



2025

Families First

Fall



Stronger Together: Power of Parenting Partnerships Fuel Family Support Across Massachusetts

Community partnerships are at the heart of Families First's Power of Parenting (POP) program. **Strong, local relationships keep us present and connected, deepening our understanding of families' experiences**, strengthening our response to diverse situations, and addressing gaps no single organization can fill alone.

Over the past year, we welcomed several new and returning collaborators that helped broaden POP's reach and impact.

- [Urban College](#) connected students and caregivers advancing their education with POP's practical parenting tools.
- [Neighborhood Villages](#) aligned its early childhood expertise with POP's parent-centered approach, connecting families with resources and community.
- The [Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester](#) expanded our reach into new neighborhoods, connecting us with Vietnamese-speaking families through translated materials and support from our partner Huong Vu, Family Engagement Specialist, who volunteered as the interpreter for this program.
- [Harbor Area Family Resource Center](#) and [Winthrop Public Schools](#) helped us meet families where they are through trusted schools and the Family Resource Center network.
- This year, we are building on that momentum with new programming at [the Care Center](#) in Western Massachusetts, equipping young parents with evidence-informed strategies in a welcoming environment.

We are also **actively exploring partnerships across Dorchester, Cambridge, the North Shore, and West Springfield**. In each of these areas, we listen first, learn about community priorities, and identify how POP can complement existing supports. Expanding language is central to this work. We are hiring a Portuguese-speaking Program Facilitator to meet growing interest from partners like [Somerville Public Schools](#), [Boston Pre-K](#), and [Everett Public Schools](#). These efforts ensure parents can participate in their preferred language while building stronger bridges among families, facilitators, and community providers.

Our approach to partnership is simple: be present, be responsive, and build together. Some partners host POP series. Others provide outreach, referrals, space, resources, or childcare. Each partner role strengthens POP, and more importantly, helps parents feel seen, supported, and equipped to navigate the everyday joys and challenges of raising children.

Interested in exploring a partnership? Connect with us to ensure families across Massachusetts have access to the tools, relationships, and community they need to thrive.

Contact Maridel Perdomo, Senior Director of Programs, at mperdomo@families-first.org

Launching the Families First Alumni Portal

We are excited to announce the launch of the Families First Alumni Portal. This new space makes it easier for all Families First alumni to **stay connected, access resources, and continue their parenting journey with support** from our team and fellow graduates.

The Alumni Portal offers direct support. Alumni can contact Families First staff for quick questions and guidance, find referral information for local services, and explore practical resources on civic engagement and workforce development. Alumni parents will also find ways to give back through volunteer opportunities, storytelling, and feedback that helps strengthen future programs.

Parenting resources are at the heart of the portal. It includes a growing library of tools, articles, and workshops covering Age 0 to 3 Parenting Topics, Age 3 to 8 Parenting

Topics, Self Care Tools and Activities, Special Education, Literacy Skills, Managing Behaviors, Co-parenting Tips, and Parenting Tips for Preteens and Teens. Content is easy to browse by age or topic so parents can quickly find what is most relevant to their family.

Just as important, the Alumni Portal is a place to connect. Alumni will be able to send direct messages to one another, participate in discussion boards to share ideas and ask questions, and use a job board where members can post open positions from their workplaces and find parent-friendly opportunities. It is a space to build relationships, share wins, and learn together.

Alumni—Look out for an email later this month with instructions on how to log in and start exploring the Alumni Portal.



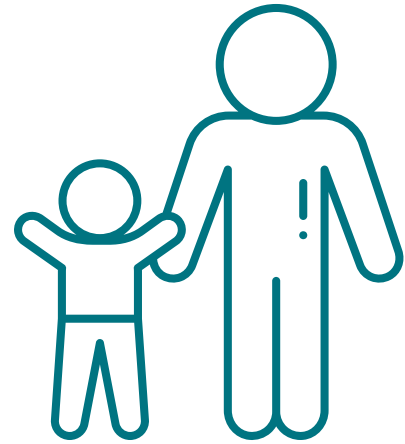
Community Impact Project Highlight: Countdown to Kindergarten - Reworking and Onboarding Parent Partners

Parent Leaders from Countdown to Kindergarten recently completed a Community Impact Project designed to strengthen parent leadership across Boston Public Schools' Department of Early Childhood. Drawing from their own experiences, they reworked and formalized the "Parent Partner" role so families can step confidently into meaningful, paid positions with schools and district teams.

The team developed a comprehensive hiring and onboarding framework for future Parent Partners. Deliverables included a job description template, a recruitment pamphlet, an onboarding manual, digital onboarding materials, and a presentation to Boston Public Schools (BPS) leadership. Each piece was created to be clear, practical, and ready for immediate use.

This project established a replicable model that the BPS Department of Early Childhood can adopt and that other BPS departments may build on. By establishing clear expectations, supports, and compensation, the model elevates parent leadership to a formalized role that helps schools meet academic and engagement goals while fostering deeper family-school partnerships.

It is a powerful example of how investing in parent leadership creates sustainable systems change and lasting opportunities for both families and schools.



Parent Leader Highlights

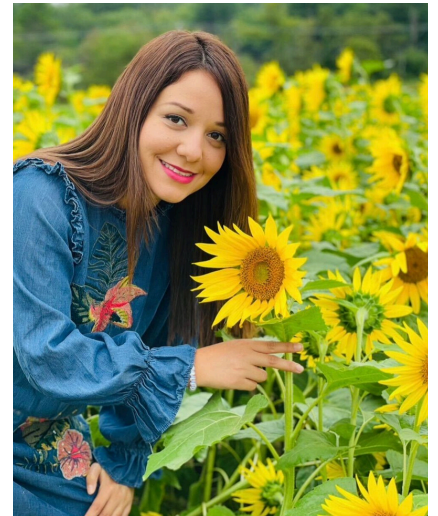


Raquel Bens de Foe

Raquel was a parent leader for our Urban College Power of Parenting program for parents of children ages 3–8. She led a group of 11 providers and parents through our summer program, all while completing her Childhood Development Associate Certificate to advance her career. Raquel is an amazing leader for parents and children in the Greater Boston community!

Claudia Figueroa

Claudia first joined Families First as a proud first-time mom in the Power of Parenting program. She quickly stepped into leadership as a Parent Leader, supporting the Program Manager by connecting with and encouraging other parents in her group. After completing POP, she continued her journey through the Ripple Program and has since become a valued member of the Parent Representative Committee. In addition to her leadership roles, Claudia actively participates in community events across East Boston, sharing her experience and expertise to strengthen the wider community.



Mai Pham



Mai served as the Parent Leader for our spring 2025 Power of Parenting program with Boston's Higher Ground for parents with children ages 3–8. Mai, a Quincy resident and proud mom of a 3-year-old and a 16-year-old, joined the program with her husband. She works at Quincy Community Action Programs and still found the time to attend every single session, often joining on her commute home.

As a Parent Leader, Mai kept materials accurate and up to date, built strong connections with parents and caregivers, and served as an important bridge between families, participants, and staff. She went above and beyond to create an engaging and welcoming space for everyone. Her dedication, warmth, and leadership left a lasting impression on the entire group.