

QPI Taskforce Small Group: Connections/ Relationships (Birth Families and Foster Parents)

Minutes from Meeting 2/2/2016

Present: Lauren Woods, Maria Armao, Samekreia McDonald, Phylene Thomas, Vincent Callahan, Thomas Mason, Doris Williams, Ana Faroniya, Kimberly Lanier, Dorothy Hart, Karin Austin

The problem that our group identified:

There is a lack of connection/ relationship established between the biological family and the foster family at the early stages of custody.

As a group, WE are charged with:

- Developing some solutions to the problem
- Identifying key people to assist in addressing the problem
- Identifying how we would measure our solutions
- Identifying a completion date
- Preliminary steps to completion
- How we will measure it if completed

Possible Solutions to Our Problem:

Consistency of information shared

Improve Communication

Increased Education (on all levels of the agency, Collaboratives, Foster Parents, Kinship Caregivers)

Encourage all agency staff to attend Foster Parent Conference

Implement Kinship Orientation

Implement the "Comfort Call" to Birth family/ legal guardian immediately after child is removed (ideally to be conducted by a Bio-Parent who has experience w/ agency involvement: HOPE)

- Offer Support/ Allow them to vent/ Offer encouragement/ Share expectations
- Open the door for any questions
- Set the stage that reunification is the goal
- Invite and encourage them to attend the All About Me/Us Mtg. (Ice Breaker)

Ice Breaker Meeting (All about Me/Us Mtg.)

- Have a trained Foster Parent/Coach facilitate the All About Me/Us Meeting (Ice Breaker)
- Have mtg. at a neutral/ positive location (Collab., library, etc.) w/ coffee, tea, bottled water to soften the meeting

- Family Friendly Location
- Involve a Birth Parent Mentor (Ideally have the same person who made the “Comfort Call” become the mentor)
- FP/Coach invites all of the participants (which will takes pressure off of the WOR of course the WOR schedule is very important as well as the family’s schedule when setting these meetings)
- These meetings should be held separate from the first visit so that they are not rushed

Increase Opportunities for Connections

- Caregivers assist with transportation to/from visits (w/ planning)
- FP’s keep a journal to share information about the child w/ birth parents
- Pictures
- Church, family events, holidays
- Share language implying that the foster parent is co-parenting with the birth parents at this time
- Show compassion no judgment; show consistent respect at all times toward birth family

Short-Term: What can be Implemented Immediately?

- Comfort Call can be done by Family Care Association until Bio-parents can be identified to assist with the Comfort Calls
- Possibly Customer Relations Department can conduct Comfort Calls
- Implementation of Additional training for staff and Foster parents
- Invite a few staff from each area to attend the upcoming Foster Parent Conference

Long Term Solutions (more time and more leg work needed)

- Bio-Parent mentor assigned to conduct Comfort Calls and to mentor long-term
- Kinship Orientation

Next Steps:

Invite the follow people to the next meeting: Youth representative (Kim L.), Kinship Resource rep. (Kim L.), Bio-parent (Phylene T.), Legal rep. (Karin A.), Direct Service worker/ supervisor (Karin A.)

Next Meeting 2/16/2016 @ 9:30 Room 104E