



The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) is one of Nevada's approaches to strengthening the quality of care provided to children and youth living in foster care by using branding and marketing principles. It is a process designed to help local and statewide child welfare systems and community partners to develop new strategies and practices, rather than imposing upon it a predetermined set of "best practices." This initiative is designed to promote quality care for children in foster care by redefining the expectations and roles of caregivers while strengthening the system and providing resources and tools.

Core premise of QPI is that the primary goal of the child welfare system is to ensure that children are safe and have effective, loving parenting. The best way to achieve this goal is to enable the child's own parents to care for him or her. If and when that isn't possible, the system must ensure that the caregiver (foster, relative, kinship and adoptive) provide the child with effective, skilled and loving parenting.

What are the elements of QPI?

The key elements of the QPI process are:

- To partner with caregivers (foster, relative, kinship and adoptive) and child welfare professionals in identifying system improvements
- To define the expectations of caregivers and child welfare professionals
- To clearly articulate these expectations
- To provide resources to caregivers
- To align the system so that these goals can become a reality

What success can we expect using QPI?

The major successes of the project have been in the systems change and improved relationships between foster parents and natural parents, and foster parents and child welfare agencies. Communities have also reported measurable improvement and outcomes for children and youth such as:

- A reduction in unplanned placement changes
- A reduction in the use of group care
- A reduction in the numbers of sibling separation
- An increase in successful reunifications

QPI Brand Statement

Foster parents nurture children who have experienced trauma and provide a safe, loving, and healing environment in which the children can thrive.

They are parenting partners who honor and support family relationships.

Foster parents are dedicated, informed, and committed advocates for children. They are instrumental and fully supported members of the child and family team.

Great foster parents make a difference for children and families in our community.

To learn more, please visit www.QPINevada.com



What are the goals of QPI?

As a result of QPI, DFS has identified these mission critical goals:

- I. Address critical issues for children that assure they are moving toward permanency**
 - Define high quality parenting for birth parents, resource parents and agency staff
 - Increase the number of excellent foster families by recruiting and retaining the best foster families
 - Provide high quality parenting to children in the child welfare system

- II. Develop a model for foster parent recruitment, retention and support that defines and clearly articulates expectations of caregivers**
 - Develop a quality foster parent brand as a core for success
 - Reassess the role of foster families to reflect the new brand
 - Develop a model for diligent recruitment and retention
 - Increase the number of excellent foster families by recruiting and retaining the best foster families

- III. Develop an effective public/private and nonprofit partnership for community involvement in child welfare**
 - Educate and involve public, private and philanthropic organizations in child welfare reform efforts

- IV. Align the system so these goals can become a reality**
 - Identify changes in practice across programs to support the new vision

Is QPI being implemented in other states?

Yes. QPI is the Youth Law Center's approach to strengthening foster care and improving quality of care for children living in foster care. This approach is currently being implemented in over 40 sites in California, Nevada, Connecticut and Florida.

QPI is supported by the Eckerd Family Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, the David B. Gold Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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What does the “brand” of foster care mean?

QPI recognizes that the traditional foster care "brand" has negative connotations and may deter families in assisting children and youth in need within our community. QPI is an effort to rebrand foster care, not simply by changing a logo or an advertisement, but by changing the core elements underlying the brand. When these changes are accomplished, communities that have implemented QPI are better able to develop communication strategies, enhance efforts to recruit, train and retain foster and adoptive parents.

Why is there a focus on the branding of foster care?

The underlying principles of QPI include the following:

External branding: Our promise to prospective caregivers and the community in general that caregivers will **be** respected, well trained, skilled partners in providing high quality parenting. They can provide a much higher level of aptitude, patience and love. This is an important change in our brand promise.

Internal branding: Training staff to internalize articulate and support the brand. Understanding their role in the identification, recruitment, training and, most importantly, support of high quality caregivers who epitomize the brand, agency staff can move beyond the standard level of performance to express real customer service in support of the brand. Focus areas to explore are:

- Identify and use relevant data
- Define and assess quality of caregivers
- Develop clearly defined expectations of caregivers and child welfare professionals
- Modify recruitment materials to reflect the new vision
- Establish proper recruitment and retention processes
- Provide marketing and targeted recruitment guidance
- Apply human resource principles in support, retention and recognition
- Develop a new approach to foster parent training – pre-service and advanced training.
- Develop a new approach to foster parent support and recognition
- Achieve systemic change in messaging and behaviors related to the foster parenting process
- Improve utilization of homes to serve special populations
- Identify changes in practice to support the new vision of the quality parenting initiative

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Who should be involved in QPI?

The success of QPI is predicated on the participation of a wide variety of partners to include the following:

- Caregivers (birth, foster, relative, fictive and adoptive parents)
- Community partners such as those from the faith community, LGBT community and business community
- Child welfare professionals
- Advocates
- Service providers
- Public human services agencies

What is the QPI framework?

There are two overall components of the QPI framework:

I. **Implementation team** - Responsible for the overall implementation of the initiative. This team reviews and approves the recommendations of the workgroups and sees that the initiative continues to move forward while accomplishing the mission critical goals.

II. **Workgroups** - Six (6) workgroups have been identified to align with the goals of QPI and those are:

1. Child Welfare Services
 - a. Identify sustainable changes in practice to support the new vision of QPI in many program areas
 - b. Assist in improving quality assurance to address critical issues for children and assure they are moving toward permanency
2. Communication Plan
 - a. Create a comprehensive QPI communication plan on how to educate stakeholders and infuse QPI across programs
 - b. Promote a promise to prospective and existing caregivers that they will be respected, well trained, skilled partners in providing high quality parenting

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3. Community Partnerships
 - a. Develop an effective public/private and nonprofit partnership for local implementation
 - b. Educate and involve private philanthropy and business in child welfare reform efforts
- 4 Recruitment
 - a. Modify recruitment materials to reflect new vision
 - b. Ensure foster parents/caregivers as an integral part of recruitment efforts
 - c. Develop a model for foster parent recruitment, retention and support that can be used in general and targeted recruitment activities
5. Training
 - a. Provide training that meets the needs of caregivers, families and children in care
6. Support and Retention
 - a. Develop and administer a Caregiver Survey
 - b. Develop retention activities to acknowledge and support parenting among foster parents and relative caregivers that complement the DFS overall retention plan found in other workgroups
 - c. Develop and implementation of the Foster Parent Champion Program

Each workgroup has two (2) QPI co-leads, one (1) DFS representative and at least one (1) community partner representative.

In addition to the resources above, there is a Clark County QPI Coordinator whose responsibilities include being a support, resource and liaison to the QPI partners locally, within the State of Nevada and with our National QPI partners.

How has Clark County implemented QPI?

QPI is a statewide initiative in Washoe and Clark Counties, and the rural communities of Nevada. QPI Clark County started November 2012 and since then the following activities have occurred:

- Four (4) convening sessions with community partners and caregivers
- Multiple workgroup sessions for the identification of workgroup initiatives
- and Two (2) implementation team meetings

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Where do I get more information about QPI?

- You can learn more at QPINevada.com

Does QPI offer opportunities for caregivers to enhance their parenting skills?

Just in Time is an online training resource for caregivers, foster, pre-adoptive and adoptive parents located within the QPI website. There is a range of on-line training topics that include, but are not limited to:

- How to effectively manage challenging behavior
- Trauma informed care
- Sex abuse
- Substances abuse and its affects

Members of the community are encouraged to access the different trainings and to recommend future trainings on QPINevada.com.

How can I get involved?

Your participation is welcomed in any of the six (6) workgroups and/or the implementation team. It is through partnerships and collaborations that we collectively will improve the quality of care our children and youth receive in Clark County while providing quality support and services to caregivers.

For more information please feel free to contact:

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