



# What You Need to Know

## About the New Placement Module in Connections

On October 18th, New York State launched statewide a new “placement module” in Connections to help staff who facilitate the placement process for children in foster care. The new placement module provides better support for the placement matching process with the goal of improved outcomes for children and families. While final decisions about placement will continue to be made by ACS child welfare staff in consultation with foster care providers, the new module will deliver critical information to help inform those important decisions.

### **The new placement module will: Help us make even better matches for children in foster care.**

ACS has always been committed to making the best possible matches for children in foster care. Using the new module, staff will be able to quickly enter the characteristics and needs of children in foster care and the preferences and capacities of foster parents and residential programs and better match them to one another. The module also provides new functionality to calculate travel distance to support our work to keep children close to family, school and community and allow staff to evaluate multiple placement possibilities much more quickly and easily. These upgrades will mean faster, better placement matches and improved outcomes for kids.

To ensure the best matches, it is of the utmost importance that foster care agencies always update information on their foster homes and congregate care settings daily.

### **Help make the placement process more efficient for ACS and foster care agency staff.**

The placement module automates and streamlines key administrative tasks to reduce cumbersome manual and paper processes. Using the module, staff will have up-to-date information about placement availability and vacancies. And, the module will provide referral management capability allowing supervisors at ACS and foster care agencies to dynamically assign and distribute work as needed. With ACS Child Protective Specialists having access to mobile tablets while in the field, they'll be able to enter information much more quickly while on-the-go.

## Help improve performance management and accountability.

The placement module more efficiently tracks the movement of children through the foster care system. And, reports from the module allow ACS to track provider acceptance and rejections for both family foster care and residential programs and help target foster home recruitment.

### Resources:

OCFS CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Staff will be available to offer on-site support as necessary. A contact list of each district and agency's assigned implementation specialist can be found on the CONNECTIONS Internet site ( <https://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/contact.asp> ).

### Comment and Suggestions

ACS is eager for your feedback so we can recommend future enhancements of the module. Please send your comments and suggestions to: [placementmodulefeedback@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:placementmodulefeedback@acs.nyc.gov)

## The Connections Placement Module

### Who Does What? The Seven Steps for Foster Care Agency and ACS Staff

**Step 1** ACS DCP initiates a placement request.

**Step 2** ACS CFS assesses the appropriate level of care.

**Step 3** ACS OPA searches requests marked "ready for search" on their dashboard (replaces email referral notification). OPA selects a specific home (e.g., kinship) or initiates a search of all available foster homes meeting the child's characteristics.

**Step 4** ACS OPA selects matched homes and sends the referral to the foster care agencies via the module (replaces emails to agencies).

**Step 5** Foster care agencies review the referral in the module. Foster care agencies can request more information via the module. OPA and foster care agency staff have conversations to discuss the child and the placement. Foster care agencies accept or decline in the module (automating previously manual process that was done through multiple emails and phone calls).

**Step 6** ACS OPA confirms the placement in the module (replaces manual notification of placement).

**Step 7** Foster care agency verifies the child's arrival at placement and the request is closed in the module (automating previously manual process that was done through multiple emails and phone calls).