



OVERVIEW

The National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG) is a five-year project working with eight sites that will implement evidence-based interventions or develop and test promising practices which if proven effective can be replicated or adapted in other child welfare jurisdictions. Effective interventions are expected to achieve long-term, stable permanence in adoptive and guardianship homes for waiting children as well as children and families after adoption or guardianship has been finalized.

SITE OVERVIEW

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) is the public child welfare agency that investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect, administers the state's foster-care system, and works to achieve permanence for the children and youth who are in state custody. Within DCP&P, the QIC-AG project is housed within the Office of Adoption Operations. This unit supports pre-adoption preparation and post-adoption and kinship legal guardianship with subsidies and an array of other services.

PROJECT GOAL

The project will implement and test the effectiveness of the **Tuning in to Teens (TINT)** intervention, which is an Australian model for teaching parents the technique of *mindful emotion coaching* to engage with their adolescents. The project will compare families who receive TINT with families who receive services as usual to test whether TINT is effective in reducing post-permanency discontinuity and increasing well-being of parents and youth. TINT is expected to help prepare parents to support their teens in managing the complex developmental tasks of adolescence by developing the youth's emotional intelligence. The project will include families who have adopted or obtained guardianship of children through the public child welfare system as well as families formed through private domestic or international adoption. Participating families will be randomly assigned to the intervention group; families assigned to the intervention group will receive TINT.

PERMANENCY CONTINUUM INTERVAL: **SELECTIVE**

New Jersey is implementing an intervention within the Selective Interval of the QIC-AG Permanency Continuum Framework. The Selective Interval includes prevention interventions that focus on outreach to families with risk factors for post-permanency discontinuity. Selective interventions use proactive outreach to engage families in programs or training *before* a specific need is indicated. Prevention efforts focus on enhancing protective factors by increasing specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills. When warranted, selective interventions can include proactively linking families to supports or services.

TARGET POPULATION

The New Jersey QIC-AG site is targeting families with children who are currently between 10 and 13 years old, whose caregivers are receiving an adoption or Kinship Legal Guardianship (KLG) subsidy, and are not open for services with DCP&P. In addition, families must meet one of the following criteria:

- » At the time of adoption or guardianship finalization, the child was between the ages of 6 and 13 years old; or
- » While the child was in the foster care system, he or she was placed in group care.

Families will be randomly assigned to either the control or intervention group. This project will be implemented throughout the State of New Jersey.

INTERVENTION

TINT is a six-session emotion coaching program designed to proactively increase parents' capacity to understand and respond effectively to their child's emotions, and thereby, help their child to develop and improve emotional competence. Such improvements in emotional competence have been correlated with a number of positive outcomes, including strengthening the attachment of the caregiver-child dyad (Havighurst, Kehoe, & Harley, 2015). Under the supervision of the purveyor, the TINT model will be adapted to ensure the curriculum addresses the special dynamics common to families formed by adoption and guardianship.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND EXPECTED RESULTS

TINT has been rigorously tested in Australia, where it was developed, and replicated in other counties, including the United States. However, TINT has not been explicitly tested with a post-permanency population. The New Jersey intervention will be rigorously evaluated through a randomized controlled trial. The expected long-term outcomes include increased post-permanency stability, improved behavioral health for children, and improved child and family well-being.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Short-term outcomes, unique to this site include the following:

- » decreased incidence of child behavioral issues;
- » increased caregiver commitment;
- » improved caregiver-child relationships; and
- » improved sense of family belongingness.

REFERENCE

Havighurst, S. S., Kehoe, C. E., & Harley, A. E. (2015). *Tuning in to Teens: Improving parental responses to anger and reducing youth externalizing behavior problems*. *Journal of Adolescence*, 42, 148-158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.04.005>



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MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the QIC-AG visit www.qic-ag.org and

- » search our Intervention and Program Catalog
- » download information about the Permanency Continuum Framework
- » explore details about the eight Partner Sites

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