



# UNITED WAY IMPACT STORY

## THE ONE SURE INVESTMENT: A QUALITY START

**“The United Way scholarship helped me out tremendously...The price of child care is almost similar to paying two rents, and I can’t afford two rents.”**

*– Kristal Elliot, United Way child care scholarship recipient*



Economists, parents, business leaders and even politicians agree. One of the surest bets today is investing in quality early childhood education.

Research shows that \$1 invested in early education saves communities 7 to 10 percent annually by reducing dropout rates and crime and increasing lifetime earnings.

Each year, United Way of Northern New Jersey makes it possible for about 1,000 children to receive scholarships and get this critical start, preparing our next generation of workers. In addition, parents have peace of mind to focus at work knowing their children are safe in capable and caring hands.

Kristal Elliot sees it firsthand. Since her 3-year-old daughter began attending Children on the Green, a nationally accredited area preschool, the change is measurable.

“She’s learned her colors, she’s learned her shapes,” Kristal says. “She’s learning how to build healthy relationships and how to express her feelings in a positive way.”

For many families like Kristal’s, the quality care at Children on the Green would be out of reach if not for United Way’s scholarship. For more than a decade, United Way has invested in making quality child care accessible to **ALICE® (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)** and poverty-level households throughout the region.

“The price of child care is almost similar to paying two rents, and I can’t afford two rents,” says Kristal, a single mother who works full time in the financial services department of a local car dealership.



**Every single piece of research I’ve seen in the last 20 years says that if you give kids preschool education you change their whole future trajectory.**

*– former New Jersey Gov. Thomas H. Kean*

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**United Way  
of Northern New Jersey**

[UnitedWayNNJ.org/Education](http://UnitedWayNNJ.org/Education)



## Investing in the Future

At about \$16,000 a year per child, the price of early childhood education is on par with rent or a college education – putting it out of reach for ALICE families. Meanwhile, studies show access to early education is proven to have lasting results.

“Preschool education, it’s the one thing we know works,” says former New Jersey Gov. Thomas H. Kean. “There is no argument. Every single piece of research I’ve seen in the last 20 years says that if you give kids preschool education you change their whole future trajectory.”

United Way’s involvement has a dual mission of making it possible for families to access affordable child care and centers to maintain high-quality programs.

Nonprofit centers receive \$26 a day from the state to support children from ALICE families living paycheck to paycheck. Along with this subsidy, parents contribute financially, paying what they can afford based on their income. However, this isn’t enough to cover the cost of running a quality program.

United Way funding helps to bridge that gap between the subsidy centers receive and the cost of providing a safe, quality and engaging environment for children. As a result, centers can stay open, parents can be productive employees, and children can start off on the right track. In the end, the community reaps the ultimate benefits.

## Off to the Right Start

“I am thankful for United Way,” says Jackeline Alvarez, whose family also benefits from United Way child care scholarships. “My children are able to attend a quality center, and I can go to work and go to school. It really gives me peace of mind.”

The scholarships have been key to providing stability for the family as Jackeline’s husband was struggling to recover from a workplace injury. The cost to send two young children to quality child care was insurmountable for them and yet they were already seeing the positive impacts on their children.

“My dream for my kids is for them to be better than I am, to go to college, to get a degree so they can become something in their lives,” Jackeline says. “I feel that being at Children on the Green they are off to a better start.”



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– Jackeline Alvarez

# About \$16,000 a year

The cost of quality child care per child in the state of New Jersey.



Support United Way and help ALICE and poverty-level families have continued access to affordable, quality child care centers. For more information, visit [UnitedWayNJ.org/SuccessBy6](http://UnitedWayNJ.org/SuccessBy6)



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We help families become  
**FINANCIALLY STABLE**



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