

Why is this initiative important?

Learning to read is a critical component of future academic and life success. Once children have mastered literacy, learning in all areas is considerably easier. The longer children struggle with reading and comprehension, the further behind their peers they become, which for some leads to dropping out of school and a life of continued struggle.



What are we doing in this initiative?

The Weld Trust will expand funding for literacy and parent engagement projects, and ensure parents have easily accessible literacy materials and support.

Additionally, The Weld Trust will support literacy in schools through training programs and staff professional development to assist students.

Outside the home, The Weld Trust will support efforts to provide high-quality early childhood experience either in formal centers or through family, friend, and neighbor networks.

# What are the priorities in this initiative?

## Curriculum Development

Increase the high-quality curriculum and literacy-focused support in schools.



## Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs

Increase the number of developmental screenings to ensure children are kindergarten ready, as well as increase the training and participation for ECE caregivers.

### Out of School Time (OST) Programs

Increase in participation in tutoring, library, or Out of School Time programs.

# Parent Programs and Education on Literacy

Increased access to high quality information for parents.

## Skills Development/Training Programs/Professional Development

Increase the number of teacher training programs and/or literacy-focused professional development, as well as increase the number of literacy-focused support staff and tutors in schools and in after-school programs.

# What are our goals for this initiative?

- Help in the development/establishment of a comprehensive system of classes for parents.
- Ensure parents have the literacy resources and skills they need to help their child be ready for Kindergarten.
- Decrease Significant Reading Deficiencies (SRD) Countywide at the Kindergarten level.
- Increase the percentage of children in Weld County enrolled in highquality Early Childhood Education programs.
- Decrease Significant Reading Deficiencies (SRD) countywide so that Weld County is 5% below the statewide average at the end of third grade.
- Increase in the number and percent of Weld County students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who are at a proficient reading level.
- Increase the number of teachers certified and skilled in early literacy instruction.

#### Childhood Literacy Logic Model

Mission Statement: To promote excellence in health and education in Weld County.

Initiative Statements – The Weld Trust will support organizations that can improve childhood literacy education and resources for families.

The Weld Trust will fund organizations that market and promote quality resources for families that will improve childhood literacy.

#### BIRTH TO FOUR YEARS

The Weld Trust will focus the majority of our funding on children 0-4 years old, providing resources and education for parents and increasing capacity, access, and training in Weld County with an emphasis on rural areas (through early childhood centers, preschools, and Family, Friend, Neighbor (FFN) networks). Our goal is also to increase the number of parents who are actively engaged with their children's literacy development. We want to ensure students will enter school meeting developmental milestones are more likely to read proficiently by third grade. We also believe that children who are in a safe, nurturing environment from the earliest age have better outcomes later in life. Unfortunately, many children – especially those living in low-income families – have not met the developmental milestones that are essential for future success in school and in life. <sup>1</sup>

#### Long-term Our approach to addressing the **Activities TWT will** Intermediate Outcomes Immediate Outcomes **Partner Organizations** Outputs Outcomes/Impact strategic issues will be: undertake 0-4 years 4-8 years 8+ vears Parental Engagement Research quality literacy Reach Out and Read Number and percent of Decrease Significant Reading Decrease Significant Reading Decrease Significant Reading materials and programs; North Range Behavioal families supported with Deficiencies (SRD) Deficiencies (SRD) Deficiencies (SRD) Parent education and resources determine current Health- HIPPY literacy materials and Countywide, at the Countywide, at the Countywide, at the Increase access to literacy materials and availability in Weld County; Nurse-Family Partnership resources Kindergarten level, so that Kindergarten level, so that Kindergarten level, so that make list of potential Book Trust Number of literacy materials Weld County is equal to or Weld County is 2% below the Weld County is 5% below the programs Bright by Text materials and programs that distributed (educational info, below the Statewide average Statewide average (State Statewide average (READ Act Increase access to parenting education (State test, administered by READ Act reports) programs might be brought in to Envision books, list of resources) Reports) Increase screenings of children for United Way of Weld bolster what's currently Number of parenting schools) Increase in number of Increase in Kindergarten readiness (READ Act Reports; developmental delays available County - PASO education programs funded Increase in family programs funded by TWT Promote a literacy/story-telling culture Thought partnership: Invest in Kids Number of parents knowledge of literacy available for family Teaching Strategies Gold through the home o Convening of SEVA - Brain bags completing funded parent resources (grantee participation (Blackbaud information) stakeholders to learn Immigrant and Refugee education programs administered surveys) system) Established system of parent and share Center Number of developmental Increase in distribution of Increase of families classes and resources for o Attracting organizations Hone House screenings conducted by literacy materials (grantee participating in education parents (Weld County **Dolly Parton Foundation** programs funded by TWT that align with our goals partner organizations reports) website and other grantee websites will show increased o Attracting other funders Vroom Increase of reading at countywide (grantee Health Partners: reports / TWT monitoring) who support similar work home in participating offerings from current or other work that will o Sunrise families (grantee Increase of families engaged baseline) assist Weld County o Banner administered questions) in parent education activities Parents have the literacy Ensure parents have a list of o UC Health Demonstrated growth in (baseline to be established: resources and skills they practice of interacting parent-focused literacy High Plains Library grantee reports and TWT need to help their child be District - Mom Kits (reading and talking) with a ready for Kindergarten (as resources on an easily monitoring) Established culture of accessible website child between pre and post evidenced by decreased SRD (provided by a government and increased kindergarten assessments administered to literacy in homes (long term As measured by: readiness scores on state agency or prominent parents (grantee goal w/ participating Grantee reports grantee) administered surveys; report families; participation rate in tests) (Grantee /TWT) Site visits and relationship This is a partial, current list to TWT) reading programs/projects, building in the community, which will expand as our Website clicks Increase in developmental as reported in grantee Measurement tools: including hosting grantmaking continues. (Grantee will report to TWT) screenings (grantee reports reports) Pre/Post Surveys informational meetings, to TWT) Increase of pre-literacy skills • Quality of life survey amongst 0-4-year-old Kindergarten readiness resource fairs, community meetings, trainings, Common assessments: children of participating assessment as reg, by READ workshops, or symposiums PICCOLO, ASQ (Ages and families (grantee reports and ACT - TS Gold, etc. ASQ, PICCOLO, Bracken; ESQ Expand funding for literacy Stages) State READ Act reports) State READ Act assessments and parent engagement State READ Act Increase in parent readiness initiatives over time (to o SRD assessment of participating families to o SRD assessment result in more available support their child's early programs and reaching literacy (grantee surveys of participating families) more families) Commonly utilized assessments: PICCOLO, ASQ (Ages and Stages) State READ Act o SRD assessment o Teaching Strategies Gold

#### **BIRTH TO FOUR YEARS (continued)**

## Our approach to addressing the strategic issues will be:

#### Education Outside

Early Childhood Centers, Preschools, and Family, Friend & Neighbor Networks (FFN)

- Increase capacity
- o Facilities
- o Personnel
- Increase access, especially in areas where childcare is hard to find
- · Ensure high quality curriculum
- Ensure high quality teachers
- Ensure parents have quality info to make informed choices

### Activities TWT will undertake

- Research number and type of programs outside of the home
- Thought partnership:
- o Convening of stakeholders to learn and share
- o Attracting organizations that align with our goals
- o Attracting other funders who support similar work or other work that will assist Weld County
- Incentivize childcare providers (through a partner organization) to obtain licensure that will allow them to participate in the Universal Preschool Program (UPP)
- Site visits to program partners and relationship building in the community
- Funding opportunities, including hosting informational meetings, trainings, workshops, or symposiums
- List of centers for parents.
   Including state ratings.
- Provide marketing resources to all levels of providers

#### **Partner Organizations**

- United Way of Weld County
- o Early Childhood Council
- o PASO
- o Reading Great by 8 o Thrive by 25
- o Project Connect
- UNC Teacher Training Program
- AIMS CC Teacher Training Program
- Weld Early Childhood Initiative
- Weld County Department of Human Services
- Non-profit ECE Centers
- Weld County School Districts and BOCES
- For Our Children Weld
- For profit providers?
- ABC Centers
- State funding entities
- Department of Human Services – CCAP
- UWWC Council
- CEEN Head Start

This is a partial list which will expand as our grant making

#### Outputs

- Number of FFN graduates
   Number of children served by funded programs
- Number of families served by funded programs
- Number of childcare spaces in Weld County
- Number of ECE, preschools, and FFN's providing quality instruction and care
- Number of trainings delivered to ECE caregivers by funded programs
- Number and percent of ECE teachers and FFN providers receiving quality training
- Number of centers/homes adopting quality curriculum
- Number of parents accessing info to make informed choices

#### As measured by:

- Grantee Reports
- United Way: Community Reports, 211 info, early childhood council website clicks
- Pre/Post Surveys of grantees
- Site Visits
- Colorado Shines reports/ratings (Quality Rating & Improvement System -QRIS)

#### Immediate Outcomes 0-4 years

#### Capacity & Access

- Increase participants in programs such as PASO by 10-15% annually (grantee reports)
- Increased number of children and families impacted by grant partners (grantee reports)
- Increase childcare spots available in Weld County by 5% annually, until the need is met (County QRIS ratings and data)

#### High Quality Education

- Decrease Significant Reading Deficiencies (SRD)
   Countywide, at the Kindergarten level, so that Weld County is equal to or below the Statewide average (State test, administered by schools)
- Increase training and participation for ECE caregivers (grantee reports)
- Increase adoption of quality curriculum countywide (Department of Early Childhood reports)
- Improved scores on kindergarten readiness assessments; district by district, school, countywide, to be equal or better than statewide averages (READ Act data)

#### Informed Parents

 Increased access to quality information for parents (review of County Health Department and United Way websites)

#### Intermediate Outcomes 4-8 years

#### Capacity & Access

- Increased capacity (number of seats) of funded programs based on subpopulation needs (grantee reports)
- Increase number of centers qualifying to receive funding through universal preschool program (Department of Early Childhood reports)

#### High Quality Education

- Decrease Significant Reading Deficiencies (SRD) Countywide, at the Kindergarten level, so that Weld County is 2% below the Statewide average (State READ Act reports)
- Adoption of readiness standards in funded programs assessments, shown in grantee reports)
- Adoption of quality standards in funded programs (facility issues, grantee reports)
- Increase of countywide implementation of quality curriculum (curriculum utilized, shown in grantee reports)
- Increase Colorado Shines ratings
- o Number of 3, 4, and 5-star ratings increased (from 12% in 2021 to a goal of over 20% in 2025, as measured by QRIS ratings)
- Increase number of ECE personnel recruited to and graduating from teacher training programs
- Improved scores on kindergarten readiness assessments to be 3% better than statewide averages, as measured by READ Act reports

#### **Informed Parents**

- Increased number of parents choosing high quality centers for childcare
- Parental satisfaction with ability to make informed choices re: education outside the home

# Long-term Outcomes/Impact 8+ years

- Decrease Significant Reading Deficiencies (SRD) Countywide, at the Kindergarten level, so that Weld County is 5% below the Statewide average (READ Act Reports)
- Increase percentage of children in Weld County enrolled in high-quality ECE programs (rated 3 stars or above), which stands at approximately 12% in 2021, to 15% by 2024.
- Improved scores on kindergarten readiness assessments County-wide, to be at least 5% better than statewide averages
- Parents have adequate access to information about childcare options near them (improved website information at both United Way's Early Childhood Council website and the County Health Department website)

Other measurement tools: Assess ASQ, PICCOLO, TSGold data

Sidebar: alignment of ECE – K12 readiness assessments (determine where prepared kids are coming from)

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#### FIVE TO EIGHT YEARS AND BEYOND (K-12)

The remaining balance of funding will be invested in children 5-8 years-old, with a focus on helping parents, teachers, schools, and other support mechanisms (tutors, after-school programs, etc.) provide effective literacy interventions to enable children to read as early as possible. Our goal here is to increase the percentage of students reading by third grade, which research shows to increase overall graduation rates. 2 We also realize that not all children are going to reach reading proficiency by the end of third grade, so we will look for programs that effectively and efficiently help students who are behind progress toward grade-level proficiency as quickly as possible.

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#### ASSUMPTIONS and ECOSYSTEM

The READ Act requires use of an interim assessment to determine whether a student has a significant reading deficiency (SRD) in grades K through 3. The most commonly used assessment in Colorado in the 2020-2021 school-year was Acadience Reading (formerly known as DIBELS Next), but there are a number of acceptable assessment alternatives authorized for use by the State. The state SRD rate for 2020-2021 was 22.8%. By grade level the state rate was: Kindergarten 17.3%, First 26.6%, Second 23.8%, Third 23.3%.

(https://www.cde.state.co.us/code/readactdashboard)

- Six school districts in Weld County have overall SRD rates higher than the state. These include Ault-Highland RE-9, Greeley 6, Johnstown-Milliken RE-5J, Platte Valley RE-7, Weld RE-3J, and Weld RE-8.
- Nine out of thirteen districts in Weld County have higher SRD rates than the state in at least one grade level K-3.
- o Districts with SRD rates higher than the state overall or specific grade level would be areas to target.
- This data also shows that as students progress from K to 3, higher percentages of students have SRDs. This indicates that students who enter K at grade level are falling behind as they progress.

High quality early childhood education is related to better performance on child outcomes including cognitive, language, and communication. Research shows that the relationship between quality and outcomes has been stronger for disadvantaged children. Data shows that modest improvements in the quality of educational experiences for low-income children during preschool years have significant effects. One suggested avenue for improving quality is offering high-quality professional development opportunities for classroom teachers.3

The Colorado Legislature, with support and prompting from Governor Jared Polis, recently passed legislation calling for implementation of a Universal Preschool Program (UPP), enabling families to enroll their 4-year-old child in 10 hours per week of paid childcare. In addition, the Governor has established a new Cabinet-level department within his administration to be known as the Department of Early Childhood. This new Department will oversee 32 regional "Local Coordinating Organizations (LCO's) that will implement the Universal Preschool Program in their region, with a start date of Fall 2023. There are numerous challenges to be overcome before the start date of the new UPP, including adequate facility space and openings (childcare spots) to accommodate the additional children expected to be served, making a high-quality curriculum selection, and making sure there are adequate numbers of well-trained teachers for the additional children. It is expected that the LCO will develop and implement a plan that will cover these issues, as well as the equitable distribution of funds for the new program.

- (1) The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014). KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot: Early Reading Proficiency in the United States. Page 2.
- (2) The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third-Grade Reading. Baltimore, MD: Author.
- (3) Neuman, S. B., Dickinson, D. K., & Sprague, K. E. (2003). The Nature and Impact of Early Childhood Care Environments on the Language Development of Children from Low-Income Families. In Handbook of Early Literacy Research (pp. 263–280). essay, Guilford Press.

#### **EXTERNAL FACTORS (barriers/facilitators)**

The Weld Trust recognizes that there are many external factors that affect childhood literacy. While some of these factors are being addressed in other funding initiatives, these need to be taken into consideration when evaluating progress towards the distal outcomes. Identifying these external factors can help inform funding decisions across multiple initiatives. Some external factors that have been identified include:

- · Family dynamics including employment, behavioral health, housing stability, food security
- Poverty
- · Transitory families
- Lack of transportation
- · Subjectivity and biases
- Language barriers
- Shortage of qualified educators, over-burdened and under-paid educators
- COVID Mandates and school closures
- Majority of ECE providers are for-profit entities
- Differing childcare/ECE philosophies