



2022

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2022
July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

Leadership Statement

Dear Families First Community,

Families First has emerged as a leader in the field of parenting education and parent leadership in Massachusetts. Our programs demonstrate the positive impact of offering parenting support in early childhood and giving parents the opportunity to step into roles where they shape early childhood systems and programs that impact their community.

Last year, we saw a 40% increase in the number of parents reached, and we continued to see impact as a result of our programs—both virtual and in-person. We launched the Power of Parenting program in Western MA (Holyoke, Springfield, and Chicopee), and with Early Education and Care as our partner, we expanded the Parent Leadership work across the state.

We have also remained committed to centering parents in the organization. We seek their input as we make changes to programs to ensure we understand the needs of the community and how best to support those needs. In addition to a core group of Parent Ambassadors who mentor and support both parents and the launch of programs, we have hired two program graduates as full-time staff and one as part-time staff. Tiffany Benson is the Family Engagement Manager, Qin Li is the Statewide Manager for Parent Leadership, and Rosemary Adorno has joined the team as a part-time Program Coordinator. These leaders work with program partners, support alumni, and are helping to guide the statewide expansion.

As we move forward, we will develop a new business plan to reflect a sustainable and thoughtfully paced expansion plan. We are working with Community Action Partners (CAP) to build the roadmap for regional work and a clear path to expand our Parent Leadership work.

We thank the staff, board of directors, parents, program partners, and supporters who have invested time and resources into building such a strong organization. We will continue to update stakeholders as we launch the new business plan.

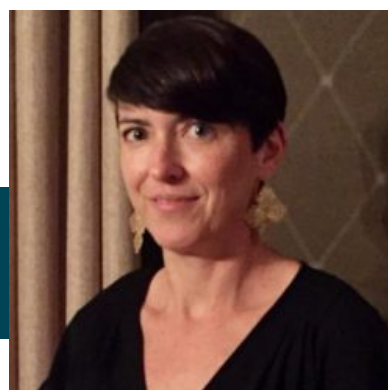
With appreciation,

Sue Covitz
Executive Director

Eileen Cloherty
Board Chair



Sue Covitz
Executive Director



Eileen Cloherty
Board Chair

Our Vision

Every parent is strong and supported.
Every child is thriving and resilient.
Every community benefits from the power of parents.

Our Mission

Families First brings parents of young children together in their communities so they can strengthen their parenting knowledge, skills, and support systems.



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Program Highlights



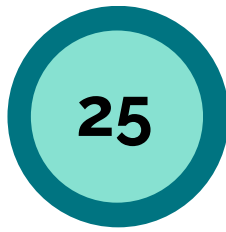
Power of Parenting™



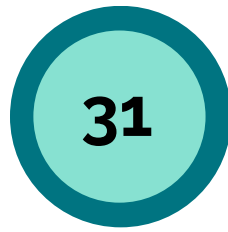
Parents Engaged



Children Benefited



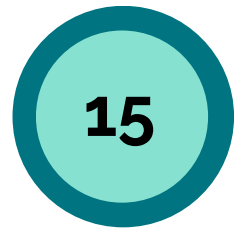
Programs



Parent Leaders



Outreach Ambassadors



Program Facilitators



96% of parents say they would recommend the program.

Power of Parenting outcomes are based on the **Protective Factors Framework** developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and the **Parental Stress Index**. We don't expect parents to report improvement in every area because many parents enter the program with a strong foundation of knowledge and skills in one or more of these areas.



Resiliency & Family Functioning

94%

IMPROVED IN AT LEAST ONE AREA



Social & Emotional Support

87%

IMPROVED IN AT LEAST TWO AREAS



Nuturing & Attachment



Concrete Support in Times of Need

65%

IMPROVED IN AT LEAST THREE AREAS



Decreased Parenting Stress

Parent Leadership Program

82 parents

engaged, including 60 parents through a contract with the Department of Early Education and Care.

5 Leadership Ambassadors

who previously graduated from the programs returned to support the program.

15 Community Impact Projects

co-created by 39 parents in collaboration with community-based partner organizations.

As a result of the **TRANSFORMATIONAL** Parent Leadership program, parents reported that they:



HAVE MORE GOALS FOR THEIR FUTURE



BELIEVE THEIR OPINION IS IMPORTANT



SPEAK UP MORE WHEN THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY



HAVE A STRONGER SENSE OF WHO THEY ARE



MORE OFTEN LIKE TO HEAR DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW IN A DISCUSSION

" One of the most important components of the Parent Leadership Program is that it helps parents define the type of leader they are. The program helps parents understand what their strengths and weaknesses are and what areas need improvement. Whether they are interested in politics, activism, or in school, being a leader in their community can provide new opportunities and better prepare them for their future. Families First provides parents with an opportunity for personal growth, to gain the knowledge and skills to function in leadership roles and represent a 'parent voice' to help shape the direction of their families, programs, and communities. "

- PLP Partner



Alumni Events

In FY22, we reached **103** alumni through **16** events that were planned and co-facilitated by our Leadership Ambassadors, including parent cafés, workshops, and a holiday event.

Alumni Spotlight

Three alumni, Mirella Cruz, Carolina Abad Salazar, and Adebola Yakubu-Owolewa, are active members of our Board of Directors. They provide critical perspectives and insights as we advance the important work of parenting education and leadership across the state of Massachusetts.

" As a mom of two I sometimes felt invisible because I was living life through my children. I wanted to be a good mom, but sometimes I felt selfish for wanting to have my time. Families First made me feel valued and seen. I stay involved with Families First because I believe in the vision and so I can be a parent voice on the board. It really feels like I can see other aspects of how things work. It made me appreciate the organization more. I can see the hard work the board does to maintain all parts moving and how truly invested people are in parents and their children."

- Mirella Cruz, Alumna, Board of Directors

Expanding Programming to Western Massachusetts

Our first two Power of Parenting Programs in Western Massachusetts launched in spring 2022 with HMR/Home City Development in Springfield and Valley Opportunity Council in Holyoke. Through these programs, we engaged **30** parents, including **5** Parent Leaders, benefiting approximately **62** children.

In FY22, under the leadership of Jill Brevik, Regional Director, Western MA, Families First moved from project planning to implementation centered on the key activities of hiring a Program Manager and launching programs at our first two Western MA partner sites. We learned a lot about the process of program replication in a new region, particularly around engaging local community members in meaningful, sustainable ways and ensuring that the program model can be adapted to meet each community's culture, strengths, and needs.

Support for this work was provided (in part) by
LEGO Community Fund U.S.



The LEGO Foundation



In early 2022, Israel Rivera joined our team as the Program Manager for Western MA. Prior to joining Families First, Israel worked in the areas of community engagement, workforce development, and youth coaching. He has an extensive track record around cultivating, building, and strengthening community at a grassroots level, especially within the city of Holyoke, where he serves on the City Council. Israel also brings lived experience to his role, as he is the father of an infant, toddler, and teenager and is closely connected to many families with young children in the community.





" I have come to our family center with my kids for four years. I could see our families loved our center and wanted it to be better. However, like many other places, a change process can be slow because of the way the system is designed. Voices are waiting to be heard, and problems are waiting to be solved. Being a Family Ambassador empowered me to lead the change. The Family Ambassador training gave me confidence by showing how many changes we can make and what we can do. Our Community Impact Project went very well, and we gained so much support from our families, center, and community partners.

I am very excited about the rest of the project and cannot wait for more families to come and join our change. I am looking forward to our future meetings and learning from other family ambassadors. "

- Bessie Chen, Senior Family Leader

Statewide Expansion



Through a contract with the Department of Early Childhood and Care, we expanded our parent leadership work across the state. In Phase One, **60** Family Ambassadors representing **24** agencies participated in the Parent Leadership Series. In Phase Two, **9** agencies and **24** family ambassadors completed **9** Community Impact Projects throughout Massachusetts. Through the Family Ambassador program, parents across the state were empowered to take control, not only as volunteers but as agents of change in their communities. This outcome is incredibly valuable because communities are stronger when parents can raise their voices to advocate for their children's needs.

DIWALI
11/8/21

EEC Family Ambassador Program
August 16, 2021

Speaking from the Heart
Real Parents. Real Life.

WEYMOUTH CFCE TEAM

- * Maura Perez- Principal of Johnson Early Childhood Center & CFCE Coordinator
- * Donna Brodeur- Project leader and Community Liaison at CFCE
- * Bessie Chen- Family ambassador
- * Ashley Dickerman- Family ambassador

- Timeline

- January 2022: Increasing the outreach, Building the Parent Library
- February 2022: Welcome meeting for the new parent ambassadors, First Parent Connection meeting
- Ongoing: Monthly sync up meetings

Sustainability & Scalability

- apply lessons learned and offer SEL home toolkit workshops on a rolling basis
- continue to coordinate and promote the usage of the identified SEL curricula needs across public platforms (schools/libraries/storytimes/play groups)

Martha's Vineyard

Martha's Vineyard is a 100-square-mile island located three miles off the coast of Cape Cod. The island is comprised of six independent towns - Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, West Tisbury, Chilmark and Aquinnah.

- o Geography
- o Rural community with extensive
- o Limited access to resources
- o Workforce is primarily blue
- o Non-traditional employment
- o Undocumented workforce
- o Seasonal population growth
- o Diversity with a large bilingual population

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

We continue to center our work in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) by building our ongoing DEIB work into all aspects of our organization.



Organizational Commitment to DEIB

With support from the Board of Directors, we added DEIB as an overall goal for the organization to elevate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at all levels of the organization.



DEIB Committee

The DEIB Committee continued its work and formed a wellness subcommittee to create actionable processes that establish a culture of well-being centered on reviewing and adapting the organization's protocols. This included a staff survey about wellness, PTO, workload, and benefits.



HR Capacity

Under the advisement of our DEIB Committee, we invested in HR capacity that included a review of salary bands and pay equity, as well as updating our onboarding process and performance review process.



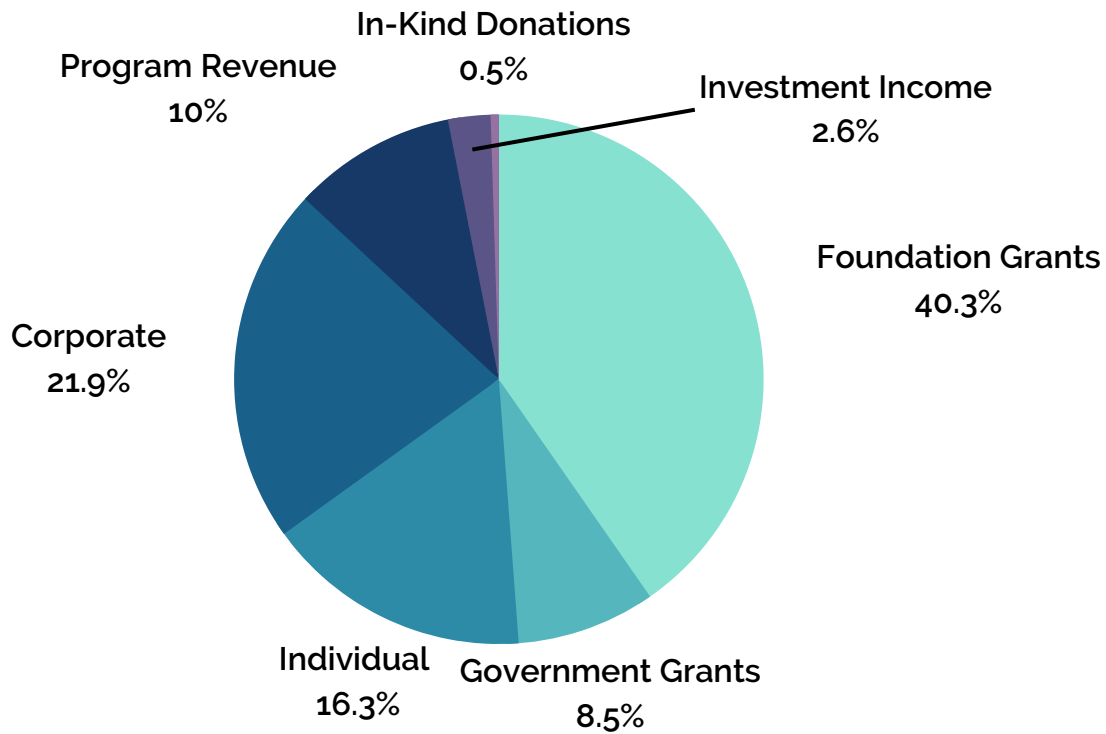
Staff Trainings

Staff participated in learning sessions related to DEIB throughout the year.

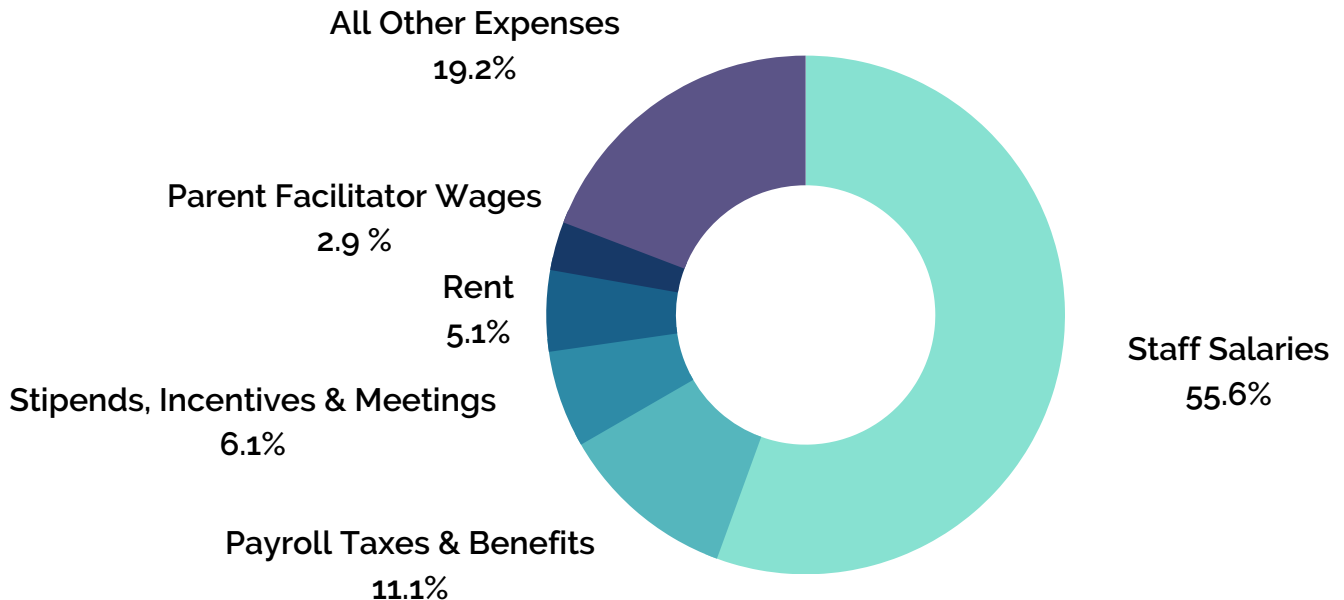
Financial Overview

July 2021 - June 2022

Revenue \$1,722,774



Expenses \$1,714,133



Community Partnerships

Cross-sector partnerships are pivotal to our program model so that parents are connected to resources, support, and opportunities in their communities. For a complete list of our many partners, please [visit our website](#).



Thank You!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eileen Cloherty, Chair
Milagros Arbaje-Thomas
Konique Ballah
Michael Caljouw
Colleen Chapman
Gary Creem
Mirella Cruz
Ariel Cudkowicz
Michelle Padden Dragone

James Hlawek
M. Quinn Moore
Judith Remondi
Caroline Abad Salazar
Jason Soto
Adam Steinberg
Ally Turner
Adebola Yakubu-Owolewa

OUR TEAM

Rosemary Adorno
Karla Alvarez
Pam Bailey
Tiffany Benson
Shawn K. Blake
Jill Brevik
Saul Caban
Yvette Cheeks
Sue Covitz
Carol Darcy
Stacey Ellsworth
Mariana Figueroa
Linda Flores
Wendy Friedman
Walter German Camargo

Seth Goldberg
Beth Greenawalt
Beverly Guerrero-Porter
Irene Blasco Hebrero
Reina Hernandez-Martinez
Vesna Karmelic-Pavlov
Courtney Kramer
Marissa Lehrman
Qin Li
Rosa Lopez
Amylark Lorwood
Angelena Madera
Yesenia Menedez-Sanchez
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THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS.
For a full list of foundation and corporate support, please
[visit our website.](#)



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www.families-first.org