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
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.

“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 Keenan
SVP Partner

“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
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“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.”

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