

# **RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL (RFA) ...AND THE STATUTE**

**IMPLEMENTATION WEBINAR:  
JANUARY 24, 2013 FROM 9AM TO 12PM**

# AGENDA

- Looking back ... What's been done?
- Quality Parenting Initiative
- Review of Statute
- Organizational Structure for RFA
- Moving forward...

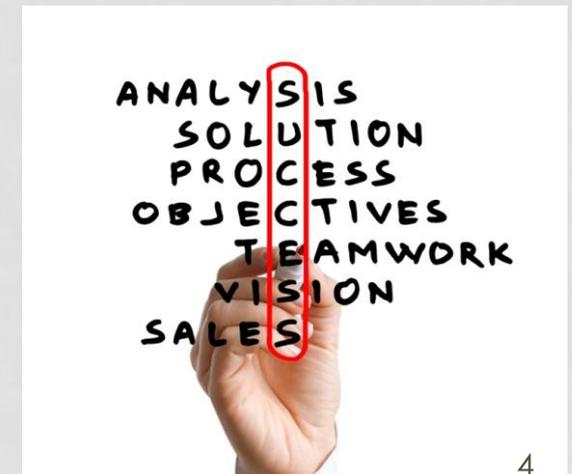


## PRESENTERS:

- Lisa Molinar, Share Divisions Inc.
- Jennifer Rodriguez, Youth Law Center
- Karen Gunderson, CDSS
- Kimberly Wrigley, CDSS
- Cathy Ballantine, CDSS

# WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

- Build an understanding of the key components of RFA as specified in statute
- Develop understanding of the role QPI may play in RFA
- Discuss and identify resources for county implementation



## **RFA PURPOSE STATEMENT**

To develop a unified, family friendly, and child centered resource family approval process that eliminates duplication and increases approval standards by incorporating a comprehensive psychosocial evaluation of all families including those that want to foster children, pursue adoption or are seeking guardianship of a child.

LOOKING BACK



# THE EARLY YEARS

1. 2000 - CDSS internally explored the concept
2. Included in the 2003 federal CFSR PIP
3. Workgroup for Consolidated Home Study (Melding) began in 2005 (CDSS/CWDA)
4. "Meldettes" (CDSS/CWDA) developed framework for legislation
5. AB 2161 (Hancock) 2006 - turned into a redevelopment bill.
6. AB 340 (Hancock) 2007 - Enacted 2007
7. SB 1013, Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012

# DISCUSSIONS, THEN AND NOW

## Challenges

- “Melding” differing requirement, cultures and language
- Landscape changed since the 2007 bill
- Alignment with related initiatives:
  - Quality Parenting Initiative
  - California Partners for Permanency
  - Katie A. Lawsuit Settlement
  - Others?
- Federal approval
- Sufficient pool of families

## Considerations

- What do our children need?
- What kind of families are needed?
- How do we create a process & standards that select for the kind of families that are needed?
- How do we ensure the process and standards work over time the way they were intended?

# QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE



# Why QPI

Foster Parenting for the 21st  
Century

# THE FOSTER PARENT IS THE MOST CRITICAL ELEMENT OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE FOR THE CHILD AND THE SYSTEM

- Foster parent is with the child much more than anyone else
- Nature has designed children to rely on parents, not courts or caseworkers
- Foster parent is best positioned to work with and help the family
- Foster parent is the custodian of the child's history

# YET WE DON'T RECRUIT FOR OUTSTANDING FAMILIES

- We recruit for home or beds as if we were talking about a place to live rather than a relationship and an intervention
- Consequently, we don't assess, train or support foster families to the key parenting and teaming responsibilities

# NOT EVERYONE CAN BE A GREAT FOSTER PARENT

- More challenging by far than just being a good parent
  - Love the child
  - Get to know the child
  - Advocate for the child
  - Work with the family
  - Understand and accommodate to culture
  - Work with the agency
  - Work with the court
  - Work with community agencies

# THE GOOD NEWS IS

- Many families are already doing this
- And many more can if we can reach them

# SYSTEM NEITHER RECRUITS NOR SUPPORTS FOR EXCELLENT PARENTING

- Recruitment has been for numbers and indiscriminating
- Recruiting homes and beds not families
- Public image is in the control of the media and chance rather than developing a positive image
- Has been unclear what expectations of resource families are
- Excellent performance is not rewarded nor are there consequences for less than adequate performance
- There are more obstacles to doing a good job than a bad job

# UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU CAN'T EXPECT OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

- No clearly articulated consensus on what is expected of foster parents
- No effort to recruit, assess and train to these expectations
- Multiple systems barriers to good performance
- A lack of respect for the challenges of the job

# QPI SOLUTION

- Project in 18 counties (including all RFA counties) led by YLC, CDSS and CWDA
- Identify and get consensus on what good foster families should be expected to do
- Summarize that in a brand message that is a guide for the system
- Live the brand

# 21ST CENTURY FOSTER PARENTS

- Are committed to what they do and are always learning
- Love the children they care for even though their hearts may be broken
- Work to be sure that the children they love will be safe and well cared for even after they leave their home
- Are full respected partners in the work of the child welfare system

# FOSTER PARENTS HAVE HIGHER STANDARDS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE SYSTEM

But "if we don't know what we're supposed to do,  
how can we do it?"

# PARTNERSHIP PLAN FORMS BASIS FOR STANDARDS FOR ASSESSMENT, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT OF FOSTER PARENTS

Partnership Plan articulates commitments expected of resource families :

- Caregivers and staff work together as respected partners
- Nurturing Children/Excellent parenting
- Supporting Families
- Strengthening Communities

# FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.QPIFLORIDA.COM

pages - home - Windows Internet Explorer

http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/qpi/pages/home.aspx

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## Just in Time Training

You need expert information for your foster parenting needs *now*. **Just in Time Training** connects you to knowledge and skill training resources on the topics you need, *when* you need it. Select from one of our training resources below.

Brought to you by:

**Just in Time Training**  
Request training now

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View previous trainings

3:42 PM Welcome to the 'centerforchildwelfare' room.

**QPI Documents**

**Desktop Shortcut**  
Click to create a desktop shortcut to this page.

**Refer a Content Expert or a Foster Parent Facilitator.**

**Contact Us**

**Announcements:** Video on "Sexual Abuse and the Foster Child" has been posted. [click here]  
Click on announcements for additional information. Messages will scroll every 6 seconds.

Internet | Protected Mode: On 95%

# FUNDING

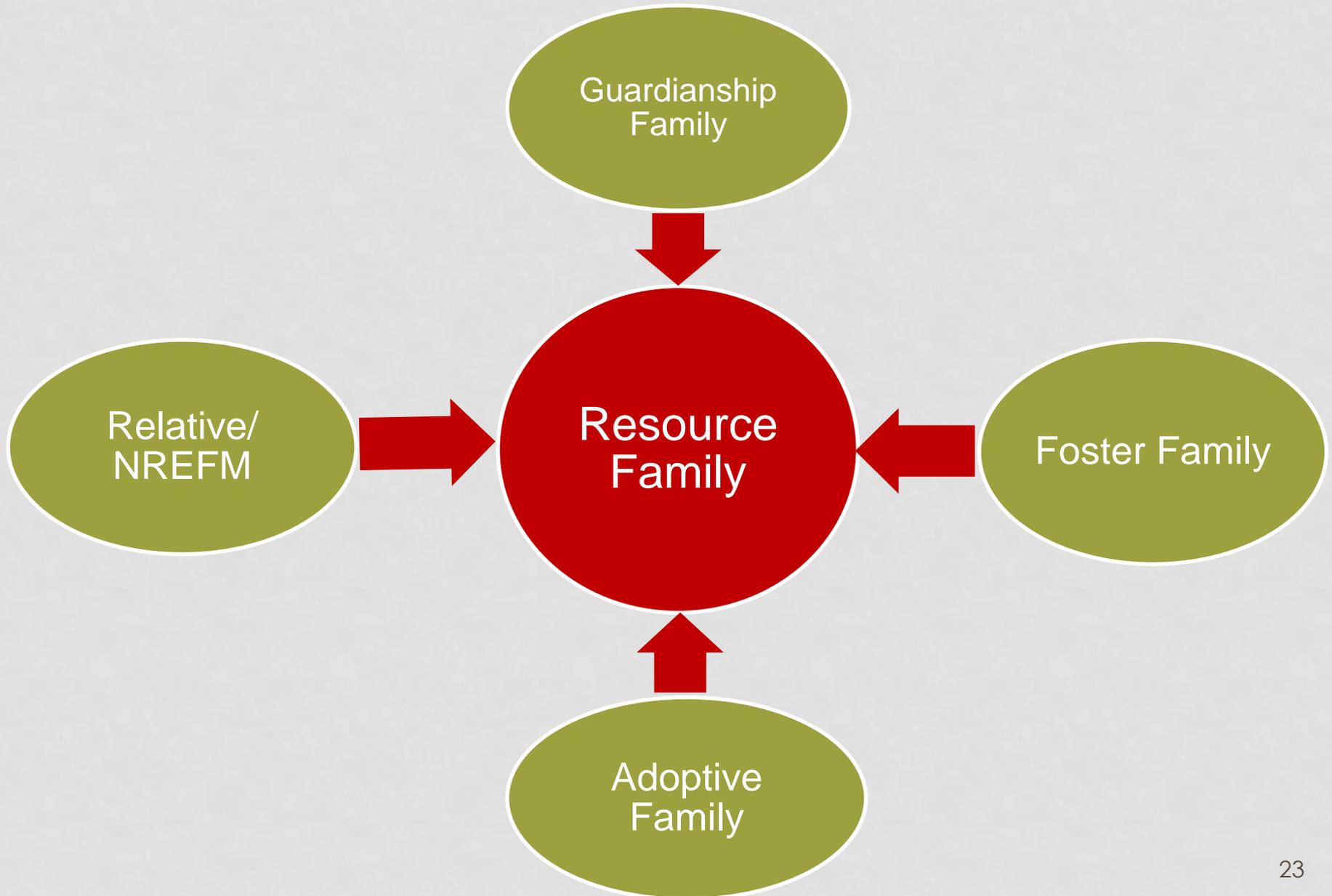


- Resource Family Approval funding (\$331,000) was realigned.
- Funds were distributed to 58 counties
- Distribution based on a percent to total of each county's average relative/guardian placements for calendar year 2010.

[Link to County Fiscal Letter:](#)

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# RESOURCE FAMILY



Element	Adoption (Existing)	Relative NREFM (Existing)	Foster Family Home (Existing)	RFA
<b>Approval Standards</b>				
Criminal Records and Child Abuse Review	✓	✓	✓	✓
Standardized Criteria for Records Exemptions		✓	✓	✓
Home and Grounds Safety Check	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training Required			✓	✓
Psychosocial Evaluation	✓			✓
Screen for Risk Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Domestic Violence</li> <li>➤ Substance Abuse</li> <li>➤ Mental Health</li> <li>➤ Physical Health</li> </ul>			✓   ✓ ✓	✓   ✓ ✓
Applicant References	✓			
Annual Review of All Families		✓	✓*	✓

\*Please see Health and Safety Code Section 1534(a)(1)(A) for further explanation of applicability to Foster Family Homes.



**LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT STATUTE  
WELFARE & INSTITUTIONS CODE 16519.5  
(SENATE BILL 1013, CHAPTER 35, STATUTES OF 2012)**



# What is a **RESOURCE FAMILY?**



## **DEFINITION OF A RESOURCE FAMILY**

[WELF. & INST. CODE § 16519.5(c)(1)]

A “resource family” is an individual or couple that a county determines to have successfully met both the home approval standards and the permanency assessment criteria necessary for providing care for a related or unrelated child who is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, or otherwise in the care of a county child welfare agency or probation department.



# RESOURCE FAMILY QUALIFICATIONS

[WELF. & INST. CODE 16519.5(c)(1)(A)-(E)]

- Capacity to meet developmental, safety, permanence, and well-being needs of children.
- Capacity to act as a prudent parent
- Ability to cooperate with agency and service providers
- Ability to provide and maintain financial stability
- Ability to maintain the least restrictive and most family-like environment
- Support system



# APPROVAL STANDARDS & PERMANENCY ASSESSMENT



# COMPONENT 1: HOME APPROVAL STANDARDS

[WELF. & INST. CODE 16519.5(d)(1)(A)-(C)]

- I. Criminal Records Clearance \*
- II. Buildings & Grounds - California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Foster Family Homes
- III. Personal Rights
- IV. Maximum Capacity
- V. Understanding Reasonable and Prudent Parenting

*\*A RF applicant whose criminal record indicates a conviction for any offenses in Health and Safety Code 1522(g)(1)(A)(i) may not be approved*

# COMPONENT 1: HOME APPROVAL STANDARDS, CONT.

[WELF. & INST. CODE 16519.5(d)(1)(D)]

## VI. Caregiver Risk Assessment

- A. Physical & mental health
- B. Alcohol & other substance use and abuse
- C. Family & domestic violence



# COMPONENT 2: PERMANENCY ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

[WELF. & INST. CODE 16519.5(d)(2)(A)-(C)]

- Caregiver training
- Psychosocial evaluation
- Any additional activities deemed necessary



# BREAK FOR DISCUSSION

*Break for 20 minutes to discuss the following questions:*

- How will this help the participants (child, youth, family, care providers, agency) in the approval process?
- What concerns you about this new way of doing business?
- How are you going to identify a common language amongst stakeholders so that you are on the same page with definitions?
- What process are you going to use to identify stakeholder and their roles in this initiative?



# PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

WHEN MAY A CHILD BE PLACED WITH A RESOURCE FAMILY?



# PLACEMENT PRIOR TO APPROVAL AS RESOURCE FAMILY

[WELF. & INST. CODE 16519.5(e)(1) & (2)]

## Compelling Reason:

- Based on needs of child
- After home approval completed
- Permanency assessment to be completed within 90 days

## Emergency Basis:

- Must be with relative or nonrelative extended family member
- May occur prior to completion of home approval and/or permanency assessment (home approval process must be initiated within 5 business days)

\*\*AFDC-FC funding is not available to families until home has been approved [Welf. & Inst. Code section 16519.59(e)(5)(E)].

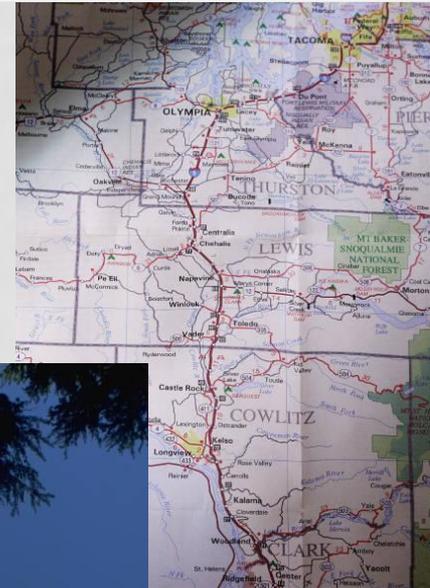


# OVERSIGHT

# SHARED OVERSIGHT

Oversight is provided at 2 levels:

- County level
- State level



# COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY

[WELF. & INST. CODE 16519.5(g)(1)-(11)]

- Ensure staff have appropriate education and experience.
- Approve, deny, rescind RF applications.
- Monitor RF on continual basis by requiring RFs to:
  - ❖ Meet approval standards
  - ❖ Comply with corrective action plans
  - ❖ Report incidents consistent with reporting requirements for licensed foster family homes
- Investigate complaints against RFs and take necessary action.\*
- Conduct grievance reviews.
- Update RF approval annually.

\*A child's social worker shall not conduct a formal complaint investigation. This should be handled, whenever possible, by a different worker than the one who originally approved the home

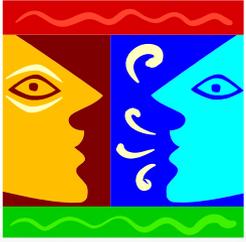


# STATE RESPONSIBILITY

[WELF. & INST. CODE 16519.5 (f)(1)-(9)]

- Administer RFA through issuance of written directives
- Monitor county systems and operations
  - ❖ Review sample of resource families for compliance with approval standards
  - ❖ Review county reports of serious complaints and incidents\*
  - ❖ Investigate unresolved complaints
  - ❖ Require corrective action of counties not in full compliance
- Prepare and submit report to Legislature

\*CDSS may conduct independent investigation of a Resource Family and may change the findings depending on the results of the investigation.



# BREAK FOR DISCUSSION

*Break for 20 minutes to discuss the following questions:*

- What additional things might the county need to consider related to gathering information?
- Where does the expertise for this lie in your organization and are they engaged in this process?
- What data are you going to collect and how are you going to do that? What are the baseline numbers you are looking at so you understand capacity issues?
- How does this change how you do business?

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR RFA

**RFA Executive Management Team**  
CDSS Deputies/Branch Chiefs/CWDA/CWS Directors



**Approval Process**

- Home Approval
- Permanency Assessment
- Grievance Process

**Oversight**

- State Level monitoring
- County Level monitoring
- Authority & Responsibilities

**Data Collection**

- Methodology
- Performance Measures
- Legislature
- Report

**Early Implementation**

- County Implementation Plan
- Terms & Conditions

# RFA Executive Management Team

## Role

- Considers high level policy issues that are raised by the Project Management Team
- Advise and assist in removing barriers for Project Management Team
- Advise and assist in education/information dissemination among stakeholders and others

## Participants

- CDSS Leadership
- CWS Directors or Points of Contact
- CWDA
- Project Management Team

## Staffing

- CDSS Lead: Karen Gunderson
- Staff Support: Project Management Team
- Others as necessary

## Meeting Frequency

- Quarterly

# RFA Project Management Team

## Role

- Acts as or helps identify subject matter experts as resources for Implementation/Planning Team and workgroups
- Helps to identify cross-cutting themes and opportunities for alignment across workgroups
- Provides input on draft deliverables
- Helps to vet deliverables with stakeholders and internal upper management
- Advise and assist in education/information dissemination among stakeholders and others as necessary

## Participants

- CDSS Leadership
- Implementation/Planning Team
- Workgroup Leads

## Staffing

- CDSS Lead: Sharon DeRego/Fernando Sandoval
- Staff Support: Implementation/Planning Team
- Others as necessary

## Meeting Frequency

- Bi- Monthly

# County Planning Internal Team

## CDSS Planning Internal Team

### Role

- Responsible and accountable for implementation
- With Executive and Project Management Teams, ensures alignment with purpose for specific jurisdiction
- Coordinates with other affected public agencies, stakeholders and others
- Vets draft deliverables

### Participants

- CDSS – internal team
- County Implementation Teams – internal team
- Participants – as identified

### Staffing

- CDSS Leads: Kimberly Wrigley/Cathy Ballantine
- County Leads – Each county Point Of Contact

### Meeting Frequency

- Each team to determine frequency of meetings – anticipate weekly

**MOVING FORWARD**



# GROUP DISCUSSION

- At this stage we are looking at communication and informing. Do we need to develop any materials to assist you in doing that?
- How often should we meet in person? (Conference calls in person meetings). What is the best time and day to have a regularly scheduled meeting? - Propose every 1st and 3rd Thursday (conference call) and quarterly in person meetings.
- Would it be helpful if we developed an extranet for this project?

# NEXT STEPS

- Think about the foster family home regulations (Article 3). What works and what doesn't?
- How does RFA and QPI work together? How might you merge your QPI efforts into the RFA initiative?

# RESOURCES

## Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16519.5

- <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov>

## Quality Parenting Initiative - QPI

- [www.qpiflorida.com](http://www.qpiflorida.com)

# CDSS PROJECT LEADS

## Contact Information

Sharon DeRego, CFSD  
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*sharon.derego@dss.ca.gov*

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**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING AND FOR YOUR  
DEDICATION TO THE SUCCESS OF RFA**