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## Casework Contact Initiative: A Success Story

In 2006, following research findings that frequent casework visits strongly correlate with positive outcomes for children, the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) passed the Child and Family Services Improvement Act. This federal legislation mandated specific data collection and reporting requirements regarding casework contacts, including that face to face contacts with each child in foster care must be made by a child's caseworker on a monthly basis.

Beginning in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007, OCFS was required to meet gradually increasing annual benchmarks. As of FFY 2011-2012 90% of foster children must be contacted each month by caseworkers. Failure to meet the federal standard triggers penalties that reduce the level of federal Title IV-B funding to the State.

ACF awarded grants nationally, including to New York State, to facilitate special efforts towards the achievement of the federal performance levels. With this funding, OCFS implemented several initiatives:

- ◇ A Web Based Training (WBT), "Documenting Casework Contacts with Foster Children", was created, providing guidance in areas such as improving documentation of contacts and best practices in maintaining frequent casework contacts. The course, which remains a valuable training tool, is available [here](#).

### OCFS Casework Contact Milestones and Status of Completion

Year	Benchmark	Achieved
2007-2008	15%	✓ 21.3%
2008-2009	45%	✓ 47.3%
2009-2010	75%	67.5%
2010-2011	90%	81.5%
2011-2012	90%	✓ 94.6%

- ◇ A tip sheet, which is available [here](#), was developed to assist staff in accessing and properly utilizing the Casework Contact Report.
- ◇ Laptops were distributed to foster care staff to assist them in documenting contacts made in the field.
- ◇ A small number of iPads were provided to selected staff to pilot the use of tablets in documenting casework contacts. Senior Independent Living Case Manager Mary Ellen Bussey, speaking to the effectiveness of the iPad pilot in improving the ease of casework visits, says, "As a participant in the iPad project, I can't say enough good things about the added mobility as a field worker. It is an outstanding advantage for every field worker who is in the pilot project. It has enabled me to enter notes in real time during the actual field visits & meetings."

CONNECTIONS  
INTRANET:

[http://ocfs.state.nyenet/  
connect](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect)

CONNECTIONS  
INTERNET:

[http://ocfs.ny.gov/  
connect](http://ocfs.ny.gov/connect)

- ◇ Lastly, training was offered to district and voluntary agency staff in the use of the voice-to-text software Dragon Naturally Speaking, in order to ease the documentation of contacts by enabling workers to enter information by speaking rather than by typing.

Ultimately, the state efforts, combined with the commitment and sustained efforts of local district and voluntary agency workers, has led to dramatic

annual improvement across the state—overall performance has gone from 15% in FFY 2007-8 to over 90% in 2011-12.

**From everyone on the CONNECTIONS Implementation and Communications Team, we offer you hearty congratulations for a job well done, and look forward to continued compliance with the federal casework contact standards, and more importantly, ongoing healthy outcomes for children in our care.**

## Did You Know...

### Helpful Resources

Ever have a question but don't know who to ask? The following list of useful links and mailboxes provides a comprehensive directory for all of your CONNECTIONS needs:

[CONNECTIONS Application Help Mailbox](#)

[LAN Admin Help Page](#)

[Data Warehouse Mailbox](#)

[Communications Mailbox](#)

[STARS Training Database](#)

[Training Space](#)

[Vista](#)

[District/Agency Profile \(DAP\)](#)

[CCRS Coding Guide](#)

[CONNECTIONS Security Internet Page](#)

[CONNECTIONS Security Intranet Page](#)

[Security Awareness Guidelines](#)

[Guidelines for Communicating Case Specific Information](#)

[Use of Laptops and Encryption](#)

[Portable Device Security](#)

[Use Your Own Device Security Information](#)

[SSL/VPN Page](#)

[VPN Page](#)

[ACS Intranet](#)

[ACS Policies and Procedures Helpdesk](#)



## July Computer Training Courses

New computer training classes are now available throughout the month of July, in both instructor-led computer labs and via distance-learning options like Training Space and iLinc.

Classes include:

- Excel 2010
- Word 2010
- Outlook 2010
- PowerPoint 2010

- OneNote Basics

These and additional courses will assist staff in transitioning to Microsoft Office 2010 and Windows 7. More extensive listings of the classroom and distance-learning courses are available on the CONNECTIONS websites at the following links:

[CONNECTIONS Computer Training \(Intranet\)](#)

[CONNECTIONS Computer Training \(Internet\)](#)



# CONNECTIONS Clue



## ***Progress Notes and FASPs: Hieroglyphics?***

Have you tried to print progress notes or FASPs and gotten “hieroglyphics” where your text should be? Lately there have been reports from the field about unusual looking narratives. Workers describe narrative text displayed as “hieroglyphics” or symbols - and not as letters – when it’s printed. But it looks fine in CONNECTIONS.

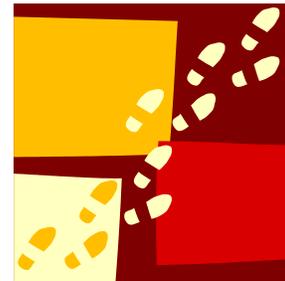
The solution? This is a printing problem. When the worker’s print drivers are uninstalled and reinstalled, the narratives are corrected and text displays correctly in alphanumeric format.

## Don’t Forget Past CONNECTIONS Clues!

Past CONNECTIONS Clues are available on the CONNECTIONS Website at:

[CONNECTIONS Clues](#) (Intranet)

[CONNECTIONS Clues](#) (Internet)



## Coming Next...



**In Our Next Issue:**

⇒ CONNECTIONS Clue: Draft of Final?

