



**WE ARE ALL IN THIS
TOGETHER**
LIVING UNITED

COLLABORATES
**Weld County's
Early Childhood Council**

Ensuring every Weld County child is valued, healthy and thriving.

CHALLENGES

It's clear that many Weld County children are growing up in challenging circumstances:

- Weld County's child population has the second fastest rate of growth in Colorado.
- Over a quarter of pregnant women (26.5%) do not receive early prenatal care.
- 24% of births are to single women; 16% are to women without a high school diploma/GED.
- 13.5% of children under 18 live in poverty; in east Greeley/Evans it is 1 in 3.
- For every two children that need child care in Weld County, there is only one licensed child care space available.
- 50% of school aged youth qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
- As of 2019, nearly 2/3 of fourth grade students (40%) did not meet or exceed expectations in English Language Arts.

Why does all this matter to me? **There are at least five reasons...**

1. Prolonged "toxic stress" disrupts proper brain development and can contribute to lifelong difficulties. One in 12 Weld County children aged 0-5 has experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences, including poverty, food insecurity, lack of health care, teenage parents, frequent change of residence, and more.
2. Parents in challenging circumstances who are unable to be their child's first and best teacher will not teach the skills their children need for school and lifelong success.
3. Children being cared for by caring adults in nurturing, safe homes or quality child care settings is critical if young ones are to become well-adjusted teenagers and adults, good neighbors, good employees, and good long-term Weld County citizens.
4. By fourth grade, children should have reading skills for learning; those who have difficulty reading and writing sufficiently by the end of third grade will have trouble succeeding. We need to ensure that by the end of third grade children can read.
5. Compared to high school graduates, a dropout's increased need for social services and greater likelihood of going to jail costs taxpayers a lifetime average of \$292,000.

For our children and neighborhoods and workplaces, for the present and the future, now is the time to work for a Weld County where every child is valued, healthy, and thriving.

Did you know that 85% of a person's intellect, personality, and social skills are developed in the first 3 years of life?

Weld County's Early Childhood Council is a diverse community partnership that increases the awareness of the importance of early childhood development and facilitates accessible pathways of services leading to lifelong well-being for all children prenatal to 8 years of age.

INVESTMENTS

The Weld County Early Childhood Council (WCECC) works to ensure that all children are valued, healthy and thriving by focusing on the whole child. The WCECC does this by utilizing the Early Childhood Colorado Framework (see ECC Framework below) to:

- Educate Weld County’s citizens on the importance of prenatal health care, early childhood development and support for young children through marketing and outreach efforts.
- Strengthen the existing network of programs serving children prenatal to age 8, in an effort to better coordinate the delivery of services. Where appropriate, new programs are created and/or improvements are made to prevent service gaps or duplication within the system.
- Support licensed and exempt child care providers to create high quality care environments.
- Participate in a state-wide network of councils and a place for collaboration on county-wide early childhood development efforts.

Whether you have a few minutes, a few hours, or a few days, you can support the most vulnerable children in Weld County. Find out more!

www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/RGB8

ECC Framework Domain	<u>The Challenge</u> – Children are Experiencing Adverse Circumstances and Failing	<u>The Solution</u> – Children are Well-Positioned for Learning and Preparing for the Future
Family Support and Education	Parents and caregivers, some who also faced adverse conditions growing up, do not have the experience and skills needed to create a nurturing environment for their children. Family and other supports are weak or non-existent.	Home visitation programs, classroom trainings, and online tools provide parents with skills, confidence, and resources for child-raising. Family friendly policies at work give parents time to be present for their children. Schools offer parenting skills training.
Early Learning & Development	There are not enough child care openings to meet the needs of working parents, and those available are too often not affordable. Child care providers don’t have sufficient access to skills-building training for creating high quality care environments so as to prepare children for K-12 education. Children who are behind in school are not provided opportunities to catch up.	Adequate numbers of child care providers are in business to meet the demand, seeing it as a career or business ownership activity. Licensed and family, friend, and neighbor providers receive the training they desire to offer high quality care, including addressing the unique needs of all children. The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) has enough providers involved to offer subsidized care to low-income children.
Early Childhood Health & Well-Being	Pregnant women do not receive prenatal care and education. Too few children are screened for physical and mental difficulties; those for which something is identified are not given a plan and resources for development. Children do not receive proper nutrition, either through lack of parental knowledge or inadequate access to fresh and healthy food.	Mothers-to-be are aware of the need for prenatal care and receive it early and often. Early childhood doctor visits include mental health screenings. Developmental and behavioral health interventions are available from early childhood on. Parents and caregivers understand the importance of proper nutrition and what foods and beverages to avoid. It is easy to access fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.
Community Education & Public Advocacy	Many in Weld County do not understand the critical importance of the prenatal to age 8 period of a child’s life, that many children need assistance, and that the social and economic costs of inadequate development and growth environments are significant.	All community members know that too many Weld County children are not ready by kindergarten to learn in school and are not reading and writing sufficiently at the beginning of fourth grade. We also realize the social and economic costs of an inadequate early childhood environment and are provided opportunities to engage.