



..CONNECTIONS NEWS..

for the week of October 10 -17, 2008

Developing a more caseworker centric system

CONNECTIONS Intranet site: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/>

FEATURED IN THIS EDITION

"Info to Know" for Caseworkers

- **UPDATED** - *Information on the Q3-08 Improvement Plan (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10) ... pg. 1 ... [more](#)*
- *Regulations Regarding Criminal History Record Review of Applicants to be Certified or Approved Foster or Adoptive Parents ... pg. 5 ... [more](#)*
- A **NEW** ADM - 08-OCFS-ADM-06 - *Criminal History Record Checks and Mandatory Disqualifying Crimes (Foster and Adoptive Parents) ... pg. 6 ... [more](#)*
- **UPDATED** - *AFCARS Info - Data on AFCARS and Casework Contacts for Children in Care ... pg. 7 ... [more](#)*
- A **NEW** Job Aid and ADM on *Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPS) ... pg. 8 ... [more](#)*

General "Info to Know"

- *CIO/OFT Customer Notification - (08-CSM-04) - eMedNY VPN Tunnel Migration ... pg. 8 ... [more](#)*
- **NEW** *Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet ... pg. 9 ... [more](#)*
- *Weekly System Maintenance ... pg. 9 ... [more](#)*

"Info to Know" for Caseworkers



UPDATED - *Information on the Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10)*

Please note that sections of this piece have been **UPDATED** since last week and are identified as such.

CONNECTIONS Application Downtime

As you are aware, on Friday, October 10, 2008, OCFS will implement the third Quarterly Improvement Plan of this year, Q3-08. In order to migrate the new functionality to production, the CONNECTIONS application will not be available from 6:00 PM Friday, 10/10 through midnight on Saturday, 10/11; an application downtime of six hours.

Q3-08 Improvement Plan

Q3-08 will include important enhancements to the CONNECTIONS application that support programmatic changes, as well as several system improvements. Two major programmatic changes included in Q3-08 are:

- ❖ a redesigned Safety Assessment tool, which is the result of extensive work with a statewide team of users who partnered with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services; and
- ❖ improved wording of risk factors in the Risk Assessment Profile to clarify the circumstances that contribute to risk of future abuse/maltreatment.

These enhancements were presented in the August 27th teleconference entitled: Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment.

Q3-08 also includes system support for districts participating in the Family Assessment Response initiative. The other enhancements included in Q3-08 are recommendations from the Child Welfare Information System Transformation Business Team. These recommended enhancements are based on a collaborative effort on the part of OCFS, and local district and voluntary agency casework and supervisory staff.

Other System Enhancements

- There will now be a choice, in Print Preview mode, of displaying and printing Progress Notes in the current default (8pt) or larger (12pt) fonts
- The Unit Approver will now be allowed to locally maintain To Do's
- In Progress Notes, once a family participant has been selected, the "Focus" checkbox will be automatically pre-filled. This supports compliance with required casework contacts for children in foster care. If a family member is a participant but is not to be considered the 'focus', the caseworker must deselect the checkmark in the "Focus" checkbox for that individual family participant

FAD Changes

- Enhancements to Criminal History Record Checks
 - Added Fingerprint Results value of Mandatory Disqualifier to comply with the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006 (now available for use)
- Revised Fingerprint Outputs to conform to the Mandatory Disqualifier changes
 - Notice (English and Spanish)
 - Denial/Revocation letter (English and Spanish)

Family Assessment Response (FAR) Initiative

Q3-08 contains system support for the Family Assessment Response initiative. This is a non-adversarial alternative approach to the traditional investigative response in select CPS report scenarios. No determination of the SCR report is made. Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007 authorized LDSSs, other than in New York City, to apply to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to use a family assessment and services approach for a subset of families that are reported to the SCR for child maltreatment. Six applications were received and approved. The participating counties are: Westchester, Orange, Onondaga, Tompkins, Chautauqua and Erie.

CONNECTIONS' system support allows participating districts to identify CPS Investigations for Family Assessment Response and open a Family Services Intake (FSI) and Services Stage (FAM) to document case activity. The FAM stage includes the following: progress notes, safety assessment, preventive risk assessment and education. Participating districts have their own Job Aid to assist them. The job aid is posted to the CONNECTIONS Intranet site on the Step-by-Step/Job Aid/Tips page and is available via the following link:

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Family%20Assess%20Resp%20%20Job%20Aid%2010%208%2008.pdf>

Non-participating districts and voluntary agencies will receive an Informational Memorandum with further information about this initiative.

UPDATED - Bridges to Health - B2H Changes

Creation of new Person Identifier - DJJOY Case #

With the implementation of the Q3-08 System Enhancement, a new Person Identifier - DJJOY Case # - has been created for DJJOY children who are enrolled in the Bridges to Health (B2H) waiver and were residing in an OCFS operated facility. The entry of the DJJOY Case # Person Identifier will bypass the edit on CONNECTIONS that requires a Program Choice of Placement in order to enter the B2H Waiver. In a NYC stage, as determined by the agency code of the case manager, the entry will also prevent CONNECTIONS from updating the Upstate Restriction/Exception Subsystem on WMS.

You should only enter DJJOY Case # Person Identifier for DJJOY children who were residing in an OCFS operated facility. You will receive a warning message "A DJJOY Case Number should only be recorded if the child is currently placed in an OCFS operated Facility. Continue?" You can select "Yes" to continue with the selection of "DJJOY Case #", or, "No" to cancel out of the selection.

Preview

The Preview environment is currently available to those individuals who have requested access.

Please note: *The Preview environment, including the FAR functionality, is currently available to the Family Assessment Response Initiative participating districts.*

Preview is a 'sandbox' (like a demo environment) where you can see and work with the Q3-08 enhancements that will be implemented on October 10th. The Preview environment uses a 'snapshot', a point in time picture, of the production environment. You will see your actual stages when you log-in to Preview, but because Preview and Production are two separate environments, any changes that you make in Preview to your stages/cases will not be reflected in Production.

Q3-08 Highlights Document

The *Q3-08 Highlights* document presents a high-level overview of programmatic and application modifications and enhancements. It is one in a series of tools that define and describe in detail the system changes and enhancements that will be included in this Quarterly Improvement Plan. The *Q3-08 Highlights* are posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site and available via the following link:

http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/build%2018.10%20Q3_08_Highlights_FINAL_9_15_08%20-v3.pdf

Q3-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes Document

The *Q3-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes* provide an in-depth description of the improvements, modifications, enhancements (SIRS), and impacts that are included in this Quarterly Improvement Plan. It is one in a series of tools that define and describe in detail the system changes and enhancements that will be included in this Quarterly Improvement Plan. The Release Notes are posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site and are accessible via the following link:

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20Release%20Notes%20final.pdf>

Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid

The *Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid* is intended for CONNECTIONS users on different levels. It provides a detailed overview of the CONNECTIONS system changes and enhancements introduced in Q3-08 (Build 18.10). Specifically, this job aid contains information about enhancements in the following functional areas:

- Safety Assessment
- Risk Assessment Profile (RAP)
- To-Do
- Progress Notes
- Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD)

For your convenience, the job aid is posted to the CONNECTIONS Intranet site on the Step-by-Step/Job Aid/Tips page and is available via the following link:

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018-10%20Job%20Aid%20v5%200.pdf>

Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan Impact Analysis - *Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes*

The *Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan Impact Analysis - Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes* is intended for local management staff to provide an overview of the key elements in the upcoming Quarterly Improvement Plan, and outlines the anticipated impacts on local practice and procedure, with suggested actions the local district or voluntary agency might want to consider in implementing these improvements.

The *Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan Impact Analysis - Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes* is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet and is available via the following link:

[http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20%20Impact%20Analysis--Final-9-19-08%20\(3\).pdf](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20%20Impact%20Analysis--Final-9-19-08%20(3).pdf)

Q3-08 Tools

The following are a list of tools to aid in implementing the Q3-08 system improvements.

- An update to online HELP (within the CONNECTIONS application - also available within the Preview environment)
- The *Q3-08 Highlights*
http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/build%2018.10%20Q3_08_Highlights_FINAL_9_15_08%20-v3.pdf
- The *Q3-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes*
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20Release%20Notes%20final.pdf>
- The Q3-08 Impact Analysis document entitled: *CONNECTIONS Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Impact Analysis - Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes*
[http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20%20Impact%20Analysis--Final-9-19-08%20\(3\).pdf](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20%20Impact%20Analysis--Final-9-19-08%20(3).pdf)
- A job aid entitled: *Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid*
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018-10%20Job%20Aid%20v5%200.pdf>
- A CBT refresher on Risk and Safety Assessments (*in development*)
- An updated Safety/Risk Field Guide (*in development*)
- An Informational Letter about the Family Assessment Response (FAR) Initiative (for non-participating districts) (*in development*)
- A Family Assessment Response Job Aid (for participating districts) entitled: *CONNECTIONS Family Assessment Response Job Aid for Participating Districts*
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Family%20Assess%20Resp%20%20Job%20Aid%2010%208%2008.pdf>
- Teleconference entitled: *Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment*
Available at www.TrainingSpace.org (contact your Staff Development Coordinator to register for Training Space)



Regulations Regarding Criminal History Record Review of Applicants to be Certified or Approved Foster or Adoptive Parents

For your information: Regulations regarding criminal history record reviews of applicants to be certified or approved foster or adoptive parents, or currently certified or approved foster or adoptive parents were filed on an emergency basis on September 30, 2008 and will appear in the October 15, 2008 State Register. The regulations were effective as of October 1, 2008.

The regulations implement Chapter 623 of the Laws of 2008. The regulations reflect amendments to federal and state statutory standards relating to situations where such person has been convicted of a mandatory disqualifying crime. The regulations eliminate the category of presumptive disqualifying crime.

For more information about the regulations, click on the link below.

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/legal/Regulatory/er/>

Also consult 08-OCFS-ADM-06

[http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/policies/external/OCFS_2008/ADMs/08-OCFS-ADM-06%20Criminal%20History%20Record%20Checks%20and%20Mandatory%20Disqualifying%20Crimes%20\(Foster%20and%20Adoptive%20Parents\).pdf](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/policies/external/OCFS_2008/ADMs/08-OCFS-ADM-06%20Criminal%20History%20Record%20Checks%20and%20Mandatory%20Disqualifying%20Crimes%20(Foster%20and%20Adoptive%20Parents).pdf)



A NEW ADM 08-OCFS-ADM-06

**Criminal History Record Checks and Mandatory Disqualifying Crimes
(Foster and Adoptive Parents)**

Please note: This piece was in the last edition of the *CONNECTIONS NEWS*.

The purpose of this ADM is to notify social services districts, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, voluntary authorized agencies and in-state and out-of-state adoption agencies of the provisions of Chapter 623 of the Laws of 2008 that amended section 378-a (2) of the Social Services Law (SSL) regarding criminal history record checks for foster and adoptive parents. Effective October 1, 2008, certain felony crimes committed by applicants to be foster or adoptive parents will **mandatorily disqualify** them from becoming foster or adoptive parents. Furthermore, if already certified or approved foster or adoptive parents are convicted of these crimes after October 1, 2008, they must have their certification or approval **revoked**. Homes fully certified or approved prior to 10/1/08 with a presumptive disqualifier can remain open providing there is no conviction for a mandatory disqualifier after 10/1/08. The category of presumptive disqualifying crimes is eliminated as of 10/1/08 by Chapter 623 of the Laws of 2008.

[http://ocfs.state.nyenet/policies/external/OCFS_2008/ADMs/08-OCFS-ADM-06%20Criminal%20History%20Record%20Checks%20and%20Mandatory%20Disqualifying%20Crimes%20\(Foster%20and%20Adoptive%20Parents\).pdf](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/policies/external/OCFS_2008/ADMs/08-OCFS-ADM-06%20Criminal%20History%20Record%20Checks%20and%20Mandatory%20Disqualifying%20Crimes%20(Foster%20and%20Adoptive%20Parents).pdf)

This ADM is to be used in conjunction with 07-OCFS-ADM-01 [State and National Criminal History Record Checks (for Foster/Adoptive Parents)] issued on February 7, 2007, in order to have complete up-to-date guidance on the subject of criminal history record checks for foster and adoptive parents. 07-OCFS-ADM-01 remains in effect except for the provisions regarding presumptive disqualifying crimes.

Please note that attached to the ADM are:

- Attachment 1a - NOTICE REGARDING FINGERPRINTING REQUIREMENTS (English and Spanish); and

- Attachment 2a - DENIAL / REVOCATION LETTER / NOTICE OF RESULTS OF FINGERPRINTING / CRIMINAL RECORD FOUND (English and Spanish).

Once Q3-08 is implemented, these documents will be available directly from CONNECTIONS/FAD.



UPDATED - AFCARS Info - Data on AFCARS and Casework Contacts for Children in Care

Timeframes for reporting AFCARS data to the federal government are coming due! We advise that you continue to update the AFCARS information on children in foster care. **Note that the end date for inclusion of the information for purposes of federal reporting will be extended until October 22, 2008.**

Please also note that the data for the Children Missing Clinical Diagnosis has been refreshed. The report 'as of' date has been changed to 10/08/08.

It is critical that local district and voluntary agency staff update the AFCARS information for children in foster care, so that the federal report contains accurate information. In order to meet the identified timeframe, data will be extracted from the CONNECTIONS system through the date of September 30, 2008. However, as noted above, local districts and voluntary agencies have additional time to update the AFCARS information (on children in foster care).

The AFCARS submission is based on a served population. Information needs to be accurate for children served in foster care on the last day of the period, September 30, 2008, or children served in foster care during the 6-month period that began April 1, 2008. Correct and up-to-date entry of AFCARS information is a federal legal requirement.

AFCARS information includes the following:

- AFCARS information from the Placement Information Tab and the Removal Information Tab
- Diagnosis on Clinical Appointment window
- For CCR cases-AFCARS Adoption Information window accessed from the Adoption Finalization window

More help on navigation for entering AFCARS can be found in the AFCARS job aid entitled: *CONNECTIONS System Build 18.9.6 Job Aid Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Functionality for Foster Care Workers, Caseworkers, Case Planners and Case Managers.*

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/JA%20AFCARS%20Job%20Aid%20v1%200%203%2008.pdf>

The following reports are also available to identify which children do not currently have diagnosis information recorded in the Clinical Appointment tab that meets the qualifications of AFCARS information.

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwreports.asp>

For more information related to these activities please contact your CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Specialist.



UPDATED - A NEW Job Aid and ADM and on Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILP)

The SILP Administrative Directive (ADM) (coming soon)

The purpose of the Administrative Directive (ADM) is to inform social services districts, voluntary authorized agencies and Indian tribes (with a State/Tribal agreement) of the newly enacted standards and procedures for the approval of an authorized agency by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to operate a supervised independent living program (SILP programs) for foster children. The directive addresses both the transition of existing supervised independent living units certified by OCFS to supervised independent living units certified by approved SILP programs operated by authorized agencies, and the establishment of new SILP programs and units.

UPDATED - The Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) Job Aid

The SILP Job Aid is a quick guide to recording a new supervised independent living program, and maintaining existing ones, in CONNECTIONS.

The *Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) Job Aid* is posted to the CONNECTIONS Intranet site and can be accessed via the following link:

[http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/S%20I%20LP%20Job%20Aid%20 %2008-2.pdf](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/S%20I%20LP%20Job%20Aid%20%2008-2.pdf)

General "Info to Know"



CIO (NYS Chief Information Officer)-OFT (NYS Office for Technology) Customer Notification (08-CSM-04) - eMedNY VPN Tunnel Migration

Please note that this notification is for informational purposes only.

Audience for this notification

Agency Network teams supporting the VPN tunnels to CIO/OFT for access to eMedNY, and agency users of the DOH eMedNY and eMedNY Data Warehouse applications.

Overview

On October 13, 2008, DOH and CIO/OFT will be migrating the VPN tunnels that go to the CSC site for eMedNY and eMedNY Data Warehouse access.

Services Impacted

Users will not have access to eMedNY and the eMedNY Data Warehouse from 5:00 - 6:00p.m.on October 13, 2008.



NEW Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet

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

- The CONNECTIONS NEWS <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/>
- Q3-08 Improvement Plan Release Notes (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10) <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20Release%20Notes%20final.pdf>
- A Family Assessment Response Job Aid for Participating Local Districts <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Family%20Assess%20Resp%20%20Job%20Aid%2010%208%2008.pdf>



Weekly System Maintenance

Due to regularly scheduled system maintenance, the CONNECTIONS application will not be available on...

- **Friday, 10/10/08** from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM

There will be additional application downtime for the implementation of Q3-08 on:

- ****Friday, 10/10/08** from 6:00 PM, Friday 10/10 through midnight, Saturday 10/11 (a downtime of six hours)
- **Wednesday, 10/15/08** from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM
- **Friday, 10/17/08** from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM



Office of
Children & Family
Services
Gladys Carrión, Esq.
Commissioner