



Office of Children and Family Services

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

SHEILA J. POOLE
Acting Commissioner

December 9, 2016

Dear Commissioners and Executive Directors:

The purpose of this correspondence is to notify local departments of social services (LDSSs) and voluntary authorized agencies (VAs) of a new function in CONNECTIONS that will support regulatory and policy requirements regarding reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment involving certified or approved foster parents. (More information about these requirements may be found in 16-OCFS-ADM-13).

When a certified or approved foster parent is the subject of a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment involving a foster child, the child protective service of the LDSS responsible for the investigation of the report is required to notify the LDSS with legal custody of the child and, if different, the LDSS or VA that certified or approved the foster home.

New CONNECTIONS Function

Beginning December 9, 2016, CONNECTIONS will introduce the:

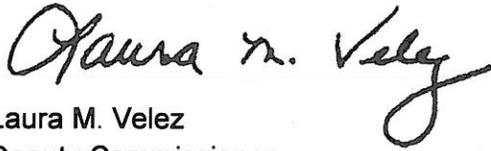
- **Foster Home Identification window** - accessible from the workload of any CPS INV or FAR worker, will allow workers to indicate, update, or correct whether or not there are foster parents in the home.
- **Foster Care Notification window** - will provide information about children in foster care placements who are placed in the home of a person involved in a CPS Intake, Investigation or FAR stage.
- **View Foster Care Notification Business Function** - information will only be accessible to applicable users with the new Foster Care Notification business function as follows:

User with Viewing Rights	Homes viewed	Children Viewed
LDSS	Certified/approved by LDSS and those where child has been placed by LDSS	Children in the legal custody of the LDSS
VA	Certified/approved by VA	Children in homes certified/approved by the VA
Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)	Certified/approved by the LDSS selected and those where child has been placed by selected LDSS If an OCFS Region is selected, all homes certified/approved by an LDSS or VA in that region	Children under the care and custody of any LDSS in the district or region selected

This new function will give all custodial LDSSs and certifying LDSSs and VAs with immediate access to information about foster parents involved in a child abuse or maltreatment report, which should trigger respective actions including safety assessments and case contacts. LDSSs and VAs are strongly encouraged to designate at least one staff person, and a back-up, to be responsible to search CONNECTIONS at a minimum of daily, to identify any foster children in a home involving a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment report.

For more information about this function, contact your Regional Director.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura M. Velez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'L' and 'V'.

Laura M. Velez
Deputy Commissioner
Child Welfare & Community Services
New York State Office of Children & Family Services