

# QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE – MINNESOTA

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## Welcome

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Darlene Bell, Foster Parent

Family Alternatives



# QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE – MINNESOTA YEAR ONE REVIEW

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## Developed by:

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Kate Rickord, MA, LP – St. David's Center

Co-Chair QPI Steering Committee



# QPI – FIVE CORE PRINCIPLES

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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.

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

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### **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



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



- **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

## MINNESOTA & QPI INITIAL STEPS

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- 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
- July 2017: MN Attendance at the QPI New Sites Conference
- 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.

# KICK-OFF: HOPE FROM MINNESOTA LEADERS

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- <https://vimeo.com/252735167>



# QPI MINNESOTA VALUES

DEVELOPED AT THE OCTOBER 2017 KICK-OFF

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- 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

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**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.



# ORIGINAL QPI-MN ACTION WORK GROUPS

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**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

QPI ALONG  
THE WAY –  
JANUARY 2018  
NATIONAL QPI  
CONFERENCE,  
NEW ORLEANS





# INITIAL QPI-MN PRIORITIES FOR 2018

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- 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





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'ALL ABOUT FAMILY': MOVEMENT TO REFORM  
FOSTER CARE TAKES ROOT IN MINNESOTA  
JUNE 2018

# QPI-MN ACTION WORK – PROGRESS

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## **Resources –**

Goal: Beginning with foster parents, creating easier connection to key resources to support parenting

Task near completion: Data compilation of foster parent survey on resources available and needed

## **Language –**

Goal: 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

Task: Support to the AWGs in how documentation and recommendations is written

## **Transitions –**

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



# QPI-MN ACTION WORK GROUPS – PROGRESS

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## **Recruitment –**

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

Task near completion: Data assessment of all 87 Counties, private agencies and tribal nations related to current trends in recruitment including successes, barriers and timelines

## **Chain of Command –**


Goal: Creating clarity in the chain of command for foster parents, birth parents, and youth.

Task completed: Out of Home Placement Information Form

## **Information Sharing –**

Goal: Assuring foster and birth families are given vital information at placement .

Task completed: Initial Child/Youth Information Sharing Form



# QPI-MN ACTION WORK GROUPS – PROGRESS

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## **Connections: Birth Parents, Foster Parents & Siblings –**

Goal: Refocus attention on strong connections between birth and foster parents, siblings and children/youth in care.

Tasks completed: A Guide to Circle of Support meetings / Comfort Call Guide

Tasks in progress: Implementation of guides, Fostering Relationships

## **Kinship –**

Goal: Create steps to assure kinship placements are more actively supported.

Task in progress: Webinar and printed materials in progress for initial resource support in areas of a) starting your journey, b) trauma/attachment and behavior, c) foster care licensing and d) roles of team members.





# BIRTH FAMILIES, FOSTER ALUM & PARENT PARTICIPATION

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Marcy Kruse	Vivian Keen	Richard Ken	Yuker Riley	Essie Jenkins	Terrilyn Wilson	Zhawin Gonzalez	Maria Alghren	Heather Van Rueden
Ella Graves	Tammy Helleland	Debra Moffatt	Ruth Olsen	Jackee Heslop-Collins	Shelly Carabello	Lisa Deputie	Monica Stevens	Rema Absey
Raylah Bacon	Taniya Watkins	Barbara Van Leer	Sasha Martin	Veronica Sanchez	Cindy Henderson	Henry Bonner	Kathy Bonner	Jen Wiechman
Essie Jenkins	Isaac German	Sheila German	Jerry Williams	Toni Crowell	April Anderson	Alisa Matheson	Evelyn Brown	Mary Pramann
				Julie Erlandson	Alyssa Lovgren Montecillo			

# BIRTH FAMILIES, FOSTER ALUM & PARENT PARTICIPATION

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Tammy Helleland	Isaac German	Shannon Rhatigan	Chris Olsen	Gregory VanLeer Sr.	Taniya Watkins	La'tanza Douglas	Darlene Bell	Lois Branjord
Justin Cassens	Curtis Bell	Shana King	Taniya Watkins	Tiffany Omete	Mary Pramann	Leo Baker	Thomas Westbrook	Vivianna Castillo-Roybal
Lalita Williams	Jean Jackson	Richard Barnjord	Heather Cortez	Juan Cortez	Carrie Edberg	Mary Pramann	Kellie Erickson	Sam Powers
Alisha Sorenson	Laurel Merten	Charleen Day-Castro	Ashley Cassens	Janette Jones	Aaron Jones	June Barker	Ada Smith	Joanne Hodgeman

# WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED WORK TOGETHER & REMEMBER - GET INVOLVED!

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- [www.aspiremn.org/qpi](http://www.aspiremn.org/qpi)
  - [www.Qpi4kids.org](http://www.Qpi4kids.org)
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## Contact for QPI Information:

- AspireMN
  - [qpi@aspiremn.org](mailto:qpi@aspiremn.org)
- Steering Committee Co-Chairs
  - Kirsten Anderson [Kanderson@aspiremn.org](mailto:Kanderson@aspiremn.org)
  - Kate Rickord [krickord@stdavidscenter.org](mailto:krickord@stdavidscenter.org)



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## Early Learnings & Success

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Laine Janke, Director Community Based Programs  
– Therapeutic Services Agency

Justin Cassens, Foster Parent – St. David's Center





# QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE – MINNESOTA

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## Why QPI-MN is Important

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Ethan Vogel, Legislative Rep. – AFSCME Council 5

Marvin Davis, Deputy Director – Child Safety and Permanency  
Division, MN Department of Human Services

Rena Moran, Director Parent Leadership – Minnesota Communities  
Caring for Children



# QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE – MINNESOTA

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## National QPI Perspectives

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Jennifer Rodriguez, Executive Director

Youth Law Center



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## Continued Priorities

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Kirsten Anderson, Executive Director

AspireMN



# QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE – MINNESOTA

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## Final Words

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Jay Kimball, Operations Director

Kindred Family Focus

Carole Shauffer, Senior Director Strategic Initiatives

Youth Law Center

