

**Rural Region Quality Parenting Initiative Committee (QPI)
Monthly Meeting Recap
August 10, 2022, 11:00 am to Noon (Meeting held via Teams)**

In Attendance:

**Brittney Best
Madelyn Brown
Rebecca Burt
Faye Cavender
Karlo Delgado
Ashley Hall
Rose Jaime
Bobbette Jamison-Smith
Melanie Jones-Bluford
Kelly McKiddie
Lori Nichols
Jhoanna Presswood
Kevin Quint
Shana Rogers
Cindy Stephenson**

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kevin welcomed everyone. Karla Delgado, as Social Services Chief from the Division, attended the meeting to see how to best communicate with our families or youth in care. She has a lot of things coming up that she'll want to share with our licensees and with the news. Karla's objective is to see if QPI would be the best way to get the information out or an additional way to get the information out to our families.

Kevin shared that QPI is not a program, it's a philosophy. QPI is a relationship-based approach to foster care based on the concept that every child needs child-centered parenting every day. QPI works to reform the child welfare practice and policy and to meet that goal by listening and partnering with those directly impacted.

2. Recap of the July meeting

The recap of the July meeting was attached to the invite.

3. Announcements & quick stuff

a. Caregiver Courier

The Caregiver Courier is based on the QPI banner theme every month. The August newsletter was "It Takes a Village" and provided an array of services and resources for caregivers. Shelby featured resources in northern Nevada, new trainings on the QPI website, as well as the training that Kelly and Stacy are offering on "Attachment Issues," which is coming up at the end of this month.

b. Binti updates

This is the first time we had Binti with the people who just finished training. They were already able to enter their information and inquiry, and become familiar with the program. Many have completed half the paperwork before they even get to the training. Shelly can pull forms from Binti and does local laws, CANS and references. This relates to QPI by making it easier for families get access to the paperwork without having to wait for us to mail it out. This speeds the process up and lets people go at their own pace. Binti gives them the opportunity to explore the licensing process and everything it entails when they're filling out the paperwork.

The fourth Pre-Service Training just concluded, and we started off with 33 families from 10 counties and 14 towns. Three families dropped out for personal reasons and a number of families didn't show up. We have about 22 families left standing, but with attrition some won't finish the process. Kevin is anticipating that 15-17 families will eventually be assigned to have their home study completed.

c. QPI Champions meeting

There will be a meeting held in Reno on September 22nd and 23rd (a day and a half). Rose and Shelby will be our representatives there. They will bring back the information so we can see if it's something we should pursue. This will give us an opportunity to build the infrastructure to build QPI into all that we do in the Division.

d. Other

Please take a look at the emails you receive with QPI trainings as they can be very useful for yourself and the families you work with. You can visit the QPI Nevada website to see what films are available.

4. How have you QPI'd in the last month?

Several people shared how they and/or the Division used QPI principles during in the last month:

Kelly McKiddie (Fallon) – Lori, Shelby and Shana put on a Foster Parent Appreciation Event in Carson City. When we support the parents, it helps them support the kids by showing them they're important and valued.

Faye Cavender (Ely) - The Division is being supportive when the foster parents call and are getting called back. We keep them informed and touch base of how things are going with the kids and just be an ear for them and be a support. We can't forget the foster parents are on the front line with these kids daily. We see them maybe once a month, but the foster parents are the ones having to deal with the child's tears when they have to go home after a visit, or behaviors after visits, or when they're upset after a court hearing.

Rose Jaime (Carson City) – She learned from the QPI National Conference in May of this year of the importance of including the parent and building a relationship between parent and foster parent. During a break-out room they had good

discussion about how a mother had her kiddos removed and the foster mom, instead of judging the situation, was very accommodating to this mom in visits and communication. She gave an example of how the mom was going to miss a visit and the mom asked the foster parent if she could go to her son's baseball game. The foster parent said yes, so they had the visit there. The mom appreciated having normalcy and being treated with respect. Rose implements QPI in her adoption work as she's a huge advocate for consents for adoption. She likes the parent to know who is adopting their children. She likes for them to be able to build a relationship because ultimately once we are done with our end of the paperwork, it's the parent and the adoptive parent for the rest of the child's life. She likes to provide that sense of transparency since it provides the parent comfort knowing who is adopting their children.

5. Review priority goals for the group and what strategies/projects

Goal 1: Decrease trauma and disruptions through improved transitional planning.

Goal 2: Improved relationships between birth parents and foster parents through co-parenting.

What can we do to reach these goals?

Ideas and discussion on Goal 1: Decrease trauma and disruptions through improved transitional planning:

Veronica - On the recruitment side, if they go to HART with a couple families, Mandy and Tracy get involved and do transition planning. But if they only have one family that is identified as a match then they don't go to HART. So, they've been reaching out to Tracy and Mandy to get them involved to still do that transitional planning with IFS. This is something that seemed to be falling through the cracks since it was implemented through HART.

Rose – She has a lot of contact with licensing since they do the home studies. She likes to get the licensing workers overall thoughts and perspectives to help her with the placement.

Kevin – He mentioned transition planning is not universal across the Rurals. Is there a way we can make it more universal? Could it be lack of staffing?

Kelly – She doesn't have a solution but it's stressful when you try to encourage transition planning and for whatever reason, it doesn't occur. There's even been times after a transition where she tried to keep the child or children in contact with the previous foster care provider and that has been difficult to execute. Maybe there's information or training we can supply to workers and foster parents that talks about the value of maintaining relationships, even when they're no longer going to keep the children.

Melanie – She thinks it should be “child first”. What does the child want and how do we allow the child to choose what their transition plan is? Or what's most

important to them? Sometimes we've created obstacles, or we have our own opinions how things should go, but it's not really thinking what the child wants or what's in the best interest of the child. An example is having kids in homes for years and we move them right before Christmas when Christmas was planned with this family, and gifts were given. Sometimes the time is not taken to plan a transition thoughtfully and slowly.

Bobbette – She doesn't like when people say, "kids will adjust". Sometimes they don't, they're hurt and have feelings.

Kevin – He thought educating staff about the importance of transition is a good idea. Kids aren't always resilient; they still have damage they're dealing with. Maybe we could have new trainings about transitions and how that should work. If you spend time on transitions, it will save time later.

Karla – She stated there is a Transition policy in DCFS Policies and Procedures.

It was mentioned that from the Permanency and Assessment perspective we should begin with Comfort Calls, but also facilitate parent visits both with our cases, and also with intra-state ICPC. There's not much push from Clark County for visits so she was able to get the parents to implement visits within the first week of the child being placed up here. It doesn't seem like an important thing when you look at an Assessment or Permanency workers priority list, so sometimes this stuff gets pushed to the back burner, and getting visits to happen as soon as possible doesn't necessarily happen.

Kevin – If we decide to pursue Ice Breakers and Comfort Calls, we should also be talking about trainings for staff and parents. We do talk to foster parents in Pre-Service Training about this but how do we keep it going? How do we make it part of something we do with the staff turnover? We could have on-going training and re-training to create that norm.

It was mentioned that when we know a kid is transitioning, make sure the families are having phone calls and they're connecting with their new home. Give the new foster home the opportunity to ask the existing foster parent questions about the kids and what their needs are.

Cindy – She has a child that was put in her home and there was no transition because of how quickly everything happened with this little guy. But he doesn't want to have contact with the previous foster parent, so in her case she's not going to force him. It's important to give the kids a choice

Ideas and discussion on Goal 2: Improved relationships between birth parents and foster parents through co-parenting:

One person said that when we have comfort calls and ice breakers, it comes down to training. The foster parent training she did in Arizona had videos of successful reunifications, getting foster parents to understand the importance of reunification, and showing good examples of parenting skills.

Bobette – She worked in West Virginia with foster parent moms. A lot of foster parent mothers don't realize that they're being judgmental and may make remarks around the kids. They don't mean to do it, but it's the maternal instinct to protect the child. She started off role playing with them in training.

One person suggested team building exercises that could be implemented with foster parents and bio parents that have a hard time seeing eye to eye with birth parents

6. Rural QPI Projects – **no discussion**
 - a. Parent Support Group
 - b. Comfort Calls
 - c. Development of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
 - d. Role Cards
 - e. Other
7. Set next meeting
September 21, 2022

Karla – She liked the collaboration and ideas shared. She'd like us to keep her on the invites to attend, when possible, to share events and activities going on. The Independent Living Youth Advisory Board has started up again and is being conducted by the Children's Advocacy Alliance. The first meeting is August 12th in Reno at 1:00 and is open to anyone who has any previous foster care experiences anywhere in the nation. If you have an event happening in your area that you want to share on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, let Karla know at least a week before to get it approved. The Director's Office likes more images, less words on flyers because they have to create alternative text for social media posts that has to be approved through Director's office. The Director's Office is working on creating something to share with the program staff so they're aware of what the requirements are.

8. Adjourn
Meeting adjourned at noon. Next meeting will be on September 21st at 11:00 am.

(NOTE: The September 21st meeting was subsequently cancelled and the next QPI Committee meeting will be on October 19th at 11:00 am)

QPI Principle 3: The individuals most affected by policies and practices are in the best position to design and implement change so that systems ensure excellent parenting and meaningful relationships for children who enter their care.