



AMPARO

GIVING PARENTS RESOURCES TO FOSTER EARLY LEARNING

In the early 2000s, Amparo was adapting to a new way of life with her 3-year-old daughter Mariana after relocating to the U.S. While going to school and adjusting to her new home, Amparo was doing everything in her power to provide more for her child. Still, she often felt she wasn't doing enough for her daughter and worried about the progress Mariana was making with her social, cognitive and emotional development.

Like many first-time parents, Amparo thought she was "making mistakes" when it came to fostering her daughter's early learning and didn't know what to do to change that.



"I was *making mistakes*. How was [my daughter] doing to be independent? And I really didn't know how."

"She cried a lot because she was very attached to me," Amparo said. "I was making mistakes. How was she doing to be independent? And I really didn't know how. She had to learn to be independent," she said.

Her biggest concern was whether what she was teaching Mariana at home was good enough to ensure her daughter would thrive in kindergarten.

That's when she discovered a parent-child education program with United Way Ready Children Impact Partner AVANCE. The evidence-based program focuses on parents being their child's "first teacher" by helping them create deeper connections with their children and preparing their children for school.

Amparo quickly saw the transformation in her daughter after employing what she learned in the program. "After two weeks, I saw the change," Amparo says. "She began to recognize colors, patterns and letters. She began to educate herself very quickly. When she started pre-kindergarten a year later, she was already very advanced. She was no longer afraid," she said.



The parent-child education program gave Amparo invaluable insight into how to foster her daughter's learning at home, which would set Mariana up for success later in school.

Amparo would go on to use this program with her second daughter, Sofía and today her daughters are thriving in their careers as successful college graduates.

"I realize the great importance that we as parents have, as the first-teachers. We do not have that education sometimes because I did not have it," Amparo adds. "From 0 to 5-years-old it is the most important thing to give them everything."

Amparo is a teacher today and is passionate about giving parents the resources they need to support their children's early learning. She believes that families in our community need continued investment in programs like the one that set her family up for future success.

"We must have resources to continue learning with our children," she says. "There are so many



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people in need and so many parents who need to be educated," Amparo added.

United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County's Ready Children Impact Area connects parents to resources that ensure their children will grow up healthy in mind, body and spirit. Programs that create curious learners through high-quality care and promote kinder-readiness. With this support, parents will have the tools needed to reach their full potential later in life.

To learn more about United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County's work and to hear more stories, visit uwsatx.org.