

# “I Knew There Were Options for My Kids”

**Agency:** HELP!Line Center

**Program:** Childcare  
HELP!Line

**Service:** The Childcare HELP!Line provides personal assistance to families on selecting quality child care in Sioux Falls and surrounding communities; makes referrals to local childcare providers, care centers and school aged programs; gives parents the tools and resources to determine quality care; connects families with resources to help with cost of care; assists in finding care options for non-tradition work schedules; and supports and recruits child care providers.

**Need:** Families struggle to find affordable, accessible, high quality childcare. 74% of families with children under six in the Sioux Empire live with a single working parent or in a dual income household. Almost half of children under six in the Sioux Empire are in paid childcare.

## What does that mean

**to me?** Parents are able to work and become productive citizens of the community while supporting their families. Additionally, research shows higher quality care leads to better social and academic outcomes for children.

Mary, a single mother of three, was distraught when her husband left after months of trying to deal with a car accident that left their eight year old in a wheelchair. Previously a stay-at-home mother, Mary was now faced with supporting the family financially and emotionally.

“It’s amazing how quickly life can change,” said Mary. “One minute I was a stay at home mom and the next minute I was frantically looking for a job *and* childcare. I didn’t know where to go!”

Things started looking brighter when she secured her job at a local restaurant, but when she started looking for care for her children she began to feel hopeless once again.

“I called a countless number of providers, but no one could keep my kids until 7:30pm,” explained Mary. “Then one provider mentioned the Childcare HELP!Line. It was the best thing she could have done for me.”

Mary was able to talk with a Child Care Specialist about her frustrations. The staff person explained that they can search by proximity to her home, hours the provider is operating, willingness to work with children with disabilities, and according to other preferences from over 400 providers listed with their agency.

“Just talking with the Childcare HELP!Line put me at ease. I knew there were options for my kids,” Mary said with a smile.

Thanks to funding from Sioux Empire United Way over 2600 families received childcare referral information last year. The service gives parents piece of mind and options to provide their children with the best care possible.

And piece of mind helps Mary continue to work, “Every night my kids come home and tell me about the fun things they did that day. I feel great knowing that I can keep working and they are getting the quality care they need!”