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

..CONNECTIONS NEWS..
for the week of October 23 - 30, 2009

Developing a more caseworker centric system
_____

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

FEATURED IN THIS EDITION

_____

"Info to Know" for Caseworkers

Casework Contacts with Children in Foster Care…

A letter was recently sent to local district Commissioners in an effort to update them on the status of New York State's work in relation to the Casework Contacts initiative that is currently being conducted; in keeping with the legislation documented in the federal Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law (P.L.) 109-288.

Two changes in requirements were highlighted. The first is that beginning in the second year of reporting, **foster children who are AWOL** must be included in the population about whom states must report. The second change is that the federal government clarified its position regarding foster children placed out-of-state. They indicated that all such children are subject to the monthly reporting requirements, notwithstanding

another federal law that requires less frequent contacts. OCFS is in the process of amending our regulations to reflect the **requirement for monthly contact with children placed out-of-state**.

Importantly, for this reporting year, the date by which all data must be reported has recently been extended by the federal government (for the FFY ending September 30, 2009). All casework contacts must be entered into CONNECTIONS Progress Notes by **Monday, November 30, 2009** in order for OCFS to submit this report. It is essential that if all casework contacts have not as yet been entered that this be done so as soon as possible.

Lastly, as of October 1, 2009, we are already in the third reporting year, having a benchmark of 75%. As I am sure you remember failure to make and/or document a contact *in any one month* of the reporting year puts the case out of compliance for the entire year. We ask that you please remind your staff, and staff of the voluntary agencies with which you contract for foster care services, of the importance of making a casework contact with each foster child at least once every month and recording each contact contemporaneous with the event.

A copy of the letter that was sent is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website and can be accessed via the following link: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/Comm%20Letter-CC%20Changes%20in%20Requirements.pdf

CONNECTIONS Training Database (TBD) Info…

What is the TDB?
The Training Database provides a safe environment for workers to learn and practice CONNECTIONS skills using simulated case data. The Professional Development Program acts as the custodian for the Training Database sign-on IDs. These ID numbers are referred to as Desktop User (DU) numbers and Instructor Led (IL) numbers. Sign-on numbers begin with either DU (upstate user) or IL (NYC user), and are followed by four digits. With a DU or IL number a local district or voluntary agency staff member can sign on to the Training Database and practice using CONNECTIONS functionality that mirrors the CONNECTIONS Production system.

The Training Database has the look and feel of the CONNECTIONS system currently in production. When you sign on to the Training Database using a DU or IL number, you will see a simulated environment displaying the *Assigned Workload* of a fictitious worker created specifically for training purposes. When you sign on, you have the ability to complete the tasks necessary to maintain and progress each stage of service. Information is deleted when the computer system is refreshed each night; any material that you enter into the system is available to you only until the end of that day.

How Can I Access the TDB?
Those interested in accessing the Training Database should contact Kelly Farmer, with the Professional Development Program. Ms. Farmer can assist with short term Training ID loans, technical assistance as well as specific functionality examples available in the

Training Database. Requests can be made either by email at kfarmer@pdp.albany.edu or phone: (518) 320-3718.
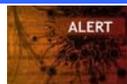
 ## NEW… NEW… NEW… ALERT in CONNECTIONS… (effective 10/18/09)

Did you know that there have been rare instances where a To Do was not generated when a worker submitted a FASP for approval? The worker and supervisor may not have noticed this exception until many days had passed.

A resolution is at hand!!! Beginning *Monday, October 18, 2009* CONNECTIONS will detect these instances during a nightly batch job. CONNECTIONS will automatically revert the FASP to "In Process" and generate alerts for the Case Planner and Case Manager informing them they need to resubmit the FASP for approval.

What you will see (an example of an ALERT):
"A problem prevented submission of FASP S:26419647 F:2351965, please resubmit."

If you have any questions regarding this issue we ask that you send an email to the Application Help mailbox at: ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.state.ny.us.

 ## CONNECTIONS Information Security Training Reminder…

In July, 2009 the Office of Children and Family Services, in conjunction with the Professional Development Program, announced the *Computer Based Training (CBT): TS: CONNECTIONS Security*. We are pleased to report that many districts and agencies have already taken advantage of this opportunity to have important training for their users at the user's convenience. Users can begin the training, and bookmark where they left off, so that they may return to the training to finish when they have time.

The purpose of this course is to provide Security Coordinators, backup Security Coordinators and <u>anyone</u> handling or reviewing CONNECTIONS security functions with the information needed to help them make accurate and informed decisions regarding setting up and maintaining CONNECTIONS security rights for new and existing workers.

The information is presented in a scenario-based format using the most common scenarios that occur in almost every agency. Basic information on security awareness, and extensive references to additional resources, are also included.

<u>Registering for and accessing this course is a three step process:</u>
1. You must be registered for the course through the Statewide Training Automated Registration System (STARS). This is the same process as registering for any other OCFS course and is done by your district or agency's STARS contact

person, who is normally the agencies' Staff Development Coordinator or Training Coordinator. The Internet address for the STARS website is: http://stars.bsc-cdhs.org.

2. Then you must secure a Directory Services account (LDAP account). LDAP accounts are separate from one's HSEN account. An LDAP account is used to grant secure access to legacy systems such as WMS and CCRS and to Training Space. If the user does not already have an LDAP account, he/she should be able to set up his/her own LDAP account by clicking on the link below and following the instructions: https://ws04.nyenet.state.ny.us/sreg/SelfReg?APP=nyappotdatv.

3. Then you can take the course by accessing the website where online courses are posted: www.TrainingSpace.org and signing on to the site using your LDAP account. A link to the course you have been registered for should appear once you sign on to Training Space.

A Note for Local District/Agency LAN Administrators:

Persons wishing to take an online training course from the website TrainingSpace.org, need an LDAP account, but do not need any additional permissions (e.g., access to other applications, such as WMS or CCRS) which are normally granted by LAN Administrators or Local Security Administrators. Therefore, trainees are allowed to establish their own LDAP accounts using the link provided above. Without additional permissions, trainees will be able to sign on to TrainingSpace.org, but will not be able to access other secure OCFS applications with this account. If trainees have questions about LDAP accounts, or are not sure if they already have an LDAP account, they should first consult their agency's LAN Administrator. For voluntary agency staff, if their own LAN administrator is unable to assist, they should contact the local district's LAN administrator.

Additional Information and Resources

- Click on the link below to access the training announcement:
  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/training/Security_CBT_Course_Announcement_FINAL_7-06-091.pdf
- Click on the link below to access the Online Training Courses, Training Space and Directory Services (LDAP) Accounts Informational Sheet:
  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/training/LDAP-Trng%20Space%207-09-09%20(2).pdf

A Reminder About AFCARS…

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

Processing of the 6 month April-September AFCARS data will begin October 27th. It is critical that local district and voluntary agency staff update all AFCARS information by that date.

The data for the AFCARS (April-September 2009) Children with Missing Clinical Diagnosis report has been refreshed. The new 'as of' date is October 14th. There will be a final refresh, with an 'as of' date of October 21st, available Friday October 23rd.

AFCARS information includes the following:

> AFCARS information from the Placement Information Tab, the Removal Information Tab and the Diagnosis on the Clinical Appointment window.

For CCR cases:

> The AFCARS Adoption Information window accessed from the Adoption Finalization window.

The CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet for Recording AFCARS Data can be found on the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Step-by-Step/Job Aids/Tip Sheets page, or via the following link: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/Tip%20sheets/Recording%20AFCARS%20Data%20v4.pdf

General "Info to Know"

NEW Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet

- ...CONNECTIONS NEWS... http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/
- Casework Contacts with Children in Foster Care letter http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/Comm%20Letter-CC%20Changes%20in%20Requirements.pdf

Weekly System Maintenance

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

- **Wednesday, 10/28/09** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Friday, 10/30/09** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM

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