

# Families First Workshops

Foster Elementary School

Arvada, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

The Family-School Partnership (FSP) team, made up of families and staff, at Foster Elementary School knows that the best way to engage with families is to find out what families want to know. The FSP team worked with families to identify workshop topics of interest to families, while the Family Engagement Liaison worked with a community non-profit organization, Families First, to put together a workshop series called Families First Workshops.

Workshop topics included Bullying, Self-Esteem, Punishment vs. Discipline: Positive Methods of Discipline, The Love of Reading and Learning, Communication: This is Not Just Talking, but also How to Listen!, and Parenting from the Heart: 5 Essential Tools for Raising Children. All workshop sessions were offered in both English and Spanish, allowing a greater number of families to come together and focus on the shared goal of student success. Workshops took place over a two-month period and were offered in both a morning and afternoon session.

The Families First Workshops were evaluated with the assistance of Families First. The FSP team learned that prior to offering the workshops, families reported feeling lost and unsure of who to ask for parenting advice. After attending the Families First Workshops, families shared that they appreciated the support and guidance they received from other families and the facilitators. Families also reported positive changes in their daily lives that were directly related to what they learned in the workshops.

The FSP team recommends beginning registration two months prior to the start of the workshops to ensure high attendance, and to use marketing strategies in various languages to recruit a greater number of families.

One goal of the Families First Workshops is to support families by bringing in topical-based workshops based on family interest; as such, it was critical to have families identify the areas of need rather than the school staff. The other goal of the Families First Workshops is to collaborate with families on student success. By increasing the knowledge and skills of families to support student learning in the home, the Families First Workshops benefitted students both at home and at school.