



FAMILIES FIRST



Parents have the power to shape their children's futures and make their communities stronger.

SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT



“Something has to change. It begins with fundamentally shifting how we value parenting, recognizing that **the work of raising a child is crucial to the health and well-being of all society.** This change must extend to policies, programs, and individual actions designed to make this vital work easier.”



SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT

“Each time I reach out to a friend or family member or each time I respond when someone reaches out to me, I feel more ease and less stress (as a parent). **The experience has taught me that parenting at its best is a team sport.**”





According to the **Center for the Study of Social Policy**, when parents are engaged as partners in programs and policies that support children's development, children thrive and systems improve. Furthermore, according to the "**Ripple Effect**" Theory of Change [Henderson & Gill Kressley, 2016], parent leadership initiatives build power as parents experience personal transformation, engage in collective action, and reinvigorate democracy.

RIPPLE OUTCOMES

- **67%** of parents reported that the Ripple program influenced them to **improve their physical, mental or emotional health**
- **95%** of parent participants now **share resources** with other parents
- **72%** have become **better advocates** for their child



HAVE
MORE
GOALS FOR
THEIR
FUTURE



SPEAK UP
MORE WHEN
THEY HAVE
SOMETHING
TO SAY



“

Participating in the leadership program took me out of a dark place and gave me a perspective for my future.

”

Ripple Program Participant



“

The number one idea I learned from being in Families First is that parents are the #1 untapped resource for positive change in communities.

”

Parent Leader



SUMMARY

- 1 Support policies** that will broadly impact infant and early childhood mental health by supporting parents with paid childcare and child tax credits (as examples)
- 2 Center the child** in the context of a family and community thereby elevating the voices of parents in policy and decision-making.
- 3 Support programs** that have the components outlined in the Surgeon General's warning.
Provide **trauma-informed workshops** or groups where parents can:
 - Learn new **parenting strategies**
 - Practice **self-care** techniques
 - Build a **community of support** that continues long after the group ends.
- 4 Engage with families** directly to improve systems

