United Way of Weld County fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. We are more than fund-raisers. We are hand-raisers. We raise our hands not only to lead the fight, but to reach out to people who need help. And hope.

We win when we Live United. By forging unlikely partnerships. By finding new solutions to old problems. By mobilizing the best resources. And by inspiring individuals to join the fight against our community’s most daunting social crises.

**WE FIGHT FOR SOFIA**

Sofia cares for her neighbors’ children along with her own son; as she started caring for more children, Sofia was interested in learning more about how to prepare them for school, as well as how to run her expanding business. Because her English isn’t very good, Sofia was too nervous to sign up for a college class, but when she heard about PASO, a training program specifically for Spanish-only speaking child care providers, she thought she would give it a try. Not only did Sofia learn from PASO and earn her Child Development Associate certificate, she developed a network of friends on whom she can rely.

**WHY WE FIGHT**

In 2016 in Weld County, there were 14,249 children with parents in the workforce that needed child care, yet there were only 6,400 licensed child care slots, meaning the majority of children are in the care of family, friends and neighbors. As seen in the 2015 NAEP scores, children of Hispanic origin in Colorado drastically underperform when compared with their Anglo peers—20% of Hispanic children (and 51% of white children) scored proficient or higher on the reading NAEP. In 2010, the graduation rate of Hispanic youth in Weld County was just 60% (versus 80% for white youth). Benefits of family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care include:

- Low provider-to-child ratios
- Emotional attachment and investment between provider and child
- Individualized attention
- Cultural congruency
- Close relationship between provider and parents
- Provide “off” hour and weekend care, supporting parent employment

**Studies have shown that**

- based on the quality, intensity, and duration of the program, when we spend $1 on early childhood education the return on investment in our community ranges from $8 - $16.
HOW WE FIGHT
The Providers Advancing School Outcomes (PASO) program is one of the first in Colorado to work specifically with the unlicensed family, friend and neighbor (FFN) child care setting, in this case with Spanish-only speaking providers. Through the program, the providers complete 120 hours of early childhood care and education training, mostly during weekend classes.

The curriculum is based on the Child Development Associate (CDA) certification program. Topics include: child development principles (cognitive, language/literacy, social-emotional, physical/motor), school readiness, child safety, nutrition, learning environment and more.

In addition to the weekend trainings, each participant receives visits from a PASO staff member who serves as a mentor. At these visits, the mentor observes the provider’s interactions with the children, reinforces and models activities taught in recent classes and provides support. Events are held throughout each cohort as well to celebrate the providers’ achievements, bring together providers and the families they care for and celebrate children.

In 2017, United Way of Weld County’s PASO graduated 22 providers who care for 139 children from 50 families.

In 2017, 100% of participants showed an increase in the quality of child care provided.

JOIN THE FIGHT

 Give
Make a donation to United Way of Weld County to support the PASO program. You may be eligible for a 50% state income tax credit!

 Advocate
Tell people about the PASO program and the positive impact it has on children, parents and child care providers.

 Volunteer
Volunteers are needed to help with the many events held throughout each PASO cohort.

Please contact PASO at Impact@UnitedWay-Weld.org or 970-353-4300 for more information or to get involved.

“Little by little I learned to recognize the abilities children have and how to stimulate their limitations. By providing discipline, love and giving them a stimulating environment for their emotional and physical development, I am helping them prepare themselves for a life full of respect, self-confidence and success.”

— former PASO participant