

# CONNECTIONS

## *Build 18 Resource Guide for Managerial Staff*



**CONNECTIONS Training Project  
SUNY Training Strategies Group**

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# **CONNECTIONS**

## ***Build 18 Resource Guide for Managerial Staff***

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# What Is CONNECTIONS?

CONNECTIONS is the child welfare computer system that allows for documentation of the delivery of child welfare services to families and children in New York State. CONNECTIONS provides outcome-based supports for child welfare caseworkers as they work with families, including assessment, planning and the provision of services. CONNECTIONS was developed as part of the Federal initiative known as the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). In 1993, the Federal government provided financial incentives for states to develop automated child welfare processes statewide in an effort to provide more efficient and effective administration of programs for Federal reporting.

## Child Welfare Practice in New York State

No matter what our roles may be in the Child Welfare system, each of us shares and contributes to the mission of child welfare: to ensure safety, permanency and well-being for children and families. To achieve this mission, Child Welfare practice in New York State must remain focused on the five child welfare outcomes identified by the Office of Children and Family Services:

- ▶ Children are safe.
- ▶ Families are preserved, consistent with the safety of the children.
- ▶ Children are adopted when their birth family cannot be preserved.
- ▶ Children leaving care at the age of majority can make a successful transition to self-sufficiency.
- ▶ Children and youth can develop normally.

The case management system in CONNECTIONS serves as an effective tool for documenting casework activities that support the achievement of these outcomes. All information must be recorded accurately and in a timely manner to support the achievement of these five outcomes.

The case management system in CONNECTIONS supports Child Welfare's mission and the achievement of the five child welfare outcomes by providing a way to record and manage information related to work with children and families, and to retain that information for future reference. Documentation in the CONNECTIONS system provides an historical record of information that is easily and instantaneously shared with others who have system access and appropriate security, such as supervisors, managers and subsequent workers at both the local district and voluntary agency level. CONNECTIONS case management outputs may also be shared with lawyers, Family Court, and the clients themselves. CONNECTIONS also provides data to managers at the local level and at the state level to support planning, the assessment of trends, performance levels and resource needs. Information in the system is also used to conduct State Central Register clearances of potential foster parents, adoptive parents, child care workers and day care workers.

Prior to the development of CONNECTIONS, a number of computer systems were used to record child welfare information; these systems (commonly referred to as “legacy systems”) are currently still in use:

- ▶ The **Welfare Management System (WMS)** tracks authorizations for Purchase of Services (POS) that are provided to children and families in the Child Welfare system. WMS also tracks SCR Clearances, Demographics, Eligibility, Direct Services and Case Maintenance, as well as reauthorization.
- ▶ The **Child Care Review Service (CCRS)** records additional child demographics and case information and tracks all child movements (placements), legal and adoption activities, and assessment and service plans for tracked children (children in receipt of preventive, protective or foster care services). It is also the source of data for the Adoption Monitoring System (AMS).
- ▶ The **Benefits Issuance and Control System (BICS)** records and issues payments for all services provided in New York State. This includes payments to service providers and foster parents. BICS functions include vendor file calculations and payment control/adjustment.

The CONNECTIONS case management system is designed to create a single statewide integrated system for the collection and recording of child protective, preventive, foster care and adoption service information. CONNECTIONS will eventually interface with and/or replace the existing New York State “legacy” systems and several non-child welfare systems, such as Temporary Assistance, Medicaid (MA) and Child Support.

CONNECTIONS has many of the same characteristics and functions of Windows-based applications with which you may already be familiar, like Microsoft Word or Internet Explorer. Your familiarity with these applications may facilitate your transition to the CONNECTIONS case management system.

CONNECTIONS is a dynamic system that is updated periodically to support casework practice, OCFS regulations, Social Services Law and reporting requirements. CONNECTIONS has been implemented in a series of packages called Releases. Subsequent updates to the system are grouped together and implemented as “builds.” Build 18 will bring a large number of Case Management functions to CONNECTIONS, including Intake, Progress Notes, and Assessment and Service Planning. Build 19 will bring the balance of Case Management, as well as Financial Management, into the application.

## **Who Uses CONNECTIONS?**

The CONNECTIONS case management system is currently used by Intake workers at the State Central Register (SCR), Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers at local districts, and Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD) workers at local districts and voluntary agencies. Build 18 will add Child Preventive, Foster Care and Adoption caseworkers to the list of CONNECTIONS users.

## The CONNECTIONS Application

The CONNECTIONS application is made available to users in three different ways:

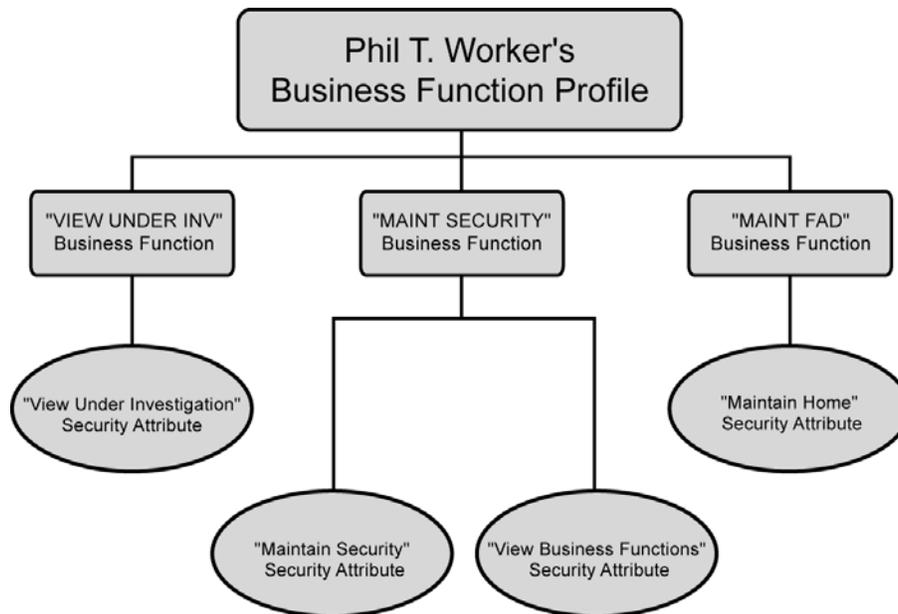
- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Production Database</b> | The Production Database contains “live” data. This is the database that all workers use to record and view information in CONNECTIONS.  |
| <b>Training Database</b>   | The Training Database contains simulated data and allows workers to practice functions necessary for their casework activities. It mirrors the functionality of the Production Database.  |
| <b>Preview Application</b> | <p>The Preview Application contains a “snapshot” of actual case data. Information entered into the Preview Application does <i>not</i> carry over to the Production Database.</p> <p>The Preview Application provides an opportunity to preview changes and enhancements planned for the CONNECTIONS system. The Preview Application is available for a limited time when changes are made to the system. Users will receive special notice from OCFS when the Preview Application becomes available.</p> |

To distinguish between the Training Database and the Preview Application, keep in mind that the Training Database contains simulated data, while the Preview Application is a “snapshot” of actual case data.

## **CONNECTIONS Security**

In order to protect the confidentiality and integrity of case data, access to information in CONNECTIONS is carefully controlled. A number of factors determine the information a worker can view or maintain in the system, including the worker's job function, the cases to which the worker is assigned, and the worker's Business Function Profile (BFP).

All CONNECTIONS users receive security profiles which determine the windows or types of information they can open and view, as well as which information they can modify or "maintain." In CONNECTIONS, each person's security profile is called a Business Function Profile (BFP). Each worker has only one BFP. Each BFP is comprised of one or more Business Functions. A Business Function may be comprised of one or more security attributes.



An individual's BFP is based on the tasks he or she is responsible for performing and the level of access to records that is needed to complete those tasks. A worker's BFP may contain multiple Business Functions, based on that worker's responsibilities.

Security Coordinators at the local district and voluntary agency level assign appropriate Business Functions to each staff person in their offices, creating an individual BFP for each worker. Managers need to consult State-issued security guidelines when determining the appropriate security to assign to workers, so that workers are assigned security appropriate to perform necessary tasks and at the same time guard families' rights to confidentiality.

CONNECTIONS features are sometimes disabled based upon a worker's role. For example, the **UNIT** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar is disabled for caseworkers, since this function is available only to supervisors. Certain Business Functions are also not assignable based on whether the worker is LDSS staff, Voluntary Agency staff or State staff. For example, Voluntary Agency staff cannot be assigned the VIEW SOURCE Business Function for child protective investigations.

## **Cases and Stages in CONNECTIONS**

The CONNECTIONS case management system organizes information about a family or individual situation into *cases* and *stages*. A *case* contains the information about the child welfare services provided to a family or individual, including reports of abuse or maltreatment,

as well as the provision of ongoing protective/preventive services, foster care, or adoption services. A “CONNECTIONS Case” consists of an associated group of “stages.” A *stage* is a grouping of casework activities related to a particular time frame, case status, or casework action within the context of the overall case.

Four stages are currently implemented in the CONNECTIONS case management system:

- ▶ CPS Intake (INT)
- ▶ CPS Investigation (INV)
- ▶ Foster/Adoptive Home Development (FAD)
- ▶ Administrative Review Investigation (ARI)

Build 18 adds two new stages:

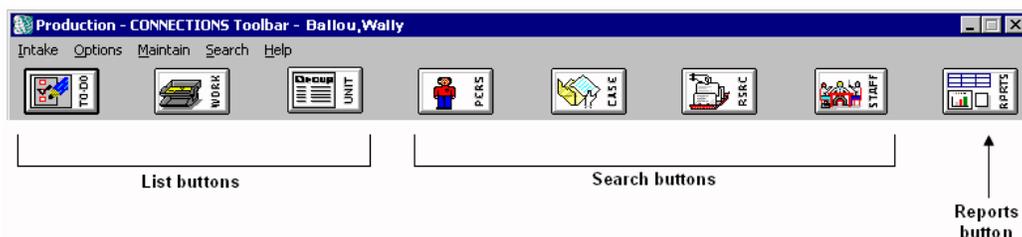
- ▶ Family Services Intake (FSI)
- ▶ Family Services Stage (FSS)

The Family Services Intake (FSI) provides workers with the ability to capture information pertaining to requests for services. This information must be recorded before ongoing services may be provided and a Family Services Stage (FSS) may be opened. Local District (LDSS) workers, as well as Voluntary Agency (VA) workers who have the proper security, are allowed to record Family Services Intakes; however, only an LDSS worker may approve the FSI and “progress” the case to a Family Services Stage. For CPS cases being opened for services, FSI provides a “bridge” between the Investigation and the FSS.

The Family Services Stage (FSS) is the area within a CONNECTIONS case in which to record person and demographic information, assessments and service plans, progress notes, and other information pertinent to the provision of services to children and families. The FSS is organized in a structured manner that promotes quality casework practice and aids worker, supervisory and management review and approval of the case information.

### ***The CONNECTIONS Toolbar***

The CONNECTIONS Toolbar is always available at the top of the screen when the CONNECTIONS application is open. The Toolbar serves as the “gateway” to information in the CONNECTIONS system.



### **List Buttons**

The first two buttons on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar (**TO-DO** and **WORK**) help workers organize their day-to-day work. The **TO-DO** button opens the *Staff To-Do List*, containing items needing the worker’s attention. The **WORK** button opens the *Assigned Workload*, a list of the worker’s case assignments; workers originate most of their documentation activities from the

*Assigned Workload* and the *Task List* (which is accessed from the *Assigned Workload*). Tasks are performed at several key intervals throughout the stage; some of them, such as the Child Protective Record Summary task, may be performed repeatedly.

Unlike pre-Build 18 functionality in CONNECTIONS, Builds 18 and 19 will not use the *Task List*; for example, workers will be able to navigate directly from the *Assigned Workload* to the Family Services Stage.

The third button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, **UNIT**, opens the *Unit Summary* window, which is available only to CONNECTIONS users who have been assigned a specific Business Function. It is available to staff at the supervisory level and to their designees. This window gives supervisors access to the workloads of the caseworkers they supervise. With the implementation of Build 18, certain workers will be able to use this button to access other workers' *Assigned Workloads*, provided that Agency Access has been established to do so. For all other users, the button is disabled.

### **Search Buttons**

The next four buttons (**PERS**, **CASE**, **RSRC** and **STAFF**) are search buttons, which enable various searches: persons, cases, resources (including foster homes, agencies and service providers) and staff in CONNECTIONS.

### **Reports Button**

The final button, **RPRTS**, opens the *Report List*, which provides access to reports that have been generated (or "launched") within CONNECTIONS. Monthly management reports are also downloaded directly to the *Report List* for workers who have been assigned certain special Business Functions. The Open Case Inquiry (OCI) report enables caseworkers and supervisory staff to view their case list, or a list of those cases assigned to workers in their units and see which assignments are coming due or are overdue.

## **The CONNECTIONS System Development Life Cycle (SDLC)**

The CONNECTIONS project follows a System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) approach to the development of new system features. Under the SDLC, every effort is made to design a system that meets users' needs, is compatible with appropriate casework practice, and addresses State and Federal SACWIS requirements. The length of time to follow the SDLC from beginning to end varies from build to build. Larger builds can take years to develop.

Beginning several months before the actual release date of a build, local districts and voluntary agencies undertake a series of preparation activities designed to implement the new system successfully.

### **SDLC Phases**

<b>Requirements Phase</b>	During the Requirements Phase, OCFS staff and user groups define what needs to be included or changed in the system and propose a solution.
<b>Design Phase</b>	Once the requirements have been established, programmers plan out how the new and modified functionality will work in the application.

<b>Construction Phase</b>	Programming for the new and modified functionality occurs during the Construction Phase. Initial testing is performed and feedback is provided to the programmers. Errors in the application are addressed before the next phase of testing, User Acceptance Test (UAT).
<b>User Acceptance Test (UAT)</b>	Prior to the implementation of the build, workers from the CONNECTIONS UAT team, as well as volunteers from local districts and voluntary agencies, use a copy of the live database to conduct a final test of the technical changes to the application.
<b>Implementation Phase</b>	The Implementation Phase includes preparation activities designed to implement the new system successfully. Instructor-led training, videos and job aids are delivered to users at a scheduled time prior to a build. Informational materials are provided that prepare users for upcoming changes. On-site implementation assistance, provided by CONNECTIONS Field Support Staff, is planned for Builds 18 and 19. CONNECTIONS Field Support Staff will work closely with district/agency staff to assure that preparations for the build(s) have been accomplished.

## Recent and Planned CONNECTIONS System Builds

### **Build 16** *(CPS Enhancements)*

*Implemented December 15, 2003*

- ▶ Structured Decision Making
  - Safety Assessment
  - Risk Assessment Profile
- ▶ Investigation Progress Notes
- ▶ Consolidated Investigations

### **Build 17** *(Security for Case Management)*

*Implementation scheduled for Mar-Apr 2004*

- ▶ Business Functions
- ▶ Staff/Units Set-Up
- ▶ Organizational Hierarchy
- ▶ Agency Access

Build 17 establishes the security structure for Build 18 functionality and beyond. The original system architecture provides the security structure for all pre-Build 18 system functions.

**Build 18**  
**(Case Management)**

*Phased implementation scheduled for Dec 2004-Oct 2005*

- ▶ New Standardized Intake
- ▶ Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP)
  - Structured Decision-Making
  - Outcome- and Strength-Based Framework
- ▶ Visiting Plan and Visiting Plan Review
- ▶ Service Plan Review
- ▶ Progress Notes
- ▶ Child Case Record (for children freed for adoption)
- ▶ WMS Interface

Build 18 establishes a single, electronic case record that contains the tools designed to promote better assessments, case planning and decision-making by casework staff.

*See Appendix A for detailed explanations of Build 18 features.*

**Build 19**  
**(Case & Financial Management)**

*Phased implementation scheduled for Dec 2005-Sep 2006*

- ▶ Foster Care Placement
- ▶ Legal Activities
- ▶ Funding Eligibility
- ▶ Services Authorization
- ▶ Adoption Photolisting
- ▶ Adoption Subsidy
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Interfaces with Other Systems (e.g., CSMS, MA)

Build 19 integrates the casework and financial management aspects of child welfare services in a manner that promotes compliance with federal mandates, state laws and regulations and optimal casework practices.

Both Build 18 and Build 19 establish a single electronic case record for services cases and extend critical CONNECTIONS functionality to services cases for the first time, including the following features:

- A standardized recording for all Service Intakes
- A family-focused, strength-based framework for assessment and service planning

- Efficiencies in documentation of case events and activities
- Casework tools to support best practice and improve decision-making
- Support for coordinated work and service planning where multiple workers are involved in a case
- Capacity for online workload management by workers and supervisors

# Overview of CONNECTIONS Case Management

Build 18 (Case Management) will almost triple the number of CONNECTIONS users in New York State. Over 10,000 new users, including all district/agency Foster Care, Preventive and Adoption staff, will become CONNECTIONS users. Build 18 will automate the Uniform Case Record (UCR)/Case Management System by incorporating these functions into CONNECTIONS. This Build will also affect the relationship between Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies. It calls for the re-engineering of work processes to take advantage of system benefits and efficiencies, and to accommodate the demands of cooperative work within a single family case record.

## New Functionality

### ***Family Services Intake (FSI)***

With the implementation of Build 18, all Intakes for Services must be recorded in a standard format within CONNECTIONS. A Family Services Intake stage (FSI) will be opened for this purpose. The Intake stage, which is the only route to a Family Services Stage (FSS), may be opened in one of two ways: either by a CPS worker from within an Investigation stage, or from the CONNECTIONS Toolbar by any worker whose Business Function Profile (BFP) contains the CREATE FSI Business Function. The Family Services Intake will be opened automatically whenever a CPS worker records an Investigation Conclusion with a Closure Reason of "Open for Services."

If opened from within an Investigation stage, demographic data from the CPS Investigation will pre-fill the Intake and the CPS worker will be listed as the source of the intake. The CPS worker will need only to record a brief narrative, update the demographics if appropriate, and record the decision to open a Family Services Stage. If the case is being opened by a non-CPS worker, completion of a screening tool for emergency and/or ongoing service needs, called the Behavioral Concerns and Family Issues (BCFI), and the documentation of any interventions taken will be required. This is only required for CWS stage types. (See page 12.)

There is no approval process for Intakes, although cases maybe submitted to a supervisor for "review," if desired. Intakes may be initiated by either a Local District or a Voluntary Agency worker, but only a Local District worker can progress an Intake to the Family Services Stage. Voluntary Agencies that prepare Intakes on behalf of Local Districts will submit those Intakes to the district for acceptance and progression to a Family Services Stage.

### ***Family Services Stage (FSS)***

The addition of the Family Services Stage (FSS) provides the umbrella for documentation of work on services cases. In Build 18, the Family Services Stage consists of six sections or tabs:

- Stage Composition
- Family Assessment and Service Plan
- Service Plan Review
- Progress Notes
- Key Dates
- Case Summary

Additional tabs that relate to Placement Activities, Service Authorizations, etc., will be added in Build 19.

There is a new concept of “Stage Type” within the Family Services Stage that drives the requirements for documentation. There are five major stage types:

- CWS** Child Welfare Services (foster care, child protective, preventive, and adoption services)
- OTI** Out of Town Inquiry
- COI** Court Ordered Investigation
- ICPC** Interstate Compact
- ADVPO** Advocates Preventive Only cases (NYC)

All CWS type stages must be fully documented, including online completion of the revised UCR Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP). All FSS tabs are enabled for this stage type. OTI, COI, ICPC, and ADVPO type stages use only the Stage Composition and Progress Notes tabs; the other FSS tabs are disabled.

### ***Family Services Stage Roles***

In CONNECTIONS, work in a family services case will be documented in real-time within a single electronic family case record. This is a major change to current practice. All workers assigned to the case will have access to and work within this case record. As a result, all workers with a role in the case will be able to view other workers’ work, including but not limited to case Progress Notes. The enhanced sharing of information will support increased coordination of services and more informed decision-making, resulting in better outcomes for families. Preparing staff to work cooperatively within a shared case record will be a major focus of implementation efforts.

There can be only one *open* Family Services Stage (FSS) for a family per jurisdiction (local district). Multiple workers, including workers from other districts or voluntary agencies, may be assigned to this stage. Every worker is assigned to one of the following four roles, which govern what they do and their ability to enter data in various system components:

- Case Manager** Every FSS has a single Case Manager, who *must* be LDSS staff. The Case Manager provides oversight of the case and must approve the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP). When the Case Manager also acts as the Case Planner, the Case Manager’s supervisor must approve the FASP.
- Case Planner** The Case Planner, who may be either LDSS or VA staff, is responsible for the coordination of work with a family. The Case Planner is also the author of the FASP and is responsible for the entirety of its contents and the timeliness of its submission for approval. This means the Case Planner must coordinate all documented work done in the CONNECTIONS case management system by other workers who contribute to the FASP, and either accept it as contributed by the worker(s) or revise it accordingly. The Case Planner sends the FASP to the Case Manager for approval. An “added” approval by the Case Manager’s supervisor may be completed after approval by the Case Manager.

<b>CPS Worker/Monitor</b>	The CPS Worker/Monitor <i>must</i> be LDSS staff and may complete the CPS Risk and Safety Assessments. The system supports, but does not require, review of the FASP by a CPS Worker/Monitor. The Case Planner needs to alert the CPS Worker/Monitor in circumstances where s/he needs to complete work in, or review, the FASP.
<b>Case Worker</b>	Case Workers may be either LDSS or VA staff. These workers may be associated with a specific child(ren) in the FSS and can complete specific work within the FASP, such as the Child Scales and Foster Care Issues regarding the child(ren) to whom they are associated. There may be multiple Case Workers assigned to the FSS.

### ***Stage Composition***

Stage Composition is the “Home” tab of the Family Services Stage. When the Family Services Stage is opened, this tab will display. Demographic data (name, address, phone, date of birth, ethnicity, race, person identifiers [PID, CIN, etc.]) for all persons named in the stage is readily available for view and may be updated by anyone with a role in the stage. Persons are added to the stage or end-dated here and historical stage composition can be viewed. It is very important that workers accurately maintain persons on this tab to ensure accurate AFCARS and NCANDS data and to avoid creation of duplicate persons/cases within CONNECTIONS.

The Family Relationship Matrix (FRM), which specifies the relationship of each person to every other person in the stage, is accessible from the Stage Composition tab and must be completed prior to the launch of the FASP. (See below.) The designation of Primary and Secondary Parent/Caretakers, which is necessary for completion of the Risk Assessment Profile and FASP Parent/Caretaker scales, is also done here.

In the Child Case Record (CCR), the worker will use the Stage Composition tab to record Finalization of Adoption and to view Family of Origin information.

### ***Tracked Child Detail***

Important information regarding all tracked children in the stage will be recorded and displayed in Tracked Child Detail on the Family Assessment and Service Plan tab. Anyone with a role in the stage can record or update PPG and Program Choice, and associate a worker with a child from here. In addition, certain placement information from CCRS (Agency, Placement Date, and Facility ID, Address and Type) will be brought forward and displayed. The historical record of all PPGs and Program Choices is also available.

### ***Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP)***

The CONNECTIONS case management system will replace the UCR Assessment and Service Plan (which is currently completed in template or paper form) with a revised and renamed Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP). The FASP is designed to support unique individual assessments and a family- and outcome-focused, strength-based service planning and delivery process. Workers will continue to assess and plan with families for children’s safety, permanency and well-being, but the format and content of that documentation is changed. The FASP supports a fuller, more accurate assessment and an increased emphasis on including the family’s perspective.

<b>Content</b>	<p>Structured decision-making tools (i.e., the revised Safety Assessment and the Risk Assessment Profile) are employed in all CPS cases to support improved safety, service delivery and casework decisions. The FASP includes new Strengths, Needs and Risk scales that reflect the expectation that caseworkers assess family and child strengths as well as needs to guide the assessment. Workers will be required to document their assessment of all tracked children individually. Primary and Secondary Parent/Caretakers will also be assessed individually.</p> <p>A Foster Care Issues component must be completed for each child placed in foster care. This incorporates and revises UCR template sections for Appropriateness of Placement, Permanency Planning, Concurrent Planning, and Visiting Plan (and Review). The Foster Care Issues questions support the rapid achievement of permanency and reflect the standards of practice required by the federal Child and Family Services Review. A Life Skills Assessment is required for all children in foster care, aged 14 and over. The FASP asks workers, as part of the Assessment Analysis, to state specifically the improvements/changes that need to be made, instead of merely stating the “problem.” This list of needed improvements will be carried forward into the service plan tab to guide service planning.</p> <p>The Service Plan has an enhanced outcome and strengths-based focus to support development of a services plan with the family. Workers are asked to identify the family/individual strengths to be used to achieve specific outcomes and to evaluate the level of outcome achievement with each FASP. In addition, documentation of needed services/service status by individual must be completed as part of the Service Plan, if the local district has opted to require this.</p>
<b>System Efficiencies</b>	<p>Important efficiencies are provided by the system. CONNECTIONS will customize the FASP according to FASP type (Initial, Comprehensive, Reassessment) and the Program Choice, PPG, and age of tracked children in the stage; as a result, the FASP will present only the relevant/required components for completion. Information from prior work will come forward and pre-fill selected FASP components. The original needs/concerns that prompted opening of the services case will be documented in the Initial FASP and will automatically display in all subsequent FASPs for worker information. The Safety Assessment (SA) in CPS FASPs will be pre-filled from the last approved SA for the worker’s review and modification, as appropriate. Placement information will be brought forward from CCRS (Agency, Placement Date, and Facility ID, Address, and Type) and displayed on the Tracked Child Detail tab. The system also provides for copying of appropriate entries to the records of other children in the stage to avoid redundant data entry. A CONNECTIONS Alert will cue Case Planners and Case Managers when a FASP is coming due or overdue.</p>
<b>Process</b>	<p>All workers assigned to the Family Service Stage (FSS) will document their work within a single, shared FASP. Workers will enter their contribution to specified FASP components in draft format. The Case Planner will then compile the draft entries of all workers into a single narrative and modify as appropriate. This “Case Planner Summary” constitutes the official FASP document. Multiple workers may also work within a single Plan Amendment</p>

to document several status changes.

Unlike the UCR templates, which can be opened and worked in at any time, there are system rules governing who can launch (open and start work in) a new FASP and when they can do so.

- A worker must be assigned to the Family Services Stage in order to launch the FASP. Any assigned worker, not just the Case Planner or Case Manager, can launch the FASP.
- The system limits how far in advance of its due date a FASP may be launched. This supports documentation of current case status within the FASP. The Initial FASP may be started upon opening of the Family Services Stage. The Comprehensive FASP may not be started more than 30 days before its due date. A Reassessment FASP may not be started more than 60 days before its due date.
- A FASP may not be launched until a Primary Caretaker has been identified, the Family Relationship Matrix is completed, and there is a PPG and Program Choice recorded for all tracked children.
- Only one FASP in the stage can be in the process of being developed and approved at a time. Launching a new FASP drops an uncompleted FASP into “template” form. Workers will then have 60 days to complete work within the template format, at which point the template will be frozen. System efficiencies are not available within the template and data from the template does not carry forward to the next FASP. Previously due FASPs that were never launched will be marked as “Missed” upon the launch of a new FASP/PA and will not be able to be completed, even in template format.
- Plan Amendments can only be created if there is an approved FASP (except in Child Case Records). They may not be launched if a FASP is in process or is available to be launched (time is within the FASP launch window) or if a FASP is in pending approval status. In these instances the status change questions are available to be added directly in the FASP and are to be recorded there.
- A late FASP may not be launched if it is more than 365 days overdue, even if the next FASP has not been launched.

### ***Progress Notes***

All progress notes will be recorded in CONNECTIONS. Everyone’s progress notes will be viewable by all workers assigned to the stage, but each worker “maintains” his or her own notes. Required completion of accompanying fields, such as date, type of contact, participants, etc., will enable searching, sorting and filtering for specific notes or groups of notes. Progress notes may be entered as either “draft” or “final” by anyone with a role in the stage or access to the workload of such a staff person. Draft notes will freeze 15 calendar days after entry. Any

supervisory review and approval of notes, therefore, needs to take place within this 15-day period. Addenda to notes can be entered at any time; the system will mark the author and date of entry of the addendum and attach it to the note being amended. Entry of notes by clerical/support/on-call staff is supported through the ENTER PROG NOTE Business Function.

### **Service Plan Review (SPR)**

Service Plan Review (SPR) information will be recorded via a separate tab outside of the FASP. CONNECTIONS provides online support for scheduling and notification of SPR conferences. Workers will record the scheduling details in CONNECTIONS and generate system alerts to all assigned workers and notification letters to family members and other invitees. The system will retain meeting and participant information for efficiency in scheduling future SPR conferences. Because the SPR tab is located outside of the FASP, it may be accessed whenever needed. Clerical workers may be given security access to schedule conferences and record SPR information.

The CONNECTIONS case management system also provides support for the documentation of SPR conferences. Selected SPR meeting data (date scheduled, date held, invitees/role, invitee notification date, attendance indicator for all invitees, reason for not attending) entered on this tab will be carried forward by the system into the associated FASP Report. Workers may also record narrative comments regarding family input, meeting outcomes, and third party reviewer comments on the SPR tab. This information is *not* brought forward to the FASP. Service Plan Reviews are required for all foster care placement cases. They continue to be strongly encouraged for *all* cases.

### **Key Dates**

The Key Dates tab is a “view only” window of permanency-related information from CCRS. It cannot be updated in CONNECTIONS and is only as accurate as the information that has been recorded in CCRS.

The following information is displayed:

- Children in Placement
- ASFA Day 1
- Due Date for Next Permanency Petition Filing
- Due Date for Next Permanency Hearing
- Deadline Date for TPR Filing Decision

### **Case Summary**

The Case Summary tab provides a quick “index” of all the stages, open or closed, in a case. It mirrors the currently available FCP window in CONNECTIONS (pre-Build 18) that includes a listing of all stages and workers, but does not navigate the worker to other stages. The Case Manager or Case Planner initiates the stage closing process from this tab.

### **Child Case Record (CCR)**

The system will automatically create a Child Case Record when the Case Manager records that the child is completely freed for adoption. All children who have been freed, including those who

might not be placed in an adoptive setting, will have a separate, single-person, system-generated case. The FASP in this case record will be customized to the situation and specific needs of a freed child.

## ***Interfaces***

### ***WMS***

Upon the implementation of Build 18, WMS Child Welfare Services cases will be initiated through the CONNECTIONS case management system. The two systems will be kept “in sync” through an ongoing interface. The WMS hierarchy, in which Non-Services data takes precedence, will be maintained and users will be notified of the need to resolve any discrepancies between CONNECTIONS and WMS data. Note that WMS cases that are active at the point Build 18 is implemented will automatically convert into CONNECTIONS cases. After WMS case initiation, the balance of activities to open WMS must be completed and services will continue to be authorized in that system until Build 19.

### ***CCRS***

Until the implementation of Build 19, when the CONNECTIONS case management system becomes the system of record, workers still need to register the case, record the assessment and service plan (Plan Type, Service Needs and Status, Program Choice, PPG, Worker Function, Case Status) and record placement (movement), legal and adoption activities in CCRS. Since PPGs have been revised in the CONNECTIONS case management system, a mapping guide will be provided to assist workers. (See Appendix F.) Workers will continue to receive cues from CCRS for entry of assessment and service plan data.

# Build 18 Implementation

## Phased Implementation

Due to the logistical requirements for providing training, as well as pre- and post-implementation technical assistance to support the substantial number of Local District and Voluntary Agency staff affected, Build 18 will be implemented in “waves” across New York State. A new wave will begin every two to four weeks. “Just in time” training will be provided in advance of each wave, with detailed technical assistance provided for eight weeks following each wave of implementation.

Wave	Counties Represented
1	Cortland, Oswego, Tompkins
2	Cayuga, Onondaga
3	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Livingston, Madison, Ontario, Otsego, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Yates
4	Monroe, Wayne
5	Erie
6	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Genesee, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Orleans, St. Lawrence, Wyoming, St. Regis Tribe
7	Albany, Fulton, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington
8	Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster
9	Westchester
10	Nassau, Suffolk
11	New York City <i>(specific boroughs for each wave to be determined)</i>
12	
13	
14	

## Field Support Tools and Methods

Pre- and Post-Implementation support tools and methods will include the following:

- Information Sessions
- Impact Analyses
- Self-Assessment
- Action Plan
- Business Process Redesign
- Facilitated Implementation Support Teams
- Prototype
- Data Clean-up
- Use of Preview
- Readiness Checklist
- Dedicated Technical Assistance
- Post-Implementation Review

Field support will also work with Voluntary Agencies to reduce the amount of time in which they will need to work in both the pre- and post-Build 18 “worlds.”

## Training/Support Materials

### **Videos**

Training videos are designed to help introduce staff to the key features of a Build or other specific training needs. These videos provide an overview of the key changes that the Build will introduce to the system. Some videos are developed for use in conjunction with a job aid or step-by-step guide, or as a stand-alone introduction to the Build. Build-related videos are mailed to Directors of Services, Implementation Coordinators and Staff Development Coordinators in Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies several weeks prior to the implementation of a Build.

One of the videos planned for Build 18 is *Security for Managerial Staff*. This video is meant to provide managers and supervisors in Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies with a high-level overview of CONNECTIONS security and information necessary to help them make informed decisions when establishing their district/agency security structure.

### **Printed Materials**

Printed materials will be developed by SUNY Training Strategies Group (TSG) for use in Build 18-related trainings. These materials, which provide step-by-step instructions for completing new or modified tasks that will be introduced with Build 18, are intended to serve as helpful reference tools for regular users of the CONNECTIONS case management system. Introductory remarks will provide a work context for tasks, while guidelines and hints will help workers carry out these tasks efficiently and effectively.

Several weeks prior to each wave of Build 18 implementation, copies of these materials will be shipped to Directors of Services, Implementation Coordinators and Staff Development Coordinators in Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies. Copies of all these documents will be posted on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website prior to the first wave of Build 18 implementation.

### ***Computer-Based Training (CBT)***

The Building Blocks CBT is designed for new CONNECTIONS users, providing an overview of CONNECTIONS and instructions on basic navigation in the application. This CBT is in CD format, offering new workers the ability to gain these fundamental skills right at their own desks.

### ***Preview Application***

The Preview Application contains a “snapshot” of actual case data. Information entered into the Preview Application *does not* carry over to the Production Database.

The Preview Application provides the opportunity to preview changes and enhancements planned for the CONNECTIONS system. The Preview Application is available for a limited time when changes are made to the system. OCFS sends a special notice to users when the Preview Application becomes available.

### ***Training Database***

The CONNECTIONS Training Database mirrors the Production database and provides a safe environment for workers to learn and practice using simulated case materials. Local District and Voluntary Agency staff can sign on to the Training Database from their own workstations. Staff must use a special training logon (referred to as a Desktop User or DU number), which is obtained by calling SUNY TSG toll-free at 1-877-451-4835. Districts and agencies may request up to four DU numbers at a time for a period of up to three weeks.

The Training Database can be used as a training tool to develop new skills or as a resource for a user’s daily work in CONNECTIONS. It has the look and feel of the CONNECTIONS system currently in production and is updated to reflect system changes weeks before a build is implemented. Workers can use the Training Database to become more familiar with changes to the system.

Information entered in the Training Database is deleted when the computer system is refreshed each night; any material that a worker enters into the Training Database is available only until the end of that day.

## **Next Steps**

### ***Computer Literacy Assessment Tools***

Appendix B contains a CONNECTIONS Computer Literacy Needs Assessment, to help you ascertain the current knowledge/skill comfort levels of your staff regarding the use of Windows-based applications like Microsoft Word and Outlook.

### ***Data Clean-Up***

Appendix C contains information about data clean-up procedures that need to be completed prior to each respective wave of Build 18 implementation.

### ***Build 18 Implementation Timeline (Site Perspective)***

Appendix D contains a timeline showing Build 18 Implementation from an individual site perspective.

# Resources

A variety of resources are available to obtain more information about using CONNECTIONS. Many of these resources are available directly from a worker's computer.

## Online Help

The CONNECTIONS system contains its own dynamic Online Help feature, which provides step-by-step instructions, as well as policy and practice information that provide context for the CONNECTIONS functions.

## Public Folders

OCFS maintains Public Folders in Microsoft Outlook to provide information that users can access at any time.



### Step-by-Step: Accessing Public Folders

- 1 Open Microsoft Outlook.
- 2 On the left side of the window, double-click **Public Folders**.
- 3 Double-click **All Public Folders**.
- 4 Double-click **Statewide**.
- 5 Double-click **CONNECTIONS**.
- 6 Click on the folder you want to view.

## OCFS CONNECTIONS Intranet Site

The OCFS CONNECTIONS Intranet Site contains many of the same documents and types of information that are available in the Public Folders.



### Step-by-Step: Accessing the OCFS CONNECTIONS Intranet Site

- 1 On the local desktop, double-click the **Internet Explorer** icon.  
*The New York State Department of Family Assistance home page displays.*
- 2 Click on the **OCFS** link on the state map on the left side of the page.  
*The Office of Children and Family Services home page displays.*

- 3 Click on the **CONNECTIONS** link on the OCFS home page.  
*The CONNECTIONS home page displays.*
- 4 Click on a topic to access information.

## **OCFS Implementation Group**

Numerous staff from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services are available to provide assistance to local district and agency managers and CONNECTIONS users. Implementation group resources and supports include the following:

- Training and Training aids
- Communications: Website and weekly updates; other announcements of interest to CONNECTIONS users
- Field Support: pre- and post-technical assistance to Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies

Your primary contact with OCFS regarding CONNECTIONS-related issues is your CONNECTIONS Regional Field Support representative. Regional Field Support representatives are a valuable resource for information. They are available to answer questions, offer guidance and provide technical assistance on the CONNECTIONS application. Your Regional Field Support representative can provide you with essential tools and strategies that will assist your agency in preparing for implementation.

A listing of Regional Field Support representatives can be found on the OCFS CONNECTIONS intranet Website on the Implementations page.

Implementation Support by CONNECTIONS Regional Field Support Staff will be available to districts and agencies during the planning and preparation phase of the implementation cycle to provide technical assistance in the use of methods and tools to help facilitate meetings and provide hands-on support for data cleanup activities.

## **Program/Practice Training**

OCFS has contracted with State College at Buffalo, CDHS, to develop and deliver Program/Practice training associated with the implementation of CONNECTIONS Build 18. Program/Practice training will precede the CONNECTIONS lab-based system training and will focus on the new Case Management component of the automated case recording system within CONNECTIONS. Policy/Program impacts include the following:

- Structured Family Services Intake
- New Assessment and Service Planning Model (FASP)
- Single, Electronic Case Record
- Roles/Responsibilities within a Shared Case
- Practice Principles that underlie the system design

## **SUNY Training Strategies Group (TSG)**

The CONNECTIONS Training Project (SUNY Training Strategies Group) provides training, materials and support through a contract between the Research Foundation of State University of New York and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

In addition to the Build-related trainings listed on page 19, TSG also provides ongoing operational trainings on a variety of CONNECTIONS topics.

### ***Operational Trainings***

TSG trainers lead full- and half-day training sessions in labs across New York State. Training classes for both CONNECTIONS and Data Warehouse courses are available for individuals with a variety of skills and experience levels:

- ▶ *Building Blocks of CONNECTIONS*
- ▶ *Basic Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD)*
- ▶ *Advanced FAD for Experienced Workers*
- ▶ *Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation*
- ▶ *Data Warehouse*
- ▶ *Advanced Data Warehouse*
- ▶ *CONNECTIONS Security*
- ▶ *Vacancy Control*

TSG also develops training materials, in the form of step-by-step guides and job aids, that are distributed to participants in each training class. Additional step-by-step guides are available in specific topic areas (e.g., Data Maintenance, Search Techniques) that are addressed in less detail in the operational trainings.

All of these training materials are available on the OCFS CONNECTIONS Intranet site.

### ***Step-by-Step Guides/Job Aids***

Previous CONNECTIONS system Builds were supported with printed documentation known as Job Aids. Due to the extensive scope of functionality in Build 18, a full-length step-by-step guide will be developed by SUNY Training Strategies Group for use in the one- and two-day Build 18 system trainings for CPS and non-CPS Child Welfare workers.

Additional printed documentation/materials will be developed by SUNY TSG for use in the remaining Build 18-related system training.

All of these materials provide step-by-step instructions for completing new or modified tasks that will be introduced with Build 18. These materials are intended to serve as helpful reference tools for regular users of the CONNECTIONS case management system; the guide will include introductory remarks that provide a work context for tasks, as well as guidelines and hints for carrying out these tasks efficiently and effectively.

Several weeks prior to each wave of Build 18 implementation, copies of these materials will be shipped to Directors of Services, Implementation Coordinators and Staff Development Coordinators in Local Districts and Voluntary Agencies. Copies of all these documents, as well

as previous Job Aids and Step-by-Step Guides, are posted on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website:

- ▶ *Building Blocks of CONNECTIONS for CPS Workers*
- ▶ *Building Blocks of CONNECTIONS for FAD Workers*
- ▶ *Data Maintenance Step-by-Step Guide for CPS Caseworkers*
- ▶ *Data Maintenance Step-by-Step Guide for FAD Caseworkers*
- ▶ *Search Techniques Step-by-Step Guide for CPS Workers*
- ▶ *Child Protective Services (CPS) Step-by-Step Guide*
- ▶ *Basic Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD) Step-by-Step Guide*
- ▶ *OCFS Data Warehouse Reporting Step-by-Step Guide – Impromptu*
- ▶ *OCFS Data Warehouse Reporting Step-by-Step Guide – PowerPlay*
- ▶ *CONNECTIONS Security Step-by-Step Guide*

### ***Technical Assistance***

TSG training staff provide technical assistance to CONNECTIONS users. This assistance typically extends beyond the basic computer questions addressed by the NYS Office for Technology's Enterprise Help Desk. CONNECTIONS trainers aid callers in progressing through the CONNECTIONS application to reinforce information taught in operational and build trainings.

**Appendix A:  
Principal Changes/Impacts of  
CONNECTIONS System Build 18**

### **1. Single Online Record for a Case**

In CONNECTIONS, ongoing child welfare services will be documented in real time within a single electronic case record. This is a major change to current practice. All workers assigned a role in the case will work within this record and, as a result, will also see the work of all other assigned workers, including each other's progress notes. Workers who provide ongoing services, including Voluntary Agency workers, will be able to view CPS information in indicated and in-process investigation stages. Increased information sharing will support service coordination and timely, informed decision-making. It also requires the maintenance of confidentiality by all staff involved in a case. Districts and agencies should plan their overall approach to preparing staff to work cooperatively within a shared case record.

### **2. New, Standardized Intake**

#### **Intake Process**

Every case for ongoing services will first need to be opened as a Family Services Intake (FSI) stage. Much of the information required for an Intake resulting from a CPS investigation will be carried forward from the Investigation Stage. Districts/agencies need to determine who (caseworker and/or clerical staff) will be responsible for entry of non-CPS intakes into CONNECTIONS and ensure appropriate training of all responsible staff. Current agency intake procedures may need revision to accommodate the standardized online process.

#### **Movement of Intakes Between Voluntary Agencies and Local Districts**

In addition, the movement of Family Services Intakes between Voluntary Agencies and Local Districts requires specific preparations. All Local Districts need to set up an Intake process that includes a single "FSI Acceptance Unit" in CONNECTIONS for acceptance of Intake stages from Voluntary Agencies. All Voluntary Agencies need to set up a single "FSS Assign Unit" for acceptance of Family Services Stages (FSS) from Local Districts. Once the Voluntary FC/Preventive Agency worker submits an Intake to LDSS for acceptance, s/he will be precluded from documenting any further work in CONNECTIONS until the LDSS accepts and returns the case. This necessitates the development of procedures for timely action on these referrals.

#### **Person Search and Maintenance**

Workers who perform intakes will need to maintain persons and cases accurately within CONNECTIONS to avoid creation of duplicate persons/cases. This is a new requirement for both Intake and Services staff.

### **3. Family Services Stage (FSS) Roles**

In CONNECTIONS, there can be only one open Family Services Stage (FSS) for a family per jurisdiction (local district). Multiple workers, including workers from other agencies, may be assigned to this stage. Each worker is assigned to one of the following four roles, which govern what workers do and their ability to enter data in various system components. Basically, current work roles remain the same, but in some areas CONNECTIONS will necessitate changes to how staff do their work.

<b>Case Manager</b>	Every FSS has a single Case Manager, who <i>must</i> be LDSS staff. The Case Manager provides oversight of the case and must approve the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP). When the Case Manager also acts as the Case Planner, the Case Manager's supervisor must approve the FASP.
<b>Case Planner</b>	The Case Planner, who may be either LDSS or VA staff, is responsible for the coordination of work with a family. The Case Planner is also the author of the FASP and is responsible for the entirety of its contents and the timeliness of its submission for approval. This means the Case Planner must coordinate the documentation of all work in the FASP, and either accept it as contributed by the worker(s) or revise it accordingly. The Case Planner sends the FASP to the Case Manager for approval. There may be only one Case Planner in the FSS.
<b>CPS Worker/Monitor</b>	The CPS Worker/Monitor <i>must</i> be LDSS staff and may complete the CPS Risk and Safety Assessments. The system supports, but does not require, review of the FASP by a CPS Worker/Monitor. The Case Planner needs to alert the CPS Worker/Monitor in circumstances where s/he needs to complete work in, or review, the FASP.
<b>Case Worker</b>	Case Workers may be either LDSS or VA staff. These workers may be associated with a specific child(ren) in the FSS and can complete specific work within the FASP, such as the Child Scales and Foster Care Issues regarding the child(ren) to whom they are associated. There may be multiple Case Workers assigned to the FSS.

**4. Changes to Process of Assessment and Service Plan Completion and Approval**

<b>Multiple Workers Recording Within a Single Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP)</b>	All workers assigned to the FSS will work within a single FASP. Workers will enter their contribution to specified FASP components in draft format. Upon launch of the Case Planner Summary, the system will compile all draft entries for Case Planner editing and modification into the official FASP document. Individual draft entries will not be saved past the time of FASP approval. Each LDSS and Voluntary Agency will need to define individual worker responsibility and timeframes for the entry of FASP components and develop procedures for utilization of Case Planner Summary functionality. Voluntary Agencies may want to develop procedures pertaining to Case Worker completion of assigned FASP components.
<b>Online Approval of the FASP</b>	Local Districts should review timelines for contract agency submission of the FASP, since this will be done electronically and will accommodate immediate review upon submission. The chain of command for approvals should also be reviewed and revised, if appropriate. It should be noted that submission of the FASP to the Case Planner's supervisor is not automatic. The

system will accommodate this, but the Case Planner must choose to send it for review by the supervisor prior to submitting it to the Case Manager for approval. Since only the Case Planner can submit the FASP for review or approval, Case Workers who wish to have their supervisor review their work in the FASP will need to send him/her a Task To Do to review the FASP online in CONNECTIONS.

**Online Completion of Plan Amendments**

Plan Amendments will be completed and approved online. Easy access to update the current Service Plan in conjunction with the status change will always be available, but is not required for submission. Supervisors should be alert to ensuring that workers are updating service plans as warranted by the status change. Districts might also want to review their current procedure for Plan Amendments and consider recommendations for utilization of optional Plan Amendments, particularly the “Change to Visitation Plan” Plan Amendment for foster care cases.

**5. Changes to Content of Assessment and Service Plan**

**Required Assessment of All Tracked Children and Individual Family Caretakers**

Currently, workers assess the family as a unit, highlighting the needs of specific family members and children where relevant. CONNECTIONS implements the requirement for individual assessment of all tracked children (children with a Program Choice and Permanency Planning Goal [PPG]) and adult caretakers in the FSS. This will be done through the completion of individual child and caretaker scales and narrative questions. Foster Care Issue questions are also individualized by child.

**Use of Structured Decision-Making Tools**

Completion of the revised Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment Profile is required in all CPS cases. Workers will require training in the use of these tools and a learning curve is to be expected. The benefit is more informed decision-making by caseworkers and supervisors and improved outcomes for children and families.

**New Family Assessment**

In addition to the Safety Assessment and the Risk Assessment Profile, a new assessment of family functioning, strengths and needs must be conducted and recorded. This assessment provides the Case Planner with areas of family functioning that need to be rated using a set of scales. Case Planners will synthesize this information with information about safety and risk with the aid of new assessment analysis questions. The answers to the analysis questions form the basis upon which the service plan is constructed. Case Planners, Case Workers and Case Managers will all need to learn how to use the new assessment tools so that their work with the family provides all of the information necessary for a thorough and accurate assessment of strengths, needs and risks.

## **New Service Plan**

The Service Plan has an enhanced outcome and strengths-based focus to support development of a services plan with the family. Workers are asked to identify the family/individual strengths to be used to achieve specific outcomes and to evaluate the level of outcome achievement with each FASP. In addition, documentation of needed services/service status by individual must be completed as part of the Service Plan, if the local district has opted to require this.

### **6. *New Program Choice: Non-LDSS Custody***

There is a new Program Choice, “Non-LDSS Custody,” for children in the care of a relative or other resource person, but not in the custody of the local Commissioner of Social Services. The Program Choice is an “add” that reflects the unique legal status and planning needs of this population. It is not meant to be a substitution for “Protective” or “Preventive Services” program choices. Appropriate FASP questions are customized for this population. Local Districts should review their caseloads to identify the cases that fit this status and make sure workers understand when to use this new Program Choice.

### **7. *Online Scheduling and Documentation of the Service Plan Review***

Online support for scheduling and notification of Service Plan Review (SPR) conferences is provided. Workers record scheduling details in CONNECTIONS and generate system alerts to all assigned workers and notification letters to family members and other invitees. Districts need to review current procedures and determine who should be given the new ACCESS SPR Business Function to facilitate SPR scheduling and documentation.

The third-party reviewer comments must also be entered in the system. Districts should review the third-party reviewer designation process and modify it as desired to take advantage of the ACCESS SPR Business Function. Districts must also determine how third-party reviewer comments will be recorded for non-CONNECTIONS users.

### **8. *Entry of Progress Notes in CONNECTIONS***

Workers will need to learn a new process for recording progress notes that includes the recording of single notes and the completion of accompanying fields, such as date, type of contact, participants, etc. There will be a learning curve for workers that may result in increased time to complete progress note recording. Since progress notes will freeze 15 calendar days after entry, procedures for review and approval should be considered and revised, as appropriate. Districts and contract agencies also need to determine if clerical/support/on-call staff will be assigned the ENTER PROG NOTES Business Function and how this will be used.

### **9. *Interim Period of Dual Entry in CONNECTIONS and CCRS***

Until the implementation of Build 19, when CONNECTIONS becomes the system of record, workers still need to register the case, record the assessment and service plan (Plan Type, Service Needs and Status, Program Choice, PPG, Worker Function, Case Status), and record placement (movement), legal and adoption activities in CCRS. Since PPGs have been revised in CONNECTIONS, a mapping guide will be provided to assist workers. (See Appendix F.) Workers will continue to receive cues from CCRS for entry of assessment and service plan data.

#### **10. System-Generated Creation of a Child Case Record for All Freed Children**

A new Child Case Record (CCR) for a freed child will be created within the Family Services Stage in CONNECTIONS. The timing for the creation of the separate record is prescribed. The system will automatically create a CCR when the Case Manager records that the child is completely freed for adoption. Every child who has been freed, including those who might not be placed in an adoptive setting, will have a separate case record. Districts that currently delay creating a child record should review, and revise as appropriate, current policies and procedures to accommodate the earlier timeframe for creation of the child record.

**Appendix B:  
CONNECTIONS Computer Literacy  
Needs Assessment Tool**

## Introduction

This CONNECTIONS Computer Literacy Needs Assessment is designed to help you assess your readiness to work within an automated case management system. This assessment does not require any specific knowledge about the CONNECTIONS system. It is designed to help you and your supervisor determine if you need basic training before participating in CONNECTIONS-related training programs. There are no wrong answers. The CONNECTIONS Project staff and your agency leadership are committed to making your transition to the automated system a success.

## Instructions

For each of the items listed below, circle the corresponding number that best represents your current skill or comfort level. The key for each your answers is as follows:

<b>Key</b>	
<b>1</b>	I don't know what this means: I need basic training
<b>2</b>	No skills in this area: I need basic training
<b>3</b>	Basic skills, minimum ability: I could use some help.
<b>4</b>	Intermediate ability: I seldom have to ask for help with this.
<b>5</b>	Advanced ability: I know this area well enough to be able to help others.

For example, you may read:

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Basic Computer Skills</b>	<b>Circle the number that best represents your current skill level:</b>				
	<i>I would rank my skill level/comfort level in the items or features below...</i>	<i>As...</i>				
<b>1</b>	Use the mouse to point, click, double-click, right-click, and drag & drop	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b>	Open, close, minimize and maximize a window	1	2	3	4	5

If you respond to Question 1 by circling the number 4, you will indicate that you do not need basic training in using the mouse to point, click, double-click, etc.

If you respond to Question 2 by circling the number 2, you will indicate that you need basic training in how to open, close, minimize and maximize a window.

Item #	Basic Computer Skills	Circle the number that best represents your current skill level:				
<i>I would rank my skill level/comfort level in the items or features below...</i>		As...				
1	Overall comfort level with computers	1	2	3	4	5
2	Log on and log off	1	2	3	4	5
3	Use the mouse to point, click, double-click, right-click, and drag & drop	1	2	3	4	5
4	Open, close, minimize and maximize a window	1	2	3	4	5
5	Resize or move windows in order to run multiple programs simultaneously	1	2	3	4	5
6	Use menus and understand double arrows at the bottom of a menu	1	2	3	4	5
7	Use the Start menu and desktop icons to open programs or documents	1	2	3	4	5
8	Activate a window if it is closed, minimized or hidden	1	2	3	4	5
9	Use ALT+TAB to toggle between open programs	1	2	3	4	5
10	Use the Task Bar and Task Bar buttons	1	2	3	4	5
11	Know what to do if the computer "freezes up."	1	2	3	4	5
12	Access Online Help	1	2	3	4	5

Item #	Basic Text Skills	Circle the number that best represents your current skill level:				
<i>I would rank my skill level/comfort level in the items or features below...</i>		As...				
1	Overall comfort/skill level with entering narrative material	1	2	3	4	5
2	Use the keyboard	1	2	3	4	5
3	Open documents and templates	1	2	3	4	5
4	Identify and use the correct template	1	2	3	4	5
5	Move through a template (using scroll down, tab to field, enter)	1	2	3	4	5
6	Use the "Save As" feature to name and file a document	1	2	3	4	5
7	Understand the distinction between saving a document to the desktop and to the server	1	2	3	4	5
8	Create electronic file folders	1	2	3	4	5
9	Use Cut/Copy and Paste	1	2	3	4	5
10	Use the formatting and editing icons on the toolbars (or menu commands)	1	2	3	4	5
11	Understand the use of Spell Check with templates	1	2	3	4	5
12	Print documents	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Microsoft Outlook 2000 Calendar and E-Mail Skills</b>	<b>Circle the number that best represents your current skill level:</b>				
<i>I would rank my skill level/comfort level in the items or features below...</i>		As...				
1	Overall comfort/skill level with Calendar and e-mail	1	2	3	4	5
2	Use the Outlook Toolbar	1	2	3	4	5
3	Send and receive Outlook e-mail within and outside the network	1	2	3	4	5
4	Open, read and reply to e-mail	1	2	3	4	5
5	Forward e-mail	1	2	3	4	5
6	Attach files or documents to outgoing e-mail	1	2	3	4	5
7	Save e-mail attachments	1	2	3	4	5
8	Delete and undelete e-mail	1	2	3	4	5
9	Save e-mail	1	2	3	4	5
10	Use the Address Book	1	2	3	4	5
11	Create a Distribution List	1	2	3	4	5
12	Create a new appointment	1	2	3	4	5
13	Make calendar entries	1	2	3	4	5
14	Print calendar information	1	2	3	4	5
15	Use Office Assistant	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Basic Internet/Intranet Skills</b>	<b>Circle the number that best represents your current skill level:</b>				
<i>I would rank my skill level/comfort level in the items or features below...</i>		As...				
1	Overall comfort level with Internet/Intranet	1	2	3	4	5
2	Start up and close Internet Explorer	1	2	3	4	5
3	Use the Explorer Toolbar	1	2	3	4	5
4	Use the Menu Bar	1	2	3	4	5
5	Access the CONNECTIONS Website	1	2	3	4	5

## **Appendix C: CONNECTIONS/WMS/CCRS Data Clean-Up**

## **Model Data Clean-Up Work Plan Summary (CONNECTIONS/WMS/CCRS)**

- 1.1 ID constraints & issues, such as, resources, timing.
- 1.2 Define scope of Build 18 cleanup: only CONNECTIONS or changes to WMS and CCRS too?
- 1.3 Develop summary cleanup plan: Overall timing.
- 1.4 Develop detail cleanup plan & schedule: Who does what, when?
- 1.5 Present cleanup plan & schedule to local implementation team.
- 1.6 Notify executives & site managers of WMS/CCRS/CONNECTIONS cleanup plan & schedule.
- 1.7 ID cleanup/conversion manager to oversee effort & negotiate cross-district issues.
- 1.8 ID cleanup staff: local or OCFS staff.
- 1.9 Test exception reports for cases failing conversion criteria.
- 1.10 Define cleanup operational procedures for Build 18, such as, approvals, turnaround time, & communication issues.
- 1.11 Execute Build 18 conversion process multiple times for each county caseload before “roll-out.”
  - 1.11.1: Clean-up #1 – duplicate individual names on CONNECTIONS
    - 1.11.1.1: *Review Multiple Person Report*
    - 1.11.1.2: *Identify persons that need to be merged*
    - 1.11.1.3: *Obtain the necessary approvals for the merges*
    - 1.11.1.4: *Perform the merges*
    - 1.11.1.5: *Rerun multiple person report until 3% error rate reached*
  - 1.11.2: Clean-up #2 – link active CONNECTIONS cases to WMS cases
    - 1.11.2.1: *Review “Comprehensive Summary B-18 Conversion Report”*
    - 1.11.2.2: *Verify that each case in CONNECTIONS has a corresponding WMS case*
    - 1.11.2.3: *Obtain the necessary approvals*
    - 1.11.2.4: *Perform case link*
    - 1.11.2.5: *Rerun conversion report until 3% error rate reached.*

1.11.3: Clean-up #3 – match people by WMS CIN to CONNECTIONS PID

*1.11.3.1: Review “Comprehensive Summary B-18 Conversion Report”*

*1.11.3.2: Verify that each person in WMS with a CIN has a corresponding CONNECTIONS PID*

*1.11.3.3 Obtain the necessary approvals*

*1.11.3.4 Perform person link and update demographics if needed.*

*1.11.3.5 Rerun conversion report until 3% error rate reached*

1.11.4: Cleanup #4 – CNNX staff roster prior to build 17

*1.11.3.1: Sort “Worker Report B 18 Conversion” by worker, being especially alert for “unknown workers”*

*1.11.3.2: Alert site security coordinators to resolve any problems*

*1.11.3.3: Rerun report to verify corrections made*

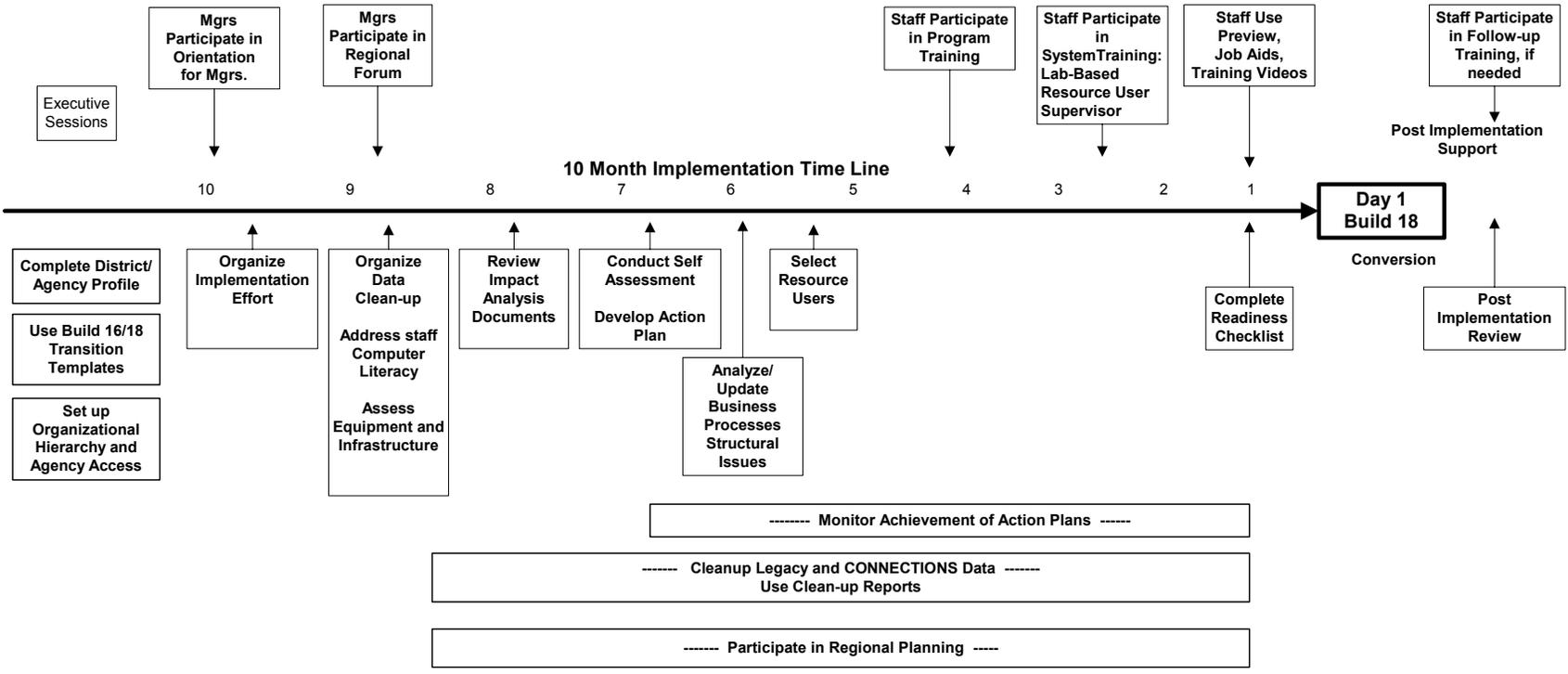
*1.11.3.4: Rerun conversion report until 3% error rate reached*

**1.12 Establish procedure to keep CONNECTIONS and WMS/CCRS in sync.**

**1.13 Establish procedure to reduce/eliminate multiple persons.**

**1.14 Define Post-Build 18 cleanup.**

**Appendix D:  
Build 18 Implementation Timeline  
(Site Perspective)**



1/23/04

## **Appendix E: Glossary**

# Glossary

<b>ACS</b>	Administration for Children's Services (NYC Daytime)
<b>ADD</b>	Additional Information
<b>ADM</b>	Administrative Directive Memo
<b>ADVPO</b>	Advocates Preventive Only (B18)
<b>AFCARS</b>	Adoption & Foster Care Analysis & Reporting
<b>AppReg</b>	Application Registration
<b>ARI</b>	Administrative Review and Information is a stage in CONNECTIONS.
<b>ARO</b>	Albany Regional Office
<b>BCFI</b>	Behavioral Concerns and Family Issues is a screening tool for emergency needs used by non-CPS workers
<b>BF</b>	Business Function is used by the local Security Coordinator to maintain security and grant CONNECTIONS access to workers. BFs are made up of Security Attributes to allow access to a particular window, dialog or functionality. Each Business Function is designed to allow a worker to perform a particular function or group of functions.
<b>BFP</b>	Business Function Profile lists of all Business Functions given to a worker. It is attached to the worker's logon ID and it is this profile that the system checks to determine which windows and functionalities the worker is permitted to access.
<b>BICS</b>	The Benefits Issuance Control System (1986) records and issues payments for all services provided in New York State. This includes payments to service providers and foster parents. BICS functions include vendor file calculations and payment control/adjustment.
<b>BRO</b>	Buffalo Regional Office
<b>BT</b>	Bureau of Training
<b>Build</b>	Updates to the CONNECTIONS system that are grouped together and implemented together.

<b>Case</b>	<p>A case is a documented collection of one or more situations and their required casework activities for addressing the protective and/or preventive service needs of children and their respective families.</p> <p>A case may contain both open and closed stages at the same time. Also, several stages may be open at the same time. Once all stages are closed, the case is closed.</p>
<b>Case ID Number</b>	Every case has a specific number generated by CONNECTIONS.
<b>Case Manager</b>	The person with overall responsibility for services cases (Child Protective cases and Non-Child Protective cases).
<b>Case Planner</b>	The Case Planner, who may be either LDSS or VA staff, is responsible for the coordination of work with a family. The Case Planner is also the author of the FASP and is responsible for the entirety of its contents and the timeliness of its submission for approval. This means the Case Planner must review all work done by other workers who contribute to the FASP, and either accept it as contributed by the worker(s) or revise it accordingly. The Case Planner sends the FASP to the Case Manager for approval.
<b>Case Worker</b>	Case Workers may be either LDSS or VA staff. These workers may be associated with a specific child(ren) in the FSS and can complete specific work within the FASP, such as the Child Scales and Foster Care Issues regarding to the child(ren) to whom they are associated. There may be multiple Case Workers assigned to the FSS.
<b>CCR</b>	Child Case Record (B18)
<b>CCRS</b>	Child Care Review Service (1982) tracks all child movements (placements), legal activities, facility files and services plans in the Child Welfare system.
<b>CD</b>	Community District (NYC)
<b>CID</b>	Case Initiation Date
<b>CIN</b>	Client Identification Number in WMS system
<b>COI</b>	Court Ordered Investigation
<b>CPRS</b>	The Child Protective Record Summary provides demographic information and investigative findings in one place. This window contains multiple tabs that allow caseworkers to access, view and print CPS case information easily. The window is organized to be consistent with the investigation process.

<b>COFCCA</b>	Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies
<b>COS</b>	Court Ordered Supervision
<b>CPM</b>	Child Protective Manager
<b>CPS</b>	Child Protective Services
<b>CPS Worker/Monitor</b>	The CPS Worker/Monitor <i>must</i> be LDSS staff and may complete the CPS Risk and Safety Assessments. The system supports, but does not require, review of the FASP by a CPS Worker/Monitor. The Case Planner needs to alert the CPS Worker/Monitor in circumstances where s/he needs to complete work in, or review, the FASP.
<b>CQC</b>	Commission on Quality Care
<b>CWS</b>	Child Welfare Services
<b>DDPS</b>	Division of Development and Prevention Services
<b>DFA</b>	Department of Family Assistance
<b>DRS</b>	Division of Rehabilitation Services
<b>DUP</b>	Duplicate Report (CPS)
<b>ECS</b>	Emergency Children's Services (NYC between 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 a.m.)
<b>EHD</b>	Enterprise Help Desk
<b>FAD/FAHD</b>	Foster and Adoptive Home Development. FAD is a stage in CONNECTIONS.
<b>FAR</b>	Finalized Adoption Record (B19)
<b>FASP</b>	Family Assessment and Service Plan (B18) is designed to support family and outcome-focused, strength-based casework.
<b>FBH</b>	Foster Boarding Home
<b>FCI</b>	Foster Care Issues
<b>FRS</b>	Foster and/or Adoptive Home Record Summary
<b>FSI</b>	Family Services Intake (B18) is a stage in CONNECTIONS that provides a standard format for all Intakes for Services to be recorded.

<b>FSS</b>	Family Services Stage (B18) is a stage in CONNECTIONS which provides the umbrella for documentation of work on services cases.
<b>GPS</b>	Group Preparation & Selection (FAD)
<b>HPF</b>	High Priority Factor (NYC)
<b>HSEN</b>	Human Services Enterprise Network
<b>IAB</b>	Institutional Abuse (CPS)
<b>ICPC</b>	Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children
<b>INF</b>	Informational Letter
<b>INI</b>	Initial Report
<b>INT</b>	Intake is a CPS stage in CONNECTIONS.
<b>INV</b>	Investigation is a CPS stage in CONNECTIONS.
<b>IRI</b>	Individual Report Involvement (CPS)
<b>LAN</b>	Local Area Network
<b>LDM</b>	Local Data Maintenance
<b>LDSS</b>	Local Department of Social Services
<b>MAPP</b>	Model Approach to Parenting Program (FAD)
<b>NCANDS</b>	National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System
<b>NIS</b>	Network Integration Services
<b>NYCRO</b>	New York City Regional Office
<b>NR</b>	Non-Reimbursable
<b>O&amp;A Block</b>	Outcome and Activity Block in Service Plan
<b>OASAS</b>	Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
<b>OCFS</b>	Office of Children & Family Services
<b>OCI</b>	Open Case Inquiry (CPS report in CONNECTIONS)
<b>OCI</b>	Office of Confidential Investigations (investigates NYC foster care & daycare reports)
<b>OMH</b>	Office of Mental Health

<b>OMRDD</b>	Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities
<b>OTI</b>	Out of Town Inquiry
<b>PC</b>	Program Choice
<b>PID</b>	Person Identification Number in CONNECTIONS
<b>PPG</b>	Permanency Planning Goal
<b>Primary Worker</b>	The Primary Worker is the person who has chief responsibility for a stage at any point in time, and therefore has full maintain privileges for the stage. A stage will always have one primary worker while it is open.
<b>RAP</b>	Risk Assessment Profile
<b>RID</b>	Resource ID
<b>RIST</b>	Regional Implementation Support Team
<b>RRO</b>	Rochester Regional Office
<b>SA</b>	Safety Assessment
<b>SACWIS</b>	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (1993)
<b>SCR</b>	State Central Register (created 1982 - CONNECTIONS R2 1997)
<b>SDLC</b>	System Development Life Cycle
<b>Search</b>	An action the CONNECTIONS system performs to find a specific type of information. Example include: Person Search, Case Search, Resource Search.
<b>Secondary Worker</b>	A worker assigned to a stage to complete specific tasks in CONNECTIONS. One or more Secondary Workers may be assigned to a case.
<b>Security Attribute</b>	The primary manner in which access to CONNECTIONS is given. Each Security Attribute allows access to a particular window, dialog or functionality in CONNECTIONS.
<b>SED</b>	State Education Department (Licensing Entity)
<b>SIR</b>	System Information Request
<b>SPPD</b>	Strategic Planning and Policy Development
<b>SPR</b>	Service Plan Review is a tab on the FASP.

<b>SRO</b>	Syracuse Regional Office
<b>Stage ID Number</b>	Every stage of service has a specific ID number associated with it.
<b>SSPS</b>	Statewide Services Payment System
<b>SUB</b>	Subsequent Report (CPS)
<b>TCD</b>	Track Child Detail
<b>UAT</b>	User Acceptance Test
<b>UCR</b>	Uniform Case Record
<b>YRO</b>	Yonkers Regional Office
<b>VA</b>	Voluntary Agency
<b>VID</b>	Vendor Identification Number
<b>WMS</b>	The Welfare Management System (1982) tracks authorizations for Purchase of Services (POS) that are provided to children and families in the Child Welfare system. WMS also tracks Clearance, Demographics, Eligibility, Service Authorization and Case Maintenance.

**Appendix F:  
CONNECTIONS/Permanency Planning Goal (PPG)  
Mapping Guide**

Permanency Planning Goals (PPGs) will be changed in CONNECTIONS to conform to AFCARS goals. Since workers will need to record PPGs in both CCRS and the CONNECTIONS case management system until the implementation of Build 19 (when CONNECTIONS becomes the system of record), this mapping guide is provided to assist workers.

<b>Current CCRS PPG</b>	<b>New CONNECTIONS PPG</b>
01 Discharge to Parents	1a – Return to Parent [Parent]
	1b – Return to Parent [Non-Parent Caregiver]
04 Discharge to Adoption	2a – Placement for Adoption [Upon filing Petition to Terminate Parental Rights]
	2b – Placement for Adoption [Upon Voluntary Surrender]
02 Discharge to Primary Resource Person	3a – Referral for Legal Guardianship/Custody [Relative]
	3b – Referral for Legal Guardianship/Custody [Non-Relative]
12 Discharge to Relative	4 – Placement with a fit and willing Relative [Non-Guardianship/Non-Custodian]
03 Discharge to Independent Living	5a – Place in another planned living arrangement [Discharge to Independent Living] <i>Note: May use only if the social services district has documented a compelling reason why goals 1-4 would not be in the child's best interest.</i>
10 Independent Living Unaccompanied Refugee Only	5b – Place in another planned living arrangement [Independent Living – Unaccompanied Refugee Only] <i>Note: May use only if the social services district has documented a compelling reason why goals 1-4 would not be in the child's best interest.</i>
05 Discharge to Adult Residential Care	5c – Place in another planned living arrangement [Discharge to Adult Residential Care] <i>Note: May use only if the social services district has documented a compelling reason why goals 1-4 would not be in the child's best interest.</i>
06 Prevent Placement	6 – Prevent Placement
07 Prevent Return to Placement	7 – Prevent Return to Placement
11 Protect Child	8 – Protect Child