

Rural Region Quality Parenting Initiative Committee (QPI) Meeting Minutes - November 16, 2022; 11 am to noon

In Attendance:

Faye Cavender	Melanie McCormick	Warren Melhorn
Ty Sullivan	Lori Nichols	Kelly McKiddie
Kevin Quint	Kyle Crutcher	Bobbie Munoz
Shelly Roering	Tawney Simpson	Betsey Crumrine
Jessica Barlow	Lauren Karp	Megan Tingle
Veronica Hagen	Shelby Riley	Melanie Jones-Bluford
Shana Rogers	Ashley Hall	Cynthia Stephenson

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Recap of the October meeting - *Please see the minutes that were attached with your email invite.*
3. Announcements & quick stuff
 - a. Caregiver Courier – *Lori Nichols sent the Caregiver Courier out for October, please let her know if you haven't received it.*
 - b. Binti and foster care licensing updates – *We have a few homes that will be ready to be licensed in the next few months, two in Pahrump (possibly three), one in Ely, one in Winnemucca, one in Silver Springs, two in Fallon, and the rest are ICPC, Relative and Fictive Kin. The next Pre-Service Foster Parent Training will start on January 21st. We should be having our new District 3 worker starting in December, and she will cover the Fallon and Lyon County areas. We also have two contractors, Warren Melhorn in Pahrump, and Kyle Crutcher in Carson office.*
 - c. Foster Parent Handbook – *This handbook was developed by Laurie Jackson and has been distributed to current foster parents. If you would like a copy, either physical or electronic, please let Kevin know.*
 - d. QPI Webinar on November 21st at 11:00 am – *Please send Kevin an email if you'd like an invitation to this Webinar.*
 - e. See the article, "Leadership Lessons: Strong Families" – *Attached with your email invite.*
 - f. See the article, "Celebrating the Holidays with Children You Foster" – *Attached with your email invite.*
- *Kevin had a meeting yesterday with the University of Southern Florida. They have the Just In Time Website, which is also called the QPI website, and has all of our training films on there. There's also a section for Rural Nevada, Clark County, and Washoe County. They will be moving to a different platform, which will not allow people living outside Nevada to access the website. This*

could cause an issue if you live in Nevada, but your IP address is in Utah for example. If you have any difficulty accessing this website or anything on it, please let Kevin know.

4. What are some ways that you helped fulfill the QPI ethic of “Every child deserves excellent parenting every day?” What can you do after this meeting today to work toward the goal of helping a child experience excellent parenting?
 - ✓ ***Shelby*** – *She had an opportunity last week to present in front of a Social Work 101 class at the University about being a child welfare worker and foster care recruiter. She explained the QPI values, importance of co-parenting, and described how our program is focused on reunification, not adoption. Many students weren’t familiar with the idea that the longer a child remains in foster care, the more damage is done to them. She received questions about why we support children going back to their parents in certain situations. She talked about how every family member should have the opportunity to make changes in their lives, so they can be available for their children.*
 - ✓ ***Warren*** – *He’s working on a home study and feels the process of licensing quality foster parents for the children is part of doing QPI.*
 - ✓ ***Kelly*** – *She takes one QPI article and saves it, then sends it in a group email to 3 or 4 foster parents, encouraging them to read and find more ways to help their kids.*
 - ✓ ***Ty*** – *He feels there are sometimes barriers between the communication levels of foster parents and birth parents that we need to bridge. We need to keep them child focused, and child centered to work toward reunification. We need to give them positive reinforcement, not guilt and reinforce to the birth parents this isn’t a lifelong thing.*

Think about the second part of the question above, talk to people in your homes or at work, and have some chats about helping a child experience excellent parenting.

5. Foster Home Retention: Discussion on the dwindling number of homes, how to recruit, and how to retain the ones we have
 - a. How can we “QPI” this? – How can we use QPI to retain homes? In the rural region we’ve lost a lot of homes, along with Clark, Washoe and nationwide
 - ✓ ***Meagan Tingle*** – *She had a discussion in a licensing work group about the viewpoint of customer service for our foster parents. Informing foster parents of what we can provide them would be a great way to retain people. Realize that the foster parents don’t necessarily work for the agency and find a way we can partner with them, such as returning phone calls, listening to what they may have problems with, and letting them vent. We need to work with a customer service aspect and treat people like people.*

- ✓ **Bobbie Munoz** – *With being a new foster parent and having trials and questions, the guidance she's received has been from other foster parents, as social workers and the team have been pretty absent. She feels like she's going to be held accountable to standards and information that she doesn't know. It feels like it's assumed you know since you went through a training. Foster parents can feel "beat up on" because they didn't rise to the standards, and it can be very disheartening and discouraging.*
- ✓ **Shelby** – *She mentioned foster parents aren't expected to be experts after going through the training. They'll go through a lot of tough situations and it's important to normalize, even empower and support people that are brave enough and willing to go through those tough moments for our children.*
- ✓ **Kevin** – *Washoe has program called Parents supporting Parents, they have a small stipend for foster parents that want to help.*
- ✓ **Betsey** – *After one training you can't be expected to be an expert on the number of topics discussed to be a foster parent. We have a lot of new staff who are learning their new jobs and don't necessarily know about licensing and foster parents. If you have reached out to a case worker and haven't received a response in 24 or 72 hours, call their supervisor. You won't be getting the case worker in trouble, sometimes the worker will be busy or in the field for 2-3 days in a row.*
- ✓ **Melanie McCormick** – *Many times CASA is asked to have a panel member at the Pre-Service Training to speak to upcoming new foster parents. It's been a wonderful opportunity for CASA to connect with foster parents and let them know of organizations that can support them, such as Kid's Closet. She suggested possibly having a panel over TEAMS to have a discussion with newly licensed foster parents and different stakeholders. That would give the foster parents an opportunity to speak with them and get a better understanding of who all the players are and what's expected of the foster parent regarding the child's attorney, public defender, or CASA. This would also give the foster parent the opportunity to establish some of those relationships*
- ✓ **Kelly** – *Foster parents state that having the connection with other foster parents was important to them. They're asked at the Pre-Service training if they want to share their phone number with others once they become licensed. Kelly suggested we schedule a TEAMS meeting once a quarter that's just for foster parents and use those meetings to invite the panel of other stakeholders Melanie was referring to.*
- ✓ **Ty** – *The placement letter has the case worker and their supervisor's name and phone number listed on it. Let the foster parents know it's ok to contact the supervisor, since the worker may be busy. And let them know*

this won't make the case worker mad, since they want the foster parent to feel comfortable with getting the information they need to be good placement providers.

- ✓ *Kevin – Developing a quarterly foster parent meeting is doing QPI since it would allow foster parents to be informed, involved, and communicated with, and that's for the benefit of the child. Kevin would like to suggest that we develop the quarterly foster parent meetings and make it a project of this committee. Kelly and Shelby will be putting this together some type of survey to get out to the committee to see what this would look like and what we could do to make it the most beneficial. If anyone else wants to volunteer, please let Kevin know and we can put something together for our next meeting.*

6. Comfort Calls and Ice Breakers (*Goes under the goal: "Improved relationships between birth parents and foster parents through co-parenting"*)
 - a. What are they? *Please see attachments sent with the agenda.*
 - b. The Quality Assurance Unit is training workers on doing these – *The QA team is putting together trainings on comfort calls and ice breakers for all the staff groups.*
 - c. How do we help this to become something the Division does ongoing?
 - ✓ *When the case workers do comfort calls and ice breakers, they case note in UNITY. There could be reminders at staff meetings about these, so they're not forgotten about, especially since we have a lot of new workers.*
 - ✓ *Create a subcommittee of 4-5 people that want to get together and help with this process of keeping these going.*
 - ✓ *QA will make their presentation to us at the next meeting so we can see what staff are doing.*
 - ✓ *Find a way to keep this going, as opposed to doing it for a month or two, then it is forgotten about.*
 - ✓ *The Comfort Calls attachment shows that calls are done within 12 hours post removal by the case worker and foster parent to the birth parent and are the first step in establishing a positive co-parenting relationship between the foster parent and birth parents.*
 - ✓ *The Ice Breaker attachment states it's a facilitated child-focused meeting held shortly after a child is placed in out of home care, or after a child makes a placement change. The idea is to connect when it's appropriate and safe with the birth parent, since the foster parent doesn't know what the child's schedule is, what the child likes to eat, allergies and medications, etc.*
 - ✓ *Discussion of getting a QPI Facebook page, Kevin, Shelby and Ty are looking into this.*
7. Transition Planning (*Goes under the goal: "Decrease trauma and disruptions through improved transition planning"*) **This was not discussed**

8. Update on the Champions Program and moving forward – *This program is more of a deeper dive into QPI. We're hoping to get funding from the state to pay for 2-4 people who are interested in participating. The training is for 6 months, but only about 5 hours a month, for a total of 30 hours. Participants could be foster parents, birth parents, community members, and staff. This allows people to get involved who really want to champion QPI in the division and communities we work in. They could then come back to the committee and bring strategies from the training to help this QPI committee go further. Kevin is waiting to hear back from QPI for more details before presenting to this fiscal to try to get the funding. Please let Kevin know if you'd like a copy of six- month curriculum or if you have any questions or suggestions.*

Kevin met with Carol Shauffer, who's an attorney with the Youth Law Center and a co-founder of the QPI movement. She is based in San Francisco. She will present at one of our meetings about Champions and her thinking about QPI and how it works.

9. Who else should we involve in this committee? **This was not discussed**
10. Set next meeting – **December 14. Kevin will sent out the minutes, agenda, and meeting announcement the week before**
11. Adjourn