

*~The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY~*  
*December 23 ~ 30, 2005*



***The Successful Implementation of CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 ...***

CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 was successfully implemented this past weekend (December 16<sup>th</sup>). 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.

***Update Information ~ Templates for the Permanency Hearing Reports, the Statement to the Court of Permanency Hearing Reports and Notices Sent, The Notice of Permanency Hearing, "A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report" and Surrender Template Information...***

As you are aware, Wednesday, December 21, 2005 was the effective date for much of the Permanency Bill.

***Templates for the Permanency Hearing Reports, the Statement to the Court of Permanency Hearing Reports and Notices Sent, The Notice of Permanency Hearing***

We are pleased to tell you that we have made a number of improvements to the Permanency Hearing Reports (PH-1, PH-2, and PH-3) and the Statement to the Court of Permanency Hearing Reports and Notices Sent (PH-4a). [The Notice of Permanency Hearing (PH-4 dated 9/2005) remains unchanged.] The improvements include: **spell check** which is enabled on the reports and an **"add a row"** button that has been added on the reports and statement. These templates have been reposted to the OCFS internet website and those that have been changed have a revision date of 12/21/2005. "A Guide for Caseworkers:

Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report" has also been revised (revision date 12/2005) to reflect the changes and has also been reposted to the OCFS internet website.

**If any users previously downloaded the above-mentioned documents/templates we advise that they do so again in order to have the newest versions. Please note: no content on the reports or statement has been changed.**

### **Surrender Templates**

Also posted on the same section of the OCFS internet website are fillable **surrenders** as follows:

- **the Judicial Surrender (LDSS 4315)**
- **Attachment to a Judicial Conditional Surrender**
- **Extra-Judicial Surrender (LDSS 4316)**
- **Attachment to an Extra-Judicial Conditional Surrender**

Please note that the Surrenders are English versions only. These revised documents reflect the Chapter 3 amendments and are required forms. Spanish versions will be available shortly and you will be advised when those are posted. A **Model Voluntary Placement Agreement** reflecting Chapter 3 amendments (English and Spanish) will also be available shortly and you will be advised when those are posted as well.

### **Emergency Regulation Information**

In addition, it is expected that **emergency regulations** will be filed very soon. Emergency regulations go into effect on the filing date. You will immediately be notified when this occurs and will be sent, at that time, the complete package.

### **Instructions for Accessing the Permanency Templates, Guide and Surrender Templates**

The templates, the Guide and the Surrenders can be accessed from the **OCFS internet site**. The address of the site is: [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us).

***Instructions for accessing the Permanency templates and "A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report", or Surrender templates from the OCFS internet site.***

- Access the OCFS internet site at [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us);
- on the left under "Resources & Information" click on "Legislation and Regulatory Agenda";
- from that page, click on "Permanency Bill - Chapter 3 of 2005";
- from that page, on the left click on "Guide for Caseworkers/Templates" **OR** left click on "Surrenders".

***Instructions for accessing the Permanency templates and "A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report" or Surrender templates from the OCFS intranet site Home page.***

- click on OCFS;
- from that page click on OCFS internet at the top right;
- on the left under "Resources & Information" click on "Legislation and Regulatory Agenda";
- from that page, click on "Permanency Bill - Chapter 3 of 2005";
- from that page, on the left click on "Guide for Caseworkers/Templates" **OR** left click on "Surrenders".

We ask that you download and review the revised Guide first, as it contains complete instructions about downloading, saving and using the templates.

If you have any questions about working with the templates, please call the OFT Enterprise HELP Desk at 1.800.697.1323.

### ***Permanency Bill Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQ's) Document...***

***Instructions for accessing the Permanency Bill FAQ's from the OCFS internet site.***

- Access the OCFS internet site at [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us);
- on the left under "Resources & Information" click on "Legislation and Regulatory Agenda";
- from that page, click on "Permanency Bill - Chapter 3 of 2005";
- from that page, on the left click on "Permanency Bill FAQ's".

### ***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”...**

#### *Progress Notes Tips...*

- User is unable to see the New Progress Note they just entered in the active Progress Note window. For viewing a new note, the user must enter a range of dates in the search criteria that includes the event date of the desired new note and refine the search criteria so that it returns less than 400 entries. It is recommended that users enter the 30 days proceeding the current date.

- When the user selects Print All on a case with more than 400 progress notes there is a delay while the report is being called up. For printing it is recommended that users enter a 30 day date range in the search criteria. Users should check that the last entry contains all notes entered on the last date in the selected range. Once these notes have been printed the user must then enter a new 30 day range of dates beginning with the day following the previous date range. This procedure should continue until all notes in a case are printed.

#### *Case Initiation Date and the First Reassessment FASP...*

With the implementation of Build 18.7 there is a change in the date the *first* Reassessment FASP is due. Previously, the first Reassessment FASP was due six (6) months from the Case Initiation Date (CID) (Day 180). In order to support the new timeframes taking effect as a result of the Permanency Bill, the due date for this FASP is 210 days from the CID. Subsequent Reassessment FASPs are due every six (6) months thereafter. Please note that the change in timeframes for the first reassessment FASP is changed for all FASPs, not just those relating to children who are in placement.

#### ***When CONNECTIONS Will Be Unavailable...***

- ***Friday, 12/23/05*** from 5:00AM - 7:00AM
- ***Wednesday, 12/28/05*** from 5:00AM - 7:00AM
- ***Friday, 12/30/05*** from 5:00AM - 7:00AM