NYS Office of Children and Family Services
on the **road** to
transforming the Child Welfare Information System

..CONNECTIONS NEWS..
for the week of September 26 – October 3, 2008

Developing a more caseworker centric system

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

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"Info to Know" for Caseworkers

UPDATED Information on the Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan (CONNECTIONS Build 18.10)

Please note that sections of this piece have been UPDATED since last week and are identified as such.

On October 10, 2008, OCFS will implement the third Quarterly Improvement Plan of this year, Q3-08. Q3-08 will include important enhancements to the CONNECTIONS

application that support programmatic changes, as well as several system improvements. Two of the major programmatic changes included in Q3-08 are:

❖ a redesigned Safety Assessment tool, which is the result of extensive work with a statewide team of users who partnered with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services; and

❖ improved wording of risk factors in the Risk Assessment Profile to clarify the circumstances that contribute to risk of future abuse/maltreatment.

These enhancements were presented in the August 27th teleconference entitled: <u>Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment</u>.

Q3-08 also includes system support for districts participating in the Family Assessment Response initiative. The other enhancements included in Q3-08 are recommendations from the Child Welfare System Information Transformation Business Team. These recommended enhancements are based on a collaborative effort on the part of OCFS, local district and voluntary agency casework and supervisory staff.

Other System Enhancements

- There will now be a choice, in Print Preview mode, of displaying and printing Progress Notes in the current default (8pt) or larger (12pt) fonts
- The Unit Approver will now be allowed to locally maintain To Do's
- In Progress notes, once a family participant has been selected, "Focus" will pre-fill automatically. This supports compliance with required casework contacts for children in foster care. If a family member is a participant but is not to be considered the 'focus', the caseworker can deselect the checkmark in the "Focus" checkbox for that individual family participant

FAD Changes

- Criminal History Record Checks
  - Add Fingerprint Results value of Mandatory Disqualifier to comply with the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006 (available for use beginning 10/1/08)
- Revised Fingerprint Outputs to conform to the Mandatory Disqualifier changes
  - Notice (English and Spanish)
  - Denial/Revocation letter (English and Spanish)

Family Assessment Response Initiative

Q3-08 contains system support for the Family Assessment Response initiative. This is a non-adversarial alternative approach to the traditional investigative response in select CPS report scenarios. No determination of the SCR report is made. Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007 authorized LDSSs, other than in New York City, to apply to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to use a family assessment and services approach for a subset of families that are reported to the SCR for child maltreatment. Six applications were received and approved. The participating counties are: Westchester, Orange, Onondaga, Tompkins, Chautauqua and Erie.

CONNECTIONS' system support allows participating districts to identify CPS Investigations for Family Assessment Response and open a Family Services Intake

(FSI) and Services Stage (FAM) to document case activity. The FAM stage includes the following: progress notes, safety assessment, preventive risk assessment and education. Participating districts have their own Job Aid to assist them. Non-participating districts and voluntary agencies will receive an Informational Memorandum with further information about this initiative.

UPDATED - Preview
We anticipate that the Preview environment will be available approximately two weeks prior to the implementation of Q3-08. Preview is a 'sandbox' (like a demo environment) where you can see and work with the Q3-08 enhancements that will be implemented on October 10th. The Preview environment uses a 'snapshot', a point in time picture, of the production environment. You will see your actual stages when you log-in to Preview, but because Preview and Production are two separate environments, any changes that you make in Preview to your stages/cases will not be reflected in Production.

Preview Requests
Requests to try the Preview environment can be made by either the Director of Services or the Implementation Coordinator of your agency. Remember to list the name and NT IDs of those individuals that you wish to designate in an e-mail to: Donna.Cramer@ocfs.state.ny.us.

Q3-08 Highlights Document
The *Q3-08 Highlights* document presents a high-level overview of programmatic and application modifications and enhancements. It is one in a series of tools that define and describe in detail the system changes and enhancements that will be included in this *Quarterly Improvement Plan*. The Highlights were e-mailed to key staff (CONNECTIONS Implementation, Security, Back-up Security Coordinators, Resource Users, Directors of Programs/Services, and other key staff) in local districts and voluntary agencies on Tuesday, September 16th. The *Q3-08 Highlights* have also been posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/build%2018.10%20Q3_08_Highlights_FINAL_9_15_08%20-v3.pdf

UPDATED - Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid
This Job Aid is intended for CONNECTIONS users on different levels. It provides a detailed overview of the CONNECTIONS system changes and enhancements introduced in Q3-08 (Build 18.10).

Specifically, this job aid contains information about enhancements in the following functional areas:
- Safety Assessment
- Risk Assessment Profile (RAP)
- To-Do
- Progress Notes
- Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD)

For your convenience, the job aid is posted to the CONNECTIONS Intranet site on the Step-by-Step/Job Aid/Tips page.
http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018-10%20Job%20Aid%20v5%200.pdf

POSTING UPDATE – Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan Impact Analysis – *Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes*

The Q3-08 Quarterly Improvement Plan Impact Analysis – *Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes* was posted to the CONNECTIONS Intranet on both the Home and Implementation pages on Tuesday, September 23rd. http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20%20Impact%20Analysis--Final-9-19-08%20(3).pdf

This document is intended for local management staff to provide an overview of the key elements in the upcoming Quarterly Improvement Plan, and outlines the anticipated impacts on local practice and procedure, with suggested actions the local district or voluntary agency might want to consider in implementing these improvements.

Additional Q3-08 Tools

Here is a list of other tools to aid in implementing the Q3-08 system improvements that will be described in future editions of CONNECTIONS NEWS.

- An update to online HELP (within the CONNECTIONS application – also available within the Preview environment)
- Q3-08 Impact Analysis document entitled: *CONNECTIONS Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Impact Analysis – Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes*
  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20%20Impact%20Analysis--Final-9-19-08%20(3).pdf
- Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid
  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018-10%20Job%20Aid%20v5%200.pdf
- A CBT refresher on Risk and Safety Assessments *(coming soon)*
- An updated Safety/Risk Field Guide *(coming soon)*
- Informational Letter about the Family Assessment Response Initiative *(coming soon)*

 Two NEW Tip Sheets – CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet: Progress Notes: Create and Modify & Progress Notes: Search, Sort and Print

At the request of CONNECTIONS system users, two NEW tip sheets have been created highlighting functionality in the Progress Notes. The *Progress Notes: Create and*

Modify tip sheet:
http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Tip%20sheets/TS%20Creating%20a%20Progress%20Note-version%203.pdf has information and illustrates how to create, edit and view a Progress Note. The *Progress Notes: Search, Sort and Print* tip sheet: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Tip%20sheets/TS%20Searching%20Progress%20Notes-version%203.pdf has information and direction about how to access the Progress Notes window, as well as searching, sorting, previewing and printing, Progress Notes. Both of these tip sheets are posted to the Step-by-Step/Job Aids/Tips page under Job Aids/Tip Sheets on the CONNECTIONS Intranet.

It should be noted that the tip sheets were created by members of the Implementation Team, Janet Parry and Jeannie Hoag, with the partnership of several reviewers. Thanks to ALL who created and reviewed the information!

A NEW Job Aid and ADM on Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILP)

The SILP Administrative Directive (ADM)
The purpose of the Administrative Directive (ADM) is to inform social services districts, voluntary authorized agencies and Indian tribes (with a State/Tribal agreement) of the newly enacted standards and procedures for the approval of an authorized agency by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to operate a supervised independent living program (SILP programs) for foster children. The directive addresses both the transition of existing supervised independent living units certified by OCFS to supervised independent living units certified by approved SILP programs operated by authorized agencies, and the establishment of new SILP programs and units.

The Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) Job Aid
The SILP Job Aid is a quick guide to recording a new supervised independent living program in CONNECTIONS.

For your convenience, both the guide and the ADM are posted to the CONNECTIONS Intranet website on the Home page: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/.

UPDATED - AFCARS Info - Data on AFCARS and Casework Contacts for Children in Care

Please note: Timeframes for reporting AFCARS data to the federal government are coming due! We advise that you continue to update the AFCARS information on children in foster care. **Note that the end date for inclusion of the information for purposes of federal reporting will be extended for *approximately* one week, through the first week of October, 2008.**

It is critical that local district and voluntary agency staff update the AFCARS information for children in foster care, so that the federal report contains accurate information. In order to meet the identified timeframe, data will be extracted from the CONNECTIONS system through the date of September 30, 2008. However, as noted above, local districts and voluntary agencies have an extra week (*approximately*) to update the AFCARS information (on children in foster care).

The AFCARS submission is based on a served population. Information needs to be accurate for children served in foster care on the last day of the period, September 30, 2008, or children served in foster care during the 6-month period that began April 1, 2008. Correct and up-to-date entry of AFCARS information is a federal legal requirement.

AFCARS information includes the following:
- AFCARS information from the Placement Information Tab and the Removal Information Tab
- Diagnosis on Clinical Appointment window
- For CCR cases-AFCARS Adoption Information window accessed from the Adoption Finalization window

More help on navigation for entering AFCARS can be found in the AFCARS job aid entitled: *CONNECTIONS System Build 18.9.6 Job Aid Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Functionality for Foster Care Workers, Caseworkers, Case Planners and Case Managers*.
http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/JA%20AFCARS%20Job%20Aid%20v1%200% 203_3_08.pdf

The following reports are also available to identify which children do not currently have diagnosis information recorded in the Clinical Appointment tab that meets the qualifications of AFCARS information.
http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwreports.asp

For more information related to these activities please contact your CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Specialist.

NEW Info from the OCFS Data Warehouse - Upgraded to Internet Explorer 7 Read This!

This piece was in the previous edition.

If your agency was just upgraded to Internet Explorer 7 you may need to make minor changes to log-in to the Data Warehouse. A new document to help troubleshoot when using Internet Explorer 7 has been posted to the OCFS Data Warehouse page of the CONNECTIONS Intranet. The document is entitled, *Internet Explorer 7 Troubleshooting for OCFS Data Warehouse Users* and can be directly accessed by clicking on the following link:

http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/IE7%20Troubleshooting%20for%20OCFS%20DW%20Users.pdf

OCFS Data Warehouse – "News and Notes"

The September 2008 edition of the OCFS Data Warehouse "*News and Notes*" is available on the OCFS Data Warehouse page of the CONNECTIONS intranet. http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwnews.asp. A few of the featured articles include: Requesting Access, Info for SSL/VPN Users, Banner Alerts, Resource Links, Checking on Children Placed Out of State and more!

General "Info to Know"

CONNECTIONS Access Numbers – An All-time High Since 2006!

We have been keeping track of the number of system users who access the CONNECTIONS application on a daily/weekly basis since 2006, and this past week we hit an all time HIGH of 15,052, for the week of September 26th !
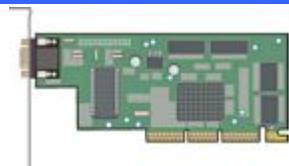
NEW Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet

The following document(s) were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:
- The CONNECTIONS NEWS
  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/
- Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Job Aid
  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018-10%20Job%20Aid%20v5%200.pdf
- Q3-08 Impact Analysis document entitled: *CONNECTIONS Q3-08 (Build 18.10) Impact Analysis - Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment Profile, FAD and Other System Changes*
  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/imp/build18/Build%2018.10%20Q3-08%20%20Impact%20Analysis--Final-9-19-08%20(3).pdf

- CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet: *Progress Notes: Create and Modify* http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Tip%20sheets/TS%20Creating%20a%20Progress%20Note-version%203.pdf

- CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet: *Progress Notes: Search, Sort and Print* http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Tip%20sheets/TS%20Searching%20Progress%20Notes-version%203.pdf
- *OCFS Data Warehouse News and Notes* – September 2008
- *Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP)* Job Aid http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/S%20I%20LP%20Description%2009-08.pdf
- An ADM on the subject of: *Standards and procedures for approval of supervised independent living programs (SILP)*

Weekly System Maintenance

Due to regularly scheduled system maintenance, the CONNECTIONS application will not be available on…
- **Wednesday, 10/1/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Friday, 10/3/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Wednesday, 10/8/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Friday, 10/10/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM

There will be additional application downtime for the implementation of Q3-08 on:
- ****Friday, 10/10/08** Downtime to be determined

Office of
Children & Family
Services
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