C·H·R·I·S COMMENTS

CHILDREN'S REGISTRY & INFORMATION SYSTEM

fdlrs

Coming Soon...CHRIS 97

The new release of CHRIS has been renamed CHRIS 97. The search for a programming package that would provide the desired user satisfaction has ended. CHRIS has been entirely reprogrammed in FileMaker Pro 3, a relational database that is very user friendly. The new CHRIS 97 is a pleasing blend of the best features of flat file databases and relational databases. The reprogramming of CHRIS 97 was inspired by user requests to provide a multi-platform program. CHRIS 97 fits the bill. FileMaker Pro has been put to the test by the CHRIS programmers and has performed well in Windows for Workgroups 3.1.1, Windows 95, Windows NT, and Macintosh OS.

This change in programming packages is good news for FDLRS because it brings consistency to FDLRS database operations. All centers are currently using FileMaker Pro 2 database for their project submission and administration. That database will be upgraded to FileMaker 3 prior to submission of next year's project.

Some CHRIS users got a taste of the new CHRIS 97 at the training sessions recently held at FDLRS Gulfcoast in Clearwater. The first two days were spent with selected Database Administrators from ten centers. They had the opportunity to give extensive input into the finished product. The third day gave representatives from eight other centers an opportunity to view the changes and provide additional input. Some of the changes influenced by the groups are outlined in this newsletter.

Perhaps the best feature of CHRIS 97 is its enhanced reporting capabilities. A recurring complaint and often experienced frustration with the old CHRIS was the limitations imposed on the user by the reporting system. FileMaker Pro enables data retrieval on virtually any field in the database in a user definable format. The preparation of simple columnar reports, labels, and form letters involves dragging and dropping fields into the layout the user designs. Most, if not all, FDLRS centers have one or more experienced and proficient FileMaker Pro users on site who can assist with the design of desired reports.

DBA Training in Clearwater, Florida.
From the top: Gene Milton, Angela Bottom, Rachael Spanjer, Susan Duffy, Norma Harmon, Martha Cromwell, Susana Cossio, Debbie Crowder, Dana Wilcox, Jan McLain, Anne Hymowitz, Olga Camacho, and Catherine Bonnell.

What's New in C

CHRIS 97 is bringing us changes in the way data are displayed and entered. Gone are the troublesome function keys. Now, data entry primarily uses mouse click functions, with selections from automatic pop-up lists and menus. The following are some of the changes that have been implemented.

Agencies and Contacts

Agencies and Contacts can be entered at the main site or the subsite, doing away with the need to wait for fixes when agencies change or new agencies need to be added. (See Preparation for Conversion for information on how to reduce duplicate names during conversion).

Demographic Information

In response to popular demand, the child's age in years and months will appear in the header on each screen. The date of birth will still be entered on the Demographics screen. The age will be recalculated based on the child's birth date and the current date each time the child's folder is opened or a report is run.

Names will be entered in the conventional "Last Name, First Name" format most often occurring in databases, enabling new features in sorting and creating merged documents. All demographic, significant adult, and address information is displayed on one screen.

There are three significant adult "folders" to store information on adults who have a legal relationship to the child. The relationship list will include: Mother, Father, Parents, Grandparent, Legal Guardian, Guardian Ad Litem, and Foster Parent. A new relationship designator, "Parents", has been added so both parent names can be entered in the "First Name" field if desired. A new field has been added for "Salutation" to be used as a form of address in a letter such as "Mr. and Mrs." Jones. A check box is included in each folder to designate whether the address is a mail address.

There is a "Other Significant Adult" folder where information can be stored on adults who have a "support" function with the child, such as: neighbor, friend, caseworker, physician, etc. This information will be entered as free text for a reference when needed.

Evaluation

The list of evaluations on the evaluation screen has been consolidated and revised to conform to evaluations required for determining eligibility for either Part H or Part B services. Where terminology was duplicative on evaluation types, the most commonly used term was selected for inclusion in the list with a help button added to delineate which terms are synonymous with the evaluation type listed. An example would be Medical which would include evaluations requiring the services of a medical professional such as ENT, Neurologist, Psychiatrist, Opthamologist, etc. Evaluation types are hard-coded to enhance consistency in reporting, so that delays and gaps in the service system can be more accurately identified and addressed.

Appointments

The Appointment list is all inclusive and will provide for separation of service professionals such as those consolidated under "medical" and will also contain additional appointment types, such as screening and staffing appointments.

ESE Staffing

In the ESE Staffing screen, Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) have been added as choices. There will be an additional code selection, "R", which stands for Related Services. These programs are not included in the list of exceptionalities because they are related services that require a primary exceptionality for eligibility. You will be able to utilize the "R" code for these. In addition, only one "P" code will be allowed for primary exceptionality. You may have as many "S" codes for secondary exceptionalities as you need. The changes incorporated in the ESE staffing screen conform to the DOE State Student Database and should assist with creating database linkages in the future.

Service Plan

There are some minor changes in the Service Plan screen which are intended to clarify the purpose of some of the fields. The "Services Authorized" field will contain Part H, Part B, Federal, or State programs with specific eligibility criteria. The purpose of this field has been to reflect the source of funding for the child's program and not the provider or location. The field "School/Provider" has been changed to "Service Location". This will allow for school names, program names, etc., to be selected from the Agency pull-down list. If you do not have schools listed in your Agency section, you may want to begin adding them. This also includes Part H service providers such as Easter Seal, ARC, UCP, and other infant service providers.

CHRIS 97 Intro Training in Clearwater, Florida. From the top: Bob Wolverton, Rachael Spanjer, Noreen Bourke, Leza Rollins, Ben Nelson, Anne Hymowitz, Margaret Hill, Ernestine Keith, Sherry Garnett, Olga Camacho, Debbie Tammaro, and Michelle Phillips.

Conversion to CHRIS 97

Training Schedule

Due to the many changes inspired by the training sessions in Clearwater, the on-site training and installation schedule will need to be changed. Hardware information sheets were distributed at the Clearwater training sessions. Conversion schedules and on-site visits will be dictated, to a degree, by the information received on those sheets. It is very important to call the Help Desk to confirm that you have at least the minimum hardware and operating system requirements to support conversion. If you are planning on purchasing new equipment, remember that computer hardware and software specifications are obsolete on the day after they are published. It is important to try to get the most powerful configuration possible within available funds. As a safeguard, fax your proposal for purchases to the Help Desk at (305) 326-7594 before purchasing. Remember that single user copies of FileMaker 3 are available at no charge from ATEN. If you have not ordered yours, do so now.

Data preparation

Agencies and Contacts: In order to allow entry of Agencies and Contacts in all locations, a unique code was generated for each. The unique code is a combination of the Agency name or Contact name and phone number. If there is no phone number, the name must be unique. If there are duplicate agencies in your current database make sure that the Agency Name, Phone Number and county are exactly the same in all records. During conversion, these records will be merged into one. If there are duplicate contact names for the same agency, check that the name and phone number are identical. If the contact is the same contact for two different agencies, the phone numbers should *not* be the same. Call the Help Desk if you need help with this process.

Reports

If you are currently using specific reports that you must be able to continue producing after conversion, or you have any other report questions, call Olga Camacho to talk reports, 1-(800)-231-5747.

CHRIS Shirts available to all CHRIS Users!

If you have been to the CHRIS 97 preview training, you saw the new CHRIS Polo shirts. We are currently offering them to all CHRIS users at a special price of $23.00. Please send in your orders by March 14, 1997 for this special group rate.

If you have any questions concerning your order, call: Cristina Rojas, 1-(800)-231-5747

Jerzees
100% Heavyweight combed cotton pique. Two button placket. Knit collar and cuffs. Hemmed bottom. CHRIS logo in six colors.

C·H·R·I·S

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