

2026

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW



WHAT IS A QPI CHAMPION?

The Youth Law Center's Quality Parenting Initiative is a national movement for foster care 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.

QPI Champions are advocates who have been trained in QPI values, theory, and techniques.

These champions, including agency staff, caregivers, birth parents, and youth, form a strong team and work together to disseminate QPI in their local communities.



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QPI Champions Training Overview

What does a QPI Champion do?

- Ensure that the agency is following the principles and methods of QPI by prioritizing excellent parenting and lasting relationships for children and youth in care.
- Explain QPI and communicate the vision to all stakeholders.
- Develop or support an action plan that includes new practices or policies.
- Build or join a steering committee or work group to advance the action plan.
- Involve birth, foster, and kinship parents and youth in decision-making in a culturally competent manner.
- Engage with the QPI network by participating in sharing opportunities, such as monthly practice exchanges, conference workshops, and one-on-one meetings.
- Aid in mentoring and developing additional Champions, locally and nationwide.

What is the time commitment?

- Champions undergo a 4-month, 15-hour training on QPI values, theory, and techniques, which includes:
 - Monthly interactive large group trainings (live on Zoom)
 - Monthly interactive small group discussions (live on Zoom)
 - Skills practice or homework
- During and after training, QPI Champions should be prepared to dedicate time to QPI work, including steering committee meetings, stakeholder education, advocacy, activities that assess progress, and network-wide practice exchanges.
- Champions are also expected to participate in text-based surveys (QPO) and attend annual QPI National Conferences or QPI Champions Conferences.

What makes a good QPI Champion?

- Core values that place the child's experience at the center of practice.
- Credibility and respect among peers/stakeholders in the community.
- Systems-level thinking and a desire to make systemic change.
- Sufficient time to prioritize QPI (which requires leadership support for staff).
- Openness to trying new things and learning from mistakes.

QPI Champions Training – Module One

About QPI

MONTH ONE TOPIC	HOURS
<p>Training #1: QPI as an Advocacy Strategy</p> <p>This training provides an overview of the Youth Law Center (YLC) and its Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) advocacy strategy. Participants will learn about QPI principles, goals, and theories of change. This training explains the strategy behind QPI Champions and what their role will be in implementing change in their local area.</p> <p>Training Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trainees will have an understanding of QPI as a system change strategy of the Youth Law Center. 2. Trainees will develop an understanding of the concept of advocacy and recognize its significance in driving positive change. 3. Trainees will understand the responsibilities of a QPI Champion. 	<p>1.5</p>

QPI Champions Training – Module Two

Attachment and Relationships

MONTH ONE TOPIC	HOURS
<p>Training #2: The Science Behind QPI: Attachment and Relationships</p> <p>This training discusses the science of child development and attachment and the importance of healthy caregiver/child relationships. The session highlights the different forms of attachment and explores how to consider a child’s needs in decision-making.</p> <p>Training Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trainees will have a basic understanding of attachment theory. 2. Trainees will be able to explain why considering each child’s attachment to caregivers is essential in child welfare. 3. Trainees will understand considerations for decision-making that support children’s attachment to caregivers. 	2.0
<p>Discussion Group</p> <p>This group discussion provides an opportunity for trainees to deep-dive into what they learned during month 1, discuss how they plan to incorporate it into their roles championing change in their local areas, and review general questions and feedback.</p>	1.0

QPI Champions Training – Module Three

Lived Experience

MONTH TWO TOPIC	HOURS
<p>Training #3: The Importance of Relationships through the Lens of Lived Experience</p> <p>This training explores the impact that relationships—or lack thereof—have on children and youth experiencing out-of-home care. The session incorporates a panel of systems-impacted young adults who share personal experiences that highlight the importance of having relationships, especially for older youth.</p> <p>Training Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trainees will have an understanding of the role healthy, lasting relationships play in the lives of youth. 2. Trainees will have a basic understanding of some of the challenges to promoting positive relationships. 	<p>2.0</p>
<p>Discussion Group</p> <p>This group discussion provides an opportunity for trainees to deep-dive into what they learned from Training #3, discuss how they plan to address challenges and promote positive relationships for older youth in care, and review general questions and feedback.</p>	<p>1.0</p>

QPI Champions Training – Module Four

Branding



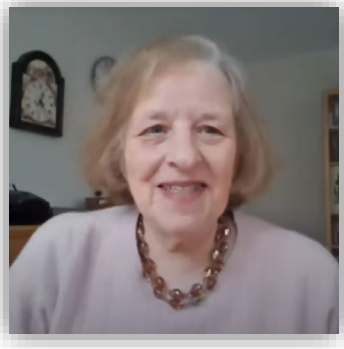
MONTH THREE TOPIC	HOURS
<p>Training #4: Branding as a Change Strategy</p> <p>This training discusses the importance of branding and how it can be used as an advocacy tool. The training highlights QPI Champions as a brand itself, and how trainees can leverage this. Branding materials are provided to trainees as part of this presentation.</p> <p>Training Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trainees will have a basic understanding of using branding as an advocacy tool. 2. Trainees will understand the importance of creating a foster care brand that supports excellent parenting. 3. Trainees will see themselves as part of the QPI Champions brand. 	2.0
<p>Discussion Group</p> <p>This group discussion provides an opportunity for trainees to deep-dive into what they learned from Training #4, discuss how they plan to leverage branding to support advocacy, and review general questions and feedback.</p>	1.0

QPI Champions Training – Module Five




Facilitation and Persuasion

MONTH FOUR TOPIC	HOURS
<p>Training #5: The Art of Persuasion</p> <p>This training focuses on the facilitation technique of persuasion. This session shows how to utilize persuasion strategies with key stakeholders in order to effectuate QPI practice and policy changes.</p> <p>Training Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trainees will understand persuasion techniques. 2. Trainees will have a basic understanding of general facilitation skills. 3. Trainees will understand how to develop a persuasion plan. 	2.0
<p>Discussion Group</p> <p>This group discussion provides an opportunity for trainees to deep-dive into what they learned from Training #5, discuss how they plan to use facilitation techniques to persuade key stakeholders, and review general questions and feedback.</p>	1.0
<p>Graduation</p> <p>This session provides an opportunity for trainees to review what they learned throughout the 4-month training, discuss how they plan to use these skills and techniques in their roles, and celebrate the completion of the program.</p>	1.5


Presenter and Staff Bios

NAME	BIO
 <p>Jennifer Rodriguez Training Co-Creator/Presenter</p>	<p>Jennifer Rodriguez, J.D., is Executive Director of the Youth Law Center (YLC) and a leading advocate for transforming foster care and juvenile justice systems across the country so youth can thrive. Jennifer spent many years of her childhood in foster care and juvenile justice facilities, and has spent most of her life advocating to ensure justice, compassion and opportunity for youth touched by these systems. Jennifer’s advocacy has resulted in significant national policy, practice and culture changes. She joined the Youth Law Center as an attorney in 2007 after eight years working at the California Youth Connection, a nationally recognized foster youth advocacy organization. Jennifer was appointed by President Obama to the National Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, which released a report promoting strengthening families parenting the most vulnerable children.</p>
 <p>Dr. Charles Zeanah Presenter</p>	<p>Dr. Charles Zeanah has worked clinically and studied children exposed to violence for over 30 years. This has included studies of PTSD and related disorders in young children. He currently co-directs a program that intervenes with 2-300 maltreated children per year. At a policy level, he serves on the DCFS Internal Advisory Group and directs Tulane’s Early Childhood Policy Leadership Initiative.</p> <p>Vice Chair, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Professor of Psychiatry & Pediatrics Executive Director Infant Institute</p>
 <p>Heidi Foreman Presenter</p>	<p>Heidi Foreman is a brand strategy consultant with over 20 years of experience creating successful positioning and key messages, developing new brands/products, and working with client teams to develop actionable marketing plans. Heidi has also held senior marketing management positions with Gillette and Scholastic.</p> <p>She is also actively engaged in brand strategy and innovation projects for non-profit organizations focused on children’s literacy and welfare.</p>

Presenter and Staff Bios

NAME	BIO
 <p>Carol Edwards, Ed.D Presenter</p>	<p>Carol Campbell Edwards joined the Youth Law Center as a consultant in 2016 after having been involved in Florida’s QPI implementation. Her work with QPI focuses on training and professional development. Carol is a licensed clinical social worker and approved supervisor in the State of Florida with 27 years of direct and administrative service. She is a faculty member and the BSW Program Director at the Florida State University College of Social Work. Carol is a national delegate for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and is the co-chair of the Florida NASW Race and Social Justice Task Force. She is a recipient of numerous teaching and professional service awards. Carol promotes the alignment of social work values and principles, with changing child welfare systems, to make life better for children and families with foster care experiences.</p>
 <p>Terry Harrak Training Facilitator</p>	<p>Terry Harrak currently works on the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) and the Just Beginning Program (JB) at the Youth Law Center. Mrs. Harrak is the author of Guidelines for Development of Foster Care Handbooks: What Foster Youth Have to Say and co-creator of Strategic Sharing: a curriculum for youth public speaking. Mrs. Harrak created The National Foster Youth Advisory Board in 2000. In addition to her professional experience, Terry brings her personal experience with the foster care and juvenile justice systems to her work.</p>
 <p>Kirstie Jetland Administration</p>	<p>Kirstie Jetland joined the Youth Law Center in 2020 as the Administrative Assistant of the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI). In 2021, she became the QPI National Coordinator and served as the hub for communication, scheduling, and event management for the QPI National Team. As the Manager of QPI Special Projects, Kirstie now supports the growth of QPI through administrative oversight of the QPI Champions Training program and various new initiatives.</p>

Presenter and Staff Bios

NAME	BIO
	<p>Lana Burnett joined the Youth Law Center in 2025 as the Administrative Assistant supporting the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI). She brings over five years of experience in administrative coordination and nonprofit operations, with a background rooted in child welfare work. Prior to joining YLC, Lana worked as an Office Administrator at Casey Family Programs, where she supported cross-agency meetings, managed logistics for team projects, and helped improve day-to-day workflows. She is passionate about contributing to work that supports youth and families and is excited to be part of a team focused on lasting impact.</p>

Lana Burnett
Administrative Assistant