

**when all else fails...**

**helping families in crisis**

  
**UTAH youth village**

*changing the lives of children and families since 1969*



# families first

## an effective alternative

When troubled teens don't respond to their parents or therapists, some parents see residential treatment as the only solution.

However, there is an effective alternative...

UtahYouthVillage has been providing a treatment approach for families with troubled children and youth since 1994 and has worked with thousands of families. This approach is generally more effective and efficient than residential treatment, even with youth that seem to have very serious issues.

### **It is called Families First.**

Referrals come from schools, church leaders, therapists, juvenile courts, state agencies, insurance companies and community organizations.

98% of the families served recommend this program to other families with seriously troubled children.





For the last 40 years Utah Youth Village has been one of the most successful providers of residential treatment in Utah. Currently we are one of the largest providers serving the very difficult youth who are wards of the state or are in Juvenile Corrections.

We know the strengths and weaknesses of residential treatment.

Our experience has taught us that in most cases the Families First program can create the same level of change in troubled youth as residential treatment except that Families First has the following advantages:

1. Parents are much more satisfied with the results in the long run.
2. Parents feel much more support.
3. Parents feel that they regain control of the family.
4. It costs a fraction of the cost of residential treatment.
5. The relationship between the parents and the child is not damaged by the personal rejection a child feels when he/she is removed from the family and placed in residential treatment.
6. The effects of Families First helps all of the children in the family, not just the referral child.
7. The intervention is only six weeks, taking much less time.
8. The change created in the youth is more enduring.
9. The Families First specialist is available for crisis help to the family for up to a year after the service.





## **What is Families First?**

Families First is an intensive in-home intervention designed to give families the tools they need to solve their problems. It builds on the family's strengths and empowers parents with proven strategies to change the behaviors of their troubled child(ren).

Teens and parents learn and practice new skills in their home “in the moment” and with real life situations.

A highly-trained Families First Specialist spends up to 10 hours a week with the family, in their own home, for six weeks. The Specialist is an ally of the parent(s), strengthening and supporting them. Parents are never criticized. Research based strategies change the behaviors of the troubled youth. After the intervention, the Specialist remains available to the family by phone for up to a year.

## **Keeping the “Team” involved.**

Referring workers are given weekly progress reports by the Families First Specialist. The summaries can be delivered either electronically or through the mail.

*“I doubt we could say enough good about Families First. Our [Specialist] taught us behaviors that brought about significant and lasting change in our home. Also, our [Specialist] fit right in with our family, and we were always glad to see her. We have discussed the experience many times and have felt Families First was an answer to prayers.”*

—Richard Paul Evans & Keri Evans

## teaching-family model

Families First is based on the parenting technology of the evidence-based Teaching-Family Model, one of the most researched treatment approaches for troubled youth in use today. It is based on the inherent power of the parent to change a child’s behavior. For a more complete description, go to [www.teaching-family.org](http://www.teaching-family.org).

Because of the training and soundness of the principles taught, families who have been referred to Families First have been pleased with their assigned specialists.

### Common Problems Facing Youth

- Delinquent behavior
- Pornography use
- Depression
- Truancy
- Drug and Alcohol Use
- Running Away
- School learning or mis-behaviors
- Suicide threats and ideation
- Sexually reactive behaviors
- Authority conflicts
- Neglect or abuse
- Hyperactivity
- Physical and verbal aggression

### When Families First is Not Effective

Families First is not appropriate if the youth presents with active suicide risk requiring hospitalization or detoxification for substance dependence or abuse. However, once the youth is stabilized, Families First can be very effective dealing with the issues leading to suicidal ideation and substance abuse.

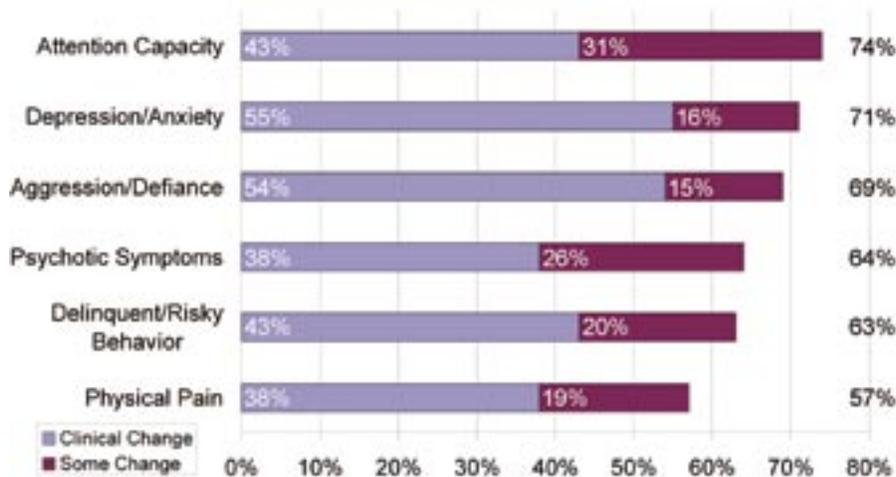
## Tailored to Family Needs:

The Families First Specialist will schedule his/her time with the family around the family's schedule, including home visits on week nights and weekends. The Families First Specialist is available for crisis intervention or consultation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Evidence-based:

Families First has been extensively and rigorously studied. These studies include a three-year, controlled experiment which found statistically significant improvement in child behavior and decreased recidivism resulting in improved family stability and a five-year pre-post survey across 951 families which documented an average 24 point improvement in youth behavior over the course of the Families First intervention – double the number needed for statistically reliable change.

**Areas of Specific Change:** Based on YO-Q scores at the completion of a Families First intervention, youth improvements were observed in the following six areas:



## Effective Over Time:

Both studies mentioned above provide evidence of enduring, sustained improvement. For example, recidivism in the Juvenile Justice System was reduced by half.

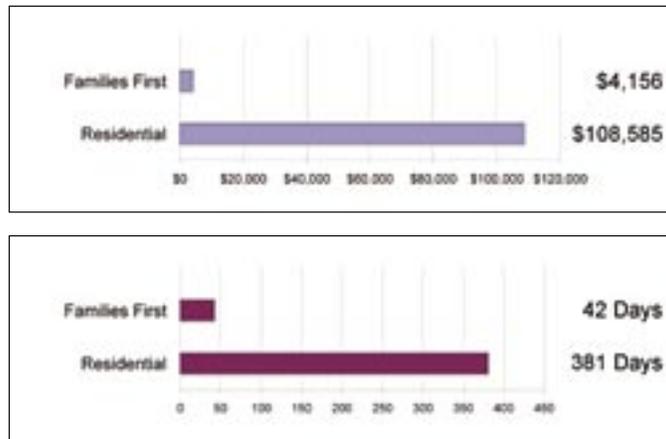
In the study comparing a treatment group with a control group, there was no recidivism (on average) in the negative behaviors of the treatment family's troubled youth six months after the Families First services. The changes last.

## Reports of Consumer Satisfaction:

In satisfaction surveys over the last three years...

- 99% of parents report that the Families First intervention had been effective at reaching the family's goals.
- 95% of youth report that the Families First intervention had been effective at reaching their goals.
- 97% of associated agencies and other professionals also report that the Families First intervention had been effective at reaching their goals.

## Families First Comparisons with Residential Treatment: Total Cost and Treatment Length



## Pricing Options

UtahYouthVillage's Families First program is committed to being able to provide intensive in-home services to children and families regardless of their ability to pay. Families First offers reduced cost interventions on a sliding fee scale, as well as on a scholarship basis where UtahYouthVillage covers the cost of the entire intervention. Additionally, Families First is able to work with several different insurance companies for coverage of this service.

To help transition children back into their own homes, UtahYouthVillage provides Families First interventions to all children placed in any of our residential group homes as no cost.

For all youth placed in our treatment foster care homes, Families First is offered at a discounted rate of over 50%.

*“I have found Families First to be an invaluable program. This program is able to work with families in their own environment and as a result, the intervention is more powerful and long-lasting.”*

—Monty Millerberg, Primary Children’s Counseling

Families First prioritizes contracted services along with cases that are covered by insurance. Any referrals with a partial payment and/or from our residential programs are assigned next. Families seeking scholarship assistance are assigned on a first come, first served basis. The waiting time for scholarship cases is often 12 weeks or more.

If there are any specific questions regarding a family’s individual needs, the appropriateness of this service for a family/child, or the waiting list, please call us at (801) 272-9980.

## **Effectiveness Compared to Residential Treatment**

In a study done by a local insurance company, twenty children of insured families were mandatorily referred to Families First before the insurance company would cover residential treatment for them.

All families had requested residential treatment. Before this study, all would have been referred to residential treatment or hospitalization.

After Families First, only one of the twenty youth was hospitalized, and it was only for several weeks. None went into residential treatment. The parents experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the service because they felt they had control of the troubled youth and the family when the intervention was done. This is not always the case when referring youth to residential treatment.

In this study, some of the parents who were forced to do Families First instead of residential treatment were initially frustrated because they wanted the immediate relief of pain and stress that comes when the child is removed from the home.

As tempting as it is to have the pain and stress of a troubled child lessened by removing the child from the home, eventually, that child will return home and their prior problems can return with them.

Families First solves problems where change is real and long-lasting -- at home with a family. Families First strengthens families. Everyone learns skills, even non-referred children. Mom and dad learn to parent together. Troubled children feel less desperate and more responsible.

Children change and families are healed. Families First is the most humane and effective method for changing troubled children that we have experienced. It should be the first step, and it will probably be the last, in a family's journey of healing.

Referring a child to residential treatment temporarily transfers the burdens of parenting to professional staff with the hope that change will occur. It's like giving a person a fish when the person is hungry.

Families First partners with the parents in creating change. It is like teaching a person to fish to satisfy their hunger. It is more effective and more fully consistent with welfare principles.





## **getting started...**

To refer a family to Utah Youth Village's Families First program call Wayne Arner at 801-272-9980 and indicate that you are interested in Families First. You can also visit our web site at [www.youthvillage.org](http://www.youthvillage.org).

Arrangements will be made to have a professional sent to meet with the family, explain the program and help to coordinate services.



### **contact us**

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