

## **KIDS FIRST**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q.** WHAT MAKES KIDS FIRST UNIQUE?

- A.** -The Kids First curriculum was specifically designed for both parents and kids to attend, strengthening the kids emotionally and refocusing the parents on the needs of the kids.
- Kids First is a therapy based, interactive educational program utilizing peer group processes, providing both clinical and practical approaches to enhance parenting skills and reduce conflict.
- The parents' and kids' curriculums are coordinated in order to more effectively address issues affecting the family as a whole as well as those issues unique to each family member.
- At the conclusion of each weekly session, the clinical staff has a de-briefing where issues that arose in the parents' and kids' groups are discussed, providing insights for the following weeks.
- Kids First is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation serving the community since 1996, organized and managed by attorneys and therapists. It is the only program of its kind in Southern California.

**Q.** WHEN WILL A JUDICIAL OFFICER ORDER A FAMILY TO ATTEND KIDS FIRST?

- A.** Whenever they feel it appropriate to address family issues related to parenting and custody.

**Q.** IS KIDS FIRST ONLY FOR SERIOUSLY DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES?

- A.** No. Kids First will benefit most families where the parents live apart and there is any parental conflict regarding the kids or the kids are having difficulty coping with the separation.

**Q.** WHAT ARE SOME COMMON SITUATIONS WHEN KIDS FIRST MAY BE MOST HELPFUL?

- A.** -When the parents are disputing parenting arrangements.
- When parents need to improve their co-parenting skills.
- When a child is reluctant to visit a parent.
- When step-family issues are negatively impacting parenting.
- When there is ongoing or high conflict between the parents regarding the kids.

**Q.** WHICH FAMILY MEMBERS SHOULD BE ORDERED TO ATTEND KIDS FIRST?

- A.** Both parents and all kids ages 4 through 17 should attend regardless of who is most un-cooperative, as Kids First addresses the effect on each family member and the family as a whole.

**Q.** SHOULD STEPPARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN BE ASKED TO ATTEND?

- A.** Yes. Kids First addresses step-family dynamics, helping parents, stepparents, kids and step-kids better understand their respective roles in the restructured family.

**Q.** SHOULD GRANDPARENTS BE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND?

- A.** Yes, if the grandparent has a significant role in the Kids' lives.

- Q.** MAY FAMILIES ATTEND IF THERE ARE RESTRAINING ORDERS?
- A.** Yes. We have never had an incident of violence. Affected families are flagged in our registration process and we reserve the right to un-enroll anyone we determine to be a risk. We have our own security in addition to the availability of Chapman Security and the Orange Police Department.
- Q.** IS KIDS FIRST A MANDATORY REPORTER OF CHILD ABUSE?
- A.** Yes. We make approximately 10 to 12 reports per year.
- Q.** WHERE AND WHEN IS KIDS FIRST HELD?
- A.** Kids First is held at Chapman University in Orange. It is an eight week program held on Saturday mornings from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. [The eighth week ends at 12:30.]
- Q.** HOW ARE THE PARENT'S GROUPS STRUCTURED?
- A.** Each parent is in a separate group with other mothers and fathers. An attending stepparent stays with their partner. Attending Grandparents will be in a group different from either parent.
- Q.** HOW ARE THE KIDS' GROUPS STRUCTURED?
- A.** Kids are in age appropriate groups: approximately ages 4-6, 7-9, 10-13 and 14-17. Siblings and/or step-kids may or may not be in the same group.
- Q.** HOW MANY GROUPS ARE THERE ON A SATURDAY MORNING?
- A.** Usually, four parent groups and seven kid's groups.
- Q.** WHO FACILITATES THE PARENT GROUPS?
- A.** One or two trained and experienced licensed therapists, psychologists and/or registered interns facilitate each parent group.
- Q.** WHO FACILITATES THE KIDS' GROUPS?
- A.** In addition to the above, we use Masters Degree candidates who work in the Chapman University Psychological Clinic. They are trained and supervised by Kids First and Chapman clinical staff.
- Q.** DOES KIDS FIRST MAKE A REPORT TO THE COURT?
- A.** No, Kids First is confidential. However, all participants receive a graduation certificate and each "court ordered" participant's certificate also includes a record of the family's attendance.
- Q.** HOW DOES KIDS FIRST MEASURE ITS EFFECTIVENESS?
- A.** In addition to anecdotal feedback received from participants, attorneys and therapists, the participants complete a pre and post test and a program evaluation. They also evaluate each of their facilitators. Kids respond to age appropriate questions about their Kids First experience.

Kids First complements, but does not replace ongoing individual therapy that may also be required.

*For more specific program and registration information, please visit our website at:*

*KIDSFIRSTOC.ORG or call 714-536-4364.*