

The Qualitative News

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“Quality is not an act it’s a habit.”

-Aristotle

WELCOME

Welcome to the very first edition of The Qualitative News! We are excited to share what the OQ has worked on this past year and some of our upcoming events. This particular edition will provide information regarding the new Qualitative Review Protocol, Reviewer roles and responsibilities, and the upcoming Child and Family Services Review. The OQ has undergone administrative and organizational changes this past year. We are pleased to announce that the previous QR Administrator, Florence Racine, has taken on a new role as Program Manager.

We would also like to acknowledge the promotion of Jennifer Kirkman and Idalmis Toro Lamourt as the new Qualitative Review Administrators. In realizing the need to better support the local offices throughout the state, we have brought on nine new staff members to take on the role as QR Team Leads. Let’s welcome Sharyn Walz, Kareemah Harris-Baker, Shanelle Robinson, Christine Encarnacion, Qiana Cooper, Rosa Mosley, Deborah Rodriguez, Colleen McCollum and Chinaster Jones. They all bring a wealth of knowledge to their new roles, and have already hit the ground running! In addition to being Leads to the QR process, they will also be instrumental in supporting area leadership and staff in the development and monitoring of their Program Improvement Plans (PIP).



WELCOME

What is Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)?

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) uses data and outcome measures to inform decision making and to support the culture of a learning organization, which is self-analyzing and self-correcting. DCF utilizes Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) to identify and analyze strengths and areas needing improvement, and then to evaluate, implement, provide feedback, learn from, and revise solutions designed to improve the quality of services. DCF's CQI activities are coordinated through the Office of Performance Management and Accountability (OPMA) and executed across the Department.



What is the Qualitative Review Process and why is it important?

The Qualitative Review process assesses system performance and identifies strengths and areas for improvements to support positive outcomes for children and families. The Qualitative Review is managed through the Office of Quality (OOQ) within the Office of Performance Management and Accountability (OPMA). The Review process is an intensive week-long review that includes interviews of children and families and other involved stakeholders in their lives as a key method of gathering information. Qualitative Reviews are conducted in all of New Jersey's twenty-one (21) counties over a two year period. In addition, targeted Reviews are also performed when areas are identified such as Investigations or Adolescent /Youth Services. The Qualitative Review is one of many ways that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) seeks to understand and monitor its' work with the children and families it serves.

The New Qualitative Review Protocol

The QR Protocol had not been revised since 2009. In Fall 2015, a work group consisting of representatives from DCF, a national expert and representatives from the Center for the Study of Social Policy reviewed New Jersey's previous protocol and protocols from other states. The tool was updated to reflect our current practice and utilize family centered language. Overall the revisions were intended to simplify, clarify and integrate our practice into the protocol.

Additionally, the sample selection has been rightsized to reflect the number of children and families served in each county, and can range between 10 to 30 families ensuring that each Local Office within a county is represented in the process.

These changes are reflective of DCP&P's move from the Modified Settlement Agreement, into its Sustainability and Exit Plan. This allows for New Jersey to tell its own story about the children and families served.

REVIEWER OVERVIEW

Reviewers are an integral part of the Qualitative Review process. A Reviewer's role begins by attending a 2 day training to learn about the Qualitative Review Process, and how to use the QR Protocol. Training also includes mock interviews, and instruction on how to rate the indicators. During the actual Qualitative Review, reviewers are grouped in pairs of two to review, score and provide feedback regarding the cases.

Who can become a reviewer?

OOQ has recently made a revision as to who can become a reviewer for the QR process. Previously, Case Practice Specialists, and other higher level DCF employees were eligible to be QR reviewers. In assessing the premise behind qualitative reviews and its need for incorporation into everyday practice, it was determined that DCP&P supervisors are vital in translating QR concepts to workers. As a result, supervisors are now able to become qualitative reviewers. Community partners are also encouraged to be a part of the process.

The QR Team Needs You!

If you are interested in becoming a reviewer, approval from your local office manager is required prior to enrolling in training. The next scheduled reviewer training dates are December 7 and 8th, 2016. Once approval has been obtained, please contact the Qualitative Review Administrators for enrollment:

Jennifer Kirkman (Jennifer.kirkman@dcf.state.nj.us) or
Idalmis Lamourt (Idalmis.Lamourt@dcf.state.nj.us)

A special THANK YOU to all reviewers for the hard work and commitment to the Qualitative Review Process!

"Quality is everyone's responsibility."

- W. Edwards Deming

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE REVIEWS



CFSR - U READY?

CFSR's are a federal-state collaborative designed to help ensure that quality services are provided to children and families through state child welfare systems. The purpose is to achieve three goals; to ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements, to determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services, and to assist states in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes.

There are seven outcome and performance areas assessed, all specific to safety, permanency, and well-being of children involved with the state agency. The results are then compared to the national standard for these indicators.

After a CFSSR is completed, states develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address areas in their child welfare services that need improvement.

DCF's Child and Family Services Review Kickoff was held on July 15, 2016, at the Professional Center in New Brunswick, NJ. Our third Cohort for the CFSR will begin on July 10, 2017 through July 14, 2017. There will be three counties selected for this cohort. To date, the selected counties have not been identified. In the largest metropolitan area, twenty "out-of-home" families (youth) will be reviewed, along with fifteen "in-home" families. In the other two counties the sample will include ten "out-of-home" families (youth), and five "In-home" families. Following the review, the Children's Bureau will submit a CFSR report to New Jersey. Once that report is received, NJ will then complete and submit their statewide Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Upon approval of the PIP, NJ will implement their plan.

2016: A LOOK BACK

We've successfully completed QR's in seven counties so far, including Burlington, Passaic, Salem, Hudson, Monmouth, Hunterdon, and Union. Positive feedback regarding the new protocol has been received by local office staff and Area Leadership, and we're looking forward to achieving positive outcomes for the children and families we serve.

OPMA Gives Back

OPMA participated in DCF's 10th Anniversary community service initiative by sponsoring a trip to the Aquarium and Children's Garden for young mothers and their children. The families are from Project Teach, a school for young mothers and their babies, right in Mercer County. The families are scheduled for their fun filled day in September 2016!

UPCOMING CQI EVENTS

We have many exciting upcoming events taking place. Remaining Qualitative Reviews for 2016 are:

- Gloucester-September 26-30th
- Essex-October 17-21st
- Mercer-November 28-2nd

Child Stat Presentations also remains an integral part of our Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. The following counties are scheduled:

- Camden East and Sussex: September 23rd (Introduction of new process)
- Atlantic West: October 28th
- Bergen South: December 16th

Note: All Child Stat Presentations are held at the DCF Professional Center in New Brunswick, NJ at 9:30 am.

We hope you have enjoyed our first edition of the Qualitative News, and we look forward to sharing information in the upcoming months.

For more information about the Office of Performance Management and Accountability (Office of Quality) or if you have questions/topics for future newsletters, please visit our website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/opma/>