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Informational Letter

Transmittal:	08-OCFS-INF-13
To:	Commissioners of Social Services Executive Directors of Voluntary Authorized Agencies
Issuing Division/Office:	Strategic Planning and Policy Development
Date:	November 7, 2008
Subject:	Family Assessment Response Cases
Suggested Distribution:	Directors of Social Services CPS Staff Voluntary Agency Program Directors
Contact Person(s):	Please see Page 4
Attachments:	Family Assessment Response Case Identifiers
Attachment Available Online:	Yes

Filing References, if applicable (*check on these –be sure that are correct and there are no typos*)

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
			Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007		

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Informational Letter is to inform local departments of social services (LDSSs) and voluntary agencies that are not currently

participating in Child Protective Services (CPS) Family Assessment Response (FAR) how FAR cases will be displayed and treated within CONNECTIONS. Since a non-participating LDSS or agency may at some point possibly encounter some family members or have some responsibility for a case that has been (or is being) served through FAR, it is necessary for such LDSS or agency staff to have some basic familiarity with how FAR cases are going to be handled within CONNECTIONS.

II. Background

Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007 authorized LDSSs to apply to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to use a family assessment and services approach for working with some families reported to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) for suspected maltreatment (not abuse and certain maltreatment reports) of their children. Among the main features of this approach, is that an investigation and determination of whether maltreatment has occurred is not done. Many of the investigative requirements are not applicable in FAR cases; instead, a family assessment is undertaken, and the family's perspective is actively sought.

The following six LDSSs are going to begin participating in FAR, with varying degree of their reported maltreatment cases, over the next few months: Chautauqua, Erie, Onondaga, Orange, Tompkins and Westchester.

Given that Chapter 452 will expire on June 1, 2011, absent an anticipated legislative extension or act to make the provisions permanent, and the inability to make major system changes to CONNECTIONS prior to the completion of the architecture modernization project (CAMP), a very basic approach within CONNECTIONS is being used to support FAR services. Primarily, investigation stages designated as FAR will not show any allegation substantiation and the cases will remain undetermined.

III. Program Implications

FAR Workflow

The six participating counties are all taking individualized approaches with FAR, including the criteria that they are using to consider serving families with FAR, the percent of their reported CPS maltreatment reports served, and the methods they are using to engage and serve eligible families. There are, however, some common features/components. The SCR will transmit all reports of alleged maltreatment (and abuse), as it would to any LDSS CPS. Upon receiving a report that meets a participating LDSS's FAR criteria, a caseworker will be assigned to the report and will approach the family in a different manner than such worker might if she or he were planning to investigate and determine the allegations. The worker will be required to conduct a safety assessment within seven days of receiving the SCR report. If

any child is determined to be unsafe, the report would then be treated like any non-FAR CPS report, the investigative stage (INV) would continue, and would be treated and appear identical in CONNECTIONS to any CPS report.

Alternatively, if all children are assessed to be safe and the LDSS continues its FAR intervention, the LDSS worker will check a “Family Assessment Response” checkbox (Note: This checkbox will only be available/visible to participating FAR LDSS during the investigation stage). The worker will then open a Family Services Intake Stage (FSI), from the FAR investigation. This FSI will be assigned a type – “OTI-FAM,” and will support entry similar to the existing OTI FSI and closing reasons specific to the FAR. The worker may close the FSI, or more likely, progress to an FSS stage called OTI/FAM. The OTI/FAM has been modified to accommodate FAR cases (referred to in CONNECTIONS as FAM). From the FSS/OTI/FAM stage, a case may be closed completely or, if regular preventive services are to be provided, the FSS/OTI/FAM stage may be modified to FSS/CWS with the case initiation date (CID) established by the opening of the preventive services case.

Unfortunately, due to the limitations in what was able to be programmed within CONNECTIONS to accommodate FAR, from a CONNECTIONS system perspective, the INV stage will remain open and undetermined (rather than the more accurate programmatic status of the INV stage being “closed to FAR”). In order to eliminate some confusion and prevent the FAR staff from getting overdue determination cues, the FAR staff will be instructed to transfer the INV stage to an OCFS caseload.

Possible Non-FAR Counties’ Interaction with FAR Cases Within CONNECTIONS

- As referenced above, the INV stages for FAR/FAM cases will remain open/undetermined. Within existing security parameters, non-FAR LDSSs and voluntary agencies may see these INV stages, and related FSI/OTI/FAM stages, in cross references, SCR database checks and through case/person search and Implied Role, if a case member of another case is also in a FAM case. All CPS related output reports, will separately identify these cases as FAM.
- Non-FAR LDSSs and voluntary agencies will be able to see case documentation of a FAR/FAM case when reviewing the history of an existing case. The INV stage will contain a safety assessment and progress notes. There will be no documentation concerning the reported allegations. The OTI/FAM/FSI stage may contain notes and the Behavioral Concerns and Family Issues screening protocol (BCFI is optional functionality). The OTI/FAM/FSS stage will likely contain progress notes, and may contain additional safety assessments, Education Detail or a Preventive (non-CPS) Risk Assessment. There will not be any FASPs in this stage.
- Any SCR database checks on FAR/FAM cases will be categorized as “No Hit.”

- If a non-FAR/FAM LDSS is assigned secondary responsibility by the SCR, the FAR/FAM LDSS will need to unassign the secondary LDSS before proceeding to FSI/FAM.
- The attached “Family Assessment Response Case Identifiers” provides further details about FAR/FAM references that will be found within CONNECTIONS.

IV. Contact Persons

Questions concerning this letter should be directed to:

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/s/ Nancy W. Martinez

Issued By:

Name: Nancy W. Martinez

Title: Director

Division/Office: Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development

Family Assessment Response Case Identifiers

1. *For Implied Role access and for reviewing search results, Family Assessment Response cases can be identified as follows:*

Case Summary Window

INV Stages

- *FAM Stages will have an "Opened" Date - but the "Closed" Date field will be blank*
- *If the INV Stage has been moved to the state workload, the "County" field will be 098*

FSI Stages

- *"OTI/FAM" will appear in the Stage Type Field for FAM Stages*

FSS Stages

- *"OTI/FAM" will appear in the Stage Type Field for FAM Stages*

INV Stages

Family Assessment Response checkbox will appear on the Investigation Conclusion Window and CPRS Investigative Findings Tab.

FSI Stages

"Family Assessment Response" appears on the background of the FSI Tabs.

FSS Stages

"Family Assessment Response" appears on the background on the Stage Composition Window (first window presented when stage is opened).

2. *The Assigned Workload Window includes the following indicators for FAM Stages (there is no FAM Indicator in the INV Stage).*

- *FSI Stages - Stage Type field "OTI/FAM"*
- *FSS Stage - Stage Type field "OTI/FAM"*

3. *Outputs*

INV Stage

The following outputs will include an indicator for Family Assessment Response. On all reports, the presence of the indicator depends on the save of the check mark on the Investigation Conclusion window on the INV Stage.

- *The IRI report - A FAM Field has been added in the Cross Reference History Section to identify INV Stages that are FAM.*
- *The OCI Report (worker level) - a FAM field has been added to identify INV Stages that are FAM.*
- *Summary of Three Most Recent Investigations - a new Family Assessment Response field has been added. "Yes" will display for INV Stages which are Family Assessment Response.*
- *CPS Investigation Summary Form - a Family Assessment Response field has been added. "Yes" will display for INV Stages that are FAM.*
- *Child Protective Record Summary - a FAM field has been added to the Case Identification Section and the Investigative Findings Section.*
- *Prior Case Summary Report – a FAM field has been added to the Role Information Section and the Detailed Stage Information Section.*

FSI Stage

The Family Services Intake Report has been modified to add "OTI/FAM – Family Assessment Response" in the "Type of Services Being Requested" field.

FSS Stage

The OCI Report has been modified to add:

- *A FAM field in the List of Cases Section*
- *Two additional fields in the Summary section - Family Assessment Response opened for 60 Days (cases opened more than 60 Days and less than 90 Days); and Family Assessment Response opened for 90 days or more.*