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From advocacy to outcomes: Developing and implementing quality standards in Florida's Residential Group Homes

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Agenda

- Background
- Quality Standards Project
- The Quality Standards and Quality Assessment System



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Quality Residential Care is Needed

- **Quality Matters** – “All residential programs are not created or managed equally. The results correspond.” (Barth, 2005).
- Quality is a combination of:
 - Structure
 - Processes
 - Experiences
 - Outcomes

So, what is quality residential care?



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Moving from Theory to Practice

- 2014 - strong push in Florida to eliminate group care programs
- Boys Town, Sheriffs Youth Ranches, and SAYS and other like-model, quality providers changed the conversation from **eliminating** group care to **quality** group care
- Focus included:
 - Creating positive media coverage
 - Persuading policy makers at the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)
 - Influencing the Florida state legislature



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How we did it...

- Leveraged existing alliances with like-minded providers
- Florida Coalition for Children (FCC; provider advocacy group) Residential Committee Chair
- Used FCC Chair position to deliver and empower statewide group home providers on messaging
- Developed materials and messaging
 - Outcomes in common (one pager from the 3 main providers)
 - *Why Quality Residential Care is Good for America's At-Risk Kids: A Boys Town Initiative*



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What made the difference?

- Outcomes
 - Educated and impacted policy makers (legislative staff) and DCF
- Media coverage
 - Impacted legislators and community donors (FCC Conference Legislator Panel)
- Unified message
 - Impacted legislators, policy makers, and detractors
- Development of the standards
 - Impacted policy makers, legislators, detractors, and providers



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Quality Standards Initiative



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The Quality Standards Initiative

- The Quality Standards Initiative is a collaboration between the Florida Department of Children & Families, Florida Coalition for Children, researchers, residential care providers & consumers aimed at promoting quality & effective residential care.
- Objectives:
 1. Establish research-based quality performance standards
 2. Develop and validate assessment designed to operationalize and measure quality standards and facilitate CQI
 3. Establish statewide accountability system for group homes as defined by Florida Statute, Section 409.996(22)



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Project Team

Collaboration is key!

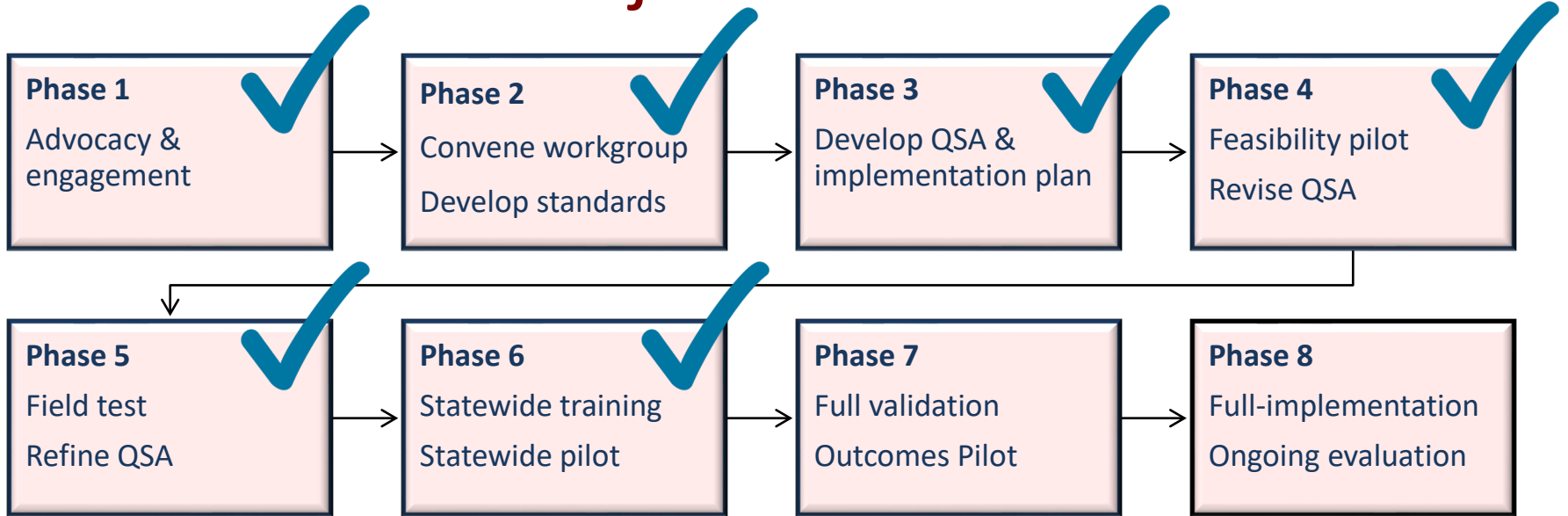
- Florida Institute for Child Welfare
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Group Care Quality Standards Workgroup
- Florida Coalition for Children Residential Committee
- Boys Town National Research Institute
- Former foster youth
- Child advocates
- Child welfare scholars
- Community-based care agencies



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Project Phases





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The Quality Standards and Quality Standards Assessment



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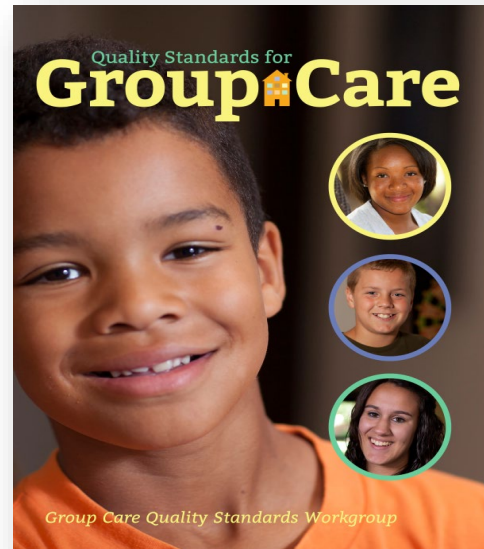
Quality Standards for Residential Group Care

Eight Quality Domains

- Assessment, Admission, & Service Planning
- Positive, Safe Living Environment
- Monitor & Report Problems
- Family, Culture, & Spirituality
- Professional & Competent Staff
- Program Elements
- Education, Skills, & Positive Outcomes
- Pre-Discharge/Post-Discharge Processes

Link to Quality Standards for Group Care Booklet:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/foster-care/group-care/docs/1507-255%20Quality%20Standards%20for%20Residential%20Group%20Care%20Booklet.pdf>



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Quality Standards Assessment

- Adaptable quality assessment system for youth residential programs
 - Measures - Research-driven performance standards
 - Large and small systems – Individual residential care providers, private agencies, state or national government systems
 - Applications – Quality improvement and assurance, performance monitoring, benchmarking, and program development



**QUALITY STANDARDS
ASSESSMENT**



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Quality Standards Assessment

- **Re-licensure process**
- **Targeted**
 - Measures extent to which practices and conditions in program are consistent with standards
- **Multi-informant**
 - Youth
 - Program directors/admin.
 - Direct care staff
 - Case managers, Placement Coordinators
 - Licensing specialist



QUALITY STANDARDS ASSESSMENT

FAMILY, CULTURE, & SPIRITUALITY

Ratings:

1 = Not at all (0%) 2 = A little (about 25%) 3 = Somewhat (about 50%)
 4 = Mostly (about 75%) 5 = Completely (100%)

Based on your experience, how true are each of the statements:

	1	2	3	4	5
While in this group home, I have been allowed to have phone calls or visit with my family or other important people in my life if I wanted to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff talk to us about the importance of family and relationships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff are supportive of my relationship with my family and other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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Domain: Family, Culture, & Spirituality

Standard: Provide Care in a Family-Like Environment

Residential Care Staff:
“The program provides a family-like environment (e.g., eating meals together, sharing in household chores and responsibilities, doing recreational activities together).”

Youth:
“We do things kind of like a family here like eat meals together, play games, and have household chores.”

1 = Not at all, 2 = A little, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Mostly, 5 = Completely





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Feasibility & Implementation Pilots

- Purpose (fitting the assessment)
 - Evaluate implementation plan
 - Pilot assessment tool
- Sample: Pilot 1 = 10 RGH in one region; Pilot 2 = 28 RGH in two regions
- Findings
 - Supported feasibility and fit within relicensing process – informed ways to improve process
 - Good reliability, identified problematic item language and misalignment between some standards, actual practices, and respondent's understanding and point-of-view – informed targeted assessment



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Validation Studies

- Purpose – Validate all QSA forms
 - Evaluate whether QSA provided information that is valid and reliable
- Sample – full population of residential programs (n = 159) + licensing supplement
- Findings showed evidence of...
 - Internal consistency
 - Structural validity
 - Inter-rater agreement
 - Construct validity
- Conclusion – evidence support QSA is a reliable and valid measures of quality residential care
- Reports on development and validation of QSA can be found at:
<https://ficw.fsu.edu/GCQSA>

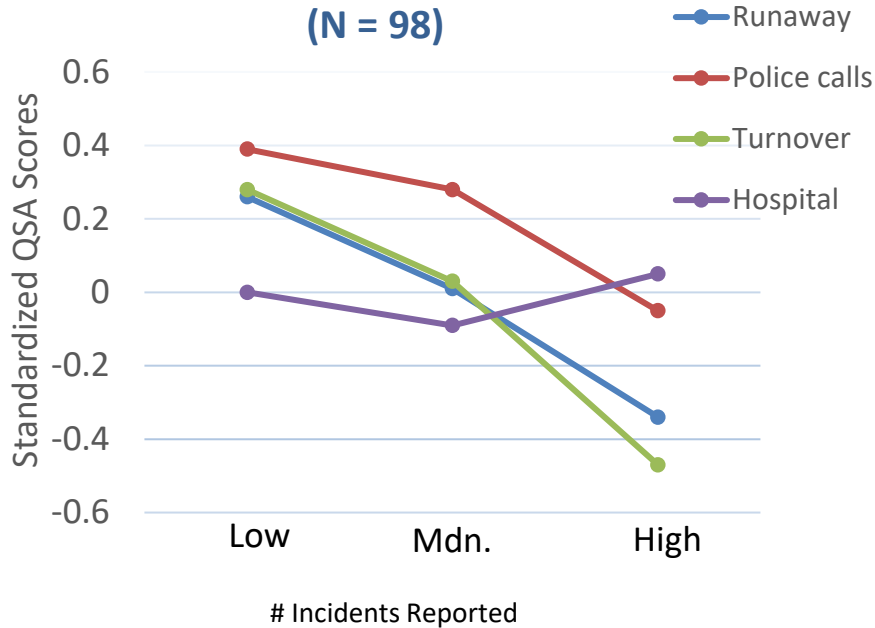


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QSA Scores & 12 Month Incidents (N = 98)



92% **Runaway**
Higher **Safe, Positive Environment** scores increased the probability of reporting no runaway incidents.

81% **Turnover**
Higher **Pre/Post Discharge Processes** scores increased the probability of reporting no staff turnover.

84% **Police Calls**
Higher **Professional Competent Staff** scores increased the probability of reporting no calls for law enforcement intervention.

84% **Hospitalizations**
Higher **Family, Culture, & Spirituality** scores increased the probability of reporting no youth hospitalizations.





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Next Steps

- Outcomes Pilot - in progress
- Finalizing QAS – July 2022
- Reporting and Quality Improvement



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Thank You!!

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