

### Pictures tell the story—with your investment, you transform homeless parents from “small” to strong

How I see myself as a parent during the first workshop:



“...I feel very small as a parent...But I’m always caring for my son.”

At the beginning and at the end of each Families First workshop series, parents living in shelters or transitional housing draw pictures that show how they see themselves as parents. In these images, it’s easy to see positive changes in families thanks to your gift.

While living under the stress of poverty and homelessness, opportunities for self-reflection and creative expression are rare, so participants really enjoy this activity. Many parents even say they keep the drawings as a reminder of their ability to overcome challenges in parenting and in life.

...and after 8 sessions:



“We are on the road to success. I have my arms up, feeling strong.”

### For a mother and son in shelter, you helped break a cycle of stress and yelling

Over and over, three-year-old Bo went looking for a juice box in the kitchen of the shelter where he and his mom were staying. Exhausted from long hours at work and at culinary school, Bo’s mom, Mei, used to yell at her son more than she wanted. If you’ve ever had a three-year-old in your life, you know what a handful they can be! Mei found herself saying, “No, no, no!” to Bo constantly. But each time she said “No,” he would walk away from the refrigerator, only to go right back. Mei was at her wits end!

Being a nurturing, supportive parent can sometimes be a challenge under the best of circumstances. Combine that with the daily stresses of living in a shelter and you can imagine it’s an even greater struggle.

That’s where you come in...Because of your generous support, Families First was able to do a series of workshops for parents like Mei living at the Hildebrand Family Self-Help Center in Cambridge. One focus of the workshop was how to be more positive when telling kids to stop



Even after his mom said “no” to juice before dinner, Bo kept going back to the fridge. Now he knows what is expected.

# Families First Gatherings

so no one has to parent alone

You're invited to our next Gathering! Come learn how commercialism and excessive screen time undermine children's well-being, and what you can do about it.

## From Bratz and Power Rangers to Gossip Girl and Grand Theft Auto: Nurturing Healthy Kids in a Screen-Saturated, Commercialized World

with Susan Linn, EdD

Founding Director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

April 15th, 7 – 9 pm

1443 Beacon Street, Brookline

Register at: <http://bit.ly/1Fk8bKL>



### Host a Gathering!

Help grow Families First's circle while bringing vital parenting information to your friends and neighbors!

Contact Rebekah McKinney at [rmckinney@families-first.org](mailto:rmckinney@families-first.org) or 617.868.7687 x23 to learn more about the Gatherings and hosting.

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## Families First, By the Numbers

Thanks to your support, parents who participate in Families First workshops are showing results:

92%

enjoy time with their children more

86%

are more confident

87%

can now set limits in a loving way

## Breaking the cycle (Continued from page 1)

doing something. A specific suggestion Mei found helpful was using “when” and “then” statements. For example, when you finish your homework, then you can play with your friends.

So the next time Bo got up from the dinner table to go to the fridge for a juice box, Mei remembered what she'd learned. In a warm voice, Mei said to Bo, “Please close the fridge and come sit at the table. When you finish your dinner, then I will give you a juice box.” And it worked! Bo sat back down and finished eating.

Mei felt great and less stressed. Bo knew what was expected and was rewarded for his good behavior. And the other mothers at the shelter saw the turnaround for themselves and were able to learn from it.

This is just one example of the countless families you've helped through your contributions to Families First – **thank you!**