



..CONNECTIONS NEWS..

for the week of September 5 - 12, 2008

Developing a more caseworker centric system

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

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"Info to Know" for Caseworkers



Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10)

As you are aware, system improvements implemented in response to 'SIRs' (System Information Requests) and 'Change Requests' had previously been referred to as "Builds." Beginning in January 2008 however, OCFS has begun implementing system improvements on a quarterly basis (for example: Q1-08 was implemented in March 2008 and Q2-08 was implemented in June 2008). We call these *Quarterly Improvement Plans*.

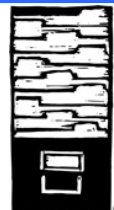
On October 10, 2008, we plan to present the third quarterly improvement of this year, Q3-08. Q3-08 will include several important enhancements to CONNECTIONS:

programmatic changes to the Safety Assessment and the Risk Assessment Profile; and system enhancements. You are already aware of the major programmatic changes included in Q3-08, because they were presented in the August 27th teleconference entitled: Changes to Safety and Risk Assessment to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment. (Further information about the teleconference appears later in this publication.)

You may also be aware of some of the other enhancements included in this Quarterly Improvement, because they originated from a collaborative effort on the part of OCFS, local district and voluntary agency casework and supervisory staff, all of whom were members of the Functional Improvement Team (FIT). Additionally, other enhancements have been identified based on recommendations from the Child Welfare System Transformation Business Team.

A Highlights document, providing a high level overview of the programmatic and other application changes, improvements, modifications and enhancements included in this Quarterly Improvement, will be available in mid-September. The Highlights document is one in a series of tools that define, describe and detail the system changes and enhancements. Other Q3-08 tools to aid in the implementation of these system improvements that will be presented and detailed in future CONNECTIONS NEWS are:

- An update to online HELP
- An Impact Analysis document
- A Job Aid
- A CBT refresher on Risk and Safety Assessments
- An updated Safety/Risk Field Guide



A Revised Version of the Records Retention Tip Sheet

Please note that this piece was included in the last edition of the CONNECTIONS NEWS.

*****Please note: ONLY local districts have to ability to perform this function.***

A revised version of the Records Retention Tip Sheet was posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaided/jobaided.asp>.

Why do we do Records Retention?

Child Protective Services (CPS) records are required by law to be expunged at specific points. Indicated CPS records must be expunged 10 years after the youngest child in the report turns 18; legally sealed unfounded CPS reports must be expunged 10 years from the date of the Intake as recorded at the State Central Registry.

Expungement of CPS records related to court decisions, fair hearings and administrative review also must be done as local districts are informed. Local districts are notified of pending expungements through the Records Retention process. This notification alerts districts to review cases that are to be expunged. It further alerts districts when cases have been expunged from the CONNECTIONS database, and that copies of CPS records maintained by the district must also be destroyed.

There are two reports sent to the district related to this process. The *To Be Expunged Report* and the *Expungement Report* are delivered to the designated recipients' Reports icon in CONNECTIONS. Designated recipients are chosen by the local district and reported to OCFS by completion of the Management Reports Update form found on the Forms page on the CONNECTIONS intranet: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/connections%20forms.asp>.



The Application Help Mailbox

Please note that this piece was included in the last edition of the CONNECTIONS NEWS.

This is just a reminder that there are multiple places to go for help with application questions - and one of them is the [Application Help Mailbox](#). The mailbox began a number of months ago as a new service for Resource Users or other key users at Local Districts. Use of the mailbox as a resource tool has since *expanded* to voluntary agencies, as well. In addition to contacting the OFT Enterprise Helpdesk for application issues, workers are encouraged to contact the NYS CONNECTIONS User Support/Triage staff directly for help with complex application issues. Questions, problems and concerns can be e-mailed to the "ocfs.sm.connections_app_help" mailbox.

One of the goals of the Application Help Mailbox is to provide an expanded level of support for system users. The 'App Help' mailbox is targeted toward questions that have had an initial review by local staff who have developed competencies with the CONNECTIONS application (for example, the Resource Users). Those staff have been identified by each district and agency, and they are able to email their questions directly to the User Support/Triage unit via the 'App Help' mailbox. To best provide prompt service it is critical that you limit the number of specified users that will have permission to access the mailbox. As previously stated, the staff who are designated by your agency to access this mailbox should be Resource Users or other individuals who provide on-going assistance to staff in completing work in the CONNECTIONS application.

PLEASE NOTE: Questions related to your equipment, access to CONNECTIONS, connectivity issues, Citrix or Webstar problems should continue to be referred to the OFT Enterprise Help Desk. *You can always call the Enterprise Help Desk for any problem that you are experiencing with the CONNECTIONS application.*

Below is a link to the form that you can complete and email to the mailbox.

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/resources/Connections%20Application%20Help%20Request.dot>



Handouts from the Teleconference on Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment

**** Please note that tapes of the teleconference can be requested through the OCFS Bureau of Training at: Dave.McGann@ocfs.state.ny.us,**

A handout of the information shared during the teleconference on Changes to Safety and Risk Assessment to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment -- televised on Wednesday, August 27th -- is available on the CONNECTIONS intranet website at <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/>.

Please note: another document describing information discussed during the teleconference is also available on the CONNECTIONS intranet site. The document is entitled: *Final Wording Changes to RAP Elements*.

Reducing repeat maltreatment among children and families in New York State is a goal that OCFS shares with local districts and foster care and preventive service agencies. As part of that effort, OCFS has made improvements to the Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment Protocols. The CONNECTIONS system will support these changes as of October 10, 2008.

Questions & Answers

There were a number of questions posed during the teleconference that we not able to answer during the time allotted. We are in the process of collecting these questions and will answer them, then post them to the CONNECTIONS website.

Post-teleconference Viewing

The teleconference and supplemental materials will be posted (in a few weeks) to TrainingSpace.org (www.trainingspace.org). TrainingSpace.org is a resource storage site for taped teleconferences, videos, and other training resources.

About TrainingSpace.org

TrainingSpace is an on-line resource used by OCFS to provide local district, voluntary agency and state staff with access to on-line training materials and resources. TrainingSpace is available to all staff at their workstations at: www.trainingspace.org. To obtain access, you need to have your Staff Development or Training Coordinator register you in STARS for the particular course/materials in which you are interested. Once registered, this material will be available under the "My TrainingSpace" portion of the website. Please note that you will be prompted for your USER ID and your LDAP password.



Did You Know... on Visitation Plans

Did You Know that...it is not necessary to create a new visitation plan each time there is a change. For example, if the visitations are increasing from “weekly” to “daily”, the change can be made in the active visitation plan. To do this, access the Visiting Plan tab (from the Visiting Plan node in the FASP) and highlight the appropriate row on the grid. The information from that plan will populate the data values. You can make the necessary changes and save the updated plan. This will result in the updated plan going forward. Creating a new plan and having both plans “active” implies that both plans are occurring and will result in multiple plans displaying on your FASP print out.

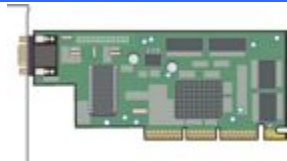
General “Info to Know”



New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet

The following document(s) were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- The CONNECTIONS NEWS



Weekly System Maintenance

Due to regularly scheduled system maintenance, the CONNECTIONS application will not be available on...

- [Wednesday, 9/10/08](#) from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM
- [Friday, 9/12/08](#) from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM



Office of
Children & Family
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