

MAY 2023 | ISSUE 2

QPI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Quality Parenting Initiative- Scott County
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Quality Parenting Initiative; In Action!

In 2015 a mother to three children suffered a traumatic event that left her physically and emotionally wounded. The mother started turning to alcohol to cope and it led to a downward spiral in her life which had previously been hard, but manageable. The mother's drinking got out of control, and she ended up losing custody of her children, one to his father and the others to her mother. When her fourth child was born in 2021, mom knew she had to stop using alcohol, but it was hard; she needed help. When mom ended up in the hospital because of her drinking the child was placed in foster care. Grandmother, who had cared for all of mom's children up to that point, knew she couldn't take care of the child at that time, so the baby was placed in a non-relative home. Mom says "It was scary" for her. Until then, she says, she had "never had anyone besides my mom ever be there for my kids". Mom soon discovered this would be a relationship she now describes as "just amazing". When foster sent her photos of child smiling, sitting on her lap, or text messages letting her know child's schedule, "It meant a lot". It brings mom to tears when she considers what she now calls a blessing in her life. Of the foster parents, mom says "she treats my son like I treat my son; it doesn't matter that he's not her biological child". (Continued on pg. 2)



THIS MONTH'S FEATURED ARTICLES

QPI In Action
Positive Influence from QPI

Family Perspective: The Positive Influence from QPI

Reflections from Foster Parents

- QPI Quality Parenting Initiative was a concept I latched onto right away because it felt so essential in setting the foundation of the relationship with the baby's mom and family. There are so many unknowns that come with fostering, but having the QPI training gave me a few more tools to try to make this experience as positive and meaningful for everyone involved. When a person doesn't have a compass, you get lost. And I think **QPI felt like a natural compass for building a bridge between us, the foster family, and the foster child's family.**
- Prior to receiving baby in our care, I had a very lengthy phone conversation with my "mentor mom" and that was invaluable. The biggest gift she offered was stressing humility and recognizing in shared situations, let Mom be mom. She encouraged me to step back at appointments and other scenarios so Mom could still be mom; I was there simply to support. This mindset of being a support really helped me. Their roles are significant, and my role was important, but I felt if the goal was reunification, then I want their roles to be seen, encouraged and respected. In a way, QPI stresses this same idea, especially with that first phone call to establish what the baby's family had for routines and what the child's preferences were. Without QPI, and certainly without my mentor mom, I would have felt ill equipped, and I think I would have created more tension and frustration in situations where I may have tried to insert myself when I didn't need to. I also want to highlight that it is a two way relationship. From the beginning and even to this day, Grandma and Mom have both been phenomenal in terms of being humble, full of gratitude, and very responsive. I truly believe it takes everyone working together to make it successful and I wouldn't have been able to be as supportive, had it not been reciprocated.

(Cont. from pg. 2) As mom continues to work on healing her own self, she reflects that this experience with QPI is maybe one of the best things that could have happened to her; "Everyone came together for my baby".

For Grandmother, saying she couldn't care for the child was a painful decision. She cried when she dropped the child off with who was then a stranger. All of that quickly changed because of QPI and the ways the foster parent embraced the family. Grandma says "I always felt I knew his schedule, his accomplishments and just how much they loved him. It was extremely comforting". Throughout the time foster parents cared for the baby they supported his relationships with members of his extended family, often letting them have him on weekends. The foster family became an extension of the birth family and sometimes they spent time all together, hanging out or participating in fun activities. Today, the child is living with grandmother and she plans to raise him. His foster family remains a big part of their lives and will continue to help support the child in whatever ways they can. QPI was instrumental in making it possible for these relationships to develop. QPI is built on the belief that excellent parenting with strong, positive relationships is the best intervention we can offer children to enable them to heal as they grow up to become adults, (<https://qpi4kids.org/what-is-qpi/>) and for the child and his family it was a positive experience. As Mom said, "I wouldn't change anything".



Building solid foundations to collaborate to serve kids and remembering that the heart of the system is the child/youth and family. -Scott County QPI Flyer