

Spotlight on Quality

Bethany & Spencer's Quality Partnership

For many permanency workers, the job rarely ends at 5 p.m. Being a permanency worker often means being a friend, trusted confidante, partner, advocate and much more. Family Services Specialist Spencer Surrat shared with us a firsthand account of what partnership in the spirit of QPI mean to her. She and foster parent Bethany Overland worked together to ensure the best outcome for a child in care.

It has been wonderful to have a partnership with the foster parents I work with. Having a good working relationship can make the difference in a child's positive experience while in care, transitioning back to home and placement with family or into future adoption.

My partnership with Bethany was seamless. Because of that, we were both able to provide a baby girl in placement within that home, a smooth transition to an adoptive relative's home out of state.

Putting the 'Care' in Caregiver

That baby girl, who had significant medical needs, benefited because we both committed ourselves to being accessible in our communication either by phone, email or text. Bethany always had medical records faxed over to me, updated me on any medical changes or concerns and let me know when the next visits were. Sometimes dealing with a baby who was born addicted and going through withdrawal can be draining because there are sleepless nights, lots of colic and other obstacles to care.



Foster parent Bethany Overland's partnership with DFS family services specialist Spencer Surrat and the biological grandparents of a child in her care achieved a successful outcome.

Creating a Relationship

Bethany was open to creating a relationship with the out-of-state maternal grandparents who planned to adopt the baby girl. I fostered and encouraged it. We were able to coordinate phone calls during medical appointments, phone calls and video chats to build a relationship and eventually in-person visits during doctors' appointments or just for fun.

I remember sitting at Einstein Bros. Bagels during the first coordinated meeting between the foster parent and grandparents. It was an amazing feeling to see how all of us working together were going to impact this child's life for the better. Bethany took off from there, coordinating and ensuring the grandparents got to visit with baby girl whenever they could.

A New Beginning

When the time came, it was a very special day in court with Bethany sitting beside the grandparents, awaiting approval for that little girl to move with her relatives. Bethany and the grandmother continue to be in touch and the foster family is able to get updates on the baby they loved and cared for.

Though it wasn't easy for that baby girl to move and lots of tears were shed, everyone worked together as a team for her to achieve permanency with her family.



Spencer Surrat is a family services specialist for Clark County's Department of Family Services.