FAMILY FIRST was founded in 2005 by Oregon State Penitentiary adults in custody (AIC). The Family First program was created under the understanding that pro-social interactions between a parent and child as well as positive interaction between parents of different ages, ethnicities and backgrounds contribute to pro-social rehabilitation, healthier mental states, and, long term, a higher probability of successful transition into communities and society at large. All Family First AIC’s are required to be graduates of Pathfinder’s 12 – week Parenting Inside Out (PIO) curriculum. PIO is a Project of the Children’s Justice Alliance and Oregon Social Learning Center in Cooperation with The Oregon Department of Corrections. The PIO 12 week curriculum includes topics such as: Creating a Safe Place to Work Together and Learn, Communication and Problem Solving, Connecting With Your Child, Child Development, Healthy families Nurturing Your child’s Individuality, Child Guidance, Special Needs, Your Life in the Community, etcetera.

OUR MISSION
The Family First programs mission is to help build and maintain strong, healthy family relationships. We believe the program to be instrumental in breaking the cycle of recidivism of PIO graduate participants. Additionally, each of our six annual events are dedicated to activities that assist in fostering familial values and bonds as well as creating an environment structured towards breaking the pattern of children of incarcerated parents ‘following’ in their parents footsteps.

WHAT WE DO
Family First holds six special events featuring a theme and virtue. These themes include Valentine’s Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Summer, Education, and Christmas. The virtues are discussed during their corresponding event, i.e. Love – Love your neighbor as yourself, Individuality – Discovering who you are meant to be so you can make a difference, Honor – Letting someone know you see how valuable they are, Cooperation – Working together to realize you can do more together than alone, Character – Learning the true goal of education, Compassion – Caring enough to do something to help those that are less fortunate than you. Of particular emphasis is our unique summer event, which includes a barbeque lunch. The activities are held in an isolated grassed area of the penitentiary where children, caregiver, and AIC father participate in games, crafts, and bounce house activities. We typically also have face painting, snow cone machine, and an outside entertainer such as a friendly clown to bring smiles to every participant’s face.

SEEKING
Family First seeks partnerships and sponsors in the community to assist by donating their time, expertise, and financial support. The program also welcomes donations of books, games, and gifts that can be given to the children and /or caregivers at the six annual events.