



**Office of Children
and Family Services**

CONNECTIONS Training Courses

Course Descriptions

July 2022

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Classroom Courses

These courses are developed for a classroom setting and offered periodically each quarter.

Case Management in CONNECTIONS for the Child Welfare Foundations Program

2 days

Not available for public registration. Offered only to participants enrolled in the Child Welfare Foundations Training Program, the purpose of this course is to instruct workers on how to create and maintain Family Services Intake (FSI) stages and Family Services Stages (FSS) in CONNECTIONS. It is intended for Case Managers, Case Planners, Caseworkers, and other professionals who maintain information in FSI and FSS stages. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe CONNECTIONS stage types, roles, and To-Dos as they pertain to the Family Services Intake (FSI) stage and the Family Services Stage (FSS).
- Identify the purpose of the FSI stage.
- Create an FSS stage from an FSI stage.
- Identify the purpose of the FSS stage.
- Identify the windows that comprise an FSS stage.
- Maintain person information for an FSS stage.
- Record, modify, view, search, and print progress notes.
- Describe the components of the *Family Assessment and Service Plan* window.
- Utilize additional caseload management tools.
- Maintain information on the *Tracked Children Detail* window.
- Identify the requirements for launching a FASP.
- Launch a FASP.
- Complete specific FASP components.
- Submit a FASP for review and/or approval.
- Describe when to complete a Plan Amendment or Removal Update.
- Schedule a Service Plan Review.
- Submit an FSS stage closure for approval.
- Identify resources to help support your work in CONNECTIONS.

Child Protective Services Response Training CONNECTIONS Classroom Training

1 day

Not available for public registration. Offered only to participants enrolled in the Child Welfare Foundations Training Program, the purpose of this course is to continue instructing new local district CPS casework staff on how to record and maintain information obtained during a CPS investigation in CONNECTIONS. This training reinforces and builds upon the skills learned in *Case Management in CONNECTIONS for the Child Welfare Foundations Program* and *CPSRT: Starting the Investigation in CONNECTIONS (WebEx)*. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Summarize what you learned in the *CPSRT: Starting the Investigation WebEx* training.
- Complete and submit a Safety Assessment.
- Complete and submit a Risk Assessment Profile (RAP).
- Identify case-level information.
- Record and modify allegations and injury information.

- Complete the Investigation Action Questions.
- Complete the *Sex Trafficking Screening* window.
- Describe the *Missing Child* window.
- Complete and submit the Investigation Conclusion.
- Generate Indication and Mandated Reporter letters.
- Generate the Combined and INV/FAR Open Caseload Inquiry reports.
- Identify policies and requirements for consolidating an investigation.
- Create and complete a Family Services Intake (FSI) stage from a CPS Investigation stage.
- Describe how to launch a Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP).
- Complete an investigation in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify resources to help support your work in CONNECTIONS.

CONNECTIONS Case Management for Child Welfare Workers

2 days

The purpose of this course is to instruct workers on how to create and maintain Family Services Intake (FSI) stages and Family Services Stages (FSS) in CONNECTIONS. It is intended for Case Managers, Case Planners, Caseworkers, and other professionals who maintain information in FSI and FSS stages. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe CONNECTIONS stage types, roles, and To-Dos as they pertain to the Family Services Intake (FSI) stage and the Family Services Stage (FSS).
- Identify the purpose of the FSI stage.
- Create an FSS stage from an FSI stage.
- Identify the purpose of the FSS stage.
- Identify the windows that comprise an FSS stage.
- Maintain person information for an FSS stage.
- Record, modify, view, search, and print progress notes.
- Describe the components of the *Family Assessment and Service Plan* window.
- Utilize additional caseload management tools.
- Maintain information on the *Tracked Children Detail* window.
- Identify the requirements for launching a FASP.
- Launch a FASP.
- Complete specific FASP components.
- Submit a FASP for review and/or approval.
- Describe when to complete a Plan Amendment or Removal Update.
- Schedule a Service Plan Review.
- Submit an FSS stage closure for approval.
- Identify resources to help support your work in CONNECTIONS.

CONNECTIONS Training for Statewide Central Register (SCR) Staff

4 days

Not available for public registration. Offered only to newly hired Statewide Central Register (SCR) staff as part of a comprehensive SCR training program, this course provides participants with detailed instruction on the *CPS* (Child Protective Services) *Intake* window in CONNECTIONS. Participants will receive an introduction to the CONNECTIONS system, learn how to navigate and record information on the *CPS Intake* window, and save and assign the intake. Through discussion, demonstration, and hands-on practice exercises, participants will:

- Identify the purpose of CONNECTIONS.
- Describe the security factors, such as Business Function Profile, that determine the information you can view or maintain in CONNECTIONS.
- Navigate and complete the components of the *CPS Intake* window.
- Save and assign an intake.
- Complete the *Transmission Log* window.
- Explain New York State Social Services Law and the importance of completing thorough Person Searches in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify the SCR guidelines for relating Person IDs in CONNECTIONS.
- Describe the different search windows and types.
- Review the SCR rules for merging cases in CONNECTIONS.

NYC Integrated Core CONNECTIONS Training (Satterwhite)

4 days

Not available for public registration. Offered only to participants enrolled in the James Satterwhite Academy, the purpose of this course is to instruct new Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Child Protective Services (CPS) staff on how to locate and maintain information in CONNECTIONS from receipt to conclusion of the Investigation (INV) stage; open a Family Services Intake (FSI) stage; stage progress a Family Services Stage (FSS); and record and submit the Initial Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) in the FSS stage. Through discussion, demonstration, and hands-on practice exercises, participants will:

- Identify security considerations related to working in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify CONNECTIONS stage types, CPS report types, and Investigation (INV) stage roles available for assignment.
- Explain the structure of the **My To-Dos** tab and identify the three types of To-Dos.
- Describe the information that displays on the **Stage Events** tab.
- Access and review the **My Uploads** tab.
- Identify the purpose of and generate an Open Caseload Inquiry (OCI) Report.
- Access and review the intake and related information both online and through printed reports.
- Maintain information about people associated with an investigation.
- Generate the Notice of Existence.
- Record and maintain progress notes for an INV stage.
- Review the course learning objectives.
- Generate the Notice of Existence.
- Complete the Family Relationship Matrix.
- Complete and submit a Safety Assessment.
- Complete and submit the Risk Assessment Profile (RAP).

- Define case-level information.
- Record and modify allegations and injury information.
- Complete the Investigation Action Questions.
- Complete the *Sex Trafficking Screening* window.
- Describe the *Missing Child* window.
- Complete and submit the Investigation Conclusion.
- Determine when to provide a Notice of Indication and how to generate and print it in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify how to generate and print a Mandated Reporter Letter in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify policies and requirements for consolidating an investigation.
- Complete an investigation in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify the objectives and review the logistics of the class.
- Describe CONNECTIONS stage types and roles as they pertain to the Family Services Intake (FSI) stage and the Family Services Stage (FSS).
- Explain the purpose of the FSI stage.
- Create an FSS stage from an FSI stage.
- Identify the purpose of the FSS stage.
- Identify the windows that comprise an FSS stage.
- Maintain person information for an FSS stage.
- Maintain information on the *Tracked Children Detail* window.
- Identify the requirements for launching a Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP).
- Describe the components of the FASP.
- Identify the requirements for launching a FASP.
- Complete specific FASP components.
- Describe the FASP Approval Process.
- Explain how to schedule a Service Plan Review.
- Describe the type of information recorded on the *Education and Health Services* windows.
- Complete an investigation.
- Create an FSI stage and create an FSS stage from that FSI stage.
- Maintain information in an FSS stage.
- Launch and maintain components in the Initial FASP.
- Identify resources to help support your work in CONNECTIONS.

WebEx Courses

These distance learning courses are offered regularly each quarter.

Adding New Persons and Relating Persons in CONNECTIONS (Webex)

45 min

The purpose of this course is to familiarize district and voluntary agency workers with the process of adding and relating individuals to a stage in CONNECTIONS, to include completing thorough Person Searches as a primary step in the process. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Perform a Person Search using the *Person Search* window.
- Add new and relate person IDs to a stage.

CONNECTIONS: Completing the Placement Request (WebEx)

2 hours

The purpose of this training is to provide an overview of completing the placement request, searching for placement resources, and verifying placements in CONNECTIONS. This training will instruct participants on how to access a placement request from the *Placement Dashboard* window, prepare the request to search for resources, determine the best fit for placement, and verify the placement in CONNECTIONS. This course includes detailed discussion of the various windows involved in the placement process, accompanied by demonstrations and a hands-on simulation of placement-related tasks. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify the overall purpose of the placement request process.
- Access the *Placement Dashboard* window and identify the window components.
- Record child-specific, placement-related information for a placement request.
- Identify Resource Search parameters and prepare to update the Request Status.
- Complete a placement search and create a placement referral.
- Accept a referral and close the placement request.

CONNECTIONS: Initiating the Placement Request (WebEx)

2 hours

The purpose of this training is for participants to learn how to record placement details as part of a request for placement services in CONNECTIONS. This information will assist districts and agencies in making quality foster care placement decisions. This training will focus on the request for placement services to include recording placement details such as critical address information, resource parameters, and child and placement options. Trainees will be provided with hands-on practice, discussions, and demonstrations that reinforce key documentation in CONNECTIONS. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify the overall purpose of the placement request process.
- Access the *Placement* window and identify the window components.
- Initiate and record details for a placement request and identify Resource Search parameters.
- Record placement request information using the **Child Options** section links.
- Record Priority Criteria for the placement request.
- Explain the use of the **Place(d) on Dashboard** checkbox.

CONNECTIONS: Navigating the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) Components (WebEx)

4 hours

The purpose of this training is to familiarize participants with identifying caretaker information, maintaining the Family Relationship Matrix, recording information on the *Tracked Children Detail* window, and navigating the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) components. The purpose of the FASP is to provide a uniform and effective method to document your assessment of family and child functioning, strengths, and needs. Ongoing assessments are important to achieving the goals of safety, permanency, and well-being for children. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify the overall purpose of the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) in CONNECTIONS.
- Maintain Primary and Secondary Caretaker information and complete the Family Relationship Matrix in CONNECTIONS.
- Maintain information on the *Tracked Children Detail* window.
- Complete specific FASP components.
- Identify how to submit the FASP for approval.

CONNECTIONS: Uploading Photos and Documents (WebEx)

2 hours

The purpose of this training is to provide an overview of the process of uploading photos and documents into CONNECTIONS. The Uploads function will allow workers to transmit photos and documents into CONNECTIONS via a secure web application. Once in CONNECTIONS, files can be linked to a stage, progress note, Person ID, allegation, or health record, which fully integrates them into the system. Trainees will be provided with hands-on practice, discussions, and demonstrations that will prepare them for this system capability. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe the purpose of the Uploads function in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify requirements and considerations related to the Uploads function.
- Explain how to upload photos and documents with and without specifying a stage assignment.
- Maintain photos and documents uploaded to the **My Uploads** tab.
- Link photos and documents to a stage, progress note, Person ID, allegation, or health record.

CPSRT: Starting the Investigation in CONNECTIONS (WebEx)

3 hours

Not available for public registration. Offered only to participants enrolled in the Child Welfare Foundations Training Program, the purpose of this training is to learn how to accurately record, view, and maintain CPS case information in CONNECTIONS. This training reinforces and builds upon the skills learned in *Case Management in CONNECTIONS for the Child Welfare Foundations Program* and is followed by the full-day classroom training, *CPSRT and CONNECTIONS Integrated CPS Training: Completing the Investigation*. Trainees will be provided with hands-on practice, discussions, and demonstrations that reinforce key documentation tasks in CONNECTIONS. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify security considerations related to working in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify the CONNECTIONS stage types, CPS report types, and Investigation stage roles available for assignment.
- Generate CONNECTIONS reports to assist in an investigation.

- Review historical information online.
- Use events to assist in completing investigation activities.
- Record progress notes in an Investigation stage.
- Maintain person information in an Investigation stage, to include relating individuals and merging/splitting person records.
- Generate and describe the Notice of Existence.

Documenting the Family Assessment Response in CONNECTIONS (WebEx)

3 hours

The purpose of this course is to familiarize local district and voluntary agency workers with how to navigate to and record information in the FAR stage in CONNECTIONS. Participants will learn about the components of the FAR stage and the windows that comprise it, including the *Family Led Assessment Guide (FLAG)*, *Action Plan*, *Safety Assessment*, and *Risk Assessment Profile (RAP)* windows. The process of track switching a FAR stage to an Investigation (INV) stage will also be discussed, as well as the *Stage Summary* window. This training includes hands-on practice, discussions, and demonstrations. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify the benefits of using the FAR stage in CONNECTIONS.
- Describe how to progress an Intake (INT) stage to a FAR stage.
- Navigate to and identify the components of the FAR stage windows.
- Explain when and how a FAR stage can be track switched to an INV stage.
- Maintain FAR stage allegations, progress notes, Safety Assessments, and the Risk Assessment Profile (RAP).
- Record FAR-specific components in CONNECTIONS, including the Family Led Assessment Guide (FLAG) and Action Plans.
- Access and navigate within the *Stage Summary* window from the FAR stage.

Performing Person Merges and Splits in CONNECTIONS (WebEx)

2.5 hours

The purpose of this training is to provide a comprehensive overview of the Person Merge and Person Split functions in CONNECTIONS. Participants will learn how to complete Person Merges and Splits; understand their impacts on person data in CONNECTIONS; understand when to use the Person Unrelate, Remove Person – Added in Error, and End Date Stage Involvement functions; and review OCFS recommendations for best practices around merging and splitting. This training includes hands-on practice, discussions, and demonstrations. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain what it means to merge and split Person IDs in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify the Business Function required to merge and split Person IDs.
- Explain when it is appropriate to use the Person Unrelate, Remove Person – Added in Error, and End Date Stage Involvement functions.
- Complete a Person Merge and describe its impact on person data in CONNECTIONS.
- Complete a Person Split and identify the results of splitting a Person ID.
- Review OCFS recommendations when merging and splitting Person IDs in CONNECTIONS.

Recording Activity Events on the CONNECTIONS Activities Window (WebEx)

2.5 hours

The purpose of this training is to familiarize local district and voluntary agency workers with the *Activities* window, define specific movement and legal codes, and identify when to record those codes in CONNECTIONS. This training will review movement and legal activities, proper coding to avoid impacts to payments, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), casework contact requirements, and federal and/or state reimbursements. This training includes hands-on practice, discussions, and demonstrations. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain CONNECTIONS security as it relates to the *Activities* window.
- Describe how to access the *Activities* window and identify its components.
- Identify when to open or reopen a track and how to do so on the *Activities* window.
- Describe specific movement and legal activities and when they should be used for tracking.
- Explain how to accurately enter activities.
- Describe the process of making a correction on the *Activities* window.
- Identify common errors in coding that create inaccurate data.

Updating Person Demographic Information in CONNECTIONS (Webex)

45 min

The purpose of this course is to familiarize district and voluntary agency workers with how to record and maintain person demographic information in CONNECTIONS. Participants will learn about the components of the *Person List* window including the sub-tabs of the **Person Info** tab. The process of copying primary address and phone number information will also be discussed. The course will conclude with a question-and-answer period and participants will be provided with access to a practice simulation available for use any time. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify where demographic information is recorded on the sub-tabs of the *Person List* window.
- Maintain demographic information, such as ethnicity, address, and 'also known as' (AKA) names, as appropriate, in CONNECTIONS.

Using the Display All Case History Window in CONNECTIONS (Webex)

45 min

The purpose of this course is to familiarize district and voluntary agency workers with how to easily view relevant history using the implied role path, how to determine when a worker has an implied role, and how to use the *Display All Case History* window to view information for all cases of which a Person ID in a stage is a part. The course will conclude with a question-and-answer period followed by hands-on practice. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify all cases of which a Person ID in the selected stage is a part.
- Access and view historical information in CONNECTIONS with an implied role.

Working with Permanency Hearing Reports in CONNECTIONS (Webex)

2 hours

The purpose of this training is to familiarize new district and voluntary agency Foster Care workers with the process of completing Permanency Hearing Reports in CONNECTIONS. Participants will learn about the Permanency Bill, the types and features of Permanency Hearing Reports, and the CONNECTIONS roles that can maintain them. This training includes hands-on practice, discussions, and demonstrations. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Access and describe the *Permanency* window.
- Explain what information is used in each Permanency Hearing Report, but housed outside the report.
- Launch, print, and delete Permanency Hearing Reports.
- Explain how to check for completion of Permanency Hearing Report questions.
- Describe how to submit a Permanency Hearing Report for review and mark as “Final.”
- Generate Permanency Hearing Notices and Statements.

Working with Progress Notes in CONNECTIONS Family Services Stages (WebEx)

2 hours

The purpose of this training is to familiarize new district and voluntary agency casework staff with the function and use of progress notes in CONNECTIONS Family Services Stages (FSS). This course includes detailed discussion of the various progress notes windows, accompanied by hands-on demonstrations and simulations of progress note-related tasks. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the functionality of progress notes in CONNECTIONS.
- Navigate and identify the *Progress Notes* window components.
- Identify who can record progress notes.
- Describe how to save a progress note in “Draft” or “Final” status.
- Identify which progress notes can be modified and when to add an addendum.
- Explain how to search for and print progress notes.

Web-based Courses

These self-led asynchronous virtual trainings are available at any time via the Human Services Learning Center (HSLC).

Completing the CONNECTIONS Family Services Intake for NYC (HSLC web)

2 hours

The purpose of this course is to provide Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and voluntary agency casework staff with an understanding of the Family Services Intake (FSI) stage. At their own pace, participants will become familiar with the information that must be recorded in an FSI stage to document a decision regarding whether to provide a family with services. After reviewing the purpose of recording an FSI stage and who is responsible for doing so, participants will work toward achievement of the following learning objectives:

- Perform a thorough search for existing records in CONNECTIONS prior to creating a new FSI stage.
- Record an FSI stage using the windows that comprise the stage and explain the function of each one.
- Identify the review steps and approvals necessary to either open the Family Services Stage (FSS) or close the FSI stage.
- Examine the *Stage Summary* and *Family Services Intake Log* windows and the available FSI stage reports.

Documenting Casework Contacts with Foster Children in CONNX (HSLC web)

45 min

The purpose of this course is to provide district and voluntary agency casework and supervisory staff with detailed instruction on the proper completion of progress notes that document casework contacts with foster children. Proceeding at their own pace, learners will discover how to properly complete the fields on the *Progress Notes* window, the appropriate content of narratives, and supports available to help maintain compliance with the contact requirements. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Discover how to navigate and complete the course.
- Learn what comprises a casework contact with a foster child.
- Learn how to properly record casework contacts in CONNECTIONS.
- Discover additional tools available to help determine whether all required casework contacts for a child have been made.
- Review covered topics and learn how to receive credit for course completion.

Introduction to Your CONNECTIONS Workload (HSLC web)

1 hour

The purpose of this self-directed training is to provide new district and voluntary agency workers with a basic orientation of CONNECTIONS. At their own pace, participants will become familiar with both the structure and context in which casework activities are documented. The training includes information about CONNECTIONS stages and roles, security, the **My Workload** tab, and To-Dos. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the difference between cases and stages in CONNECTIONS.
- Describe the roles available for assignment within each stage type.
- Explain the importance of confidentiality and how to protect system information.

- Determine the information you can view or maintain in CONNECTIONS.
- Explain how a Business Function Profile affects access to information in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify the features of the main CONNECTIONS window.
- Move, sort, and filter the grid columns on your workload.
- Use the **NAVIGATION PANE** to access additional CONNECTIONS window and reports.
- Identify the components of the **My Workload** tab and explain why the tab is the “gateway” to documenting your work with the family.
- Explain how selecting a stage affects access to the links in the **NAVIGATION PANE**.
- Personalize your workload by customizing columns and changing your default tab.
- Explain why To-Dos are critical to managing your casework in CONNECTIONS.
- Identify the three types of To-Dos and the **To-Do Options** available in the **NAVIGATION PANE**.
- Describe how to use the **Navigate** link, create a new To-Do, and view To-Do details.

Recording Education in CONNECTIONS (HSLC web)

45 min

The purpose of this course is to introduce district and voluntary agency workers to the CONNECTIONS Education component. Participants will become familiar with the requirements for recording education information and learn how to view, record, and maintain that information in CONNECTIONS. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the requirements for recording education information.
- Describe who can record education information for a child and why it is recorded.
- Navigate to the windows of the Education component and record, view, and maintain the information on them.

Recording Health Services in CONNECTIONS (HSLC web)

1 hour

This self-directed training is designed to provide participants with a functional knowledge of the CONNECTIONS *Health Services* window and its components. At their own pace, participants will become familiar with New York State requirements for documenting health information in CONNECTIONS, how that information is protected, and where and how to record specific information (e.g., a child’s medications and allergies, appointments and hospitalizations, biological family health information). Participants will also learn about the printable forms and summaries that are available. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain why it is important to record health-related information for children receiving child welfare services.
- Explain how the confidentiality of health information is protected in CONNECTIONS.
- Describe who can access and maintain health information in CONNECTIONS and how it is accessed.
- Identify the tabs and sub-tabs of the Services window.
- Describe what, and how, information is recorded on each tab.
- Describe the health reports and consent forms available in CONNECTIONS.

Registration Information

Registration

Pre-registration in HSLC is required. (<https://www.hslcnys.org/hslc>).

Please note: Training fees are charged to local district social services for CONNECTIONS trainings. There are no training fees charged to voluntary agency personnel.

To locate CONNECTIONS Training courses in HSLC, search using the following:

Provider: **SUNY Albany – PDP**

Content: **Systems Connections**

When searching for classes in HSLC, the date range defaults to the next 60 days. This is usually sufficient but can be modified.

Recommended Preparation

Many CONNECTIONS courses assume familiarity with certain windows, components, and/or processes. Refer to the course information listed in HSLC for an individual course's recommended preparation/prerequisites.

Handouts

Printable handouts, as well as a link to join the class, are accessible from the HSLC confirmation email. An additional Participant Manual (if applicable) will be emailed after class. Please verify the accuracy of staff email addresses recorded in HSLC.

Contact

Questions regarding courses or inquiries regarding special requests can be directed to CONNECTIONS@albany.edu.