



**UTAH
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
COMMITTEES 2008 ANNUAL REPORT**

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Introduction

Purpose and Structure

In Utah, Quality Improvement Committees (QICs) act as Citizen Review Panels (CRP), required entities as legislated in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. In accordance with provision specified in 107.c of that Act, QICs examine policies, procedures, and practices proposed, developed, or implemented by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). They also review specific Child Protective Service cases to evaluate the extent to which the child protective services system is successfully discharging protection responsibilities. QICs offer solutions to unique problems and have independence to advocate for unique community needs. They have the knowledge and ability to identify organizational obstacles, have the ability to recognize system strengths, and have the authority to communicate those strengths to the community.

Each of the five DCFS regions maintains and supports at least one QIC responsible for reviewing and supporting activities expected of CPS Citizen Review Panels (CRP). Regional QIC chairs meet regularly to discuss areas of common concern.

The DCFS state office also maintains and supports a statewide QIC that responds to all recommendations, questions, and concerns delivered to it. The statewide QIC serves as the conduit for information and ideas presented by regional QICs. In addition, they develop, operate, update and maintain the QIC website, designed to aid in convenient access to information.

Each committee is coordinated by a citizen chair and is composed of citizen and community partners living or practicing within a region's jurisdiction. Members have a stake in the outcome of services provided to children and families and are considered "informed evaluators" that give DCFS the best, most objective analysis about improvements needed to the state's child welfare system.

Each QIC is required to review Child Protective Service related data and identify issues at least quarterly. Members also review DCFS policies, procedures, data, and case review information that measure the performance of programs and services provided. At least yearly QICs invite the following agencies to a committee meeting and receive reports that relate to child welfare trends or the status of child welfare services:

- The Office of Services Review that reports on Qualitative Case Review (QCR) and Case Process Review (CPR) outcomes
- The Office of Child Protection Ombudsman that reports on trends pertaining to client and consumer complaints about services delivered by the division
- The Department of Human Services Fatality Review Committee that presents results outlined in the Fatality Review Report.

In QIC meetings, members discuss systemic problems that affect children and families, address matters concerning systemic issues that come before them as a result of an employee complaint

or concern,¹ and based on their observations, have the mission to be informed evaluators who ask hard questions and make recommendations designed to improve agency processes and client outcomes.

To communicate their findings each QIC produces a quarterly summary that includes a description of:

- Data reviewed
- Public relation activities
- Special studies conducted
- CPS and Domestic Violence related issues
- Recommendations to be passed to the State QIC and/or DCFS administration.

Annual Quality Improvement Committee Summit

The Third Annual Quality Improvement Committee Summit was held on November 25, 2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Approximately 80 QIC members from all over the state attended this day-long event.

Members listened to presentations describing activities of Utah's Drug Endangered Children (DEC) multidisciplinary collaboration and the Utah Methamphetamine Joint Task Force. Members had the opportunity to identify their successes as well as talk about struggles they face in maintaining their QICs. Of particular concern was the current economy and proposed cuts to the state budget. Members received a status report and update on current and future DCFS activities including the creation of the congregate care workgroup, the division's focus on providing supports for kin caregivers, and received a detailed summary of the CWG Sustainability Report, issued in response to the upcoming exit from the consent decree. In this instance administration reiterated the increased importance of the role of QICs once court oversight is terminated.

The group also reviewed legislation to be delivered to the state's legislature including bills designed to:

- Address the needs of runaway or homeless youth
- Clean up language in current child welfare legislation
- Address the new federal legislation outlined in the federal Foster Connections to Success and Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.

Finally, the group discussed the need for committees to be culturally and ethnically diverse. In order to achieve this goal committees and its members need to be respectful of culture, eliminate barriers such as travel distance, recruit former clients who are interested in working with child welfare related issues, and utilize immersions to recruit membership.

¹ Refer to Practice Guideline 020.2 Personnel/Payroll-Procedures for Handling Employee Concerns and Complaints.

State Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
Lisa McDonald, Executive Director	Christmas Box International
Carolyn Jensen, Director	Children's Justice Center
Katie Gregory, Assistant Administrator	Juvenile Court
Karla Pardini, Child and Family Services, Director	Jeene Wagner Lake Jewish Community Center
Karen Buchi, M.D., Professor	Department of Pediatrics U of U
Julie Steele, FNP	Department of Pediatrics U of U
Jennifer Eldridge	Private Citizen
Leticha Medina, Operations Director	Colors of Success, Inc.
Stephan Clark, Attorney	Jones Waldo Holbrook and McDonough
Trish Beck	State Legislator
F. Richards Smith, Guardian ad Litem	State Courts
Kerri Burns, Community Development Manager	Division of Child and Family Services
Carol Miller, Program Support Specialist	Division of Child and Family Services

Significant Activities

Over the last year, the State QIC focused on DCFS responses to drug endangered newborns and children. A subcommittee was formed to address this problem and topic relevant training was developed and presented throughout the state

Recommendations and Responses

On January 3, 2008, the State Quality Improvement Committee submitted a [recommendation letter](#) to the Child and Family Services Administrative Team containing several recommendations around in-home services and substance abuse issues. The [response letter](#) from Child and Family Services was sent to the State Quality Improvement Committee on February 3, 2008.

In-Home Services:

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Division write separate practice guidelines related to kinship cases/care.

Response: Our current guidelines available through our website at http://www.dcfhs.utah.gov/guidelines_rules.htm contain separate practice guidelines related to kinship cases/care. Section 500 was created out of the necessity to recognize that when children are placed with a relative caregiver; they are in an out-of-home placement similar to, but not the same as, foster care with a non-relative. These guidelines give information about what the caseworker needs to be doing when a relative has been granted temporary custody from the

juvenile court, differentiating it from in-home services where a child remains with their parent/guardian. There are areas of these guidelines that we are currently working to revise to give more clear information on how to help determine the best kinship placement when there is more than one family that comes forward expressing an interest in caring for a child and to also ensure that the appropriate background screening is being completed prior to placement. There may be further revisions if current legislation (HB 36) passes that would allow us to place children with relatives more quickly as well as have the child remain in our custody for an assessment period, which will help relatives make a choice on whether to become licensed or to request custody from the court. Child and Family Services is very supportive of this change in legislation.

Recommendation: It is recommended that a system be devised to follow the recommendations of the workload study so that staff are not overloaded.

Response: We agree that Child and Family Services needs to work toward implementing the recommendations of the workload study with regard to in-home cases. Currently a workgroup has been working on definitions of the various in-home services to bring standardization to the regions. Some in-home codes (CIS, CCS for example) are not applied consistently and different services are provided under the same code. Until a standard definition and practice is defined for each code, Child and Family Services cannot set caseload (workload) standards for in-home cases. Until then, we will continue to use the standard developed by the Legislative Auditor (15 cases).

Recommendation: It is recommended that the division develop a system to distinguish PSS cases where the children are living with their parents from those receiving PSS services as a result of being placed with kin.

Response: Currently, our SAFE development team is developing an alternative to a new case type to be able to differentiate between a court ordered in-home services case and a court ordered case where temporary custody has been granted to a relative. We will be able to track all children placed with kin caregivers and prompt the activities that are needed to ensure each child is receiving the attention needed to ensure their safety and well-being while working with the caregiver and family on permanency planning. With the sophistication of our SAFE system we have come to recognize that this alternative to creating a KSS casetype for tracking will make it so that our focus is on practice issues with working with the family and not on linking and duplicating efforts for tracking information in our system with a new casetype.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the children in a kin placement be counted as individuals rather than as a family count.

Response: As with all the issues related to kinship care, a child specific focus and increased support to the caregiver are two of the primary issues that we are addressing in the system. We support the recommendation from the QIC that we count every individual child that is in a kin placement and ensure that we are attending to their individualized needs. We will be creating within SAFE notifications and/or action items that will prompt caseworkers to have similar requirements for working with children in a kin placement as we do for children in foster care.

An example is for there to be a conversation with the child outside the presence of the caregiver each month as required by the case process review.

Recommendation: It is recommended that consideration be given to increasing the amount of client contact required for kinship cases. It is recommended that consideration be given to increasing the amount of client contact required for PSS cases.

Response: We support the recommendation that we take into consideration increasing the amount of client contact required for any in-home service case where a child remains with a family that has been in crisis. There is a current In-Home Workgroup chartered by the administrative team that is looking at practice guidelines and making recommendations for improving practice in working with families. This information will be given to the workgroup so that they can incorporate this into other recommendations they are making to strengthen our in-home services.

Substance Abuse:

Recommendation: It is recommended that a subcommittee of the QI committee be supported to develop multidisciplinary training across the state.

Response: Child and Family Services is happy to support a subcommittee being formed to develop multidisciplinary training that will include:

- Consistent response by law enforcement and CPS staff on cases of newborns alleged to have been exposed to substances
- An emphasis on recording accurate data regarding contributing factors in the SAFE data-base
- Information regarding time parameters under which parents must show substantial progress to have their children returned to their custody/care.

We also appreciate your suggestion to gather information from the attendees about their need for additional training or resource information related to substance abuse. Darren Burdette, CPS program manager and Mary Catherine Jones from the professional development team have been informed they will participate on the subcommittee. \$5800 has been secured to fund the travel and per-diem for some members of the subcommittee to provide the multidisciplinary training across the state. This funding will also pay for a lunch during training. This funding is provided through a grant and as such needs to be spent by Oct 1, 2008.

On April 24, 2008, the State Quality Improvement Committee submitted a [recommendation letter](#) concerning outreach and public relations efforts needed from the Department of Human Services, Office of Child Protection Ombudsman. The [response letter](#) from the Office of Child Protection Ombudsman was sent on May 21, 2008.

The committee recommended the following:

Recommendation 1: That groups such as medical providers, education, law enforcement, etc, receive a letter or flyer informing them of OCPO's role/function and contact information. It is also suggested that families might need some notification beyond the posters in the DCFS offices. Is it possible to include the OCPO's purpose and contact information on some of the information the families receive upon removal of their child?

Response: "OCPO will consider the most effective way and the means to provide information about OCPO with these and other professionals. In 2007, OCPO created posters that explained how one would go about having their concerns or complaints addressed. The poster included information on OCPO and provided contact information. The posters were distributed to all DCFS offices throughout the State. OCPO requested that the posters be placed in waiting rooms or on bulletin boards for general public access. OCPO has always recognized the need to inform the public and the consumers of DCFS services of OCPO's role and function. Other forms of advertisement have not been pursued because of not having enough staff to meet the potential demand.

Recommendation 2: That a survey of some sort be developed to send recipients of OCPO services to measure their satisfaction. Of particular interest is whether or not complainants felt that OCPO being a part of DHS and housed in the same building as DCFS allowed for enough distance/objectivity?

Response: A customer satisfaction survey was completed in 2000 when Marsha Peterson was the Ombudsman. Then, under the direction of Craig Monson, another customer survey was conducted in 2003. In 2003, OCPO pulled a random sample from the complainants who had contacted OCPO in the previous year. At the time the survey was completed, there were less than 6 surveys returned to OCPO although OCPO provided a self addressed stamped envelope for each survey sent. Mr. Monson and the Deputy contacted three constituents and arranged to conduct personal interviews. Only two constituents followed through with the interview. The results of the survey did not provide any substantive information from which to draw any conclusions. Anecdotally, complainants seemed to be satisfied with the service they received from OCPO when their concerns are found to be valid. Constituents who want OCPO to compel DCFS to return children to their custody or direct DCFS to change a child's placement, for example, are not satisfied that OCPO can provide them with the outcome they are seeking. OCPO is generally told by the constituent that they feel listened to and that OCPO understands their concerns and are appreciative of information OCPO is able to provide regarding DCFS processes or additional resources. OCPO does hear occasionally that the constituent believes OCPO is a part of DCFS or that OCPO protects DCFS regardless of what the concern might be. OCPO does spend time with the constituent to educate him/her about the independence, role and function of this office. The prior survey did not reveal enough information to assist OCPO to consider altering the current OCPO processes. In light of the results of the prior efforts to obtain constituent feedback, it's unlikely that the time needed to develop and complete a survey would be an efficient use of our limited resources."

Eastern Region/Price Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
John Behn	Boy Scouts of America
Rick Shaw, General Manager	Sun Advocate News
Melissa Hamilton, Principal	Bruin Point Elementary
Kari Larsen	GAL Office
Shelley Wright, Director	Family Support/CJC
Rhonda Peterson	Carbon County
Lisa Branch	Local Interagency Council/Past Foster Parent
Jeff Olinger	Department of Workforce Services
Heather Ogden, Counselor	Ogden School
Kyle Elder	Carbon County Mental Health
Rulinda Wahlberg	Past Client
Kobi Marchello-Chair	Utah Foster Care Foundation
Patsy Buchmiller	Utah State Department of Health-Fostering Healthy Children

Significant Activities

The Eastern QIC has been successful at keeping a consumer on the committee. The QIC identified drug testing and budget concerns as issues they want to focus on in the future. A letter was sent to all ecclesiastical leaders about the need for foster families and the QIC provided a foster parent immersion experience on October 14th.

Recommendations and Responses

On February 3, 2008 DCFS administration responded to questions raised by the Eastern QIC (<http://utahqic.utah.gov/documents/EASTERNQIRESPONSE.pdf>)

Question: Why are there no accommodations for staff who wish to make DCFS their career, such as longevity and merit raises?

Response: The rules of longevity are determined by the Department of Human Resources and apply to all state employees. Merit raises can only be approved by the state legislature. Child and Family Services is working on a proposal for a type of career ladder system, similar to that of the Department of Education. This proposal will be made in the 2009 legislative session.

Question: Given the work DCFS does, the paperwork and licensure required, why are they not paid more as a child welfare social worker over other social work jobs?

Response: It is difficult to truly convey the differences when comparing our staff to other Divisions within the Department of Human Services. Child welfare social workers are indexed

the same as other social workers. Risk, stress, paperwork requirements and the magnitude of the decisions our staff have to make will be included in the proposal for the “career ladder” system at next year’s legislative session.

Question: Whose job is it to work with the legislature to provide raises for social workers who work for DCFS?

Response: The responsibility lies with both the administration of the Division of Child and Family Services as well as the Executive Director of the Department of Human Services. One of the difficulties is possible inequities within the Department of Human Services if Child and Family Services social workers were to receive a raise. Child and Family Services administration continues to work within the department toward a reasonable goal of increased compensation and equity. Once we have the proposal for a new career ladder type of system prepared, it will be shared with quality improvement committees. The advocacy of the citizen members to support and fund this system would be greatly appreciated.

The remainder of your letter was a list of wonderful suggestions. Unfortunately, the majority of them are not within our ability to change. They are either controlled by the legislature or the Division of Facilities Management. Rest assured that they will be considered for inclusion in the career ladder proposal as mentioned above. The suggestions we do have control of are the following:

Suggestion: Have the SAFE screen NOT pop up with the red notification, the first thing seen when turning it on. This serves as a reminder of all you are not doing right.

Response: We do try to be strengths based in our approach with staff much as we hope they are strengths based with their clients. These notifications had been programmed this way so that workers could not miss the notice of a deadline. We appreciate your observations of negativity and will have the SAFE team investigate potential alternatives.

Suggestion: Ensure that workers caseload remains manageable.

Response: A workload study of all program areas was recently completed, which we are happy to share with your committee. We realize that employee retention goes hand in hand with ensuring manageable caseloads. One of the building blocks we are pursuing this current legislative session is the request for 18 additional full time employees including 14 caseworkers, 2 supervisors and 2 support staff.

Eastern Region/Roosevelt Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
Brian Raymond	Daggett County
Carolyn Watson	Prime Time 4 Kids
Cindy Warren	Roosevelt Housing Authority
Clark Kendall	Active Re-entry
Dan Wheeler	Vocational Rehabilitation
Deb Smith	Child and Family Services
Jason Rasmussen	Foster Grandparent Program
Jeanie Tobert	Uintah Basin Applied Technology
Kathy Reel	Ute Tribe Headstart
Lynda Schade	Utah State University Extension for Duchesne County
Lynn Bigelow	Adult and Aging Services
Lynn Whitman	Division of Services for People With Disabilities
Margo Weeks	Department of Workforce Services
Marsha Perry	Northeastern Counseling Center
Matt Watkins	Division of Child and Family Services
Pam Webster, Domestic Violence Coordinator	Division of Child and Family Services
Pam Womack	HEAT Program
Ronda Olsen	Utah State University Extension
Sandy Schurz	Duchesne Early Childhood Program
Suzanne Prevedel	Duchesne County Adult Education
Valle Mortenson	Tri County Health
Vanessa Liesik	DDI Vantage
Wendy Simmons	Roosevelt Office of the Department of Workforce Services

Significant Activities

This QIC is new and is dealing with unique child welfare issues existing in the Roosevelt Area. Volunteers including Robin Taylor, Janet Row, Kasie Peterman, Rose Miller, Pamela Tew, Quanah Powaukee, Lorena Horse, Norman Bell, served on the System of Care Committee.

Recommendations and Responses

No recommendations were made by this QIC during the period of this report.

Northern Region Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
Brenda Durtschi	Utah Foster Care Foundation
Carol Baumann, Regional Director	Division of Child and Family Services
Estelle Dahlkemper	Community Volunteer
Jeff Tesch, Clinician	Head Start
Eileen Nicholas	Ogden School District
Rhett Fronk, Director	Christmas Box House
Debee Gold	Davis Behavioral Health
Mary Francisco	Utah State Department of Health, Fostering Healthy Children
Sarah Pomeroy, TAL Supervisor	Division of Child and Family Services
Patty Conner-Rose	The Christmas Box House
Pam Clark	Family Support Center
Nancy Xenede Card	Community Volunteer
Sally Jones (Co-Chair)	McKay Dee Hospital
Teresa Fowers, Licensing Specialist	Office of Licensing
Linda Melton	Foster Parent
Daryl Melton (Chair)	Foster Parent
Bob Burch	Foster Parent
Lynell Packer	Community Volunteer – “Prayer of the Children”
Landon Halverson	Ogden City Corporation
Joyce Booth, Paralegal	Office of the Attorney General
Pat Milar	Weber Human Services
John Rice	Community Volunteer
Dan Webster	Utah Foster Care Foundation
Jean Marie Morris, Kinship Specialist	Division of Child and Family Services
Pam Hugie	Community Volunteer
Stacey Snyder	Guadian Ad Litem’s Office
Craig Monson	Community Volunteer
Sherri Enger	Christmas Box House
Crystal Atwood	Community Volunteer
Pat Ropelato	Community Volunteer
Sylvia Cobabe	Community Volunteer
Pam Nacario, Office Manager	Division of Child and Family Services

Significant Activities

The Northern QIC created a subcommittee to focus on permanency issues as well as finding kin for out of home placements. The QIC received a donation and pledge of employee time from community partners to assist in locating caregivers. In addition, the QIC has been functioning

for several years, with very low turnover. This year the QIC will identify ‘barriers’ to permanency by reviewing cases that have been in the system over 2 years. The goal is to identify solutions to those barriers. The QIC and Region held two successful immersion days with attendance between 60 and 70 each time. The committee is proud of its Celebration of Hope event where Stories of Hope, honoring DCFS staff and improving staff morale, were presented.

Recommendations and Responses

No recommendations were made by this QIC during the period of this report.

Salt Lake Valley Region Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
Evan Nebeker	Guadian Ad Litem
Shron Graser	Youth Services
Marilee Greenland	Division of Child and Family Services
Cathy Haney	Family Support Center
Curt Hansen	Granite School District
Dr. Karen Hansen	Safe and Healthy Families Primary Childrens Medical Center
Shaorn Hughs	Community Member
Teresa Jacobs	Family Support Center
Annet Jan	Attorney Genrals Office
Caroly Jensen	Tooele Count CJS
Peggy Jerome	Primary Care Family Therapy
Marilyn Johnson	Community Member
Steve Leyba	Department of Workforce Services
Diane Moore	Division of Child and Family Services
Tonya Myrup	Division of Child and Family Services
Evan Nebeker	Guadian Ad Litem
Marcela Rodrigues	The Road Home
Marjean Searcy	SLC Police Department
Mindy Simon	YWCA
Misty Butler	Administrative Office of the Courts
Darren Carr	South Salt Lake Police Department
Cheryl Dubach	Utah Department of Health-Fostering Healthy Children
Jennifer Baldrige	Centro de la Familia
Stephanie Steele	The Sharing Place
Arn Stolp	Community Member
Mark Weisbender	Silverado Counseling
Patricia Worthington	Community Member

Significant Activities

As a direct result of increasing the number of members that represent community partners membership has doubled. The QIC sponsored the Heart of Gold awards for the second year. Placement stability was addressed by the QIC and the committee is forming a task force to help match children to families. The QIC is helping with congregate care issues and selected services delivered to TAL youth as one of their top priorities.

Recommendations and Responses

On May 8, 2008, The Salt Lake Valley Region Quality Improvement Committee sent [a letter](#) to Child and Family Services administration making suggestions relating to employee retention. Because this letter recommends instituting a career ladder system for caseworkers, no response was due from Child and Family Services administration.

Recommendation: We would like to suggest that the Division look into the feasibility of implementing a career ladder system for caseworkers statewide and also look at the potential for creative staffing with job sharing and part-time opportunities. Our committee would fully support any program to help retain employees. We would hope that this would provide some incentive to workers to remain with the division for more years of service and enhance the care you provide to children and families with the additional experience these employees bring to their positions.

This Quality Improvement Committee sent a [recommendation letter](#) to Child and Family Services administration dated July 18, 2008, concerning Tooele County and the number of children who enter care with substance abuse as a contributing factor. The [response letter](#) from Child and Family Services was sent to the Salt Lake Valley Region Quality Improvement Committee on August 18, 2008.

Recommendation: We noted that Tooele seemed to have more children placed in foster care vs. in-home services than the other offices in the Salt Lake Region. We requested that the region review the data and come back to us with reasons as to why they might be placing the children in out of home care more than the other offices. A review noted the low number of cases, which affected the overall percentages. In addition three cases may have been provided in-home services in place of foster care. Our committee is most concerned about the lack of mental health services available in the Tooele area on a consistent basis. In many cases, services have to be “piecemealed” together for the parents and youth. The committee would like to request that DCFS discuss these concerns with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to see if there are ways to enhance the services in this area of the region that is increasing in population.

Response: Our Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Program Administrator was assigned to look into this matter. He first met with DCFS staff to get a better idea of what barriers to treatment they may be facing. He also had a meeting with Tooele Valley Mental Health and the new DCFS Program Administrator for Tooele. Our Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Program Administrator reports the meeting on August 12, was very productive.

The representative from Tooele Valley Mental Health, while relatively new to this position, is working very diligently to meet community needs. He has increased programming in several areas and graciously volunteered to transport adolescent's in our care to services offered by Juvenile Justice that are only available in Salt Lake City. He is also willing to look at the fee schedule for services offered to our clients. The parties agreed on some referral protocols that should speed up the process and timelines under which our clients will be seen. Now that this coordination and communication has been opened up at the local level between these two agencies, many of the problems staff are facing can and will be addressed and hopefully resolved to better meet our clients and the community's needs. The parties also asked that Royce Webb, LCSW and a member of their team, attend the monthly interagency team meeting to ensure open lines of communication between all our community partners in the area.

Southwest Region/Cedar City Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
Duane Jarvis	South West Center
Shandra Powell	Family Support Center
Mark Hollingshead	Division of Child and Family Services
Amy Bates	
Douglas Spencer	
John Shrum	Department of Workforce Services
Destry Maycock	
Stephanie Furnival	Children's Justice Center
Keith Millet	Cedar City Police Department
Denny Heaton	Southwest Education Academy
Annie VanYperen	Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
Gwen Knight, Coordinator	CASA
Amber Perkins	Parent Representative
Mark Yahne	BACA
Denise Rember	Foster Care Citizen's Review Board

Significant Activities

Members agreed that the chairperson would serve for one year. The committee conducted a recognition event for foster parents and recognized DCFS workers for their hard work. The QIC formed a Public Relations subcommittee this year which will disseminate information about the committee and its function.

Recommendations and Responses

No recommendations were made by this QIC during the period of this report.

Southwest Region/Sevier County Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
Bruce Zylks	Division of Child and Family Services
Don & Coylene Brinkerhoff	Foster Parents
Gail Albrecht	Sevier County School District
Josephine Griffith	Six Counties Senior Citizens
Karen Anderson	Division of Child and Family Services
Karen Payne	Guardian ad Litem/Casa Representative
MaryLee Harrison	Retired Domestic Violence Worker
Susan Munk	Department of Workforce Services
Tammy Powell	Juvenile Justice Services
Leanne Geigle	CUCC
Arlene Cromwell	
Marissa Douglas	
Pam Allred	Division of Child and Family Services
Mike Godfrey	Division of Child and Family Services
Valorie Johnson	Division of Child and Family Services
Caron Withers	New Horizons
Shelly Haupt	
Angie Morrill	

Significant Activities

The committee identified worker retention and stability of foster placements as their goals for this year. Four QIC members assisted with the QCR review. The QIC sponsored a day long Zero Tolerance for Drug Use event designed to raise awareness of drug use/abuse in Sevier County. They held an immersion in September and are still working on raising funds for a local Children's Justice Center and drug court.

Recommendations and Responses

No recommendations were made by this QIC during the period of this report.

Southwest Region/Washington County Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Name	Agency
Chantel Markel, Realtor	Tolbert Nielsen Realty Group
Debbie Hofhines (Chair) Southwest Region Area Rep.	Utah Foster Care Foundation
Tami Fullerton, Assistant Program Director	Division of Juvenile Justice Services
Ms. Trina McCoy, Victims Advocate	St. George Police Department
Mr. Greg Loebel, Coordinator	Pilot Community
Terry Ogborn	Millcreek High School
Jennifer Nichols	Justice Court
Mike Carr, Head Counselor	Washington County School District
Biff Lowry	Community Member
Armondo Parras	Community Member
Sara Boatright	Kinship/Foster Mother
Beverly Luttrell	
Ms. Patricia Sheffield, Director	CJC
Sandy Cox	Casa Volunteer
Jeff Wilcox, Esq.	Attorney
Madonna Melton	DOVE Center
Diane Callister, Retention Specialist	Utah Foster Care Foundation
Robert W Johnson	Division of Child and Family Services
Lynda Whitlock	TLC Health Program
Tina Call, Program Manager	Division of Child & Family Services
Gordon Gunn, Program Administrator	Division of Child & Family Services
Tom Kelley, Program Manager	Division of Child and Family Services
Shirley Owen, Program Manager	Division of Child and Family Services
Ruth Huth, Domestic Violence Caseworker	Division of Child and Family Services
Suzanne Chavira, Program Manager	Division of Child and Family Services
Michelle Patterson, Senior Assistant Caseworker	Division of Child and Family Services
Pebble Mowery	CASA Volunteer
Melinda Barney, Case Manager	DJJS
Glorya Schow	CASA Volunteer
Charlotte Pace, Coordinator	CASA
Jane Fields	

Significant Activities

The QIC developed a common goal to address preventative services. The Southwest/Washington QIC hosted a Success Night designed to encourage employee retention. Most of their members are QCR trained and are becoming lead reviewers.

Recommendations and Responses

The Southwest Region/Washington County Quality Improvement Committee sent two recommendation letters to the State Quality Improvement Committee on October 27, 2008:

Recommendation: [Cohabitation Act Request](#)

Our Quality Improvement Team would like to make a request due to our concern regarding the Cohabitation Act. We have recently become aware of a child who was placed by DCFS with his grandparents. The grandparents had been cohabitating for 25 years and were required to become legally married in order to adopt the child. By doing so, they lost a great deal of financial benefits which they, in the end, decided were less important than the child's well being. While admirable of the grandparents, we feel that this is completely unnecessary. Some of the financial benefits they and others could lose are: 1) Social Security Benefits; 2) Widow's Pensions (which was the financial loss in the above mentioned case); 3) Tax Benefits. Therefore, our team would request that you lobby for an amendment to this Act that would exclude kinship. We feel that in the above case, the provisions of the Act actually hurt the child by putting the family at risk financially.

Response: -- [Cohabitation Act Request](#)

As a committee we share your concerns that the Cohabitation Act may be hindering viable kinship or foster families from taking care of children. After reviewing your letter, the State QIC has agreed that this issue is of great importance. Your concerns will be forwarded to the Division of Child and Family Services director, Duane Betournay, and Deputy Director and legislative liaison, Charri Brummer, for their review and to use in possible discussions during this legislative session. As a local QIC please consider contacting your local legislators to explain the problems you have identified in regards to the Cohabitation Act.

Request-- [Peer Mentor Request](#)

Studies have shown that youth who transition from foster care to independent living face hardships and difficulties as adults. Typically, they have less education, lower paying jobs, higher crime rates, higher medical needs, higher pregnancy rates, and proportionately score in the lower ranges of most socioeconomic indicators. A study of the Las Vegas Nevada foster care ILP program identified demographics such as age, race, gender, income, education and employment. The results were alarming as most of these types of studies are: 31% graduated high school, 30% had attended some college, 60% had an income less than \$10,000 annually, with 10% having no income at all, 30% complained of serious medical problems, 25% were on Medicaid, and only 9% had private insurance. We don't believe that this is exclusive to foster children in Nevada, but that this is a trend nationally. The Washington County Division of Child & Family Services has implemented a pilot program working with the Transition to Adult living Program (TAL). We are excited to monitor this and observe the success it might bring to the youth in our system. However, we are concerned that once the children are 18, or age out of the system, they will still struggle to succeed financially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually. Due to our concern for children in foster care who age out of the system, we would like to see a program implemented to support

these youth beyond what the state can do for them. In order to do this, we would like to offer each youth a peer mentor. This peer mentor would need to attend appropriate prelicense foster parent classes and have a background check completed. Although ideally this person would be a healthy mom or dad, we believe that a peer mentor would be the next best thing since this is not available to them. If these young adults have a consistent peer mentor to reach out to and ask advice and use as a resource when they don't know where to turn, we believe these disheartening statistics would improve tremendously. We propose that a monthly stipend of a minimum of \$50 be offered to the peer mentors who are willing to participate. In return for the stipend, the following would be required of the peer mentors:

1. Attend one session of the TAL classes so that they are aware of what is being taught.
2. Visit the young adult in their residence a minimum of two times a month
3. Contact the young adult by phone a minimum of once a week.

Research has also shown that if the youth do not have a reason to participate in a program such as this, they will not cooperate. Therefore, we would also like to request that funding be provided to offer them a stipend as well. We would like to request a stipend of \$25 per month for them. In return for the stipend, the young adult would be required to cooperate and be available for the peer mentors.

Response --[Peer Mentor Request](#)

The State QIC feels these youth are vulnerable and could benefit from additional services. As a committee we discussed some possible resources for these identified youth: Jane Lewis, State Program Administrator for the Transition to Adult Living (TAL) program and Mike Beacco, Southwest Region TAL coordinator are currently working on creating a mentoring program for youth transitioning out of foster care. They are looking at the Youth Mentor Project in Salt Lake City as a model. The Youth Mentoring Project matches youth who have been in foster care with an adult mentor or family. The mentor is available to help the youth with essential adult life skills and day-to-day issues. This program is grant funded through the State Office of Education with their at risk youth funding. You also proposed a monthly stipend for those participating in a mentoring program. Unfortunately, due to the recent budget crisis this will not be an option at this point. Since it is a volunteer only program, the Youth Mentor Project may be able to assist with ideas as to how to be successful without the funding.

Western Region Quality Improvement Committee

Membership

Members	
Name	Agency
Dan Grinder	Community Partner
Laura Blanchard	CJC
Richard Nance	Utah County Health Department
Ronda Gates	Center for Women and Children
Barbara McCleary	AAG
John Moody	Guardian Ad Litem

Evelyn Cloward	Utah County Health Department
Vicky Proctor	Provo Police Department
LoAn Lee	Community Action Program
Marla Raff	Utah County Health Department
Barbara Quackenbush	Nebo School District
Monica Hullinger	Nebo School District
Bert Peterson	Division of Child and Family Services
Trish Coburn	Division of Child and Family Services
Beverly Hart	Division of Child and Family Services
Brent Platt	Division of Child and Family Services
Jared Osmond	Community Partner
Judy Robertson	Division of Child and Family Services
Wendy Bunnell	Utah Foster Care Foundation
Judy Gillies	CJC
John Bonnet	Division of Child and Family Services, Drug Court
L.J. Dustman	Office of Licensing
Stephanie Ellis	UFABA
Renee Calkins	UFABA
John Thrill	Utah Foster Care Foundation
David Bayles	Boys and Girls Club
Miriam Campbell	Provo School District
Ha Khong	Provo School District
Betty Quinn	Christmas Box House
Sherri Engar	Christmas Box House
Elizabeth Williams	Christmas Box House
Rebekah Olsen	United Way
Martin Hurlburt	Wealth Management Systems
Brian Robinson	Summit (Alpine School District)
Teresa Tavares	Centro Hispano

Significant Activities

The number of foster parents has risen due to help given by this committee. Member Jared Osmond donated his services and created a Public Services Announcement for use by DCFS. Members of the QIC attended the Adoption Conference held April 10 and 11th. The QIC held an immersion on October 9th.

Recommendations and Responses

No recommendations were made by this QIC during the period of this report.