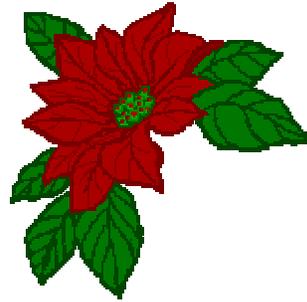
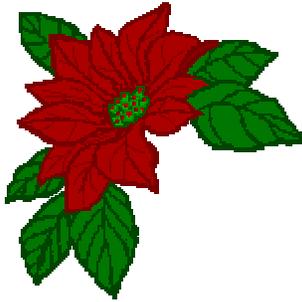
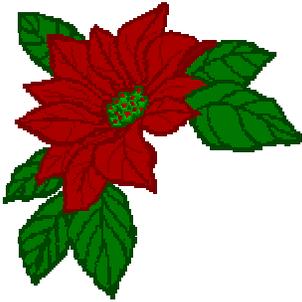


~The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY~
December 16 ~ 23, 2005



CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 ...

Permanency Bill

CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 is on target for implementation this weekend. A window of six hours of downtime, beginning Friday, 12/16/05 from 6:00 PM, through 12:00 AM, Saturday, 12/17/05 is scheduled. We ask that users log out of the CONNECTIONS Application by 5:45 PM on Friday (12/16).

For informational purposes, the Build 18.7 Highlights and the Build 18.7 Release Notes, documents that define the impact of the Permanency Bill on the CONNECTIONS Application, are posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet site on the Implementation and News For Users pages.

CONNECTIONS Permanency Bill System Build 18.7 Job Aid...

Please note that the CONNECTIONS Permanency Bill System Build 18.7 Job Aid is available and posted to the CONNECTIONS website on the Desk/Job Aid page.

CONNECTIONS Training Schedule...

January through March 2006

The statewide schedule for January through March 2006 has been posted in the Statewide Training Automated Registration System (STARS). The link to the STARS website is <http://stars.bsc-cdhs.org>. To access schedule and registration information, follow the links based on whether you are from a voluntary agency or local district. Once you are at the schedule inquiry page, to search for CONNECTIONS training schedules, use the drop down menus to choose SUNY TSG (CONNECTIONS) for "Provider" and Systems CONNECTIONS for "Course Content"; then enter the date and region parameters that fit your request.

Pre-registration for all courses is required. Please use STARS for your registration needs. If you have technical problems with STARS, or need STARS training, please contact STARS Technical Support at 1-800-413-3210.

The full training announcement is posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet website on the Training Info & Schedule page.

*****Please note that local districts and voluntary agencies should follow their agencies protocol/policy when registering for any training.***

General Information System Communications...

Topic: Permanency Bill; CCRS input of "Date Certain"

The information below was communicated to Directors of Service and WMS Coordinators, in a General Information System (GIS) message on November 23, 2005.

The permanency legislation changes the frequency of permanency hearings for children who are subject to proceedings under:

- Article 10 Abuse/Neglect; both in placement and in direct care/relative custody
- Voluntary Placement Agreements
- Completely legally free for adoption
- Voluntary Surrender
- Article 651.b Refugee Assistance

The initial permanency hearing for non-completely freed Article 10, voluntarily placed or Article 651.b children must be commenced no later than 8 months from the removal to placement or to direct care and every six months thereafter. This is a change from the twelve-month cycle that has been the standard. A “date certain” for the next hearing will be set at each hearing, so that families and staff will all know exactly when the next court activity on permanency will take place. No petitions are filed for this population and legal authority is retained without any lapses, as the court holds continuing jurisdiction. The Judge may order the hearing earlier than six months from the current hearing date, but no later than six months. The Permanency hearing must be concluded no later than 30 days from commencement.

How to Update CCRS:

Beginning on December 21, 2005 the “date certain” will be brought forward from CCRS into CONNECTIONS as a view only data field. Alerts will be generated to the assigned workers for Service Plan Reviews Plan Amendments, when appropriate and submission of the Permanency Hearing Report based upon this “date certain”.

Local districts and Family Courts may have already begun to calendar hearings based upon the new timeframes. In order to get the benefit of the cues in CONNECTIONS, the “date certain” must be entered in CCRS. If a local district has begun working with their Family Court and has obtained a “date certain” for the next appearance in court it can be entered in CCRS in the following way:

- Contra the legal activity, for example the last hearing (L300) where, under the new law, a “date certain” would have been required and reenter it using the same data (activity date, type and outcome(s)) and include the new “date certain” in the MOD D field. This will maintain the legal history accurately.

Waiting until the next court activity to update CCRS is, of course, an option. However, users will **NOT** receive any cues in CONNECTIONS, unless the “date certain” is entered in CCRS. After 12/21/05 any permanency related activity in CCRS with a date in the MOD D field, including “next hearing dates” entered prior to 12/21/05, will be brought forward into CONNECTIONS. A series of alert cues will be generated based upon that “next hearing date/date certain”, for the permanency hearing report, Service Plan Review and any necessary Plan Amendments for children entering foster or direct care.

*This, and other GIS messages are available in the Public Folders: All Public Folders/dfa.state.ny.us/OCFS/TSU/ ***Services systems Reference Documents/ GIS (system change notices)*

Quick Tips...

FASP and Progress Notes Reminder

Please Note: Narrative fields in the FASP and Progress Note components of the CONNECTIONS application are text fields only. If a user attempts to paste an entire WORD document, a scanned document, a picture, a table or a screen print into a narrative field it can result in the user being unable to view or print the FASP or Progress Note. It is recommended that users copy and paste **text** only into narrative fields.

Confidentiality and Records Integrity

Please Note: To preserve the confidentiality and integrity of records associated with an adopted child, **do not** put the new legal name of a child who is being adopted in any Text Narrative or Comment Box, including the Stage Closure Question, in the CWS or CCR stages. The new legal name is appropriately entered on the Finalized Adoption Window in the CCR only.

CID Dates and the WMS Case Opening Document...

A document that explains the creation of the Case Initiation Date (CID) within CONNECTIONS and the relationship between the CID and the WMS opening date was created based on an identified user need. The document was developed through the joint efforts of the CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Field Support staff. The CONNECTIONS User Acceptance Testing team also reviewed the document. We would like to thank those individuals on both of the teams who developed and reviewed this document!

When CONNECTIONS Will Be Unavailable...

- **Friday, 12/16/05** from 5:00AM - 7:00AM
- **Friday, 12/16/05** from 6:00PM - 12:00AM, **Saturday, 12/17/05** (a projected six hour downtime for the implementation of Build 18.7)
- **Wednesday, 12/14/05** from 5:00AM - 7:00AM
- **Friday, 12/23/05** from 5:00AM - 7:00AM