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# ANNUAL REPORT 2015



Families  First  
PARENTING PROGRAMS  
[www.families-first.org](http://www.families-first.org)

Families  First  
PARENTING PROGRAMS

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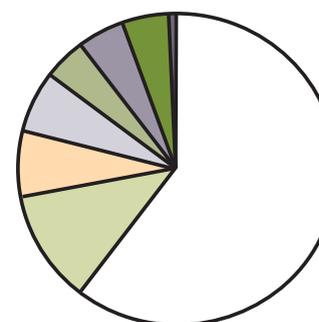
## Building on Community to Strengthen Families

## Selected Financial Information | YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
<b>Operating Revenues:</b>				
Foundation grants	312,500	386,435		698,935
Individual contributions	205,629			205,629
Corporate contributions	69,640			69,640
Program revenue	61,062			61,062
In-kind donations	6,300			6,300
Investment income appropriated for operations	49,683			49,683
Net assets released from restrictions	374,020	(374,020)		
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>1,078,834</b>	<b>12,415</b>		<b>1,091,249</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>				
Programs	632,415			632,415
General and administrative	167,609			167,609
Development	270,286			270,286
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>1,070,310</b>			<b>1,070,310</b>
<b>Changes in Net Assets from Operations</b>	<b>8,524</b>	<b>12,415</b>		<b>20,939</b>
Non-operating revenues (expenses)	(3,763)			(3,763)
<b>Total Changes in Net Assets</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>12,415</b>		<b>17,176</b>
Net assets, beginning of year	588,671	191,250	565,250	1,345,171
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>593,432</b>	<b>203,665</b>	<b>565,250</b>	<b>1,362,347</b>

### SOURCES OF REVENUE (FY 2015)



Foundation grants	64%
Major donors	8%
Business and corporate donors	6%
Program fee revenue	6%
Friends	5%
Board contributions	5%
Investment income	5%
In-kind contributions	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

It takes a village to raise a child, the old saying goes. Today we call it a *community*.

As part of a community of donors, you make Families First's parenting education programs possible. You help stressed, low-income parents build strong relationships with their children. And those relationships make children more resilient and successful.

Community partnerships have long allowed Families First to reach the parents most in need.

But with deeper, more strategic collaborations in high-need neighborhoods, your investment makes a greater and longer-lasting difference.

Through one such collaboration, the *Pre-K Readiness Program*, Families First reaches low-income parents in Roxbury housing developments managed by the Urban Edge community development corporation. Parents receive twenty-one weeks of parenting education from Families First, life skills from Urban Edge, and information on nutrition and exercise from Baraka Community Wellness. Union Capital Boston motivates parents with a mobile app, and Jumpstart provides literacy activities for their children.

The participating parents have formed a tight-knit community through which they support each other and their children. Mirella is one of those parents. On the following pages, you'll read more about her and how, with your support, Families First is building on community to strengthen families like hers.

Through twenty-one Families First workshops at Urban Edge, parents come together to build their knowledge and skills—and a community of parents they can rely on.

“Each partner is an expert and committed to high-quality services for all parents.”  
—Ashley Bushnell, Jumpstart

# Yesenia Menendez: Together “We Are Empowering this Community”



Yesenia Menendez says giving struggling parents knowledge and tools to help their children reach their potential changes lives.

“I am in love with Families First’s program. It’s a mission for me,” says Yesenia Menendez, Families First Parenting Educator.

With a master’s degree, experience as a social worker, and decades as a parent, she is certainly an expert, but she aligns herself with parents.

“I remember those days raising my kid by myself, a single parent. It’s been a bumpy road for me. It’s great when people see you’re on the same level...I use that [in the workshops].”

With your support, Yesenia brings Spanish-language workshop series to immigrant communities like East Boston. For many of the parents there, economic challenges and cultural differences converge to disempower them with their kids.

“Every time I go to East Boston, the group is big... people are eager.”

“We talk about parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive. Many migrant parents are authoritarian out of fear. I teach them to embrace different styles—to open space for conversation without being too permissive.”

People want help in specific situations, but Yesenia says she doesn’t give solutions. Instead, she shares knowledge and tools so parents can find their own. “This is changing people. It’s changing perspectives. We are empowering this community.”



Halfway through the Families First workshop series, Mirella feels more confident in her parenting, and she sees positive changes in her girls, Amariz and Aurora, too.

## With Your Support, Mother and Daughters Get Time to Grow

Mirella’s two girls are polar opposites. Amariz is five, bold, and athletic. Aurora is three and more cautious. Aurora was born with hydrocephaly, which left her with serious balance challenges.

Mirella says age three was challenging with Amariz; with Aurora it’s even harder. Aurora is talking back, and Mirella had been losing patience.

But after eleven weeks with Families First, Mirella sees the fresh talk as Aurora’s way of “finding her strength through her voice.” By giving her an understanding of normal development, she says the workshops have helped her support Aurora to adapt to her challenges.

“...I still have moments when I get very angry. Now I’m able to look at how I’m feeling...I know I might need to walk away for a few minutes. Now they are not just seeing Angry Mommy.”

“I think the changes I see in my girls are because of both Families First and what I’m doing differently, and Jumpstart. It’s given them their time and given me time to learn new skills for them. Both work great together.”

“If I could tell people to do a program like this, I would. It brings some form of peace to your life with your kids.”

**“You’re not born a parent; you have to learn it.”  
—Mirella, parent participant**

The right page represents selected financial data from the FY15 (year ending June 30, 2015) audit. Complete copies of the audited financial statements are available upon request. →

# How Families First Makes a Difference



Poverty keeps kids from reaching their full potential. You want to make a difference through parenting education, but when you invest, you want to make the most change possible in our community.

At Families First, strong new evaluation systems ensure the programming you support is highly effective:

- Quantitative and qualitative evaluations are integral to every program
- Families First gets access to broad data on families through collaborations
- Pilot projects track parents over time

## 2015 Impact

1,438 parents empowered  
87% enjoy spending time with their children  
91%\* talk and play with their children more  
80% are more confident  
2,800 children benefit

*\*Of parents in Families First's early childhood series*

# Our Community of Donors

**THANK YOU!** We are grateful to have you as part of our community. Through your support in every way, you give parents the tools to improve their relationships with their children, their children's lives, and our wider Boston community.\*

## Meet J.D. LaRock

**Families First:** Who is J.D. LaRock?

**J.D.:** I'm a university administrator, but primarily, I'm an education policy-maker. Previously I worked with Governor Patrick and Senator Edward Kennedy to increase educational opportunities for disadvantaged students. I joined Families First's board last year.

**FF:** Why is parenting an important issue for you?

**J.D.:** After becoming a parent, I began to appreciate that my work, while important, is not sufficient to prepare children for school and life. The role of parenting is crucial.

You hear so much about school readiness. To me, it's developing socio-emotional skills and habits of mind that help children deal with the complicated new school environment. It's important for parents to be as thoughtful as they can.

**FF:** What do you value about your involvement in Families First?

**J.D.:** I feel an enormous sense of reward being part of an organization that is helping to create bonds between parents and children that are so critical.

With so many groups focused specifically on education, it's all the more important that there's an organization grounded in the parent-child relationship. That's the starting point for everything else.

*\*We're going green! To view lists of our donors and Friends Council, please visit: [bit.ly/1MxjMZD](http://bit.ly/1MxjMZD)*



J.D. LaRock lives in Melrose with his wife, Christina, and their daughter, Callie. As an educator and parent, J.D. knows how crucial parenting is to children's success.