

**Division of Child and Family Services
Rural Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)
Monthly Meeting Recap
June 15, 2022, 11:00 am to Noon (Meeting held via Teams)**

In Attendance:

Rebecca Burt

Kristen de Shane

Melanie Jones-Bluford

Lori Nichols

Kevin Quint

Shelby Riley

Shana Rogers

Tawney Simpson

Megan Tingle

Jenna Willford

Who Else???

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kevin welcomed everyone. He mentioned that foster parents, CASA, and other community partners comprise about 20% of the QPI Committee's membership list. We want to encourage this an increase that number!

2. Recap of the May meeting

Kevin mentioned that the recap of the May meeting has been sent out and is available for review.

3. Announcements & quick stuff

a. **Caregiver Courier: The latest Caregiver Courier newsletter came out earlier this week. It has been sent to all foster homes and DCFS staff. Shelby is doing a great job in putting it all together.**

b. **Binti updates: Lori gave an update. With the exception of an occasional applicant that wants to complete the process the old way, all new foster care applicants are completing their licensing paperwork on Binti, which saves time in the process. She also reported that there is project that will cross reference Binti and UNITY. This will take up to two years. Updates will be shared with the group.**

4. Review of QPI National Conference

a. Themes

Kevin and others from Nevada attended the QPI National Conference at the end of May. The conference was entitled "Building the Movement Together" and it centered around the three QPI Principles. Fifteen people from the rural region attended. This included four foster parents and three CASAs. The rest were DCFS staff. Some of the presentation and workshops included sustaining the QPI movement, which emphasizes "excellent parenting" and "putting the child in the center" of all that we do, comfort calls, preserving meaningful relationships for the child in care, encouraging lifelong connections, transitions,

a good look at developmental research on youth and how that affects them in foster care, a foster parent panel, an aged out youth panel, and partnering with families and the community to help a child. The phrase, “putting the child at the center” of all we do was emphasized time and again.

Kristen, foster parent from Ely, shared some of what she learned, as well as her observations of the conference. She was impressed with the need to help children in care to understand why they are in a home and if they are leaving, to explain why they are leaving. She emphasized the need to do all of this in an age appropriate way. Personally, she looks for books and other materials to read and share with the children in her home to help them understand their circumstances.

Shana said that she thought the conference was a great place for people to come together and share. She found the information to be very valuable. One concept that she likes is “the community wrapping around the child.” She also liked the idea of birth fathers and birth families in general being more involved. Changing our language to be less stigmatizing is a strong point in QPI.

Tawney really liked the aged out youth panel on the last day and found it to be inspirational.

- b. Based on the conference and what you know about QPI, how do you “QPI?” Kevin asked, “What does it mean to ‘do QPI?’” Lori said that it’s doing the little thing we do, even when not in a crisis. It’s about stopping what you’re doing and getting something done for the person that needs it. It’s being responsive and making a concerted effort to “get it done.” QPI is creating better relationships between all of us.

Tawney said that QPI “is all about relationships.” She said that QPI encourages foster parents to have a relationship with the birth parents.

Kristen said that each child is different and with specific needs. She is “big on research” and reads and learns evidence based parenting practices. She wants to understand and explore what each child needs in their stage in life. She works on communicating better. She pays attention to the child’s moods and needs. QPI has helped her to understand cues and triggers.

Kevin ended this discussion by saying, “As a Committee, we are carrying the torch for the QPI movement in DCFS. If we begin to do these things and if we continue doing the good things we are doing, this can and will become a movement in DCFS that will gain momentum.”

5. Discussion on who will attend the QPI Champions meeting in Reno in September Kevin reviewed the Champions concept. It is a QPI Program designed to train advocates in QPI values, theory, and techniques with the goal of helping those advocates to help us build a strong QPI awareness and application of QPI principles

in the Division. As was announced at the May meeting, we have been invited to a meeting in Reno of QPI Champions from across the nation to see how it works and then use that information to decide if we want to be part of it. The meeting is on September 22-23. We have two slots. Rose, Shelby, and Jenna have volunteered to attend and bring the information back to us. We only have two slots so at some point, a decision will have to be made.

Lori expressed support for us attending so that we can know more about Champions and can make a decision about whether to pursue it for the Rural Region. She asked if we could have more than two slots. Kevin didn't think we could but will ask.

6. Discussion on developing a working group to define and refine goals for the group **It was suggested that instead of developing and refining goals in this meeting that a working group would be formed to do that. Lori, Kevin, Shana, Tawney, and Rebecca volunteered. They will begin work on this before the next meeting.**
7. Rural QPI Projects: How do we begin/continue work on these? What can we add or modify based on what was emphasized and learned at the QPI National Conference? **Kevin referred to the list of projects that are in this meeting's handouts. It was asked, "What would you like to focus on?" Kristen said that she'd like to see a focus on foster parent support groups and that she'd like to help with that. She sees the value in a foster family helping another and answering questions.**

In that vein, Lori mentioned the Parents Supporting Parents (PSP) in Washoe County. She agrees that this kind of an effort or program would fill a very large need. Kristen talked about developing a list of foster parents in which foster parents could meet other foster parents.

Melanie suggested developing a Q&A or FAQ for foster parents.

Kevin reminded everyone of the Handbooks for foster parents, for relative and fictive kin, and for caseworkers. Kevin asked for volunteers to do this. Kristen volunteered. Kevin will send them to her via email.

8. Set next meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for July 20th at 11:00 am. Kevin will get the agenda and this meeting's recap well before that time.
9. Adjourn

"QPI is based on the belief that every child needs to grow up in a caring family and that the primary goal of foster care must be to ensure that children and youth in the system receive excellent parenting every single day through committed, developmentally informed relationships with the adults caring for them. This need for relationships cannot be put on hold while a family recovers from a crisis or until an adoption can be finalized."– *From Principles Behind QPI*