

Attachment D

20. What are the outcomes of Quality Parenting Centers (QPC) in other states?

Current research shows that consistent and frequent visitation between parents and their children in out-of-home care can reduce trauma for children and is crucial to strengthening and maintaining family relationships. It is also important for parent-child attachments and can decrease the sense of abandonment that children often experience when they are removed from their home and placed in out-of-home care. Family visitation is linked to positive outcomes, including improved child well-being, less time in out-of-home care, and faster reunification (when safety is established and in the best interest of the child). Visitation helps preserve the child's sense of belonging as part of a family and community, and fosters the maintenance of cultural connections. It facilitates permanency planning, promotes more timely reunification, and helps in the decision-making process to establish an alternative permanency plan for a child in out-of-home care.

Visiting between youth and their families has long been regarded as a core of reunification services (Hess & Proch, 1993). Youth who have regular, frequent contact with their family while in foster care experience a greater likelihood of reunification, shorter stays in out-of-home care, increased chances that the reunification will be long lasting, and overall improved well-being and positive adjustment to placement (Weintraub, 2008). Home-like and other supportive settings are preferable for visitation (Haight, et al. 2001). One example of a program similar to the proposed QPC is the Family Connections Reunity House in New Jersey. After 14 years of operation, Reunity House has reunited nearly 300 families. The South Orange site was so successful the program was replicated in different locations in the state.

The National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning established a database of 104 agencies providing services that help children in foster care visit with their families. 95.4% of programs responding offer on-site supervised visits. Agencies may also offer visitation offsite (e.g., restaurants, parks, home of relative, etc). We find that most of our families prefer an option of a home-like setting.

Based on our research, there are at least 11 states that offer center-based supervised visitation programs - many offer different programs within the state. These include: FL, RI, NJ, NY, DE, IN, CA, NV, AZ, OR and NC. All provide coaching, mentoring and a therapeutic approach similar to what DCF will be implementing. Other programs operate in Australia. These programs have as their goals: timely reunification/timely permanency, improved parent/child relationship, improved parenting skills, reducing future maltreatment and improved child well-being. The above is specific to the child welfare population. Many other visitation programs focus on custody disputes, visits with a non-custodial parent, and being a place for a safe exchange between parents.

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How Reunity House in South Orange Changed Foster Care in NJ (9/15/2014). Retrieved from <https://villagegreenj.com>
Weintraub, A. (2008). Information Packet Parent-Child Visiting. Retrieved from www.nrcfcppp.org