

You've made it possible for parents to learn in a whole new way!

Families First is on a quest to support parents as effectively as possible so they can provide strong foundations for their children. Bringing parents and children together makes parent learning more

concrete and makes it more likely that parents will continue using what they learn back at home.

That's why, with your investment, Families First is trying out an innovative new workshop series called PACE. It stands for Parent and Child Experience and it means parents and their kids are in the same room during a portion of the workshop sessions, which focus on communication.

Parents can practice what they have learned in previous workshops while expert Parenting Educators offer real-time feedback.

With your support, this new type of workshop is being tested this spring with a group of parents and preteens enrolled in Northeastern University's (NEU) Youth Development Initiative Project (YDIP).

YDIP aims to help its 30 youth participants—who reside in public housing near NEU's campus—prepare for college and be successful, but that goal is approached in a holistic way. YDIP has been a Families First partner for 8 years, and according to NEU VP of Public Affairs Bob Gittens, "PACE was a logical continuation of that work."

A formal evaluation is underway, but parents have been very positive about their experience, calling PACE "helpful" and "engaging." Stay tuned for future updates on how your contributions are helping support parents in new ways! ■



PHOTO: KARA DELAHUNT

New PACE workshops bring parents and children together so parents can practice communication strategies



With your help, emojis are improving a parent's relationship with her child



Like many parents do as their children get older, Davida had concerns about peer pressure and the possibility of children she doesn't know having a negative influence on her youngest son at school. And Jaquan, 10, wasn't giving her much information. She had trouble getting him to talk to her at all.



Thanks to your support, Davida learned new ways of "getting through" to Jaquan when she participated in a Families First workshop at the Hennigan Community Center in Jamaica Plain. One of them was unexpected: her parenting educator encouraged her to show Jaquan "emojis"—those



funny little computer-generated faces that help us express ourselves while texting—and to ask him to tell her which one matched his mood after coming home from school.

It worked like a charm. Before, "if he had a problem at school, he wouldn't tell me. Now, with the emojis, he opens up more."



Davida also learned to give Jaquan some control over what she does with the information he shares. She says she



October 30, 2015

7:30 – 9:00 am

SAVE THE DATE

Keynote speaker: **Ron Lieber**,
personal financial columnist
for the *New York Times* and
author of *The Opposite of Spoiled*



Families First's Liz Cohen at the 2014 Fathers' Breakfast with parent participant Celeste Tavarez, her son, and the brother she is raising

Opening lines of communication with emojis,
continued from page 1

learned to ask, “how do you want me to handle that?” I’ve been a mother for 25 years and I’m just learning I should ask that.”

Now Jaquan has the emojis hanging up in his room. When she’s trying to get him up in the morning, she points to the emojis and says, “Are you feeling like this today?” Davida’s favorite new parenting tool starts the conversation—and the day—on the right foot. 😊

Families First Parenting Educators, by the numbers

23 Parenting Educators

17 have advanced degrees in Education, Counseling, or Social Work

13 specialize in supporting parents of teens, infants, and school-age children

13 specialize in supporting parents in transitional housing and shelters

8 have taught at public schools, colleges, or universities

8 specialize in supporting toddler development

7 speak more than one language—Haitian Creole, Spanish, and French are some of the languages spoken

5 are licensed social workers

4 run nonprofit programs in Massachusetts

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