

Starting Points: Becoming a QPI Site

The Youth Law Center's Quality Parenting Initiative is a national movement for foster care system change, made up of a network of states, counties, and private agencies committed to ensuring that all children in care have excellent parenting and lasting relationships so they can thrive and grow.

Sites must support the three core QPI principles that underlie our *system change* process.

In addition, prospective sites must ensure that they will provide:

1. Commitment from top leadership and their management team,
2. Staff champion(s), and
3. Resources, including staff time.

Leadership Commitment

Successful QPI implementation requires the interest and commitment of senior leadership. The agency director, senior staff, and all key managers must support the fundamental philosophy of QPI. They must understand and agree to commit the amount of time and effort needed for QPI implementation.

The QPI process depends on the staff, foster and kin parents, birth parents, youth, and others involved in the child welfare system believing that the changes they recommend can happen. The agency director and senior staff must be willing to support these changes to the extent possible. Giving priority to quality parenting requires a high degree of flexibility in dealing with individual children and families and their particular needs. However, flexibility carries with it the risk of making a mistake, and staff and foster parents must believe that agency leadership supports them in taking on this risk.

Leadership must also be willing to commit staff time to the QPI process and ensure support from all parts of the agency, including operations and the staff members of the training, legal, clinical, administration and others who are key to agency functioning.

As a systems change initiative, QPI requires agency leadership to give top priority to aligning policies and practices to the goal of excellent parenting and to integrating QPI work in all other reform efforts.

Regularly communicating the agency's commitment to QPI and to excellent parenting is critical to changing the system's culture and expectations. Therefore, the agency director and senior leadership must attend key milestone meetings to make this commitment visible.

Site Coordinator

Prospective QPI agencies must identify at least one staff member to serve as the QPI Lead or Site Coordinator. The QPI Lead works closely with one or more QPI staff members to coordinate the logistics of the QPI launch and its ongoing implementation. The QPI Lead must have direct access to senior agency administrators and be knowledgeable about the culture and operation of the system. Because the lead is the local voice of QPI, it is critical that this person is enthusiastic about and shares the values and principles on which QPI is based.

Resources

Prospective sites must have the resources to implement and support QPI. This includes the ability to invest staff time in the change process and to involve other members of the child welfare community, including court representatives, health care professionals, teachers, attorneys, and others who touch the lives of people in the system. The participation of foster and birth parents and youth is also critical to the success of QPI, so the agency must have the resources and commitment to involve them.

Next Steps

If you are interested, after reading [What is QPI?](#) and [The Principles of QPI](#), email us at info@QPI4kids.org. We will schedule a call to discuss your community's individual needs and how we might be able to support you.

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