

Module 3: Stage Composition Tab and Tracked Children Detail Window

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Introduction and Rationale

This module provides guidance for completing the Stage Composition tab and Tracked Children Detail window accurately and completely.

The Stage Composition tab is a place to record key demographic information about all persons in the family/household/case. The Tracked Children Detail window further identifies the Program Choices and Permanency Planning Goals for each child receiving services.

CONNECTIONS will automatically customize the sections of the FASP that must be completed for a given family based upon the time frame of the FASP and information contained on the Stage Composition tab and Tracked Children Detail window. This tab and window have a significant impact on customization of the FASP, and together they determine:

- Who is available in the drop-down lists in on the Progress Notes tab and the Family/Child Visiting Plan
- Which Safety Assessment is generated for a given case
- Who is listed (and whether or not their assessment is optional) in the SNR Scales
- Which Foster Care Issues sections are generated and required for a child

The accuracy of Stage Composition and Tracked Children Detail information is critical to the correct customization of the FASP. Failure to update or to verify the accuracy of this information may result in the caseworker completing the wrong portions of the FASP or omitting portions that are necessary to provide an accurate assessment and plan for the family. The caseworker must be sure the Stage Composition and Tracked Children Detail information is accurate before launching a FASP.

The FASP is based on a family-focused, child-centered model of assessment and planning. The persons listed on the Stage Composition tab, along with the Program Choice(s) and Permanency Planning Goal assigned to each child, should reflect the family's plan and the work of all child welfare agencies involved with the family, not just the primary worker's part in it.

The accuracy of the data on the Stage Composition tab reflects how family-focused the caseworker really is in his/her work with the family, and whether the caseworker has an accurate picture of who in the child's world impacts the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child.

Stage Composition Tab

Family Services Stage - Collins,Kristy - S:24001983/C:34000535

File Options Reports Help

Case Name: Collins,Kristy Case Initiation Date: 9/27/2004 WMS App Reg

Stage Composition
Family Assessment and Service Plan
Service Plan Review
Progress Notes
Permanency
Case Summary
Education
Health Services

Person List

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Suffix	Person Id	M/S	Sch	*DOB	Approx	Age	
Collins	Kristy			14003385		V	02/19/1974	No	34	
Collins	Kimberly			14003388		V	08/16/1997	No	11	
Collins	Patrick			14003387		V	04/22/1989	No	19	
Collins	Thomas			14003386		V	11/24/1965	No	42	
Collins	Tyler			14003389		V	03/30/2004	No	4	

Person Identifiers

INV	Type	Number	Start Date	End Date
*				

***Ethnicity**

Non-Hispanic or Latino
 Central American
 Caribbean
 Cuban
 Dominican
 Mexican
 North American
 Puerto Rican
 South American

***Race**

Native African
 Other - Black or Afri
 Alaskan Native
 American Indian
 Asian
 Chinese
 Indian
 Japanese
 Korean
 Other - Asian

Address
Phone
Relationship Matrix
Add/Relate
Caretaker
Save
Cancel

Close

Quick Tips for Completing the Stage Composition Tab

- Check the accuracy of this tab and update as needed before launching a new FASP.
- Include all adults in both the Primary and Secondary Caretaker's household(s).
- Include both legal parents of each child in foster care (and their current partners if known), even if they were not living with the child prior to placement.
- Include all children living in the household or who are anticipated to return to the household, even if the caseworker is not providing services directly to them.
- End date any person no longer associated with a case (e.g., a child whose custody has been permanently transferred to a relative). Do not end date a child in placement or other temporary living arrangement, as he/she is still part of the case.
- Where applicable, include adults and children in multiple households.
- Check the accuracy of the Primary and Secondary Caretaker. (See the Primary/Secondary Caretaker criteria in *Appendix 3A: Definitions and Identifying Criteria*.)
- Use a family map or genogram to help identify legal parents/household members.
- Update any new or revised information (e.g., address, phone, DOB, ethnicity).
- Complete the Family Relationship Matrix.

Tracked Children Detail Window

Tracked Children Detail - Collins, Kristy - S:24001983/C:34000535
File Options Help

Program Choice/PPG Placement Information Associate Worker Removal Information

Select Children: All

Child	Age	CaseWorker
Collins, Kimberly	11	
Collins, Patrick	19	
Collins, Tyler	4	

Program Choice Information

Program Choice	Eff Date	End Date
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Program Choice:

Effective Date:

End Date:

Permanency Planning Goal (PPG) Information

PPG	Eff Date	End Date	Ant
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*PPG:

*Subcategory:

Effective Date: End Date:

*Anticipated Completion Date:

View Active All

Quick Tips for Completing the Tracked Children Detail Window

- Check the accuracy of this window and update as needed before launching a new FASP.
- Include all children known to be living in the home* of either the Primary Caretaker or Secondary Caretaker. If anyone has not been included, add them to the Stage Composition tab.
- Track appropriate children (i.e., assign an appropriate Program Choice(s) and PPG). See definitions of Program Choices and PPGs in *Appendix 3B: Program Choices* and *Appendix 3C: Permanency Planning Goals*.
- Verify that each child has the correct Program Choice(s).
- All children in a home with an open or Indicated CPS/Protective case should have a Program Choice of Protective.
- Verify that for each tracked child, the PPG is appropriate to case circumstances and needs of the child, and is consistent with decisions made at the most recent planning conference with the family, and with any court appearance.
- A child listed on the Stage Composition tab who is no longer associated with the case (i.e., a freed child, or a child whose custody has been transferred to a relative) should be end dated. A child in placement or other temporary living arrangement is still part of the case, and should not be end dated.

Tracked Children Detail

To get an accurate picture of which children to list on a case, it is necessary to know the legal status of children who currently live elsewhere, but who are anticipated or likely to return to the home to be under the care of the Primary Caretaker/Secondary Caretaker.

*For children in foster care, the “home” refers to the home of the Primary Caretaker/Secondary Caretaker; there may be more than one “household” if parents or other permanency resources live separately.

Frequently Asked Questions

Which adults should be listed on the Stage Composition tab?

The specific circumstances and needs of the family will ultimately determine who should be added to the Person List grid on the Stage Composition tab. The general rule is to include all adults known to be living in or frequenting the home. This can include:

- Legal parents/caretakers living in the child’s home*.
- Parent’s spouse/partner/other adults who live in the home. To get an accurate picture of which adults to list on a case, it is necessary to know the legal status of parents/adults who live elsewhere, yet may be considered part of this family/household, and who are anticipated or likely to return to this household.
- Legal parents who live elsewhere, even if they do not have custody of the children.
- Legal parents who are currently in prison, rehab, a hospital, or who are temporarily barred from the home. (End date deceased parents, or those whose rights have been surrendered or terminated.)
- Legal parents of each child in foster care (and their current partners if known), even if they were not living with the child prior to the placement.
- All adults listed in the CPS case, including but not limited to all people residing in the children’s home.
- Other adults who are considered a part of this family/household, but are temporarily living elsewhere, are in prison, rehab, or hospitalized, or temporarily barred from the home, but who are anticipated to return to this home. (Examples include a parent’s partner who is in prison but is anticipated to return to the home in the near future; an adult sibling of the child who regularly resides in the home but is currently in rehab; and other relatives who usually live in the home but who are temporarily hospitalized.)
- Siblings over the age of eighteen who reside in the home.
- Relatives/friends for whom this is their primary residence and/or who serve as parenting partners.
- Other adults who have child care responsibility within the home or frequent contact with the children and assume a caretaker role.

*The adults and children listed on the Stage Composition tab are those living in or associated with this “family of origin.” For a nonfreed child, this is the home/family that is the focus of the work, not the foster home. A freed child no longer has a Primary Caretaker/Secondary Caretaker; the focus of the work is on permanency through other means (i.e., adoption, or other permanent resource connection).

What if the parents live separately?

If the children's parents live separately, there may be more than one household to assess and to work with. Along with the Parent/Caretaker or Child SNR Scales for each individual, two sets of Family SNR Scales will need to be completed, one for each household. CONNECTIONS will recognize multiple households by the addresses listed for each adult on the Stage Composition tab.

For a foster care case, where parents are living separately, adults and children in both households should be listed on the Stage Composition tab, and thus included in the family's assessment. Both parents have a legal right and responsibility to plan for the children, and both parents should be assessed as part of the overall plan for a child.

For a nonfoster care case, the specific circumstances and needs of the family will help determine who should be the focus of the casework assessment and services, and thus who should be listed on the Stage Composition tab.

Why should caseworkers assess noncustodial parents and other adults in the household?

Generally, any noncustodial parent or other adult who regularly lives with the child, acts in a parenting capacity, or has access to the child within the home should be listed on the Stage Composition tab. The noncustodial parent or other adults living in the family home will likely affect the parent's ability to plan for and provide a safe, permanent home for the child. Assessment of these individuals is critical to a complete understanding of family functioning.

Any parent who continues to have or seeks contact with the child, and who has a significant role in raising the child, should be listed on the Stage Composition tab and assessed as to his/her impact on the child and functioning of the child's household.

A parent's spouse/partner or other adults living in/or frequenting the child's home will likely impact the parent's ability to plan and provide a safe, permanent home for the child. Assessment of these individuals' roles within the family is critical to a complete understanding of family functioning. They should be listed in the Person List grid, assessed in the SNR Scales, and included on the Family Assessment Analysis window as:

- They may present safety threats or offset safety issues.
- They may affect the level of risk in the household.
- They may share parenting responsibilities.
- They can provide additional information or alternative viewpoints regarding circumstances within the home.
- Their beliefs and actions may affect parental behavior and decisions.
- They may serve as potential alternative resources should the parent be unable to raise the child.
- Their relationship with the parent and/or with the child may be a key factor in the success of any change effort.

What if there is a concurrent permanency plan?

The PPG determines the primary focus of the FASP. The focus of the Assessment and Service Plan should be on the Primary Caretaker and Secondary Caretaker household(s).

In circumstances where the caseworker is actively working on an alternative permanency plan, it may be decided (in concert with the caseworker's supervisor and the Case Manager) to assess additional adults beyond those living in the Primary Caretaker/Secondary Caretaker household(s) who are likely to serve as alternative permanency resources. In order for these individuals to display and be assessed in the SNR Scales, the caseworker will first need to add them to the Stage Composition tab. This needs to be completed before launching the FASP.

What is the significance of the Primary Caretaker and Secondary Caretaker to the FASP?

It is important to identify the correct individuals as Primary Caretaker and Secondary Caretaker, as this will determine how points are assigned in the RAP. The individual with more contact and greater child care responsibility (assumed to be the Primary Caretaker) will likely be the individual having the greatest impact on the level of risk in the household. Thus, he/she carries more weight when assessing risk in the household.

The FASP SNR Scales must be completed for adults identified as a Primary Caretaker or Secondary Caretaker. The SNR Scales may also be completed for other adults listed on the Stage Composition tab. Completion of the SNR Scales for these other adults will not be required in order to submit a FASP for approval. However, it is highly recommended (and required in some districts) that all adults be assessed in order to have an accurate picture of the strengths, needs, issues, and concerns within the household.

Decisions about who to assess in the SNR Scales should be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with one's supervisor and the Case Manager, based upon the needs of each case. For further discussion of this decision making, see *Module 7: Strengths, Needs, and Risks (SNR)*.

Which children should be listed on the Stage Composition tab?

All children living in the home or who have a plan to return to this household should be listed on the Stage Composition tab, even if the caseworker is not providing services directly to them.

This may include siblings, half siblings, stepsiblings, cousins, or other children for whom the parent is responsible. Include children:

- Who are currently living in the Primary Caretaker/Secondary Caretaker household(s)
- Whose plan is to return to the home of the Primary Caretaker/Secondary Caretaker
- Who are considered part of this family/household, but who are currently in foster care, a hospital, detention, rehab, with relatives, or other temporary living arrangements
- Who are in the joint custody of the Primary Caretaker or Secondary Caretaker, and who spend a significant amount of time in this home
- Who are currently missing or AWOL (away without leave) from this home

The caseworker may wish to use a family map or genogram to help identify all children living in the home or who are anticipated to return to this home.

What address is listed on the Stage Composition tab for a child in foster care or living in another temporary alternative arrangement?

For a nonfreed child in a foster home/facility, or temporarily living with a relative/other resource, the child's primary address should be recorded as that of the case address, which is usually the address of the Primary Caretaker. This enables CONNECTIONS to recognize the child as a member of the parent's/legal guardian's household for the purpose of completing the SNR Scales. A child with a primary address different from the Primary Caretaker will be viewed as head of household at the other location, and will result in Family Scales being generated for the child. Such scales apply only to an adult head of household, or in the case of a minor who is a parent/Primary Caretaker.

A freed child has no legal parents, so a freed child's address is the address of the district that has custody of the child.

Which children are "tracked?"

All children receiving Protective, Preventive, or Placement services must be tracked. This is the only way to get an agency-wide, district-wide, and statewide accounting of how many children are being served by the child welfare system, and what their goals are for permanency. Program Choice and PPG will also determine which sections of the FASP must be completed. Be sure these are accurate before launching a FASP.

For a family receiving CPS/Protective services, all children living in the household or with a plan to return to that household must be given a Program Choice of Protective, not just the child who was/is the target of abuse or neglect.

For families with children in foster care, the "home" refers to the home that is the identified permanency resource; there may be more than one permanency resource if parents or other permanency resources live separately.

To get an accurate picture of which children to list on a case, it is necessary to know the legal status of children who currently live elsewhere, but who are anticipated or likely to return to this home under the care of this Primary Caretaker/Secondary Caretaker.

What is the significance of the Family Relationship Matrix?

The Family Relationship Matrix provides a means of understanding the legal and biological relationships of adults and children listed on the Stage Composition tab. While the persons listed on the Stage Composition tab tell the caseworker who is in this family/household, it is also critical that the caseworker accurately identify each member's biological/legal relationship. While engagement of all family/household members is important to a successful change effort, the legal/biological relationship of adults and children will determine key rights and responsibilities of family members, and will also significantly impact the case planning and case legal activities.

The Family Relationship Matrix must be completed or updated in order to launch a FASP, and must be updated each time a person is added to a case. To accurately and thoroughly complete the Family Relationship Matrix, it may be helpful to construct a genogram/family map to help the caseworker identify all relevant adults and children associated with a given case.

When can “Protective” be removed as a Program Choice?

Addition or deletion of the Protective Program Choice has a significant impact on customization of the FASP (i.e., it determines which Safety Assessment is presented and whether or not a scored RAP is presented and calculated). Protective can be removed as a Program Choice when there is no longer a need for a CPS-focused assessment in a case. The following three circumstances must all be present for the Protective Program Choice to be removed:

- There are no children likely to be in immediate danger of serious harm *and* there is no longer a need for controlling safety interventions to remain in place at this time.
- The Final RAP or Risk Rating has reached an acceptable level. (See *Module 6* for RAP information.)
- The Service Plan shows an acceptable level of outcome achievement for the most significant identified problems.

Other circumstances when Protective can be removed include:

- All children in a case are freed for adoption.
- All children in foster care have a PPG of APLA (Another Planned Living Arrangement), either with a permanency resource or to adult residential care.

All of the above situations need to be considered on a case-by-case basis with the input of a supervisor and others involved in the case. It will be important to include a current thorough assessment of the family circumstances in making this decision.

Who can enter information or make changes to the Stage Composition tab and Tracked Children Detail window?

Anyone with a role of Case Manager, Case Planner, Case Worker, or CPS Worker/Monitor in a given case can make changes to the Stage Composition tab and Tracked Children Detail window within that case (i.e., the business function profile within the CONNECTIONS system enables persons with these roles to make such changes). However, local policy in some districts may only allow the Case Manager to make these changes. Voluntary agency workers should check with their Case Manager for clarification of local policy about who can make such changes.

Appendix

3A: Definitions and Identifying Criteria

The definitions below will help identify who to include on the Stage Composition tab, and the correct Primary Caretaker and Secondary Caretaker.

Who to Include on the Stage Composition Tab:

- All people listed in the CPS case, including but not limited to all people residing in the children's home
- Any person who has child care responsibility or frequent contact with the children and assumes a caretaker role
- Any child who is in foster care or alternative placement with a permanency planning goal of Return Home or APLA
- Any children who have run away or are temporarily in another living situation, but who are expected to return home

Identifying the Primary Caretaker:

- The Primary Caretaker is an adult who is legally responsible for the children and resides with the children.
- When more than one person who is legally responsible for the children resides in the household, the birth mother is presumed to be the Primary Caretaker. For an adopted child, this would be the adoptive mother.
- If the mother does not physically reside with the children, the Primary Caretaker is the adult who does reside in the children's home and assumes primary responsibility for the care of the children.
- There can only be one Primary Caretaker.

Identifying the Secondary Caretaker:

- Not every family has a Secondary Caretaker.
- The Secondary Caretaker is an adult who lives in the children's home and assumes some responsibility for the care of the children.
- An adult who does not reside in the children's home, but cares for the children on a regular basis.
- If there are two or more potential Secondary Caretakers with child care responsibilities, it is presumed that the caretaker listed as a subject in the CPS case should be identified as the Secondary Caretaker.
- If there are two or more potential Secondary Caretakers, select the adult who assumes the most responsibility for the care of the children (other than the Primary Caretaker), either within or outside of the home.

Focus Check

For a child in foster care, home/household refers to the home the child came from, and/or the home/family to which he/she is likely to return, not the foster home.

3B: Program Choices

The following will help guide the selection of an appropriate Program Choice:

- *Non-Mandated Preventive Services:* Services are being provided by a local district or voluntary agency and are designed to prevent *possible* future placements in foster care or which may enable a child to return home sooner than anticipated.
- *Mandated Preventive Services:* Services are being provided by a local district or voluntary agency, which is designed to prevent *imminent* foster care placement or replacement in foster care, or which may enable a child to return home sooner than anticipated, or to facilitate a timely discharge from foster care. For each family with a Program Choice of Mandated Preventive Services, the caseworker must show that the child/family meets at least one of the eligibility criteria for Mandated Preventive Services. (See also *Module 12: Programmatic Eligibility.*)

Mandated Preventive Services may include home visiting, counseling, day care, homemaker, parent aide, or other services aimed at assisting the family in maintaining a child in the home or preparing for the child's return home.

(See "Mandated vs. Non-Mandated Preventive Services: What's the Difference?" below for more information.)

- *Placement:* The child is currently in a foster care placement (i.e., custody of the child has been transferred to the local district or to OCFS), or the child is in foster care and legally freed. The child may be in a foster home, group home, or institutional placement. For each child with a Program Choice of Placement, the caseworker must show that the child/family meets at least one of the eligibility criteria for placement. (See also *Module 12: Programmatic Eligibility.*)
- *Protective:* The child is named in an open, Indicated CPS case, and the case continues to be monitored by a local CPS worker. For a family receiving CPS/Protective services, all children living in the household or with a plan to return to that household must be given a Program Choice of Protective, not just the child who was/is the target of abuse/neglect.
- *Non-LDSS Custody-Relative/Resource Placement:* The Relative/Resource Placement is a service designed for children in the care of a relative or other resource person, but not in the custody of the local Commissioner of Social Services. Custody in these cases either remains with the parent, or is given by the court to the relative or resource via an Article 10 proceeding. There are two primary subgroups to these cases—cases in which the court orders direct placement with a relative or resource under LDSS supervision, and cases where the children are formally or informally placed with a relative or resource without LDSS initiated court action. The Program Choice of Non-LDSS Custody-Relative/Resource Placement must be used in conjunction with either Protective or Preventive. Unique PPG's will be generated by CONNECTIONS for this Program Choice.

Mandated vs. Non-Mandated Preventive Services: What's the Difference?

The distinction between Mandated and Non-Mandated Preventive Services is based on the federal and state mandates that govern when such services must be provided and who is eligible for them. It is not based upon whether the client is court ordered to participate in services. It is the local district/service provider who is mandated to provide such services.

Based upon federal requirements to prevent the unnecessary placement of children, NYS mandates that districts provide preventive services to support at-risk families in their district and to avert unnecessary placement of children. Mandated Preventive Services must be provided for children at imminent risk of placement. The state assists districts in funding such services commensurate with needs in each county.

The following are the types of services districts must make available: case management, case planning, casework counseling, day care, homemaker, housekeeper, family planning, home management, clinical services, parent aide, day treatment, parenting education, transportation, emergency cash/goods, and emergency shelter.

The Programmatic Eligibility Standards for Mandated Preventive Services define the types of circumstances that render a family eligible for these services. The documentation of Programmatic Eligibility required in the FASP is intended to ensure that services are provided to families who fit these standards. The specific services provided to a family will be based upon the identified needs of that family. (See NYS Codes Rules and Regulations Part 423 for regulations governing provision of Preventive Services.)

Districts may also choose to provide and fund preventive services above and beyond what is required by state mandate to families whose children are at possible risk of placement. These are referred to as Non-Mandated Preventive Services. These services draw upon different funding sources. Examples include Title XX housing assistance or TASA (TeenAge Services Act). Eligibility for these Non-Mandated services is established by the district and/or their source of funding.

3C: Permanency Planning Goals

Return to Parent: The child is in foster care, and the plan is to return the child to his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). This is the PPG for most children entering care, and should remain the goal until such time as it is decided that, based on a current assessment of the family situation, a different permanency plan is in the child's best interest.

Discharge to Adoption: The child is in foster care, and/or will be legally freed for adoption, and the plan is to provide permanency through adoption. This includes children who are legally free but not yet in an adoptive placement, as well as children who are in an adoptive placement awaiting finalization. When a goal of adoption is set for a child who is not yet legally free, action toward freeing the child must begin within 30 days after setting the goal.

Referral to Legal Guardianship/Custody: The child is in foster care, and the plan is to discharge the child to someone other than the child's parent(s) or legal guardians. Family court (Article 6) action will be taken to formalize the living arrangement. If a child is in a Kinship foster home, and the plan is to discharge the child to his or her relative through a guardianship with KinGAP, this is the appropriate PPG.

Discharge to a Fit and Willing Relative: The child is in foster care, and the plan is to discharge the child to a relative.

Discharge to Another Planned Living Arrangement (APLA):

- **With a Permanency Resource (formerly Independent Living):** The child is in foster care and over age 14, or the child is in foster care in an approved relative home regardless of age, and it has been determined that it is in the child's best interest to remain in foster care rather than to return to the parent(s) or to be adopted. This PPG may also be set for a child for whom the court has refused, after a hearing, to free the child for adoption, requiring the child to remain in foster care until the age of majority.
- **Unaccompanied Refugee:** The child is an unaccompanied refugee under the age of 18, has been lawfully admitted to the United States, and has no known immediate adult relatives in the United States. The child is in foster care and the discharge plan is APLA.
- **Adult Residential Care:** The child is in foster care and the child's need for placement is based in whole or in part on a child service need, and this need arises out of a factor other than the child's behavior (i.e., neurological or physical basis). Prior to having established this as the PPG, the local district must have considered other permanency plans, including Discharge to Parent, Discharge to Relative, Primary Resource Person, and/or Discharge to Adoption. The local district's Director of Services must approve establishment of this goal.

Prevent Placement: The child is residing with one or both parents or with a caretaker, legal guardian, or in an alternative living arrangement other than foster care. Services are being offered to prevent the child's placement in foster care.

Prevent Return to Placement: The same as Prevent Placement, but the child has previously been in foster care. Services are aimed at preventing a return to foster care.

Protect Child: The child is named in an indicated report of Child Abuse or Maltreatment, and the only services being provided are CPS.

Non-LDSS Custody-Relative/Resource Placement: Permanency/Discharge Options:

- **Reunite with Parent:** The child is in a non-LDSS custody/living arrangement (see definition under Program Choice), and the plan is to return the child to his/her parent(s) or legal guardian.
- **Legalize Living Arrangement with Relative/Resource:** The child is in a non-LDSS custody/living arrangement, and the plan is to formalize the current arrangement through a family court (Article 6) proceeding.
- **Permanent Living Arrangement (Non-Guardianship/Non-Custody):** The child is in a non-LDSS custody/living arrangement, and this will become an informal permanent arrangement with the child staying with this resource.