Security Outreach and Review Project

In January, 2013, the Implementation Team began the Security Outreach and Review Project (SOaR) to offer assistance to Local Departments of Social Services and Voluntary Agencies in the areas of information security guidance and best practice. The SOaR team will conduct security reviews to assist each district and agency in examining existing security and confidentiality standards as well as to ensure each agency has the tools and support needed to establish a solid security plan moving forward.

The box to the right lists areas of the district or agency security plan that will be discussed within the security review session. The SOaR team will also review the role of your CONNECTIONS Security Coordinator, security tips, and guidelines for the proper handling of confidential information.

An important security consideration is the timely removal of former staff from within CONNECTIONS. Best practice also recommends staff members be granted the least security access necessary to efficiently perform their job duties, thereby reducing much of the risk for unintentional security breaches. Users should access information only if they have a role in a case or have a duly authorized purpose for accessing information.

The SOaR outreach project is based on regulations within 05-OCFS-ADM-02. Further information about the project goals and establishment can be found in the November 2012 letter from Deputy Commissioner Bill Travis which launched the creation of OCFS field support for information security guidance. The letter is available on both the intranet and internet CONNECTIONS websites.

For more information about SOaR outreach, contact your district or agency’s CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinator. Additionally, the Security page of both the intranet and internet CONNECTIONS websites will provide useful information as material is updated regularly.
The Title IV-E guidance document will assist caseworkers in avoiding common errors when they record casework activities.

April Computer Training Courses

New computer training classes are now available throughout the month of April, in both instructor-led computer labs and via distance-learning options like TrainingSpace and iLinc.

Classes include:
- Excel 2010
- Word 2010
- Access 2010
- Outlook 2010
- PowerPoint 2010
- OneNote Basics

Additionally, more information can be found on the Title IV-E website, located here.

Title IV-E and foster care eligibility are directly related to non-reimbursables (NR’s) which were discussed in depth in the last CONNECTIONS News for Users. This feature piece can be reviewed at the following links:
- News for Users, February 15-28 (Intranet)
- News for Users, February 15-28 (Internet)

Title IV-E Legal Guide Now Available

A new guidance document, Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility, is now available to assist caseworkers in avoiding common errors when they record casework activities that often result in cases being declared out of compliance with Title IV-E standards.

The document highlights foster care eligibility issues identified by NYS OCFS and the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. It addresses both non-court and court related issues and the steps to take to avoid compliance problems.

The guidance document is available at the following link:
Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Tip Sheet

Additionally, more information can be found on the Title IV-E website, located here.

Title IV-E and foster care eligibility are directly related to non-reimbursables (NR’s) which were discussed in depth in the last CONNECTIONS News for Users. This feature piece can be reviewed at the following links:
- News for Users, February 15-28 (Intranet)
- News for Users, February 15-28 (Internet)
Upgrade to Modify Appearance of Citrix Desktop

Next Wednesday, April 17th, the Citrix Desktop will undergo modifications within the normal maintenance window (5 AM - 7 AM) that will substantially alter the look and feel of the Citrix Desktop.

Users navigate to the Citrix Desktop when entering CONNECTIONS, ASAP and other applications accessed via Citrix.

Although the overall appearance of the Citrix Desktop will be noticeably altered, both the interface functionality and URL will not change.

A document outlining the visual changes users will experience between the Citrix Desktop’s current and future appearance is available on both the intranet and internet CONNECTIONS websites at the following links:

- Citrix Desktop Upgrade Document (intranet)
- Citrix Desktop Upgrade Document (internet)

CONNECTIONS Training for Second Quarter Now Available

A training calendar is now available that lists CONNECTIONS training opportunities throughout the entire second quarter, from April 1st to June 30th, 2013.

The CONNECTIONS Training Calendar begins with a chronological list of available classroom trainings. The final page of the calendar identifies CONNECTIONS web based trainings available at any time through TrainingSpace.org.

The calendar is available at the following links:

- CONNECTIONS Training Calendar (Intranet)
- CONNECTIONS Training Calendar (Internet)
Records Retention Upgrade

The quarterly Records Retention cycle will take place over the weekend of April 26-28.

This process leads to the expungement of Child Protective Services (CPS) electronic and hard copy case records pursuant to New York State Social Services Law. The Law specifies the precise periods that case material must be retained and when it is required to delete case records.

Each local district has identified individuals responsible for receiving case listings in two reports:

1. The To Be Expunged Report notifies districts which cases are slated to be expunged so they may review to be certain the expungement is appropriate.
2. The Expungement Report identifies cases that have been removed from the CONNeCTiONS database, signaling that hard copies of CPS records for the case must also be destroyed.

There is a tip sheet that outlines the local district tasks in more detail, which is available on both the intranet and internet.

In closing, there are two important points to take away:

- It is important for each district to keep the list of workers who receive these reports up-to-date. Ensure that there is more than one person at the district slated to receive reports, and that they understand the responsibilities associated with this role.

- These reports contain confidential information. They are only available for a limited time and any printouts must also be destroyed.

If you have any questions about security tasks in general or the Records Retention process specifically, send them to acceptable-use@ocfs.state.ny.us.

To determine the recipients of the two Records Retention reports in your district, or to update recipients, contact the CONNeCTiONS Communications Mailbox at connectionsi@ocfs.ny.gov

Updates to Casework Contact Web-Based Training

Recent modifications have been made to the Casework Contacts with Foster Children in CONNeCTiONS web-based training.

The primary changes made to this web-based training focuses on the new Missing Contact by Month feature.

Changes include an explanation on the purpose and requirements of this new feature as well as directions on navigating and viewing these children in CONNeCTiONS.

Pre-registration for this course through STARS (the Statewide Training Automated Registration System) is required. Once registered, you can access this course via TrainingSpace. An LDAP ID is also required to access training within TrainingSpace.
CONNECTIONS Clue

**Dates of Birth matter – especially in NYC!**

Are you a Voluntary Agency worker in NYC completing a Family Service Intake? If so, this tip is for you!

When adding persons to the Family Service Intake (FSI) Person Demographics tab, it’s important that you enter a Date of Birth (DOB) **BEFORE** you do a search of the database.

The DOB does not carry forward onto the FSI Report if a DOB is not entered in the FSI before a Search and Relate is done. This is true, even if you find a match in the database and relate the new identity with an existing one. The Relate process will bring the DOB forward from the database into the FSI demographic information, but it will not pull forward onto the FSI Report. To the VA worker, the FSI looks complete.

The consequences? When a VA worker submits the FSI for acceptance to ACS, and submits the FSI Report along with the electronic 2921, ACS will reject the FSI because of a “missing DOB” on the FSI Report. Yet when the VA worker reviews the FSI, everyone on the Person Demographics tab displays at DOB. How confusing is that?

The solution? Always enter the DOB **BEFORE** you Search and Relate when completing an FSI!

Don’t Forget Past CONNECTIONS Clues!

Past CONNECTIONS Clues are available on the CONNECTIONS Website at:

- [CONNECTIONS Clues](#) (Intranet)
- [CONNECTIONS Clues](#) (Internet)

Coming Next...

In Our Next Issue:

- New CONNECTIONS Clue: “You do not have permission to see your case To-Do’s” message

Office of Children & Family Services
Gladys Carrión, Esq., Commissioner