Parents gain ideas for dealing with preteen attitude and rebellion

Families First’s community of supporters to access resources for their own parenting, while learning about the vital work the organization does for under-resourced families. At Families First’s Gathering in March, parents from the MetroWest community came together to learn strategies for guiding preteens through rebellion. Michelle Padden-Dragone, a Families First board member and long-time Parenting Educator, led the session with humor and real-life examples that were well-appreciated by the 20 parents in attendance. Parents left with new knowledge and skills to keep their kids safe, while also allowing for independence and reasonable risk-taking.

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Kristen Collins, a mother at the Gathering, commented, “I love that Families First comes into our community to make connections that help advance the mission. I always enjoy the speaker, and Michelle was lovely. I could have listened to her for another hour.”

If you’d like to learn more about how you can get involved with Families First and participate in the Gatherings, contact Jill Brevik at jbrevik@families-first.org.

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**Families First: Tell us a little about yourself.**

**JR:** My husband Jack and I live in Needham with our two children, Adam and Lilly. We are a far-flung family, with a hectic schedule! My husband works full time in Delaware, and my children commute daily to their school in Providence, RI.

**FF:** As a mother, what is most challenging for you?

**JR:** Being a single mom all week definitely has its challenges. Having done it for the last 8 years, I now have huge respect for single parents.

**FF:** How did you become involved with Families First?

**JR:** I didn’t know much about the organization before I went to a Gathering, but I was extremely impressed with the content and the information that was shared. I have also been very impressed with the leadership at the organization. My husband and I really look at that when we’re deciding whether to get involved.

**FF:** What would you tell someone who was just finding out about Families First?

**JR:** Although it brings much joy, raising a family is very stressful, no matter how many or how few resources you have. Families First is providing a vital service in trying to help parents navigate this journey of parenthood. It’s important to have support, information, and a network of peers who understand. Anything you can do as a parent to help your children grow into happy, well-adjusted, productive adults is worth exploring!

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**The Power of Parenting**

Families First launched the new Power of Parenting program last fall, and the results are in!

Parents gained skills including:
- Giving choices
- Understanding the “why” behind behaviors
- Staying calm, yelling less
- Taking time for themselves

By the end of the program, 100% of participants said they would recommend it to other parents.

**Ultimately, these changes positively affect the lives of their children and set them on a path to success in school and life. That is the power of parenting!**

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“We’re very present in my everyday life. You know, it’s like brushing your teeth, taking a shower… every day I use something out of what Families First taught me.”

—Celeste, program participant

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