

Rural Region Quality Parenting Initiative Committee (QPI)
Monthly Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2023; 11:00 am to Noon (Meeting held via Teams)

1. Welcome and Introductions
Ashley Smith, Bobbette Jamison-Smith, Brittany Best, Chelsea Heath, Jessica Carstens, Kevin Quint, Kyle Crutcher, Lauren Karp, Lori Nichols, Meagan Tingle, Mia Kuzens, Rebeca Stoffel, Shana Rogers, Shelby Riley, Shelly Roering, Sierra Richey, Tawney Simpson, Veronica Hagen, Warren Melhorn
2. Recap of the April meeting
The meeting minutes from April were provided with the meeting invitation.
3. Announcements & quick stuff
 - a. A new email invite for this meeting will be sent out for June and going forward **Chelsea- the new public information officer and public information officer for the Systems Advocate. Handles the constituent complaints and concerns. Sierra is the administrative assistant.**
 - b. Caregiver Courier
Newsletter- sent out by Shelby- please let her know if you have anything you want to add.
 - c. Foster care licensing updates and the next Pre-Service Training
Lori- a few homes in the que to be completed. A few homes have been denied. It is painful to deny homes. We need our foster parents to be treated with kid gloves. Our families need help, especially when dealing with children with trauma. Treat our foster parents with respect and how we would want to be treated. Binti is moving along nicely. Our training is coming up.
Kevin- 19 families, 33 people have signed up for the training coming up: July-August. 6th training since we have started. A quarter finish everything from when they start. None from Elko and none from Fallon.
 - d. QPI May Newsletter
Kevin shared the QPI monthly newsletter dated May 9th
4. Review QPI National Conference: People who attended the conference on May 16-18 will share
Some of those that attended shared:
Ashley Smith- be culturally aware and the exposure to their culture. Know how much exposure they have had to their culture and don't always assume. For example, a culturally Spanish child that was placed in a Spanish speaking home but did not speak Spanish.
Rebeca Stoffel- They may not be in touch with their culture. They might not have those traditions, they may not relate, so touch base with the children, what do they

want to learn to know what is best for the child. Know your traditions. Maintaining your culture connections. Sometimes when we rule people out as placement options, we may be ruling them out from a cultural connection. Can you drive them to soccer? Can you take to an event? Can you keep connection? Can you somehow expose the child(ren) to keep the culture alive?

Lori Nichols- The foster family and the case worker will have the decision and the judgement to make the best choice for the child. The baseline for normalcy. They're a parent like any other parent!

Brittany Best- All of the things that they associated with culture we can bring it into our homes. They may have unrealistic expectations of how we place our children, but we can try our best to create the best situation for our children, for example, food. Try to create a traditional connection between the child and placement and their original home with food. The placement will not be exactly like their original home, but we can try.

Kevin- What does the child need personality wise? Developing post licensing trainings, FP working with the kid(s) that aren't just like their family.

Lauren Karp- LGBTQ goes further than culture. We also have to look at if the home will be supporting the child's lifestyle and sexual orientation, not just culture. Sexual orientation, identity, and what matters to them because it's all related, all that matters to kids regardless to who they are.

Shelby Riley- I really love the use of lifestyle. A child can be raised eating processed foods or sleeping with the TV on. We should be looking at how to ease the transition to the placement. Not all parenting styles are neglectful just because it is different than yours.

Sunshine Perry- It is okay to ask those questions. It opens up the door for more opportunities for the child.

Kevin- The speaker talked about colonialism and challenged us to think about our mind set: How can I think differently, how can I do things differently? Partnering with the parents, not just teaching them. Sometimes the system "colonizes" families by imposing our values on families. There was a powerful youth panel. Some of their messages included, I'm not just a case number," " I didn't have anyone teach me about my race and culture." A question came up from one of the speakers, "How do we create a system within child welfare for equity for families?" Another point was that race labels can be misleading and offensive.

Bobbette- last label black people received was African American. Born in Pennsylvania. Not Africa. There are no Italian Americans. Ancestors from Africa but not self. Ask the black person their preference; Bobbette resents the label.

5. QPI Themed Conversation and Sharing: What are some ways that we can help foster children remain or to become connected to their culture, kin, and community?

Shelby Riley- liked what Rebeca said earlier. Bridging the connection if there is no connection. Asking questions. (Example: potential tribal connection in child so you take them to tribal events, look for historical connection, ask elders, etc.) Ask during Ice Breakers with parents- traditions, holidays, etc. Don't be the expert in the room. Some people need help with things (hair care for examples). There is a learning curve for FP. FP can always ask parents for tips or help with specific cultural pointers.

Rebeca Stoffel- ask the children and the parents. What do you want to know? And if they don't know, what do you want to learn, how can I help? Use the case worker. Food is different in the homes. A typical diet. Have the parent bring the food for a visit. Share a recipe. Try to keep the people or things that they know in their lives as much as possible so that they don't lose that connection. Do NOT be shy about asking questions.

Kevin: The term "white fragility" was brought up. Overall, this is a concept in which a passive or unaware perspective can perpetuate racism or bias.

6. Update on Comfort Calls and Ice Breakers: Liz Stetson and Dana Gray from the Quality Assurance Unit

- a. **Kevin talked with Liz and they are not ready to address the group yet until they can get more data. They will be on the agenda again sometime in the future.**
- b. What else can our group do to support this effort?

Rebeca Stoffel- Permanency doesn't really have many chances for that. Not as many opportunities. Thinks that it should be done at removal when parents are afraid where the child is going to be. Mom &/or dad are in the picture at this point. If on call, it is on the list. From placement to placement, yes we do establish a connection, but it is not necessarily called a Comfort Call.

Shelby Riley- a lot of our homes are willing to let the Birth Parents call.

Kevin- He has heard that sometimes Family Support Workers make the comfort calls.

Shelby-The Comfort Calls and Ice Breakers help monitor how the relationship between birth and foster parent is doing.

7. Update on discussion on engaging birth parents-Melanie McCormick, Carson City CASA Director

Melanie could not be here. Table for now.

8. Workgroup updates

- a. Funding Workgroup: **Tabled for now**
- b. QPI Facebook Page Subcommittee report: **Shelby discussed the FB page and gave a brief demonstration. The FB page is a virtual hub for any news, information,**

and collaboration. Please contact Shelby for other regions besides Carson City so that she can add it to the Facebook page. This includes things to highlight, the Elko appreciation dinner, National things going on, a newsletter. We would like to make it more interactive, with 1 question per month. The more momentum we can get from this group, the more it will go on its own. Another format to get news. Please comment thoughts for people not here in meeting. Try to expand to help our community. FP can ask questions about programs, therapists, extra resources, extra supplies, pick-ups, etc. There are 26 members so far, so please join!

c. Caregiver Corner Subcommittee report: Shelby and Kelly McKiddie continue to hold these on-line gatherings that are intended to be a support to foster parents.

9. Transition Planning (*QPI Committee goal: "Decrease trauma and disruptions through improved transition planning"*)

a. Review comments from the last meeting on transition planning

b. What can we do to plan and make healthy, positive transitions?

The importance of carefully planned transitions was discussed. This group can help create more of a culture that puts the child first and in the center through consistent and well planned transition work. Kevin shared the document on transitions that the QPI Committee developed in 2017-2018. This is a good template for the process.

Rebeca has a kid that has to move placement after school. She wasn't planning on looking at the vacancy list since it would change by then but talked to other staff and realized that one home just had an opening, so made contact and met at the park. There was an instant connection, through jujitsu and other interests. The child spends every weekend there, spending the week with the current placement. On the weekends, the child gets to know the FP and other kids in the home. These things matter! If the stars align, take the step, have an impact, it makes the transition as easy and comfortable for the child.

This topic will be continued at the next Rural Region QPI Committee meeting.

10. Set next meeting

June 21st at 11:00 am