



Invitation to Engage and Invest

How do you want to invest in early childhood development efforts in your Weld County community?



“As someone who loves the Weld County community and has supported different organizations, there is no better steward of my investment than United Way. I trust them as they put community first.”

- Dick Monfort
Owner/Chairman & CEO
Colorado Rockies





Building the foundation for early childhood success

Children are entering Kindergarten ready and reading at grade level by the start of 4th Grade

Highlights

- Early childhood is the most important period of a person's development.
- Until the end of 3rd Grade students learn to read—after this, they read to learn.
- Only 39% of Weld County children are reading at grade level by the beginning of 4th Grade; in other words, 6 in 10 aren't reading to learn by age 8.
- United Way manages Weld County's Early Childhood Council, the community collaboration where early childhood challenges are solved.

Jonah, a Weld County child care provider, saw the State of Colorado Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant program as an opportunity to expand his business and better serve his community. With help from United Way staff for coaching and in applying for funding, Jonah moved his business from being a family child care home serving 12 children to a full-fledged center with 20 tiny tykes. Each of these children will now be better prepared for school and life success.

The Why

For their life success, it is vital that children are reading well by the beginning of 4th Grade. This will more likely occur when children's basic needs are met, when their child care providers know how to deliver high quality care and when, if present, a child's special needs are addressed quickly and successfully. Parents that have sufficient resources and support are better able to remain in the workforce.

By 2024, the Reading Great by 8 community-wide goal is to increase the percentage of Weld County children reading to learn by the beginning of 4th Grade from 39% to 43%.



Challenges

In Weld County, during the 2019-2020 school year only 39% of 4th Grade students were meeting expectations in English Language Arts. Since students are learning to read until the end of 3rd Grade and then reading to learn after that, this means that nearly 2 in 3 Weld County children weren't reading well enough to take full advantage of the rest of their formal education.

This situation is difficult for each student and is costly for our community. As evidence, 70% of all incarcerated adults cannot read at a 4th Grade level, meaning they lack the

reading skills to navigate many everyday tasks or hold down anything but lower paying jobs. This lack of reading ability keeps people at-risk all of their lives. It also costs the larger community money to have our neighbors relying on social services.

How do we, as a community, respond in urgency to change this situation? How do we measure if we are succeeding? How do we solve this challenge?

Investments

The Reading Great by 8 shared effort includes over 35 organizations. Investments are made in a number of programs with county-wide impact that lead to **more students reading at grade level by the beginning of 4th Grade**. Activities include (with those offered by United Way staff in **bold**):

supporting parents and caregivers through instruction and basic needs like diapers

recruiting new child care providers and coaching them in opening their businesses

helping child care providers improve the quality of the child care that they provide

identifying and addressing early childhood developmental delays

protecting children that have been physically or sexually abused

working with students in grades 1-3 to catch up in their reading skills

Plus, United Way manages Weld County's Early Childhood Council, which is the primary place for collaboration in order to increase early childhood outcomes in Weld County.



Building the foundation for early childhood success



Your investment in United Way supports these critical Reading Great by 8 activities and will help our Weld County neighbors succeed.





Building the foundation for early childhood success



Connecting youth to caring adults



Preventing and ending homelessness



Helping older adults age well in our community



Linking people to the help that they need

Responding in urgency to community need – be it a natural disaster or a health crisis or an ongoing challenge – is typical for your United Way. Every day we do so in five initiative areas:

- **Reading Great by 8** – Building the foundation for early childhood success.
- **Thrive by 25** – Connecting youth to caring adults.
- **Weld's Way Home** – Preventing and ending homelessness.
- **Aging Well** – Helping older adults age well in our community.
- **Connecting Weld** – Linking people to the help that they need.

Will you join us in investing in these most important efforts? You may do so in one or more of several ways:

- Donate one-time or monthly by visiting www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donate or by mailing a check to United Way of Weld County, PO Box 1944, Greeley, CO, 80632.
- Contribute every pay period through payroll deduction at your workplace.
- As a Leadership Giver investing \$500 per year or more—visit www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/leaders for details, benefits and special incentives.
- Support the effort through an estate, planned, or larger one-time gift.
- Have a workplace campaign at your business or become a corporate partner, so that the donations of your friends and neighbors go further.

Plus there are numerous volunteer opportunities in which you and, if you are a business owner or manager, your employees can get involved. Find out more at www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/volunteer.

Contact Travis Hitt at 970-304-6185 or THitt@UnitedWay-Weld.org with questions and to find out more about how you can partner with your United Way of Weld County.

With your engagement and investment, together we can create a better Weld County for everyone. We hope that you will join us.

Sara Seely
Chair, Board of Directors
Business Development, FNBO



Melanie Woolman
President & CEO
United Way of Weld County

