



Child First was evaluated with a randomized, controlled trial with strong positive outcomes. (Child Development, January/February 2011)

CHILD FIRST DEMONSTRATED:



68%

DECREASE IN CHILD LANGUAGE PROBLEMS



42%

DECREASE IN CHILD AGGRESSIVE AND DEFIANT BEHAVIORS



64%

DECREASE IN MATERNAL DEPRESSION OR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

CONTACT

Mary Mitchell, LCSW
Families First of Palm Beach County

561-345-6272

mmitchell@familiesfirstpb.org

WWW.CHILDFIRST.ORG

Child First is an evidence-based, intensive, early childhood model that works with the most vulnerable young children and their families, helping them heal from the devastating effects of stress and trauma. Our two-generation approach builds strong, nurturing, caregiver-child relationships, promotes adult capacity, and connects families with needed services. This home-based intervention increases emotional health and learning success, and prevents child abuse and neglect.

The Challenge

Scientific research in brain development clearly shows that high-risk environments (e.g., where there is maternal depression, domestic violence, substance abuse, or homelessness) lead to levels of stress that can be “toxic” to the young, developing brain. Without the buffer of strong, nurturing relationships, the results are long-term damage with significant emotional/behavioral, learning, and health problems.

The Child First Response

Child First is an intensive, home-based model for children (prenatal through age five years) and their families, utilizing a professional team of a Master’s level Mental Health/Developmental Clinician and a Care Coordinator. Key model components include:

- 1. Psychotherapeutic, two-generation intervention**, which helps build a nurturing, responsive, parent-child relationship. This protects the child’s developing brain from the damage of chronic stress, heals the effects of trauma and adversity for both child and parent, and promotes strong emotional health and cognitive growth.
- 2. Care coordination** provides hands-on connection to broad community-based services and supports for all family members, leading to family stabilization, decreased stress, and utilization of growth-enhancing community resources.
- 3. Facilitation of executive functioning** and self-regulation capacity is promoted for both parent and child, including memory, attention, planning, organization, and reflection.

Child First Accomplishments and Impact

- Child First has been designated by HHS as “evidence-based” under the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.
- Child First now serves families in Palm Beach County, Florida and throughout Connecticut.
- Child First’s cost effective intervention is projected to prevent the need for physical and psychiatric hospitalization, foster care, special education, and incarceration.
- Child First has been recognized by the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, Social Impact Exchange, Harvard Center on the Developing Child, Pew Home Visiting Campaign, Zero to Three, National Conference of State Legislators, and Connecticut and American Hospital Associations.