

**Rural Region Quality Parenting Initiative Committee (QPI)  
Monthly Meeting Recap  
August 16, 2023; 11:00 am to Noon (Meeting held via Teams)**

**In attendance:**

<b>Tim Baran</b>	<b>Kelly McKiddie</b>	<b>Shelby Riley</b>
<b>Rebecca Burt</b>	<b>Warren Melhorn</b>	<b>Kylie Riske</b>
<b>Betsey Crumrine</b>	<b>Kandee Mortenson</b>	<b>Shana Rogers</b>
<b>Kyle Crutcher</b>	<b>Lori Nichols</b>	<b>Kimberly Schmeling</b>
<b>Veronica Hagen</b>	<b>Lisa Olson</b>	<b>Tawney Simpson</b>
<b>Bristol Hantzsche</b>	<b>Dorothy Pomin</b>	<b>Ashley Smith</b>
<b>Brandy Holbrook</b>	<b>Jhoanna Presswood</b>	<b>Rebecca Stoffel</b>
<b>Bobbette Jamison-Smith</b>	<b>Kevin Quint</b>	

1. Welcome and Introductions: Kevin welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. Recap of the July meeting: The recap of the July meeting was sent out prior to today's meeting
3. Quick review and discussion on what the Rural Region QPI Committee has been doing over the last 15 months: Kevin reviewed some of the accomplishments of this group in since June of 2022. Some of these include
  - Setting goals related to decreasing trauma and disruptions and improving relationships between birth parents and foster parents
  - Establishing a QPI Facebook page
  - Starting and continuing a virtual foster parent support group called "Caregiver Corner"
  - Starting a conversation about building bridges with birth parents
  - In partnership with the DCFS Quality Assurance Unit, promoting Comfort Calls and Ice Breakers
  - Starting a conversation on Transition Planning for youth in care
  - Becoming involved in the QPI Champions program

Kevin encouraged everyone to think about the following, "If you could only pick one of these to focus on, what would it be?"

4. Announcements & quick stuff
  - a. Caregiver Courier: **Shelby R. sent out the most recent version in July. She asked if everyone had received their copy through Constant Contact (not working as well as we had hoped it would).**
  - b. Foster care licensing updates and the Pre-Service Training: **Lori N. discussed the families in the rural region getting their homework completed so licensing can start on the home inspections and interviews for licensing. She also talked about the different rural areas that we have families in process for licensure, even prior to completing the training.**
  - c. New QPI brochure is needed: **Shelby, Lori, and Kevin will start designing a new Rural Region QPI brochure! More to be revealed.**

- d. QPI Website: August is “*Back to School Month:*” Resources are on the [www.qpinevada.org](http://www.qpinevada.org) website
  - e. Update on DCFS becoming a Champions site: **Kevin is talking with his supervisor and management to see if money can be authorized in order for DCFS to become a QPI Champions site. Becoming a Champions site will provide greater access to QPI materials, expertise, trainings, and other QPI states. This will enable us to bring QPI to the Rural Region, which will benefit our children and the families that are helping them.**
5. QPI Themed Conversation and Sharing: What are some of the reasons that foster homes relinquish their license? What can be done to retain foster homes? (What can Licensing do? Caseworkers? Managers? Foster parents?)
- **Lori N. – Licensing is trying to communicate better with families to be more streamlined in their processes so families don’t feel so isolated for long periods of time.**
  - **Rebeca S. – families “bite off more than they can chew” and get burned out fast when agency is enlisting their help + some.**
  - **Shelby – families want to “prove themselves” to the agency and if they turn down placements, they let the agency down; foster parents feel guilt. Lack of respite resources; inviting new caregivers to the Caregiver Corner to start forging support and camaraderie with other experienced and not-so-experienced families; respite-only caregivers not always available for when they are needed.**
  - **Kevin – families often want to adopt so how do we get applicants to understand the real need for foster families as opposed to adoption-only?**
6. Brief description of current efforts to retain foster homes.
- a. Retention planning efforts: **Dorothy Pomin is retired from DCFS and is back as a contractor to put together a plan to identify why foster homes become licensed, why they stay, and why they go. Based on that data, a foster home retention plan and project will be launched in certain parts of rural Nevada with the goal of increasing foster home retention.**
    - **Dorothy Pomin wants to know how her efforts can be best utilized to get their engagement with the agency. If there are issues that come up, perhaps she could help with those. The rural region is really big and she is just one person, but she is open to ideas to identify what the issues are to address them to retain foster homes. She would like to create a survey to get feedback from foster parents. She feels that she knows both sides of fostering and working for DCFS. Knowing that perspective will help her to relate to both sides which will help her engage with both the agency and foster parents!**
    - **Bobbette would like to know what we can do as an agency to support foster parents.**
    - **Kevin said this is a ‘whole-system issue’ regarding a lot of different areas that need to be looked at.**
  - b. First Placement Program is another effort to retain homes. **Advanced Foster Care (AFC) Coaches are assigned to newly licensed homes and go to the home four up to six weeks to coach and teach skills to these new homes that will help them**

address common behaviors that children have such as emotional dysregulation, attachment, aggression, etc.

7. Transition Planning (QPI Committee goal: “Decrease trauma and disruptions through improved transition planning”)
  - a. Review and comment on the Transition Document that was developed in 2017.
    - **Kevin** briefly reviewed the Transition Planning for Child and Caregivers Wellbeing document and discussed the benefits of proper transitions, elements needed to improve transitions, and the possible visit progression schedule. How do we complete transitions better? How do we find ways to encourage each other to use better transitions? Policies are long and drawn out so how do we explain these to staff, foster parents, and even older children?
    - **Lori N.:** Transitions are hard with everything else that caseworkers have to do.
    - **Kimberly S.:** Likes the document and feels that it is doable for caseworkers, even though it may not be perfect – it’s doable. *If it can minimally happen, anything is better than nothing.* If all we can do is give them information about the new placement, even pictures of the outside of the new house, pets, other kids, it’s better than no information given at all.
    - **Dorothy P.:** She remembers the document during her time as a staff member with DCFS.
    - **Kelly M.:** She wonders about transitions of children from foster home to foster home. Sometimes the foster parents don’t even know about the moves before they happen.
    - **Betsey C.:** We have a lot of policies, including a Transition Policy that has been distributed during RMT, so these policies need to also go out to the foster parents – they can be the ones to suggest transition pieces like pictures, talk about it, keep it moving in the agency. Betsey also discussed a child that was finally adopted – their relative became a DCFS employee, interviewed the child when they were a bit older, and the thing she said was the worst thing about being in care *was being taken to a home that she knew absolutely nothing about.* The worker wouldn’t talk to her on the drive to the other home, complete silence; child didn’t know anything about where she was going. Ultimately, it was a terrible experience!
    - **Shelby:** She talked about the small things that can be done such as walking kids through the house to show them around the home helps to set the tone from the very beginning of the transfer.
    - **Bobbette:** Said that she wants the Transition Policy to be sent to staff; she feels that “tips and hints” would help staff to understand the policy better.
8. Discussion on Comfort Calls and Ice Breakers (QPI Committee goal: “Improve relationships between birth parents and foster parents through co-parenting”)
  - a. Comfort Calls with incarcerated parents: **We’ve reached out to QPI National on this**

