



PARENTING JOURNEY

We help build stronger families.



A Strength-Based Parenting Program

**Supporting Parents
Caring for Kids**

OUR MISSION

To create safer, more resilient families by supporting them in developing the inner strengths, life skills and network of resources they need to succeed.

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The Parenting Journey group curriculum is an innovative group-based approach to working with parents. Our organization also offers a Training Program designed to help you bring this effective program to the parents you serve. The program is currently being replicated in close to 500 sites throughout New England and New York.

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Parenting is a journey that begins the day you are born.

Families are the most important institution and the most valuable resource in a child's life. The Parenting Journey is a program geared toward parents who may not have had the kind of upbringing that serves as a source of strength and knowledge.

The Parenting Journey curriculum:

- Concentrates on the emotional understanding of what it means to be a parent;
- Helps parents envision a positive future for themselves and their children;
- Emphasizes the parent as a person rather than the child or the child in a disciplinary relationship with the parent;
- Helps parents reflect on their own upbringing and draw conclusions about how to be a good parent.

Parenting Journey is more than a "how to" class. It is an opportunity for parents to develop themselves as nurtured and nurturing people, capable of making responsible and informed choices in raising their children.

Elements of the Parenting Journey program are:

- A 12-week curriculum
- 2 hours per week
- Concrete agenda
- Highly structured activities and discussions
- Nurturing meal

Who is the group for?

Any parent who is genuinely curious and willing to examine how essential relationships impact parenting can benefit from the Parenting Journey, including these populations:

- Parents seeking community and support
- Couples
- Single and divorced parents
- Parents of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- GLBT parents
- Mandated parents
- Parents who have experienced violence
- Parents in preventive programs
- Parents with minimal literacy
- Parents in recovery
- Parents with mental health issues

Where can this group be offered?

- Shelters
- Community Centers
- School Environments
- Human Service Agencies
- Churches
- Mental Health Clinics
- Public Housing Settings
- Medical Environments



Program Structure

PARENTING JOURNEY

The Parenting Journey Program Structure

Parenting Journey's structured 2 hour per week, 12-week group curriculum does the following:

1. The group-based design of the program helps to reduce parent isolation and begin to build healthy social connections.
2. Fosters parental resilience by focusing on and identifying parents' strengths that can help parents problem-solve, set goals, and more confidently raise their children.
3. Parents experience routines, consistency, and respect which helps them self-regulate their behavior and practice empathic listening. These experiences are part of every group session and provide a model for creating a strong family foundation, which supports the positive social and emotional development of children.
4. Parents improve their parenting skills by reflecting on and making connections regarding unhealthy practices they may have learned or experienced as children that they might be repeating with their own children.
5. Provides opportunities for parents to share, be acknowledged, be appreciated, and express appreciation to others. These experiences motivate parents to more fully nurture their children and seek out healthy social and emotional support in others contexts.



COMPARED TO OTHER PROGRAMS:

The Parenting Journey is not....

- A didactic seminar in child development.
- A behavior modification program for parents.
- A "how to" recipe for parenting interventions.

Learning about child development and how best to discipline one's child are critical elements in raising one's children. But we have found many parents are not ready to focus on these issues until they have had an opportunity to work through crucial aspects of their own experiences in their families of origin and have truly struggled with their role as a parent. Parenting skills and child developmental information are communicated experientially in the the Parenting Journey. We deal with handling relational situations using the Ritual Questions during the first part of each weekly session.



Curriculum Summary

PARENTING JOURNEY

Parenting Journey is a 12-week curriculum designed for parents who want to learn more about themselves, their relationships, and the resources they need to effectively parent their children. In a warm and nurturing environment, parents are supported and encouraged to care for themselves and each other, while participating in a series of experiential exercises.

SESSIONS 1-2:

BUILDING TRUST

These sessions start with ice-breakers and other team building activities designed to build comfort and cohesion among parents.

SESSIONS 3-6:

CONNECTING THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

These sessions get to the heart of the Parenting Journey model. Parents are respectfully led through a series of experiential activities that offer them an opportunity to reflect on their past experiences of being parented. This process encourages parents to identify what “did” and “didn’t” work in their own childhood experience. They make connections of unhealthy patterns they might be repeating with their own children. They acknowledge past disappointments and move toward making conscious decisions to be successful parents.

SESSIONS 7-8:

SPECIAL CHALLENGES

In these sessions, parents explore special challenges such as holding on to “secrets” and “fears” and dealing with the messages we give our children about their “other parent” [Honoring Your Child’s Identity]. These sessions help parents address how these issues can impede their ability to move forward in their lives.

SESSIONS 9-10:

CHOICES

Parents explore the importance of making proactive choices. They identify concrete and achievable goals and develop strategies for reaching them.

SESSIONS 11-12:

CLOSURE

In the final sessions, parents are supported as they confront losses in their lives and reflect on “good” and “bad” endings that they have experienced. The final session is a Graduation Ceremony, where parents invite friends and family. Parents take center stage and are praised for their strengths and participation. The significance of the graduation ceremony often stands as a monumental accomplishment.



Assumptions

PARENTING JOURNEY



- 1** All parents want to be good parents.
- 2** The best way to raise hope is to start by identifying a parent's strengths, and building from there.
- 3** Any individual affects and is affected by other family members. We do not live in isolation.
- 4** People need an experience of feeling nurtured before they can nurture their children.
- 5** It is important to incorporate thinking as a step between feelings and actions to promote appropriate responses.
- 6** Effective learning comes first through feelings and then through thinking.
- 7** Effective parenting is influenced by one's own past, by the whole family, and by the cultural, social, and economic circumstances in which families find themselves.



Goals

PARENTING JOURNEY

- 1 Parents will be more hopeful and optimistic about their future.
- 2 Parents will have more insight about the connections between their parents' behavior and their own behavior as parents.
- 3 Parents will be more confident about achieving their own personal goals.
- 4 Parents will demonstrate an increase in their capacity for empathy and forgiveness.
- 5 Parents will increase their ability to nurture themselves and their children.
- 6 Parents will increase their understanding about what it means to be a good parent.
- 7 Parents will show an improved capacity to find and utilize community resources.



Facilitator Training

PARENTING JOURNEY

The Parenting Journey program has been recognized by state and private agencies as an effective program for engaging at-risk parents. The Parenting Journey has also proved to be a powerful experience for all parents facing the ordinary yet daunting task of raising their children.

The Parenting Journey offers a training program where you can learn first-hand how to use our experiential curriculum to run Parenting Journey groups within your organization. This involves five days of intensive training, opportunities for follow up technical assistance, and ongoing updates.

ELEMENTS OF THE PARENTING JOURNEY TRAINING PROGRAM:

Informational Sessions for Agency Decision Makers

The Parenting Journey program requires high-level support from senior management and supervisory staff within your organization. Brief information sessions for decision makers or directors who are considering investing in the Parenting Journey are held in Boston, New York, or via webinar multiple times each year.

Attendees will learn about:

- The many ways it benefits parents and organizations;
- The support mechanisms available to trainees;
- The value of adding The Parenting Journey to their service mix.

The Parenting Journey is an evidence informed curriculum that builds competencies in parents that are aligned with the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework.



Facilitator Training

The five-day intensive Parenting Journey Facilitator Training covers the entire Parenting Journey curriculum over the course of five, six-hour training days. It is part of the program philosophy to expect trainees to participate in all training activities so that trainees experience the exercises as parents do in the program. The training also provides opportunities for the trainees to facilitate sections of the curriculum and to receive constructive feedback from their trainer and other training participants. After the training, trainees may return to their organizations and begin conducting Parenting Journey groups with the parents they support.



Fees

The current fee is \$800 per participant. This fee covers the experiential 5-day, 30-hour professional course that teaches the 12-session Parenting Journey group curriculum; a copy of the curriculum and session-by-session fidelity checklists; up to 2 hours of technical support via telephone or webinar for up to one year from the date of training; and breakfast and lunch each training day. Certificates of completion and 30 NASW Continuing Education Units are offered. Limited partial scholarships may also be available to participants outside of the New York area.

There is an additional \$425* cost for The Parenting Journey Starter Kit, which includes all materials needed to conduct the 12-session Parenting Journey Curriculum. The set includes a full-sized set of 26 Parenting Journey Session Posters for use in each of the 12 group sessions. The Kit also includes 12 Parent Workbooks and a set of 55 “ice-breaker” buttons (used to open the program in the first session).

**Shipping costs not included.*

Bring the Parenting Journey Training to your Site

Let us bring The Parenting Journey Facilitator Training to your state, community, or site. A minimum of 16 participants is needed in order to bring the training to your area. If your organization cannot guarantee that minimum, we are happy to work jointly with your organization to recruit for the minimum number of participants required to deliver the training.

The cost of putting on the training is based on participant enrollment fees and the travel costs to send two workshop leaders to your area. This fee covers the experiential 5-day, 30-hour professional course that teaches the 12-session Parenting Journey group curriculum; a copy of the curriculum and session-by-session fidelity checklists; up to 2 hours of technical support via telephone or webinar for up to one year from the date of training; and breakfast and lunch each training day. Certificates of completion and 30 NASW Continuing Education Units are offered. Limited partial scholarships may also be available to participants.

Learn More

For more information about the Parenting Journey Facilitator Training, please contact Noël Twigg, Senior Director of Partnerships at (617) 628-8815 or via email at ntwigg@parentingjourney.org.

The Parenting Journey Curriculum and other copyrighted materials are only distributed to people who have been trained in the Parenting Journey model. Only facilitators trained by the Parenting Journey should run Parenting Journey programs.



Frequently Asked Questions

PARENTING JOURNEY

What is the Parenting Journey?

The Parenting Journey is a family services organization located in Somerville, MA. **Its mission is to create safer, more resilient families by supporting them in developing the inner strengths, life skills, and network of resources they need to succeed.** Our approach is based on the family systems principle: that people do not exist in isolation. They live in families (however defined) and gain important strengths from these relationships. Through recognizing and harnessing families' strengths, our programs create changes that benefit all members, both individually and as a family.

Why was the Parenting Journey program created?

The Parenting Journey grew out of a contract with the Department of Children and Families of Massachusetts to provide parenting programs for child welfare-involved parents. The program seeks to support struggling parents who, as children, might not have been adequately parented themselves. It is our belief that parents cannot give from an empty vessel, nor understand what it means to be taken care of if they have not experienced it.

How can I learn more about the Parenting Journey model?

Call us to arrange to attend a free information seminar or to schedule a telephone consultation. It is especially important for organization decision makers to understand the model before they send their staff to be trained.

What qualifications should trainees have to apply for this training?

We train professionals in the human services field. It is desirable for participants to have social and emotional intelligence, comfort dealing with emotions, and some prior experiences as an educator, health educator, or group facilitator. The following is a profile of past training participants:

- Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Counselors
- Nurses
- Parent Involvement Specialists
- Marriage & Family Therapists
- Children Services Workers
- Parent Aids
- Child Welfare Workers
- Parent Educators
- Parent-Community Liasons
- Family Life Educators

What's involved in the five-day training?

It is important for each trainee to attend all five days of training in order to understand how to successfully use the curriculum. During the first three days of training we take each trainee through all 12 sessions of the Parenting Journey curriculum, while teaching the most effective ways to deliver the sessions to parents. During the final two days, trainees have an opportunity to practice conducting sessions, while receiving feedback from a skilled Parenting Journey group leader. Trainees also learn the "nuts" and "bolts" they need to know before they start their groups.



Curricula Series

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Parenting Journey I:

Our 12-session, introductory curriculum is designed to help parents increase their self-care practices, raise awareness of the past and present factors that influence their parenting styles, enhance their parenting skills, and utilize their strengths to support their children and build nurturing family relationships. The Parenting Journey model focuses on adult development and the emotional understanding of what it means to be a parent, thus filling a void created by traditional parenting classes which often focus on child development and disciplinary techniques.



Parenting Journey II:

Our 12-session Parenting Journey II offers parents an opportunity to utilize the skills and new insights they gained in Parenting Journey I. As the Journey continues, parents re-direct their focus away from their past experiences of being parented (Parenting Journey I) and begin to examine their lives in the “here and now”. This includes identifying self-sabotaging behavior and proactively setting goals and making plans for themselves and their family’s futures. Parents leave with a better understanding of how their past and current actions impact and affect their children. Parents have tangible and concrete goals for themselves.

Parenting in America:

Parenting in America is our 12-session curriculum-based program in which Haitian and Latino parents share their immigration experiences, honor their cultural strengths, and use new strategies to confront the challenges of adapting to living in the United States and raising their bicultural children. The curriculum addresses such topics as the balance of power in the family; learning to navigate systems and connect with resources that are important to, or can improve, their lives; and staying healthy in a stressful environment. The goal of the group is to support immigrant parents as they go through a process of self-discovery and goal setting in relation to their parenting—all within their cultural contexts.

"The Parenting Journey is such an invigorating, nurturing experience. It exceeded my every expectation. The experience urged me to connect with and reconcile past experiences – both good and bad. I am enthusiastically motivated to begin facilitating Parenting Journey sessions to share this experience with others." -- Past Trainee

Contact Parenting Journey

at info@parentingjourney.org for more information on our curricula series and to receive a schedule of upcoming training offerings.



Partial List of Agencies Trained

PARENTING JOURNEY

Florida

Citrus County Abuse Shelter Association
Eckerd
Devereux
Kids Central, Inc.
Hands of Mercy Everywhere

Massachusetts

ABCD Head Start & Children's Services
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
Boston Public Schools/Quincy Upper School
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Burlington Community Life Center
Catholic Charities Boston
Child Care of the Berkshires
Children's Services of Roxbury
Crittenton Women's Union
Family Services of Merrimack Valley
Fitchburg Comm. Connections Family Resource Ctr.
Framingham RLC
Greater Visions Children's Center
Mother Caroline Academy
Roxbury Youthworks, Inc
The Home for Little Wanderers
Year Up

New Hampshire

Early Education Services

New York Area

80 Maiden Lane, Suite 606
New York, NY 10038
(212) 430-5909

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire
Family Resource Center of Central NH
Prevention Makes Cents

New York

7th Avenue Center for Family Services
Alianza Dominicana
Arab American Family Support Center
Arms Acres
Association to Benefit Children
Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center
Catholic Charities
Catholic Guardian Society
Children's Aid Society
East Harlem Tutorial Program
Good Shepherd Services
Graham Windham
Harlem RBI
Jewish Board of Family and Children Services
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center
Mercy First
Safe Space
The Children's Village

Washington, DC

Jubilee Jump Start
Linkages to Learning
Martha's Table

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