



# ..CONNECTIONS NEWS..

*for the week of January 15 - 22, 2010*

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

## FEATURED IN THIS EDITION

### ***"Info to Know" for Caseworkers***

- *The WMS Discrepancy Report ...pg. 1*
- *Assessing Mobile Technologies in CPS (2008-2009) Report ...pg. 2*
- *AFCARS Info ...pg. 2*
- *Information About Casework Contacts: ...pg. 3*
  - *The Casework Contact Computer Based Training (CBT) is Available NOW!!!*
  - *Casework Contacts Letter*

### ***General "Info to Know"***

- *CONNECTIONS Operations ...pg. 4*
- *A NEW Quarterly Update is Coming That Will Involve: The NEW Open Caseload Inquiry (OCI) Report ...pg.4*
- *NEW Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet ...pg. 5*
- *Weekly System Maintenance ...pg. 5*

## ***"Info to Know" for Caseworkers***



### ***The WMS Discrepancy Report***

As you may have noticed, and as we communicated in December, there were issues with the December 2009, and most recently, the January 2010 discrepancy reports. It was found after further investigation that the cause of the issues stemmed from two separate reasons, but none-the-less issues arose with both the December and January reports that made the information contained in the reports incorrect. It should be noted that on both occasions the report was rerun and the first run of the report destroyed.

With reference to the January report - the correct report was run the beginning of the month (the incorrect report was run at the end of December). Some districts may have

printed a version of the first incorrect report - we would ask that you destroy that report and rerun a second, correct version.



## ***Assessing Mobile Technologies in CPS (2008-2009) Report***

The New York State (NYS) *Mobile Technology Demonstration Project* is a multi-year initiative to assess the use of mobile technologies in child protective services (CPS) work in New York State. Starting in 2006, this collaborative effort among the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), NYS County Departments of Social Services (DSS or local district), and the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) at the University at Albany has conducted three successive assessments on mobile technology deployments and one in depth business analysis. This assessment focuses on the most recent effort in 2008-2009 where twenty-six districts received over 500 laptops and tablets for caseworkers, supervisors, and managers.

In this effort, districts were asked to submit proposals to OCFS for mobile technology funding. OCFS then selected districts and centrally procured the devices (laptops and tablets). OCFS led the statewide deployment with some assistance from OFT and the districts. Local connectivity contracts were under the purview of the districts to select and procure. In addition, local districts were responsible for selecting CPS staff to participate and training the staff on the technology. CTG conducted an independent assessment of the use of the technology within and across the districts. The results of the impact of the technology on the work are presented in findings about caseworker productivity. The report is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website on the Remote Access page. For access to the full report click on the following link: [http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/Portable%20Tech-Final%20Report-%20OCFS%20changes%201\\_04\\_10\\_ctg.pdf](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/Portable%20Tech-Final%20Report-%20OCFS%20changes%201_04_10_ctg.pdf)



## ***AFCARS Info***

Just a note that the data for the *Children Served with Missing Clinical Diagnosis* reports (AFCARS period October 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010) has been refreshed as of January 6th. The next data refresh is scheduled for Feb 4th ('as of' date Feb 3rd).



## ***Information About Casework Contacts:***

- *The Casework Contact Computer Based Training (CBT) is Available NOW!!*
- *Casework Contacts Letter*

This piece was in the last edition of the CONNECTIONS NEWS.

### ***The Casework Contact Computer Based Training (CBT)***

A new Computer Based Training module (CBT) titled: *TS: Documenting Casework Contacts with Foster Children*, has been developed to provide training and information related to the federal and NYS casework contact standards. This CBT is currently available in STARS for caseworkers to complete and includes:

- A summary of the federal foster child casework contact standards, as well as an overview of state requirements on all foster care contacts and casework contact requirements in other program areas;
- Instructions for the correct documentation of casework contacts in CONNECTIONS so that full credit is received for all contacts that do meet the requirements;
- Exercises to reinforce learning and
- Information on the available reports and how to access these reports to help in self-monitoring of compliance.

It is estimated that The CBT will take approximately 30-60 minutes to complete. This CBT is a precursor to the technology that will be used extensively to train caseworkers and supervisors as we roll out the major changes to CONNECTIONS in 2010.

To access the CBT, caseworkers should refer to the guide ([Online Training Courses, Training Space and Directory Services \(LDAP\) Accounts Guide](#)) posted below. In brief, the process includes the following steps:

- Register each individual worker who will take the CBT course through STARS with a start date of January 1, 2010 or later.
- Once the worker has been registered in STARS access the website [www.TrainingSpace.org](http://www.TrainingSpace.org) either through the HSEN web browser or directly through the World Wide Web if you have access to the web.
- Sign in using an LDAP account Sign on and Password. Every worker with an HSEN ID can obtain an LDAP account. If the worker does not have an LDAP account, or the worker's password has expired, the guide below provides information on how to obtain an account or reset a password, as appropriate. Click on the link to the course that is visible after the prospective trainee has signed in.

### ***The Casework Contacts Letter***

A letter, dated December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 signed by Commissioner Carrión, and addressed to local district Commissioners and voluntary agency Executive Directors, informed them of the significant progress that has been made in the documentation of casework contacts with children in foster care over the past year. In fact, the federally established benchmark of 45% for this year was exceeded. The letter also announces the availability of a new CBT on casework contacts that staff is strongly encouraged to take.

For a copy of the letter, as well as a copy of the Training Space and Directory Services (LDAP) Accounts guide referenced in the letter, please see below.

- Letter



Dec 09 CW Contacts  
Reading Reading.doc

- Online Training Courses, Training Space and Directory Services (LDAP) Accounts Guide



LDAP-Trng  
Space--rev 7-16-09.p

## *General "Info to Know"*



## *CONNECTIONS Operations*

As you may have noticed over the past few weeks, the CONNECTIONS application has sporadically had technical issues with the servers that house and drive the application. Since the inception of the issues, CONNECTIONS tech staff has collaborated with Microsoft and Citrix resources and have performed a complete analysis of our server infrastructure. Engineers from both companies were able to identify the cause of the server issues and have reviewed the current list of available hot fixes and service packs for both platforms and jointly created a list of hot fixes and service packs that were installed and tested. The issues seem to have subsided and the application is available and operational.

## *OCI Report*

*A NEW Quarterly Update is Coming that will involve:  
The NEW Open Caseload Inquiry (OCI) Report*

**\*\* Please note:** The OCI acronym was incorrectly identified in the last weekly as the Open Case Inquiry Report - the acronym actually stands for Open Caseload Inquiry Report. We hope that no confusion was caused by this error.

There will be a new report coming soon - the Open Caseload Inquiry (OCI) report. A few districts have graciously piloted the NEW OCI report and we have taken their feedback and are further developing the new version. The OCI report is a caseworker specific report that gives prompts to let the caseworker know when work is coming due or overdue on their workload. The report helps the caseworker manage their workload in order to meet regulatory and policy requirements. Access to the OCI report will be via an Icon on an environment called SharePoint. Further information about this exciting development will be available through Regional Implementation Support Team (RIST)

meetings, as well as through the *Highlights* document that will detail and illustrate the specific changes.

### ***NEW Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet***

- ...CONNECTIONS NEWS... <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/>
- Access Mobile Technologies in CPS (2008-2009) Report  
[http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/Portable%20Tech-Final%20Report-%20OCFS%20changes%201\\_04\\_10\\_ctg.pdf](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/Portable%20Tech-Final%20Report-%20OCFS%20changes%201_04_10_ctg.pdf)



### ***Weekly System Maintenance***

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

- [Wednesday, 1/20/10](#) from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM
- [Friday, 1/22/10](#) from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM



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