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

# ..CONNECTIONS NEWS..
## for the week of August 29 – September 5, 2008

## *Developing a more caseworker centric system*
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**CONNECTIONS Intranet site:**  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/
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### FEATURED IN THIS EDITION
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## "Info to Know" for Caseworkers
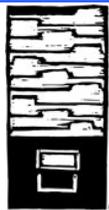
 *A Revised Version of the Records Retention Tip Sheet*

*\*\*Please note:  ONLY local districts have to ability to perform this function.*

A revised version of the Records Retention Tip Sheet was posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet:  http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaides/jobaides.asp.

## Why do we do Records Retention?
Child Protective Services (CPS) records are required by law to be expunged at specific points.  Indicated CPS records must be expunged 10 years after the youngest child named in the report turns 18; legally sealed unfounded CPS reports (more commonly

called Post-Elisa Law reports) must expunged 10 years from the date of Intake by the SCR.

Expungement of CPS records related to court decisions, fair hearings and administrative review also must be done as local districts are informed.  Local districts are notified of pending expungements through the Records Retention process.  This notification alerts districts to review cases that are to be expunged.  It further alerts districts when cases have been expunged from the CONNECTIONS database, and that copies of CPS records maintained by the district must also be destroyed.

There are two reports sent to the district related to this process.  The *To Be Expunged Report* and the *Expungement Report*  are delivered to the designated recipients' Reports icon in CONNECTIONS.  Designated recipients are chosen by the local district and reported to OCFS by completion of the Management Reports Update form found on the Forms page on the CONNECTIONS intranet: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/connections%20forms.asp.

# ? *The Application Help Mailbox*

This is just a reminder that there are multiple places to go for help with application questions - and one of them is the *Application Help Mailbox*.  The mailbox began a number of months ago as a new service for Resource Users or other key users at Local Districts. Use of the mailbox as a resource tool has since *expanded* to voluntary agencies, as well. In addition to contacting the OFT Enterprise Helpdesk for application issues, workers are encouraged to contact the NYS CONNECTIONS User Support/ Triage staff directly for help with complex application issues. Questions, problems and concerns can be e-mailed to the "**ocfs.sm.connections_app_help**" mailbox.

One of the goals of the Application Help Mailbox is provide an expanded level of support for the system users.  The 'App Help' mailbox is targeted toward questions that have had an initial review by local staff who have developed competencies with the CONNECTIONS application (for example the Resource Users).  Those staff have been identified by each district and agency and they are able to email their questions directly to the User Support/Triage unit via the 'App Help' mailbox.  To best provide prompt service it is critical that you limit the number of specified users that will have permission to access the mailbox.  As previously stated, the staff who are designated by your agency to access this mailbox should be Resource Users or other individuals who provide on-going assistance to staff in completing work in the CONNECTIONS application.

<u>PLEASE NOTE:</u> Questions related to your equipment, access to CONNECTIONS, connectivity issues, Citrix or Webstar problems should continue to be referred to the OFT Enterprise Help Desk. *You can always call the EHD for any problem that you are experiencing with the CONNECTIONS application.*

Below is a link to the form that you can complete and email to the 'APP Help' mailbox. http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/resources/Connections%20Application%20Help%20Request.dot

 *Handouts from the Teleconference on Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment*

A handout of the information shared during the teleconference on Changes to Safety and Risk Assessment to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment that was televised on Wednesday, August 27th, is available on the CONNECTIONS intranet website: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/.

Please note that another document describing information discussed during the teleconference is also available on the CONNECTIONS intranet site. The document is titled: *Final Wording Changes to RAP Elements*.

Reducing repeat maltreatment among children and families in New York State is a goal that OCFS shares with local districts and foster care and preventive service agencies. As part of that effort, OCFS has made improvements to the Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment Protocols. The CONNECTIONS system will support these changes as of October 10, 2008.

**Questions & Answers**
There were a number of questions posed during the teleconference that we not able to answer during the time allotted. We are in the process of collecting these questions and will answer them and then post them to the CONNECTIONS website.

**Post-teleconference Viewing**
The teleconference and supplemental materials will be posted (in a few weeks) to **TrainingSpace.org** ([www.trainingspace.org](http://www.trainingspace.org)). **TrainingSpace.org** is an asynchronous platform for taped teleconferences, videos, and other training resources.

**About TrainingSpace.org**
**TrainingSpace** is an on-line resource used by OCFS to provide local district, voluntary agency and state staff with access to on-line training materials and resources. TrainingSpace is available to all staff at their workstations at: [www.trainingspace.org](http://www.trainingspace.org). To obtain access, you need to have your Staff Development or Training Coordinator register you in STARS for the particular course/materials that you are interested in. Once registered, this material will be available under the "My TrainingSpace" portion of the website. Please note that you will be prompted for your USER ID and your LDAP password.
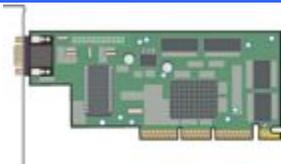
## General "Info to Know"

### New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet

The following document(s) were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- **The CONNECTIONS NEWS**
- A *Revised* Version of the **CONNECTIONS Records Retention Tip Sheet**
- Handouts from the Teleconference on Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment

### Weekly System Maintenance

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

- **Wednesday, 9/3/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Friday, 9/5/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM

**Office of
Children & Family
Services**
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Commissioner