

ANNUAL REPORT **2017**





690

Parents Participated

1,408

Children Benefited

30

Partners Collaborated

“Because of this program, I have become more active with my kids. I understand them better. I have a better approach with them when we communicate. My kids love that I have learned how to become more calm and patient.”

Parent Participant

The Power of Parenting Program

The Power of Parenting is Families First’s most comprehensive program ever—offering interactive, skills-based parenting education and support over sixteen weeks.

Parents explore topics like:

- Children’s temperaments
- Growth and change in the early years
- Building self-esteem and resilience
- Building language skills
- Positive discipline and setting limits in a loving way
- Play as learning
- Media and brain development

Power of Parenting is offered in many neighborhoods throughout Greater Boston, in partnership with organizations who share Families First’s mission of strengthening families. Parents who complete the program feel more informed, confident, and supported.

For one mother, the impact was clear:

“The group learned so much from each other. Sharing our stories helped us realize that we are not alone in this journey. After this experience, I am more confident as a parent and an individual.”

Parent Participant

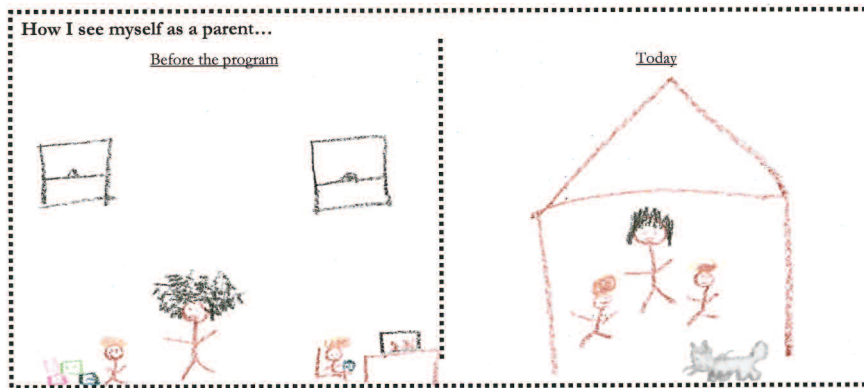
FY17 Evaluation Highlights

Families First gathered parents together in their own communities throughout Greater Boston to receive transformational knowledge, skills, and support around parenting.

Parents reported:

- 94%** Enjoyment of time spent with their child
- 92%** Confidence in ability to take care of their child
- 93%** Understanding how to set age-based expectations
- 78%** Connections to other parents

Identity Map



The first picture is me stressed out: messy hair, kids playing and not listening. The second picture is more stress-free with more help from others. Coming to this group, I was able to get help from other moms, both having and getting other opinions.

Parent Participant

Evaluation Spotlight: Building Social Connections

Parents shared strategies with one another

- "Take 5 minutes, breathe and then go back to what needs to be done."
- "Ask a question: why he's crying or why he is mad."

Parents became more open to others' advice

- "In the beginning, I needed to keep him close...but now I need to let go and let others give me advice...Now I am willing to take it."
- "I sit back more freely and take what people say that applies to [my daughter]."

Parents connected on a deep level

- "We're a sisterhood, a family."
- "[After my grandmother passed], I needed support and I received it when I was away; they took care of my children so I could attend the services.. It opened my eyes; it's not only about blood relations."



"This is my third class. I really enjoy the classes, and I always learn new strategies of how to talk and understand my kids better. I still stress over some stuff, but putting in practice the materials we learn has made my stress level go down. The most exciting part is that we graduate and it is a wonderful experience. I will also give a lot of thanks to the amazing beautiful women that introduced me to the classes."

Parent Participant





SVP Partners Allen Todres and Jan Cooper



SVP Partner Don Hawley and Sue Covitz, Families First Executive Director

“Having worked with the staff at Families First for almost three years, I am very impressed with their dedication, hard work, and ability to change. The staff has carefully thought through how best to accomplish their program goals, and have made the structural, staffing, and technology changes needed to meet their objectives and measure their success.

Families First is poised for future success with its sharp focus on how best to serve its parents, partners, and community.”

*Connie Keeran
SVP Partner*

Thank you, Social Venture Partners!

In 2015, Families First was awarded a three-year grant from Social Venture Partners Boston (SVP), which included comprehensive resources like one-on-one coaching and skills-based workshops to strengthen nonprofits and amplify impact.

With support from SVP's expert consultants, Families First's leadership team and board of directors created a new three-year Business Plan (FY18-20). The business planning process involved designing a new program model—Power of Parenting—as well as refining our theory of change and logic model, and conducting detailed financial modeling. These endeavors are helping the organization increase its impact on families in need and expand its presence over the next three years.

SVP has been an invaluable partner for Families First. The unwavering support and guidance has truly helped to transform the organization.



“The most satisfying thing about working with Families First is that they get things done. Top to bottom, they are patient in providing guidance relative to their needs and, in return, are extremely open to new ideas and innovation. Families First's culture is very respectful and also business-like in making decisions and following through. As I look back over the nearly three years of involvement with Families First, I feel proud to have played a role in what has been a remarkable amount of organizational development, focus, and ensuing depth of impact.

In my view, this is a shining example of what an SVP/ Investee relationship can be.”

*Don Hawley
SVP Partner*

Danita: Satisfaction Helping Others

"It was divine intervention that brought me to Families First. I am a better mother and person because of what Families First teaches."

Danita, Parent Participant

As a single mother of four children with special needs, Danita knew she needed support. Families First became an essential resource by helping her develop strong connections with other parents, critical new parenting skills, and new goals for herself and her family.

Danita joined a Families First program a few years ago and couldn't get enough! As the group continued to meet, she saw that parents were opening up more, and she began to make true friends and partners in her journey as a parent.



After receiving so much support, Danita recently decided to give back and become a Parent Leader. In this important role, she recruits new parents and leads discussions in the program.

In the limited free time that she has, Danita is dedicated to volunteering in her community. Her work as a Parent Leader gives her a feeling of accomplishment, and she gets a great deal of satisfaction when she is helping other parents.

Over the years, Danita has developed a strong relationship with Yvette, one of Families First's Parenting Educators. Yvette has spent over 30 years volunteering and working with families, and she makes a positive and lasting impact on the parents in Families First's programs.

Someday, Danita would like to have a career similar to Yvette's. At a recent graduation, Yvette said, "after 30 years of experience, the parent relationship is still the most important part of the very special work that Families First does."

What does Danita want for the future? She would love to be a social worker or a nurse. Now, with her new confidence, connections, and experience, she is determined to make it happen.



"I was really moved to see the impact on the parents. This curriculum is truly dynamic, and the parents' actions toward each other and the words they shared inspired me tremendously to continue being a vehicle in this process."

*Yvette Cheeks
Parenting Educator*

Families First's Donors

Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)

\$100,000+

Anonymous Family Foundation
Global Giving on behalf of TripAdvisor

\$50,000 - \$99,999

The Charles Engelhard Foundation
The Mabel Louise Riley Foundation



\$20,000 - \$49,999

Amelia Peabody Foundation
Bain Capital Children's Charity Ltd.
The Johnson Family Foundation
Nordblom Family Foundation
The Philanthropy Connection
Social Venture Partners

\$10,000 - \$19,999

A.C. Ratshesky Foundation
Mabel A. Horne Fund, Bank of America
Philanthropic Solutions
Boston Children's Hospital
The Chickering Foundation
Clipper Ship Foundation
Florence V. Burden Foundation
Foundation M
Hestia Fund
Debbie and Michael Kohn
Lovett-Woodsum Foundation
MEDITECH

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Carlotte and Samuel Berk
Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall
Charity Fund
Alexandra and Colin Campbell
Charles Sanders Trust
Laurel and Ken Ferretti
Phyllis W. McGillicuddy Charitable Trust

The Nord Family Foundation
Proskauer Rose LLP
Etta and Mark Rosen
The TJX Companies, Inc.

\$2,500 - \$4,999

The Baupost Group
Boston Bruins & TD Garden
Cambridge Community Foundation
Charles River Associates
Ariel and Joanne Cudkowicz
Gayle and Buddy Dublin
Eastern Bank
The Frederick E. Weber Charities
Corporation
Melissa and Aaron Grossman
Claudine and Adam Grossman
Pauline Hargreaves
Pam and Don Hawley
John Hancock Financial Services
Jennifer Kordell and Tim Moran
Margaret and Sean Lynch
Sean McGrath
Jeffrey Murray
Nixon Peabody, LLP
Shara and Russell Oken
People's United Community Foundation
Lia and William Poorvu
Judith and John Remondi
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Molly and Owen Stearns
Josef Volman
Margaret and Jim Wade
Webster Bank
Mariann and Andrew Youniss

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Melissa Bradley
Kiera and Jim Carlisle
Janet Cooper and Raymond Marcinowski
Cotiviti USA LLC
Sue Covitz and Henry Grossman
Kimberly and Gary Creem
Brandi and Chris Dean
Stacy Dell'Orfano

Adeola and Osagie Ebekozen
Trudy and Lester Fagen
Andrea Fong
Wendy and Bill Friedman
Patti and Louis Grossman
Nancy and Chris Hughes
Scott Kaplowitch
J.D. LaRock
John Lawrence
Crista R. Martinez Padua
and Harry Padua
Mark McCue
Libby Zug Moore and Jeff Moore
Dale Pyatt
Sarah and David Roberts
Jeremy Seidman
Slalom Consulting
Jennifer and Marc Stiller
Susan and Michael Thonis



\$500 - \$999

Jennifer Athas
Katie Bacon and Mark Pener
David Cohen
Cheryl and Brian Cuddy
Cina and Adam Doctoroff
Anne Donahue and Stephen Conlin
Michelle Padden Dragone
Elizabeth Gerlach
Joan Wasser Gish and Jason Gish
Marianne and Joe Herlihy
Colleen and Brian Hickman
Emily and Leo Kahn
Rachel and Seth Kalvert
Connie Keeran
Garrett Law
Penelope and Thomas Lawrence
Ann Manaktala



Stacy Martin
Sandra and Seth Reynolds
Michael Salinger
Stuart Segel
Peter Shaevel
Susan Snyder and Paul Giragos
Phyllis and Adam Sonnenschein
Sheryl and Adam Steinberg
Susan Wertheimer and Dan Covitz
Peter White

“Hearing parents who were helped by Families First speak about their challenges made me say, Wow, look at all that this parent has overcome. It was inspirational at a time when I needed inspiration.”

*Ariel Cudkowicz
Board Member*

\$250 - \$499

Richard Alfred
Margaret and David Allen
Barbara Anthony
Beth and Shawn Baker
Biogen Idec Foundation
Ellen and James Burns
Catherine and Paul Buttenwieser
Andrea Longo Carter
Andrew Clark
Debbie and Joel Covitz
Anne Cowie and Amy Graves
Paul Donovan
Ryan Driscoll
Jeffrey Duchemin
Danielle and David Dykeman
Mary Lou and Russell Ellsworth
Nicole Esposito
Ellen and Ray Fallon
Susana and Martin Fantozzi



Alice and Robert Fisher
David Francione
Vanessa and Jeffrey Gilbreth
James Godwin
Tatyana Goldwyn
Laura Gross and Charles Dellheim
Jill and David Grossman
Dara and David Grossman
Brian Hale
Stephen Hollingsworth
Cindy and Andrew Janower
Kenneth Jones
Khadija Khan and Irshad Sideeka
John Knapp
Wendell Knox
Debbie Leibole
Peter Levitt
Nancy and Thomas Looney
James Lynch
Divya Mani and Vicente Piedrahita
James McGrath
Heather and Kevin McKeon
Rebekah McKinney
Nancy McKinney
Theresa McNally and Michael Thompson
Stephen Riley Meade
Anna Mitus and Jay Orlander
Quinn Moore
Karen Moran
Jeffrey Musman
Cindy Null and Robert Goodof
Madeleine Otani Oldman and Andrew Oldman
Leslie and Ken Pucker
Kevin Queally
Lisa Robinson and Robert Hansel
Lisa Rothman
Suzanne Rothschild and John Baynard
Kristin and David Shapiro
Kathleen and David Shields
Cookie Otani-Smith and Ralph Smith
Jeremy Sternberg



Fredericka and Howard Stevenson
Lynne and Anthony Teta
Susie and Allen Todres
Marta B. van Dam
Jo Viney and Lawrence Wallach
Tom Wilde

\$150 - \$249

Jonathan Baum
Elizabeth and Richard Blankstein
Antoinette Bryan
Erin and Greg Comella
Lisa and David Craig
Olive Darragh
Lloyd David
Marguerite Fletcher
Dee and James Hlawek
Christopher Keefe
Arthur LeBrasseur
Lilly Marcelin
Anne and Colin McNay
Joan and Robert Munnelly
Jeffrey Peterson
Carol Sexton
Sarah and Jonathan Sheldon
Carolyn Van Tine
Heidi Vanderbilt-Brown and Drew Popper
Judith and Doug Weinstock
Clea and Neal Winneg

Special thanks to Barry and Stuart Segel of Mr. Sid for their strong, ongoing support of Families First.

Unfortunately, due to space constraints, we can't list all of our donors in our annual report. Our deepest gratitude goes out to all of our supporters.

Thank you!

Board of Directors

Co-chair

Jennifer Kordell
Charles River Associates
International

Co-chair

Dr. J.D. LaRock
Commonwealth
Corporation

Treasurer

Eileen Cloherty
Manulife Financial
Corp./John Hancock
Financial Services

Clerk

Michelle Padden Dragone
Massachusetts Department
of Children and Families

Ombudsman

Dr. Osagie Ebekozen
Boston Public Health
Commission

Melissa Bradley
Blue Cross/Blue Shield
of Massachusetts

Gary Creem
Proskauer Rose LLP

Ariel Cudkowicz
Seyfarth Shaw LLP

Gayle Dublin
Community Volunteer

Melissa Grossman
Understanding Our
Differences

Nancy Hughes
Community Volunteer

Sean Lynch
JLL

Russell Oken
Irwin Realty Partners, LLC

Etta Rosen
Educational Consultant

Molly Stearns
The Neighborhood House
Charter School

Board Committees

Development

Ariel Cudkowicz - Chair
Gary Creem
Ellen Fallon*
Marc Freiburger*
Melissa Grossman
Nancy Hughes
Jennifer Kordell
Sean Lynch
Jessica Rhein*
Molly Stearns

Finance & Audit

Eileen Cloherty - Chair
Melissa Bradley
Jim Hlawek*
Michael Kohn*

Nominating Committee

Jennifer Kordell - Chair
Ariel Cudkowicz
Gary Creem
Gayle Dublin
J.D. LaRock
Sean Lynch
Russell Oken

Gatherings Committee

Melissa Grossman - Chair
Andrea Carter*
Alix Campbell*
Gayle Dublin
Diana Gaffin*
Debbie Leibole*
Libby Moore*
Cheron Morris*
Judi Remondi*
Judith Sydney*

Breakfast Committee

Ariel Cudkowicz - Co-chair
Peter White - Co-chair*
Gary Creem
Jeff Gilbreth*
Adam Grossman*
Henry Grossman*
James Hlawek*
Seth Kalvert*
Bill Kenneally*
Michael Kohn*
Jennifer Kordell
J.D. LaRock
Sean Lynch
Kevin McKeon*
Quinn Moore*
Tim Moran*
Jeffrey Musman*
Russell Oken
Kevin Queally*
Molly Stearns
Owen Stearns*
Adam Steinberg*
Tim Thompson*
Cindy Westervelt*

*non-board members

Families First Staff

Sue Covitz, MSW
Executive Director

Maureen O'Brien, PhD
Director of Curriculum and
Training

Magda Rodriguez
Director of Programming

Wendy Friedman, MBA, MSW
Director of Finance and
Administration

Lauren Dorn-Jones, MEd
Director of Development

Ashlan Allison, LCSW
Evaluation Manager

Jill Brevik, MS
Associate Director of
External Relations

Stacey Ellsworth
Office Manager

Juan- Carlos Ferrufino
Partner Relationship
Manager

Amylark Lorwood
Development Associate

Madeleine Otani Oldman
Program Coordinator

Maham Zia
Administrative and
Technology Coordinator

Parenting Educators

Pamelia Bailey, MSW

Shawne K. Blake, MS, LSW

Roxanne Hoke-Chandler, MS

Yvette Cheeks

Dawn Shearer-Coren, EdM

Carol R. Darcy, EdD

Clara Angelina Diaz

Briget A. Evans, MSW, LICSW

Yolanda Neville, MEd

Marta Rivera

Yesenia Menendez-Sanchez,
MSW

Molly Arbaje-Thomas