

QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE - MINNESOTA

Developed by:

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QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE

- The Quality Parenting Initiative, a strategy of the Youth Law Center, is an approach to strengthening foster care, refocusing on excellent parenting for all children in the child welfare system.
- Launched in 2008 in Florida and has been implemented in over 70 jurisdictions in 10 states (California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin).
- When QPI is successful, caregivers have a voice.

QPI – FIVE CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Excellent parenting is the most important service we can provide to children and youth in care. Children need families, not beds;
2. Child development and trauma research indicates that children need constant, consistent, effective parenting to grow and reach their full potential;
3. Each community must define excellent parenting for itself;
4. Policy and practice must be changed to align with that definition; and;
5. Participants in the system are in the best position to recommend and implement that change.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE QPI APPROACH

1. Defining the expectations of caregivers;
2. Clearly communicating expectations (the brand statement) to staff, caregivers and other stakeholder and;
3. Aligning system policy and practice with those expectations.

QPI: INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS & PARTICIPANTS

- Anyone who is invested in positive outcomes for children and families in our community can be involved in this initiative;
- Parents and professionals connected to the child welfare system;
- Foster and relative caregivers, foster youth and alumni;
- Individuals from diverse communities that experience disparities within the system, advocates for children and families, judicial and legislative representatives.

MINNESOTA & QPI

INITIAL STEPS

- 2016-2017: Private Foster Care Agencies that are members of AspireMN gathered to learn more about QPI (AspireMN: An association of resources and advocacy for children, youth and families)
- June 2017: Design-Day to plan the Minnesota Kick-Off of QPI
- September-October 2017: QPI Learning sessions across the community offered
- October 2017: QPI-MN Kick-Off held with over 200 participants with the goal to talk develop strategies for creating change to improve the foster care experience for children and families in Minnesota.

MINNESOTA & QPI: IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS BY PRIVATE FOSTER CARE AGENCY MEMBERS OF ASPIREMN

Original Goal:

building solid foundations to collaborate to serve kids and remembering that the heart of the system is the child/youth and families

- **Poor outcomes for children:** high re-entry rates, failed pre-adoptive or adoptive placements, youth aging out to homelessness
- **Over representation of children of color in care:** inequity in how child protection reports are assessed and followed through on once in the system, including greater removal from home and lower reunification rates
- **Lack of access to resources:** for the child/youth - mental health, physical health, dental, transportation, preserving community or familial connections & for the foster provider - training access, respite services, 24/7 support, transportation, navigating educational system

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- **Lack of uniform standards:** discrepancy in County licensing, case management and support practices vs private agency expectations re: case load sizes, birth family engagement & variability in interpretation of licensing standards based on licensor
- **Lack of information sharing:** current model of a “silo system” preventing information exchange across systems including real time information about birth families and the child’s needs given to the foster parent, lack of information about the child’s placement to the birth family
- **Negative community images of foster care:** invisibility of kids and youth in care and isolation of kids and youth in care (stigma, dehumanizing), foster parents image as either on a pedestal or only in it for the money, impact on the ability of the broader community to see themselves as a foster parent

QPI MINNESOTA VALUES

DEVELOPED AT THE OCTOBER 2017 KICK-OFF

- Children and youth develop and grow through love and support of their families and communities.
- Communities and system partners collaborate and drive best practice and best interests of our children and youth.
- Foster parents are respected partners who advocate and collaborate for the wellbeing of the child/youth and their birth family and relatives.
- Birth families, relatives and foster parents connect and create mutually healthy relationships to care for children and youth.



ORIGINAL QPI-MN ACTION WORK GROUPS

Resources - Beginning with foster parents create easier connection to key resources to support parenting – including an FAQ about exiting resources

Language - Bring new understanding and sensitivity to all stakeholders by articulating preferred and healing words to be used that emphasize strengths and support the value of children, youth and all families

Kinship - Learn from kinship families what information would have been helpful to have at time of placement – including training. Create steps to assure kinship placements are more actively supported.

Transitions - Supporting positive transitions to and between placements, goal of creating a best practice checklist for all transitions

ORIGINAL QPI-MN ACTION WORK GROUPS

Recruitment - Help agencies refer potential foster parents to the agency that will best be suited to support each foster family based on interests, geography, skills

Chain of Command - Creating clarity in the chain of command for decision-making and support for foster parents, birth parents, and youth.

Information Sharing - Assuring foster and birth families are given vital information at placement to comfort and support the child/youth and establish connection between foster and birth families.

Connections: Birth Parents, Foster Parents & Siblings - Refocus attention on strong connections between birth and foster parents, siblings and children/youth in care.



INITIAL QPI-MN PRIORITIES FOR 2018

- A comfort call to the birth family within twenty-four hours of the child or youth entering a foster home
- Birth and foster families meet within the first weeks to develop a relationship, share information, and work together to meet the child or youth's needs
- Integrating the importance of child and youth voice into all interactions

GET INVOLVED!

- www.aspiremn.org/qpi
 - www.Qpi4kids.org
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