



February 2009

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February at a Glance

Portsmouth:

This month only: Beyond the 'Sex Talk,' Raising Girls/Raising Boys, Communicating without Arguing or Attitude, Communicating for Cooperation, Keeping Your Cool, Reducing Power Struggles, Parenting the Challenging Child, Co-Parenting after Divorce or Separation
Ongoing: Parent Recharge; Grandparenting; Life with Teens; parent-child playgroups for babies, toddlers and preschoolers; Family Fun Night (for families under stress)

Lower Seacoast: Parent Recharge, Family Morning Out, Winning at Parenting

Western Rockingham County: Family Playtime, Setting the Stage for Smooth Sailing in the Teen Years, Babytime

Exeter and Newmarket: Programs on Communicating with Teens

For more about these programs, click below for info in your choice of three formats:



[Program descriptions & links to flyers](#)



Focus on Children's Smiles

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. At [Families First Dental Center](#), our goal is to ensure that all children have access to dental care. To that end, any child or teen living in New Hampshire or Maine, with or without insurance, can become a Dental Center patient. And we offer some evening and weekend appointments to make it easier to use our services. Families First also integrates dental care and education into all of its other programs: prenatal care, primary care, parenting and family programs, and health care for the homeless. For a Dental Center appointment, call (603) 422-8208 ext. 106.

PROGRAM OF THE MONTH: Behavioral Health

More and more, research is showing the strong connection



between mental and physical health, leading to a national movement to integrate mental and physical health care. Here in the Seacoast, Families First Health and Support Center is leading the way. In August, we hired our first Behavioral Health Specialist, Pete Fifield (pictured).



Pete works in the Health Center at Families First, helping patients manage conditions ranging from anxiety and depression to diabetes, hypertension and more. He can also help with behavioral changes such as improving diet and exercise and reducing tobacco, alcohol and drug use. Behavioral health services are part of Families First's treatment protocol for many common health problems. The idea behind this is that the human body is very complex, and our whole health goes beyond just our physical selves. More often than not, our emotions and thoughts significantly influence our behaviors.

So, what is it like to work with a behavioral health specialist? It is not like long-term psychotherapy, but rather a concrete, solution-focused approach to whole health. A behavioral health session focuses on how the patient's thoughts and emotions relate to their behaviors regarding the treatment plans established by their primary care provider. If you are experiencing anxiety or depression, for example, it will be harder for you to follow through with the provider's recommendations. If you wish to quit smoking or drink less, you may be more successful with help from a behavioral health specialist.

Integrating primary care and behavioral health services to address the full spectrum of patients needs is one more way Families First meets our goal of being a true "medical home" for our patients. Your treatment plan may include various resources, but you will stay in the hands of your primary care provider, and Families First will remain your medical home. In other words, regardless of what complex issues you may be experiencing, with integrated care at Families First, "you've come to the right place."



Possible and Impossible Goals for Discipline

by Joanna Wicklein

Often as parents, we are frustrated in our attempts to discipline our children because our goal is to get our kids to "get with the program" -- our adult program. That is: Not make our adult life so difficult. Stop fussing when we are trying to shop. Stop messing up the house. Stop touching everything at Grandma's house. Stop embarrassing us in front of our friends with bad manners. Stop being noisy or demanding when we need to get work done, chat with friends, or are too tired to deal. . . . The problem is, kids have a different program that they have to get with, a program set by their human biology. . . . [Read Full Article at SeacoastParentsConnect.com](http://SeacoastParentsConnect.com)

Co-Parenting After Divorce or Separation

Our next Co-Parenting program for divorced or separated parents starts Wednesday, Feb. 4. Parents who have attended the Co-Parenting program in the past say it has greatly helped them to reduce frustration in communicating with their "ex" and focus on making their own family work smoothly. Parents may attend with or without their former partners. The facilitators have backgrounds in law, family work and counseling. The cost is \$40 (sliding fee available), and

childcare is included. Not sure if this course is right for you? Contact Joanna by [email](#) or at 603-422-8208 ext. 123. [More info](#)

Rotary Donates Car Seats for Families First Clients

For a limited time, the Portsmouth Sunrise Rotary Club will provide free child car seats to Families First clients. To request a seat, contact Eliza Seavey at Families First at 603-422-8208 x148. Once the request is approved, families will schedule an appointment with the Portsmouth Police Department to receive their new car seat and learn proper installation. To support this program or to learn how to become a member of the Portsmouth Sunrise Club, contact Pat Lyons at 603-767-0009.



DRIVE OF THE MONTH: Household Items

Each month, we ask community members to donate different items that Families First clients need - either on their own, or by organizing a group of friends or a club to hold a drive to collect the items. In February, we are asking for **new** household items such as cleaning supplies, toiletries, towels, sheets, etc. They will be distributed to individuals and families in need by our Health Care for the Homeless mobile health van team, home visitors and care coordinators. Please bring items to Families First ([directions](#)) in Portsmouth. View "[Drive of the Month](#)" schedule for the year.

RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

F.A.S.T.E.R. (Families Advocating for Substance Treatment, Education and Recovery) offers a parent peer support group for families dealing with drug abuse and recovery. All meetings are free, confidential and relate to issues surrounding families dealing with youth substance abuse and associated behaviors. They are held at the Community Campus in Portsmouth. For more information, visit the [FASTER website](#), or call Donna at 603-571-4232.

F.A.S.T.E.R.
Families Advocating for Substance
Treatment, Education and Recovery

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