

~ *The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY* ~

April 20 ~ 27, 2007



CONNECTIONS Training Schedule Time Change...

***** Please note that there has been a change to the half day CONNECTIONS Build 18.9 classes beginning Monday, April 23rd.***

Based on class evaluations and feedback from the Build 18.9 training, a change is being made in the half day classes offered to Health Professionals and Caseworkers effective Monday, April 23rd. ***A half hour is being added to the class to allow for all of the content to be covered, as well as to allow participants sufficient time to practice the new functionality in the training lab.*** Morning classes will be from 9:00AM - 12:30PM and afternoon classes will be from 1:00PM - 4:30PM.

We realize that some staff may not be able to stay for the last half hour due to other commitments. The additional half hour will be focused mainly on practice exercises that we believe will help staff better integrate the class content. Nevertheless, even if a trainee cannot stay for this extra half hour component, they will still have received a presentation of all the CONNECTIONS functionality in the time that precedes this extra half hour.

A NEW Computer Based Training ~ CONNECTIONS Fundamentals...

The SUNY Training Strategies Group, in conjunction with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, is pleased to announce the distribution of the computer-based training, *CONNECTIONS Fundamentals*. This self-paced course is intended for newly hired child welfare staff responsible for using the CONNECTIONS system in their work with children and families. It provides a basic orientation to CONNECTIONS case management modules that new child welfare workers may need prior to attending any CONNECTIONS training. ***It is not intended to replace training*** and does not cover the functionality in depth. There is a "virtual mentor" to walk workers through each content area.

Staff can take this course at their own pace at their desktop. Minimum system requirements to successfully run this CD include Version 8 or greater of Flash Player, Version 9 or greater of Windows Media Player, Windows 2000 or XP running on a Pentium 3 or greater machine. Most, but not all CONNECTIONS PC's should already have this software. Anyone with a oneimaged CONNECTIONS machine should not need additional software. Further recommended system requirements for non-CONNECTIONS machines are also included on the inside cover of the CD. We strongly recommend that all other programs are closed during the operation of the CD. Pop-Up blockers in your web browser software also must be turned off in order for this product to work properly. The CD may be used many times over, so re-cycle it through to the appropriate staff. **The CD's were addressed to Staff Development coordinators in local districts and to training coordinators in voluntary agencies.** If your district or agency does not receive a shipment by Friday, April 27th, we ask that you contact the SUNY TSG office at 1.877.451.4835 and they will provide you with the name and address to whom the shipment was sent.

CONNECTIONS Common Functions Guide...

An updated version of the CONNECTIONS Common Functions Guide, as well as a companion document of revisions to the Guide from the last version, have been posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Home and Step-by-Step/Job Aids/Tips pages. The Common Functions Guide provides basic instruction on the navigation step for tasks that are completed by all Child Welfare workers. It provides an introduction to the toolbar, managing your workload and 'To Do's', and a condensed version of the process for maintaining person information and progress notes.

Two New CONNECTIONS Tip Sheets... ***Build 18.9 Outcome & Activity Block Tip Sheet*** ***Build 18.9 Health Services Component Tip Sheet***

Take a look! There are two new tip sheets posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet!

CONNECTIONS Training Events in STARS...

With the Build 18.9 training winding down, we just want to remind you that CONNECTIONS Operational Training is scheduled for the second quarter and is in STARS. Please take a look and see if the training that you have been waiting for is now being offered in your area! There are several courses that SUNY Training Strategies Group is offering during the second quarter. Please see below for further info...

Basic Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD) (lab training) – This two-day course provides an overview of developing and maintaining foster and adoptive homes in CONNECTIONS in accordance with current New York State regulations, including:

- Responding to an inquiry

- Maintaining person information
- Certifying a foster/adoptive home
- Maintaining FAD homes in CONNECTIONS
- Annual Reauthorizations
- Closing homes
- Re-opening homes
- FAD reports

CONNECTIONS Security *(lab training)*

This one-day course designed for Security Coordinators and Back-up Security Coordinators provides an overview of CONNECTIONS Security, including:

- Maintaining staff, office and units
- Security reports
- Transferring workers
- End-dating and reinstating staff

Case Management for Child Welfare Workers* *(lab training)*-

This two-day course provides an overview of the Case Management functionality within a casework context, including:

- Creating and stage-progressing an FSI to an FSS
- Maintaining information in an FSS stage
- Documenting progress notes
- Launching and completing a Family Assessment and Service Plan
- Closing a stage
- Changing a stage type

Specialized Preventive Case Management (SPCM) *(lab training)*

(NYC only)-

This two-day course provides an overview of the Case Management functionality for preventive cases with a focus on ACS policy and procedures, including:

- Advocates Preventive Only (ADVPO) cases
- Creating and stage-progressing an FSI to an FSS
- Maintaining information in an FSS stage
- Documenting progress notes
- Launching and completing a Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP)
- Closing a stage
- Changing a stage type

Child Protective Services Investigation* - *(lab training)*

This three-day course provides an overview of CPS Casework Flow and documentation, including:

- Demographic information
- Progress Notes
- Safety Assessment

- Risk Assessment
- Maintaining allegations
- Concluding an investigation
- Opening a case for services
- Completing a Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP)

Developing Effective Resource User Skills – *(lab training)*

This one-day course is designed for experienced CONNECTIONS users who are designated to assist co-workers in using CONNECTIONS with a focus on recommended practices for troubleshooting and problem solving, including:

- Techniques for helping other workers to learn to resolve CONNECTIONS issues on their own
- Resources/Support Tools
- Managing workloads
- Case maintenance
- Family Services Stage tasks

Vacancy Control – *(lab training)*

This half-day course introduces participants to the Vacancy Control functionality in CONNECTIONS, including:

- Obtaining real-time access to vacant bed information in foster care and congregate care settings
- Maintaining beds and bed characteristics

* The content of this course is integrated in the CORE and CPSR training currently offered to new case workers/CPS specialty workers.

We encourage you to register staff now for the course(s) that may help them more successfully navigate CONNECTIONS! And, if you do not see the course you are looking for and have a CONNECTIONS training need (as well as a minimum of 5 people to participate) please call the SUNY Training Strategies Group, CONNECTIONS Training Project office at 1.877.451.4835 and ask for George Kleinmeier. Tell him about the specific training you are looking for. We will try to accommodate all requests as quickly as possible!

A Note About the Web Version of the Permanency Hearing Report Templates...

We have recently fielded a few questions from users about the use of the web version of the Permanency Hearing Report templates. In reviewing the questions with the Policy team we report that districts may use the web versions of the statement and notices and the web version of the freed child Permanency Hearing Report, if they have an "8D" child in a CWS stage, as well as the web version of any PHR, if districts have had to close and reopen CONNECTIONS/WMS cases due to retro-payment issues. However, we would like to add a word of caution regarding the use of the Permanency Hearing Report templates, as the templates should not be viewed as a substitution for

required information that should be recorded within the CONNECTIONS application.

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

The following document(s) were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- CONNECTIONS Common Functions Guide
- Companion document of revisions to the CONNECTIONS Common Functions Guide
- The CONNECTIONS Weekly

Weekly System Maintenance...

CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...

- ***Friday, 4/20/07*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Wednesday, 4/25/07*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Friday, 4/27/07*** from 5:00AM – 7:00AM