

Good Evening,

My name is John O'Neill and I am a Fathering Family Support Provider for the Families First Nurturing Families Network program at Madonna Place in Norwich. I have been working in this position for just under a year. I work with first time fathers who are looking for help with their children whether it be building attachment or learning information regarding their child's development.

Throughout my experience, I have come across proud fathers who desire nothing more than knowing what's best for their children. At times, I have been honored with hearing stories from fathers about how the Families First program has helped them along the way. One moment in particular occurred at the Families First graduation ceremony held this past August. This father had been in the program for five years with his daughter and rarely spoke during our visits. When his daughter received her certificate, the father asked to speak and complimented the program whole heartedly. He quickly became emotional while talking. He thanked God for having Families First and the fathering home visitors as resources that helped him build a relationship with his daughter and gave him knowledge in childhood development.

On another occasion, while working with a father regarding home safety, we reviewed handouts on how to make the home safe for his daughter. The following week I walked into a spotless home and the father had attached child safety locks to his kitchen cabinets. He was very proud of himself and the efforts that he had put forth to keep his child safe.

I also work with other fathers who only have the Family First program as their main resource for child development and support. This program has helped many dads throughout the years become better fathers and to advocate for themselves. I would like to see this program given appropriate funding so it can continue to provide fathers and families with parenting education and support in the formation of even stronger parent-child bonds.

Thank you for your time.