CONNECTIONS

NEWS FOR USERS

CONNECTIONS INTRANET:
http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect

CONNECTIONS INTERNET:
http://ocfs.ny.gov/connect

Partnership in Action: Implied Role Training in New York City

Beginning in January 2017, a new ACS-mandated classroom training for voluntary agency staff covering case history and implied role access in CONNCETIONS was offered, developed and administered jointly by staff from OCFS, ACS, and ITS.

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The Content

Implied Role access is an important and often underused function in CONNECTIONS that can result in a more comprehensive understanding of a family's history and therefore better outcomes for child safety, permanency, and well-being.

In short, if a stage on your CONNECTIONS workload shares a person in common with another stage, either open or closed, you have an **implied role** in that stage. This role allows you (or others with access to your workload) **view-only** access to the information in the related stage(s).

Best casework practice requires that all historical information for a case in which you have a role be reviewed, including stages in which you have an implied role. Implied role functionality was introduced in CONNECTIONS in 2006, and allows upwards of 10 years of history to be evaluated — often lending itself to a multigenerational scope of child abuse and maltreatment.

Although this ACS-mandated training is specifically targeted toward voluntary agency staff, implied role is an important function in Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) offices as well, as it allows district workers to view pertinent case history across county lines, with access to much more information than via a normal Case or Person search. Voluntary agency workers cannot access CPS Intake information or unfounded CPS Investigation stages via implied role, but *can* review investigation stages that have been indicated or are currently under investigation, as well as open or closed Family Services Stages (either FSI or FSS).

Benefits to Accessing Prior History
Strengthens early engagement with families
Provides a fuller view of the family that includes any traumatic history experienced by children and caretakers
Improves worker assessments, service plans, and interventions or treatment
Results in better outcomes for child safety, permanency, and well-being

The Training

Staff from OCFS, ACS, and ITS worked cooperatively in both developing the curriculum for the mandated training and delivering the finished course — which is ongoing.

Each training session consists of two 90-minute components. break. The first 90 minutes examine the policy and process behind case history and implied role, and is presented by OCFS staff. This component of the training is important in that it lays the groundwork for implied role and case history from a legal and policy perspective, exploring various Social Service Laws (SSL) and Administrative Directive Memoranda (ADM). Staff are also refreshed on ACS procedure involving roles and responsibilities at different points in a child's CPS and/or foster care episode.

The second 90 minutes of each training session focuses on CONNECTIONS training scenarios and is led by ITS CONNECTIONS Implementation staff. Here, trainers demonstrate how best to retrieve case information in CONNECTIONS via sample scenarios and also provide hands-on, desk-to-desk assistance, allowing workers to utilize implied role functionality within their currently assigned cases.

By the Numbers

- Each session consists of **two 90 minute** components, interspersed with a **15 minute** break.

- Approximately **75%** of participants were previously unaware of the full capabilities of Implied Role functionality.

- Between January and February, **275** staff members have attended training.

- All remaining sessions through June are **100%** subscribed.

> *"From the start of this project, it has been a true collaboration between ACS, OCFS, and ITS. We moved fairly quickly from planning and development of the curriculum to delivering this training."*
>
> *- Kelly Acevedo, LCSW*
> *Associate Commissioner, ACS Child Welfare Programs*

Resources

The **tip sheet** used in Implied Role training, "Implied Role and Cross District Access," is available for all staff on both the CONNECTIONS **Intranet** and **Internet** websites. The tip sheet is particularly useful in its presentation of step-by-step directions for accessing case history via implied role, with screenshots from CONNECTIONS.

Additionally, a **NEW course** titled *"Viewing Person History in CONNECTIONS"* will be offered by OCFS via the Professional Development Program (PDP) **beginning April 10th**, using iLinc technology. The 30-minute course is designed to help district and voluntary agency workers learn how to access, drill-down, view, and identify the indicators that may point to the existence of historical information in CONNECTIONS. A course announcement is available on the **Intranet** and **Internet**.

As always, the CONNECTIONS Implementation team is eager to assist with any CONNECTIONS issues, implied role or otherwise. A list of your regional Implementation Specialists is available on the *Contact Us* page of the **Intranet** and **Internet**.

For more information about the new PDP course, or other CONNECTIONS training opportunities, search for "CONNECTIONS" at the Human Services Learning Center (HSLC).

Meet Your Implementation Specialists:
Rochester Regional Office

CONNECTIONS Implementation Specialists are an integral part of the statewide CONNECTIONS team. Located within each regional office, Implementation Specialists are dedicated to providing personalized CONNECTIONS assistance to all districts and voluntary agencies within their assigned region. In each *News for Users*, we will feature a different regional CONNECTIONS Implementation team, reacquainting you with your local CONNECTIONS experts.

Brett Baker

Background: Brett is relatively new to the CONNECTIONS Implementation team, but is no stranger to the CONNECTIONS application, as he served ten and a half years at Yates County DSS working in their Foster Care and CPS units as a caseworker and a supervisor. Brett graduated from Colgate University in 2005, and also has experience in web design and business consulting.

A Day in the Life: Brett begins every day checking his email, calendar, and daily task list. After a quick morning run, Brett travels to his site destination, which can include any number of district and agency offices or the Rochester Regional Office. Brett provides support to users electronically and in-person, and maintains both reoccurring and impromptu appointments with district and agency staff across the Rochester region.

Words of Wisdom: "Child welfare is a field where social work and technology merge more and more each day. My colleagues and I are here to help bridge the gap between these two arenas, wherever necessary."

Farrah Henneberg

Background: Like Brett, Farrah is a fresh face in Implementation, but has extensive history working with CONNECTIONS — Farrah served as a Monroe County caseworker for 11 years, specializing in Homefinding and certifying foster homes. Farrah likes to say that she "majored" in building relationships, with a "minor" in FAD.

A Day in the Life: Farrah is the CONNECTIONS lead for Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, and Seneca Counties, and begins her day by verifying her schedule before setting out. Farrah's schedule often fills up with reoccurring site visits and presentations, but she always tries to leave some flexibility for unexpected CONNECTIONS questions or issues. In her free time, Farrah often works in Data Warehouse to prepare reports for counties.

Words of Wisdom: "Don't spend hours of your valuable time trying to figure something out in CONNECTIONS! Contact me! Let me help you — and you can move onto other things!"

We're Here to Help!

Contact your Regional Implementation Specialist with any CONNECTIONS issue! A list of contacts by region is available on the Contact Us page of the **Intranet** and **Internet**.

Did You Know...

Communication, 3 Ways: Breaking down CONNECTIONS Newsletters

Receiving timely CONNECTIONS updates and news is an important factor in effectively using and understanding the application. In support of this, CONNECTIONS news is communicated to district and agency users by three vehicles:

The ***CONNECTIONS Technical Bulletin*** is distributed biweekly via email to a limited list of users with more technically-oriented job titles. Focusing on more technical updates to CONNECTIONS, the bulletin most often announces weekly maintenance windows in which the application is not available.

The ***CONNECTIONS Build Bulletin*** is distributed to our statewide CONNECTIONS distribution list as needed, and pertains specifically to upcoming application builds. Articles

within summarize upcoming changes to the application, as well as outline and link to build training and support documentation.

CONNECTIONS News for Users, You're reading it! This newsletter has been recently revamped to feature longer, more content-oriented articles, and is distributed seasonally. Articles highlight new and exciting initiatives, revisit existing support tools like tip sheets and trainings, and provide important insight into the daily workings of the CONNECTIONS application.

All three newsletters are posted on the homepage of the CONNECTIONS website, on the **Intranet** and **Internet**, as soon as they become available.

Have a question about CONNECTIONS Communications or want to be added to a mailing list? Send an email to our Application Help Mailbox, at ocfs.sm.conn_app @ocfs.ny.gov.

A Tip Sheet a Season…

In a new, reoccurring segment, a different tip sheet will be highlighted with each seasonal issue of the *CONNECTIONS News for Users*.

CONNECTIONS tip sheets are valuable tools that target a specific area in the application, often one which is troublesome to many users. With step-by-step instructions and screenshots, these frequently-updated resources, of which roughly 60 currently exist, are great go-tos for quick and easy resolutions.

Consolidating Duplicate CPS INV or FAR Stages (Intranet / Internet)

When multiple CPS intakes involving the same family are recorded, it may be appropriate to record all required tasks within a single Investigation (INV) or Family Assessment Response (FAR)

stage. In such instances, a subsequent INV or FAR stage may be closed as a duplicate to the previously-received INV or FAR stage — a process known as *consolidation*.

Although a commonly employed CPS function, consolidations can be tricky due to the numerous rules surrounding eligibility. Many users are familiar with the six-day rule — a stage can only be closed as a duplicate within six days, down to the minute, of its associated Intake stage — but the list of requirements is in fact much more exhaustive.

This tip sheet, updated in January 2017, offers step-by-step instructions to the consolidation process, as well as troubleshoots common error messages users may receive when attempting to consolidate.

Check out all of our CONNECTIONS Tip Sheets on our Job Aids and Tip Sheets Page — available on the **Intranet** *and* **Internet**.

CONNECTIONS Clue

Can't end-date a worker from CONNECTIONS because they still have Task To-Dos assigned?

Once a worker leaves employment, their CONNECTIONS account should be end-dated as soon as possible to prevent unauthorized system access. However, in order for a Security Coordinator to end-date a worker, their workload and To-Do list must first be cleared.

There are three kinds of To-Dos: Alert (A), Reminder (R), and Task (T). Alert and Reminder To-Dos may be deleted if no longer needed. Task To-Dos, however, must either be completed, have a completion date entered, or be reassigned to another worker.

Only the worker's Unit Approver can reassign Task To-Dos with the following steps:

1. Use Unit Summary to navigate to the worker's To-Do tab.
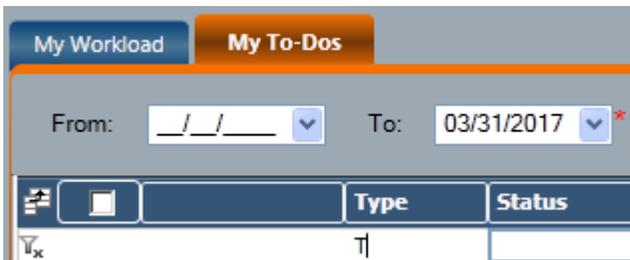
2. Check the checkbox of the To-Do you wish to reassign.

3. Click the *Detail* link in the left navigation pane.

4. In the left navigation pane of the To-Do Detail window, click the *Staff Search* link.

5. Enter your search criteria and click the *Search* button.

6. From the resulting Staff List, select the person to whom the To-Do will be assigned.

7. Click the *Ok* button to the lower right of the Staff List.

8. Click the *Save & Close* button on the To-Do Detail window.

Of course—to avoid taking these retroactive steps — be sure the worker's workload and To-Do list are empty *before* they separate from the district or agency.
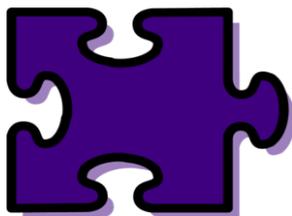
CONNECTIONS Puzzler

Time for some fun! Can you unscramble these ten common CONNECTIONS words and phrases? Answers are posted on the CONNECTIONS home page.

TCNSOCINONE	APNL DAENNTMME
CSONTILAOED	ERGROSPS ETNSO
KDOLRAWO	FTOSER OEHM
NOSITIVTNGIAE	SIKR TNAESSSSMSE
YNNCPEMAER	EDIMILP LROE