

Welcome to the Caregiver Mentor Training Program

Orange County Social Services Agency
Children and Family Services



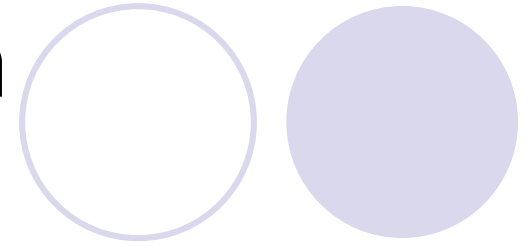
Trainers:

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Caregiver Mentor Program Training Agenda – Day 1



- Introduction
 - What is the Caregiver Mentor Program?
 - Why is it important, why now and why do we need to train?
- Caregiver Mentor Program Goals/Objectives
 - Criteria
 - Activities and Responsibilities
- How to be an Effective Mentor/Becoming a Mentor
 - Characteristics
 - Types of Mentors

What Is The Caregiver Mentor Program



- The Caregiver Mentor Program
 - A group of trained foster parents who provide support and assistance to other foster parents on how to be more successful working with the Agency, and the children and families that we serve.

Why Do We Need The Caregiver Mentor Program

- Foster Parents are the Agency's greatest resource to help other foster parents learn about foster parenting.
- Foster Parents who understand what is expected of them and feel supported, are more likely to want to remain foster parents.
- Foster parents who feel supported and know what to do, provide for greater stability of children in placement.

Why Did Orange County Create The Caregiver Mentor Program

- QPI – Quality Parenting Initiative
 - Carole Shauffer (Executive Director of Youth Law Center in San Francisco) and Robert Butterworth (Secretary of Florida DCF) came together to develop a different image of foster care.
 - Began in 2009 in Florida.
 - Active in 16 of Florida's 20 Judicial Circuits
- QPI – California
 - After hearing the results of QPI in other states California adopted this initiative.
 - Currently active in 20 out of 58 counties



Goals Of QPI California

- Redesigning the Child Welfare Foster Care System.
- High Quality Foster Care.
- Reinvention of the entire approach to foster care.
- Changing the concept of developing and retaining quality foster parents for children in out-of-home care.
- Raising the standards rather than lowering them.
- Better outcomes for children in foster care.
- Strengthening the family the child lives with (biological, foster, relative or adoptive family) .
- Trying to create partners, teachers and professional caregivers.

How QPI - California Began In Orange County

- In March 2012 Orange County held it's first of five QPI Sessions.
- Several meetings and trainings were held with Carole Shauffer and Deb Bronson-McGrath (CEO of Discover True North).
- Orange County created a brand statement.
- Established 5 workgroups to address the goals of QPI for Orange County.



Orange County Brand Statement

Today's foster parents and relative caregivers in Orange County are committed, loving families, helping families. They have a lifetime impact on children and families in our community.

Foster parents and relative caregivers are:

- *Valued, professional team members who mentor strengthen and support children and their families.*
- *Trained in meeting the diverse needs of children in their care.*
- *Respectful of children's connections to their culture, family and traditions.*

*It's not a job, it's a journey. **TAKE THE JOURNEY WITH US!***

The QPI Workgroups



- The Initial QPI Workgroups
 - Caregiver Mentor Program
 - Voice Mail Greetings
 - Foster Parents Input for JV 290 Court Report
 - Use of Icebreaker Meetings
 - Foster Parent QPI Training
- The Current QPI Workgroups
 - Transitions
 - Mission Possible
 - Promoting QPI to CFS Staff

Why Do We Need To Train Foster Parents To Be Mentors

- The best mentors are people who have already had the experience and know what worked and what did not.
- The Agency needs to share the Agency values and expectations so that everyone is on the same page.
- Training allows us to provide the opportunity to learn, critique and share best practices and standards.
- They model QPI principles in building strong working with the Agency, families, and community partners.

Caregiver Mentor Program

Goals/Objectives



- Goals:

- Support to new and existing foster parents.
- To increase the overall retention rate of foster parents.
- To increase the placement stability of children in foster homes.
- To assist foster parents in successfully navigating through the child welfare system.

- Objectives:

- Help protégés develop into successful foster parents

Definition of a Successful Foster Parent

- A full partner on a team supporting healthy development and achieving permanency for children who cannot live with their parents. The specific job of the foster parent is to provide high quality parenting, consistent with the needs of the child, when appropriate to mentor the biological parent, and to maintain a lifelong commitment to the child wherever he or she lives.

Successful Foster Parent “Best Practice” Behaviors



- Treats children as their own.
- Invests in the child’s life (appointments, activities, ask questions).
- Doesn’t give up; unconditional commitment.
- Willing to partner and be a team player.
- Teaches child everyday life skills i.e.; cooking, laundry, planning for future.
- Acts as a mentor to the birth parents.
- Maintains realistic expectations of the children.
- Flexible and open to change.
- Loves the children.



Partnership Plan

California Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care

Teamwork, Respect, Nurturing, Strong Families

All of us are responsible for the well being of children in the custody of child welfare agencies. The children's caregivers along with the California Department of Social Services, county child welfare agencies, private foster family agencies, and contractors and staffs of these agencies undertake this responsibility in partnership, aware that none of us can succeed by ourselves.

Children need normal childhoods as well as loving and skillful parenting that honor their loyalty to their biological family and their need to develop and maintain permanent lifelong connections. The purpose of this document is to articulate a common understanding of the values, principles, and relationships necessary to fulfill this responsibility. The following commitments are embraced by all of us. This document in no way substitutes for or waives statutes or rules; however, we will attempt to apply these laws and regulations in a manner consistent with this agreement.

Effective Mentoring



- Responsibilities and Activities
- Characteristics
- Coaching
- Build Positive Relationships
- Maintain Balance
- Be Solution Oriented
- Be Culturally Sensitive



How To Be An Effective Mentor

- The objective of being an effective mentor is so that all foster parents can become the best possible caretakers for the children that we serve, and help the families that we serve.
- Orange County's Children and Family Services (CFS) Mission Statement:
 - Partner with families to ensure their children live in safe, nurturing and permanent homes.
 - Families have the desire, strengths and abilities to make healthy choices for their children and family's well-being.
 - Setting the standard of excellence in public child welfare

Key Activities and Responsibilities

- Assist, guide and provide protégés with information that will promote positive communication between the families and the Social Services Agency.
- Assist protégés with problem solving situations that occur.
- Assist protégés with understanding the role of the caseworkers, juvenile court, protection and safety issues, as well as, the agency's process in abuse allegation investigations.
- Encourage education and training to maintain foster care license.
- Assist protégés in locating resources available in the community.
- Provide support to protégés in crisis situations such as placement disruptions and investigations.
- Serve as a sounding board and provide support as needed.
- Participate in Quarterly meetings to enhance the quality of the Mentor Program.



Characteristics of a Good Mentor

- A good communicator.
- A good listener.
- Approachable.
- A solution seeker that uses positive strategies.
- Honest and trustworthy.
- Patient.
- Possess cultural competency.

Mentors: Coach protégés to work effectively with the Agency

- Reinforce Agency mission, guiding principles and core values.
- Provide perspective through working knowledge of the child's journey through the social services and court system.
- Model QPI principles in building strong working relationships with Agency personnel.

Build Positive Relationship With Protégés



- Have strong communication skills
 - Nonverbal communication.
 - Attentive listening.
 - Managing stress.
 - Recognize and understand your own emotions and those of the person you're communicating with.
- Share your stories openly
- Let protégé express stress and frustrations
- Be honest, and maintain confidentiality
- Be solution oriented
- Model a team approach
- Use empathetic listening skills = listen in order to understand.
- Know when to ask for help

Maintaining Balance



- Know your limitations.
- Maintain boundaries.
- Time management.
- Setting expectations.

Problem Solving



- The important steps found in a problem-solving method are:
 - Define the problem.
 - Analyze the cause.
 - Develop the plan.
 - Implement and monitor the plan.
 - Review results to ensure problem is solved.

Cultural Competency



- The ability to work effectively with people from a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints”.
- Paul Pedersen’s multicultural competence model emphasized three components: awareness, knowledge and skills.
 - Awareness: Consciousness of one's personal reactions to people who are different.
 - Knowledge: The ability to recognize what we know and seek to find out what we don’t.
 - Skills: Focuses on practicing cultural competence by recognizing our communication and behaviors.

Becoming A Mentor



- Commitment
- Types of Mentors
- Protégé Selection Process

Expected Commitment of Caregiver Mentors

- We are grateful for foster who are willing to help others succeed and become successful foster parents.
- Caregiver Mentors will:
 - participate in Caregiver Mentor Program Training
 - commit to participation in the program for a minimum of 6 months.
 - devote a minimum of 8 hours per month to mentoring activities.
 - attend quarterly progress and training meetings
 - complete records to track program effectiveness
 - make contact with protégés within 72 hours of assignment

Types of Mentors



- Primary Mentors

- Assigned to a maximum of 5 protégés.
- Implement the responsibilities and expectations of the Caregiver Mentor Program.
- Identify the needs of the protégé which may require specialized skills outside of primary mentors expertise.

- Specialty Mentor

- Assigned by the Caregiver Mentor Coordinator (CMC) to assist Primary Mentors in addressing specialized needs of a protégé.



Protégé Selection Process

- Newly licensed foster parents/caregivers will be referred to the Caregiver Mentor Coordinator (CMC).
- Current licensed homes/caregivers that request a mentor will be considered.
- Current licensed homes/caregivers may be referred by agency staff.
- Matching will be determined on the caregivers' needs and what the mentor can offer.
- Should problems arise and the relationship not be successful due to scheduling, communication style, or personality types, then a new Mentor may be assigned.

Life Cycle of a Mentoring Relationship

- A successful conclusion to the ending of the mentoring experience is one in which both parties:
 - recognize how and where empowerment has occurred
 - mutually end the mentoring relationship.
- What frequently happens in successfully closed mentoring is an ongoing friendship that allows for occasional mentoring and a positive ongoing relationship.