

New York State Office of Children and Family Services  
CONNECTIONS Case Management

**Impact Analysis**

**Subject:** Family Services Stage

**Functional Area:** Electronic Case Record

**Brief Description of Current Function/Process:**

Sections 409-e and 409-f of the Social Services Law and NYS regulations [18 NYCRR Part 428] require the establishment and maintenance of a Uniform Case Record for families and children receiving child welfare services. Cases are currently documented in a combined paper/electronic file, the contents of which comprise the Child Welfare Case Record. Each Local District and Voluntary Agency currently maintains its own separate case record.

**What Remains the Same:**

- The content of the Uniform Case Record remains the same. This includes intake information, family assessments and service plans, plan amendments, progress notes, and a variety of paper documents that are received from external sources or copies of documents pertaining to a case generated by the district or agency.
- The retention of certain paper records (birth certificates, court documents, medical evaluations, psychological and psychiatric reports, school records, etc.) will still be necessary. Scanning is not available in Build 18.
- Voluntary Agency clinical notes, daily logs, and written material created by service providers who act in roles other than Caseworker, CPS Monitor, Case Planner and Case Manager are not a part of the CONNECTIONS case record.
- Legal requirements and standards for safeguarding confidentiality of client information still apply.
  - Foster Care - SSL 372, 373-a, 409-e, 409-f;
    - NYCRR 357.3, 430.12, 431.12
  - Preventive – SSL 409-e, 409-f, NYCRR 423.7
  - CPS – SSL 422(4), (5), (6), (7), 422-a, and 424(4), (5)
    - NYCRR 432.7
  - Adoption DRL 114; SSL 373-a, 409-f; NYCRR 357.3
  - 466.4 New Connections Regulations (currently published for public comment)
- Access by staff to client information in the Connections Case Management system is dependent upon their “need to know” such information to perform his or her specific job responsibilities.

**What is New or Changes:**

- The form and manner of maintaining certain components of the Uniform Case Record changes. The Connections Case Management system will be the system of record for open child welfare services cases.
- There will be a single case record for each family for whom a case record is required. Multiple agencies/workers may be assigned a role in the case and work within this record.

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- Most of the information in the case record will be stored in an electronic format. It is retrievable and may be printed as needed.
- Implementation of the electronic case record will not be complete until Build 19. Build 18, which includes intake, assessment and service plan, service plan review, and progress notes, etc. is an important step toward this, but until Build 19, WMS and CCRS remain the system of record. Thus, the Uniform Case Record for legal purposes in Build 18 will consist of the combined case management information maintained in CONNECTIONS, paper documentation maintained outside of the system and legacy system information maintained in WMS and CCRS.

Documentation maintained in CONNECTIONS, Build 18:

- Family Services Intake Report
- Family Services Intake Face Sheet
- All Family Assessment and Service Plans (FASPs) and Plan Amendments (The FASP output will show approval status but not the names of approvers; the system retains the approver's name in event listing.)
- All Service Plan Review Reports
- All Progress Notes

Documentation Maintained Outside of CONNECTIONS:

- Common Application for Services (LDSS 2921)
- Documentation of eligibility for any funding source for which the child or family may be eligible and entry of the Eligibility category in WMS.
- Direct and Purchase of Services Authorization maintained in WMS.
- Placement/Movement, Legal and Adoption Activities entered in CCRS.
- Family Album entries for children freed for adoption
- External Documentation List / Actual Documents
  - Birth Certificates
  - Medical Information and Consents
  - Record of school placement, education reports and evaluations
  - Psychiatric/psychological reports
  - Reports from other agencies
  - Correspondence
- All stages (Intake, Investigation, Family Services, etc.) will be electronically linked to the Family Case.
- The CONNECTIONS Case Management system will accommodate service cases that do not require the completion of all Uniform Case Record requirements (for example, Out of Town Inquiry, Court Ordered Investigation, ICPC). Streamlined functionality will provide system support for documenting these activities.

**Implications/Considerations:**

**System**

- The system will retain an historical record of date and worker ID of entries.
- The ability to print case record components (for example, Investigation Summaries, individual FASPs, or FASP components) will be available. It should be employed judiciously for specific

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purposes, not as maintenance of a second 'back-up' paper record. For example, copies of the Family Assessment and Service Plan may be printed to share with the family or the court.

- Case File Print functionality, the ability to print the complete official record via a single command, will not be available until Build 19. Case components can be printed separately where a complete copy of the case record is required for legal purposes.
- Workers will need adequate access to PCs and the CONNECTIONS network in order to complete their work in a timely fashion.

### **Program**

- The real time electronic record will facilitate both the sharing of information and retrieval of historical case information.
- The approved FASP constitutes the official record. Draft entries to the FASP are considered working documents and are not retained after the FASP has been approved.
- Because multiple workers and agencies are working within the same record, documentation of conflicting information will be easier to spot and address. The case planner should resolve these conflicts prior to submitting a plan or an amendment for approval.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies should review their record keeping process and procedures and revise as necessary.
2. Prepare staff to maintain the required record in an electronic environment.
3. Develop policies and procedures defining when it is necessary to produce hard copies.
4. Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies should review, and revise as necessary, all current internal policies and procedures regarding maintaining case confidentiality, as required by statute and regulation. The policies should specifically address standards for the re-disclosure or printing of case information.