



**United 4
Children**

2024 Annual Report



Letter From Our CEO

Dear Friends -

In 2024, you helped us celebrate U4C's 55th year of service with our anniversary gala. As we reflect on this milestone year, I am reminded that growth often comes hand in hand with challenges. This year was no exception for Missouri's educators or United 4 Children, but it was also one of our most impactful years yet.

Missouri and the nation continue to face obstacles in funding early education initiatives and nonprofit organizations. Limited and unstable funding, subsidy reimbursement delays, and low workforce compensation is leaving many families without reliable care, childcare providers burnt out, and nonprofits under financial strain. These obstacles not only deepen inequities in access but also cost the state over a billion dollars annually in lost productivity and economic impact.

Even in the midst of these barriers, we celebrated meaningful progress. Through our Nutrition Program, we provided more than a million healthy meals and snacks to children in home-based care, ensuring they had the nourishment needed to grow, learn, and thrive. Our coaching and education teams worked tirelessly to equip almost 6,000 child care providers with the skills and support to foster safe, nurturing, and healthy learning environments. Our Child Care Inclusion specialists partnered with providers to build inclusive classrooms for more than 1,600 children with elevated needs, making it possible for children of all abilities to learn and grow in spaces optimized for their success. The dedication of our teams creates a ripple effect, strengthening not only educators but also the children and families they serve.

We also marked an important milestone as the steward of Missouri's official Early Care and Education Resource and Referral network. In 2024, this work touched over 2,000 families across the state, connecting them with the guidance, resources, and referrals they need to thrive.

Through it all, one thing has remained constant: our community's unwavering commitment to children. We are deeply grateful to the educators, families, partners, and supporters who walk alongside us each day. It is because of YOU that United 4 Children can continue making a difference in the lives of children who need us most.

As you read through this annual report, I hope you share in the pride and optimism I feel. Each win reflects the meaningful progress we have made together, and each challenge reminds us how vital this work continues to be. We will keep moving forward, strengthening one educator at a time, knowing that when educators are supported, children thrive.

With gratitude,



Deanna Finch
CEO
finchd@united4children.org



The U4C Approach

Our Mission

United 4 Children empowers caregivers to nurture whole-child development through early childhood and afterschool programs.

Our Vision

Every child has the foundation to thrive.

Programs & Services:

Child Care Quality Program Enhancement

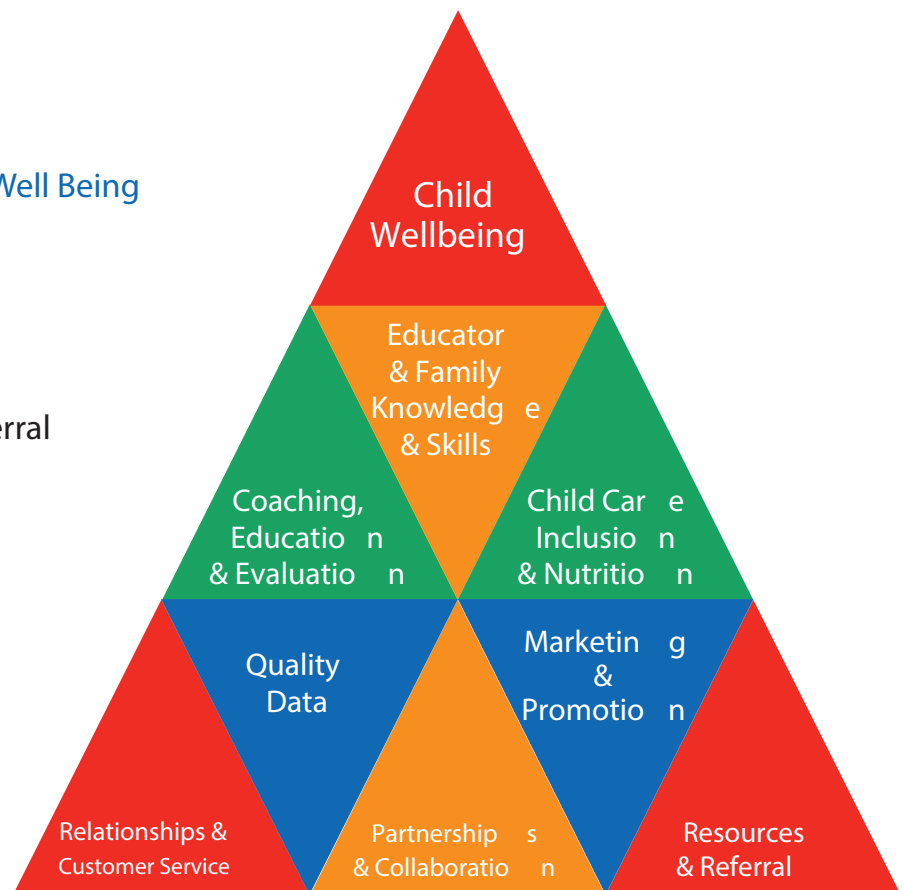
- Coaching
- Education
- Evaluation
- Inclusion/SEEC

Investing in Children's Health & Well Being

- Inclusion/SEEC
- Nutrition

Community Awareness

- Missouri Early Care & Education Resource & Referral
- Missouri Childhood Community Leaders



Our United Impact

8,145

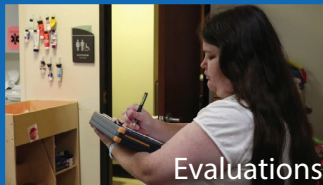
Children impacted by highly skilled educators
increasing their foundation to thrive



EDUCATION

5,873

Educators receiving mentoring to improve the quality of care for children across the state of Missouri



Evaluations



Coaching



Trainings



NUTRITION

1,164,816

Meals and snacks served by educators with support from U4C



INCLUSION

1,645

Children with elevated needs and their peers supported by highly skilled educators



RESOURCE & REFERRAL

2,364

Families connected to resources and referrals through the U4C call center



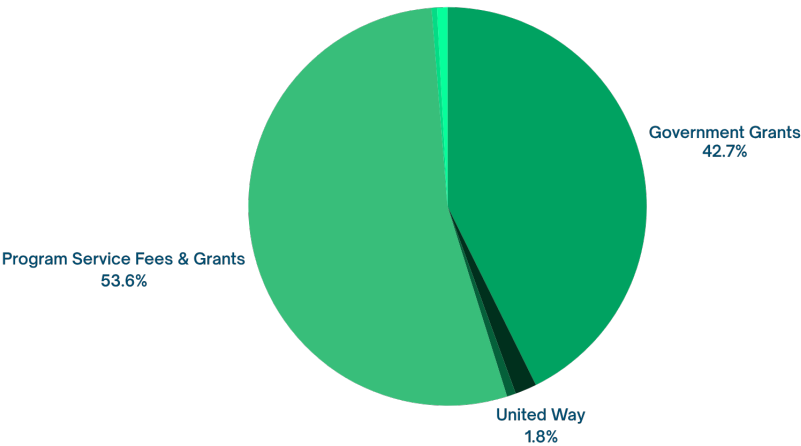
Our Financial Picture

In the past several years, we took major steps toward diversifying our funding base to reduce reliance on government sources and strengthen our long-term sustainability. While an influx of government funds in 2023 and 2024 temporarily increased our concentration in that area, we expanded our grant writing efforts and sought new partnerships to broaden our reach. By continuing to steward and grow our community of individual, corporate, and small foundation donors, we are ensuring United 4 Children can remain responsive, innovative, and equipped to meet the evolving needs of children, families, and educators for years to come. In 2025, independent financial auditors reviewed United 4 Children's 2024 financial statements and issued an "Unmodified" or "No Comment" audit opinion, marking the organization's seventh consecutive clean audit.

Issuance of "Unmodified" means an auditor, upon review of an organization's financial statements and accompanying notes, concludes that the financial statements and accompanying notes are presented fairly, conform to generally accepted accounting principles, and fairly represent the true financial picture of the organization. For the 7th consecutive year, United 4 Children has also successfully completed a Federal 2 CFR 200 audit for its work with Federal Funding. A 2 CFR 200 audit is required for any organization that expends more than \$750,000 in one year from Federal Government Funding.

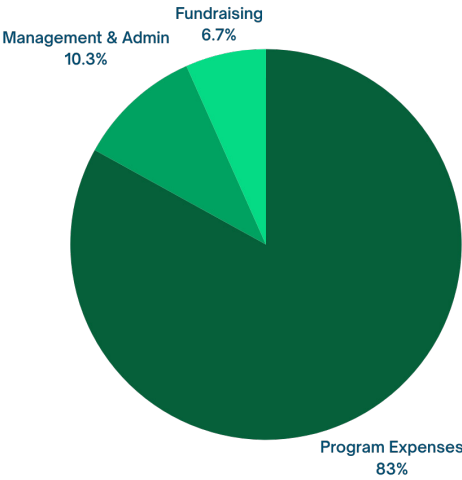
83%
of money spent in 2024
was allocated directly
to U4C programs

2024 Revenue Sources



Program Service Fees & Grants	\$3,420,304
Government Grants	\$2,725,930
United Way	\$112,165
Contributions	\$54,119
Fundraising	\$46,567
Miscellaneous	\$27,636

2024 Expenses Breakdown



To view United 4 Children's audits and 990 forms visit United4Children.org/financial-information or scan the QR code.



ROI

For every \$10 invested in U4C \$8.30 is returned back to the community "
- Deanna Finch, CEO

Thank You 2024 Event Sponsors!



Provider Spotlight

Royce Jones

Promise to Cherish Yours



At United 4 Children (U4C), we know that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive in a safe and supportive educational environment. However, the quality of that environment depends largely on the standard of programming and professional development of educators, who play a critical role in shaping a child's future.

U4C's work is built on a simple yet powerful principle: when educators are supported, children thrive. That's why when Ms. Royce Jones, the owner of Promise to Cherish Yours, a child care center in Spanish Lake, reached out asking for help, two of our knowledgeable and compassionate Early Childhood Specialists, Barry Gale and Brittney Wilson, jumped into action to help transform this center using the "U4C Approach", improving the classroom's curriculum, business practices, nutrition, and the lives of the children in its care, all at no cost to Ms. Jones.

Before partnering with United 4 Children, Promise to Cherish Yours was facing several challenges including limited access to professional development, lack of specialized coaching, navigating food programming & nutrition, and challenging behaviors.

To address these challenges, Barry and Brittney reached deep into U4C's well of services, providing expert coaching & training, nutrition program support, child care inclusion services, and program assessment & evaluations.

The impact of these services was felt deeply at Promise to Cherish Yours.

Ms. Jones shared, "I want to especially recognize Brittney, who has been nothing short of phenomenal. She is more than just a mentor—she is a true advocate for child care providers. Her dedication to my growth has been unwavering, whether through coaching sessions, training support, or inclusion strategies that have helped me create a welcoming and supportive environment for all children. Additionally, I want to extend my gratitude to Barry, whose oversight and support have been incredibly beneficial. His biannual monitoring visits have provided me with valuable insights and reassurance that I am on the right path. Barry's expertise and feedback help me continually improve my facility."

Thanks to United 4 Children's services, and Barry and Brittney's support, Promise to Cherish Yours has undergone significant improvements growing enrollment, supported children, better nutrition, and ongoing evaluation & feedback.

Ms. Jones reflected on the U4C approach, and its effects on her business,

"Because of United 4 Children, Brittney, and Barry, I have grown immensely as a provider. I feel empowered, supported, and equipped to give the children in my care the very best. I cannot thank this program enough for its dedication to child care providers like me... United 4 Children has been an absolute game-changer for my business. The coaching, training evaluations, inclusion support, and food program assistance have given me the tools, resources, and confidence to provide high-quality care to the children and families I serve. This program has not only helped me meet industry standards but has also elevated the way I run my facility, ensuring that every child in my care receives the best possible experience"

Child Care Collaboration Network

In 2023, United 4 Children, in collaboration with ARCHS, secured one of the largest early childhood investments in St. Louis history — more than \$4 million dedicated to building capacity in early education through the Child Care Collaboration Network (CCCN). This historic contract expanded our infant-toddler, home-based & preschool child care collaboratives, which delivered coaching, training, and technical assistance to strengthen child care quality across the region.

Despite strong results, in March 2024 the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) announced it would no longer fund the CCCN contracts. United 4 Children, alongside advocates across Missouri, sprang into action. Through data, impact stories, and collaborative advocacy, we successfully persuaded state leaders to reverse course and extend the contract for another year, a very rare occurrence in state contracts.

But in January 2025, DESE again announced cancellation of the contracts, effective May 2025. DESE Leadership briefly indicated that the contract may be amended rather than canceled, but remained silent for months, forcing U4C to prepare contingency plans.

By late April, DESE had decided to cancel the CCCN contract and introduced a drastically reduced replacement contract, slashing funding from \$4 million to \$1.5 million and narrowing the scope of services. To further complicate matters, ARCHS was barred from contracting with U4C due to a technical issue unrelated to CCCN. Notably, U4C was never in noncompliance regarding the CCCN work.

By the end of May 2025, we were forced to lay off 40 employees, and reduce these important services that were available to all child care providers in the entire St. Louis region.

Let the data speak for itself!

The outcomes from the CCCN contract demonstrated the deep value of this work:

- Stronger Classrooms: 90% of programs showed improvement on post-assessments, surpassing our targeted goal.
- Educator Growth: 90% of educators reported improved knowledge through coaching and technical assistance.
- Training Excellence: Hundreds of hours of Best Practice Trainings were delivered to the community, with 100% of participants reporting knowledge gains.
- Coaching in Action: Educators implemented relationship-based responsive care with the focus on building relationships with individual children to provide a foundation of trust and security that supports the child's specific developmental and learning needs.

Though state support is shifting and CCCN may be over, its legacy is undeniable: **stronger classrooms, more confident educators, and better outcomes for children**. These results show that when Missouri invests in coaching, training, and program quality, the payoff is clear. While state priorities may shift, United 4 Children's mission does not. We continue to pursue new funding streams, apply for competitive grants, and engage with partners to ensure that these vital services remain available.

At U4C, we continue to celebrate proven success despite barriers, and demonstrate the resilience required to keep fighting for Missouri's children, families, and educators.



Our Team



"Team photo taken at U4C's December 2024 all team meeting and end of year celebration."

Deanna Finch
CEO

Christina Cathcart
Senior Manager Operations

Kelly Hantak
Senior Manager of
Strategic Program Advancement

Our Board



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Chairman

Steve Bowman
Governance Chair

Jonathan Strong
Board Member

Chris Rowland
Vice Chairman & Treasurer

Stephanie Gebel
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Michael Sorth
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Secretary

AJ Foster
Board Member

