

## It's never too early to learn

In Los Angeles, Esmeralda searched for affordable, quality childcare for her young daughter, Maria. She desperately needed a place for Maria to stay while she worked and attended school. "Even though my career was important to me," she said, "I didn't want to jeopardize my daughter's safety and development."

Research shows that active involvement early in a child's life prevents serious problems from developing later. Every \$1 invested in early childhood development and quality child care will save \$17 in later costs, such as remedial education, welfare and court or prison expenses. Investing in early childhood education and development also has the potential to prevent other social and economic problems including illiteracy, youth violence, teen pregnancy and unemployment.



“ More than 500 thousand children have benefited from United Way Success By 6. ”

Through United Way Success By 6, a collaborative community initiative that proactively supports the healthy development of children in their early years, United Way supports the education and development of children like Maria.

United Way Success By 6, the nation's largest network of early childhood coalitions, focuses on improving school readiness through community change. In more than 350 communities, Success By 6 equips parents and children with the tools for success. In the last five years, **more than 500 thousand children have benefited from United Way Success By 6** through early learning, child care, parent education, health, literacy and family resource center programs. At United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Success By 6 unites diverse resources and skills in targeted disadvantaged communities and implements long-term strategies that support early childhood development.

Esmeralda had to find childcare she could afford with her limited resources. She found a United Way of Greater Los Angeles Success By 6 community partner that offers quality childcare and early education programs for low-income families. While Esmeralda worked and finished her degree, Maria was learning pre-kindergarten skills and receiving caring attention from trained childcare professionals. "I am so grateful that I was able to do all of this without having to worry about Maria's health and safety," Esmeralda said. "I'm pleased that she was in an enriching environment where she was not only watched and cared for, but also supported academically."

Based on the specific needs of the community, the Los Angeles Success By 6 program focuses on early literacy, quality parenting and quality care-giving as its top three priority areas. In some LA communities, this means linking parent literacy programs with under-served residents and in others it means bringing together resources to form a broad base of community support systems including economic development, child and family services, housing, and affordable, quality childcare. In communities all across the country, United Way Success By 6 means the chance for a brighter future, just like what Esmeralda found for herself and her daughter Maria.

- One out of every three children is behind a year or more in school.
- 46% of kindergarteners are coming to school at risk for failure.
- Economically disadvantaged children enter kindergarten 1-2 years behind in language and other skills important to school success.
- By age five, many children in high-risk environments are already two years behind developmentally. The gap tends to persist over time, impacting school readiness and success.