Tab — Vacancy Control Bed Detail

The **Bed Characteristics** tab displays the characteristics and severity levels of the selected Congregate Care Facility's beds. Access to the **Bed Characteristics** tab is only available for beds in Congregate Care Facilities that have characteristics with severity levels greater than zero. (Congregate Care Facilities are not currently supported in Vacancy Control.)

The lower section of the window contains the **Total Bed** field. This field is view-only and is pre-filled with the number of beds listed on the **Beds** tab. This section also contains the buttons. The following table provides a description of the buttons' function.

Button Name	***Description***
Sort	Click on this button to re-sort the list of beds. (The **Sort** command can also be selected from the **Options** menu.)
Previous	Click on this button to move to the previous facility in the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window. If information is recorded but not saved when the **Previous** button is clicked, the following message displays: *"Do you want to save changes?* *If No, modified data and/or narratives will be lost."* (The **Previous Facility** command can also be selected from the **Options** menu.)
Next	Click on this button to move to the next facility in the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window. If information is recorded but not saved when the **Next** button is clicked, the following message displays: *"Do you want to save changes?* *If No, modified data and/or narratives will be lost"* (The **Next Facility** command can also be selected from the **Options** menu.*)*
Reserve	Click on this button to reserve a vacant bed. (The **Reserve** command can also be selected from the **Beds** sub-menu, located in the **Options** menu.)
Occupy	Click on this button to occupy a vacant or reserved bed. *Only the assigned worker or a worker in the unit hierarchy can occupy a bed in reserved status*. (The **Occupy** command can also be selected from **Beds** sub-menu, located in the **Options** menu.)

(Table continued on next page) ▶

Button Name	Description
Save	Click on this button to save the changes. (The **Save** command can also be selected from the **File** menu.)
Close	Click on this button to close the window *without* saving the changes. (The **Close** command can also be selected from the **File** menu.) Clicking on the **Close** button prior to saving changes displays the following message: *"Do you want to exit? Unsaved data and/or narratives will be lost"* Clicking on the **Yes** button cancels the changes and all information reverts to its state after the last save. -OR- Clicking on the **No** button ends the close request and returns to the window for additional modifications (or to enable the **Save** button).
Print	Click on this button to print the Vacancy Control Placement Tracking Report. (The **Print** command can also be selected from the **File** menu.)This **Print** buttons enables when a bed with an occupied status is selected.

Step by Step:
Reserving or Occupying a Bed

1 From the *Vacancy Bed Detail* window, select the bed to be Reserved or Occupied.
If the bed is in Vacant status, the status can be changed to Reserved or Occupied. If the bed is in Reserved status, only the worker who reserved the bed, or a staff person in the unit hierarchy can change the status to Occupied or Unreserved.

2 Click on the **Reserve** button to change the status to Reserved or on the **Occupy** button to change the status to Occupied.
The Bed Detail Notes window opens.

Where am I?

CONNECTIONS toolbar > Options menu > Vacancy Control Search command > Search button > Bed Detail button

3 Enter information into the Child Info field.
Enter the child's gender and date of birth in the first 10 spaces (e.g., M 12/06/91) of the 25-character field.

4 If the date the child is expected to leave is known (e.g., a Planned Discharge) then enter this date in the Date Expected Vacant field.
*NOTE: If you have entered information into either the Child Info field or the Date Expected Vacant field, check for accuracy before you click on the **OK** and **Save** buttons. If the information has already been saved and you need to make changes, you must re-open the Bed Detail Notes window. To re-open the Bed Detail Notes*

*window, you must select the bed and click on either the **Unreserve** or **Occupy** buttons.*

5. Click on the **OK** button.
6. Click on the **Save** button to save your changes. *Before you close the Bed Detail window for this resource, record the Resource Name, Resource ID, Agency Phone number and any other information you may need when contacting the agency concerning the placement.*

When a child is moved from a bed, the bed must be updated using Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance to reflect the new status.

Information in the **Child Info** and **Reserved By Worker ID** fields is removed when the bed status changes to Vacant or Temporarily Unavailable.

Information in the **Date Expected Vacant** field is removed when the bed status changes to Vacant.

Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance

Beds, Bed Characteristics, and other factors change; local districts and voluntary agencies must maintain accurate records to optimize their placement potential. The *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window provides workers with the ability to identify beds in Foster Boarding Homes that are available for placement and offers designated workers the flexibility to make modifications to beds (e.g., add beds, delete beds, change bed characteristics, add comments) through the worker's *Assigned Workload* (including unit hierarchy access to the *Assigned Workload*) or owned by their agency.

In order for bed information to be maintained, the facility must be in either Accepted–Active or Applicant status. Note: Only Facilities in Accepted-Active status will return in Vacancy Control Search.

Workers performing modifications to beds using the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window must have the VACANCY MAINT Business Function as well as one of the following conditions:

If a child's placement in a bed changes the foster parent's overall preference, **all other beds in the home must be updated to reflect these changes**.

For example, if a male child occupies one of two beds in a room originally available for either males or females, then the worker who is responsible for maintaining the foster home must update the vacant bed to reflect a change in gender preference for the vacant bed.

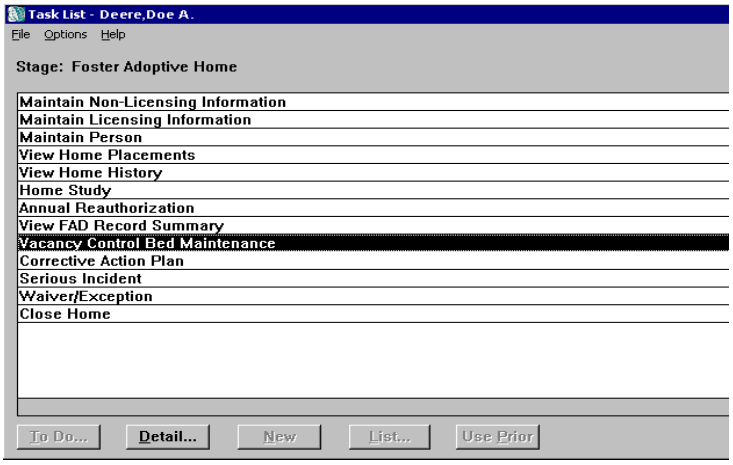
- The worker must be from the same district/agency that owns the facility

or

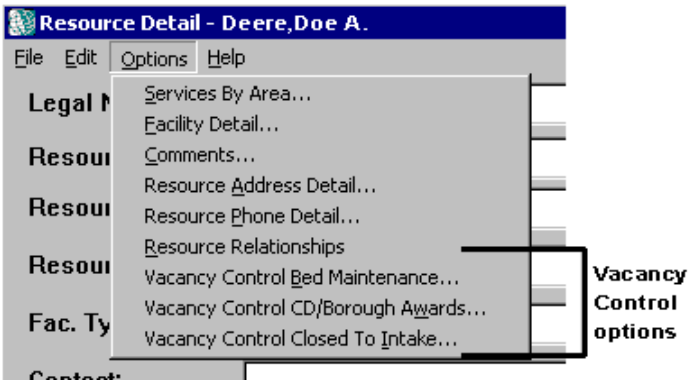
- The facility must be on the worker's Assigned Workload.
  Note: Workers assigned to a FAD stage are able to view the Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance window from the Task List. This provides FAD workers who are not designated to maintain Vacancy Control with access to information contained in Vacancy Control that may be relevant to certification and licensing information.

You can access the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window from either your *Assigned Workload* or from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar using one of the following navigational paths:

- When the facility is on your *Assigned Workload,* click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar. Select the facility from the *Assigned Workload* and click on the **Tasks…** button. Select "Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance" from the *Task List* and click on the **Detail…** button.



- When the facility is not on your *Assigned Workload*, click on the **RSRC** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar to conduct a Resource Search for the facility. Select the facility from the *Resource List* and click on the **Detail** button. Select "Vacancy Bed Maint" on the **Options** menu from the *Resource Detail* window.



Step by Step: Opening the *Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance Window* via the *Task List*

1. Select the appropriate FAD home on the *Assigned Workload*, and click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
2. Select the **Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance** task, and click on the **Detail…** button.
   The Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance window displays.

Step by Step: Opening the *Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance* Window via the *Resource Detail* Window

1. Conduct a Resource Search to find the appropriate Resource.
2. Select the appropriate Resource from the listing of search results.
3. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The *Resource Detail window displays*.
4. Select the **Options** menu and click on the **Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance…** command.
   The Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance window displays.

For details on conducting a Resource Search, see *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*

Understanding the Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance Window

The *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window is divided into three sections:

- Heading (containing pre-filled, view-only information)
- Tabs
- Buttons

The buttons and the information in the Heading are always visible, regardless of the tab you select. The Heading contains the following information for each facility:

- Resource Name
- Address
- County
- Type
- Sub- Agency
- Resource ID
- Vendor ID
- Status
- CD (NYC Only)
- Phone
- Agency
- Male Age Range: Min Year
- Male Age Range: Max Year
- Female Age Range: Min Year
- Female Age Range: Max Year
- Total Capacity

Two buttons, the **Facility Comments** button and the **Close** button, display at the bottom of the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window. The **Facility Comments** button is used to access a comment box. You may record additional information about a facility in this comment box when the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window is opened in modify mode (e.g., via the *Task List*). An "√" displays in the check box next to the **Facility Comments** button on the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window once comments have been saved.

Step by Step:
Recording Facility Comments

1. On the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window click on the **Facility Comments** button.
   The Facility Comments window displays.
2. Record comments.
   *The **Save** button enables.*
3. Click on the **Save** button.
   The following message displays:
   "Changes Have Been Saved."
4. Click on the **OK** button.

Tabs on the Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance Window

The tabbed section of the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window is made up of two tabs: the **Beds** tab and the **Bed Characteristics** tab. The **Beds** tab is always active when the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window is opened.

The Beds Tab

The **Beds** tab is a wide grid containing a number of columns. The information displayed for each column will vary, depending on whether a foster home or congregate care facility has been selected.

In each column, information for each bed of the facility selected may be recorded in the associated cell.

Column Name	Description
Bed ID	The cells in this column display a unique identifier that links beds for internal tracking. This field is view only.
Status	The cells in this column display the current status of the bed. When you enter this window in modify mode, you may select one of the following statuses: • Occupied • Vacant • Temporarily Unavailable (for less than 30 days) Beds in "Reserved" Status can *only* be modified by the worker who made the reservation, or by a staff member in that worker's hierarchy.
Male Min Year **Male Max Year** **Female Min Year** **Female Max Year**	The cells in these columns display minimum and maximum age ranges for male and female designated beds. This information can be modified. Age ranges must be within the ranges specified in the F/A Home License window. When opened in Browse mode, these cells are "view-only." Enter "0" in the minimum age range when a bed is suitable for a child less than 1 year old. Leave the age fields blank if the bed is not suitable for a gender.
Reserved by Worker ID	The cells in this column display the Person ID of the worker responsible for changing the status of the bed to "Reserved." This field is view-only. The data in this cell will be removed when the bed status changes to "Vacant" or to "Temporarily Unavailable." Use the Staff Search function in CONNECTIONS to locate further information about the worker. (See Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS.)
Bed Location	The cells in this column display information that identifies where the bed is located in the facility. For example, "A1-2" is used to identify 1 of 2 beds in Bedroom A. The modifier "Ther" (Therapeutic Contract) is added when appropriate.
Child Info	Each cell in this column contains 25 spaces that can be used to record child identifying information. The first 10 spaces should be used to identify the gender and date of birth (e.g., **M 12/06/91**). Additional information may be recorded in the remaining 15 spaces.

Table continued on next page ▶

Column Name	Description

(Continued from previous page) ▶

Date Expected Vacant	The cells in this column are used to record the date that the bed is expected to become vacant (if known). Once the status is changed to "Vacant," the information is removed from the cell.
Physical **Learning** **Emotional** **Behavioral**	The following choices may be recorded in each cell to indicate the severity level of difficulty the foster home is willing to accept: • 0 — N/A (no known condition or problem) • 1 — Mild (minor condition or problem; does not significantly affect functioning) • 2 — Moderate (moderate condition or problem; may affect functioning and may require specialized services or treatment) • 3 — Severe (serious condition or problem; significantly affects functioning and requires intensive services or treatment)
HIV	The cells in this column are used to indicate whether the bed is available to individuals diagnosed with HIV. To fill these cells, you will select one of two choices: • No • Yes

For each cell, you will either record information directly or select from a drop-down list (activated by clicking on the cell).

At the bottom of the Beds tab, you will find five (5) buttons. Each button allows you to complete an action related to the Bed(s) selected. Descriptions of each button are located in the table below.

Button Name	Description
Add Beds	This button is used to add more beds to a facility. The **Add Beds** button becomes enabled when the window is opened in Modify mode, and the current number of beds listed is *less* than the licensing capacity.
Delete Beds	This button is used to delete existing beds from a facility. ***Always*** delete a bed in the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window, before changing the bed capacity information in the *F/A Home License* window.
Modify Beds	This **Modify Beds** button is used to change existing bed characteristics. The **Modify Beds** button becomes enabled when the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window is opened in Modify mode and one or more beds is selected.

Table continued on next page ▶

Button Name	Description

(Continued from previous page) ▶

Save	The **Save** button is used to save changes to the window. "Save" can also be selected from the **Bed Maintenance** menu.
Cancel	The **Cancel** button is used to cancel any changes that are in progress (not yet saved). "Cancel" can also be selected from the **Bed Maintenance** menu.

The Bed Characteristics Tab

The Bed Characteristics tab automatically becomes active when you select one or more beds on the Beds tab and click on the **Modify Beds** button. The type and amount of information displayed will vary, depending on how many beds you have selected. When only one bed is selected, the existing characteristics and existing severity levels for that bed are displayed. If multiple beds are selected, the grid displays characteristics but not the severity level. Workers are able to select and apply the bed characteristics to all selected beds.

To add/modify information, you **must** have the VACANCY MANIT Business Function. If you do not have this BFP, the Bed Characteristics tab will *only* enable when you select *one* bed. All information is displayed in "view-only" mode.

Adding, Deleting and Modifying Beds

New beds can be added to a selected facility up to the certified capacity. These beds can be based on existing beds, or added as a "blank" bed record. The number of beds and age ranges by gender for each bed must be within the licensing certification. Only one bed can be added at a time.

The instructions for Adding, Deleting and Modifying Bed Information are located on the following pages.

Step by Step: Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance: Adding "Blank" Beds to a Facility

1. On the **Beds** tab in the *Vacancy Control* window, click on the **Add Beds** button (without selecting an existing bed).
   A new bed displays with a blank row.
2. Enter specific information for the new bed in the blank fields.
3. Click on the **Save** button.
   The following message displays: "Changes Have Been Saved."
4. Click on the **OK** button.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance task > Detail button

Step by Step:
Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance:
Adding Beds to a Facility with Existing Characteristics

1 On the **Beds** tab in the *Vacancy Control* window, click on the column to the left of the **Bed ID** column to select the bed.

2 Click on the **Add Beds** button.
A new bed displays with the characteristics (including severity levels, status and bed location) copied from the selected bed. If necessary, modify the copied information to accurately represent the new bed.
The Bed Location field must be updated with the new bed information using an identifier. For example, "A1-2" stands for Bedroom "A", Bed "1 of 2." The modifier "Ther" (Therapeutic Contract) is added when appropriate. This information is required for homes with vacancies).

3 Click on the **Save** button.
The following message displays:
"Changes Have Been Saved"

4 Click on the **OK** button.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance task > Detail button

Step by Step:
Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance:
Deleting Beds From a Facility

1 On the **Beds** tab in the *Vacancy Control* window, click on the column to the left of the **Bed ID** column to select the bed.
To select multiple beds hold the control button and click the column to the left of the Bed ID column.

2 Click on the **Delete Beds** button.
When deleting a single bed the following message displays:
"Are you sure you wish to delete this Bed?"
When deleting a multiple beds the following message displays:
"Are you sure you want to delete these <#> Beds?"

3 Click on the **Yes** button to delete the Bed(s).
The following message displays:
"Changes Have Been Saved."
*Clicking on the **No** button displays the Vacancy Control-Bed Maintenance tab without deleting the bed(s).*

4 Click on the **Save** button.
The following message displays:
"Changes Have Been Saved."

5 Click on the **OK** button.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance task> Detail button

When reducing the licensing capacity for a facility, always delete the beds that are beyond the new licensing capacity in Vacancy Control before changing the bed capacity information in the *F/A Home License* window.

Step by Step:
Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance: Modifying Severity Level Information via Bed Characteristics tab

1. On the **Beds** tab in the *Vacancy Control* window, click on the column to the left of the **Bed ID** column to select the bed.
   To select multiple beds hold the control button and click the column to the left of the Bed ID column.
2. Click on the **Modify Beds** button.
   The Bed Characteristics tab displays.
3. Select the Available Characteristics (0,1,2, or 3) from the drop-down list.
4. Click on the **Save** button.
   The following message displays:
   "Changes Have Been Saved"
5. Click on the **OK** button.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance task > Detail button

Age ranges by gender must be kept within the parameters of the licensing certification. Enter "0" in the minimum age range for beds appropriate for children younger than one year old. Leave the age fields blank when the bed is not suitable for a particular gender.

Step by Step:
Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance: Modifying Severity Level Information via Beds tab

1. On the **Beds** tab select the severity level (0,1,2, or 3) from the drop-down list for the column (e.g. Physical column) for the appropriate row.
2. .Click on the **Save** button.
   The following message displays:
   "Changes Have Been Saved"
3. Click on the **OK** button.

Bed status is another important item that must be kept current to reflect the movement of children in and out of facilities. The status of a bed can be identified as Vacant, Occupied, and Temporarily Unavailable.

Beds in "Reserved" status can only be changed by the worker that made the reservation, or by a staff member within that worker's hierarchy.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button>Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance task > Detail button

The status of "Temporarily Unavailable" can be applied to a bed for less than 30 days.

Step by Step:
Vacancy Control – Bed Maintenance:
Modifying Bed Status

1. Click on the column to the left of the **Bed ID** column to select the bed.
2. Click on the drop-down arrow in the **Status** field for that bed.
3. Select the appropriate status from the list.
4. Click on the **Save** button.
   The following message displays:
   "Changes Have Been Saved."
5. Click on the **OK** button.

Vacancy Control Closed To Intake

The *Vacancy Control Closed To Intake* window allows designated local district and OCFS staff to remove facilities from the Vacancy Control Facility Search Results. The Closed To Intake status can be applied to:

- A Facility — to remove the facility from the search results.
- An Agency — to remove all Congregate Care Facilities and Foster Boarding Homes that the agency owns from the search results.
- A Facility Type within an Agency — to remove all facilities of a selected type (e.g., Group Home, Institution) that the agency owns from the search results.

To make modifications in the *Vacancy Control Closed To Intake* window, workers must have the VAC AWARD/CLOSE Business Function. To access the window in view-only mode, workers must have the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function.

The status of Closed To Intake works differently, depending on whether it was applied by an OCFS worker or a staff member from a local district. The following table illustrates how Closed To Intake functions when different workers apply the status.

Designated OCFS staff applying the Closed To Intake status	→ The facility is removed from all Vacancy Control Searches *for all workers statewide*.
Designated Local district staff applying the Closed To Intake status	→ The facility is removed from Vacancy Control Search Results when a worker from the same district as the worker applying the Closed to Intake status performs the search. → The facility returns with a "Closed To Intake Indicator" when a worker from another district performs the search

For example, if a NYC/ACS manager from Kings County (Brooklyn) applies the Closed To Intake status to a facility, the facility will not return in Vacancy Control Searches performed by NYC/ACS workers from any of the five boroughs. If a staff member from NYS/OCFS, non-NYC/ACS districts, or a voluntary agency (and the bed is within their own agency) performs the search, this same facility will be included in the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Results* window with a "Y" displayed in the **Closed To Intake** column.

Applying the Closed To Intake status is not a permanent change and can be reversed by designated local district and OCFS staff.

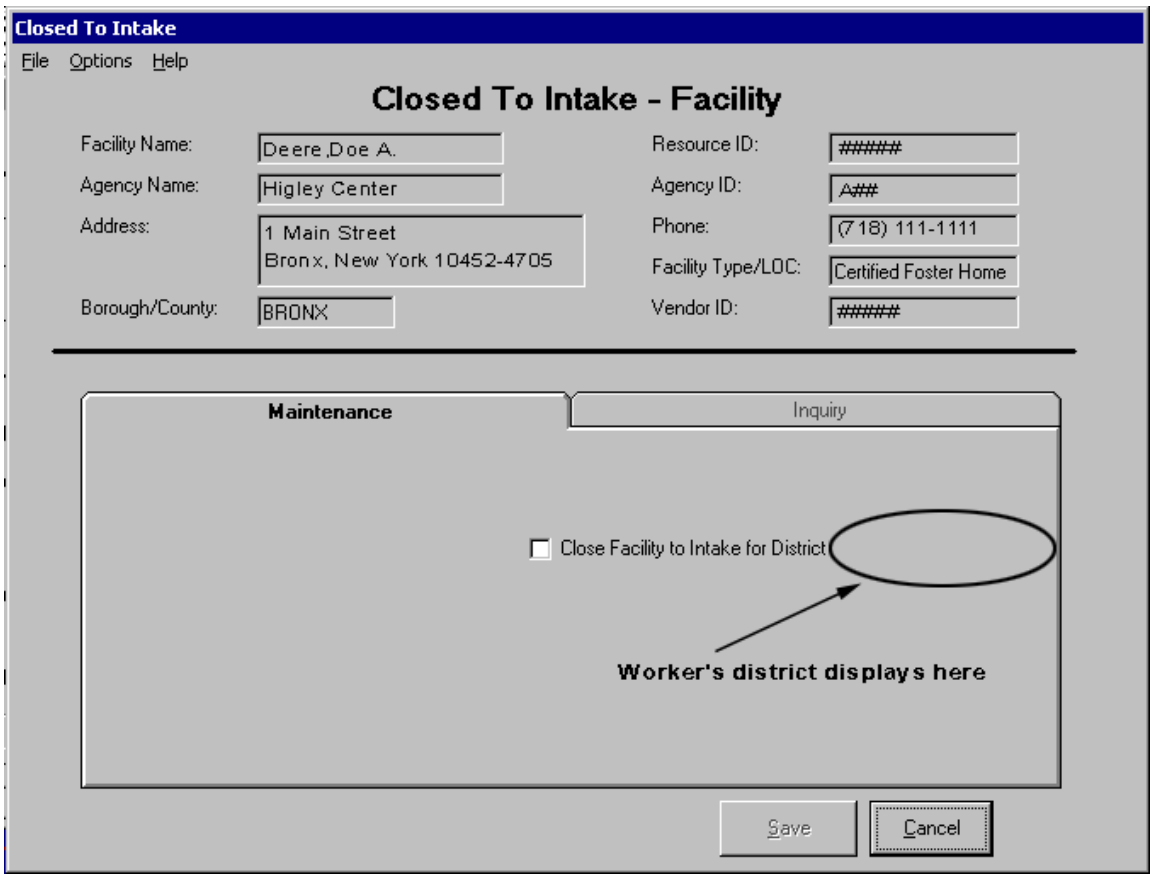
Step by Step:
Accessing the Vacancy Control Closed To Intake Window

1. Conduct a Resource Search to find the appropriate Resource.
2. Select the appropriate Resource from the listing of search results.
3. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The *Resource Detail window displays*.
4. Click on the **Options** menu and click on the **Vacancy Control Closed To Intake…**command.
   The Vacancy Control Closed To Intake window displays.

For details on conducting a Resource Search, see *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*

The *Vacancy Control Closed To Intake* window displays with **Inquiry** tab enabled for workers with the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function.

The *Vacancy Control Closed To Intake* window is divided into two sections: the header and tabs. The header at the top of the window is pre-filled with view-only information for the selected facility.



The tab section includes two tabs, the **Maintenance** tab and the **Inquiry** tab. The **Maintenance** tab is the active tab when workers with the VAC AWARD/CLOSE Business Function open the window. The **Inquiry** tab is the active tab when workers who don't have the VAC AWARD/CLOSE Business Function (but who have the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function) open the window.

The Maintenance Tab — Vacancy Control Closed To Intake

The type of resource selected determines which fields display on the **Maintenance** tab. When the window is opened for a facility, local district workers can click on the **Close to Intake for** [worker's district] check box to add or remove the Closed To Intake status for the facility for the worker's district. An OCFS worker can use the **Close to Intake for ALL** check box to apply the status to all districts.

Applying the Closed To Intake status is not a permanent change and can be reversed by de-selecting the **Close To Intake for** [worker's district] check box.

When the window is opened for an agency, a grid with following two columns displays:

- **Facility Types** — contains a view-only list of six facility types.
  - Agency Boarding Home
  - Certified Foster Home
  - Foster/Adoptive Home
  - Group Home
  - Group Residence
  - Institution
- **Closed** — a check box for each of the six facility types.

Local district workers can also use the **Close Agency to Intake for district** [worker's district] check box to add or remove the Closed To Intake status for the entire agency (e.g., all Foster Boarding Homes within the agency) for the worker's district. OCFS workers can use the **Close Agency to Intake for ALL** check box to apply the status to the entire agency for all districts.

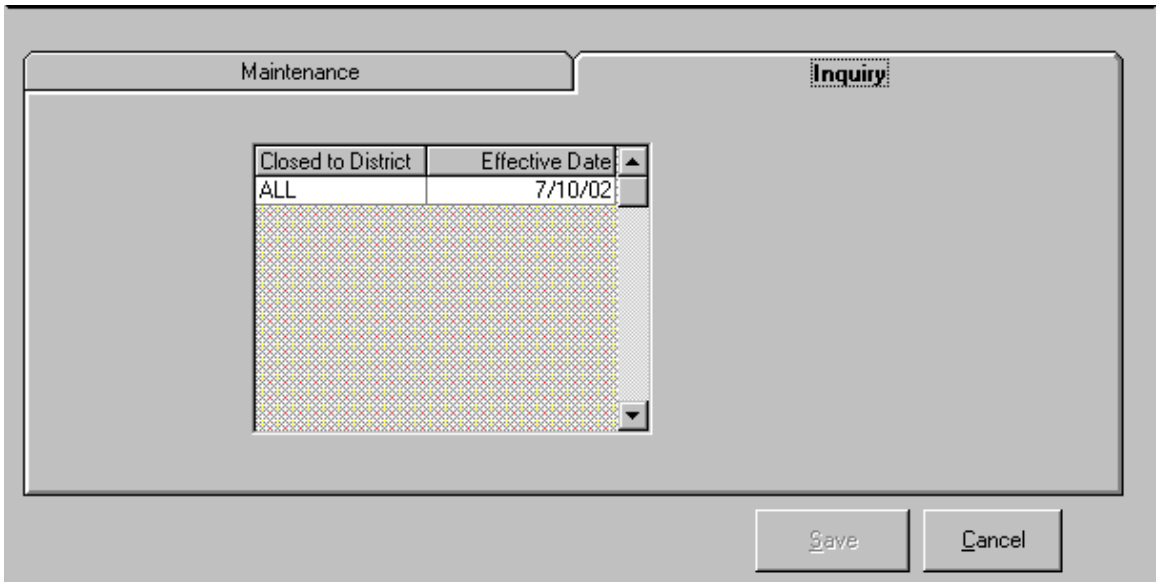
The Inquiry Tab — Vacancy Control Closed To Intake

The type of resource selected determines which fields display on the **Inquiry** tab. When the window is opened for a facility, a grid with following two columns displays:

- **Closed to District** — lists the districts that added Closed to Intake to the facility.
- **Effective Date** — captures the date the status was applied.

When the window is opened for an agency, a grid with the following three columns displays:

- **Closed to District** — lists the districts that added Closed to Intake to the agency.
- **Closed for Facility Types** — lists the facility types that the status was applied to.
- **Effective Date** — captures the date the status was applied.



Vacancy Control Closed To Intake Report

The Vacancy Control Closed To Intake Report contains a list of facilities and agencies (sorted by district) with detailed information for each facility or agency that have a Closed To Intake status. The report is generated weekly. All staff on the Closed to Intake Distribution List will be able to view this report from the Report List window. This list is maintained by NYS/OCFS.

Vacancy Control CD/Borough Award (NYC/ACS only)

The *CD/ Borough Award Maintenance* window allows NYC/ACS administration to indicate in CONNECTIONS which agencies have been awarded a neighborhood based service contract. The CD Awards apply to agencies that license Foster Boarding Homes and the Borough Awards apply to agencies that operate Congregate Care Facilities.

This window is accessed from the *Resource Detail* window by selecting “Vacancy Control CD Awards” from the **Options** menu.

The *CD/ Borough Award Maintenance* window is divided into three sections, the header, a middle section with tabs and a lower section with buttons. The header is pre-filled with view-only information for the selected agency.

The *Vacancy Control CD/Borough Award* window displays in **Inquiry** mode for workers with the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function.

The tab section is divided into two tabs, the **Foster Boarding Homes — CD Awards** tab and the **Congregate Care Facilities — Borough Awards** tab.

Step by Step:
Accessing the CD/Borough Award Maintenance Window

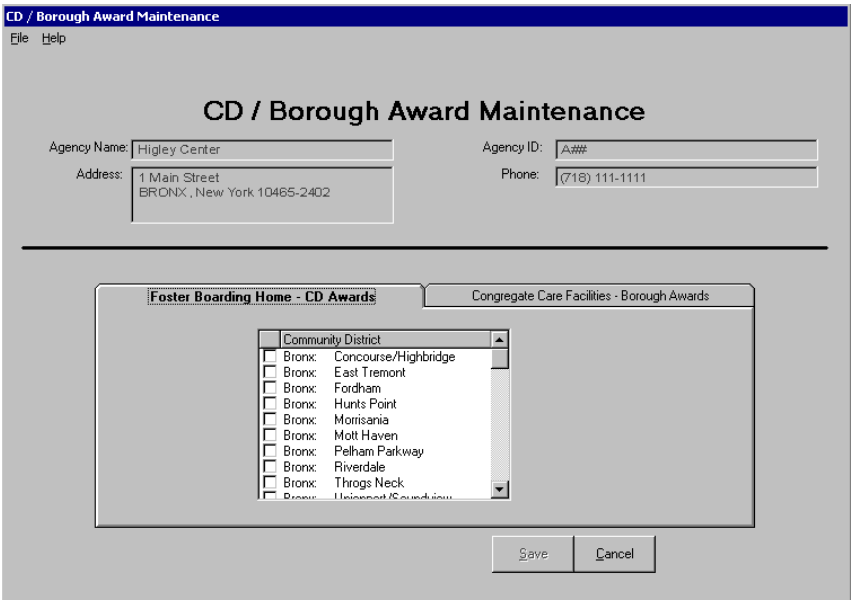
1. Conduct a Resource Search to find the appropriate Resource.
2. Select the appropriate Resource from the listing of search results.
3. Click on the **Detail…** button.
   The *Resource Detail window displays*.
4. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Vacancy Control CD/Borough Awards…**command.
   The CD/Borough Award Maintenance window displays.

For details on conducting a Resource Search, see *Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS*

Foster Boarding Homes — CD Awards Tab

The **Foster Boarding Homes – CD Awards** tab is always active when the window is first opened. This tab displays a list of all NYC Community Districts. A check box next to each Community District indicates whether or not the selected agency was given an Award for the NYC/CD.

Workers must have the VAC AWARD/CLOSE Business Function to modify information in this window. Workers who have the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function can access the window in inquiry mode only.



Step by Step:
Adding a Community District (NYC/CD) Award

1. Click on the check box next to the CD to indicate that the selected agency is given an Award for the CD.
2. Click on the **Save** button to save the changes.
   The following message displays:
   "Changes Have Been Saved."
3. Click on the **OK** button.
   The Resource Detail window displays.

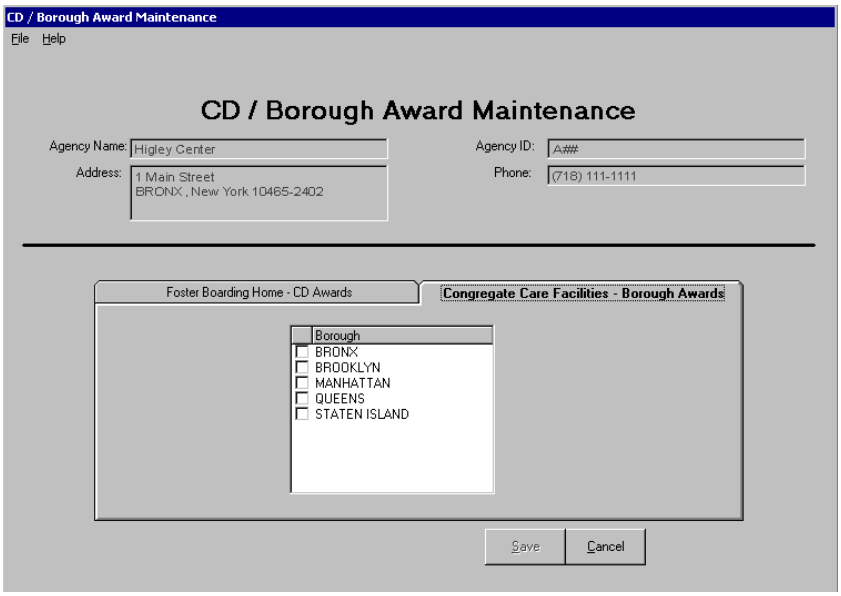
Step by Step:
Deleting a Community District (NYC/CD) Award

1. Click on the check box next to the CD to remove the indicator.
2. Click on the **Save** button to save the changes.
   The following message displays:
   "Changes Have Been Saved."
3. Click on the **OK** button.
   The Resource Detail window displays.

Congregate Care Facilities — Borough Awards Tab

The **Congregate Care Facilities — Borough Awards** tab displays a list of all boroughs. A check box next to each borough indicates whether or not the selected agency was given an Award for the borough.

Workers must have the VAC AWARD/CLOSE Business Function to modify information in this window. Workers who have the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function can access the window in inquiry mode only.



Step by Step: Adding a Borough Award (NYC/ACS Only)

1 Click on the check box next to the borough to indicate that the selected agency is given an Award for the borough.

2 Click on the **Save** button to save the changes.
The following message displays:
"Changes Have Been Saved."

3 Click on the **OK** button.
The Resource Detail window displays.

Where am I?

RSRC button > Search button> Detail button > Options menu > Vacancy Control CD/Borough Awards command

Step by Step: Deleting a Borough Award (NYC/ACS Only)

1 Click on the check box next to the borough to remove the indicator.

2 Click on the **Save** button to save the changes.
The following message displays:
"Changes Have Been Saved."

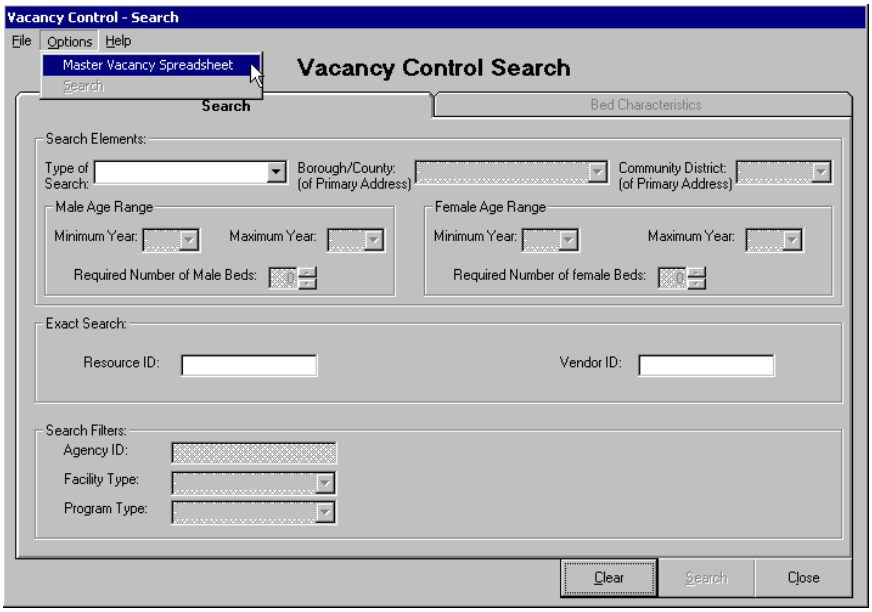
3 Click on the **OK** button.
The Resource Detail window displays.

Where am I?

RSRC button > Search button> Detail button > Options menu > Vacancy Control CD/Borough Awards command

Vacancy Control – Reports

NYC Voluntary Agencies require access to a "Master Vacancy Spreadsheet" listing information about all of their Foster Boarding Homes that are in Accepted-Active status and contain at least one vacant or reserved bed. This report will only include homes within the worker's agency. Contract agencies will use this information to respond to requests for placement that come in after business hours from the Office of Placement Assistance (OPA).



Master Vacancy Spreadsheet Command

This report is intended to assist workers who receive placement requests after business hours. To ease the burden on system performance, the Master Vacancy Spreadsheet can only be generated between the hours of 3:00 PM and 8:00 AM, Monday through Friday and 3:00 PM Friday through 8:00 AM Monday. If a worker attempts to generate this report between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday, s/he will receive the following message:

When the worker selects the **Master Vacancy Spreadsheet** command on the **Options** menu on the *Vacancy Control Search* window, a report will be generated that queries the database and selects the homes within the worker's agency that have a vacant bed available. The report displays as an Excel spreadsheet. For those homes that meet the requirements (Accepted-Active status and at least one vacant bed), the report will also include information about all of the beds within the home (occupied, reserved, temporarily unavailable and vacant). The worker can sort and print the information. In order to save the report, the worker must copy the data to his/her local directory.

This report is in real-time, which means all information is current as of the time the report is generated. The following columns are listed on the Master Vacancy Spreadsheet:

Agency ID	Resource ID	Resource Name	Borough/County
Sub Agency ID	CD	Lic Capacity	Address
Vendor ID	City	State	Zip
Phone	Facility Type	Program Type	CD Award
Bed ID	Bed Status	Bed Location	Child Info
BED Expected Vacant	Lic Female Min Age	Lic Female Max Age	Lic Male Min Age
Lic Male Max Age	Pre Bed Female Min Age	Pre Bed Female Max Age	Pre Bed Male Min Age
Pre Bed Male Max Age	Physical	Learning	Emotional
Behavioral	AIDS Indicator	Comments	

To access the *Vacancy Control Search* window, the worker's BFP must include the VACANCY SEARCH Business Function.

Step-by-Step:
Accessing the Master Vacancy Control Spreadsheet

1. From the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, click on the **Options** menu and select the **Vacancy Control Search…** command.
   The Vacancy Control Search window displays.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Master Vacancy Spreadsheet** command.
   The Spreadsheet generates and then displays.

Step-by-Step:
Copying the Master Vacancy Spreadsheet Data to a Local Directory
(NOTE: You must have Microsoft Excel installed on your local PC)

1. With the Master Vacancy Spreadsheet open, click and drag to select any or all of the cells you wish to copy.
2. Click on the **Edit** menu and select the **Copy** command.
3. Click on the **Start** button on the local desktop (not the Citrix desktop) and open Microsoft Excel.
4. Click on the **Edit** menu and select the **Paste** command.
   The information you copied from the spreadsheet in CONNECTIONS will paste into new spreadsheet.
5. Click on the **File** menu and select the **Save** command.
6. Name the document and designate where you would like to save it, then click on the **Save** button.

Print Screen Command

The **Print Screen** command is available in the *Facility Search Results* and *Bed Detail* windows. This command is listed under the **Options** menu. The **Print Screen** command will launch a report containing all of the data on the window (including all rows and columns).

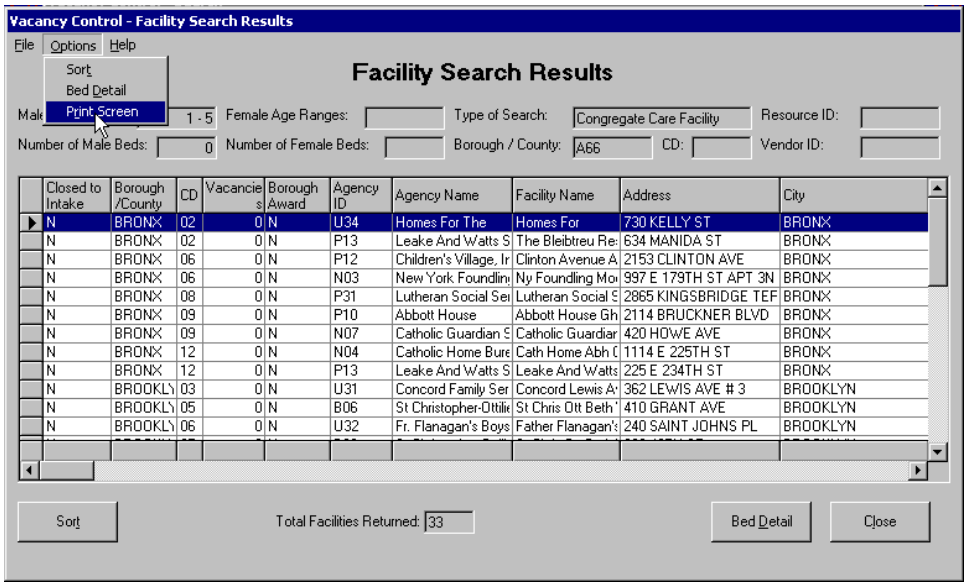
For the *Facility Search Results* window, the report lists all facilities that return in the search results grid. For the *Bed Detail* window, the report includes all beds that return in the search results grid.

Workers can sort the search results and view the sorted list on screen; however, the new **Print Screen** function will print the search results in the default (or original) order. Reports will not print sorted.

NOTE: This report is formatted for *legal* size paper. Load legal size paper into your printer before printing.

Print Screen for Facility Search Report

Any worker who has access to the *Facility Search Results* window via the *Vacancy Control Search* window will have the ability to print the *Facility Search Results* window.

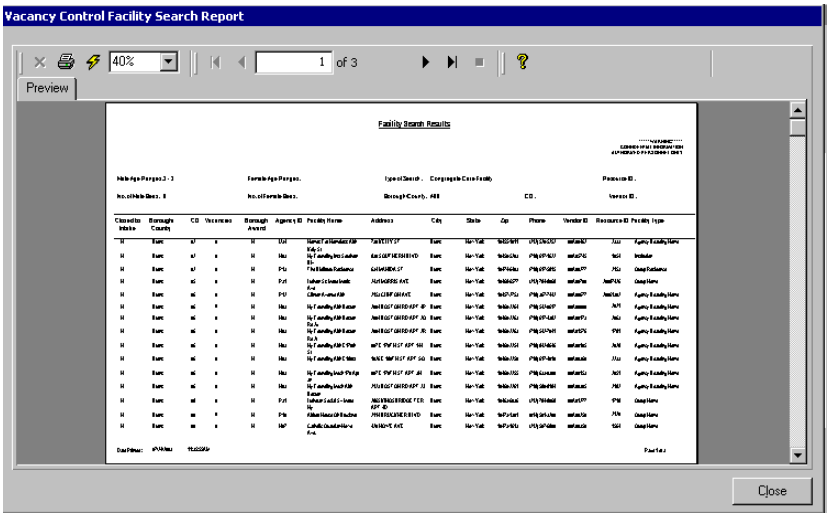


Step-by-Step:
Accessing the Print Screen Command for the *Facility Search Results* Window

1. From the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, click on the **Options** menu and select the **Vacancy Control Search…** command.
   The Vacancy Control Search window displays.
2. Conduct a Facility Search.
   The Facility Search Results window displays.
3. Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Print Screen** command.
   The Report window displays.

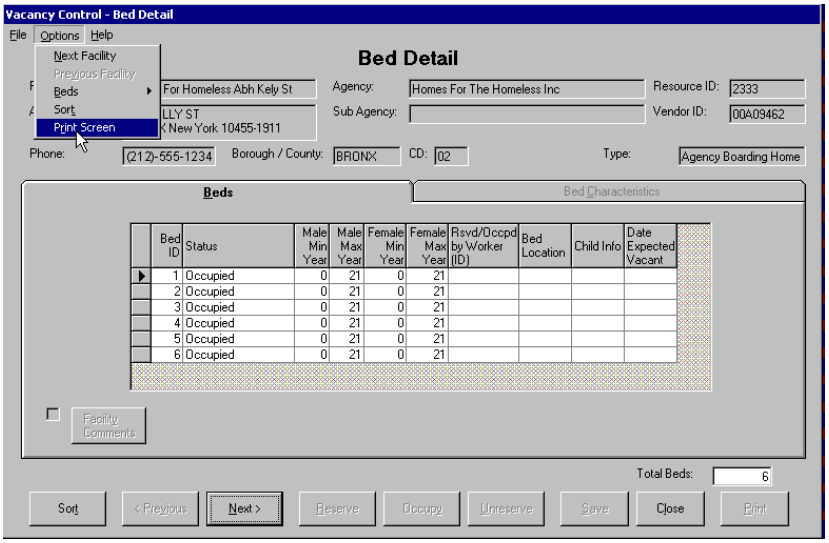
4 Click on the Printer icon ( ) to print the results.

5 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Vacancy Control Facility Search Report* window.



Print Screen for Bed Detail Report

Any worker who has access to the *Bed Detail* window via the *Vacancy Control Search* window will have the ability to print the *Bed Detail* window.



Step-by-Step:
Accessing the Print Screen Command for the *Bed Detail* Window

1 From the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, click on the **Options** menu and select the **Vacancy Control Search…** command.
The Vacancy Control Search window displays.

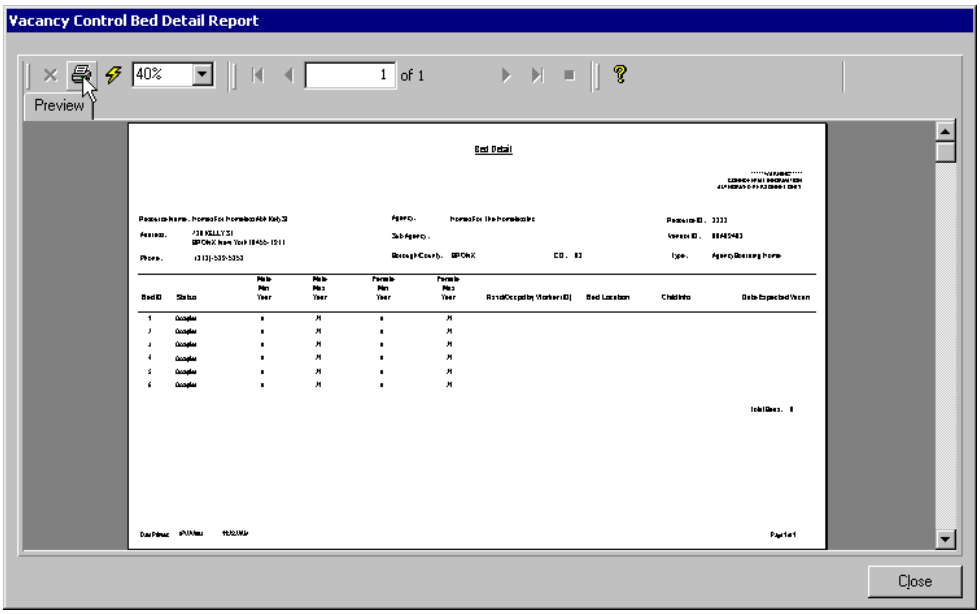
2 Conduct a Facility Search.
The Facility Search Results window displays.

3 Select a facility and click on the **Bed Detail** button.
The Bed Detail window displays.

4 Click on the Options menu and select the Print Screen command.
The Bed Detail Report window displays.

5 Click on the Printer icon ( ) to print the results.

6 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Vacancy Control Bed Detail Report* window.



Module 14:
Recertification and Reapproval of FAD Homes

Foster and adoptive homes must undergo an annual renewal process, referred to as an **Annual Reauthorization**, in order to extend the certification or approval of the foster home for one year. The term “Reauthorization” is used in CONNECTIONS to indicate both the “recertification” and the “reapproval” of foster homes. As the caseworker, you will follow your agency’s procedure for performing an assessment of the foster home and the quality of foster care being provided. Based on this information, you will make a recommendation as to whether or not the certification/approval of the home should be extended for another year.

This module focuses on the steps necessary to prepare and complete the Annual Reauthorization process for FAD homes. Both casework activities and CONNECTIONS features will be discussed. By the end of the module, you will be able to:

- identify when reauthorizations need to be documented; and
- complete the Annual Reauthorization process using the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) in CONNECTIONS.

Annual Reauthorization of FAD Homes

Agency practice and procedure for annual renewal of the certificate or approval must include the following:

- A written evaluation of the home and family;
- A written evaluation of the care provided to children in the home and the working relationship of the foster parents or relatives with the agency;
- A written statement from a physician about the foster family's or relative family's health, if it has been within 18 months since the date of the last medical exam;
- An oral review of the evaluation with the foster parents or relative foster parents before the certificate or approval is renewed; and
- The completion of a Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) for the foster parent and each person age18 and older who currently resides in the foster home (if such a check has not yet been performed). Additionally, workers should perform a Criminal History Record Check prior to Annual Reauthorization when an individual turns age 18 or an individual age 18 or older moves into the home.
  Note: The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) keeps the fingerprint cards on "Search & Retain," which means the information is kept on file and the district/voluntary agency is informed if there is a subsequent arrest after the original CHRC is run.

Once all of the above information has been collected and submitted for supervisory approval, the authorizing agency must review the information and make a determination of whether to renew the certification or approval, *or*, if there is cause, revoke the certification or approval.

Expiration of a FAD Home/Stage

Expiration of a foster home on your *Assigned Workload* occurs when the Annual Reauthorization process including approval is not completed by the last date of the certification/approval period.

Expiration of the home/stage causes the home to be closed and removed from your *Assigned Workload*. Once this happens, the home/stage cannot be accessed unless it is reopened and all requirements for opening/reopening/ reauthorizing the home must be completed (*see Module 17: Reopening FAD Homes for reopening standards and procedures*).

Children *must not* be placed in a home that is closed. If children are already placed in a home that has been closed by the system, and the intention is for them to remain in that home, it must be reopened immediately. Once a home is closed, it cannot be reopened in CONNECTIONS until the next business day (*see Module 17: Reopening FAD Homes*).

> According to State law, foster children may not remain in a foster home that is in **Closed** status.
>
> If the intent is for the home to remain closed, foster children must be removed in accordance with proper regulatory procedures, including removal notification.

A foster home that expires due to the failure to complete a recertification or reapproval will not receive state and federal reimbursement until it is again placed in Accepted-Active status. A closed home in this situation is referred to as Non-Reimbursable (NR).

"Late" or "Delayed" Entry

The term "Delayed Entry" refers to situations where all casework activities have been completed, yet the information was not able to be recorded in CONNECTIONS in time to prevent the expiration (and system closing) of the home. Such a situation must be thoroughly documented in case notes, showing that the home's eligibility for certification did not lag. The home will have to be reopened and the Home History Detail dates may have to be adjusted. Refer to *Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS* for more information.

Non-Renewal of Certification/Approval

Foster homes must continually meet all standards set forth by OCFS. Failure to meet these standards may result in non-renewal or revocation of a license.

Agency practice and procedure for non-renewal or revocation of a foster home's certificate or approval must include the following:

- Foster parents must be advised, before the expiration date of the certification/approval, that the agency does not plan to renew the license for the home.
- Non-renewal of a certified or approved foster or adoptive home may be based upon such factors as failure to meet one or more of the criteria for certification or approval (*see Module 2: Maintain Licensing Information*) or lack of need for a foster home with its particular characteristics.
- The reasons for such action must be specified in a letter postmarked at least 20 days before the expiration date of the certification/approval before the child(ren) may be removed, discharged or transferred from the home.
- An arrangement must be made for the certified or approved foster or adoptive parent to meet with an official of the agency to review the decision and the reasons for it.
- The foster parent shall be advised of his/her right to appeal to the Office of Children and Family Services and request a fair hearing in accordance with §400 of the Social Services Law.

The Annual Reauthorization Process in CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS supports the Annual Reauthorization process in several ways. Prior to the expiration date of a certification/approval period, a caseworker receives an **Alert To-Do** on his or her *Staff To-Do List.* These alerts appear 90, 60 and 30 days prior to the expiration date.

Alerts are also sent to remind caseworkers that valid medical dates are necessary for the successful recertification/reapproval of a FAD home. These alerts are sent 120, 90, 60, and 30 days prior to the expiration date of the home's certification/approval period.

CONNECTIONS lists tasks on the *Task List* for each FAD home/stage to assist in recording the Annual Reauthorization process. All casework activities must be completed and documented in CONNECTIONS and in the External Foster Home Case Record prior to submitting the Annual Reauthorization in CONNECTIONS.

Preparing for an Annual Reauthorization

The key to successfully completing an Annual Reauthorization is to begin as early as possible. As the primary caseworker for a FAD home, you will go through three major steps in completing the Annual Reauthorization process in CONNECTIONS:

- Review/update all person and home information; and
- Complete the **Annual Reauthorization** task, using the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS); and
- Submit the FRS (home record) for supervisory approval.

Reviewing and Updating Information

We will see that some areas of CONNECTIONS are time sensitive; they are not active until the 90 days prior to the expiration of the home. However, a significant amount of work can be accomplished before this period.

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) can be utilized at any point in the year through the **Home Study** task to review home and person information. Take time to look at each tab of the FRS early in the process of preparing for each Annual Reauthorization. Errors that you find in person demographics or home demographics can be corrected at any time during the licensing period.

This Step-by-Step Guide contains detailed information on how to maintain person and home information. *Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS* provides valuable information on how to change information that is already in CONNECTIONS. Additionally, you may want to record newly discovered information about the home or individuals residing in it. Turn to Module 6 (*Responding to an Inquiry*) and Module 7 (*Maintaining Person Information*) to add information for the home and for people, respectively.

The Annual Reauthorization Task

Annual Reauthorizations are completed in CONNECTIONS via the **Annual Reauthorization** task on the *Task List*. This task is also used when the home undergoes a change that affects the home's "from/to" certification dates (see Module 19: Certified and Approved Emergency Homes).

The **Annual Reauthorization** task is only available during the 90 days prior to the expiration date of the certificate/approval. The Annual Reauthorization will open the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). In the FRS, you have the ability to retrieve historical Annual Reauthorizations, as well as create new ones.

When the **Annual Reauthorization** task is selected at any time other than 90 days prior to the home's expiration date, the buttons on the **Task List** disable.

The **Annual Reauthorization** task may enable different buttons when selected. These buttons are affected by the existence of an In-Process Home Study, and/or by the existence of historical Annual Reauthorizations for the home.

The tables at the end of this module illustrate these different levels of available buttons, and may be useful in making decisions when selecting the **Annual Reauthorization** task.

The Annual Reauthorization Tab

The Annual Reauthorization tab in the FRS consists of one section, titled "Annual Reauthorization." In this section, CONNECTIONS lists two choices with associated radio buttons; **Standard Annual Reauthorization** and **Other**. After selecting the appropriate radio button, the Retrieve/Edit Narrative button is used to generate the Annual Reauthorization Narrative. This narrative opens as an Microsoft Word document.

The **Standard Reauthorization Annual Document** is a template. It contains protected sections containing questions and instructions, and unprotected areas where you can record information. This document may have previously recorded information if you have chosen the **Use Prior** or **Detail** (for an in-process document) buttons. The **Other** radio button is a blank Microsoft Word template where workers can copy and paste individual agency template.

You may refer to *Module 2: Getting Started in CONNECTIONS*, for information on "Copying and Pasting", and additional features of MS Word.

Completing the Annual Reauthorization Task CONNECTIONS

The steps for opening, completing and submitting the FRS for an Annual Reauthorization are outlined below. When you have completed the Reauthorization Document and click on the **Submit** button in the FRS, CONNECTIONS displays the *F/A Home Licensing*. You will complete this window to finalize the submission of the Annual Reauthorization.

Refer to *Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes* to learn about the *F/A Home License* window.

Step by Step:
Using the FRS to Complete a New Annual Reauthorization
Step I: Accessing the FRS and Completing the Reauthorization Document

1. Select the appropriate foster home from your *Assigned Workload*.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Annual Reauthorization** task.
4. Click on the **New** button.
   *The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary displays, containing current data from database and the most recently saved Home Study narrative. The Annual Reauthorization tab is showing. If there is an existing FRS you may click on the **Use Prior** button.*
5. Select the Reauthorization document radio button, if appropriate.
6. Click on the **Retrieve/Edit Narrative** button.
   The Reauthorization document displays as a Microsoft Word document.
7. Record information in the Reauthorization document.

Selecting the **New** button when an FRS already exists displays the following message:

"Start with New (blank) narratives instead of those last saved"

*Click on the **Yes** button to display new FRS.*

8 Upon completion, click on the **File** menu and select **Close.**
The following message displays:
"Save Changes?"

9 Click on **Yes** to save information.
The Annual Reauthorization tab displays.

You might not complete the Annual Reauthorization document all at once, and you may need to go into other tabs of the FRS to record updates to the home (e.g., the Home Study narrative). The directions below instruct you on how to finish the submission, once all information has been recorded in CONNECTIONS, and the **Submit** button on the FRS has become enabled.

Step by Step:
Using the FRS to Complete a New Annual Reauthorization
Step II: Completing the F/A Home License Window and Submitting the FRS for Supervisory Approval

1 Select the appropriate foster home from your *Assigned Workload*.
*The **Tasks…** button enables.*

2 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

3 Click on the **Annual Reauthorization** task.

4 Click on the **New, Use Prior** or **Detail** button.
The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary displays with the Annual Reauthorization tab active.

Recording and saving any change in the *FRS* window enables the **SUBMIT** button whether or not all information (e.g., Home Study), is complete.

5 *Record all information necessary for the Reauthorization.*

6 Click on the **Submit** button at the bottom of the FRS.
The F/A Home License displays.

7 Click on **Reauthorization** check box in the Renewal/Extension section of the *F/A Home License* window.

8 Change the **Status** field to **Pending Acceptance**.

9 Click on File, and select 'Save and Submit'.
A Task To-Do assigned to your supervisor displays.

10 Record Comments, if desired.

11 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.

If you attempt to Save and Submit the *F/A Home License* window without selecting the Reauthorization check box, the following message will appear:

"Check Reauthorization check box when submitting license for recertification."

After Reauthorization Approval

Once the Reauthorization is approved, the following occurs:

- The status of the Annual Reauthorization event changes from PEND to APRV.
- All information in the FRS is frozen. Selecting that Annual Reauthorization event from the *Event List* and clicking the Detail button opens the frozen Annual Reauthorization document which includes all information in the FRS in view-only mode for viewing or printing.
- A Home License event with a status of APRV will be created.
- The “From” and “To” dates on the Home License window update to reflect the new certification or authorization period.
- An alert is sent to the worker, to remind him/her that a current home certification or approval letter should be printed.

Annual Reauthorization Tables

As mentioned earlier in this module, the following tables are provided to help understand the different pathways that may occur using the **Annual Reauthorization** task. Specific descriptions of what happens when some buttons are selected have been added at the end of each table.

If No In-Process Home Study Exists…		
Annual Reauthorization is selected and…	**Buttons Enabled**	**State of FRS**
No Previous Reauthorization exists **Approved/Frozen HS exists**	**New** **Use Prior**	FRS contains current data from the database. Narratives and comment boxes are blank.
In-Process Reauthorization exists	**Detail**	FRS contains current data from the database. The most recently saved Home Study narrative and comment boxes are opened. The In-Process Reauthorization is opened.
Approved/Frozen FRS **HS or Reauthorization exists**	**New** **(A)**	FRS contains current data from the database. The most recently saved Home Study narrative and comment boxes are opened. The Reauthorization document is blank.
	Use Prior	FRS contains current data from the database. The most recently saved narratives and comment boxes are opened.

(A) Clicking **New**, when a previous Approved/Frozen FRS exists will produce the following message:

"Start with new (blank) narratives instead of those last saved?"

This refers to any existing historical Reauthorization narratives. You can click on **Continue** to retrieve the FRS with a blank Reauthorization narrative, or click on the **Cancel** button to return to the *Task List* and make another selection.

CONNECTIONS cannot maintain simultaneous, in-process FRSs. Below is a table explaining what buttons are enabled when you select the **Annual Reauthorization** task under specific conditions and what information is contained in the FRS.

Annual Reauthorization is selected and…	Buttons Enabled	System Messages	Information on the FRS
An in-process Home Study exists **OR** **An in-process Annual Reauthorization exists**	**Detail**	When you access the Annual Reauthorization task for the first time, the following message displays when you click on the Detail button: *"In-process Home Study exists and will be converted. Continue?"* • If you click on the **Yes** button, the in-process Home Study FRS will convert to an Annual Reauthorization FRS. • If you click on the **No** button, the Task List displays and the in-process Home Study FRS will NOT convert. Before you are able to work on the Annual Reauthorization, you must complete, Save and Submit the Home study.	If you selected the **Use Prior** button when you started the in-process Home Study or Annual Reauthorization, the following information will be populated in the FRS: • Current data from the database; and • The most recently saved and approved narratives, including comment boxes. These narratives can be viewed or modified. If you selected the **New** button when you started the Home Study or Annual Reauthorization, the following information will be populated in the FRS: • Current data from the database and any narrative entries you have made in the in-process FRS.
No in-process FRS exists **and** **an Approved and Frozen Reauthorization OR** **Home Study exists**	**New**	If you click on the **New** button when a previous Approved/Frozen FRS exists, the following message displays: *"Start with new (blank) narratives instead of those last saved?"* • If you click on the **Yes** button, a blank FRS (including all text boxes) displays. • If you click on the **No** button, the Task List displays.	FRS contains current data from the database. All of the narratives and comment boxes are blank and may be modified.
	Use Prior	If you click on the **Use Prior** button, no message displays.	FRS contains current data from the database, and the most recently saved and approved narratives, including comment boxes. These narratives can be viewed or modified.

Home Certification/Approval Extensions

In specific situations, you may need to extend the current certification/approval of a FAD home. This would most likely occur if an individual aged 18 or older moved into the home, and the results of the CHRC (a.k.a. fingerprint check) have not been received in time to complete the recertification/reapproval.

Refer to Module 20 for information about Extensions of Emergency Homes.

A FAD Home in **Accepted –Active** status may be extended for four 90-day periods while fingerprinting results are pending. In order to complete an extension, valid medical reports must be on file for all Foster Parent(s). Also, fingerprint extensions are allowed only if the **Date Card Sent** field on the *Person Detail FA* window has been recorded for all principals age 18 and older.

Date Changes

First Extension	When the first extension is requested, the new **Authorized From** date will be set to the current **Authorized To** date; the new **Authorized To** date will be 90 days from the new **Authorized From** date.
Subsequent Extensions	When the second or third extension is requested, the **Authorized From** date is unchanged; the **Authorized To** date is increased by 90 days.
Final Extension	If, during the extension period, you attempt to reauthorize the home for one year, the **Authorized From** date remains unchanged. The **Authorized To** date will be set one year from the **Authorized From** date.

When completing the recertification/reapproval process, click on the **Fingerprint Extension** check box (on the *F/A Home License* window) to indicate if an extension is necessary.

Module 15:
Closing Foster Homes

A foster home may close at any point throughout the life cycle of the home. Home closure reasons vary, but often occur at key points in the life cycle of a foster home when the home and its applicants are being assessed/reassessed (e.g., the applicant stage, during recertification/reapproval).

There are several common home closure reasons, including the following:

- The prospective or certified/approved foster parents choose to discontinue the application process or to close an approved/certified home due to personal reasons.
- An application expires (at 6 months).
- The SCR Database Check reveals that an applicant has a prior history of abuse or maltreatment.
- Information obtained for the Home Study reveals that the home does not comply with regulation standards.
- Information recorded on medical forms results in the denial of the home for Home Study.
- The Authorizing Agency determines that there is no further need for the foster home.
- The Agency is closing.
- CHCR results reveal that a prospective or certified/approved foster parent has been convicted of one or more crimes.

For regulatory citations for each of the closure reasons listed, see *Appendix G: Table of Home Closures with Citations*.

Your decision to close a foster home must be based on OCFS policies and regulations. The reasons must be clearly documented in your contact notes and in the Closure Report. Follow appropriate procedures when closing a foster home. (See 18 NYCRR §443.11.)

This module covers the regulatory requirements involved in closing a home and how CONNECTIONS can support your casework activities. By the end of the module, you will be able to:

- identify state regulations regarding home closure;
- open and complete the Closure Report in CONNECTIONS; and
- Submit the Close Home task for supervisory approval.

Recording a home closure in CONNECTIONS notifies OCFS of the change in the home's status.

Home Closure

Closure of a foster home in **Accepted-Active** status is referred to as *revocation* or *involuntary decertification*, except in situations where the family has voluntarily requested to discontinue providing foster parenting services (18 NYCRR §443.11).

Closing a foster home is a process that respects the rights of all parties involved and adheres to certain timelines.

The only exception occurs in situations *where the immediate health and safety of a child is at risk*. If foster children are in a home that closes and the intent is for that home to remain closed, the foster children must be removed immediately.

Removing a child from foster family care involves a specific timeline and proper notifications.

Refer to 18 NYCRR §443.5(a) for these regulations.

Revocation of a Certificate or Approval Letter

For a revocation of a Certificate or Approval Letter, your decision to close the foster home must be based upon New York State regulations and must be documented clearly in the External Foster Home Case Record.

The authorizing agency must advise the foster parents before the expiration date of the certificate or letter of approval that the agency does not plan to renew the certificate or approval. The certificate or letter of approval can be revoked prior to the expiration date if a situation arises. A notification letter expressing the intent to close the home must be sent to the foster or adoptive parents at least twenty (20) days prior to closing the home. A letter indicating the decision to remove foster children from the home must be sent at least ten (10) days prior to closing the home (18 NYCRR §433.11). The only exception is in situations where the immediate health and safety of a foster child is at risk. In these circumstances no advance notice is required to remove the child. Each agency must generate and print its own letters of notification. *These tasks are not supported by CONNECTIONS.*

Let's take a closer look at two home closure circumstances that commonly occur when a home is in **Applicant** status, but could happen at any point in the life cycle of a foster home:

- Home Closure due to the results of the SCR Database Check; and
- Home Closure due to CHRC and/or "Search and Retain" Results.

Home Closure Due to the Results of the SCR Database Check

An SCR Database Check must be conducted when you initially prepare a foster home for certification or approval, and when any person age 18 and over moves into the home (e.g., a parent of a foster parent).

The SCR Database Check may reveal that a person has been an indicated subject in a report of abuse or maltreatment. If this happens, you need to follow regulatory procedures to revoke a certification or approval letter, or deny an application.

See *Module 9: Checking the status of Approvals Submitted for FAD Homes* and New York State Social Service Law for information regarding denial of certification/approval due to the results of the SCR Database Check.

Home Closure Due to CHRC Results

The CHRC or "Search and Retain" function may reveal that a prospective or certified/approved foster parent has been convicted of one or more felony crimes *(see also Module 7: Maintaining Person Information)*.

An authorizing agency must use the information it receives from OCFS to determine whether or not to certify or approve a foster home, *or* whether or not revoke a certificate or approval letter.

If an authorizing agency decides to revoke a certification or approval letter due to the results of a CHRC or "Search and Retain," certain procedures must be followed. The family must be sent a written statement identifying the charge or conviction and stating the reason(s) for home closure. The agency must send the letter within seven days of learning of the charge or conviction [18 NYCRR §443.8(k)].

As the caseworker responsible for the supervision of a foster home in this situation, you must conduct a safety assessment of the conditions in the household that determines:

- whether or not the subject of the charge or conviction resides in the household;
- the extent of that person's contact with the foster children; and
- the status, date and nature of the criminal charge or conviction
  [18 NYCRR §443.8 (g)(1)].

A Safety Assessment is required (in addition to other regulatory procedures) prior to removing any child from a home due to the results of the CHRC (18 NYCRR §443.8).

Document the Safety Assessment in the FRS using the **Household Member Detail** tab. Based upon the results of the safety assessment, take all appropriate steps necessary to protect the health and safety of the foster child or children in the home. This includes removal, where appropriate. These actions should be documented in External Foster Home Record and in your contact notes and the Closure Report (in CONNECTIONS). If revocation of the certificate or approval letter does occur, the foster child(ren) must be removed [18 NYCRR §443.8(g)(2)(3)].

For more information regarding the Search & Retain function, refer to **00 OCFS ADM-04** in Public Folders on Microsoft Exchange.

FAD Denial/Revocation Letter

Full certification and approval of foster and adoptive homes can be denied when the results of the CHRC indicate that placement in the home is not in the best interest of a foster child (see 18 NYCRR 443.8 and 00OCFS ADM-4 for further clarification).

If a home certification/approval or recertification/reapproval is denied due to the results of the CHRC, the caseworker needs to provide notification of the denial in writing to the applicant(s).

The **FAD Denial/Revocation Letter** (available in English and Spanish) is used to notify prospective or existing foster or adoptive parents whose home review has indicated a criminal history record. The letter states the reason(s) for denial and the process available for the review and/or challenge of the criminal history records.

The letter contains the following fields, which are pre-filled when the letter is generated:

- **Date** (system date on which the letter was generated)
- **Name** (the foster parents who are being denied)
- **Re:** (person found with the criminal record)
- **DOB** (birth date of the individual in the **Re:** field)
- **NYSID No**. (NYS Identification number from DCJS)
- **Supervisor**
- **Agency Representative** (Primary Worker)
- **Telephone** (Primary Worker's telephone number)

Step by Step:
Generating and Printing the FAD Denial/Revocation Letter
Part I: Generating the Letter

1 On the *Assigned Workload*, select the home you need to send the letter to
*The **Tasks…** button enables.*

2 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

3 Select the **Maintain Person** task.

4 Click on the **List…** button.
The Person List displays.

5 Click on the name of the person for whom the CHRC results caused the denial letter.

6 Click on the Reports menu on the *Person List* and select **FAD Denial/Revocation Ltr. (E)** [English] or **FAD Denial/Revocation Ltr. (S)** [Spanish], as required.

*The **FAD Denial/Revocation Ltr.** command enables if:*

- *A person has been selected on the Person List.*
- *The selected person is part of a Foster or Adoptive home.*
- *The Foster or Adoptive home does not have a status of "Inquiry" or "Closed."*

If the above requirements are met, the following must be true in order for the letter to launch successfully:

- *An entry exists in the Fingerprint Results Received field on the Person Detail FA window.*
- *The DOB column on the Person List contains a date of birth for the selected person.*
- *The selected person is at least 18 years of age.*

When the letter has launched successfully the following message displays:

"The report has been launched. Check the Report List window."

Letters remain unopened on the Report List for seven days before being purged.

Step by Step:
Generating and Printing the FAD Denial/Revocation Letter
Part II: Viewing and Printing the Letter

1. Click on the **RPRTS** (Reports) button on the far right side of the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Report List displays.
2. Confirm that the **Status** column reads "Done" for the letter you want to view. If it does not read "Done," click on the **Refresh** button at the bottom of the window.
3. Click on the letter to select it.
   *The **Open** button enables.*
4. Click on the **Open** button.
   The letter displays as a Microsoft Word document.
5. To print the letter, click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
   The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.
6. Click on the **OK** button to print.
7. To close the document, click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
   The Report List displays.
8. To close the *Report List*, click on the **Close** button.

Generating the letter for the first time generates an event on the *Event List.*

You can print the letter by clicking on the **File** menu in the Word window. There is space at the top of the letter for your agency's letterhead. Be sure to print the letter on agency letterhead.

The Close Home Task in CONNECTIONS

The *Task List* of every foster home contains the **Close Home** task. This task may be used at any point in the life cycle of the foster or adoptive home to document a home closure in CONNECTIONS. A home closed in CONNECTIONS cannot be reopened until the next business day.

Selecting the **Close Home** task and clicking on the **New** button, opens the *Close Home* window. This window must be completed and then **Saved and Submitted** for supervisory approval.

You can *not* work on this window in increments. All information must be recorded prior to saving and submitting.

Home Closure Fields

Descriptions of the fields you must complete in the *Close Home* window are presented below.

Closure Reason

You must select a **Closure Reason** on the *Close Home* window. Select the closure reason that best summarizes why the authorizing agency is closing the home. The Closure Reasons listed in CONNECTIONS are presented in the table below.

Closure Reasons in CONNECTIONS	
• Agency Closing • Applicant Does Not Permit Adoption Home Study • Applicant Physically or Emotionally incapable of caring for a Adopted Child(ren) • Approval not in Best Interest of Child(ren) Awaiting Adoption • Criminal History - Discretionary Disqualifier • Criminal History - Presumptive Disqualifier • Family Violence • Health & Safety • Home No Longer meets Child's Needs • Non-Compliance with Non-Licensing Regulations • Type of Home Not Needed • Unacceptable Medical Report • Adoption Disruption	• Adoption Finalized • Death • Difference Over Policy/ Procedures/Roles • Difference Over Reimbursement Rates • Family Circumstances/Martial Problems • Family Illness/Health Problems • Family Moved • Family Request • Foster Child Behavior • Foster Child Physical/Mental Disabilities • Insufficient Services for Foster Child(ren) • Insufficient Support for Foster Family • Problems with Casework or Agency • Problems with Foster Child's Family • Relative Assumed Custody/Guardianship • Duplicate Home • Merger • Other • Transferred to Another Licensing Agcy

† If a Criminal History closure reason is selected, the Closure Type field is set automatically to "Involuntary" and the Recommend Reopening field defaults to "Do Not Recommend." Both fields can be manually altered, if necessary. Also, upon Saving and Submitting these specific closure reasons, a message box displays reminding you that a "Notice of Denial/Revocation of certification/approval due to fingerprinting results" must be sent to the foster parents.

‡ These closure reasons do not apply to Foster Homes and should not be used at this time.

† If a Duplicate Reason closure reason is selected, the Closure Type field is system populated with "Involuntary" and the Recommend Reopening field defaults to "Do Not Recommend." Both fields are non-modifiable.

Closure Type

In the *Close Home* window you must select a **Closure Type** of either "Voluntary" or "Involuntary" to categorize why the foster home is closing. *Involuntary* closure indicates that the home is being closed at the initiation of the authorizing agency. *Voluntary* closure indicates that the foster or adoptive parents are initiating the home closing.

Recommend Re-Opening

This field has two options. You may choose **Recommend** or **Do Not Recommend**. This decision should be made in advance of completing this window, and with the support of your supervisor.

Date Notification Sent
Record the date that a notification letter was sent to the family informing them of the home closure. Remember that you have to send notification of home closure at least twenty (20) days prior to closing the home.

Closure Report Button
This button generates the Closure Report, a Microsoft Word template. Reasons for and actions surrounding the home closure should be documented in this window.

Variations of the Home Closure Window

***Close Home* Window Display Variations**	
Action	**Window Display**
Submitting a FAD home for closure	The **Current Status** field is protected and populated from the database. The **Change To** field is protected. For FAD homes in Inquiry status, the field reads "Closed;" The homes in any other status, the field reads "Pending Closure."
Changing a Pending Closure	The **Current Status** field is protected and reads, "Pending Closure." The **Change To** field is protected and populated with "Pending Closure" or "Closed;" The following fields are enabled† and populated from the database: • **Closure Reason** • **Closure Type** • **Recommend Re-Opening** • **Date Notification Sent** The **Closure Report** button is enabled; the check box is populated with a check mark if the closure report has been completed or is blank if it has not yet been completed.
Viewing a FAD Home Submitted Closure Event	The following fields are protected and populated from the database: • **Current Status** • **Closure Reason** • **Closure Type** • **Recommend Re-Opening** • **Date Notification Sent** The **Closure Report** button is enabled. The Summary Closure Report is frozen and displays in View-only mode.

† Provided the worker clicks on the "Yes" button in response to the message, "Saving will invalidate the pending Approval. Continue in Modify mode?" Otherwise, these fields are protected.

Home Closure Report

The Home Closure Report is a Microsoft Template generated by CONNECTIONS for you to document the reasons for home closure, and the actions taken by the authorizing agency. Many of the protected fields in the template are automatically populated with information transferred from other areas of the CONNECTIONS database. Record new information in the unprotected sections of the document.

> See *Module 2: Getting Started in CONNECTIONS* for tips on how to copy and paste information in Microsoft Word documents.

The Home Closure Report is accessed via the **Closure Report** button on the *Close Home* window. Once the report has been accessed, an "√" displays in the check box next to the Closure Report button. The **Save and Submit** function on this window becomes enabled once the report is accessed and all required fields are completed. Use this button initiate the approval process once you have completed all information on the window.

The Impact of Home Closure

The closure of a foster or adoptive home still in **Inquiry** status does not require supervisory approval. The decision to close a foster or adoptive home *in any other status requires supervisory approval.* The home does *not* close until your supervisor/unit approver completes the task of approving the *Close Home* window that you **Save and Submit**. Once your supervisor completes the approval process the following actions take place:

> Supervisory approval of the **Close Home** task triggers an update to the Resource Directory, BICS and CCRS during the overnight interface.

- the home/stage is removed from your *Assigned Workload*; and
- The Closure Report must be accessed via the *Event List*, and is "frozen" and displays in View-Only mode.

Accessing and Completing the Close Home Task

The steps for accessing the Close Home and completing all close home requirements are detailed in the following sections.

Step by Step:
Completing & Submitting the *Close Home* Window (Including the Closure Report)

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, select the home you need to close.
   *The **Tasks…** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks…** button.
   The Task List displays.
3. Click on the **Close Home** task.

> If the current status of the home is "Pending Acceptance" and the associated licensing approval is pending, the *Close Home* window will not open; the following message displays:
>
> "A licensing change is pending approval. The home/facility cannot be closed"

4 Click on the **New** button (use the **Detail** button to access a previously created **Close Home** task).
The Close Home window displays.

5 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Closure Reason** field and select the appropriate closure reason from the resulting list.

6 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Closure Type** field and select the appropriate closure type from the resulting list.

On the *Close Home* window, the system automatically populates the **Current Status** and **Change To** fields.
The **Change To** field is always "Pending Closure."

7 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Recommend Reopening** field and select the recommendation choice.

8 Record the date the close home notification was sent to the foster parents in the **Date Notification Sent** field.

9 Click on the **Closure Report** button to generate the Closure Report.
An MS Word document opens.

You can *not* work on this window in increments. All information must be recorded prior to saving and submitting.

10 Record information in the unprotected sections of the document, or paste information copied from another MS Word document (*see Module 2: Getting Started in CONNECTIONS*).

11 When you are ready to leave the window or save information, click on **File** and select **Close**.
The Close Home window displays.

12 Click on the **Save & Submit** button.
The following message displays:
"Have you completed the Closing Summary Report?"

13 Click on the **Yes** button.
The To-Do Detail window displays.

14 Fill in the description field, as needed.

15 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.

Closing a Duplicate Home

A Duplicate Home occurs when the home has been recorded more than once in the CONNECTIONS database. The results may be the same demographic information, but two different Vendor ID numbers. In order to maintain the integrity of the data entered in CONNECTIONS it is important that caseworkers have the ability to differentiate duplicate homes from valid resources. CONNECTIONS allows caseworkers to search for and identify duplicate homes, label homes as duplicate and close duplicate homes.

When creating a home it is necessary to conduct a thorough FA Home Search to determine whether the home already exists in CONNECTIONS. Using this search function, existing homes can be located regardless of where in the state they were created. The FA Home Search filters through foster homes of every status level (e.g., Inquiry, Applicant, Accepted-Active, Closed). If in your search you find a home closed by another agency a worker should reopen the home to

avoid duplication. Locating and reopening the home is the best way to maintain data integrity and to keep the history of the home up to date and accurate. If a thorough search is not conducted, the result can be the creation of a duplicate home.

Closing a duplicate home is a two-step process. The first step requires changing the Vendor ID number to a Duplicate Home number. The second step is to close the duplicate home.

Step by Step:
Closing a Duplicate Home
Part I: Changing the Vendor ID Number

1 From the *Assigned Workload* select the home whose vendor ID number you are changing.
*The **Tasks…** button enables.*

2 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List Displays.

3 Select the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task.
*The **Detail…** button enables.*

4 Click on the **Detail…** button.
The Home Demographics window displays.

5 In the *Home Demographics* window, click on the **Address…** button.
The Resource Address Detail window displays.

6 Select the Business address in the list section at the top of the window.
The address information displays in the detail section at the bottom of the window.

7 Highlight the Vendor ID number in the **Vendor ID** field and press the **Delete** key on your keyboard.

8 Enter a new Vendor ID in the Duplicate Home number format (the DH number is obtained from your supervisor).
*The **Modify** button enables.*

9 Click on the **Modify** button.
The new Vendor ID displays in the Vendor ID field with a DH number format (DH-####).

10 Click on the **OK** button to close the *Resource Address Detail* window.
The Home Demographics window displays.

11 Click on the **Save & Submit** button on the *Home Demographics* window.
The Task List displays.

If you attempt to close a home as a duplicate without first changing the Vendor ID, the following message displays: *"Must change VID to the assigned DH-#### format before saving.""*

If primary address is different from the business, click on the **Address** button to record the Duplicate Home Vendor ID in the *Resource Address Detail* window."

The Duplicate Home number format is:
the letters DH,
followed by a hyphen
and 4 digits
[DH-####].

Step by Step:
Closing a Duplicate Home
Part II: Closing the Duplicate Home

1 Select the **Close Home** task.
The New button enables.

2 Click on the **New** button.
The Close Home window displays.

3 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Closure Reason** field and select **Duplicate Home**.
The Change To field reads "Closed Duplicate."

4 Click on the **Closure Report** button to generate the Closure Report.
An MS Word document opens.

5 Record information in the unprotected sections of the document, or paste information copied from another MS Word document
(*see Module 2: Getting Started in CONNECTIONS*).

6 When you are ready to leave the window or save information, click on **File** and select **Close**.
The Close Home window displays.

7 For homes in "Active" or "Applicant" status, click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Submit**. For homes in "Inquiry" status, click on the **Save** button in the bottom right corner of the window.

Where am I?

Assigned Workload > FAD > Tasks button

To complete part 2 of Closing a Duplicate Home Supervisory approval is needed to approve Duplicate Vendor ID change.

A FAD home that has been closed as a duplicate cannot be reopened.

Caseworkers are able to search for duplicate homes that have been closed by selecting **Closed Duplicate** from the **Status** menu on the *FA Home Search* window.

Module 16:
Maintaining Closed FAD Homes/Stages

In addition to the responsibilities of maintaining FAD home information for open homes, you may be a person who is relied upon to make updates to Closed FAD Homes.

Homes receiving adoption subsidies do not have to remain open in CONNECTIONS to receive payment (*see Module 21: Adoptive Homes*). However, if the family changes status information, their record must be updated. The *Local Data Maintenance* window allows you to make updates to a home without having to reopen (and later close) the home.

The *Local Data Maintenance* (LDM) window allows the viewing and updating of Person Demographic information in closed FAD stages. Its structure is similar to the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). The LDM window contains 4 tabs:

- Person Demographics
- Allegations
- Add / Relate Person
- Investigation Conclusions

To use the *Local Data Maintenance* window you must have the MAINT CLSD PERS Business Function.

Contact your Security Coordinator if you have questions regarding security access.

Only the Person Demographics tab is available to FAD workers.

In this module, we will look at how to access the *Local Data Maintenance* window and the Person Demographics tab. By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- access the LDM window;
- identify the sections of the LDM window;
- use the Person Demographics tab to update closed FAD home information; and
- navigate to the LDM Online Help System.

Accessing the Local Data Maintenance Window

If you have the MAINT CLSD PERS Business Function, you can access the *Local Data Maintenance* (LDM) window through the *Case Summary* window.

Access requirements for the LDM window are summarized below:

Menu Command on *Case Summary* Window:	Maintain Closed Person Demographics
Security Attribute Needed:	Maintain Closed Person Demographics
Additional Access Requirements:	FAD stage is closed *and* Worker must be from same district/agency as primary worker when stage was closed
LDM Tabs Enabled:	Person Demographics

Since the stage in question will be closed, it will not appear on your *Assigned Workload*. It will be necessary for you to start with a case search.

Step by Step:
Opening the *Local Data Maintenance* (LDM) Window

1. Conduct a **Case Search** to retrieve the home you need to update.
   (*See Module 4: Retrieving Information in CONNECTIONS for instructions*).
2. From the list of results, select the FAD home/stage that requires maintenance.
   The Summary button enables.
3. Click on the **Summary** button.
   The Case Summary window displays.
4. Select the FAD stage to be viewed/updated, and click on **Options**.
   A drop down menu displays.
5. Select **Maintain Closed Person Demographics** from the menu.
   The Local Data Maintenance (LDM) window displays, showing the Person Demographics tab. Selecting Maintain Closed Person Demographics opens the LDM window in modify mode.

No events are generated when the LDM window is accessed through the **Maintain Closed Person Demographics** command.

The LDM window consists of a heading, four tabbed sections, and a footer. Only the Person Demographics tab is active when the window is accessed via the **Maintain Closed Person Demographics** menu item.

The Layout of the LDM Window

The *Local Data Maintenance* (LDM) window consists of three major sections:

- Header
- Tabs
- Footer

The Heading and Footer sections contain elements that are present no matter which section of the LDM window is being used. The Tabs are the sections that make up the main body of the LDM window and are described in detail below.

Heading

The heading is always present when the LDM window is open. It includes the following information: Case Name, Case ID, Stage ID, Report Date (if applicable), Case Status, and Event Status.

Because you will be accessing the LDM window via the **Maintain Closed Person Demographics** menu item on the *Case Summary window*, the **Event Status** field will be blank.

Footer

The footer is always present when the LDM window is open. Only one button appears in the footer: the **Close** button. Clicking on this button closes the LDM window and returns you to the *Case Summary* window. The Close process also gives you the opportunity to save any unsaved changes to the LDM window.

Tabs

The information contained in the LDM window is organized into sections, which are represented by file tabs on the LDM window. Appearing from left to right, these tabs are labeled:

- Person Demographics
- Add/Relate Person
- Allegations
- Investigation Conclusions

Remember, only the Person Demographics tab is available when the LDM window is entered using the **Maintain Closed Person Demographics** menu item.

Information entered in the LDM window will be stored in the CONNECTIONS database. When you reenter the LDM window, it will be “refreshed” with the most current information. This information can be reviewed and, if necessary, updated further.

The Person Demographics Tab

The purpose of the Person Demographics tab is to provide a place to view and update information about persons associated with a closed FAD stage. The person information listed on this tab can only be modified if the individuals are associated with closed cases. A person's information *cannot be modified if that person is associated with any open, non-ARI stage*.

If you do attempt to modify information for a person in an open non-ARI stage, CONNECTIONS will alert you to this by providing the following message:

"Can't modify demographic information of people in open stages.
Person member of Stage ID: ###"

If you do need to correct demographic information for a person who is associated with an open stage, you will need to access their *Person Detail* window from within the FAD home/stage (*see Module 7: Maintaining Person Information and Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS*).

If you do not have access to that person on your *Assigned Workload*, conduct a person search to determine the open stage the person is associated with. The Person Search results will also identify the primary worker's name and agency. You can contact the primary worker to discuss any changes that are needed to the record.

Information on the Person Demographics Tab

The Person Demographics Tab can be separated into two grids; an Upper Grid and a Lower Grid.

The Upper Grid

The upper grid contains the following information about all persons associated with a closed FAD home/stage:

- Last Name
- First Name
- Middle Initial
- Person ID
- DOB (Date of Birth)
- T (Date of Birth Type)
- Age
- Marital Status
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Relation/Interest
- Race
- Language
- DOD (Date of Death)
- Approximate Date of Death
- Religion
- Phone
- Ext (Phone Extension)
- Type
- Role

When making changes on the Person Demographics tab, it is important to remember the following items:

- The Date of Death and Approximate Date of Death Flag columns can only be modified if a Date of Death already appears in the grid for that person.
- Updating a person's Date of Birth in LDM will change the person's Date of Birth in all other stages containing that person. (Keep in mind that, since a person in open stages cannot be modified, the affected stages will all be closed stages.)
- The Age field cannot be modified if there is an exact Date of Birth listed in the DOB field. If corrected DOB information for an exact DOB becomes available, correct the DOB field and the Age field will automatically update. If the DOB is marked Approximate (A), the Age column can be modified. When Age is modified, the DOB is recalculated and updated.

All columns in this grid are modifiable by clicking directly on the grid cell and typing or selecting from the drop down commands, with the following exceptions:

Column	Modified by…
Person ID	Cannot be modified
Race	Race selection box is located elsewhere on Person Demographics tab.
Ethnicity	Ethnicity drop-down and selection box are elsewhere on the Person Demographics tab.
Phone Number, Extension, Phone Type	Maintain Primary Address/Phone Windows are accessed via the Address/Phone button
Role	Automatic (re)calculation when changes are saved.

Clicking in a row of the grid selects that person for modification. An arrow to the left of a row indicates that person has been selected.

The Lower Grid

When a person is selected in the upper grid, the lower grid will display all person identifiers (SSN, CIN, etc.) for that person. Each person identifier appears in its own row of the lower grid. An arrow displays to the left of the row that is currently selected for editing.

You may add new identifiers by typing and selecting from the drop-down command into the row of the lower grid marked with a star (the last row). To end-date an existing identifier, add a new row with the same Type. The End-Date will be set to the current date.

The lower grid displays the following information for each identifier:

- INV ID Invalid Flag
- Start Date
- Type
- End Date
- Number
- Comments

The information in the lower grid is modifiable as follows:

Column	Modified by…
INV (ID Invalid Flag)	This flag can only be marked (using the drop down arrow that appears when clicking in the cell,). Cannot be removed. Marking the flag invalid will set the end date of that row to the current date.
Type	ID Type can be selected for new rows using the drop down arrow that appears when clicking in the cell. ID Type cannot be modified for existing rows.
Number	ID Number can be modified by clicking and typing directly in the grid. Cannot be modified in a row for which the **End Date** is set.
Start Date	Start Date is set to the current date when a new record is added.
End Date	End Date is set to current date when ID Invalid Flag is set or when new row with same ID type is added.
Comment	The Comment section can be modified by clicking and typing directly in the grid. Cannot be modified in a row that already has the End Date is set.

The Race and Ethnicity of the person selected in the upper grid can be modified using the drop-down box and list boxes in the bottom right-hand corner of the tab. The table below illustrates how this works.

Box	Enabled when…	Modifying this box…
Ethnicity Drop Down	A person is selected in the upper grid.	Updates the Ethnicity column in the upper grid. This column will display “NR” when the ethnicity is listed as “Not Reported in the upper grid.
Ethnicity List Box	A person is selected in the upper grid —AND— **Ethnicity** field is set to “Hispanic or Latino”	NA
Race List Box	A person is selected in the upper grid.	Updates the Race column in the upper grid. If more than one Race is selected in this box, the upper grid displays “Multiple.”

Remember: You must click on the **Save** button after each change you make to the Person Demographics tab, for each change to be stored in the CONNECTIONS database.

Buttons on the Person Demographics Tab

The Person Demographics tab also has three buttons towards the bottom of the tabbed section:

- Address/Phone (disabled for FAD stages)
- Save
- Cancel

Phone/Address Button

The **Phone/Address** button is disabled for FAD stages.

Save Button

The **Save** button affects what happens to new information you have entered into the LDM window. To store newly recorded information in CONNECTIONS, you will select the **Save** button. This button is disabled until any changes are made on the Person Demographics tab. It also becomes disabled after a save, until the next time changes are made to the tab.

Cancel Button

If you choose not to save your information, you will click on the **Cancel** button. This action will cancel all changes made to the tab since the last save. The **Cancel** button is disabled until any changes are made on the **Person Demographics** tab. Clicking on the **Cancel** button displays the following message:

"Your changes will be lost. Continue?"

You will click on the **Yes** button to discard any unsaved changes. To leave the changes as they were entered, click on the **No** button.

Closing the LDM Window

When you have finished making all changes on the LDM window, and you have saved your entries, click on the **Close** button at the bottom of the LDM window. Clicking on the **Close** button prior to saving the LDM window displays the following message:

"Save changes in progress."

Click on the **Yes** button to save the changes; click on the **No** button to discard them.

The remaining tabs on the LDM window - Add/Relate Person, Allegations, and Investigation Conclusions – are not accessible when the LDM window has been entered using the **Maintain Closed Person Demographics** menu item in the *Case Summary* window.

Conducting Maintenance on a Closed FAD Home/Stage

Step by Step:
Making Changes on the *Local Data Maintenance* (LDM) Window

1. Access the LDM window (see page 16-2)
2. Make necessary changes to appropriate fields (e.g., DOB, Martial Status, Ethnicity)
3. Click on the **Save** button.
   The following message displays:
   "Changes have been saved."
4. Click on the **OK** button.
   The LDM window displays.
5. When you are done reviewing information about the person, close each window by clicking on **Close** button.

You must save (click on the **Save** button) after making a change to the **Person Demographics** tab, in order for that change to be stored in the CONNECTIONS database.

Therefore, if more than one change has been made, only the last one, if unsaved, will be discarded when the **No** button is clicked.

LDM Online Help

Context-sensitive help information is available for all elements of the LDM window including tabs, grids, buttons, and individual fields. To activate context sensitive help, simply click on an element (e.g., a Field Name) and press the F1 key on your keyboard. Information about that element of the LDM window will be displayed.

LDM Online Help includes the following features:

- A Table of Contents allowing access to all Help information.
- Index and Search functions providing alternate means of finding information.
- Interactive graphic examples of LDM window elements. Clicking on certain portions of a graphic within LDM Online Help will display explanations of that element.
- Hyperlinks appear throughout the Help information. These links will take you directly to related information such as definitions and procedural guidelines.
- Pressing F1 opens the LDM Help system. Information specific to the LDM window element that was active when F1 was pressed will be displayed. Once in the Help system, the table of Contents allows access to help information on other elements of the LDM window.

The LDM Help system offers more than help on LDM window elements. Below is list of additional Help information that you can access on line in the LDM window.

LDM Overview: A high level summary of LDM including a listing of its features and functions. This overview can be accessed directly by clicking the word Help that appears in the upper left corner of the LDM window and then clicking on LDM Help, which appears in the small menu.

“How Do I?” Help: Information on how to navigate within the LDM window and how to best utilize its functions.

Glossary: Definitions of terms commonly used in casework as well as definitions of LDM window elements and concepts.

Guidelines: Background on the legal, policy, and procedural guidelines followed by workers as they develop and record the information viewed in the LDM window.

Help on Help: Instructions on how to use the LDM Online Help system.

Module 17:
Reopening Closed Foster Homes

You may need to reopen a closed foster home for a variety of reasons, such as:

- An individual/couple inquires about becoming foster parents and states that they have a history of providing foster care in New York State.
- A foster parent in your agency has taken a break due to family circumstances and is ready to provide care again.
- The foster home/stage was closed by the system when the certification or approval period expired.
- A foster home was closed in CONNECTIONS due to system error or administrative reasons.

In this module, you will learn how the different reasons for closing a home affect the reopening of the home. Additionally, you will learn how CONNECTIONS supports the process of reopening foster homes/stages.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- conduct an **F/A Home Search** in CONNECTIONS;
- review the results of an **F/A Home Search**;
- reopen a closed home in CONNECTIONS in either Inquiry or Applicant status; and
- assign the reopened home to a caseworker for full certification or approval.

Reopening Closed Foster Homes

The reason for home closure is an important factor in determining the process of reopening the home. Regulations state that a closed home must be reopened in accordance with regulatory requirements {18 NYCRR 443.2(b)(19) and 443.10(b)}. The reopened home is treated as a new inquiry, except in the case of closure due to system error or administrative reasons.

§443.2(b)(19) states: "Treat all reopenings of foster homes that have closed as requests for a new certificate or approval. A new application must be completed regardless of how long the home has been closed. The only exception to this requirement is when a reopening occurs for administrative reasons, i.e., when the home should not have been closed initially but because it was, a reopening is necessary."

"System error or administrative reasons" refers to specific problems with the CONNECTIONS system or the ability to access CONNECTIONS.

Failure to complete the Reauthorization casework process and record the proper information inside CONNECTIONS is *not* considered a "system error or administrative reason."

A common reason for home closure is the failure to complete the Reauthorization process in CONNECTIONS in an accurate and timely manner. Failure to complete the Reauthorization process in a timely manner, including timely approval in CONNECTIONS, will result in home closure in CONNECTIONS (*see Module 14: Recertification and Reapproval of FAD Homes*). In a situation where you have not fully completed the Reauthorization process (and recorded the information in CONNECTIONS), you must treat the home as a new inquiry. A new SCR Database Check must be completed and the Home Study narrative must be updated.

When all casework outside CONNECTIONS has been completed but has *not* been recorded in the system by the expiration date (thereby causing the home to become system closed), it is referred to as *late system entry*. You will have to wait one business day before you may reopen the home, but you do *not* have to reopen the home/stage as a new inquiry.

Inadvertent closure of a home due to system error or administrative reasons, or due to late system entry, must be supported with documentation in the External Foster Home Case Record. This documentation should verify that all of the casework activities for the Recertification or Reapproval process were completed in a timely manner, even though they may not have been recorded in the system. A Business Function Profile (BFP) of "Maintain FAD History" is required to correct the home history to reflect the date the recertification or reapproval was actually completed by the caseworker (*see Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS*).

The F/A Home Search

Regardless of why you are reopening a foster home, you must start by conducting an F/A Home Search in CONNECTIONS. This is necessary to avoid creating a duplicate home in the system. This is the primary reason we are *reopening* the home; duplicating a home is associated with duplicate Vendor ID's, and possibly with duplicate Person ID's. Conducting a thorough F/A Home Search is the best way to avoid all of these hazards.

The reason for reopening a home may affect your decision to conduct a "state-wide" search, and could affect the **Search Type** you choose on the F/A Home Search window. There are three search type options:

- Phonetic
- Phonetic Address
- Exact

Module 6 (*Responding to an Inquiry*) describes the F/A Home Search process in detail. Turn to *Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry* to view more information on these specific Search Types.

When entering a home name for an F/A Home Search, use the following method:

Smith, Mary

Do not place a space between first and last names.

Conducting an F/A Home Search

Step by Step:
Conducting an F/A Home Search

1. Click on the **Options** menu on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar and select **F/A Home**.
   A fly-out menu displays.
2. Click on **F/A Home Search…** on the fly-out menu.
   The F/A Home Search window displays.
3. Click on the **Clear** button (or highlight the **Agency Code** and press the **Delete** key) to delete the **Agency Code** and perform a statewide search.
   The following field highlights in yellow: Home Name.
4. Enter the home name in the **Home Name** field in the following format: *Smith, Mary*
5. Click on the **Search…** button.
   The F/A Home List displays. If the search does not return a match, the window is blank and displays the following message:
   "The criteria entered results in no information being returned."

On occasion, a worker may create a FAD Home not realizing the home already exists in CONNECTIONS. The result is a duplicate home. This can lead to duplicate homes being reopened or reactivated.

See *Module 15: Closing Foster Homes* to close duplicate homes.

Understanding the Results of the F/A Home Search

In *Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry*, we conducted an F/A Home Search. The Results of the F/A Home Search display on the *F/A Home List*. The *F/A Home List* includes the following information for each FAD home/stage returned:

- Resource Name
- Status
- Race
- County
- Zip Code
- Worker Phone
- VID (Vendor ID)
- Sub-Agency *(NYC only)*
- Address 1
- State
- Worker Name
- Worker Ext.
- Setting
- Ethnicity
- City
- CD *(NYC only)*
- Case ID

If the F/A Home Search reveals that the home previously existed in CONNECTIONS and is now closed, you must determine whether or not the home should be reopened. The process of making this determination should include (but is not limited to) the following:

- View Home Demographic information by clicking on the **Home Demo.** button at the bottom of the *F/A Home List*.
- View the home history in CONNECTIONS (by selecting **F/A Home History…** from the **Options** menu on the *FA Home List*).
- If the **Recommend Reopening** field on the *F/A Home History Detail* window indicates “Do not recommend reopening,” do more research. Try to contact the caseworker that previously closed the home. If the former worker is not available, contact the former agency for general information on the closing. If possible, try to get information in writing. In addition, you should document all findings in the External Foster Home Case Record.
- Remember that a discussion of the situation with the potential foster or adoptive parent(s) should also take place. This discussion needs to be documented in the External Foster Home Case Record.

Step by Step:
Reviewing Information on the *F/A Home List*

1. On the *F/A Home List*, select a foster home that matches your search criteria.
2. Click on the **Home Demo.** button.
   The Home Demographics window displays.
3. Review the *Home Demographic* window, then click on the **Cancel** button.
   The F/A Home List displays.
4. Click on the **Options** menu and select **F/A Home History…**
   The F/A Home History window displays.
5. Select the most recent event that has a **Status** of "Closed."
6. Click on the **History Detail…** button in the lower left corner of the window.
   The following message displays:
   "Inquire mode. Not authorized to make any changes."
7. Click on the **OK** button.
   The F/A Home History Detail window displays.
8. Review the information in the **Closure Type**, **Closure Reason** and **Recommend Reopening** fields.
9. When you have completed your review of this window, click on the **Cancel** button.
   The F/A Home History window displays.
10. Click on the **Close** button in the *F/A Home History* window.
    The F/A Home List displays.

Where am I?

CONNECTIONS toolbar > Options menu > FA home > FA Home > Search command > Search button

Continue with the process of reopening the foster home *only after* you have performed *all* necessary steps to determine that the home is appropriate for reopening.

Reopening, Saving and Assigning a Previously Closed Home

In order for a foster home to be reopened, it must be Saved and Assigned to a worker in "Inquiry" or "Applicant" status. Determine which status to use (Inquiry or Applicant) by considering the reason for closure, the reason for reopening the home, the amount of time the home has been closed, and local district/voluntary agency policy and procedure. For example, Save and Assign in "Applicant" status if the home is being reopened by the agency that closed it *and* the closure was inadvertent.

When a home is reopened by the agency that closed it, payments are reimbursable as soon as it is *submitted* to the supervisor/unit approver for approval.

When a home is reopened by an agency *other than the agency that closed it*, payments are not reimbursable until the home is reopened, saved and submitted, and *approved* by the new agency supervisor/unit approver.

The instructions below begin on the *F/A Home List*, immediately following the review of historical information on the closed home. They continue through the process of assigning the home to a Primary worker. For information on how to assign a home/stage to a worker who is not on your Available Staff list, see *Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry.*

Step by Step:
Reopening, Saving and Assigning a Previously Closed Home

1 In the *F/A Home List*, click on the **Options** menu and select **Re-open Closed Home**.
The Reopen Home window displays.

2 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Change To** field and select either "Inquiry" or "Applicant," as appropriate.

3 Click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Assign**.
The Assign window displays.

4 In the Available Staff section at the top of the *Assign* window, click on the name of the worker who is to have primary responsibility for the foster home/stage – if assigning to someone other than self.
Proceed to Step 6 if assigning case to self.

Where am I?

CONNECTIONS toolbar > Options menu > FA home > FA Home > Search command > Search button

5 Click on the **Primary** button.
The selected caseworker's name displays in the Assignments section at the bottom of the window.

6 Click on the **Save** button.
The F/A Home List displays.

7 Click on the **Close** button on the *F/A Home List*.
The F/A Home Search window displays.

8 Close on the **Close** button on the *F/A Home Search*.
The Assigned Workload displays.

After Reopening a FAD Home

Remember that reopening a FAD home is only the first step in processing an inquiry or updating a FAD home/stage. A good first step in reviewing the home/stage is to access the Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS). The FRS provides a comprehensive view of all home/stage information, and is a quick way for you to figure out what information needs to be added or updated first (see Module 3: Managing Your Workload for details on accessing the FRS).

For information on how to record or edit home and person information, refer to the following modules in this guide:

- Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry;
- Module 7: Maintaining Person Information; and
- Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS.

Converting Facility Type after Reopening a Foster Home

A home originally opened as an Approved Relative Foster Home, Certified Foster Home or Foster/Adoptive Home may need to have its Facility Type updated upon reopening to reflect a change in the provision of foster care. For example, foster parents who were once approved to care for a relative may now want to provide foster care to non-relative foster children. The opposite could be true as well.

To convert the **Facility Type**, an F/A Home Search must be performed to find the home in CONNECTIONS, then the home must be reopened and assigned to your *Assigned Workload*. As the caseworker responsible for completing the certification or approval process, you must update all information pertaining to the home. To convert the **Facility Type**, use the **Maintain Licensing Information** task. On the *F/A Home License* window, the **Facility Type** field can be changed to reflect the current situation.

If a home is being reopened and treated as a new inquiry, a Reauthorization is not needed. The full certification or approval process creates a new authorization timeline.

For more information on the licensing procedures, refer to *Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes*.

The instructions below describe how to convert Facility Type after Reopening a Foster Home from the *Assigned Workload*.

Step by Step:
Converting Facility Type after Reopening a Foster Home

1. After conducting an *F/A Home Search* and Re-opening the closed home; from the *Assigned Workload*, click the name of the appropriate foster home/stage.
   *The **Task** button enables.*
2. Click on the **Tasks** button.
   The Tasks List displays.
3. Select the **Maintain Licensing Information** task.
4. Click on the **Detail** button.
   The F/A Home License window displays.
5. Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Facility Type** field select as appropriate.
   *The **Save** button enables.*
6. Click on the **Save** button.
   The Task List displays.

Refer to the following Step-by-Step's for help deciding which task to use prior to Converting Facility Type: "Conducting an F/A Home Search" and "Reopening, Saving and Assigning a Previously Closed Home."

Module 18:
Historical F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters

For a variety of reasons (e.g., foster parent's request, audits) you may need to obtain a copy of an F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter from a previous licensing period. Historical documents are an important feature of a case record. In this module, we will learn how CONNECTIONS supports this need. By the end of the module, you will be able to:

- generate, view and print an historical F/A Home Certificate; and
- generate, view and print an historical Approval Letter.

Historical F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters

CONNECTIONS captures the *end date* (and all other information required for historical F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters) each time an Accepted-Active event is changed to "Pending" status and is submitted for supervisory approval.

This end date is printed on the bottom left corner of historical F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters. It indicates the period for which the information on the document was valid.

> The ability to generate Approval Letters and Historical Approval Letters and Certificates was introduced to CONNECTIONS in October 2000.
>
> Retrieval of Approval Letters is not possible prior to October 2000.

In attempting to populate historical F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters, the system lists the first two individuals in the home, provided that they show a relationship/interest (**Rel/Int**) code of "Foster Parent" (recorded on the *Person Detail* window) and have no date of death. Before January 2002, if the **Rel/Int** code of "Foster Parent" was not recorded prior to or during that specific historic period, no names will be listed on the historical document. Subsequent to January 2002, a Rel**/Int** code of "Foster Parent" is required for at least 1 person in the stage.

F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters reflect the most recent date information for the period in question. If dates have been corrected on the *Home History* window, those corrections will be reflected in the historical document.

Historical documents must be generated via the *Event List*, *not* the **Maintain Licensing Information** task (which displays current licensing information only). The *Event List* can be accessed two ways: through the *Assigned Workload* or through the *Task List*.

Effects of Historical Persons on Foster Home Certificates and Approval Letters

The **Remove Person – Left Home** function described in *Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS*, affects the historical record of a FAD home, including certificates and approval letters.

When an individual is removed from a FAD home with the **Remove Person – Left Home** function, the historical certificate or approval letter retains only the Foster Parent's name in a "frozen" historical document. By doing this, the historical home certificate or approval letter reflects accurate information for the historical period represented by that document.

Certificates and approval letters generated after an individual has been removed from the FAD home via the **Remove Person – Left Home** function do not show the person as a member of the foster home.

Step by Step: Generating and Printing an Historical F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter

1. On the *Assigned Workload*, click on the name of the appropriate foster home/stage.
2. Click on the **Options** menu and select ***Event List…***
   The Event List displays for the selected stage.
3. Click on an event from the appropriate time period (the **Event Description** should read: "Changed home status to Approved-Active").
4. Click on the **Detail…** button in the bottom left corner of the *Event List*.
   The F/A Home License window displays.
5. Click on the **Forms** menu and select **Historical F/A Home Certificate** or **Historical Approval Letter**, as appropriate.
   This certificate/letter displays as a Microsoft Word document.
6. Review the document to ensure it is for the correct time period.
7. Click on the **File** menu and select **Print**.
   The Microsoft Word Print dialog box displays.
8. Click on the **OK** button.
9. Click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
   The F/A Home License window displays.
10. Click on the **Cance**l button on the *F/A Home License window.*
    The Event List window displays.
11. Click on the **Close** button on the *Event List*.
    The Assigned Workload displays.
12. Click on the **Close** button on the *Assigned Workload.*
    The CONNECTIONS toolbar displays

Module 19:
Transferring Foster Homes

A foster home transfer involves reassigning the foster home across districts or voluntary agencies. Movement of a foster home within the same district or voluntary agency is referred to as a reassignment.

In this module, we will explore some of the policies and procedures regarding home transfers and provide instruction on how CONNECTIONS supports this process.

By the end of the module, you will be able to:

- identify the difference between a transfer and a reassignment;
- identify the responsibilities of both the sending and receiving agencies; and
- transfer a home/stage to another agency in CONNECTIONS.

The FRS as a Review Tool

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) provides a comprehensive view of all information recorded for a FAD home. As you prepare FAD homes for transfers, use the FRS to quickly view each tab to scan for missing or inaccurate information.

Responsibilities of Sending and Receiving Agencies

The decision to transfer a foster home requires frequent and clear communication between the two agencies involved: the Sending Agency and the Receiving Agency. The duties and expectations of both agencies are listed in the following sections.

Responsibilities of the Sending Agency

Several activities *must* be completed before a foster home is transferred in CONNECTIONS. *(See Appendix C: OCFS Informational Letter regarding Foster Boarding Home Records and Policy on Transferring Foster Boarding Homes.)*

- An agreement must be made between the two agencies completing the transfer—the sending agency is responsible for ascertaining acceptance of the foster boarding home by the receiving agency.
- The sending agency must identify the staff person at the receiving agency to whose *Assigned Workload* the foster home/stage is being transferred.
- All home licensing, non-licensing, maintain person and reauthorization information must be updated as necessary by the sending agency.

Under *no* circumstances may a foster boarding home be transferred if there is a CHRC results letter from OCFS indicating a disqualifying crime for a foster parent, or indicating a situation requiring “Hold in Abeyance” for a charge or conviction related to a foster parent.

If no foster children are already placed in the home and the foster boarding home is transferred prior to final certification or approval, the sending agency must apprise the receiving agency as to the exact status of the home, specifying met and unmet requirements.

If there are foster children in the home, the above applies. In addition, the sending agency must establish which voluntary authorized agency or social services district will have planning responsibility for each child in the foster boarding home and each child's family.

The Reauthorization document must be completed by the sending agency on home transfers when the home is coming due for reauthorization, or if the home is in **Emergency** status and is ready for progression to **Pending Acceptance** status.

Responsibilities of the Receiving Agency

If the home is being transferred prior to final certification or approval and *any* part of the CHRC process has taken place—even if the only step taken has been to submit the fingerprint cards to OCFS—the receiving agency must complete and submit the form *Notice to NYS OCFS of Foster Home Transfer Between Authorized Agencies* [*see Appendix C: OCFS Informational Letter (00 OCFS INF-6) re: Foster Boarding Home Records and Policy on Transferring Foster Boarding Homes*]. The receiving agency then continues with the certification or approval process.

A closed home must be reopened by the receiving agency, not transferred.

Save and Submit updates the links between CONNECTIONS and the BICS payment system. The receiving agency's worker must save and submit the Interim Home Study of the transferred home for supervisory approval in order for the home to be updated in CONNECTIONS as the receiving agency's foster home. Only after the supervisor approves the home will payments to that home be reimbursable.

Vendor ID Information

The Vendor ID number of a FAD home *may* need to be changed when a FAD home is being transferred. Vendor ID changes may be required when the Maintainer of a FAD home is changed during the transfer. To know if a new Vendor ID number is needed, you must always know who the "Maintainer" is for the home. This information is located on the *Resource Detail* window.

All Local Districts have the same Maintainer code: SDSS. Therefore, any district can contract with a home and the Maintainer code will not change.

Voluntary Agencies maintain their own homes. The Maintainer code is the same as the Agency code. For example, the Voluntary Agency "Little Flower" is identified by the agency code B08. The maintainer code for this agency is also B08.

The table on the next page illustrates when a Vendor ID number may change.

A New Vendor ID Is Needed When…	A New Vendor ID Is NOT Needed When…
The "Maintainer" changes. This may happen when: • a home is transferred from a Voluntary Agency to a Local District • a home is transferred from a Local District to a Voluntary Agency • a home is transferred from one Voluntary Agency to another Voluntary Agency	The "Maintainer" *does not* change. This may happen when: • a home is transferred between Local Districts, and the maintainer continues to be SDSS.

Transferring a Home from One Agency/District to Another

Once you have completed the casework activities noted in the beginning of this module, you will be ready to complete the transfer in CONNECTIONS. Remember to review all of the information about the home in CONNECTIONS to verify that it is accurate and current. This involves several tasks, including (but not limited to): **Maintain Non-Licensing Information**, **Maintain Licensing Information** and **Maintain Person**.

The directions below will assist you in completing the transfer process, once you have the record in order.

Step by Step:
Transferring Foster Homes

1. Click on the **WORK** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar.
   The Assigned Workload displays.
2. Select the appropriate foster home/stage to be transferred and click on the **Assign** button.
   The Assign window displays.
3. Click on the **Options** menu and select **Staff Search Criteria…**
   The Staff Search Criteria window displays.
4. Highlight the Agency code in the Agency field.
5. Enter the agency code of the worker to whom the home is being transferred.
   Typing in field deletes the existing Agency code.
6. Type the first and last name of the staff person to whom the home/stage is being transferred.

The **Agency** field is pre-filled with the agency code of the worker who is performing the search.

7 Click on the **Search** button.
The Staff List displays with the results of the staff search.

8 Click on the appropriate staff person.

9 Click on the **OK** button.
The Assign window displays. The staff person's name and information have been added to the Available Staff list at the top of the window and is highlighted.

10 Click on the **Primary** button.
The following message displays: "This action will remove the current primary worker from the stage. Continue?"

11 Click on the **Yes** button.
The new Primary worker's name displays in the Assignment section.

12 Click on the **Save** button.
The Assigned Workload displays.

The receiving agency must save and submit the Interim Home Study of the transferred home for supervisory approval to update CONNECTIONS (see page 19-2).

Module 20:
Certified and Approved Emergency Foster Homes

This module introduces you to homes that have been temporarily certified or approved on an emergency basis to provide care and board to a specific child who needs immediate placement in a foster home. For example, a child removed from his or her biological family may be placed with an aunt to provide care as an emergency foster home. Foster homes created for this reason are referred to as Emergency Foster Homes.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- identify the difference between Emergency Foster Homes and fully Certified and Approved Foster Homes;
- identify when Certification or Approval of Emergency Homes is appropriate;
- progress a home from “Emergency” to “Pending Acceptance” status; and
- identify differences in how and when Emergency Homes are temporarily certified and approved in New York City.

Regulatory Information

Emergency certification or approval of a relative or non-relative foster home is allowable when a child is removed from his or her own home and placed into the legal custody of a local social services district. As of May 11, 2005 regulatory revisions have expanded the circumstances in which an authorized agency may approve or certify a foster home on an emergency basis. Authorized agencies can now also certify or approve foster homes on an emergency basis if a child needs to be placed voluntarily by his/her family of origin or as a result of a person in need of supervision (PINS) or juvenile delinquency proceeding. The regulations also allow for a local social services district to move a foster child to a foster home approved or certified on an emergency basis, in exceptional circumstances when there is a compelling reason [see standards set forth in 18 NYCRR §443].

Regulatory Requirements Prior to Placement of the Child

Before placing a foster child with a potential caretaker or eligible relative on an emergency basis, the authorizing agency must secure a signed and dated statement from the potential caretaker or eligible relative indicating the following [from 18 NYCRR §443.7(b)]:

- the exact relationship to the child and the child's parent(s);
- that the potential caretaker or eligible relative is willing to provide foster care for the child;
- an assurance that the potential caretaker or eligible relative understands that the child is in the legal custody of the commissioner of social services; and
- that by accepting responsibility for providing foster care for the child, the foster parent is agreeing to comply with foster care requirements, including but not limited to those involving the role and authority of the certifying or approving authorized agency and the social services district with legal custody of the child to supervise placement.

An "expedited" or 24-hour Home Study must be completed prior to placement of the child. This assessment of the home must conclude that there is no apparent risk to the health and safety of the child. Refer to 18 NYCRR §443.7(b)(3) for a full listing of what should be documented in the expedited Home Study.

The authorizing agency also must obtain necessary character references and review agency records to determine whether or not the potential foster parent has a prior history of abuse or maltreatment. Once all of these items have been completed, the foster home may be certified or approved as an emergency foster home and the child may be placed.

An agency-generated, off-line letter may be created for each home indicating that it is in "Emergency" status.

Send one copy of the letter to the foster or adoptive parents and retain another copy in the External Foster Home Case Record. This letter is not generated in CONNECTIONS.

Regulatory Requirements after Placement of the Child

A home that has successfully met all State requirements may become certified or approved as an Emergency Foster Home for 90 days from the date of placement of the child in the home [18 NYCRR §443.7]. The authorizing agency will use the 90-day period to prepare the home for

final certification or approval (*see Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes and 18 NYCRR §443.7*).

If the worker fails to complete the full Home Study or fails to perform any other casework activity (excluding the exceptions noted below), the home should be closed after 90 days.

Emergency Home Extensions

According to state regulations, there are two situations where homes in Emergency status may be eligible for an extension. The information from State regulations, below, provides some background for this section on extensions.

Except as described below, homes may only be certified or approved in "Emergency" status for 90 days following the placement of the child.

Exception #1: An emergency foster home certified or approved on an expedited emergency basis for 90 days may continue to provide foster care beyond the 90th day, when all other requirements for final certification or approval have been met *except for completion of the CHRC process*.

Certification or approval of the home in "Emergency" status may continue until the completion of the CHRC process or unless the certification or approval is otherwise revoked by the authorized agency [18 NYCRR §443.7(6)(2)].

Extensions Related to the CHRC

In addition to the original 90-day period, FAD Homes in Emergency status may be "extended" for three 90-day periods of time, for a 'year' (360 days) total. This does not affect reimbursement, since homes in Emergency status are not Title IV-E reimbursable.

Regulatory requirements and the status of the foster home determine the ability to record these extensions periods in CONNECTIONS. A home is only eligible for an extension if all required medical reports are valid and on file. Additionally, the **Date Card Sent** field on the *Person Detail FA* window must be recorded for all principals in the home age 18 and older *and*, the **Date Results Received** field must be empty for at least one of these individuals.

Each time the Emergency period is extended, the **Authorized To** date increases by 90 days and the **Authorized From** date remains unchanged. The fingerprint extension period cannot be extended more than 30 days prior to the **Authorized To** date.

Creating Emergency Homes in CONNECTIONS

Emergency Homes are created in CONNECTIONS using the same methods covered earlier in this guide. The table below should help you find information you need to create an Emergency Home, and to record information for the certification/approval process.

Casework Activity	Step-by-Step Module to Refer To…
Responding to the Emergency Home Request	Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry
Creating FAD homes in Emergency Status	Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry
Adding/Relating People to the Home	Module 7: Maintaining Person Information
Using the FRS to View and Edit Data	Module 3: Managing Your Workload
Making Changes to the Home	Module 12: Maintaining FAD Homes in CONNECTIONS
Copying and Pasting in Narratives	Module 2: Getting Started
FAD Checklist for Homes in Emergency Status	Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes

Progressing a Certified /Approved Emergency Home to Accepted-Active Status

In the previous section of this module, we discussed New York State regulations regarding the progression of a home from “Emergency” status to final certification or approval—known as “Accepted-Active” status. An Emergency Home that becomes fully certified or approved progresses through two phases:

Emergency — This is the first 90-day period that begins on the day the child was placed in the home.

Finally Certified or Approved — This begins at the end of the 90-day period; a one-year licensing/approval period begins that can be renewed through the Annual Reauthorization process (*see Module 14: Recertification and Reapproval of FAD Homes*).

Once a home progresses to “Accepted-Active” status, a new timeline is established.

Using the FRS

An Emergency FAD home is already in an active status, and probably has children placed in the home. Since the move to an annual licensing cycle affects the To/From dates on the *F/A Home License* window, you will progress the licensing information via the **Annual Reauthorization** task on the *Task List*.

The steps for completing this status progression are very similar to those involved when completing an Annual Reauthorization. One difference is that the Home Study narrative will not exist, and must be recorded in CONNECTIONS.

Remember that you must click on the Reauthorization checkbox on the *F/A Home License* window, to extend the timeline for the home certification/approval.

Step by Step:
Progressing an Emergency Home to Pending Acceptance Status

1 Click on the appropriate Emergency home/stage on the *Assigned Workload*.
*The **Tasks…** button enables.*

2 Click on the **Tasks…** button.
The Task List displays.

3 Select the **Home Study** task.

4 Click on the **New** button.
*If information has been recorded into the FRS, the **Use Prior** button enables; click the **Use Prior** button. The FRS displays.*

5 Click on the Home Study Narrative tab and enter Home Study information in this area of CONNECTIONS (*see Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes*)

6 Take time to go through all tabs of the FRS to review information.

7 Click on the **Submit** button.
The F/A Home License window displays.

8 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Status** field and select **Pending Acceptance** from the resulting list.

9 Click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Submit**.
The To-Do Detail window displays.

10 Add **Comments**, if appropriate.

11 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.

Once the certification or approval of the home has been reviewed and approved by your supervisor, you must generate an F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter and provide a copy to the foster parents (see *Module 10: F/A Home Certificates and Approval Letters*).

Remember to click on the **Fingerprint Extension** check box if you are extending the current license while waiting for the results of the CHRC.

(All other regulatory requirements must be met and at least one **Date Card Received** field must be blank).

When a foster home in Emergency status is being reauthorized, the **Licensing Information** tab in the FRS will display the **Anticipated Authorization Period Upon Approval** with both an Authorized From date and an Authorized To date.

This information displays only when the worker performs the reauthorization, calculating the next anticipated authorization period based on the current Authorized To date. CONNECTIONS cannot anticipate exactly when the worker will complete and obtain approval for a reauthorization, so the exact authorization period will display only after the supervisor has approved the reauthorization.

For example, if a foster home in Emergency status has an authorization period of 1/1/03 – 4/1/03 and the caseworker begins performs the reauthorization process on 3/15/03, the Anticipated Authorization Period Upon Approval will display as 4/1/03 – 4/1/04. If the supervisor approves the reauthorization on 3/16/03, the *actual* authorization period upon approval will be 3/16/03 – 3/16/04, reflecting one year from the date on which the reauthorization was approved.

The Anticipated Authorization Period Upon Approval does not display when the supervisor views the FRS from the Approval Task To-Do.

Emergency Homes in New York City

The regulatory requirements for Certified and Approved Emergency Foster Homes apply to all districts and voluntary agencies statewide, including the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) in New York City. ACS has established additional procedures for processing applications to provide emergency foster care.

In New York City, the CPS caseworker forwards the home information to the Office of Placement Administration (OPA). The OPA worker searches the CONNECTIONS database to verify that the foster home/stage does not already exist then creates the Emergency home in CONNECTIONS.

The OPA worker assigns a Vendor ID number, modifies any information about the home, completes the *F/A Home License* window and **Saves and Submits** the new foster home/stage to the supervisor or unit approver.

Once the OPA supervisor approves the Emergency Foster Home, the home's **Status** changes to "Emergency." The home is approved for a 90-day period.

ACS has created its own 24-Hour Home Study template. ACS completes the 24-hour Home Study to open the home and then assigns the home to either DFCS or a voluntary agency.

ACS CPS workers also use an Emergency Home Checklist.

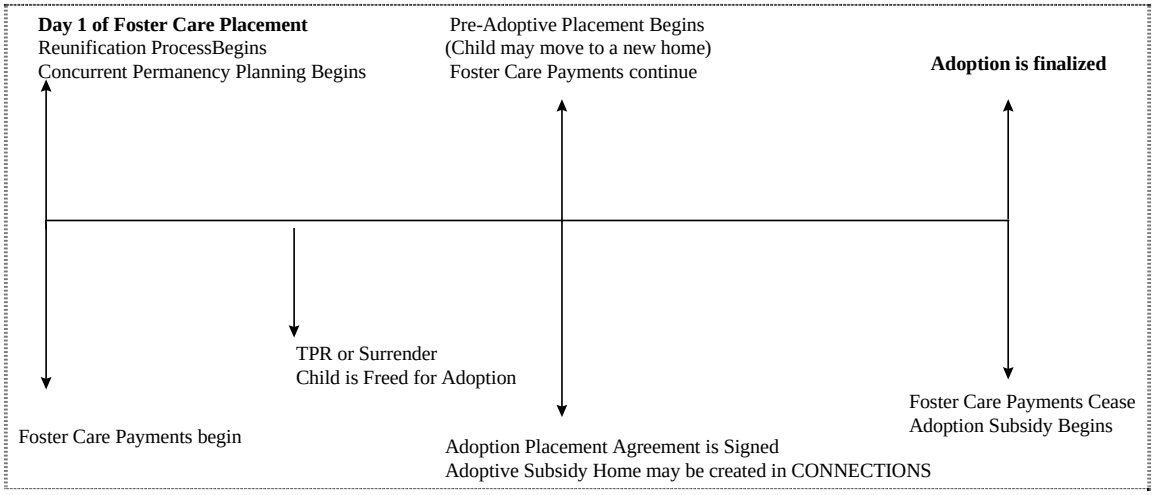
Next, the OPA supervisor determines whether the Division of Foster Care Services (DFCS) or a contract agency will supervise the home, and assigns a caseworker from the appropriate agency to be the Primary worker for the foster home/stage. The OPA worker assigns him/herself as the Secondary worker in the foster home/stage.

Module 21:
Adoptive Homes

Approval of Adoptive homes in CONNECTIONS is a separate process from the certification or approval of foster homes. Authorized agencies operating an adoption program have an adoption or home finding unit that accepts public inquiries. Once an inquiry is made, the authorizing agency must respond to the inquiry and develop the home as a potential adoptive placement in accordance with New York State adoption regulations.

The figure below highlights the major milestones completed when a child transitions from foster care placement to a final adoptive placement. It also clearly indicates when foster care payment changes to adoption subsidy. These are issues that will be expanded upon throughout this module.

Figure 1:
Major Milestones in the Process of Adopting a Child in Foster Care



The standards for studying an individual for approval as an adoptive parent are *nearly* the same as those for the approval of a foster parent. There is one exception: In a situation where one spouse wants to adopt, that prospective parent *must be legally separated* from his/her spouse in order to pursue approval as an adoptive parent.

This module presents ways that Adoptive homes differ from Foster homes. By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- discuss differences in how adoptive homes are funded (vs. Foster care settings); and
- identify how these differences are recorded/documented in CONNECTIONS.

Responding to an Adoptive Inquiry

First Contact: Responsibilities of the Authorizing Agency

Once an authorizing agency receives an inquiry from a prospective adoptive parent, they are required to respond to the inquiry within five business days and offer the person an individual or

group orientation session. This session should take place within 30 days of receiving the inquiry.

The orientation session should be planned for hours that are convenient to the prospective adoptive parent and should include the following information
[18 NYCRR §421.11(a)-(g)]:

- a discussion of the characteristics of children available for adoption in New York State (show *New York State's Waiting Children* and explain its use); and
- a discussion of the regulations regarding marriage status: married persons can adopt only as a couple with each partner participating, and that a married person who is living separate and apart from his or her spouse *must have a legally recognizable separation agreement or decree of separation to adopt a child*.

By the end of the orientation, the authorizing agency will provide the inquiring individual with a copy of the adoption application and will inform him/her of the following:

- the procedures for application and adoption study, and the availability of adoption subsidies;
- of an indicated child abuse and maltreatment report;
- that applicants are required to sign a sworn statement indicating, to the best of their knowledge, whether they have ever been convicted of a crime in New York State or any other jurisdiction;
- that pursuant to §372(e) of the Social Services Law, an applicant may apply for a fair hearing if an application is not acted upon by the completion of an adoption study within six months or if an application is rejected; and
- that the agency will inquire with the Division of Criminal Justice Services as to whether the applicant has been convicted of one or more felony crimes.

Within five days of an orientation session, the authorizing agency will contact persons who were invited to the orientation session but who did not attend. These persons will be offered the chance to attend another orientation or an individual interview [18 NYCRR §421.11(h)].

Documentation of the Adoption Inquiry

Documentation of casework activities is a vital part of the adoption process. It is important that you clearly organize and record the information you will collect regarding each adoption inquiry. We shall refer to this external record as the External Adoptive Home Case Record.

For each inquiry, develop a record that contains:

- a dated record of the inquiry, whether received by mail, telephone or in person;
- a dated copy of the invitation to an orientation session;
- a dated copy of the written acknowledgment of the inquiry; and
- a dated record of all further communication, whether by letter, telephone or in person [18 NYCRR §421.11(i)].

This record must be kept on file, even if no application is completed, for 12 months after the last communication with the inquiring individual [18 NYCRR §421.11(j)].

CONNECTIONS and Adoptive Inquiries

The certification or approval of a home for pre-adoptive placement is documented in CONNECTIONS using the setting of **Foster Home** (*see Module 8: Maintaining Licensing Information for FAD Homes*). Funding for a pre-adoptive placement is actually Foster Care money; adoption subsidies do not begin until the finalization of an adoption.

Record the inquiry as early as possible. Refer to *Module 6: Responding to an Inquiry* for information on how to record such information to CONNECTIONS.

The Adoption Application

By the end the orientation session, you must provide the prospective adoptive parent with an adoption application that has been approved by OCFS. This application provides a variety of factual information about the prospective adoptive parent(s), including:

- name, address and identifying information;
- age, race and religion of members of the household;
- whether an applicant is certified or approved as a foster parent; and
- characteristics of children sought to be adopted [18 NYCRR §421.12(a)].

If the prospective adoptive parents choose, they may be registered to adopt a handicapped or hard-to-place child with the adoptive parent registry [18 NYCRR §421.12(c)].

Documentation Regarding Application Information

In addition to the documentation noted on page 21-2, the following information should be recorded in the External Adoptive Home Case Record:

- the application, medical report and references;
- summary of interviews with the applicant and visits to the applicant's home; summary of agency conference clarifying the basis for each decision that affects the applicant's status with the agency; and
- copies of all correspondence with the applicant [18 NYCRR §421.12(b)].

CONNECTIONS and Recording of the Application Information

Only local district workers create FAD Adoptive homes. Best practice is to create the Adoptive home after an Adoption Placement Agreement has been signed. The prospective adoptive parent inquiry will be recorded in CONNECTIONS twice to reflect the different types of payment each home/stage receives:

- Initially, a home is created with a setting of Foster Care.
- Closer to the time of an adoption finalization, a home is created with a setting of Adoptive Home.

At that point, a caseworker closes the foster care case in CONNECTIONS. A new case (for the child) is then opened in WMS to maintain information regarding the finalized adoption subsidy. If the adoptive parents have an interest in adopting more children the foster care home should

remain open. The adoptive parents would have two homes created in CONNECTIONS. The Finalization is documented in the CCR stage in CONNECTIONS which includes the WMS adoption subsidy info and the closed CCR stage. The Adoptive home in CONNECTIONS becomes the system of record for the home receiving subsidy payments.

Information obtained from the Application process should be recorded in CONNECTIONS, where recording of such information is supported. Refer to *Module 7: Maintaining Person Information*, for instruction on how CONNECTIONS supports this type of documentation.

Decision: Determining Whether or not to Accept the Home for Adoption Study

Progression of the inquiry to applicant status requires the completion of an Adoption Application. Applications for an adoption program are accepted on a *Priority Basis*, which is described below [18 NYCRR §421.13(a)]:

Priority of Acceptance for Adoption Applications	
First Priority	On or about April 1st of each year, OCFS will determine the age, race, handicap and other significant characteristics of the largest proportion of waiting children. First priority will be given to: • applicants seeking children with these characteristics; • foster parents seeking to adopt a child who has resided in their home for 12 continuous months; and • Native Americans seeking to adopt Native American children.
Second Priority	Second priority is given to: • applicants who are seeking to adopt photo-listed children who do not have the characteristics of the largest proportion of waiting children as determined by OCFS; and • applicants who are seeking children currently available in the care of the authorizing agency for whom there is not a waiting list of approved families.
Third Priority	Third priority is given to: • all other applicants (i.e., those who have expressed an interest in adopting children such as healthy young children who are not photo-listed, if such children are not available for adoption in the care of the authorizing agency where application was made).

Within 10 days of receiving a completed Adoption Application, the authorizing agency must send written acknowledgment and inform the applicant of how their application shall be responded to [18 NYCRR §421.13(b)].

How an authorizing agency responds to each application is based upon the Priority Level assigned to the application. The table below matches each priority level with the appropriate response.

Written acknowledgment of receipt of a completed application is not supported by CONNECTIONS.

However, you can create a Reminder To-Do to alert you when you need to create and send the letter of acknowledgment for each Prospective Adoptive Home.

Priority of Acceptance and Responses for Adoption Applications	
First Priority	First priority applications are accepted for immediate adoption study. The letter sent to these applicants will identify: • a first appointment to be not more than 30 days from receipt of completed application; and • the name and telephone number of an agency staff person who can be contacted during the interval period [18 NYCRR §421.13(b)(1)].
Second Priority	Second priority applications are provided with a letter identifying: • an estimate of when an adoption study may start; and • the name and telephone number of an agency staff person who can be contacted during the interval period [18 NYCRR §421.13(b)(2)].
Third Priority	Third priority applications shall receive a letter indicating: • whether there is any likelihood of an adoption study being granted [18 NYCRR §421.13(b)(3)], *or* • that they have been rejected on the basis of “no need”—*unless* the agency is able to begin the adoption study promptly so that it is completed within six months of receiving the completed application [18 NYCRR §421.13(c)].

An authorizing agency may refer a prospective adoptive parent to another agency prior to the start of an adoption study. This is appropriate if the applicant has expressed an interest in a child photo-listed with that agency and the applicant has expressed a desire to be referred to that agency.

If the applicant does not wish to be referred to another agency, do not delay the adoption beyond normal delays related to priority level [18 NYCRR §421.13(d)].

Any rejection must be accompanied by:

a statement of fair hearing rights [§22 and §372(e) of Social Services Law];

and

a statement that the applicant has the option of remaining on a waiting list with a description of the procedures for exercising this option [18 NYCRR §421.13(c)(1)-(2)].

Waiting Lists

A *waiting list* refers to a listing of applicants who are waiting for adoption study. These applicants have been identified as first, second and third priority. Therefore, an authorizing agency must maintain separate waiting lists for each category [18 NYCRR §421.14(a)].

Each waiting list must contain the name of each applicant, the date the completed application was received by the agency and the characteristics of the child sought for adoption. See the table below for descriptions of how an authorizing agency should address each waiting list [18 NYCRR §421.14(b)].

Waiting List Time Frames	
First Priority	Adoption study should start within 30 days and should be completed within six months of receipt of the completed application. These applicants have first priority in the initiation of adoption studies, the assignment of staff, the scheduling of individual and group appointments, and of conferences to review studies and make decisions.
Second Priority	Adoption study should be completed within six months of receipt of the completed application.
Third Priority	The Authorizing Agency shall contact these applicants at least one time per year to review characteristics of waiting children and to ascertain their interest.

A separate waiting list should be maintained for each priority group of families whose studies have been completed and approved [18 NYCRR §421.14(d)]. Families are allowed to change their interest and adjust their priority group at any time. Use the date of this change as the date of new application [18 NYCRR §421.14(f)].

Adoption Study Process

As the caseworker responsible for development of the adoptive home, you must conduct an assessment of the applicant(s) and their home environment to determine their ability to provide a safe and healthy environment for an adopted child. This assessment is referred to as the *adoption study*.

An adoption study involves working with applicants individually or in groups to obtain information. It includes at least one visit to the applicant's home [18 NYCRR §421.15(a)]. A group orientation format may be used to provide applicants with the opportunity to interact with parents who have already adopted a child. This type of interaction is required by State law [18 NYCRR §421.15(b)].

During the first appointment or meeting of the adoption study, you must inform the applicant of all items that are require by the conclusion of the adoption study:

- A report from a physician regarding the health of each member of the household.
- References from at least three persons, only one of which may be related to the applicants who can attest to the character, habits, reputation and personal qualifications of the applicants and their suitability for caring for a child.
- If married, the applicants *must* provide proof of marriage.
- If married and living separate and apart from his/her spouse, the applicant must provide proof that the separation is based upon a legally recognizable separation agreement *or* decree of separation or an affidavit executed by the prospective adoptive parent attesting that he or she has been or will be living separate and apart from his or her spouse for a period of three years or more prior to the commencement of the adoption proceeding.
- If previously married, the applicant *must* provide proof of dissolution of marriage by death or divorce.
- Evidence of employment and salary must be provided for each employed applicant.
- A response to an agency inquiry to the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment stating whether the applicant is the subject of an indicated child abuse or maltreatment report.
- A response from OCFS to the CHRC, for each applicant and any person age 18 and older residing in the prospective adoptive home.
- A sworn statement from each applicant indicating to the best of such applicant's knowledge, such applicant or any person over the age of 18 currently residing in the home has ever been convicted of a crime in New York State or any other jurisdiction [18 NYCRR §421.15(c)].

Adoption Study Criteria

The adoption study will explore specific characteristics of each applicant to assess what type of care the person might provide to an adopted child. Applicants for adoptive study must be at least 18 years old. Authorizing agencies are not allowed to set any other age parameters for applicants. The health of each applicant must be reported on (see previous page), and must show that the applicant is expected to live until the child's majority and to have the energy and other abilities needed to fulfill the parental responsibilities. Physical examinations must be conducted within one year of the date of the adoption application.

Here are some personal characteristics of each applicant that will be addressed closely in the adoption study:

- Capacity to give and receive affection;
- Ability to provide for a child's physical and emotional needs;
- Ability to accept the intrinsic worth of a child;
- Flexibility and ability to change;
- Ability to cope with problems, stress and frustration;
- Feelings about parenting an adopted child and ability to make a commitment to a child placed in the home; and
- Ability to use community resources to strengthen and enrich family functioning [18 NYCRR §421.16(a)-(c)].

Accepting the *intrinsic worth* of a child includes:

Sharing and respecting his/her past.

Understanding the meaning of the separation he/she has experienced.

Having realistic expectations and goals.

Decision: Determining Whether to Approve or Reject an Adoption Study

You will be required to make a recommendation to your supervisor regarding the adoption study for each applicant. Conclusions about the ability of an applicant to be an adoptive parent will be based on a variety of factors:

- How well the adoption criteria have been met (see page 21-7)
- The characteristics and needs of children available for adoption
- The principles and requirements for adopting a child who is a member of a sibling group [see 18 NYCRR §421.2(e) and §421.18(b)]
- The principles related to the development of the children
- Reasons a person seeks to become an adoptive parent
- The understanding of the adoptive parent role
- The person's concerns and questions about adoption
- The person's psychological readiness to assume responsibility for a child
- The attitudes that each person in the applicant's home has about adoption and that individual's concept of an adopted child's role in the family
- The awareness of the impact that adoptive responsibilities have upon family life, relationships and current life style
- A person's self-assessment of his/her capacity to provide a child with a stable and meaningful relationship
- The role of the agency in supervising and supporting the adoptive placement [18 NYCRR §421.15(d)]

Accepting an Adoption Study

If, after reviewing the information noted above, you decide to accept an Adoption Study, you will first need to prepare a narrative summarizing the study findings and activities [18 NYCRR §421.15(e)(1)]. This narrative should detail how the Adoption Criteria was met and how each factor noted above was addressed. Overall, the summary should include all material available to provide a full description of the family for adoptive purposes.

Once you have completed the adoption summary, the following activities should be completed:

- Arrange for the applicant(s) to review the written summary (excluding sections where sources have requested confidentiality);
- Encourage the applicant(s) to express their views regarding the summary;
- Give the applicant(s) the opportunity to enter their reaction as an addendum to the written summary;
- Arrange for the applicant(s) and the caseworker to sign the summary after it has been reviewed and any addendum has been attached; and
- Provide a dated written notice of approval to applicant [18 NYCRR §421.15(e)(2)-(6)].

Rejecting an Adoption Study

An application for adoption study may be rejected for many reasons. During the study itself, an applicant's lack of cooperation may prohibit you from gathering enough information to make a determination. If you are able to collect enough information to complete an assessment, you may find that the applicant is physically or emotionally incapable of caring for an adopted child. Or you may determine that approval of a certain application would not be in the best interest of the children awaiting adoption [18 NYCRR §421.15(g)(1)-(2)].

At least two staff members must be involved in any decision to reject an adoption study, and one of these individuals must be at a supervisory level. Record the names of the participants in the decision and the reason for the decision in the External Adoptive Home Case Record.

Prospective adoptive parents must be informed in writing that their adoption study has not been accepted. This letter should contain the reasons for the rejection and include an offer to discuss the decision in person with the worker's supervisor. If the rejection is based in whole or in part on the results of the SCR Database Check or the CHRC, the FAD Denial/Revocation letter is sent.

You must also inform the applicant of his/her right to a hearing before the department regarding the rejection of the application, and state the procedures to be used for this purpose
[18 NYCRR §421.15(g)(3)-(8)].

If an applicant for adoption study is discontinued by mutual consent, you must:

Update the applicant's record to reflect the discussion leading to the mutual agreement;

and

Send a letter to applicant stating that the adoption study has been discontinued by mutual consent.

The notification letter informing applicants of a rejection of their adoption study for reasons other than Criminal History Record Check is not currently supported in CONNECTIONS.

See Module 15: *Closing Foster Homes,* for information on how to generate and print the FAD Denial/Revocation letter.

Conclusion of the Adoption Study

The adoption study process should be concluded within four months of initiation with a decision to discontinue, reject or approve the adoption study. This four-month standard should only be exceeded where illness or geographic absence of the applicant make the applicant unavailable, or where the study was interrupted by the unavailability of agency staff. See 18 NYCRR §421.15(h) for specific procedures regarding these exceptions.

The registering agency should update the Adoptive Parent Registry, either noting the approval of the applicant or removing the applicant if the adoption study has been discontinued or rejected

The Adoptive Home after Approval of the Adoption Study

It is important to remember that the adoptive home we have been discussing so far goes through a few more stages of development. Concluding the adoption study process is a first step in preparing for the ultimate goal of finalizing an adoption.

The next step involves distributing the newly approved adoption study to local districts and voluntary agencies searching for adoptive placements or pursuing a pre-adoptive placement of a child who is known to the prospective adoptive parent.

Once a potential match is made, visitation begins between the child and prospective adoptive parent(s). A successful graduated visitation plan results in a pre-adoptive placement. If the pre-adoptive placement is successful, the legalization of the adoption of the child completes the adoption process.

In a pre-adoptive placement, Foster Homes are created in CONNECTIONS as foster homes to receive *foster care payments* because the child is still in the legal custody of the county.

Once an adoption has been finalized, an Adoptive Home is created in CONNECTIONS and receives adoption subsidy payments.

Adoption Casework and CONNECTIONS

Foster care payments and adoption subsidy payments are different types of payments. In order for the BICS payment system to make adoption subsidy payments, the Adoptive home must have a Vendor ID (VID) number that is different from the VID used to make foster care payments.

In order to accommodate a second VID, a second FAD home must be created in CONNECTIONS with a **Setting** of “Adoptive” and an **LOC** of “Adoptive Home” in the *F/A Home License* window. This second home will contain the Adoption Study and will be populated by using the **Relate** function to relate residents in the Foster home to the Adoptive home (*see Module 7: Maintaining Person Information*).

The Adoptive home in CONNECTIONS does not become active and receive payments until the adoption is finalized. Adoptive homes with finalized adoptive placements do *not* need to remain in Accepted-Active status in order for adoption subsidy payments to continue. However, the adoptive home must be kept updated at all times. Changes of address, family composition and other maintenance activities can be recorded by reopening a closed Adoptive home to Inquiry or Applicant status, correcting the information and then closing the home again.

It is recommended that for adoptive parents with an interest in adopting more children, you maintain a second home and in CONNECTIONS with the setting type of Foster Home that indicates a Facility Type of “Foster/Adoptive Home” and a status of “Accepted-Active.” This foster or adoptive home must be recertified/reapproved annually to remain in Accepted-Active status. The Home Study needs to be updated to reflect any changes.

Cross Reference Guide

Below is a cross reference guide for recording Adoptive casework activities in CONNECTIONS. This table identifies the casework activity and matches it to the activity required in CONNECTIONS. The last column provides a reference to the module in this guide where you can find the step-by-step directions for completing the activity.

Casework Activity	CONNECTIONS Activity	Refer to…
Determine if the prospective adoptive parent has a history of providing foster care services, or has had an adoptive home in the past.	F/A Home Search	Module 6
Record inquiry information about the home.	*Home Demographics* window	Module 6
Obtain and record general information (e.g., address, phone number, maiden name) about prospective adoptive parent.	**Maintain Person** task	Module 7
Provide fingerprint cards and document information regarding the CHRC.	**Maintain Person** task (*Person Detail FA* window)	Module 7.
Document training/ orientations that the prospective foster parent attends.	**Maintain Person** task (*F/A Home Member Training List/Detail* window)	Module 7
Document the Adoption Study Narrative.	**Home Study** task	Module 8
Document certification or approval information, track the progression of the home toward Accepted-Active status, and submit certification or approval information for supervisory review and approval.	**Maintain Licensing Information** task	Module 8
Produce a Certificate or Approval Letter prior to the pre-adoptive placement (home will exist in CONNECTIONS as a foster home).	**Maintain Licensing Information** task	Module 8
Re-open an Adoption subsidy home to update information.	**Re-open Closed Home** command **Maintain Person** task (update person information)/ **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task	Module 16 Module 7 Module 6
Maintain changes to home and person information.	**Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task **Maintain Person** task	Module 6 Module 7

Appendix A:
FAD CONNECTIONS
Glossary

24-Hour Home Study

Prior to the placement of a child in an Emergency Home, the authorizing agency must complete a preliminary assessment of the home. This assessment is referred to as the **24-Hour Home Study**, because it is completed quickly to facilitate immediate placement.

In the process of preparing an Emergency Home for certification or approval, a *full* Home Study must be completed in CONNECTIONS. This longer home study reflects the additional assessments and background checks required for full certification/approval.

Accepted-Active

This status is used in CONNECTIONS to indicate that a home currently meets all state regulations for full certification/approval, including (but not limited to) the results to the CHRC and a completed/valid Medical Report.

CONNECTIONS will automatically identify a FAD home as "Accepted-Active" once a supervisor has approved the initial certification/approval of a home/stage.

Accepted-Inactive

This status is used in CONNECTIONS to identify a FAD home that is fully certified or approved but is not currently accepting placements.

Adoption Subsidy

Children meeting certain eligibility requirements may be able to receive federal and/or state adoption assistance (for information on eligibility for Adoption Subsidy see 18 NYCRR, Section 426).

This financial assistance is referred to as an **Adoption Subsidy**. Adoption Subsidies are distributed once an adoption is completely and legally finalized.

In CONNECTIONS, a Setting of “Adoption” is used to identify homes receiving Adoption Subsidy payments. Pre-adoptive placements (with a Setting of “Foster Care”) receive Foster Care Payments until adoption finalization.

Adoptive Home - Facility Type

The Facility Type of "Adoptive Home" is used in CONNECTIONS once an adoption is finalized. It is the only option available for a home that is receiving Adoption Subsidy payments.

Adoptive Home - Setting

In CONNECTIONS, the setting of Adoptive Home is used for FAD homes where an adoption has been finalized. This setting option indicates a home that is receiving Adoption Subsidy payments.

Agency Name	In the FAD environment, the **Agency Name/Resource ID** field displays the name of the local district or voluntary agency responsible for authorizing the certification or approval of the foster or adoptive home. Following that name is the unique system-generated identification number for that agency.
AKA Names	People are frequently known by more than one name. An applicant or individual residing in a FAD home may have a legal name, a nickname, and/or a maiden name. Through the AKA Name function, CONNECTIONS allows you to record "also known as" (AKA) names for each individual residing in a FAD home. Once recorded in CONNECTIONS, these names are available to be searched upon.
Annual Reauthorization	On an annual basis, FAD homes must undergo a thorough assessment (documented in CONNECTIONS via the **Annual Reauthorization** task) before the certification or approval can be renewed. This process is referred to as the Annual Reauthorization, and is also called a Recertification or Reapproval of the home. Caseworkers can begin documenting their assessments using the Annual Reauthorization task in CONNECTIONS 90 days prior to the expiration of the certificate or approval.
Applicant	A FAD home's status can be progressed to "Applicant" in CONNECTIONS once a prospective foster or adoptive parent has submitted a completed application for Home Study.
Application for Home Study	Individuals interested in becoming certified or approved as foster parents must be provided with an Application to begin the process home certification or approval. This is also referred to as an Application for Home Study because the application is one of the first items to be reviewed by an authorizing agency. The application must be accepted in order for the applicant to continue forward to the Home Study process.
Approval Letter	An Approval Letter (or Letter of Approval) permits a relative within the second or third degree of the parents or stepparents to be reimbursed for providing foster care services to a child in the legal custody of the district. This letter is given to the foster parent(s) *only* after the foster home has met all approval requirements.

Approved Relative Foster Home	This term is a **Facility Type** option for a FAD home with the setting of "Foster Home." This option indicates that the foster parents are within the second or third degree of the parents or stepparents of the child they are caring for.
APRV - Event Status	This status type is found on the *Event List*, and indicates that a task has been approved by a supervisor.
Assigned Role in a Case	For FAD stages in CONNECTIONS, a worker can be assigned the role of Primary worker, Secondary worker.
Assigned Workload	The *Assigned Workload* displays the worker's entire active caseload in one place. A worker's *Assigned Workload* identifies the worker's role in each stage. Some examples of information displayed on the *Assigned Workload* include the name of each stage of service, the type of stage and when each stage was assigned to the worker.
Auth From Date	In CONNECTIONS, the **Auth From Date** identifies the Date of Approval for a FAD home that is in Accepted-Active status. The **Auth From Date** is system-generated based on the date a supervisor approves submission of the FRS and the *F/A Home License* window for certification/recertification or approval/reapproval. The **Auth From Date** can be found in the heading of the FRS, on the *F/A Home License* window, and on the F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter generated from the *F/A Home License* window.
Auth To Date	In CONNECTIONS, the **Auth To Date** identifies the date of expiration for a FAD home in Accepted-Active status. The **Auth To Date** is system-generated based on the date a supervisor approves submission of the FRS for certification/recertification or approval/reapproval. The **Auth To Date** can be found in the heading of the *FRS* window, on the *F/A Home License* window, and on the F/A Home Certificate or Approval Letter.
BICS (Benefits Issuance Control System)	The Benefits Issuance Control System (BICS), used for the payment and claiming of services cases in New York State, interfaces with CONNECTIONS (with the exception of Erie County and NYC ACS Contract Agencies).

Capacity

The capacity of a FAD home is based upon the allocation of physical space in the home, and on the foster parents' interest and ability to care for a certain number of children. See 18 NYCRR or your supervisor for specific information (e.g., number of children per bedroom).

Case

A case is a documented collection of one or more situations and their required casework activities for addressing the protective and/or preventive service needs of children and their respective families.

A case may contain both open and closed stages at the same time. Also, several stages may be open at the same time. Once all stages are closed, the case is closed.

In FAD, the case is comprised of the FAD stage only. A new case is created in CONNECTIONS, when the home is “Saved and Assigned.”

Case ID Number

Every case has a specific number generated by CONNECTIONS. For FAD Homes, this system-generated number is assigned when the home is created and then “Saved and Assigned.”

Case List

The Case List enables you to view a listing of all cases which either meet the search criteria entered in the Case Search window or are associated with a person searched for using the Person Search function.

The Case List displays high level case information such as Case Name, Case ID, etc.

Category 1 Crimes

This phrase refers to a method for organizing the type of crimes considered when a Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) is conducted (see 18 NYCRR 443.8).

There are two segments to Category 1 Crimes:

(A) A felony conviction at any time involving child abuse or neglect; spousal abuse; a crime against a child (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence (including rape, physical assault or battery)

(B) A felony conviction within the past 5 years for physical assault, battery or a drug-related offense.

Category 2 Crimes	This phrase refers to a method for organizing the type of crimes considered when a Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) is conducted. Category 2 Crimes involve a charge or conviction of any other crime not listed in Category 1.
CCRS (Child Care Review Service)	The Child Care Review Service (CCRS) is the Legacy computer system in New York State that tracks the activities of children receiving foster care, prevention, and protective services paid for by local districts.
Certified Foster Home	A Facility Type option for a FAD home with the setting of "Foster Home." Select this option when the potential foster parents have stated they do not intend to adopt foster children.
Certified Foster/Adoptive Home	A Facility Type option for a FAD home with the setting of "Foster Home." Select this option when the potential foster parents have stated they plan to, or will consider, adopting foster children.
Closed	This status identifies a FAD home that has been approved for voluntary or involuntary closure. Children cannot remain in a home in Closed status.
Community District (CD)	New York City addresses are organized into geographical subdivisions called Community Planning Districts (CDs). The CD displays as a two-digit code. The CD is listed on several windows in CONNECTIONS (e.g., F/A Home List) and indicates the Community Planning District in which the FAD home (or the household involved in a CPS stage) is located.
COMP - Event Status	This status type on the *Event List* indicates that a worker or a supervisor has completed a task in CONNECTIONS. If it is a task a worker must complete which requires approval, it indicates that that task has not yet been submitted for approval.
Congregate Care - Setting	The setting of Congregate Care in CONNECTIONS is used to indicate specific FAD facilities that are not based within a family residence. Congregate Care facilities are created in CONNECTIONS by employees of OCFS. Congregate Care facilities are operated by voluntary agencies. Congregate Care facilities are identified further by the following Facility Types: Group Home, Group Residence, Agency Boarding Home, and Institution.

Contract	Local districts contract with voluntary agencies to arrange for specific services (e.g., foster care, preventive, adoption related services). This process must be reflected in CONNECTIONS. Local district staff create contract headers in CONNECTIONS to specify the services being provided by the voluntary agency. Contracts for each agency are system-generated when the FAD home is created in the CONNECTIONS system. These contracts allow CONNECTIONS to interface with BICS vendor files and CCRS when updates are made to facilities in CONNECTIONS.
Criminal History - Discretionary Disqualifier	This phrase refers to a potential result of the Criminal History Record Check (CHRC). It indicates that the CHRC results list charges or convictions other than those specifically listed in 18 NYCRR §443.8(e)(1) and 00 OCFS ADM-4. In this situation, a household resident (other than the potential foster or adoptive parents) has been charged or convicted of a Category 1 Crime or Category 2 Crime; *-or-* a prospective or certified/approved foster parent or adoptive parent has been charged or convicted of a Category 2 Crime. The district or voluntary agency may exercise some amount of judgment in determining whether or not to deny an application or revoke an existing certification/approval consistent with the standards set forth in Art. 23A of the Corrections Law (see 00 OCFS Adm-4).
Criminal History - Presumptive Disqualifier	This indicates that an applicant, foster parent, approved or adoptive parent has a conviction of one or more "Category 1 Crimes" [see 18 NYCRR §443.8(e)(1) and 00 OCFS ADM-4 for more detail].
Criminal History Record Check (CHRC)	Authorizing agencies are required to obtain a set of prospective or existing foster parent's and adoptive parent's fingerprints, and those of each person over the age of 18 (including foster children) currently residing in the prospective or existing foster home These fingerprint cards are sent to OCFS, and then to the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). DCJS conducts research on each person to determine if he/she has ever been convicted of a crime. Results of a CHRC include Presumptive Disqualifier, Discretionary Disqualifier, No Record Returned, and Hold in Abeyance (see 18 NYCRR 443.8 for more information).

Directories

Organized tables of information within CONNECTIONS that can be searched upon. All staff can view (without a special security profile) the Office, Resource and Staff directories. To access and/or maintain the Unit Directory requires the appropriate security profile.

Emergency Status

This status is used in CONNECTIONS to identify a FAD home created for the purpose of providing board and care on an emergency, time-limited basis. FAD Homes created in Emergency status provide for the placement of a child in a specific home that is not already certified (e.g., with a relative).

A child may be placed in a home in Emergency Status prior to full certification/approval of the home. A 24-hour Home Study, and a signed statement of caretaker relationship to the child are two of the requirements that must be met for a home to be placed in Emergency Status (18 NYCRR 443.7).

Event

An event is a stage-related action performed or recorded in CONNECTIONS. For example, a change in address, reauthorization or a new primary assignment is an event. CONNECTIONS generates events automatically once an individual has completed the home/stage-related action in the system.

Event List

The *Event List* provides important information about past and present stage/case milestones, such as assignments, stage changes, approvals and changes in Case status (not to be confused with Event status). The *Event List* documents what has occurred in a stage/case. Staff may use the *Event List* to monitor progress in developing a resource home or to determine the next steps for completing the home authorization process. In the *Event List*, there are five possible Event statuses: NEW, PROC, PEND, APRV, and COMP.

Extended Accepted-Active

This is when a FAD home whose active status (Accepted-Active) has been extended beyond the one year expiration date due to missing Criminal History Record Check results.

This type of extension is allowed when a home in Accepted-Active status is due for Annual Reauthorization. The fingerprint results from one or more (CHRC) have not been received, but the home has otherwise met all regulatory requirements.

Accepted-Active homes can be recertified/reapproved based on this process for four (4) 90-day periods while awaiting fingerprint results. Since the home was already in Accepted-Active status, Title IV-E reimbursement is not affected.

Extended Emergency

This is when a FAD home whose active status (Emergency status) has been extended beyond the initial 90-Day expiration date due to missing Criminal History Record Check results.

This type of extension is allowed when a home in Emergency status is within 30 days of being advanced to Accepted-Active status (thus beginning an annual cycle). In this situation, fingerprint results from the CHRC have not been received but the home has otherwise met all regulatory requirements.

Homes in Emergency status may be extended for three (3) 90-Day periods (or one year/360 days total).

F/A Home Certificate

This Certification to Board or F/A Home Certificate permits an individual (or individuals) to receive reimbursement for providing foster care services to children in the legal custody of the district.

This certificate is given to the foster parent(s) *only* after the foster home has met all approval requirements.

Facility Type

A Facility Type is dependent upon the Setting of a home, and serves to further identify the FAD facility.

Example: Choices for the Foster Home Setting include Certified Foster Home, Foster/Adoptive Home and Approved Relative Foster Home.

FAD checklist

Found in the FRS (see below), this is a listing of all tasks required for home certification/approval and recertification/reapproval. It also includes a listing of casework activities necessary to create a home in Emergency status and activities necessary for recertification.

Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS)

The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS) provides a comprehensive view of the FAD information you record in CONNECTIONS. This is accomplished through the use of a single, multi-tabbed window that allows you to access, view, and print FAD home information easily. This multi-tabbed window is organized to be consistent with the existing foster/adoptive home development process. You may record comments and contact notes at appropriate points throughout this process.

The FRS is frozen upon approval by a supervisor. Historical information can be viewed by accessing the frozen FRS via the *Event List*.

Foster Boarding Home

A Foster Boarding Home is defined as "a residence owned, leased or otherwise under the control of a single person or family who has been certified or approved by an authorized agency to care for not more than six children" [18 NYCRR §443.1(j)].

Foster homes created on an Emergency basis is discussed in Module 20: Emergency Certified or Approved Foster Homes. Refer to Module 21: Certification and Approval of Adoptive Homes for information about the certification and approval of Adoptive Homes.

Foster Home - Setting

The Setting of "Foster Home" is used in CONNECTIONS to identify a FAD home currently providing foster care and/or pre-adoptive services. These homes receive Foster Care payment.

The Facility Types listed below are found on the *F/A Home License* window and are used to further identify the type of FAD home.

- Certified Foster Home
- Approved Relative Foster Home, and
- Certified Foster/Adoptive Home.

Help on Narratives

The Help on Narratives button (found on the FRS) allows you to access help information for the Home Study and Annual Reauthorization documents. When the **Help on Narratives** button is selected while in the **Home Study Narrative** or **Annual Reauthorization** tabs, Help information about that document will immediately display. Clicking on the button while on any other tab will open an index of help topics relating to these narratives.

History of One or More Crimes

This phrase refers to a potential result of the Criminal History Record Check (CHRC). It indicates that a prospective foster or adoptive parent has been convicted of one or more felony or misdemeanor crimes. This result is further identified as either Criminal History - Presumptive Disqualifier or Criminal History - Discretionary Disqualifier.

Hold in Abeyance

A result of a Criminal History Record Check (CRHC) that indicates an individual has been charged with a crime; however, the charge has not been fully resolved.

Home Certification/Approval Extensions

New York State Foster Care regulations allow homes already in an active status (either Emergency or Accepted-Active status) to have their status extended beyond their expiration date. Extensions are allowed when all certification/approval and recertification/reapproval requirements have been met, but the results of one or more Criminal History Record Checks (CHRC) have not been received. In CONNECTIONS, this means that *all* **Date Card Sent** fields have been completed on the Person Detail FA window, but one or more of

the **Date Results Received** fields remains blank. The **Fingerprint Extension** check box on the *F/A Home License* window must be selected for the extension to be recognized by CONNECTIONS.

Home Study (Initial and Interim)

An Initial Home Study narrative documents the first assessment of a home as part of the preparation for certification or approval of a potential foster or adoptive placement. See 18 NYCRR Part 443 for specific instructions on items included in a Home Study narrative.

An Interim Home Study is a reassessment of the home and an updating of the home information due to changes that occur during the annual certificate/approval period (such as foster parent marriage or divorce).

The foster parent's ability to continue providing foster care services is assessed, with consideration given to the impact that the status change has on the foster home.

Identification Numbers

Caseworkers use a variety of numbers to assist in the identification of person and home information that is stored in CONNECTIONS and in the External Foster Home Case Record. Examples of Identification Numbers include: Vendor ID Number and Resource ID Number.

Inquiry

This term refers to the status given a FAD home by CONNECTIONS when it is first opened or reopened for the purpose of recording an inquiry by the applicant(s).

Legal Name

Located in the *Home Demographics* window, this field indicates the official name of the facility. A Legal Name must be recorded to identify Foster and Adoptive homes and Congregate Care facilities. If this field is left blank, it defaults to the Home Name (which is named after the foster mother).

It is recommended that this field be used to record both foster parent names in the following format: *Smith,Joan/Smith,John*

NEW - Event Status

On the *Event List*, this status is used to identify that a new task has been created and work on the task has not yet been saved to CONNECTIONS.

No Criminal Record Found

This phrase refers to a potential result of the Criminal History Record Check (CHRC). It means that the CHRC revealed no criminal convictions, no open cases, and no history of arrests.

No Record Found	This is one result of the State Central Record (SCR) Database Check required of all foster or adoptive applicants and individuals over the age of 18 residing in their homes. This result indicates that the person was *not* found to be a subject of an indicated report of abuse or maltreatment to the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.
No Reportable Criminal Record Found	State Law makes reportable only convictions (or open arrests) for felonies and misdemeanors. This result of a Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) indicates that a history does exit for something other than a conviction or an open charge for a felony and/or misdemeanor. This could be, for example, a conviction for a violation or a dismissal of a charge.
Office Directory	A listing of office addresses and phone numbers, office staff members, type, region, county, agency, site and office name.
On Hold	This status is used in CONNECTIONS to identify a home that has been fully certified or approved, and may have existing placements, but where intake to the home has been closed to additional placements.
PEND - Event Status	This status, found on the *Event List*, is used to indicate that a completed task has been submitted to a supervisor and is pending (awaiting) approval.
Pending Acceptance	This status is used in CONNECTIONS to identify when a FAD home record has been submitted for supervisory approval. A FAD worker selects this status when using the **Save & Submit** command, via the *F/A Home License* window. Acceptance of the record is dependent upon the supervisor's actions. The home remains in Pending Acceptance status until a supervisor completes the task of approving or rejecting the submitted work.
Pending Closure	This status is used in CONNECTIONS to identify when the Close Home task has been submitted for supervisory approval. CONNECTIONS automatically identifies a FAD home with the status of "Pending Closure," when the *Close Home* window is submitted.

Pending Emergency

This status is used in CONNECTIONS to identify a home is being submitted to a supervisor to approval for “Emergency” status. Acceptance of the FAD Home and child placement is dependent upon the supervisor's actions. Once the FAD record is accepted, the status of the home is system-progressed to "Emergency."

This status also occurs when a home is already in "Emergency" but undergoes updates that require submission of the FRS for supervisory approval.

This occurs when a Local District completes a 24 Hour Home Study, and progresses the home to Emergency Status, but sends the FAD home/stage to another agency to complete FAD Maintenance. The new agency will use “Pending Emergency” when changes are submitted for the record during the 90 day Emergency Life Cycle.

Pending Matters/Hold in Abeyance

This phrase refers to a potential result of the Criminal History Record Check (CHRC). It indicates that a final determination about the prospective (or current) foster or adoptive parent must be "held in abeyance" if (1)criminal charge for a Category 1 Crime has not been finally resolved or (2) the CHRC reveals a criminal conviction that may be a Category 1 Crime, but requires further review by OCFS.

Person ID Number

CONNECTIONS creates a unique Person ID Number for each person that is recorded in the system. Merge, Split, and Relate functions must be used with caution to preserve accurate Person ID numbers.

Person Identifiers

Items that help to further identify a person, such as: Social Security Number, CIN Numbers, and Driver’s License Number. This information can be recorded via the *Maintain Person* task.

Primary Worker

The Primary Worker is the person who has chief responsibility for a stage (FAD home) at any point in time, and therefore has full maintain privileges for the stage. A stage will always have one primary worker while it is open.

PROC - Event Status

This status, found on the *Event List*, is used to indicate when a task is in the process of being completed by the worker (and has not been submitted for approval or marked as completed).

Program Type

Program Types serve to further identify a foster home by specifying exactly what type of care the home is licensed to provide.

For example, a home with a Program Type of "Therapeutic" is certified to provide a more intense level of foster care supervision.

Program Types are defined by OCFS and authorizing agencies; they are *not* based solely on the characteristic of children currently living in the home.

REJT - Status

This status, found on the *Approval Status* window, is used to identify work that has been reviewed by a supervisor and has been rejected. At the same time, the *Event List* will display a status of COMP for the same event – indicating that the supervisor completed the task of reviewing the work.

When work is rejected, the FAD worker must make appropriate changes in a timely manner, and re-submit the FAD record to the supervisor.

Relationship/Interest (Rel/Int) to the Home

Each person residing in a FAD home is identified in several ways, including how they are associated with the foster or adoptive parent.

In order for their names to appear on the F/A Home Certificate and Approval Letter, Foster parents **must** be identified in CONNECTIONS using the Relationship/Interest code of "Foster Parent."

Caretakers who are related to foster children must be identified as "Foster Parent," and *not* by their familial relationship (e.g. aunt, uncle, grandparent).

Other adults in the home should be identified by their relationship to the foster parent (i.e., mother, sister, etc.).

Resource

This is another term used to identify a foster or adoptive home, or congregate care facilities in CONNECTIONS as well as other service providers.

Resource Directory

A listing of all professionals and organizations who provide services to clients. Resources include community and contracted providers, law enforcement agencies, schools, help lines, facilities and foster/adoptive homes.

Resource ID Number

Each FAD facility has a unique Resource ID in CONNECTIONS. For FAD homes, this ID number is generated when the home is Saved and Assigned.

Resource Lien

Resource Lien is an action taken when a home has been overpaid unintentionally. Additional payments to the home for new expense are suspended until the overpaid amount has been rectified. In CONNECTIONS, this action can be indicated clicking in the **Resource Lien** check box on the *Home Demographics* window.

Safety Assessment

A Safety Assessment is an evaluation of the conditions (specifically the safety) of a foster home. Safety Assessments occur when an agency learns of positive results to a Criminal History Record Check (CHRC).

CONNECTIONS provides a Safety Assessment template in the FRS where caseworkers can document their findings.

SCR Database Check

New York State foster care regulations require authorizing agencies to determine whether or not foster/adoptive parent applicants, and individuals residing in their homes that are age 18 and over, have been the subject of an indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment on file with the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

Search and Retain

This phrase refers to a potential result of the Criminal History Record Check (CHRC). From an excerpt of 00 OCFS ADM-4: "It should be noted that after the [initial Criminal History Record Check or CHRC] search is made, DCJS will retain the fingerprints for a prescribed period, and will notify OCFS upon any future arrest for a finger printable offense."

Search

A Search in CONNECTIONS is an action in the system performed to find a specific type of information. Examples include: Person Search, Case Search, Resource Search.

Secondary Worker

A Secondary Worker is assigned to a FAD home/stage to complete specific tasks in CONNECTIONS. One or more Secondary Workers may be assigned to a case.

The Secondary Worker is able to assign and unassign the secondary role. A Secondary Worker is not allowed to open or close a stage.

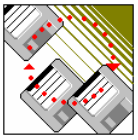
Security Attributes

Security Attributes identify what level of access a CONNECTIONS user has in the system. A set of Security Attributes reflects casework duties. These Security Attributes are grouped together to create a Business Function. Access to information in CONNECTIONS is governed by Business Function.

Setting	The term “Setting” is used in CONNECTIONS to identify/describe FAD facilities. Setting choices include Foster Home, Congregate Care, and Adoption.
Source of Inquiry	This field found on the *Home Demographics* window, is used to document how a potential foster/adoptive applicant heard about, or became interested in, making an inquiry into becoming a foster/adoptive parent.
Staff Directory	In CONNECTIONS, a “Staff Directory” is a listing of all CONNECTIONS users. This directory includes names, office phone numbers, addresses, and skills.
Stage /Stage of Service	A Stage of Service is a logical grouping of related casework activities. In each stage there are various tasks that may be performed. Some tasks may be repeated and performed at key intervals throughout the stage (e.g., reauthorizations). Certain tasks must be completed in order to close a stage. The stages currently in CONNECTIONS include: Intake (INT), Investigation (INV), Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD), Family Services Intake (FSI) and Family Services Stages (FSS).
Stage ID Number	Every stage of service has a specific system generated ID number associated with it.
Sub-Agency (NYC Only)	Specific office sites in New York City (agency code A66) are classified further into sub-agencies; workers can search and sort FAD homes in CONNECTIONS by sub-agency. When a foster or adoptive home is created in CONNECTIONS by a New York City ACS worker (agency code A66) or transferred to a primary worker who is from agency A66, CONNECTIONS automatically populates the New York City “800” level sub-agency information in the F/A Home List. A foster or adoptive home in New York City can be associated with one of these sub-agencies. This field is always protected. Homes where the primary worker does not work for ACS do not display sub-agency information.
Submit Button	The **Submit** button (found on the *FRS* window) initiates the “Save and Submit” process. When this button is selected, the *F/A Home License* window displays, allowing you to Save and Submit the FRS and the Home License information together. The **Submit** button disables if you have not made a change and saved information on the *FRS* window.

Templates	Uniform Microsoft Word forms that contain protected sections of text that cannot be altered. Information can only be recorded in the unprotected sections. An example is the Safety Assessment in the FRS.
Unit Directory	A listing of all supervisor units and the workers who are in/out and assigned to each unit (including the agency, site, zone and unit number).
Vendor ID Number	This 8-digit number (also know as the "Facility ID") is necessary for payment in CONNECTIONS. Obtained locally from the worker's supervisor, these numbers are assigned to each home when it is entered into CONNECTIONS. Vendor ID Numbers are unique to each home. Preserve Vendor ID numbers and a home's historical record by properly closing, reopening and transferring homes as needed.

Appendix B:
CONNECTIONS – LEGACY Interface

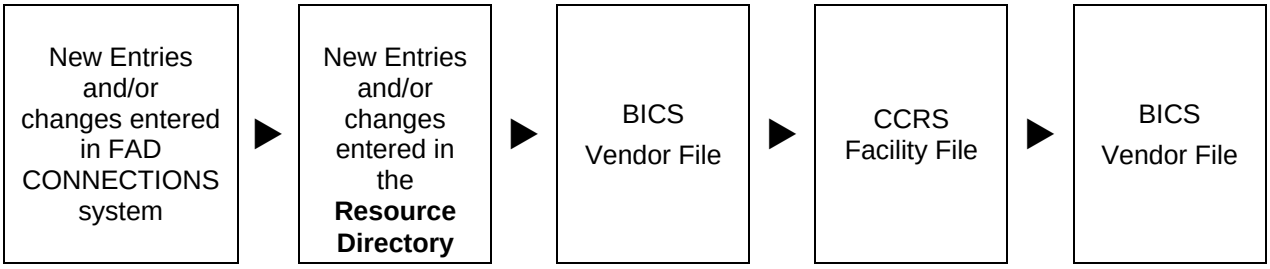


Interfaced Automated Systems

- CONNECTIONS records all State Central Register (SCR) reports, Child Protective Services (CPS) intakes and investigations, foster and adoptive home development activities, contracts and resources.
- **CCRS** (Child Care Review Service) tracks all child movements, legal events and service plans in the child welfare system.
- **BICS** (Benefits Issuance Control System) is the system for the payment and claiming for Non-Services cases in upstate New York. It also generates all services payments in upstate New York with the exception of Erie County, and generates foster care and adoption payments in New York City (but not for voluntary agencies in NYC).
- **WMS** (Welfare Management System) records case and child demographics, eligibility data, purchase of service, and it authorizes services for children and families.

What is the Synchronization/Interface process?

- In August 1997, the CONNECTIONS Resource Directory and FAD dialogue were created from CCRS and BICS data. Facilities and providers that were known to BICS remain in BICS for inquiry, authorization and payment. The facilities that were in CCRS remain in CCRS for inquiry and placement.
- CCRS is still used for inquiry and placement, while BICS is still used for payment and claiming.
- Each night, a batch is run that updates WMS, CCRS and BICS with data recorded.
- All new facilities and vendors are now recorded in CONNECTIONS.
- For example: the interface between CONNECTIONS, CCRS and BICS updates name (and other) information for facilities in CCRS and the name (and other) information for all CONNECTIONS Resources in BICS. Historical data from CONNECTIONS updates the status of FAD homes in CCRS.



Appendix C:
OCFS Informational Letter regarding Foster Boarding Home Records and Policy on Transferring Foster Boarding Homes

Transmittal 00 OCFS INF-6

September 21, 2000

The purpose of this release is to set forth the existing requirements pertaining to retention of material in the foster boarding home record and the policy on transferring foster boarding homes between authorized agencies.

Prior to implementation of the Foster Adoptive Development (FAD) component of CONNECTIONS, all materials related to the certification or approval, recertification or reapproval of foster boarding homes were retained in paper (hard copy) format by the authorized agency. For the purposes of this release, that record will be referred to as the "provider record." While certain items relating to the foster boarding home certification, recertification, approval, and reapproval process may be maintained solely on the CONNECTIONS system, it is still necessary to maintain a paper provider record.

The following is a listing of all necessary documentary components of the provider and CONNECTIONS record, and the requirements for maintaining such information. It is not a complete listing of all requirements for certifying, approving, recertifying or reapproving foster boarding homes. Complete requirements, both documentary and non-documentary, are set forth in 18 NYCRR Parts 443 and 444.

I. Signed Application which contains at a minimum:
   A. list of all family members and their dates of birth;
   B. the marital status, religious faith, employment history, income information, health status/physical functioning (including any limitations) of the applicants;
   C. physical description of the home and the proposed living accommodations of a foster child or children;
   D. the history of prior applications and their status, including any reasons for prior rejection.

II. Additional Submittals (at the time of Application):
   A. the names of the required number of personal references;
   B. sworn statement by applicants regarding themselves and those in the household over the age of 18, regarding criminal convictions;

      Note: If there is a disclosure of criminal convictions, and a decision to certify or approve, a statement of the reasons why the home is determined appropriate and acceptable is required.

III. Verifications:
   A. employment history, work record and qualifications;
   B. personal reference letters attesting to applicant's character and personal qualifications

IV. Medical:
   A. physician-completed report form on each applicant (exam must have been completed not more than one year prior to the date of application);
   B. physician-completed report form on each existing foster parent at least once every two years;
   C. physician attestation to general health of family with each medical report form

V. Signed and Dated Relationships Statement (Relative Homes Only)

VI. Foster Parent Agreement

VII. Expedited Home Study (Emergency Relative Homes Only)†

VIII. Home Study †
   A. Summary of Interviews
   B. Home Assessment

IX. SCR Database Check - Date of Submission and Results

      Note: If the applicant is the subject of an indicated report of abuse or maltreatment, and there is a decision to certify or approve, a statement of the reasons why the home is determined appropriate and acceptable is required.

X. Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) - Date of Submission and Results

      Note: If there is a criminal record found, a safety assessment is required; if a decision is made to deny or revoke a certification or approval based on the CHRC, a copy of the Denial/Revocation Letter is required.

XI. Summary of Agency Conference and Decision Regarding Applicant(s)†

XII. Certificate to Board or Letter of Approval for Relative Homes ‡

Note: Although the certificate is printed through the CONNECTIONS system, the system itself currently does not retain a copy. It is important at the time of certification or approval and at each subsequent recertification or reapproval to copy this document or the approval letter prior to mailing and retain it in the provider record.

XIII. Placement Roster (names and removal dates for all children placed in the home)

XIV. Summary or History of Training Received†

XV. Summary of Annual (Re)Evaluation†

XVI. Correspondence

XVII. Complaints

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† CONNECTIONS is considered the system of record for these items.

‡ CONNECTIONS will become the system of record for this item when access to the certificate to board and the letter of approval become available in the system.

CONNECTIONS requirements for authorization include: completion of home demographics; person-related information, including information on the submission of fingerprint cards and receipt of the criminal history background check results; resource detail; licensing information. CONNECTIONS requirements for reauthorization include completion of the *F/A Home License* window.

Regarding the retention period for the provider record, a voluntary authorized agency must consult the terms of its purchase of services agreement with the social services district. Generally, such records must be retained for at least seven years to satisfy potential claiming and reimbursement issues. For all authorized agencies, it is recommended that all documents be retained for the entire period that the foster home is certified or approved. Authorized agencies may also want to consult with their counsel concerning extending the period of record retention for other reasons such as pending or potential litigation.

Policy on Transferring Foster Boarding Homes

Social Services Law §376(3) provides that no person can be certified by more than one authorized agency. However, it is legally permissible to transfer a foster boarding home between authorized agencies. (Note: the term “authorized agency” refers to both a voluntary authorized agency and a social services district). This may be necessary when a voluntary authorized agency closes of its own volition or is required to involuntarily cease operation. It may also occur for administrative reasons, such as the newly instituted plan by the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) to implement transfers between the voluntary authorized agencies with which ACS contracts, in order to support neighborhood-based placements. Social services districts may also need to transfer homes, if, for example, foster parents move out of the area. It is essential for voluntary authorized agencies considering transferring foster boarding homes to coordinate with the social services district(s) with which they have a contract. The requirements for the sending and receiving authorized agencies with regard to the provider record and related requirements, especially with regard to the Criminal History Record Check (CHRC), are outlined below.

Sending Agency

If there are no foster children in the home:

- Ascertain acceptance of the foster boarding home by the receiving agency. This may include coordination with the social services district with which the sending agency has a contract, if transfer is between two voluntary authorized agencies. Ascertain the effective date of the transfer and the name of the staff person at the receiving agency to whose workload the foster boarding home is being transferred.
- Review and, if necessary, update the record, so that all documentation listed above is included in the External Foster Home Case Record and/or CONNECTIONS. All conditionally required documentation, as noted under II (b). IX, and X, above, must be included.

Social services districts may transfer foster boarding homes prior to final certification or approval, including relative and non-relative foster boarding homes certified or approved on an emergency basis. Voluntary authorized agencies may also make these transfers to other voluntary authorized agencies unless the social services district(s) with which they have a contract prohibit such transfer. However, *under no circumstances may a foster boarding home be transferred if there is a CHRC results letter from the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) that indicates a presumptive disqualifying crime for a foster parent, or indicates a situation requiring "Hold in Abeyance" for a charge or conviction related to a foster parent*. (See 99 OCFS INF-7.)
If a foster boarding home is transferred prior to final certification or approval, the sending agency must apprise the receiving agency as to the exact status of the home, specifying all met and unmet requirements.

- Request and obtain written consent from the foster parents to transfer the home;
- Provide written confirmation of the transfer to the foster parent, including the effective date;
- Physically transfer the entire paper provider record to the receiving agency; and
- Follow the established steps in CONNECTIONS for foster boarding homes in Inquiry or Applicant status to transfer (reassign) the foster boarding home to the receiving agency and verify acceptance by the receiving agency.

If one or more foster children are in the home:

- All items listed above; and
- Establish which voluntary authorized agency or social services district will have planning responsibility for each child in the foster boarding home and each child's family; if planning responsibility changes, in concert with the case manager at the social services district, and attendant contract provisions between the social services district and the voluntary authorized agency, follow your established procedures involving the child and family uniform case record.

Receiving Agency

If the home is being transferred prior to final certification or approval:

- Review the paper provider record and all FAD-related information in CONNECTIONS and note the exact status of the home, and those requirements that have been met and unmet;
- Communicate with the sending agency if there are any discrepancies as to the status of the home and resolve any such discrepancies;
- Determine whether the foster boarding home is acceptable to your agency to go forward with the continuation of the certification or the approval process. If the foster boarding home is acceptable, proceed with the remainder of the steps below;
- If *any* part of the CHRC process has taken place, even if the only step taken has been to submit the fingerprint cards to OCFS, complete and submit the form "Notice to NYS OCFS of Foster Home Transfer Between Authorized Agencies" to OCFS (*see Attachment 1)*;
- Follow the established steps in CONNECTIONS for foster boarding homes in *inquiry* or a*pplicant* status to accept the transfer of the foster boarding home.
- Continue with the certification or approval process; and
- If there are foster children in the home, the social services district must adjust the WMS POS line and maintain CCRS to reflect any changes to Case/Child Planner.

If the home is being transferred as a fully certified or approved foster home:

- Review the paper provider record and determine that it is complete;
- Review all FAD-related information in CONNECTIONS and determine that the home is appropriately certified or approved and the period is current;
- If anything is missing, contact the sending agency. If the missing documentation cannot be provided, some degree of judgment must be used. If the information contained in the missing item or items is dated and would not be essential for the receiving agency to supervise the foster boarding home, the transfer may still take place. For example, if there is a current medical report, but there is a missing one that would have been due *prior* to the current one, the home may still be transferred. Under no circumstances may the transfer take place without the following items: application, sworn criminal conviction statement, current medical report, SCR Clearance results, CHRC results, Home Study and current Reevaluation. The conditionally required documentation with regard to the criminal conviction statement, the SCR Clearance and the CHRC, as noted under II. (b), IX, and X, above, must also be present. If these requirements cannot be met, reject the transfer.
- Determine whether the foster boarding home is acceptable for certification or approval by your agency. There may be circumstances (other than missing documentation) where your agency finds the foster boarding home

unacceptable. For example, assessments based on disclosure of criminal convictions, or based

- on indicated reports of abuse or maltreatment, or safety assessments conducted on persons with specified criminal charges or convictions may cause your agency to reach a different decision than that reached by the sending agency. Attempt to resolve this with the sending agency or reject the transfer. If the foster boarding home is acceptable, proceed with the remainder of the steps below.
- Follow the established steps in CONNECTIONS, including Saving and Submitting for approval.
- Print a new Certificate to Board for the foster boarding home, or issue a new Approval Letter (for an approved relative home); retain a paper copy.
- If there are foster children in the home, the local social services district must adjust the WMS POS line and maintain CCRS to reflect any changes to Case/Child Planner.
- Complete and submit the form "Notice to NYS OCFS of Foster Home Transfer Between Authorized Agencies" to OCFS.

This form can be found as Attachment 1 and is available electronically in Public Folders/All Public Folders/dfa.state.ny.us/OCFS/ASFA-Policy Practice (Recovered). Receipt of this form by OCFS will allow OCFS to transfer agency responsibility for purposes of CHRC and any search and retain responses subsequently received. Forms must be submitted to:
Criminal History Review Unit
NYS Office of Children and Family Services
PO Box 839
Rensselaer New York 12144-9953
Attention: Linda Fylak (Transfers)

Email the form to: Linda.Fylak@dfa.state.ny.us
Upon receipt of the form, OCFS will change the agency associated with each household member over the age of 18. Should any arrests of such household members occur after the transfer, the receiving agency will get the information from OCFS.
s/s_____
William F. Baccaglini
Director
Strategic Planning and Policy Development

Attachment 1
Notice to NYS OCFS of Foster Home
Transfer Between Authorized Agencies
(To Be Completed By Receiving Agency)

NAME OF FOSTER HOME _____

RESOURCE ID# /VENDOR ID# (VID)_____

FACILITY ID#_____

RECEIVING AGENCY ID#	**SENDING AGENCY ID#**
RECEIVING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS	**SENDING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS**

PROVIDE NAMES AND NYSID# FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD AGE 18 AND OVER (ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY). THE NYSID# IS FOUND ON THE SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK LETTER. IT IS ASSIGNED BY DCJS TO EACH INDIVIDUAL FOR WHOM FINGERPRINTS ARE PROCESSED. THE SUMMARY OF RESULTS IS SENT BY OCFS TO AN AGENCY AND IS THE ONLY PLACE YOU WILL FIND THIS NUMBER.

NAME	**NYSID#**

This is to certify that (name of agency) _____ has received and reviewed the paper and CONNECTIONS record of the above referenced foster home and found such record to have all necessary and required documentation in accordance with 00 OCFS INF- 6.

Effective (date of transfer) ____/____/____, (name of agency) _____ assumes responsibility for the foster home. We understand that for any names listed on this form, any criminal history identified on or after the date of transfer will be sent to our agency.

_____
(signature of authorized agency representative)

_____
(title and phone number)

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

Mail form to:
CRIMINAL HISTORY REVIEW UNIT
NYS Office of Children and Family Services
PO BOX 839
Rensselaer NY 12144-9953
Attention: Linda Fylak (transfers)

Appendix D:
Vendor Identification Numbers

Each district and voluntary agency that certifies foster homes receives a block of numbers from OCFS to use for VID assignments. Number blocks are sent by e-mail to CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators and other identified contact people. When recording a new foster home in CONNECTIONS, you will need to obtain a VID from the assigned block for your district or voluntary agency.

Speak to your supervisor or program director to find out who distributes the VID assignments at your office. Each district and agency is responsible for setting up internal procedures and protocols for tracking the use of the numbers. It is suggested that the numbers be entered onto a spreadsheet or logbook that records the number, date assigned, Resource ID (RID), case name, and worker name.

Additional blocks of Vendor ID numbers may be obtained by contacting the following people:

Duplicate Vendor ID Numbers and Foster Home Vendor ID Numbers:	**Maureen Connolly** 473-5745 *Maureen.Connolly@ocfs.state.ny.us*
Congregate Care Facility Vendor ID Numbers:	**Paula Ainspan** 486-3743 *Paula.Ainspan@ocfs.state.ny.us*

This procedure does not impact the locally administered process of VID assignments to ACS kinship foster homes or other direct care homes. Use existing procedures in those instances

Note: This information is an excerpt from an instructional document mailed electronically to Training Strategies Group by OCFS. Modifications were made on September 15, 2005 to update the names of OCFS staff.

Appendix E:
Certificates and Approval Letters

Approval Letter

Onondaga County DSS
Approval to Board Children

RESOURCE ID
20000742

EFFECTIVE DATE
1/16/2001

EXPIRATION DATE
1/16/2002

ISSUED TO
Barbara Holmes

RELIGION
Catholic

ADDRESS
162 HOPE AVE

SYRACUSE **NY**
ONONDAGA **13205**

This is to certify that the above named is regarded as maintaining a suitable home at the above address only for the care of children at board and is hereby authorized to care at board 2 boys between the ages of 3 Years 0 Months and 3 Years 0 Months and/or 2 girls between the ages of 1 years 0 Months and 8 Years 0 Months with a maximum capacity of 2 children.

This foster home has been granted exception(s) to the following boarding home rules:

CERT AGENCY RESOURCE ID	WORKER ID	AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS
20000440	15051	Onondaga County DSS 421 MONTGOMERY ST FL 8 SYRACUSE NY ONONDAGA 13202-2923

(Authorizing Signature)

NOTE: THIS CERTIFICATE IS THE PROPERTY OF THE ISSUING AGENCY AND IS TO BE RETURNED TO THE ISSUING AGENCY WHEN CERTIFICATION IS TERMINATED.

F/A Home Certificate

Onondaga County DSS
Certificate to Board Children

RESOURCE ID
20000575

EFFECTIVE DATE
4/26/2001

EXPIRATION DATE
4/26/2002

ISSUED TO
Angela Jarret
Marty Jarret

RELIGION
Protestant

ADDRESS
130 OAK ST

SYRACUSE NY
ONONDAGA 13202

This is to certify that the above named is regarded as maintaining a suitable home at the above address only for the care of children at board and hereby authorized to care at board 4 boys between the ages of 1 Years 0 Months and 18 Years 0 Months and/or 4 girls between the ages of 1 years 0 Months and 18 Years 0 Months with a maximum capacity of 4 children.

CERT AGENCY RESOURCE ID	WORKER ID	AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS
20000440	15051	Onondaga County DSS 421 MONTGOMERY ST FL 8 SYRACUSE NY ONONDAGA 13202-2923

NOTE: THIS CERTIFICATE IS THE PROPERTY OF THE ISSUING AGENCY AND IS TO BE RETURNED TO THE ISSUING AGENCY WHEN CERTIFICATION IS TERMINATED.

Appendix F:
Historical Certificates and Approval Letters

Historical Approval Letter

Onondaga County DSS
Approval to Board Children

RESOURCE ID
20000742

EFFECTIVE DATE
1/16/1999

EXPIRATION DATE
1/16/2000

ISSUED TO
Barbara Holmes

RELIGION
Catholic

ADDRESS
162 HOPE AVE

SYRACUSE **NY**
ONONDAGA **13205**

This is to certify that the above named is regarded as maintaining a suitable home at the above address only for the care of children at board and is hereby authorized to care at board 2 boys between the ages of 3 Years 0 Months and 3 Years 0 Months and/or 2 girls between the ages of 1 years 0 Months and 8 Years 0 Months with a maximum capacity of 2 children.

This foster home has been granted exception(s) to the following boarding home rules:

CERT AGENCY
RESOURCE ID **WORKER ID** **AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS**
20000440 15051 Onondaga County DSS
421 MONTGOMERY ST
THE INFORMATION CONTAINED FL 8
ON THIS APPROVAL WAS SYRACUSE NY
VALID THROUGH: 4/25/1999 ONONDAGA 13202-2923

_____
(Authorizing Signature)

NOTE: THIS CERTIFICATE IS THE PROPERTY OF THE ISSUING AGENCY AND IS TO BE RETURNED TO THE ISSUING AGENCY WHEN CERTIFICATION IS TERMINATED.

Historical F/A Home Certificate

Onondaga County DSS
Certificate to Board Children

RESOURCE ID
20000575

EFFECTIVE DATE
4/26/1999

EXPIRATION DATE
4/26/2000

ISSUED TO
Angela Jarret
Marty Jarret

RELIGION
Protestant

ADDRESS
130 OAK ST

SYRACUSE **NY**
ONONDAGA **13202**

This is to certify that the above named is regarded as maintaining a suitable home at the above address only for the care of children at board and is hereby authorized to care at board 4 boys between the ages of 1 Years 0 Months and 18 Years 0 Months and/or 4 girls between the ages of 1 years 0 Months and 18 Years 0 Months with a maximum capacity of 4 children.

CERT AGENCY
RESOURCE ID **WORKER ID** **AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS**
20000440 15051 Onondaga County DSS
421 MONTGOMERY ST
THE INFORMATION CONTAINED FL 8
ON THIS CERTIFICATE WAS SYRACUSE NY
VALID THROUGH: 8/13/1999 ONONDAGA 13202-2923

NOTE: THIS CERTIFICATE IS THE PROPERTY OF THE ISSUING AGENCY AND IS TO BE RETURNED TO THE ISSUING AGENCY WHEN CERTIFICATION IS TERMINATED.

Appendix G:
Table of Home Closures with Citations

Reason for Home Closure	Foster Home	Status	Citation
The prospective or certified/approved foster parent chooses to discontinue the application process due to personal reasons (Voluntary Closure).	All Types ‡	Inquiry Applicant	18 NYCRR Part 443
Information recorded on medical forms results in the denial of the home for Home Study.	All Types ‡	Applicant Emergency	18 NYCRR §443.2(b)(18)
Full Home Study reveals that the home does not comply with standards set by OCFS.	All Types ‡	Applicant Emergency	18 NYCRR §443.7(i) 18 NYCRR §443.2(c)
Information received from SCR Database Check results in denial of full Certification or Approval of the home.	All Types ‡	Inquiry Applicant	18 NYCRR §443.2(b)(9)
Information received from the Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) results in denial of full Certification or Approval.	All Types ‡	Applicant	18 NYCRR §443.8 18 NYCRR §443.2(c)(7)
Application Expires (at 6 months).	Certified Foster Homes Approved Relative Foster Homes	Inquiry	18 NYCRR §443.2(c)(6)
Non-renewal of Certification or Approval during the Re-approval or Re-certification process due to one the following: • lack of need for the Foster Home; • failure to meet one or more of the criteria for certification or approval as set forth in Part 443; • the Authorizing Agency determines that the home no longer meets the child's needs.	All Types ‡	Accepted-Active Emergency	18 NYCRR §443.11
"Search & Retain" function reveals criminal activity by one or both foster parents	Certified Foster Homes Approved Relative Foster Homes	Accepted-Active	00 OCFS ADM-04

Reason for Home Closure	Foster Home	Status	Citation
Revocation of Certification or Approval (can occur at any time during the certification or approval period), due to one of the following: • lack of need for the foster home; • failure to meet one or more of the criteria for certification or approval set forth in Part 443; • the Authorizing Agency determines that the home no longer meets the child's needs; • the outcome of a Child Protective Services investigation into a report or abuse or maltreatment requires that the home be closed.	Certified Foster Homes Approved Relative Foster Homes	Accepted-Active	18 NYCRR §443.11
Finalization of an Adoption.	Certified Foster Homes Approved Relative Foster Homes	Accepted-Active	18 NYCRR §426
Agency Closing.	All Types ‡	Any status	18 NYCRR (B1) Article 6

† This table does not represent a complete listing of possible home closures.

‡ "All Types" refers to:

- Certified Foster Homes (including Foster/Adoptive Homes)
- Approved Relative Foster Homes
- Emergency Certified Foster Homes
- Emergency Approved Relative Foster Homes

Appendix H:
Basic FAD Practice Exercises

Practice Exercise 1:
Search for a FAD Home

Description

You have received an inquiry from a prospective foster parent. Your first step in recording this inquiry in CONNECTIONS is to conduct a search to determine whether the foster home already exists in the database.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for conducting an F/A Home Search and viewing the search results.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the Tips column for help. The Where in CONNECTIONS column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the *F/A Home Search* window.	CONNECTIONS Toolbar	**Options** menu. **F/A Home** command. **F/A Home Search…** command (sub-menu)
2 Conduct a thorough search for the prospective foster home, using the name on your color index cards.	*F/A Home Search*	**Home Name** field (Last,First) Clear the **Agency ID** field to search statewide. **Search** button.
3 Review the search results.	*F/A Home List*	Review the list to determine if the home for which you searched exists in CONNECTIONS. If no matches are found, the following message displays at the bottom of the F/A Home List: *"The criteria entered results in no information being returned."*
Leave the *F/A Home List* open for the next exercise.		

Practice Exercise 2:
Create a Foster Home in CONNECTIONS

Description

You have completed a thorough statewide search in CONNECTIONS for the prospective foster home. After reviewing the search results, you determine that the home does not already exist in the system. You are ready to record the inquiry by creating the home in CONNECTIONS.

The following exercise takes you thorough the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for creating a new foster home.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the Tips column for help. The Where in CONNECTIONS column indicates which window you should be using to the perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the *Home Demographics* window	*F/A Home List*	**New…** button
2 Complete all recordable fields in the *Home Demographics* window	*Home Demographics Window*	**Setting** field (select **Foster Home**) **Race** field **Ethnicity** field **Hispanic or Latino Origin** field (if applicable) **Religion** field **Marital** field **Inquiry** source **Language** field **Respite** field (select **Not Accepted**)
3 Record the primary address for the home: **Upstate & LI Classes:** 1110 Route 7 Latham, NY 12110 **NYC Classes:** 1110 Broadway New York, NY 10010	*Home Demographics*	**Street** field **City** field **Zip** field **County** field Select **Albany** (Upstate & LI classes) or **Manhattan** (NYC Classes)

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Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
4 Record that the business address is *identical to the primary address*.	*Home Demographics*	**Use as Business** check box.
5 Validate the address.	*Home Demographics*	**Validate** button. **Yes** button.
6 Record the primary phone number for the home.	*Home Demographics*	**Primary Phone Number** field.
7 Save and Assign the new foster home.	*Home Demographics*	**Save and Assign** button.
8 Assign the new foster home to yourself.	*Assign window*	Verify that "your" Darryl Wilson is listed in the *Assignments* section in the lower half of the window. **Save** button.
9 Open the *Assigned Workload* and verify that the newly created home is assigned to you.	CONNECTIONS Toolbar	**WORK** button. Verify that the FAD stage you just created displays on your workload.
10 Close the *Assigned Workload*.	*Assigned Workload*.	**Close** button.

Practice Exercise 3:
Generate and View the FAD Fingerprints Requirement Letter

Description

One of your responsibilities as a foster care caseworker is to notify the prospective foster parents that they and all individuals age 18 and older who reside in the foster home need to be fingerprinted. You need to generate the FAD Fingerprints Requirement Letter to be sent to the foster parents to provide this notification.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for generating the FAD Fingerprints Requirement Letter.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the Tips column for help. The Where in CONNECTIONS column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the *Assigned Workload*.	CONNECTIONS Toolbar	**WORK** button
2 Open the *Task List* for the home you created in Practice Exercise #2.	*Assigned Workload*	Click to select **Tasks…** button
3 Open the *Person List*.	*Task List*	**Maintain Person** task **List…** button
4 Generate the FAD Fingerprints Requirement Letter.	*Person List*	**Reports** menu **FAD Fingerprint Req. Ltr. (E)** [English] or **FAD Fingerprint Req. Ltr. (S)** [Spanish] command. *Note the message that displays: "The Report has been launched. Check the Report List window*." **OK** button.
5 Open the Report List.	CONNECTIONS Toolbar	**RPRTS** button
6 Open the letter.	*Report List*	Click to select the letter **Open** button

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Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
7 View the letter, then close the document.	FAD Fingerprints Requirement Letter (Microsoft Word document)	Printing will *not* be done in this class. *To print, click on the File menu and select the Print… command*. **File** menu **Close** command
8 Close the *Report List*.	*Report List*	**Close** button
9 Close the *Person List*.	*Person List*	**Close** button
10 Close the *Task List*.	*Task List*	**Close** button
11 Close the *Assigned Workload*.	*Assigned Workload*	**Close** button.

Practice Exercise 4:
Add People to the Foster Home

Description

You have completed the recording of the inquiry and created the foster home in CONNECTIONS. You need to add all of the individuals who live in the home (with the exception of foster children under the age of 18) to the FAD home record in CONNECTIONS.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for adding a person to a FAD home.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the **Tips** column for help. The **Where in CONNECTIONS** column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the *Assigned Workload*.	CONNECTIONS Toolbar	**WORK** button
2 Open the *Task List* for the home you created in Practice Exercise #2.	*Assigned Workload*	Click to select **Tasks…** button
3 Open the *Person List*.	*Task List*	**Maintain Person** task **List…** button
4 Add a person to the home.	*Person List*	**New…** button
5 Using the first name on your color index card, conduct a thorough Phonetic Name person search to determine whether the person is known to CONNECTIONS.	*Person Search* window	**First** and **Last Name** fields. **Search** button
6 Add the person to the FAD home.	*Person Search* window	**New** button

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Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
7 Record person demographics information.	*Person Detail* window	**Sex** field **Ethnicity** field **Race** field **Hispanic or Latino Origin** field (if applicable) **Marital** field **DOB** field **Religion** field
8 Record the person's role in the foster home.	*Person Detail* window	**Rel/Int** field (select Foster Parent)
9 Save the person information.	*Person Detail* window	**Save** button
10 Repeat steps 4-9 for the next person on your index card.		
Leave the *Person List* open for the next exercise.		

Practice Exercise 5:
Record Person Detail FA Home Information

Description

The next step in the process of recording complete person information is to record the medical exam date and the date on which the fingerprint card was sent for each person age 18 and older in the foster home. This information is recorded in the Person Detail FA window.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for recording information in the Person Detail FA window. Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the Tips column for help. The Where in CONNECTIONS column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the *Person Detail F/A* window.	*Person List*	**Options** menu **Person Detail FA Home** command
2 Record information in the Birth Location, General Info., Fingerprint Information and Foster Parent sections of the window for the first foster parent.	*Person Detail FA* window	**Date Card Sent** field (enter today's date) **Date Results Received** field (for training purposes only, enter today's date.) **Medical Exam Date** field (enter today's date)
3 Save the information.	*Person Detail FA* window	**Save** button
4 Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the second foster parent.		
Leave the *Person List* open (with the first person's name selected) for the next exercise.		

Practice Exercise 6:
Record Foster Parent Training Information

Description

The next step in the process of recording complete person information is to record information regarding all training each foster parent has completed.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for recording training information in the F/A Home Member Training window.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the Tips column for help. The Where in CONNECTIONS column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the F/A Home Member Training window.	*Person List*	**Options** menu **Home Member Training List/Detail** command
2 Record that the first foster parent attended an orientation session.	*F/A Home Member Training*	**Date** field (enter yesterday's date) **Title** field (enter "Nurturing Children in Foster Care") **Type** field (select Orientation) **Session** field (enter "1") **Hours** field (enter "3")
3 Add the information to the list section at the top of the window.	*F/A Home Member Training*	**Add** button
4 Save the information.	*F/A Home Member Training*	**Save** button
5 Repeat steps 2-4 for the second foster parent.		
Leave the *Person List* open (with the first person's name selected) for the next exercise.		

Practice Exercise 7:
Record Aliases (A.K.A. Names)

Description

The foster mother you have recorded for your FAD home is also known by her maiden name, Williams; she uses her married name as her legal name. You want to record the alias in CONNECTIONS.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for recording A.K.A. names.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the **Tips** column for help. The **Where in CONNECTIONS** column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the A.K.A. Name List/Detail window.	*Person List*	**Options** menu **A.K.A. Name List/Detail** command
2 Record the foster mother's alias as a non-primary name, then add it to the list section at the top of the window.	*A.K.A. Name List/Detail*	**First and Last** name fields Do ***not*** select the **Primary** check box. **Add** button
3 Save the information.	*A.K.A. Name List/Detail*	**Save** button
4 Close the Person List.	*Person List*	**Close** button
5 Close the Task List.	*Task List*	**Close** button

Practice Exercise 8:
Progress the Home to Applicant Status and Record the Vendor ID

Description

You have recorded in CONNECTIONS all of the demographic, training and other required information that you gathered during the inquiry phase of the home certification or approval process. After a careful review of all of the information, the foster home has been accepted for Home Study. Your next step in the development of this foster home is to advance the home to Applicant status. In addition, once the home has progressed to Applicant status, you will record the Vendor ID (VID) for the foster home.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for progressing a home to Applicant status and recording the Vendor ID.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the **Tips** column for help. The **Where in CONNECTIONS** column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Select the FAD home that needs to be progressed and open the *Task List*.	*Assigned Workload*	Click to select **Tasks…** button
2 Open the F/A Home License window.	*Task List*	**Maintain Licensing Information** task **New** button
3 Record the Facility Type and Program Type for the FAD home.	*F/A Home License* window	**Facility Type** field (Select Foster/Adoptive Home) **Program Type** field (Select Regular) **From** date field (Enter today's date)
New York City classes: *Record age ranges and capacity for the home.*		
4 Progress the home to Applicant status and save your changes.	*F/A Home License* window	**Status** field Select Applicant **Save** button
5 Open the *Home Demographics* window.	*Task List*	**Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task **Detail…**button

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Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
6 Record the second Vendor ID from your color index card.	*Home Demographics* window	**Vendor ID** field **Validate** button *Note the address validation message*. **Yes** button
7 Save the changes.	*Home Demographics* window	**Save** button
Leave the *Task List* open for the next exercise.		

Practice Exercise 8a:
Vacancy Control/Bed Maintenance
(NYC Only)

Description

Now that you have created a new FAD home in CONNECTIONS, you need to record the bed information for the home. This information enables workers to search for available beds for children in need of placement.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for creating a bed in the FAD home.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the **Tips** column for help. The **Where in CONNECTIONS** column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Select the FAD home that you created in Practice Exercise #2 open the *Task List*.	*Assigned Workload*	Click to select **Tasks…** button
2 Open the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window.	*Task List*	**Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance** task **Detail…** button
3 Add a bed, record its characteristics and save the information.	*Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance*	**Add Beds** button **Status** field (Select **Vacant**) **Male/Female Min/Max Age** fields **Bed Location** field **Physical** field **Learning** field **Emotional** field **Behavioral** field **HIV** field **Save** button *The following message displays: "Changes have been saved."* **OK** button

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Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
4 Close the *Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window.	*Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance* window	**Close** button.
5 Close the *Task List*.	*Task List*	**Close** button.

Practice Exercise 9:
Record the Home Study, Maintain Licensing Information and Submit the Home for Supervisory Approval

Description

With the completion of the previous exercises, you are now ready to record the home study and to complete the licensing information, after which you will be ready to submit the prospective foster home to your supervisor for approval.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for recording the home study, maintaining licensing information and submitting the home to your supervisor for approval.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the **Tips** column for help. The **Where in CONNECTIONS** column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Open the *FAD Record Summary* to access the home study.	*Task List*	**Home Study** task **New** button
2 Open and record the home study narrative.	*Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS)*	**Home Study Narrative** tab **Initial Home Study** check box **Save** button *(The following message displays: "Changes have been saved.")* **OK** button **Standard Home Study** radio button **Retrieve/Edit Narrative** button Record information in the home study narrative (Microsoft Word document).

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Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
3 Close the home study document.	Home Study Narrative (Microsoft Word document)	**File** Menu **Close** command (*The following message displays: "Save changes?"*) **Yes** button
4 Submit the Home Study.	*Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS*)	**Submit** button
5 Record the approved age ranges and capacity for the home, progress the home to Pending Acceptance status, then Save and Submit for supervisory approval. NYC: Age range and capacity recorded in Practice Exercise #8.	*F/A Home License*	**Min Year, Month, Max Year**, and **Month** fields *(both male and female, as applicable)* **Capacity** field **Status** field Select Pending Acceptance **File** menu **Save and Submit** command
6 Send the resulting Task To-Do to your supervisor.	*To-Do Detail*	Enter comments, if desired, in the **Description/Notes** field **Save** button
7 Close the *Task List*.	*Task List*	**Close** button
8 Close the *Assigned Workload*.	*Assigned Workload*	**Close** button

Practice Exercise 10:
Maintenance Exercise
(Remove Person – Left Home)

Description

The second individual you added in your Review Practice Exercises has left the FAD Home due to divorce. Since this individual's former occupancy in the home needs to remain part of the FAD home's historical record in CONNECTIONS, use the Remove Person – Left Home function to record that person's departure.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for removing a person from a FAD home when that individual no longer lives in the home.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the **Tips** column for help. The **Where in CONNECTIONS** column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Select the FAD home that you created in your Review Practice Exercises open the *Task List*.	*Assigned Workload*	Click to select **Tasks…** button
2 Open the *Person List.*	*Task List*	**Maintain Person** task **List…** button
3 Select the person and perform the removal function.	*Person List*	Click to select **Options** menu **Remove Person – Left Home** command *The following message displays: "Are you sure you want to Remove Person – Left Home?"* **Yes** button.
4 Close the *Person List*.	*Person List*	**Close** button.
5 Close the *Task List.*	*Task List*	**Close** button.

Practice Exercise 11:
Close a Foster Home

Description

The foster home you created has been approved by your supervisor and is now in Accepted-Active status. All necessary information has been received and recorded in CONNECTIONS. The home is ready to accept foster children. A few days later, the prospective foster mother contacts you and states that she will not be able to provide foster care services, since her father recently developed a serious illness and she needs to care for him. You need to close the foster home.

The following exercise takes you through the necessary steps in CONNECTIONS for closing a foster home.

Follow the numbered tasks below. Look in the Tips column for help. The Where in CONNECTIONS column indicates which window you should be using to perform the task.

Task Chart

Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
1 Select the home to be closed, then open the *Task List.*	*Assigned Workload*	Click to select **Tasks…** button
2 Open the *Close Home* window.	*Task List*	**Close Home** task **New** button
3 Record the home closure information.	*Close Home*	**Closure Reason** field (Select Family Illness/Health Problems) **Closure Type** field (Select Voluntary Closure) **Recommend Re-Opening** field (Select Recommend) **Date Notification Sent** field (enter a date reflecting 20 days ago)
4 Complete the closure report.	*Close Home*	**Closure Report** button Record information in the resulting MS Work document **File** menu **Close** command

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Task	Where in CONNECTIONS	Tips
5 Save the information and submit the home closure to your supervisor for approval.	*Close Home*	**Save and Submit** button (*The following message displays: "Have you completed the Closing Summary Report?"*) **Yes** button
6 Send the Task To-Do for the home closure approval to your supervisor.	*To-Do Detail*	Enter comments, if desired, in the **Description/Notes** field. **Save** button
7 Close the *Task List*.	*Task List*	**Close** button
8 Close the *Assigned Workload*.	*Assigned Workload*	**Close** button

Appendix I:
Security Awareness Materials

OCFS Security Guidelines

Safe Computing Practices

- **Be responsible**—Download *only* authorized, work-related executables or documents from the Internet that are from trusted sources ***and*** that your LAN/Security Administrator has approved. *Never* use commercial e-mail accounts (such as AOL, Hotmail or Yahoo), Instant Messaging, chat rooms or other third-party services on a state computer without prior *written* authorization.
- **Be professional**—*Never* use state e-mail services for prohibited activities, including (but not limited to): sharing jokes or any other non-work-related materials; transmitting illegal, offensive or threatening items; and soliciting for unauthorized causes or activities. In addition to being prohibited, these unnecessary electronic transmissions crowd network bandwidth and occupy server capacity needed for legitimate business purposes.
- **Be alert** and *immediately* report any suspected virus infection or other system compromise to your LAN/Security Administrator *and* to the OCFS Information Security Officer (Jo Shrader). Proper reporting speeds reaction, recovery and damage control. Be sure you know who your LAN/Security Administrator is *before* you need to contact him/her.
- **Be consistent** in complying with the same safety procedures when using remote access or transporting files between PCs via a floppy disk or CD. If you move disks between your home and work PCs, make sure you have up-to-date anti-virus software on your home PC and regularly scan disks and CDs. Viruses can easily be brought into the state network through a laptop, home PC or storage media.
- **Be suspicious** of e-mail you weren't expecting, even if it's from someone you know. Computer viruses often send e-mails to all contacts in an unsuspecting sender's address book. *Before* you open the e-mail, call the source to verify that s/he intentionally sent the e-mail.
- ***NEVER* run/download/forward unsolicited files** (e.g., executables, documents, spreadsheets). Any programs that run or execute on your PC must be virus-checked and approved by your LAN/Security Administrator first. *Never* open *any* file with a double file extension (e.g., iamavirus.txt.vbs).
- ***NEVER* forward virus warnings to *anyone*** Contact your LAN/Security Administrator to determine how to proceed. (If your LAN/Security Administrator is not available, contact the Help Desk.) Forwarding these items increases risk and creates additional network traffic.
- ***NEVER* attempt to test system weaknesses or vulnerabilities** unless you are specifically authorized to do so.
- ***ALWAYS* leave your PC powered on (being sure to log off, as appropriate)** This will ensure that your PC will receive security patches. Click on **Start > Shut Down > Restart** to log off and restart your computer *without* leaving it powered off.

Anti-virus software helps protect against computer viruses, but does NOT replace conscious, consistent adherence to established safety procedures.

If you think your computer may have been exposed to a virus, DON'T PANIC! Contact your LAN/Security Administrator IMMEDIATELY.

OCFS Security Guidelines

Protecting Your Password

- **Make it difficult**
  Select a password that is easy for you to remember, but difficult for others to guess. Don't be stingy—make your password as long as possible (at least 8 characters and up to a maximum of 13 characters), in order to help reduce the likelihood of allowing someone to guess it. You cannot use all or part of your logon ID in your password, nor can you reuse any of your last 13 passwords.

- **Mix it up**
  Your OCFS password *must* contain *at least* one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter *and* one number. CONNECTIONS users must *never* use symbols in their passwords.

- **Keep it to yourself**
  Don't share your password with others. Never display your password; if you need to write it down, don't keep the information at your desk or anywhere it can be easily seen by others.

- **Embrace change**
  You must change your password periodically—*at least* once every 90 days. If you think your password has been compromised, *change it immediately*. (Don't forget to report the situation to your LAN/Security Administrator as soon as possible!)

- **Be yourself**
  Use *only* your logon ID and password; *never* use a current or former co-worker's ID or password.

- **Let your fingers do the walking**
  Never store passwords in macros or automatic log-on features. Enter your password manually every time.

Your unique User ID and password not only provide you with "keys" to access the OCFS network (including CONNECTIONS, as applicable), they also serve as a form of identification—linking you to your actions in the system.
YOU are responsible for actions taken with your User ID and password! Always follow established password protocols to help prevent unauthorized use of your User ID and password.

If you think your password has been compromised, change it immediately AND report the situation to your LAN/Security Administrator.

Security is everyone's responsibility!

These guidelines are advisable for *all* of your passwords.

OCFS Security Guidelines

Protecting Confidential Information

Maintain confidentiality 24/7

Protecting confidential information encompasses all spoken, handwritten, printed and electronically transmitted notes and communications. When you make case visits, be sure to keep client-identifiable casework documentation with you at all times and *never* allow unauthorized individuals to view the information. Remember that all case and system information must be used *only* for legitimate business purposes. If you must keep hard copies of confidential information at your desk, *always* lock your desk whenever you are away from it. If hard copies need to be discarded, *always* run them through a cross-cut shredder.

Don't kick this habit

It's easy to become complacent or to think, "I'll only be away from my computer for a few minutes." If you are logged on to the system, *always* lock your computer (or log off the network) by holding down the **Ctrl+Alt+Del** keys at the same time. Do this *every time* you leave your desk; this helps prevent unauthorized individuals from using your User ID and password to access the network. ***80% of security breaches are unauthorized people using an authorized user's computer, NOT hacking in from outside.***

Hit the road, but…

Be particularly careful when using portable electronic devices, such as laptop computers, Quick Pads, voice recorders and PDAs. Don't leave confidential information on these devices longer than is absolutely necessary. If the device has the ability to transmit information, avoid transmitting confidential information over wireless connections or unsecured public connections. When traveling with the device, keep it with you at all times; *never* check it into airline luggage systems.

Exercise care with voicemail and e-mail

When conducting casework or other legitimate business contacts by phone, it's inevitable that you may sometimes need to leave a voicemail message or send an e-mail to a contact. *Avoid* ever including confidential information in voicemail you leave or e-mail you send.

Don't convey confidential information where others can intercept it

Caseworkers have an obligation to preserve the confidentiality rights of the children and families with whom they work. Other staff may also have legitimate access to this information. If you must discuss confidential information on the phone, avoid areas where your conversation can be overheard. Remember that cellular phone lines are not sufficiently secure to be appropriate when discussing confidential information. *Avoid* saving confidential information to the hard drive of *any* desktop computer. Check the permission levels on your Microsoft Outlook folders; make sure you understand what each level of access means and assign permissions on a need-to-know basis *only*.

The walls have ears

Be mindful of protecting confidential information in areas where you can be easily overheard, such as in cubicle areas.

Use follow-through when faxing

If you need to transmit any confidential information via fax, call first *before* sending the fax, in order to alert the intended recipient that you are sending a fax. Be sure to call the recipient afterward, too, to verify that the fax was received *and* that it was not left on the fax machine. Avoid faxing confidential information whenever possible.

Security is everyone's responsibility.

Always follow established security protocols to help protect confidential information.

Appendix J:
Defining Mild, Moderate And Severe Child Characteristics For Vacancy Control Maintenance

nyc ACS
NYC Administration for Children's Services

Introduction

In an effort to achieve maximum efficient vacancy utilization in the Vacancy Control System (in CONNECTIONS), the Office of Placement Administration (OPA) is providing definitions of the terms, Mild (1), Moderate (2) and Severe (3) as applied to child and bed characteristics. OPA has defined the terms listed below, and illustrated them with specific examples of the applicability of the terms to child and bed characteristics. In addition, there is a list of "Additional" definitions that may be helpful in maintaining the Vacancy Control System.

Definitions

The definitions of Mild (1), Moderate (2) and Severe (3) as applies to Behavior, Emotional, Physical and Learning characteristics, have varying degrees of subjectivity, from the perspective of both the OPA placement worker and the foster care agency Intake Coordinator. There are, however, certain guidelines to provide some uniformity of definition:

- "**0**"- usually applies to characteristics that present no known condition or problem; or, child and bed characteristics may be left blank.
- **M**ild - usually applies to characteristics that present a minor condition or problem that does not significantly affect functioning. **M**ild is represented by the Number 1.
- **M**oderate - usually applies to characteristics that present a condition or problem that may affect functioning and that may require specialized services or treatment. **M**oderate is represented by the Number 2.
- **S**evere - usually applies to characteristics that present a serious condition or problem that significantly affects functioning and that requires intensive services or treatment. **S**evere is represented by the Number 3.

Specific Examples

Following, are some examples of Mild, Moderate and Severe characteristics to illustrate the definitions:

Behavior: Frustration

1. Mild - Easily frustrated, but remains under control
2. Moderate - Loses temper easily, but exhibits no violent behavior
3. Severe - Loses temper and loses control, causing harm to self, others or property

Emotional: Bed Wetting

1. Mild - Occasional bed wetting
2. Moderate - Some bed wetting that may require some treatment
3. Severe - Frequent bed wetting that requires special treatment

Physical: Newborn (Substance Abuse)

1. Mild - Evidence of substance abuse during pregnancy- no sign of any delay at this time
2. Moderate - Evidence of substance abuse during pregnancy- some indication of delay
3. Severe - Evidence of substance abuse during pregnancy, significant physical and developmental delays; fetal alcohol syndrome

Learning: School Achievement

1. Mild - Minor difficulty in maintaining grades
2. Moderate - Some learning problems - 2 levels below age group in reading and math
3. Severe - Major learning problems requiring intensive educational testing and services

Additional Definitions

In addition to the definitions described above, there are two characteristics that require explanation:

- To describe a child's HIV status, the indication is "YES" / " NO."
- To describe the range of intelligence for a child, the following levels apply:

Average Intelligence- 90-109>

Borderline Retardation- 70-89 (70 and above is within the normal range)

Mild Retardation- 55-69

Moderate Retardation- 40-54

Severe Retardation- 25-39

Profound Retardation - 0-24

Un-testable- <0

* **M**ild - Capable of developing social and verbal skills up to a 6th grade level and sufficient for self-support

* **M**oderate - Capable of some communication and learning vocational skills; difficulty with social functioning

* **S**evere - Poor motor and verbal skills; some limited ability to perform supervised work

* **P**rofound - Requires constant care, structured environment; limited self-care

* **U**n-testable - Requires constant care and supervision; unlikely to acquire self-care skills.

Appendix K:
Criminal History Record Checks
(Fingerprint Card and Waiver)

03 OCFS INF -01 introduced a revised fingerprint card and associated directions applicable to applicants to be certified or approved as foster or adoptive parents and persons over the age of 18 who reside with such applicants. Furthermore, this INF introduced a new form and procedure designed to eliminate submission of fingerprint cards for the purpose of obtaining a criminal history record check for those persons ***previously fingerprinted*** for one of the following purposes: applicants for certification or approval as a foster or adoptive parent; applicants for day care center and/or group family day care licensure, employment or volunteer; family day care and/or school age child care registrations, employment or volunteer; household members over the age of eighteen of applicants who would otherwise be required to submit a fingerprint card.

The card was been simplified to specifically include only those fields that apply to foster care/adoption. A replacement chart is attached to this INF with complete directions for each field. This chart replaces Attachment 2 in 00 OCFS ADM-04. Of particular note are two new fields on the card. These are the **CONNECTIONS Home Resource ID#** and the **CONNECTIONS Person ID**#. These fields are ***required*** entry for all districts and agencies that certify/approve foster and/or adoptive homes on CONNECTIONS. It should be noted that this will require homes to be entered through save and assign of "Inquiry", and persons entered in these homes on the CONNECTIONS Person List/Detail window, in order to obtain these system generated ID numbers. These fields should be *left blank* for New York State adoption agencies *not* serving publicly funded foster children and for out-of-state adoption agencies. Districts and agencies should assess their current procedures to determine the sequencing of these activities, and procedures should be adjusted so that fingerprint cards given to applicants and those household members over the age of 18 have these fields already completed by the district or agency.

Please note, disclosure by the applicant or household member of his or her Social Security Number (SSN) is voluntary, and not mandatory. SSN's will be utilized to assist DCJS staff in performing criminal history record checks. These facts should be made known to all persons who are required to be fingerprinted.

New Waiver Form

For each new applicant for foster care or adoption, districts and agencies should ask whether the applicant or those household members over the age of 18 have ever been previously fingerprinted for any one of the following:

- certification or approval as a foster parent or adoptive parent
- day care / child care employment / volunteer
- day care child care registration
- day care licensure
- household member over the age of 18 in any applicable category above.

If they have, the Waiver form should be used in lieu of requiring re-fingerprinting. Each applicant and household member over the age of 18 must complete and sign a *separate* waiver form and the district or agency must complete the fields so designated for them as follows:

- New Facility/Provider/Agency ID # (item 12)
- CONNECTIONS Resource ID # (item 13)
- CONNECTIONS Person ID # (item 14)
- New Facility/Provider/Agency Name and Address (item 15).

In addition, districts and agencies must review and verify one form of identification listed on the Waiver, and complete the shaded gray fields pertaining to the identification used and attest to that by signing the form. (See Attachment 1 for completion instructions.)

OCFS, in conjunction with DCJS, has established a policy regarding closed homes, “search and retain” and the timing of expungement of fingerprints from the DCJS database in order to allow the waiver process to successfully achieve the expected results. As long as a foster or adoptive home remains open with your district or agency, any new arrests reported for anyone in those homes who had been previously fingerprinted will be sent to the certifying/approving district or agency in the usual manner. ***When a home is closed in CONNECTIONS***, or for New York State adoption agencies ***not*** serving publicly funded foster children and out-of-state adoption agencies, when the Notification of Adoption Finalization is submitted to the Fingerprint Unit, any new arrest notices sent by DCJS to OCFS will ***not*** be sent to the district or agency that closed the home. Such information will be retained by OCFS; however, it should be noted there is a built-in lag time before CONNECTIONS closings become available to the Fingerprint Unit. This is to allow for system closings that quickly reopen. Therefore, it is possible that a subsequent arrest notice could be sent out during this brief interim period.

Although fingerprint card expungement requests continue to go from OCFS to DCJS annually as the law requires, with regard to foster and adoptive home members, these requests will only be made under the following circumstances:

- such person is associated with a closed foster/adoptive home; ***and***,
- such person is not associated with any other open foster/adoptive home in any other district or agency; ***and,***
- if such person had been active in day care/child care, he or she has been closed by the day care/ child care process either through enforcement or voluntarily (all associations); ***and,***
- the most recent closing has been in effect for three years.

Ultimately, an indicator will exist in CONNECTIONS to designate when expungement has occurred. You will be advised when that functionality is supported. If a Waiver form is used and the fingerprints have been expunged, the district or agency will be notified that new fingerprints must be submitted.

Attachment 1

Waiver for Submission of a Duplicate Fingerprinting Card

Instructions for Completion

This form is designed to eliminate the need to submit new fingerprint cards to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYS OCFS) for the purpose of obtaining a criminal history background check for applicants for day care center/group family day care licenses, employment or volunteers; family day care/school age child care registrations, employment or volunteers; and for applicants for certification or approval as a foster or adoptive parent. This form is also used for household members over the age of eighteen (18) of applicants who would otherwise be required to submit a fingerprint card. This form only applies to individuals who have been previously fingerprinted for the purposes described above.

INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL ITEMS ON FORM - LEAVE AREAS BELOW SHADED HEADINGS BLANK

1. Enter applicant's or household member's Last Name

2. Enter applicant's or household member's First Name

3. Enter applicant's or household member's Middle Initial

4. Enter 'M' for Male or 'F' for Female

5. Enter applicant's or household member's Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

6. Enter applicant's or household member's CURRENT Street Address

7. Enter applicant's or household member's Social Security Number (SSN)

[Disclosure of SSN is voluntary, and not mandatory. SSN will be used to assist DCJS staff in performing criminal history record checks.]

8. Enter applicant's or household member's CURRENT city and state for above address

9. Enter applicant's or household member's Zip Code

10. Alias and/or Maiden Name – Enter any alias or maiden name. Enter any applicable complete name in which the given and/or surname is different than those entered on items 1 thru 3.

11. Check here if this is a new address – The address given in items 6 & 8 is different from address when previously fingerprinted

12. New Facility/Provider/Agency ID # - The ID # is the license number of the day care facility or provider, or the authorized agency ID # to which you are now applying.

13. FOR FOSTER/ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS AND/OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ONLY: Enter Resource ID# of the home as it appears on CONNECTIONS. [NYS adoption agencies not serving publicly funded foster children and out-of-state adoption agencies leave this field blank.]

14. FOR FOSTER/ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS AND/OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ONLY: Enter the ID# of the person (listed in fields 1-3) as it appears on CONNECTIONS. [NYS adoption agencies not serving publicly funded foster children and out-of-state adoption agencies leave this field blank.]

15. New Facility/Provider/Agency name and address – The address of the day care facility or provider, or authorized agency to which you are now applying.

16. Additional Information – Current Role – Check the box that corresponds with the role for which you are currently applying.

17. Have you previously been fingerprinted for Day Care, Foster Care or Adoption purposes through:

The NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS); or

By a local social services district or voluntary authorized agency?

Check 'Yes' ONLY if you have been previously fingerprinted by one or more of these organizations. If you check "No", this form does not apply to you. A fingerprint card will be required.

18. Previous Facility/Provider/Agency – Enter Facility/Provider/Agency ID # for all locations with which you have previously been affiliated, where you were required to submit a fingerprint card to NYS OCFS in relation to day care, foster care or adoption.

19. Previous Address – Address at which you resided when you were previously fingerprinted

(If different from address in box #8)

20. This form must be signed and dated by applicant or household member.

This form will only be accepted when fully completed according to the instructions listed above, and authorized by the foster or adoptive agency / social services district representative or by the Bureau of Early Childhood Services day care licensing representative. Upon completion, this form should be submitted, in lieu of an additional fingerprint card, to the OCFS Criminal History Review Unit, P.O. Box 839, Rensselaer, NY 12144.

Attachment 2

(rev. 11/02)

Directions for Completing the Fingerprint Card

The table below lists the elements on the fingerprint card and directions for completion. Shaded rows must be completed by the authorized agency. All other rows can be completed by the person who is to be fingerprinted, except field 28.

Field No.	Element	Directions
1.	Name	Complete last, first and middle name
2.	Street Address	Enter residence house number and street
3.	Apt/Bldg#	Enter apartment and/or building number
4.	City	Enter city
5.	State	Enter state
6.	Zip	Enter ZIP code
7.	Alias or Maiden Name	Enter any other name person may be known as
8.	Sex	Enter M or F
9.	Race	See codes on back of card
10.	Ethnicity	See codes on back of card
11.	Skin	See codes on back of card
12.	Hair	See codes on back of card
13.	Eyes	See codes on back of card
14.	Weight	Enter weight
15.	Height	Enter height in feet and inches
16.	Date of Birth	Enter month, day and year of birth
17.	Age	Enter age
18.	Place of Birth (State or County)	Enter State, if not New York; otherwise enter County
19.	Contributor	Prefilled
20.	Agency ID No.	Enter 3 character Agency code followed by an individual identifier assigned by the authorized agency [maximum field size is 8 characters in total]

Field No.	Element	Directions
21.	Social Security Number	Enter social security number [Disclosure of SSN is voluntary, and not mandatory. SSN will be used to assist Division of Criminal Justice Services staff in performing criminal history record checks.]
22.	Date Fingerprinted	Enter the month, day, and year the fingerprints were taken
23.*	REASON FINGERPRINTED (Check One)	Check one code for this referral using the following categories: foster parent [FP]; relative foster parent [RFP]; adoptive parent [AP]; household member of foster parent over 18 [FHM]; household member of relative foster parent over 18 [RHM]; household member of adoptive parent over 18 [AHM]; foster child over 18 [FC]
24.	CONNECTIONS Home Resource ID#	NYS local social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies - Home must be entered on CONNECTIONS to obtain the Home Resource ID#. It will be system generated when Inquiry is saved and assigned. NYS adoption agencies not serving publicly funded foster children and out-of-state adoption agencies leave this field blank.
24a.	CONNECTIONS Person ID#	NYS local social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies - Home must be entered on CONNECTIONS and person must be associated with the home to obtain the Person ID#. It will be system generated when a home member is added or related to the FAD Person List. NYS adoption agencies not serving publicly funded foster children and out-of-state adoption agencies leave this field blank.
25.	License Type/Job Title	Prefilled

Field No.	Element	Directions
26.	Signature of Person Fingerprinted	This should be signed at the time of fingerprinting
27.	Authorized Foster or Adoption Agency – name and address	Complete Agency name and full mailing address
28.	Signature of Person Taking Prints	This should be signed at the time of fingerprinting by the person taking the prints

* Failure to complete this field will result in the fingerprint card being returned to the submitting agency.