



Gigi's Leadership Journey

Gigi is a mother of two young children—Geo and Leilani—who started coming to Families First's programs several years ago at her children's daycare center in Jamaica Plain.

She explains, “One of the causes of stress that I had before I started Families First was that I didn't have a support group around. I just didn't have anyone to help with my kids.”

The *Power of Parenting* program helped Gigi build a strong support system while learning new parenting strategies and gaining a deeper understanding of her own upbringing and how it was influencing her parenting.

The program was so powerful for her that she volunteered to tell her story at the Families First Breakfast in October. There, she explained: “When I was young, there was a lot of yelling and hitting. I did not want to be that parent. I want my children to have good opportunities and be ready to conquer the world. A big lesson that I learned from being with Families First was that I want to continue to break the cycle and teach other parents to stop using spanking and yelling.”

Now that she has finished the program, Gigi serves as a Parent Leader, and she helps with the recruitment and retention of new families. She also helps to spread the word about the importance of parenting in her neighborhood.

“If I see a parent that I met in the class, and she is struggling, now we have a connection... besides the program, we are connecting in the community because of Families First.”

Gigi has also engaged in several of the program's incentives, including services from Dress for Success which provided her with attire for the Breakfast event and for upcoming job interviews. As she works toward her personal goals, she says, “Families First supports me to do whatever I want to do. If I want to take over the world, they're like: ‘We're right there with you Gigi!’”

Social connections, parental confidence, and leadership skills—built through the *Power of Parenting* program—can have an immense impact on women like Gigi who are determined to be a force for good in their families and communities.

