

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One quiet late April morning in 2009 I was in my office minding my own business, wrapping up the semester's activities, when I got a call from Washington, DC. "Hi, I'm Karl Ensign, of Planning and Learning Technologies (PAL-Tech)," the new voice said. "There is a new RFP (Request for Proposal) out from the U.S. Children's Bureau. Have you seen it? Check it out. We want to apply for this and we want you to lead the effort as the P.I (Principal Investigator)" My life hasn't been the same since.

The RFP for the National Quality Improvement Center for the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System was the U.S. Children's Bureau's (CB) most far-reaching initiative yet for improving legal representation of children. I learned later that CB's Emily Cooke had advocated for an ambitious research and consensus building project on child representation for many years and the stars finally aligned in the form of this RFP. Emily Cooke was my first Federal Project Officer (FPO). I still have my file labeled "Emily's List" of tasks and directions as we first set up the project. She had clear ideas for the foundation of the project and communicated them to me very clearly. Well begun is half-done, right? I felt this was her "baby" that was put temporarily in my foster care to nourish to the next step. Thank you Emily for your clear vision and direction.

Upon her retirement, after a long and illustrious career at CB, the FPO duties were assumed by David Kelly who has been an ideal FPO, and a terrifically nice guy to boot. Always supportive. Always available for direction when needed, but leaving the details to me and my team. What a great talent David is at CB; he understands the law and courts and how they fit in to the overall child welfare system. He is creative and committed—and I think he understands the urgency that drives recreating our child welfare system. He has already done great things for child welfare and I expect even more from him as time goes on. Thank you, David. You're the best. *Aqui vamos!*

In our first year Needs Assessment my partnership with Karl Ensign and PAL-Tech was very productive and very satisfying. With the support of Cynthia Samples, Robyn Ristau, and others at PAL-Tech, Karl and I identified the "state of play" as to child representation in the U.S. which was to be the foundation of the QIC project to come. Karl, I owe you so much, as do the people who will learn and benefit from this project. Thank you.

With Emily Cooke's guidance we developed a National Advisory Committee without peer. This carefully balanced group helped us explore options and eventually sharpen our focus.

- Maryellen Bearzi—Protective Services Division, New Mexico,
- Frank Cervone—Support Center for Child Advocates, Philadelphia, PA
- Kay Farley—National Center for State Courts
- Martin Guggenheim, New York University Law School, New York, NY
- BJ Jones—North Dakota Tribal Judicial Institute
- Mimi Laver—American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, Washington, DC
- Hon. Patricia Martin—National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Chicago, IL
- Michael Piraino—National Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Carol Wilson Spigner, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, State College, PA
- Mark Testa—University of North Carolina School of Social Work,
- Nancy Thoennes, Center for Policy Research, Denver, CO
- Casey Trupin—Columbia Legal Services, Seattle, WA

Thank you all very much for your time and advice and for giving this project such a strong start.

Already in the first year we began thinking about appropriate empirical questions and a research design so we turned to Robert Nelson at the American Bar Foundation who convened a group of research scholars to consider our empirical questions and possible options. Thanks to Bob, to Beth Mertz who headed the effort, and to Gail Goodman, and Sarah Ramsey. Doing double duty were Nancy Thoennes, Martin Guggenheim, and Mark Testa who participated in these research design discussions and also served on the QIC Advisory Board.

Enter Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Led by Britany Orlebeke and including Andy Zinn, Ada Skyles, and Xiaomeng Zhou, Chapin Hall became the essential research partner in this effort. Fred Wulczyn made sure we started on the proper footing. Chapin Hall is well-known in the child welfare community as the premier empirical research team. They absorbed the findings of the QIC needs assessment, reviewed the advice of the American Bar Foundation advisory group, and then went through their own deliberations. The result is the ambitious and cogent research plan you see reported here. Talk about smart, rigorous, and methodical, these folks are awesome.

I wanted to answer ALL the pressing questions in this one effort; you taught me that sound research requires a disciplined focus. Thank you for the tutoring in the complexities of managing a complex research project and for putting up with my many naïve questions. Thanks especially for your hardheaded competence. I always knew we were in the hands of experts. There is more from the social science perspective to learn

about lawyers and courts in child welfare, much more. These are the folks to do it. And thanks too for the friendships we have built over these six years of collaboration.

The QIC was administratively simple in the first year, but by year two things got pretty complicated. But all was smooth sailing thanks to the addition of Assistant Director Robbin Pott, executive extraordinaire and valued advisor. Everyone who has worked with her realizes her intelligence and gift for organization. I really appreciate her heart, her passion for social justice. Apart from keeping the QIC project running smoothly, Robbin took on the challenging multidisciplinary representation study in Flint. This is one of the major products of the QIC effort and will have a lasting impact on our field. Alicia Lixey provided reliable administrative support for the QIC as she has for the Child Advocacy Law Clinic for so many years. Her happy disposition is a pleasure. Mike Halerz, of Terapixel, Inc. in Ann Arbor, designed our website and our logo and was always available for consult when we needed him.

By the end of the first year we had developed the QIC Best Practice Model and were facing the challenge of how to train lawyers in the model in a way that would be straightforward, easy to grasp and retain, but also could be done in a relatively short period of time. In early 2011 Cecilia Fiermonte did the initial work on a two-day curriculum. We built upon Cecilia's framework for an initial pilot and modified it again for the final QIC training. Cecilia is a great talent, with a broad and deep understanding of the law, policy and practice related to child welfare and a good understanding of adult learning styles. Her initial materials really set us on the right foot. Thank you so much Cecilia.

Tim Jaasko-Fisher, then of the Court Improvement Training Academy at the University of Washington Law School, observed the first pilot of the two-day training in Ann Arbor in May 2011. He liked the content but thought it could be delivered more effectively. He was right. Tim opened my eyes to Liberating Structures and other fresh approaches to harnessing and channeling ideas from a group. Tim named the "pods" and his commitment to "communities of learning" guided our efforts for keeping the Six Core Skills learning alive. Tim was one of the major QIC trainers and has a special skill for engaging learners and making it fun. He ran the regular pod meetings in Washington, assisted by Rob Wyman. I miss working with you on a regular basis, Tim.

Tim also engaged the Mockingbird Society, an organization of former foster youth in Washington State. We all know that the voices of the children and youth are often overlooked, not heard. We developed a scenario and a video for the training with assistance from Mockingbird Society. A special thanks to Deonate Cruz who played Marco in our video and to Dominique as Margo. The conversation that Tim led with these two youth, about their experiences in foster care and with lawyers, was one of the high points of the QIC training. Janet Gwilym, then a 2d year law student at University of Washington, conducted the interviews with Marco. She was given little preparation

time but she set up our training objectives just right. She is a gutsy and courageous lawyer by now and her clients are lucky to have her. Thanks to you all.

Melissa Carter, Director of the Barton Child Law Center at Emory Law School was also a key developer of the QIC training package and a major trainer for all the sessions in Washington State and Georgia. She is a respected presence in Georgia for her effective advocacy. Her confidence and competence and clear presentations really won our audiences. I love her positive and hard-working approach. Melissa ran the pod meetings in Georgia. Thank you, Melissa.

An essential element of the QIC training was child development, interviewing and the effects of trauma. My Michigan colleague, psychologist Dr. Kate Rosenblum, developed that package and did the training in Georgia to rave reviews. Dr. Fran Lexcen, a psychologist with similar training and experience as Kate's, did the child development and trauma training in Washington State. She was wonderful to work with and received similar raves from the lawyers. Thank you Kate and Fran.

My Michigan Law School colleague, Frank Vandervort, contributed to this effort in so many ways that a thank you hardly covers it. In the first year or so Frank was my consigliere. I discussed most major decisions with him and received excellent counsel. He was a major contributor to the QIC training package, especially around negotiation, conflict resolution and advocacy approaches. Frank was one of the trainers in the Michigan pilot and in Georgia with excellent results. You would think this would be enough to be thankful for, but Frank also reviewed this entire book in draft form and gave detailed insightful comments. (His unvarnished, candid comments were, well, . . . frank.) His comments brought the book to a new level.

Vivek Sankaran, another of my Michigan Law colleagues and now Director of the Child Advocacy Law Clinic, also reviewed the complete manuscript and provided direction and helpful critique. Vivek says we need a QIC-type opportunity for parent representation.

The leadership of each of our partner states was extraordinary. Michelle Barclay of Supreme Court of Georgia Committee on Justice for Children is a strong and clear-minded leader. Her commitment to this project and constantly innovative spirit is an inspiration to us all. She was assisted by Pat Buonodono of the Administrative Office of the Courts and Araceli Jacobs. Araceli earned the trust of the lawyers and local court clerks and worked tirelessly to get the data that we needed. She's amazing. Jane Okrasinski and Darice Good provided the coaching and, along with Melissa Carter, conducted the pod meetings for the Georgia lawyers, which kept the QIC Six Core Skills ideas alive throughout the project. Thank you all, very, very much.

In Washington State, Justice Bobbe Bridge (Ret.) is unequalled as an advocate for children and youth. Since leaving the Washington State Supreme Court she started the Center for Children and Youth Justice (CCYJ) in Seattle. Our formal partners in Washington were the CCYJ and the Washington Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), on behalf

of the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care. At CCYJ, Hathaway Burden, a young superstar, now in law school, handled the complex management issues inherent in this project. She was succeeded by a proud Michigan law & MSW graduates Hannah Gold and Gina Cumbo. The highest accolades go to Rob Wyman who contacted each and every Washington State lawyer who represented children and asked him or her to agree to participate in this study. Rob's credibility as a coach came from his extensive trial practice and experience as a supervising lawyer leavened by insight and sensitivity reflecting his MSW training. He was extraordinarily effective. He and Tim Jaasko-Fisher were terrific in the pod meeting. What a team in Washington State! Thank you.

Chapin Hall depended upon reliable and committed state collaboration to get the data in a reliable form. I share their appreciation of George Li, from the Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts, who was willing to share his expertise with the court's data system throughout the project. We also thank the staff of the Washington State Center for Court Research—Charlotte Jensen, Matt Orme, and Carl McCurley.

None of this work, and certainly not my involvement in it, would have been possible without the incredible support and nurturing environment of the Michigan Law School (UML). This extraordinary institution has encouraged and sustained our child welfare law work for over 40 years—when the place of “kiddie law” and clinical law was far from established as an appropriate part of a top tier law school. UML took a chance over these decades that not all law schools would have taken. Apropos of the QIC, my dean in 2009, Evan Caminker, was not only supportive but was willing to forgo considerable indirect costs in order to make our proposal to CB more competitive and free up more resources for the work - and thus less for institutional support. Not every dean would agree to that. That means that Michigan law, directly and indirectly, supported some of the work of the QIC. I thank Evan Caminker, our current Dean Mark West, but also the entire institution. It is an extraordinary place with extraordinary people.

Finally, and probably most importantly, we thank the attorneys in Georgia and Washington State who agreed to participate in the project and the evaluation, and who completed thousands of surveys over multiple years. Their cooperation and willingness to share the details of their work, helps us better understand the process and effect of their advocacy for children. The lawyers hoped that their involvement in this study would somehow help improve legal representation of children on a national level. May their hopes be fulfilled! They are the true heroes in this field and we dedicate this book to them and the many other lawyers who work day in and day out representing children, their parents, and the child welfare agency in America's still inadequate child protection system. Thank you! On we go!

