



## Initiatives in Action: School Readiness Initiative



### Bright Beginnings

The Salvation Army Aurora Childcare Program has transformed my family. Enrolling my two kids here has enabled me to have enough time to go back to school and land a higher paying job in clerical medical administration that was enough to get my family off welfare.

But that's just the beginning.

We escaped some pretty awful circumstances in Michigan. We were living in a shelter and came to Colorado last year. The difference has already been significant, especially for my children.

My daughter Aleece is enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten at the Center and my 9-year-old son Derek comes here after school while I'm at work.

On a day when I visit her at the childcare center, her teacher, Miss Cindy, asks her what the different parts of the flag stand for. She knows that the red stripes stand for the blood that was shed, the white is for purity, and the blue is for truth. She's only 4 years old and gives me a big, all-knowing smile after her answers.

Kids who have not experienced early childhood education will learn to read in kindergarten. Aleece will know how to read before she even starts. I'm proud; she's already at a kindergarten level. She sounds out letters and recognizes words. She's ahead of the game.

Aleece is also learning many important things that are helping her develop a healthy lifestyle and personality, including conflict resolution. When the kids get angry, they are encouraged to "stop, drop and chill."

When she started here, she was so shy; we've been through a lot. In class she wouldn't raise her hand if she thought she might be wrong. Now, her confidence level is sky high. It's a great thing to see as a mom.

I drive past a few daycares during my daily commute from Aurora to Lakewood. A lot of the kids are just staring out the windows looking bored. But not mine. I know that my kids are engaged here.



Aleece, age 4, is enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten at The Salvation Army Aurora Childcare Program. The high-quality early childhood education receives support from Mile High United Way's School Readiness initiative.

They're learning and having fun. Sometimes when I pick them up in the evening, they ask, "Why are you here, mom?" It's pretty great to have that kind of security.

I seriously considered moving my family to Lakewood because the commute is so harsh, but my kids love it here.

*“ My whole life is my kids and I just want what’s best for them. ”*

The Salvation Army Aurora Childcare Program is so much more than just a daycare. I don't worry if they are safe. I know they are. They go above and beyond. My son is finished with school at 2:15 p.m. They pick him up and bring him to the center until I can get there at 5:30 p.m. It really helps me out. My whole life is my kids and I just want what's best for them.

As a single mom, there never seems to be enough hours to get everything accomplished. I get the kids home by 6 p.m., we have dinner, do bath time and I try to get them to sleep by 9 p.m. I try my best to read to them, but we always seem to run out of time. That's why this childcare center is so important. It helps fill in the gaps and makes sure they are prepared to succeed in school.



*“Mile High United Way and our community partners now support nearly 4,500 children in high quality early care and education,” said Diana*

*Romero Campbell, senior director of School Readiness. “There is a significant difference between early childhood education centers and daycare. United Way supports childcare centers that are not only a safe place for young children, but a place that will prepare them for long-term success in school.”*

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For more information about Mile High United Way and our School Readiness Initiative, please visit our website at [www.unitedwaydenver.org](http://www.unitedwaydenver.org).

We can do more together.



**Mile High United Way**