

April 25, 2017- Training on the QPI Co-Parenting Court Order

Panel: Orlando Gonzalez (Our Kids) and Trudy Petkovich.

- QPI (Quality Parenting Initiative)/ Co-Parenting Protocol: Judge Sampedro-Iglesia's Order
- This is a part of the dependency system in Miami-Dade County.
- **It only applies to cases where the goal is reunification and the child is placed in a Licensed Foster Placemen.**
- QPI can be envisioned as “the umbrella” with the spokes being co-parenting, transition plans, and normalcy.
- The partnership recognizes that all of us are responsible for the well-being of children in the custody of DCF. This includes: Protective Investigators, Judges, Foster Parents, Relative/non-relative caregivers, CLS, regional counsel, GAL, Our Kids and Case Management agencies
- Children need NORMAL childhoods, as well as loving and skillful parenting which honors their loyalty to their biological families.
- Co-parenting is the process by which all partners work with the birth family to support reunification and meet the child's needs.
- A transition plan is a coordinated plan of actions to ease the transition from one caregiver to another — must be tailored for each child's individual stage and psychological needs.
- Normalcy: allowing kids in foster care to take part in everyday activities without the unnecessary involvement of case managers, agencies, or the Court. The “reasonable and prudent parent standard allows foster parents to give foster children permission to do daily, age-appropriate activities (joining a team, getting a driver's license, going to the beach, etc.).
- **6 elements of a quality foster parent: 1) participates in health/behavioral/ mental care; 2) supports the child's education; 3) supports participation in extracurricular activities; 4) participates in case planning and monitoring; 5) supports birth family connections; and 6) involved in professional development.**
- At the shelter hearing, the biological family gets a Letter of Introduction from the agency with the QPI brochure and all important phone #'s (the case manager, case manager supervisor, and court liaison).
- 3-4 days after the shelter hearing — or at the first visit by the case manager with the foster parent — a brief phone conference takes place between the CM, foster parent, and biological family. At this time, the form All About Me is completed. This form includes basic info, nicknames, other family members the child may miss, medical info — allergies, meds, concerns — school info — IEP, teacher, etc. — food/meals/ daily routine/ activities, favorite foods, disliked foods, allergies, extracurricular activities, bedtime routines, special friends, etc. Other info — behaviors, fears/anxieties, how you comfort your child, hair care.
- 4 weeks from the shelter hearing, an ice-breaker protocol takes place with the biological family at the agency, and a co-parenting plan is formulated and signed by everyone.
 - Meeting shall include parent, custodian and case manager, at a minimum.
 - No party shall discuss the allegations.
 - Co-parenting plan is developed: should be tailored to the specific case & address ways the parent/custodian can maintain systematic and regular contact to serve the best interest of the child (visitation, contact — phone, text, email — or attending medical/school appointments for the child).

- Shall be filed with the court (NOT a part of the case plan). If co-parenting is not appropriate, must indicate to the Court why not.
 - If parents not cooperative, shall include explanation of circumstances and state efforts made.
- The agency determines the level of the co-parenting plan.
- Although the plan is filed with the court, there are no findings against the agency. This is voluntary, but the judges want to know what is happening and what efforts have been made.
- Tasks in the co-parenting plan are not a part of the case plan for either the agency or the biological parents.
- If placement changes, a new icebreaker must be done.
- Pre-adoptive homes can have a conflict with co-parenting.
- QPI is even more effective when there are younger children.
- QPI is now accepted in 20 states.
- We are still having issues when trying to find placement for sibling groups, teens, and those with behavioral/therapeutic issues.