



CONNECTIONS

*NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Q3-08 Highlights (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10)*

...Q3-08 Highlights... (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10)

-- Implementation Date: October 10, 2008 --

[The purpose of this document is to provide a *high level* description of the improvements, modifications and enhancements that are included in this Quarterly Improvement Plan.]

CONNECTIONS Intranet site: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/>

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Background Information Related to the Definition of Quarterly Improvement Plans

System improvements implemented in response to 'SIRs' (System Information Requests) and 'Change Requests' have previously been referred to as "Builds." Beginning in January 2008 however, OCFS began to implement system improvements on a quarterly basis (for example: Q1-08 was implemented in March 2008 and Q2-08 was implemented in June 2008). These system improvements are now called *Quarterly Improvement Plans*. On October 10, 2008, OCFS will implement the third Quarterly Improvement Plan of this year, Q3-08.

What is the Purpose of the *Q3-08 Highlights* Document?

The *Q3-08 Highlights* document presents a high-level overview of programmatic and application changes, modifications and enhancements. It is one in a series of tools that define, describe and detail the system changes and enhancements that will be included in this *Quarterly Improvement Plan*. A listing of other Q3-08 tools to aid in the implementation of these system improvements will be detailed later in this document.

What Will the Implementation of Q3-08 Include?

Q3-08 will include important enhancements to the CONNECTIONS application that support programmatic changes, as well as several system improvements. Two of the major programmatic changes included in Q3-08 are:

- ❖ a redesigned Safety Assessment tool, which is the result of extensive work with a statewide team of users who partnered with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services; and
- ❖ improved wording of risk factors in the Risk Assessment Profile to clarify the circumstances that contribute to risk of future abuse/maltreatment.

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These enhancements were presented in the August 27th teleconference entitled: Changes to Safety and Risk Assessment to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment.

Q3-08 also includes system support for districts participating in the Family Assessment Response initiative. The other enhancements included in Q3-08 are recommendations from the Child Welfare System Transformation Business Team. These recommended enhancements are based on a collaborative effort on the part of OCFS, local district and voluntary agency casework and supervisory staff.

High-Level Overview of the Programmatic Changes Included in Q3-08

The major programmatic improvements to the Safety Assessment include:

- A simplification of language
- Clarification of the criteria used to determine if children are in immediate or impending danger
- Clarification of safety decision options
- The introduction of a safety plan that specifies who needs to take what action, when, and for how long, in order to protect child(ren) from identified dangers
- Help on definitions: a new prompt - a light bulb - button has been added to the window to provide a fast path to Safety Definitions

The major programmatic improvements to the Risk Assessment Profile include:

- Clarification of the risk assessment elements, making the descriptions as close as possible to what the research has proved to be predictors of the likelihood of any type of abuse or maltreatment, and the removal of language that was confusing and too open to incorrect interpretation.

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More Detail on the Safety Assessment

- Changes made to Safety Definitions - more prescriptive description of the terms: *safety, immediate danger, impending danger, safety factor*
- Additional Safety Factors for statewide use
- Revised Safety Decision options to provide more clarity regarding children's safety status and the need for protective action
- New Safety Plan output brings the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) into the process in a more formal way
 - The Safety Plan can be printed and given to the parent(s)/caretaker(s) to sign
- Refinements to the list of Controlling Interventions

Safety Assessment Tabs

- There are still four tabs, but with reordering, renaming and adjustments to the questions.
 - Safety Factors (Tab 1)
 - SCR identified *Factors* will no longer pre-populate the Safety Assessment
 - Once a *Factor* is selected, workers will be prompted to enter comments
 - Selected *Factors* will populate at bottom of the screen, and workers will still identify *Factors* that put child(ren) in immediate or impending danger
 - Safety Decision (Tab 2)
 - Prnt/CrtkrActions/Safety Plan (Tab 3)
 - Ctrl Interventions/Safety Plan (Tab 4)
 - Tab 3 and 4 are used to create the Safety Plan Output.

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Safety Plan Output

- There will be an ability to print the Safety Plan to:
 - Review with parents and other involved parties
 - Have key participants sign the plan
 - Encourage, but not require, parents to sign the Safety Plan
- The Safety Plan will contain:
 - Key demographics
 - Assigned workers
 - Information recorded in the two new safety plan tabs
 - Information associated with Safety Decision 4, if applicable

A High-Level Overview of the Other Enhancements Included in Q3-08

Other System Enhancements

- Progress Note font choice. There will now be a choice, in Print Preview mode, of displaying and printing Progress Notes in the current default (8pt) or larger (12pt) fonts
- The Unit Approver will now be allowed to locally maintain To Do's
- In Progress notes, once a family participant has been selected, "Focus" will be system pre-filled. This supports compliance with required casework contacts for children in foster care. If a family member is a participant but is not to be considered the 'Focus', the caseworker can deselect the checkmark in the "Focus" checkbox for that individual family participant.

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FAD Changes

- Criminal History Record Checks
 - Add Fingerprint Results value of Mandatory Disqualifier to comply with Federal Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006 (will be in place for use beginning 10/1/08)
- Revised Fingerprint Outputs to conform to the Mandatory Disqualifier changes
 - Notice (English and Spanish)
 - Denial/Revocation letter (English and Spanish)

Family Assessment Response Initiative

The Q3-08 Build will contain system support for the Family Assessment Response initiative. This is a non-adversarial approach to the traditional investigative response in select CPS report scenarios. No determination of the SCR report is made. Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007 authorized LDSSs, other than in New York City, to apply to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to use a family assessment and services approach for a subset of families that are reported to the SCR for child maltreatment.

Six applications were received and approved. The participating counties are: Westchester, Orange, Onondaga, Tompkins, Chautauqua and Erie. The approved applications can be viewed using the following link;

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/prevention/assessmentResponse.asp>

CONNECTIONS system support allows participating districts to identify CPS Investigations for Family Assessment Response and open a Family Services Intake (FSI) and Services Stage (FAM) to document case activity. The FAM stage includes the following: progress notes, safety assessment, preventive risk assessment and education. Participating districts have their own Job Aid to assist them. Non-participating districts and voluntary agencies will receive an Informational Memorandum with further information about this initiative.

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Additional Q3-08 Tools

Other Q3-08 tools to aid in the implementation of these system improvements are:

- An update to online HELP
- An Impact Analysis document
- A Job Aid
- A CBT refresher on Risk and Safety Assessments
- An updated Risk/Safety Field Guide
- An Informational Letter (INF) about the Family Assessment Response Initiative