

The Quality Parenting Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the goal of The Quality Parenting Initiative (“QPI”)?

The goal of QPI is to ensure that every child who is removed from home by a child protection agency receives the love, nurturing, advocacy and support he or she needs for healthy development. Key to the project is increasing the number of committed families, including kin, who can parent these children, supporting excellent practice and ensuring that every family can and does meet the child’s needs.

What is the brand?

The brand is a statement of the sites’ expectations for caregivers (foster parents and kin) and the caregivers’ reasonable expectations of the child welfare system. Each site develops its own brand statement based on discussions among all parties of what foster parenting and kinship caregiving should mean in that site.

Why can’t we use the brands and practice changes that other sites have developed? Aren’t we reinventing the wheel?

QPI seeks to change what foster parenting, including kinship care means to a community. Only the community itself can decide exactly what that is. Similarly, each community must identify local barriers to making the “brand” a reality and opportunities for improvement. Most importantly, bringing the community together to discuss parenting and expectations of caregivers is the first step in increasing mutual respect and team building.

What specific strategies must a site adopt to be part of QPI?

QPI is a process not a set of strategies. Many sites do arrive at similar conclusions about the caregiver brand and changes needed to fulfill the brand promise. However, to require certain elements or practices would make the process a pro forma exercise and disrespect the participants. Once a site develops its brand and necessary practice changes, QPI provides tools to assist the site in implementing these changes.

What marketing materials do you provide to sites?

Since sites are developing their own brands, we do not provide a pre-packaged marketing campaign. Once the site agrees on a brand statement QPI can provide assistance in creating materials that reflect the brand and developing a marketing approach that both reflects the brand values and is appropriate to the community.

Does QPI affect kinship care?

QPI is not simply a recruitment and retention tool. It is designed to ensure that every child who is removed from his or her home regardless of whether he or she lives with relatives or in licensed care has excellent parenting that meets his or her emotional, developmental, cognitive and social needs. Therefore QPI also applies to kinship care. The brand provides kin with an explanation of what they must do to care for a child. It gives the agency a way of selecting the appropriate family member to care for a child and structuring a kinship support and education program. Children should not be forced to “choose” between living with kin and receiving the support they need.

What other resources does QPI bring to a site?

In addition to facilitation, QPI brings educational resources that includes linkages to experts in developmental psychology and trauma, consultants in recruitment and retention of foster families, model policies and procedures, foster parent training materials and advocacy assistance. These resources are made available to sites through our QPI and “Just in Time” Training websites. In addition to training videos, these websites feature announcements, a training calendar, documents and materials, and other resource links including the “Request Training Now” submission form. It is not mandatory that any site use any of these resources.

What is the QPI4Kids Network?

The QPI4Kids Network is an expanding group of QPI site leaders and participants from various agencies that are participating in QPI across the country.

The QPI4Kids.com website provides members access to discussion forums, select videos tailored to their needs, conference videos and materials, a directory of QPI contacts, and documents that are created and shared by other QPI members.

Why can't sites simply implement QPI without any assistance?

Our experience in approximately 40 sites has been that an outside facilitator, who is not part of any particular local group or agency but is knowledgeable about child welfare practice and policy, is necessary to this process. The QPI facilitator is an “honest broker” who is not on one “side” or the other and who has no history with the organization. After the process moves to implementation, local participants are expected to lead their own groups. Sites have all found it helpful for QPI to periodically “check in” on the process and provide some assistance in moving forward.

How is the Youth Law Center equipped to manage QPI?

The Youth Law Center has 30 years of experience in systems improvement. While we have engaged in litigation we have also provided extensive technical assistance and policy consultation to foundations, non-profits and State and local governments. Our goal is to ensure that every child in the system receives the care we would want for our own children in similar circumstances.

Is there any data to support this approach?

The assessment of QPI conducted for the State of Florida provides detailed information on preliminary results. We are engaged in a more systematic evaluation at this time. The QPI project is based on current knowledge about successful parenting of children in care. The materials have been reviewed by researchers and experts in recruitment, training and support of foster families and kinship caregivers.