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A Day in the Life: CONNECTIONS Triage

Whether or not you know it, you've probably been assisted somewhere along the line by the **CONNECTIONS Triage staff**—our local **CONNECTIONS experts** who serve as a second-level help desk at our home office in Rensselaer. Each of the four triage members specialize in different aspects of the **CONNECTIONS** application, and their areas of expertise will be covered in more detail below.

Before reading and understanding the profiles of these vital team members, it is important to clarify how best to seek their assistance. When you encounter an issue with the **CONNECTIONS** application, your first line of contact should always be your **CONNECTIONS** regional Implementation Specialists or Business Analysts. Although they do not always have the specifically tailored knowledge of the triage unit, their span of expertise is far broader and they usually are most suited to locally assist staff with **CONNECTIONS** issues. In the event that your **CONNECTIONS** issue requires more specialized knowledge, you should contact the triage unit by emailing the app_help mailbox at ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.ny.gov. This will reach the triage unit directly, as opposed to first contacting the NYS Customer Care Center. Alternatively, the Customer Care Center (at **1-800-697-1323**) should be a first point of contact for error messages, access issues, or delay/latency complications. Please review the chart below for examples as to the correct path to take when seeking application support.

Type of Question		Who to Contact
"How to" Questions		Implementation/ Triage
Latency		Customer Care Center
Access Issues		Customer Care Center
Error Messages		Customer Care Center
Any Questions in ACS		First contact ACS helpdesk at 212-513-9671

Triage is comprised of members **Paula Ainspan, Connie Jo Fedorwich, Brian Grey, and Nancy Mahar**. Each triage member will comment on their responsibilities on the following two pages.

CONNECTIONS INTRANET:

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect>

CONNECTIONS INTERNET:

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/connect>



Paula Ainspan

Areas of Expertise:

1) Access, 2) Approval, 3) Assignments, 4) Address Validations, 5) Resource IDs, 6) Security, 7) To Do's, 8) Webstar

Time in CONNECTIONS: Thirteen years

Background: Paula has a Bachelors in Elementary Education and a Masters in Special Education. She served as a Caseworker at Albany County DSS for seventeen years before joining the Triage team as a Children and Family Services Specialist in 2000.

Advice to the Field: “Just like Goldilocks & the Three Bears, remember: don’t assign staff too many business functions or too few business functions but *just* the “right” amount to successfully complete their work. These functions are not meant to be forever, but to apply to the type of work staff are assigned to do at any given time.”

Connie Jo Fedorwich

Areas of Expertise:

1) Bridges to Health (B2H) & Health, 2) Education, 3) Family Service Stage (FSS) 4) Family Assessment Service Plan (FASP) / Plan Amendment, 5) Person Maintenance — FSS, 6) Permanency Hearing Reports (PHR), 7) Service Plan Reviews, 8) Tracked Children Detail

Time in CONNECTIONS: Nine years total, three in Triage.

Background: Connie Jo has an Associates degree in Information Technology. Prior to becoming an IT Specialist in the Triage unit in 2006, Connie Jo was an Implementation Specialist at the CONNECTIONS field support center for two years.

Advice to the Field: “Check all of your dates to make sure they are correct before launching a FASP (i.e. the Case Initiation Date (CID), Program Choice/PPG Effective Date in the Tracked Children Detail Window). It is also important to ensure that before freeing a child for adoption and creating a CCR, progress notes are complete, the FASP and Plan Amendment are approved, and the PHR is final.”





Brian Grey

Areas of Expertise:

1) Consolidation, 2) Maintain Allegations, 3) Merge/Split, 4) Person Maintenance — CPS, 5) Person Maintenance — WMS, 6) Risk Assessment and Safety Assessment—CPS, 7) Stage Composition — CPS, 8) WMS

Time in CONNECTIONS: Thirteen years total, five in Triage.

Background: Brian has a B.S. in Psychology. He worked at the State Central Register (SCR) for eight years, four years

registering reports of child abuse or maltreatment and four additional years supervising SCR staff. In 2008, he joined the triage staff as a Children and Family Services Specialist.

Advice to the Field: “Always merge with extreme caution. What could take only a few clicks of the mouse to complete can take hours and multiple staff at the state and local level to correct if a merge is done incorrectly. It is also important to understand the difference between a *bad relate* and a *bad merge*. Finally, if you recognize an error, always ask for assistance while the stage is open; many times the solution is easier while the stage remains open.”

Nancy Mahar

Areas of Expertise:

1) Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD), 2) Family Services Intake (FSI), 3) Local Protocol, 4) Narrative Loss, 5) Printing, 6) Progress Notes, 7) Stage Composition —FAD, 8) KinGAP

Time in CONNECTIONS: Eight years total, six years in FAD.

Background: Nancy has a B.S. in Business, Management, and Economics, with a concentration in Technology Management.

She worked for ten years in voluntary agencies with the homeless in the Capital District, especially homeless women and children, before transitioning to a technical work environment. Nancy’s state tenure began as an intern with the NYS Office for Technology, working in the IT Unit and Customer Relations, where she was introduced to CONNECTIONS. In 2005, Nancy joined the Triage Unit, first in a contract position, and then as a Technology Specialist. In her own words, “Sometimes life takes such interesting twists and turns—I was a foster child who was adopted, and today I am helping workers with foster homes and adoption subsidies.”

Advice to the Field: “Don’t wait until the last day to recertify a foster home. Check your To-Do’s daily, and use the OCI report to manage your work.”



December Computer Training Courses Now Available



New **computer training** courses are available for the month of December in both instructor-led classrooms and via distance-learning options like Training Space and iLinc.

Featured in classroom training in December is the new course: *Word 2010 Level 2: Working with Complex Documents*. In addition, classroom training will feature *Visio 2010: Getting Started—Diagrams, Flowcharts, and Organization Charts*.

Online courses feature *NYSeMail: 90 Day*

Email Retention (applicable to HSEN email accounts only) and *Excel 2010: Charts and Graphics*. December's featured TrainingSpace course is *Moving to Office 2010*.

The full list of courses is available at the following links.

December Classroom Training
([Intranet](#) / [Internet](#))

December Distance Learning
([Intranet](#) / [Internet](#))



CONNECTIONS Clue

A child on my workload has been freed and I'm trying to create a CCR, but I'm getting an error message. Is there a workaround?

In short, yes! This is a common issue—but it does have an easy solution!

In the FSS:

1. Navigate to the Tracked Children Detail window (FASP tab > Tracked Children button > Placement Information tab).
2. Highlight the child's name to reveal the CCRS/ CONNECTIONS Placement Data.
3. Click the View/Edit button.
4. Write down the information in the CONNECTIONS Information on the right side of the screen (You'll need this information in a later step).
5. Click the Delete button.
6. Click the Save button.
7. Return to the Placement Information window and click the checkbox to completely free the child and create the CCR.

Be sure all the necessary steps have been completed before recording the child as freed. (See box).

In the newly created CCR:

8. Repeat steps 1-3, above.
9. Re-enter the placement information on the CONNECTIONS side of the window.
10. Click the Save button.



BEFORE CREATING THE CHILD CASE RECORD

- ⇒ *Be sure all Casework Contacts & progress notes relating to the child have been entered in the FSS.*
- ⇒ *Make sure any Service Plan Review documentation involving the child is complete.*
- ⇒ *Check to be sure no FASP or Plan Amendment is in pending status.*
- ⇒ *Check to be sure all PHRs for the child are in Final status.*
- ⇒ *Be sure required AFCARS information has been entered on the Placement Information and Removal Information tabs in the Tracked Child Detail window of FASP module.*
- ⇒ *Verify that the WMS case linked to the Family Services Stage is in "No Pend" status.*
- ⇒ *Verify that CCRS legal, movement and adoption activities are up to date.*

