



WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
LIVING UNITED

PROVIDES

Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Program

OPPORTUNITIES

When Maria opened her home child care business a few years ago, one of her goals was to begin accepting payment through the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program. She was nervous to begin the complex process so when she heard that United Way of Weld County was helping providers to become eligible, she jumped at the opportunity for assistance. While the process was still complex, Maria was able to achieve her goal with United Way’s help and is now able to serve even more children.

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF WELD COUNTY

United Way has the vision, experience, relationships, and ability to take on and solve some of Weld County’s biggest challenges. Through United Way, together we are building a better Weld County, one where children are reading to learn by the start of fourth grade, youth are working at good jobs by age 25, families have stable housing, older adults are aging well, and people are connecting to the help they need. **Will you join us?**

Reading Great by 8-involved programs help children enter kindergarten ready and read at grade level by the start of fourth grade.



CHALLENGES

The first three years of a child’s life are a critical time of growth and development. Beginning in infancy, high quality child care affects a child’s ability to succeed in school, develop relationships and master social competence. In the United States, nearly 11 million children under the age of 5 spend some or all of their day being cared for by someone other than their parents.

It is imperative that our children's caregivers have the knowledge, skills and tools needed to help every child flourish.

Through working with child care providers to create and maintain high quality early learning environments, United Way’s Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Program helps some of the most vulnerable children in Weld County be better prepared for school success.

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.





INVESTMENTS

The Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Program provides outreach, conducts readiness assessments, and gives technical assistance to child care providers seeking to improve their Colorado Shines quality of care rating. Colorado Shines includes five levels of quality of care environment: level one providers meet basic licensing requirements and level five have worked through a thorough improvement process.

The process begins with United Way staff contacting child care providers, asking if they would like to increase their quality of care while explaining that higher quality care is better for children and allows the provider to charge higher rates. Providers are then matched with a quality improvement coach; the initial meeting identifies areas for improvement and determines a strategy by which increases in quality can be made. This often includes the purchase of quality improvement items, modification of existing child care space, and professional development offerings. Through Colorado Shines, United Way can fund purchases and renovations. When the provider is ready, an assessor from Colorado Shines visits the center- or home-based child care facility and conducts a rating. The rating is then published through Colorado Shines and is good for three years.

“We know that environments teach, and a separate set of eyes is a great way to make improvements for sustainability. One-on-one coaching gives providers support with teaching and guidance strategies, supporting routines and coaching to a healthy and safe child care center or child care home.”

– Cheri, Quality Improvement Coach

In 2020-2021, 31 Weld County child care providers increased the quality of child care provided with United Way support.

In 2020-2021, these 31 Weld County child care providers received \$86,240 in regular quality improvement grants, and another three benefitted from Emerging and Expanding Grants totaling \$122,504.

GIVE

Make a donation to United Way of Weld County to support the Child Care Quality Improvement Project and you could be eligible for a 50% tax credit on your state income tax!

ADVOCATE

Please share with your legislators the value of child care quality improvement programs.

VOLUNTEER

There are a variety of program-related clerical tasks that can use volunteer support.

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