Shared Parenting Strategies Literature Review Summary

The attached spreadsheet documents **42 strategies** that focus on aspects of shared parenting between parents and caregivers within the context of the child welfare system. These strategies and interventions were found through a search of the peer reviewed research literature on shared parenting and from databases and organizations such as the Child Welfare Information Gateway, Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, the Birth Parent National Network, and Children's Trust Fund Alliance.

Shared Parenting Models with Supporting Evidence

The **Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)** seems to be a prominent tool for facilitating shared parenting system transformation. This national model is utilized in over 80 jurisdictions across 10 states. This model employs and promotes strategies described below (and in the spreadsheet) such as *comfort calls/icebreakers*, *successful/planful transitions*, *strengthened partnerships between staff and families, relationships and information sharing between birth and resource parents*, *enhanced training*, *strategic decision making*, and *peer support*. The work of QPI is guided by constituency engagement and beliefs that no one understands the intricacies of the child welfare system better than those involved in it. QPI has been supported and evaluated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, demonstrating that QPI can improve relationships between birth parents, foster parents (or kinship caregivers), and agency staff.

Several other strategies and interventions have demonstrated promising outcomes. Of particular note:
- A five-year evaluation of **Shared Family Care** found that graduates had 1) an increase in income and employment; 2) more stable independent housing; and 3) less recidivism into the child welfare system.
- Parents who participated in **Parents Anonymous** were significantly less likely to experience new referrals and new substantiated referrals to the child welfare system within a year of finishing the program; and the program helped reduce the likelihood of system involvement.
- Parents who participated in the **Iowa Parent Partner** program were significantly less likely to have a subsequent child removal within 12 months of family reunification (evaluation limitations: non-random assignment and lack of statewide implementation during some years of data collection).
- A quasi-experimental evaluation of **Parents for Parents** found a relationship between Dependency 101 and increased reunification rates (70% of parents who participated in Dependency 101 reunified with their children); a relation between parent participation in Dependency 101 and decreased termination of parental rights (26% of parents who participated in Dependency 101 had their parental rights terminated); no relationship between Dependency 101 and length of time until permanency; and initial support of a positive relationship between additional mentoring components and case outcomes (79% of parents who participated in Dependency 101 AND mentoring, reunified with their children).

- Washington State Institute on Public Policy evaluated **Mockingbird Family Model** and found youth placed in constellations had greater placement stability in their foster homes, and 92% of foster families in constellations were retained as foster parents after 2 years.
- **Icebreakers** have been found to reinforce care of the child as the primary concern; the parent is the expert on their child; provides opportunity for information sharing from the parent; reinforces caseworker follow through; provides foster parents with increased information need to provide quality care; creates collaboration for shared parenting; and promotes face-to-face contact and trust.
- Analysis of quantitative outcomes using the post-test/retrospective pre-test format demonstrate that **Circle of Parents** is valued by participants and increases the health and well-being of parents, children and families who participate. The greatest improvements were seen in Social Emotional Support followed by Family Functioning/Resiliency and Concrete Support. Although the Nurturing and Attachment category showed the least improvement of the four scale scores, the BEFORE average for the Nurturing and Attachment scale was already higher than any other scale so there was less room for improvement.
- **Comfort Calls**:
  - Improve child or youth's ability to tolerate the physiological effects that occurs when major changes happen (removal from parent and family);
  - Improve shared understanding around the unique needs and preferences of the child(ren) between the individuals who are parenting/caring for them;
  - Birth and foster parents begin building a relationship in support of shared parenting; and
  - Improve birth family engagement through the life of the case by immediately demonstrating to birth parents that caseworkers can be trusted to follow through on their promises and commitments.
  - Reduces significant stress and confusion (sometimes leading to trauma) that children and youth often experience following separation from their primary caregiver(s);
  - Reduces feelings of loyalty binds for placed child(ren)/youth; and thus
  - Child(ren) are likely to use defiant behavior to demonstrate loyalty to their birth families.

Shared Parenting Strategies

Several types of strategies were used across multiple shared parenting models – more details about each of these strategies can be found in the excel spreadsheet:
- **Visit coaching/facilitation (3):**
  - [ABC-V Fostering Relationships](#)
  - [Visit Coaching](#) (*manual linked*)
  - [Parent-Child Psychotherapy](#)
- **Increased communication and relationship between birth and foster parent (14):**

- o Aggressive Co-Parenting
- o [Better Together: Building Blocks to Successful Partnerships](#)
- o Birth Parent Questionnaire
- o Child Family Team Meetings *(supporting documentation saved in Dropbox)*
- o Comfort Calls *(supporting documentation saved in Dropbox)*
- o [Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee Log](#)
- o [Family Team Decision Making Meeting](#)
- o [Foster parent/birth parent normalizing approach](#)
- o Icebreakers and CHAT (communication, history, and transition) *(supporting documentation saved in Dropbox)*
- o [Improving Outcomes for Children (IOC)](#) *(2019 Evaluation Scorecard saved in Dropbox and linked)*
- o [Information Sharing Agreements among birth and foster parents](#)
- o [Mockingbird Family Model](#)
- o Successful Transitions *(supporting documentation saved in Dropbox)*
- o The Journal
- **Foster parent/birth parent/child welfare professional training (8):**
  - o [Birth parents involved in foster parent licensing training](#)
  - o [Building a Better Future Training](#)
  - o [CAPMIS Training](#)
  - o [HOPE – Helping Ohio Parent Effectively](#)
  - o [Parent Allies](#)
  - o [Parent Partners](#) *(Handbook, Practice Guides, and Forms saved in Dropbox)*
  - o [Strengthening Families](#) Program *(supporting documentation saved in Dropbox)*
  - o [Structured Decision Making](#)
- **Policy/Systems Change (2):**
  - o [CHAMPS](#) *(Playbook saved in Dropbox)*
  - o [Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI](#)) *(Reports and Implementation materials saved in Dropbox)*
- **Parent support groups/Peer Support (8):**
  - o [Circle of Parents](#)
  - o Father Mentor Program
  - o Fostering WA Foster Parenting Support Groups
  - o [ICWA Law Center Parent Mentor Program](#)
  - o [Parent for Parents](#)
  - o [Parents Anonymous Mutual Support Group](#)
  - o Peer Support Recovery Coaches
  - o Project Succeed
- **Increased parent voice (3):**
  - o [Community Cafes](#) *(supporting documentation saved in Dropbox)*
  - o Family Engagement Advisory Board
  - o [Parent Collaboration Groups](#)
- **Co-Parenting Initiatives (3):**

- o [Rising Ground](#)
- o [Shared Family Care](#)
- o Shared Parenting *(NC DHHS Training Participant Workbook PDF saved in Dropbox)*

Summary of CHAMPS Playbook for Policy Goal #1 Support Relationship between Birth and Foster Families

CHAMPS, Children Need Amazing Parents, is a national policy campaign designed to improve foster parenting policies throughout the United States to promote the highest quality parenting. Through synthesis of best policy and practices, CHAMPS disseminates a policy playbook built on research. The CHAMPS Playbook identifies six policy goals that envelopes the research recommendations. The first of these goals is to support relationships between birth and foster families.

The CHAMPS Playbook notes that: "Research has demonstrated that frequent contact between children in foster care and their birth families improves a child's behavior and adjustment to being in care. Furthermore, positive relationships and interactions between the foster and birth families support frequent visitation and can also create a sense of belonging for children and improve parenting practices" (CHAMPS Playbook, 2019, p. 42).
- Weekly contact with biological parents is associated with lower levels of depression and externalizing problems for children (McWey et al., 2010)
- Consistent and frequent contact with biological parents is associated with more secure attachments and better adjustment (McWey & Mullins, 2004)
- Foster parent acceptance and respect of, and contact with, birth parents are more successful at supporting child's sense of belonging to both families (Neil & Schofield, 2003)
- Positive birth parent and foster parent relationships associated with increased positive discipline approaches (Linares et al., 2006)
- In reunification cases: regular contact with birth parents is necessary; birth families need support before, during, and after visits; child attachment to both birth and foster families should be supported (Haight et al., 2003)

Strategies that support relationships between birth and foster families:
- *ABC-V Fostering Relationships*
- *Better Together: Building Blocks to Successful Partnerships Training*
- *Birth Parent Questionnaire*
- *CHAMPS*
- *Child Family Team Meetings*
- *Comfort Calls*
- *Foster Parent/Birth Parent Normalizing Approach*
- *Icebreakers and CHAT (Communication History and Transition)*
- *Information Sharing Agreements among birth and foster parents*
- *Mockingbird Family Model*
- *Quality Parenting Initiative*
- *Rising Ground*

- *Shared Family Care*
- *Shared Parenting*
- *Successful Transitions*
- *The Journal*
- *Visit Coaching*

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