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CONTACT: Emma Tobin, Executive Director
etobin@familynurturing.org

Family Nurturing Center Event Highlights ParentChild+ and Shares Powerful Stories from Parents, Professionals, and Boston Policymakers



(Photo, Left) Members of the Boston ParentChild+ team gather (Photo, Right) City Councilor Frank Baker gives his thanks to members of the Family Nurturing Center and ParentChild+

BOSTON, MA: Early childhood development and family support programs Family Nurturing Center (FNC) and ParentChild+ hosted a Policymaker Open House on October 13 at the newly built FNC in Dorchester. FNC Executive Director Emma Tobin welcomed the crowd of public officials, board members, staff, and families to the Center, and thanked her staff for the important work they do each day supporting families with young children throughout the city. Massachusetts ParentChild+ State Director Carol Rubin highlighted the work the Early Learning Specialists do via in-home and virtual visits through two distinct models: directly with families with young children in their homes; and with Family Child Care (FCC) providers and other informal childcare providers, who often do not have access to any other support systems or early education programs.

During the event, State Representative and Senator-Elect Liz Miranda and Boston City Councilor Frank Baker shared their heartfelt stories of childhood and family challenges, while emphasizing the importance of local support systems for family resilience.

Rep. Miranda proudly shared her story as a “product of a teen mom” and discussed the importance of community infrastructures that support families in need. “Places like Family Nurturing Center and St. Mary’s were the places that were here for me and my family, and families like mine,” Miranda recounted. As a representative in the Massachusetts Legislature for an underserved and marginalized community, Miranda emphasized the program’s ability to influence the lives and growth of families that are often left behind. Miranda stated proudly, “What I love about the Family Nurturing Center is that you build families, but you also count people back in, and you engage them in their own wellbeing.”

Also featured in the policymaker presentations was Councilor Frank Baker, who described his own family’s experience with the ParentChild+ program through FNC. He talked about his wife wanting to ensure their twin babies had absolutely every support they could to ensure their success, and reaching out to the Family Nurturing Center. Their family participated in ParentChild+ for the full 92 visits, working with Lydia Brown, who is now the Boston coordinator. Councilor Baker thanked Lydia for all she had done for their family, and noted the successful bedtime routine, always a challenge with twins, that their family followed as a result of Lydia’s input. Amidst political challenges and squabbling, he noted, instead, “This is where we should be focusing, on building that foundation of the family.”

Beyond the policymakers, it was parents who took center stage. One mother who participates with her daughter in ParentChild+ simply called the program “A pleasure. It’s been amazing.” Taking time to describe her daughter’s excitement about learning from and connecting with their early literacy specialist, she concluded by saying about the program, “I would like it to keep going because we have more parents that really need it. We have a lot of immigrants coming to the country that really need this program.”

The program also highlighted the deep diversity of cultures and languages that the Early Learning Specialists bring to the program. Early Learning Specialists who spoke during the event share languages with the families they visit, including Arabic, different dialects of Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole – of particular importance as Massachusetts continues to welcome an unprecedented number of Haitian migrants in light of the crises in that country.

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Family Nurturing Center (FNC) is based in Boston and offers free programs for families in low-income neighborhoods to help parents and caregivers give their children the best possible start in life. Through evidence-based, multi-lingual programming, and through training across the Commonwealth, FNC works to nurture families and strengthen communities.

ParentChild+ is a school readiness-focused home visiting program that works with families throughout Massachusetts to ensure parents have the information, skills, and materials they need to prepare their children for school success. ParentChild+ Boston is based out of FNC.

These organizations serve thousands of MA families and children each year, and can offer resources to constituents – resources which, for many families, are more important than ever, following the upheaval of the last 2.5 years of the pandemic.