New York State Children and Family Services
CONNECTIONS Case Management
Issues Brief

Subject: Local District Options in CONNECTIONS Case Management

Date: May 14, 2004

Intended Audience: LDSS Directors of Services

Contact Person: CONNECTIONS Regional Field Support Staff

Issue: Should Local Social Service Districts take advantage of any of these five
                    CONNECTIONS case management system options in Build 18?
1. Require Intake Worker completion of "Requested Services" in Family
   Services Intake.
2. Require completion of "Services Needed" as part of Service Plan.
3. Require Higher Level of System Edits for entry of progress note data
   values.
4. Addition of customized list of up to 10 services for Information and
   Referral functionality.
5. Create customized instructions to guide worker Progress Note entry.

Background:

The CONNECTIONS Case Management system is designed as a single statewide
integrated system. In several instances however, where the needs of districts vary and the
additional information requested by some districts is not considered essential to the case
management system, Local Districts will have the option of choosing whether to require
the collection of this information. Selection of option 1, 2, 3, or 4 sets an edit across the
board for all workers assigned to cases in the district. Voluntary Agencies will follow the
selected edits of the Case Manager's district, even where they are physically located
outside that district. Option 5 applies only to LDSS workers.

It will be possible to select/deselect an option after the implementation of Build 18, but
the data fix process won't be able to be done immediately and will need to be prioritized
with other required system work. Districts should, therefore, carefully consider the
advantages and disadvantages of each option and let us know their intentions by returning
the attached Local District Option Selection Form to their CONNECTIONS Regional
Field Support contact as soon as possible, but no later than June 25, 2004.

Benefits and Costs:

1. **Option to <u>Require</u> Intake Worker Completion of "Requested Services" in
   Family Services Intake.**

This functionality is available in Family Services Intakes that do not originate from a
CPS investigation. It is available only for Intakes for Child Welfare Services (CWS)
stage type; it is not available in intakes for ICPC, COI, OTI, and ADVPO.

Selection of this option <u>requires</u> Intake worker completion of the Requested Services screen. This screen presents the worker with a checklist of 61 services from which the worker identifies (checks) those services requested by the family (see window screen print and attached list of services). Districts should note that workers may opt to complete this list even if the LDSS does not require it.

Where Child Welfare Services Intakes do not originate from a CPS investigation, workers will be required to complete the Behavioral Concerns and Family Issues (BCFI) screening, which includes a checklist of Emergency Services Required. This shorter listing of solely emergency services constitutes the Intake Worker's judgment of the services needed to address immediate family needs. Intake workers also complete a narrative statement of the reasons for involvement with the family.

The advantage of the additional 'Requested Services' checklist is the capture, in data form, of all services being <u>requested by the client</u>. Because it is in data format, this data could be compared later to the services determined needed in the Family Assessment and Service Plan and to the services actually provided, as long as the district also selects option #2. Districts might glean valuable information regarding the availability of services for planning purposes. Districts should be aware, however, that the documentation of a gap between services requested by clients and the services actually provided might raise legal issues and unforeseen consequences.

2. Option to <u>Require </u>Completion of "Services Needed" as part of Service Plan.

This functionality will be available in the Service Plan component of all Family Assessment and Service Plans (FASP). Similar to the current UCR Service Plan, workers must complete one or more Outcome and Activity blocks (O&A block) that describe in narrative form the specific activities that families and workers will undertake to address selected problems/concerns and desired outcomes. This option allows Local Districts to require that workers also select from a checklist of 61 services, the specific services needed by family members and indicate a status for each selected service (Provided Direct, Provided Purchased, Referred/Waitlisted, Planned, Completed, Discontinued, Refused by Client, or Unavailable). The list of services is the same list as in FSI "Services Requested" (see attached). It will need to be completed (at least one service and corresponding status must be selected) in order for the FASP to be submitted for approval. Districts should note that workers may opt to complete this list even if the LDSS does not require it. Please note: until Build 19 is implemented, workers will also need to enter service information in CCRS.

As in Option #1, the primary advantage is the capture of valuable information about the service need, service availability, and client completion of recommended services in a data format that can be utilized for planning, management, documentation, and research purposes. As in Option 1, documentation of a gap between needed and available services may raise legal issues and unforeseen consequences.

Supervisor monitoring of provided services will also be facilitated. Radio buttons will allow easy view of currently active services or a historical list of all services. This view will only be accurate, however, if the list is kept updated with each FASP, as selected services will be brought forward from the last approved FASP / Plan Amendment and will be displayed in the Services Selected grid for status updating.

Because 'Services Needed' is completed for individual family members, the additional worker time required may be a factor to consider. System efficiencies are included to reduce the time involved. Family members in need of the same service may be selected as a group. Typing in an initial letter automatically scrolls the dropdown list to the list of services starting with that letter and once the worker has selected the service, the cursor automatically moves to the status field.

3. **Option to <u>Require</u> Higher Level of System Edits for entry of progress note data values.**

Workers will use a new process for recording progress notes in the CONNECTIONS case management system. Notes will be entered one at a time and some accompanying data fields must be completed before the note is able to be saved. The Standard System Edit requires completion of the following data fields: Event Date, Type of Contact, Method of Contact, and Author. Depending on the Type and Method of Contact selected, the system edit may require Family Participant or Other Participant, and/or Location of Contact. Other fields - Focus of Contact, Purpose of Contact, and Unannounced Visit - are optional. The system will automatically record Entered By, District/Agency, and Entry Date.

Local Districts may opt to require a Higher Level of System Edits which would mandate completion of an additional field, Time of Contact, for most progress note types. If the district selects this option, a progress note could not be saved until this field is completed when required. Local District selection of the higher system edits will apply to all cases for which the Local District has case management, including those handled by Voluntary Agencies. Districts should note that workers may opt to complete this field even if the LDSS does not require it.
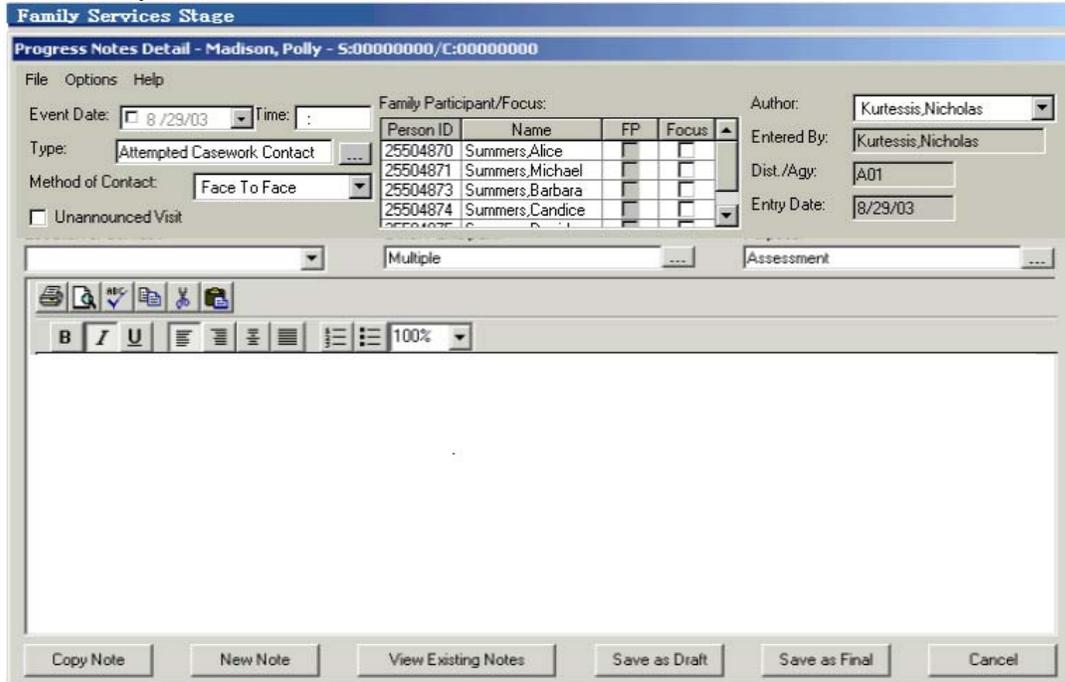
The advantage of recording time is the ability to more precisely identify when a contact took place. It will also produce data in regard to when workers most commonly perform field activities.

Selection of this option will also result in the addition of selected values to Other Participants and Purpose fields. These values will only be available where districts have selected the Higher Level System Edits.

> Other Participants: Child Evaluation Specialist and Third Party Reviewer will be available for all contact types.

> Purpose: 72 Hour Child Safety Conference: Elevated Risk, 72 Hour Child Safety Conference: Post Removal, 30 Day Family Permanency Conference: Elevated Risk, 30 Day Family Permanency Conference: Post Removal, 40 Day, 45 Day FSU Conference, Replacement, Critical Case Planning, Court Extension Review, Post Court Extension Review, Trial Discharge, Final Discharge, 90 Day Service Plan Review, 6 Month Service Plan Review, will be available as a choice when the type selected is Case Conference.

4. **Option to add a customized list of up to 10 services for Information and Referral functionality.**

Optional functionality is available within CONNECTIONS to document Requests for Information/Referrals. This functionality is available to both Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies. A standardized list of 16 services is available for tracking requests and referrals. No client-identifying data is collected in this process.

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CONNECTIONS provides for recording the amount of time spent on the I&R contact and the results of the contact (referral made by worker, referral information provided to the requestor, or service unavailable). The information collected through documenting requests for information and referral may be used to support the compilation of statistics pertaining to service needs/gaps and the amount of staff effort expended in the I&R function.

The standard list of services includes:

- Adoption
- Assistance Programs (TANF, MA, HEAP, FS, SS)
- Child Care
- Child Protective Information
- Domestic Violence
- Directions
- Drug/Alcohol
- Education

- Family Planning
- Foster Care
- Health
- Home Management
- Housing
- Mental Health/Counseling
- Parenting
- Respite

Local Districts may opt to add up to 10 customized services to the standard list to better document information about service areas of special interest or specific local services. The addition of customized services will only apply to Information and Referrals taken by the Local District. Voluntary Agencies will not see the additional services.

Information and Referral
File

Service	Referral Made by Worker	Referral Information Provided to Requestor	Service Unavailable
Adoption	☐	☐	☐
Anger Management	☐	☐	☐
Child Care	☐	☐	☐
Child Protective Information	☐	☐	☐
Domestic Violence	☐	☐	☐
Directions	☐	☐	☐
Drug/Alcohol	☐	☐	☐
Education	☐	☐	☐
Employment	☐	☐	☐
Family Planning	☐	☐	☐
Foster Care	☐	☐	☐
Health	☐	☐	☐
Home Management	☐	☐	☐
Housing	☐	☐	☐
Mental Health	☐	☐	☐

Time Spent on Referral: [▼]

[Save]   [Close]   [Cancel]

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5. Option to create customized instructions to guide worker Progress Note entry.

Local Districts may opt to create (script) instructions to guide worker progress note entry. The instructions may be customized to the specific combinations of Progress Note <u>Type</u> (Attempted Casework Contact, Casework Contact, Collateral Contact, Court, Family Visitation, etc.), <u>Method of Contact</u> (Face to Face, Mail, Fax, Phone, Email, Other), and <u>Purpose</u> (Adoption Activities, Assessment, Counseling, Housing, Case Planning, etc.). There is a limit of 4,000 characters/spaces per instruction. New York State default instructions are not available at this time.

If a district selects this option, a 'Show Instructions' button on the Progress Note Detail window will be available to all district workers entering or modifying a progress note. When the button is selected, the district's scripted instruction will display on the top half of the Progress Note Detail window so that the worker can type in the narrative while viewing the instructions. The specific instruction displayed will be based on the combination of Type, Method and Purpose entered by the worker. Instructions will not be available to Voluntary Agency workers.

The addition of customized instructions is intended to address district priorities and improve workers' documentation of case contacts and activities. It should be especially helpful to new workers. When the instructions are visible, they reduce the available view area of notes by half. This may be a concern to workers. However, the instructions need to be actively selected by the worker and workers can toggle back and forth between 'View' and 'Hide' Instructions.

Districts selecting this option will need to send OCFS/CONNECTIONS/IT the scripted instructions to be added to the Progress Notes Instructions Matrix Table. They must specify the instruction to be displayed for each possible combination of Type, Purpose, and Method fields. The Progress Notes Instructions submitted by the districts must be reviewed and approved by Policy, Legal, and DDPS. Upon approval, the instructions will be loaded into a Progress Notes Instructions Matrix Table through the SIR Process. Any future changes will be made through the Data Fix process.
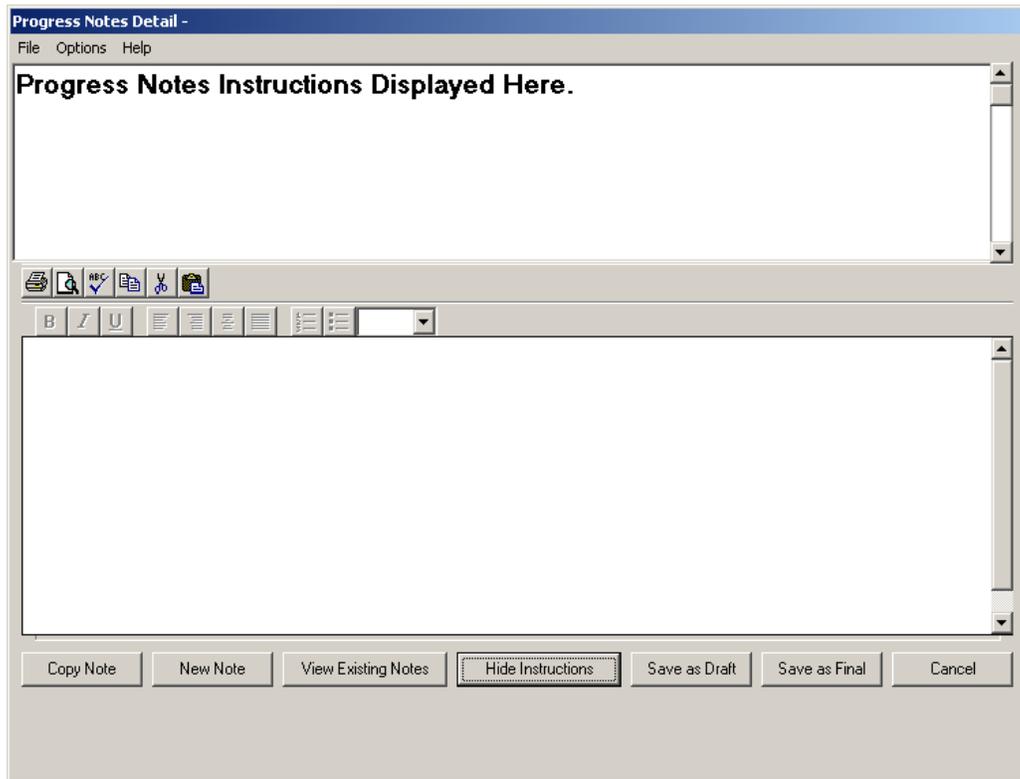
View after selecting the "Show Instructions" pushbutton on the Progress Notes Detail window. The "Show Instructions" pushbutton is replaced with "Hide Instructions" pushbutton.

Alternatives:

Local Districts wishing to capture data regarding option #1 - "Services Requested by clients" and/or option #2 - "Services Needed" and/or option #3 - "Time (hour/minute) of Contacts/Attempted Contact" could, alternatively, issue directions to Local District staff and contract agencies to complete these fields. This would be in lieu of selecting the option of system edits to require field completion before work could be saved or submitted for approval. Degree of compliance would then depend upon monitoring and supervision. This alternative would allow selective gathering of data by work unit, etc. rather than an across the board mandate inclusive of all staff and agencies.

Next Steps:

It will be necessary for each Local District to notify OCFS about its intentions. Directors of Services should complete the attached Local District Option Selection Form and forward it to their CONNECTIONS Regional Field Support contact. **The Option Selection Form must be received by June 25, 2004.** If the form is not received, OCFS will <u>not</u> apply the additional edits. As Local District selection will apply to all cases for which they have case management responsibility, we recommend that Local Districts consult Voluntary Agencies as part of the decision process.

Services Checklist for "Requested Services" and "Services Needed"

1. Adoption Services
2. Aftercare
3. After School Programs
4. Alcohol Counseling/Treatment
5. Assisted Living
6. Batterer's Counseling
7. Case Management Services
8. Casework Counseling
9. Child Care Services
10. Clinical Services
11. Community Advocacy
12. Crisis Response Services
13. Day Care Services
14. Day Services
15. Day Treatment
16. Developmental Disability Services
17. Detox Services
18. Diagnostic Evaluation
19. Domestic Violence Services
20. Drug Counseling/Treatment
21. Educational / Training Services
22. Emergency Cash/Goods
23. Emergency Food
24. Emergency Shelter
25. Employment Services
26. Family Planning Services
27. Family Preservation Services (Intensive Home Based)
28. Family Support Services
29. Financial Management
30. Foster Care Services for Children
31. Health Related Service
32. Homemaker Services
33. Home Management
34. Home and Community Based Waiver Services
35. Housekeeper/Chore Services
36. Housing
37. Housing Improvement Services
38. Independent Living Services
39. Information and Referral Services
40. Legal Services
41. Maternity Services
42. Mediation Services
43. Mental Health Services
44. Mentoring
45. OASAS Residential Services
46. OCFS Residential Program
47. OMH Residential Program
48. OMRDD Residential Program
49. Parent Aide Services
50. Parent Training
51. Physically Handicapped Services
52. PINS Diversion Services
53. Post Adoption Services
54. Post Discharge Services (18-21 years)
55. Preventive Services for Children
56. Public Health Nurse
57. Respite Care
58. Sex Offender Treatment
59. Transportation Services
60. Unmarried Parent Services
61. Other

4-20-04

Local District Option Selection Form
Directors of Services should return this form to their CONNECTIONS Regional
*Field Support contact by **June 25, 2004**.*

District:

Requestor:
Name:

Title:

Telephone Number:

Local Options Selected: [Please circle each selected option]

1. Require Intake Worker completion of "Requested Services" in Family Services Intake.
2. Require completion of "Services Needed" as part of Service Plan.
3. Require Higher Level of System Edits for entry of progress note data values.
4. Addition of customized list of up to 10 services for Information and Referral functionality.
   Services to be added:
   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.
   6.
   7.
   8.
   9.
   10.
5. Create customized instructions to Progress Notes. (A separate form will be sent to Requestor for district specification of instructions by Type, Method, and Purpose).
6. No Option Selected

Signature:

Date: