



# CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet

## AFCARS and Activities: Documenting Removal Information in CONNECTIONS

The federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) requires states to collect a number of data elements on children in out-of-home care. For each child with an M910 Placement Date recorded in the Activities window, there must be an associated Date of Physical Removal, Type of Legal Event Associated with the Removal, and the condition(s) associated with that removal recorded in the Tracked Child Detail Removal Information window. This tip sheet provides workers with examples of how to correctly record removal information in CONNECTIONS, particularly in those instances where the date of removal differs from the placement date.

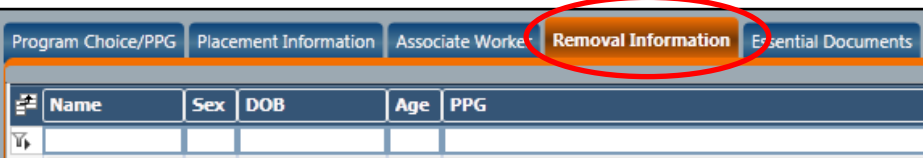
*Note: No information in this tip sheet is intended to modify the criteria or procedures for determining Title IV-E eligibility.*

### Entering Removal Information

- Removal information is recorded in CONNECTIONS on the Removal Information tab of the Tracked Children Detail window.

To navigate to this tab:

- Highlight the desired stage on your workload.
  - Click the **Tracked Children** link in the NAVIGATION PANE.
- The Removal Information tab enables when there is a current Program Choice of Placement or Non-LDSS Custody-Relative/Resource Placement.



- Information must be entered individually for each child who is removed and enters care.
- Only the most recent placement episode is reported for AFCARS purposes.
- A “placement episode” is defined as the duration of time between when a child is placed in a foster care setting (M910 - Child’s Placement Begins is recorded in Activities) and when the child is discharged (either an M990 – Child’s Placement Ended or an M999 – Child’s Track Closed is recorded in Activities).
- For each placement episode, it is necessary to record:
  - ✓ Date of Physical Removal
  - ✓ Conditions Associated with Child’s Removal (select all conditions that apply)
  - ✓ Type of Legal Event Associated with Removal
- In most instances, the date of physical removal is the date when a child is removed from his or her home for the purpose of being placed into foster care or non-LDSS custody. There are certain situations that require special consideration in

determining the removal date. Typical scenarios follow below.



**Note: A child on trial discharge is still considered to be in care.**

Therefore, if they return to placement from trial discharge, no matter the length of the trial discharge period, this is treated as part of the same episode as the placement that preceded the trial discharge.

Activity Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Next Permanency Hearing Date Certain: \_\_\_\_\_

Removal Information

History of Removals:

Inv	Removal Date	Legal Event	Date Saved
	05/10/2016	Article 10 Abuse/Neglect	7/5/2016 2:23:49 PM

Count = 1

Date of Physical Removal: \*

Type of Legal Event Associated with Removal: \*\$

Invalid

**Condition Associated with Child's Removal**


- Abandonment
- Alcohol Abuse (Child)
- Alcohol Abuse (Parent)
- Caretaker's Inability to Cope due to Illness or Other Reasons
- Child's Behavior Problem
- Child's Disability
- Death of Parent(s)
- Drug Abuse (Child)
- Drug Abuse (Parent)

[New](#)

Scenario	CONNECTIONS Systems Implications	Example
<p><b>#1:</b> Child removed from home, remanded to a detention facility.</p> <p>Child is then placed in foster care.</p>	<p><b>REMOVAL INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this data element is the date that the child enters the foster care setting.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M910 Date is the date that the child enters the foster care setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date child detained = 5/1/16</li> <li>Court transfers custody to LDSS = 5/15/16</li> <li>Child remains in detention = 5/15/16 - 5/17/16</li> <li>Child transferred to foster care setting = 5/18/16</li> </ul> <p>Therefore,</p> <p><b>Date of Physical Removal</b> field in CONNECTIONS = 5/18/16</p> <p><b>M910 date</b> in ACTIVITIES = 5/18/16</p>

Scenario	CONNECTIONS Systems Implications	Example
<p><b>#2a:</b> Child brought to hospital by parent/ caretaker due to child's health or clinical needs (e.g., severe emotional disturbance).</p> <p>Following hospitalization, the child enters foster care and is placed in a foster care setting.</p>	<p><b>REMOVAL INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this data element is the date that the child enters the foster care setting.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M910 Date is the date that the child enters the foster care setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date child leaves home and enters hospital = 5/1/16</li> <li>Child transferred from hospital to foster care setting = 5/15/16</li> </ul> <p>Therefore,</p> <p><b>Date of Physical Removal</b> field in CONNECTIONS = 5/15/16</p> <p><b>M910 Date</b> in ACTIVITIES = 5/15/16</p>
<p><b>#2b:</b> Child removed from home by CPS; child brought by CPS directly to a hospital.</p> <p>Child subsequently goes from the hospital to a foster care setting.</p>	<p><b>REMOVAL INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this data element is the date that the child enters the foster care setting.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M910 Date is the date that the child enters the foster care setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child removed from home and enters hospital = 5/1/16</li> <li>Child enters foster care setting = 5/5/16</li> </ul> <p>Therefore,</p> <p><b>Date of Physical Removal</b> field in CONNECTIONS = 5/5/16</p> <p><b>M910 Date</b> in ACTIVITIES = 5/5/16</p>


Scenario	CONNECTIONS Systems Implications	Example
<p><b>#3a:</b> Child removed from home and is placed by the court with a relative (Non-LDSS Custody) under Article 3, 7, or 10 of the Family Court Act.</p> <p>The child is subsequently physically removed from the relative and enters a foster care setting.</p>	<p><b>REMOVAL INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS treats the initial Non-LDSS custody placement with the relative as a removal episode (although a non-foster care episode); therefore, removal data is recorded.</li> <li>• The AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for the purpose of reporting this (non-foster care) removal episode for NYS tracking purposes is the date the child leaves home to reside with the relative.</li> <li>• The date the child is placed in foster care or the date the court transfers custody to the LDSS (whichever is earlier), becomes the AFCARS Date of Physical Removal for this second (foster care) removal episode.</li> </ul> <p>Note: The conditions associated with this second removal may differ from the conditions that prompted the child to reside with the relative. These condition(s) should be recorded for the second removal episode.</p> <p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p>There is no corresponding M910 entry or date for the non-LDSS custody placement (first non-foster care removal episode).</p> <p>M910 Date is the date the court orders the child into foster care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date child leaves home to reside with relative (non-LDSS custody) = 5/1/16</li> </ul> <p>Therefore,</p> <p><b>Date of Physical Removal</b> in CONNECTIONS = 5/1/16</p> <p><b>M910 Date</b> in ACTIVITIES = not applicable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date child transferred from relative to foster care setting via CPS removal = 5/14/16</li> </ul> <p>Therefore,</p> <p><b>Date of Physical Removal</b> in CONNECTIONS = 5/14/16</p> <p><b>M910 Date</b> in ACTIVITIES = 5/14/16</p>

Scenario	CONNECTIONS Systems Implications	Example
<p><b>#3b:</b> Child removed from home and the court places the child with a relative (Non-LDSS Custody) under Article 3, 7, or 10 of the Family Court Act.</p> <p>The relative thereafter becomes a foster parent; custody transferred to LDSS and child remains with the relative (constructive removal).</p>	<p><b>REMOVAL INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As with Scenario 3a, the initial non-LDSS custody placement with the relative is treated as a removal episode. The date the child leaves home to reside with the relative becomes the AFCARS Date of Physical Removal field for NYS tracking purposes.</li> <li>When the court transfers custody to LDSS, there is no new date of physical removal.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no corresponding M910 entry or date for the non-LDSS custody placement (first removal episode).</li> <li>M910 Date is the date the court orders the child into foster care, provided the child is in a foster care setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date child leaves home to reside with relative = 5/1/16</li> <li>Date custody transfers to LDSS, child remains with relative who is now an approved/certified foster home = 5/15/16</li> </ul> <p>Therefore,</p> <p><b>Date of Physical Removal</b> in CONNECTIONS = 5/1/16</p> <p><b>M910 Date</b> in ACTIVITIES = 5/15/16</p>
<p><b>#4</b> Child placed in OCFS facility and then stepped down to a VA and/or the child is stepped up to an OCFS facility.</p>	<p> See the tip sheet entitled: <i>System And Casework Contact Implications For Youth Moved Into And Out Of OCFS Facilities</i> on the CONNECTIONS <a href="#">Intranet</a> and <a href="#">Internet</a>.</p>	

## Data Clean-Up and Workarounds

When working with the AFCARS Removal/Placement report to address missing AFCARS removal data, a listed child may no longer have a current Program Choice (PC) of Placement or Non-LDSS Custody. To address this situation:

1. Temporarily enter a Placement PC, enter the removal information, then end-date the Placement PC.
2. You can use the same date to start and end the temporary Placement PC, but the Effective Date cannot be prior to the approval date of the last FASP or prior to the end-date of the last end-dated Program Choice or PPG.
3. Use the pop-up box that will display when you again end-date the Placement PC and the associated PPG to explain that the temporary change was for the purpose of entering missing AFCARS information.
4. If the child is 18+ years old, it is not possible to change the Program Choice to Placement. Due to system implications of changing the child's DOB to make them appear as under the age of 18, it is recommended that these situations be sent to the Triage Application Help mailbox ([ocfs.sm.conn\\_app@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.ny.gov)) for assistance.
5. Ensure information is being entered for the correct child! The default on the Removal Information tab is to highlight the first child on the list.

 The AFCARS Removal Information clean-up report includes entries where the Date of Physical Removal Date is more than 30 days earlier than the M910 date. If, after review, the assigned caseworker determines that these are both valid dates, no change should be made in CONNECTIONS.



For information on entering other AFCARS elements, see the CONNECTIONS tip sheet, *Recording AFCARS Information* on the CONNECTIONS website at <http://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/jobaided/jobaided.asp>.

## Resources

- CONNECTIONS Job Aids and Tip Sheets:  
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaided/jobaided.asp>
- CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Staff:  
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/contact.asp>
- CONNECTIONS Triage Application Help Mailbox:  
[ocfs.sm.conn\\_app@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.ny.gov)  
(NOTE: address contains an underline)

ITS Enterprise Service Desk  
1-800-697-1323