

2010

Oklahoma Partnership for School
Readiness



Smart Start Oklahoma
Annual Report
11/1/2010



Board Chair

Dear Governor Henry,

On behalf of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board, I am pleased to present our Annual Report for FY10. We appreciate the support you have given to Early Childhood in Oklahoma during your term as Governor. Oklahoma has made tremendous improvements in implementing quality services over the past 8 years, and is considered a leader across the country in our early childhood accomplishments.

This report shares the accomplishments made to date by the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, also designated as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council, and 18 local Smart Start Oklahoma Communities. An overview of key early childhood indicators, program participation and costs is also presented, to provide a snapshot of the current status of early childhood services in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Chair of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, and thank you for your contribution to Oklahoma's early childhood system.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marny Dunlap'. The signature is stylized and written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dr. Marny Dunlap
OPSR Chair

Annual Report

In 2003, the Oklahoma legislature identified a structure to convene early childhood stakeholders to plan and improve the state's early childhood system – named the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness. Through this system, state agency leadership, private citizens, local communities, parents, professionals and businesses can provide input and make recommendations to the Governor and state policy makers on decisions that will improve the outcome for children in our state. Significant accomplishments have been made since 2003, and Oklahoma is continually sited as being a leader in early childhood initiatives. The forum that the Partnership provides has facilitated cooperation and planning efforts toward increasing the availability and access to quality early learning experiences for young children.

During State Fiscal Year 2010, the state faced serious budget shortfalls. These cuts were temporarily offset in many areas of state government by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. While program reductions occurred, devastating impacts to early childhood services were averted during FY10. However, SFY 2011 shows indications of being an equally challenging year – or potentially fiscally worse. Oklahoma will experience a change in Governor, State Superintendent and several other key legislative positions. These newly elected officials will be faced with challenges in setting fiscal priorities for the state. It will be critical for the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness to educate and advocate to maintain the great strides that have been made in Oklahoma to improve educational success in our state.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness is required by legislation to submit an annual report on the status of key accomplishments toward school readiness. This report encompasses State Fiscal Year 2010, July 1, 2009 through June 20, 2010. Indicator data was obtained from a variety of state and federal resources, and the most recent data available was used. Not only are early education experiences critical, but prenatal care, improved birth outcomes, parental supports, economic stability, environmental safety and violence free communities and homes are equally important. The report highlights the key issues and current status of services available for Oklahoma's young children and their families.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Andersen, Executive Director
Smart Start Oklahoma

Major Accomplishments

OPSR named the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council

In 2007, under the federal reauthorization of Head Start, the Governor of each state was charged with creating or identifying a state advisory council for early childhood. The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) received this designation in November of 2008, entering into a memorandum of understanding with the Governor's Office and the Head Start Collaboration Office. To further solidify this Council, during the spring 2010 legislative session, the Oklahoma State legislature passed **HB 3126** to expand the duties of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board to include duties of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council. This legislation became effective on November 1, 2010. The establishment of the Council positions Oklahoma to apply for federal funding to support the work of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council, outlines priorities for the state to address, and complements and enhances the work currently being done through the OPSR Board.

With this newly designated role, OPSR accepted additional tasks under the federal legislation:

(I) conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children in the State;

(II) identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federally-funded and State-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among State agencies responsible for administering such programs;

(III) develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early childhood education programs including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;

(IV) develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;

(V) develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;

(VI) assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or pre kindergarten program; and

(VII) make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.

To accomplish these tasks, OPSR created a workgroup structure, comprised of on-the-ground experts to advise and inform the state council. These workgroups are:

Quality, Access, Standards and Accountability

This workgroup has the responsibility to:

- ◆ Develop recommendations to increase the quality and access to early childhood programs and services
- ◆ Develop recommendations to improve the state's early learning standards

Key Issues:

- ◆ Access to programs and services
- ◆ Programs standards and accountability
- ◆ Expanding research based models of programs and services for children birth to three
- ◆ Developing policies to support the use of multiple funding streams for high quality programs
- ◆ Preparedness level of children entering kindergarten

Data Systems and Coordination

This workgroup has the responsibility to:

- ◆ Develop a plan for a unified data system and policies and structure to support enhanced community coordination
- ◆ Improve collaboration by identifying opportunities and barriers

Key Issues:

- ◆ Agency capacity to share or link data
- ◆ Tracking of aggregate data

Professional Development and Workforce

This workgroup has the responsibility to:

- ◆ Develop a cross sector, statewide professional development and career advancement plan
- ◆ Identify the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year institutions of higher learning toward supporting the development of early childhood professionals

Key Issues

- ◆ Shortages of early childhood practitioners
- ◆ Articulation agreements between institutions of higher learning
- ◆ Linking professional development systems and standards

- ◆ Agency collaboration in professional development
- ◆ Competencies and standards among early learning professions

Community Mobilization

This workgroup has responsibility to:

- ◆ Recommend funding for community projects
- ◆ Support local community recommendations to the Board
- ◆ Approve local community work plans

Key Issues

- ◆ Communication between local communities and the board
- ◆ Obtaining local input
- ◆ Community evaluation
- ◆ Local community coordination and systems development

Public Engagement

This workgroup has responsibility to:

- ◆ Develop recommendations to implement a public engagement plan
- ◆ Work with the Foundation and OPSR Boards on public engagement plans

Key Issues:

- ◆ Engaging the public in school readiness issues
- ◆ Involve business leaders in early childhood investment
- ◆ Engaging families

Special Populations

This workgroup has responsibility to:

- ◆ Assure all recommendations developed in other workgroup issues include underserved children in early care and education services

Key Issues

- ◆ Identifying underserved populations
- ◆ Identifying recommendations for strategies for assuring underserved populations have access to quality early care and education services

Each workgroup is represented on the **Policy and Workgroup Coordination Committee** to assure all workgroup efforts are addressed comprehensively throughout the planning processes. These recommendations are coordinated and refined through the Policy and Workgroup Coordination Committee and the OPSR Executive Committee. All recommendations are presented to the OPSR Board for final approval prior to being submitted to the Governor.

Preparedness Level of Children Entering Kindergarten

Oklahoma does not currently collect statewide information regarding children's preparedness for entering kindergarten. Efforts are underway to develop a standard definition for school readiness, implement and evaluate pilot school readiness assessments and develop recommendations for state leadership on best practice standards for statewide school readiness assessment. The following describe accomplishments thus far in developing these standards and factors that contribute to children succeeding in school.

School Readiness Definition

The OPSR Board has established a Ready Schools Advisory group to develop a recommendation for a school readiness definition. The members of the Ready Schools Advisory group have expressed a strong commitment to establishing a responsible definition and subsequent school readiness pilot that has the best interest of young children entering school in mind.

School Readiness Assessment

The Better Together School Readiness Assessment Pilot has completed two years of data collection and evaluation. Refer to the section on Efforts to Promote Private Partnerships for further information on this pilot. Results from this pilot will be considered as the state develops a School Readiness Assessment framework and recommendation.

School Readiness Indicators

The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: Making Progress for Young Children was a multistate initiative that developed sets of indicators at the state level to track results for children from birth to 8. While Oklahoma does not currently collect all indicators identified through this initiative, below are key indicators that are collected that contribute to school readiness.

Ready Children

These indicators are under development and will be addressed through the School Readiness Assessment Advisory Group.

Ready Families

Mother's Education Level

21.3% of births to mothers with less than a 12th grade education (2008, OSDH)

Births to Teens

2,300 births to teens ages 15-17 rate of *15.1 per 1,000* girls (2008, OSDH)

Child Abuse and Neglect

8,605 confirmed child abuse and neglect, *61.9%* of those confirmed were children birth to age 6 (SFY09, OKDHS)

Children in Foster Care

53% of children who were in out-of-home placements were birth to age 6 (OKDHS July 2010)

Ready Communities

Young Children in Poverty

21% of children under age 6 living in families with income below the federal poverty threshold (2009, Oklahoma Department of Commerce)

Supports for Families with Infants and Toddlers

1,708 infants and toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start (CLASP, 2008)

Lead Poisoning

4% of children under age 6 with blood lead levels at or above 10 micrograms per deciliter 20 (Oklahoma Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Report, 2009 Surveillance Data Report)

Ready Services – Health

Health Insurance

13% of children under age 18 without health insurance (2009, OHCA)

Low Birth Weight Infants

8.2% of infants born weighing under 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds) (2008, OSDH)

Access to Prenatal Care

5.2% of births to women who receive late (third trimester) or no prenatal care (2008, OSDH)

Immunizations

71.7% of children 19-35 months who have been fully immunized (2008, CDC)

Ready Services - Early Care and Education

Children Enrolled in an Early Education Program

15.8% of 3- and *90.0%* 4-year-olds enrolled in a center-based preschool programs, Head Start programs, and pre-kindergarten programs (2008 Children's Defense Fund)

Accredited Child Care Centers

4.3% of child care centers are 3 Star facilities and are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (OCCRA, Oklahoma State Profile, 2009)

42.3% of child care centers are 2 Star facilities (OCCRA, Oklahoma State Profile, 2009)

68.3% of all Child Care Facilities report waiting lists (OCCRA, Oklahoma State Profile, 2009)

Access to Child Care Subsidies

32.4% of all children in child care are in Subsidized Care (OCCRA, Oklahoma State Profile, 2009)

89% of children receiving child care subsidies are in 2 or 3 star facilities (OCCRA, Oklahoma State Profile, 2009)

Ready Schools

Class Size

1:10 Average teacher/child ratio in K-1 classrooms (2009, NIEER)

Third Grade Reading Scores

71% of children with reading proficiency in third grade as measured by the state's proficiency tests (2009, Office of Accountability)

Oklahoma has established standards for children entering Kindergarten for reading skills. **Each student** enrolled in kindergarten in a public school in this state shall be screened for reading skills including, but not limited to, phonological awareness, letter recognition, and oral language skills as identified in the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS).

For those kindergarten children at risk for reading difficulties, teachers shall emphasize reading skills as identified in PASS, monitor progress throughout the year and measure year-end reading progress. (70 O.S. § 1210.508C) (Office of Accountability, Annual Report 2009)

Public Engagement, Private Sector Programs, and Voluntary Parental Involvement

Public Engagement Efforts

Parenting Award Presented

Parenting is a challenging task even in the best of times. When families are further challenged by life's circumstances or fighting tough financial situations it can be even more difficult. Smart Start partnered with Oklahoma City Educare, a local collision repair center, a local State Farm agent and several other auto part and repair centers to select a family that both met the financial criteria while displaying exemplary parenting skills for a special honor. Along with a financial need, the parent or parents also needed to show a high involvement in their children's lives, activities and well-being. After a rigorous selection process, one Oklahoma City family was awarded a vehicle to help them with their transportation needs through this Parenting Award program.

CAP Day at the Capitol

Smart Start Oklahoma sponsored CAP Day at the Capitol which included inviting all Oklahoma Senators and Representatives to take part in Child Abuse Prevention Day. This day is dedicated to bringing greater awareness to the problem along with discussing efforts towards reducing child abuse in our state.

All 18 Smart Start communities were encouraged to participate by bringing guests and constituents to spend some quality time with their elected representatives to discuss child abuse and any pending or future legislation on child abuse prevention.

Apple pie and a coffee bar treated the guests to some fun during this most important day at the Capitol about an important need in our state.

Educare Tours

Smart Start Oklahoma hosted tours at the newly created Educare Center in Oklahoma City. Educare was built to serve 200 disadvantaged children, ages birth to five years old, with year-round early childhood education programs. Educare Centers throughout the nation help young children grow up safe, healthy and eager to learn and help to provide the highest quality outcome-based learning environments for at-risk families and their children.

Policy makers and interested guests were invited to participate in a tour to receive information about this state of the art learning facility that not only teaches children, but also requires

parental involvement in the lives of the students. This parental involvement builds family relations and creates lifelong positive routines in a child's educational career.

Additional information about Oklahoma City Educare Center can be found at www.okceducare.org.

Public Hearing for State Early Childhood Advisory Council

Smart Start Oklahoma held a public hearing on January 26, 2010, to discuss the details of OPSR's role as Oklahoma's State Early Childhood Advisory Council. This public hearing allowed interested parties to ask questions about the council, the federal grant and OPSR's role in the execution, duties and goals for the federal funding.

Feedback included comments such as:

- *Would like the plan to stress the importance of early parent intervention throughout the document.*
- *Using the term "special populations" is not considered inclusive language.*
- *We don't have early learning standards, we have guidelines. There should be infant and toddler guidelines, preschool guidelines and kindergarten guidelines.*
- *The only quality rating scale mentioned was for child care. The national movement is toward quality rating improvement systems for all environments where children receive their early care and learning.*
- *The statewide data system described is financially costly and will require an end user fee to maintain. It should be paired with mandated efforts for a health information exchange – which has federal funding & requires the same participants in the database.*
- *The workforce can only be expanded if the rewards of advanced education are paired with adequate salary and benefits.*
- *The strategic plan shows how advanced Oklahoma is in the early childhood field and they are proud of the efforts put forth by Smart Start Oklahoma.*

These comments are being addressed in specific workgroups, committees and through the board. A second public hearing will be held in the Fall of 2011, and public comments have been added to all Board agenda items to continue the process of assuring the public is invited to participate in the development of recommendations effecting early childhood.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board has 15 private member representatives, that are required in statute to fall within the following categories: Two parents of children eight (8) years of age or younger, and one representative of licensed child care providers. These positions are appointed by the Governor, and the OPSR Board has representation to fill these positions on the board. (See Board Member List)

Programs Supported by Private Sector Funding

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation has been successful in partnering with private business and foundations to provide financial support to local Smart Start community projects. During FY10, the Foundation received approximately **\$650,000** in private donations to support Oklahoma's early childhood initiatives.

Better Together: Oklahoma Ready Schools

Better Together Oklahoma's Ready Schools Initiative is an expansion of a nationwide early childhood school improvement initiative called Ready Schools. Four public schools in Oklahoma participated in this statewide pilot during FY10.

Better Together guides schools in engaging community partners to enhance their programs and services, building on their existing strengths and resources. Not only are more children served, but the services and programs are more comprehensive, extending from birth through the early elementary years.

Participating public schools commit to the program for three years. During that time, they receive onsite consultation, technical assistance for implementation, training in the use of child assessment and program assessment, and opportunities for cross sector professional development with child care, head start and public school teachers.

Educare

Educare is a state-of-the art early childhood center that is open full-day and full-year, with a bachelor degreed teacher in every classroom, working together in a growing network to advance quality in Oklahoma. The Educare model has high staff and small class sizes, a curriculum based on research, parental involvement, on-site family support and on-site health/mental health services. Educare seeks to combine the best of Head Start, child care, and preschool to help at-risk infants, toddlers and preschoolers grow up eager to learn and ready for school.

Each Educare is a partnership, a place, a program and a platform for policy change. The Educare Centers across America work together with the Bounce Learning Network. Oklahoma now has three Educare centers, two in Tulsa and one in Oklahoma City. A third site is being planned for the Tulsa area, which will total 4 Educare Centers in Oklahoma. This will once again place Oklahoma on the cutting edge of accomplishments in the area of early childhood programs.

Oklahoma State Pilot Program for Infants and Toddlers

During the 2006 legislative session and with broad bi-partisan support, the Legislature directed the State Board of Education to establish a state early childhood pilot program. The Legislature appropriated \$5 million on the condition that the private sector could raise \$10 million to enhance the quality of early childhood education and care for low-income children from birth

through age three. The first and largest contributor was the George Kaiser Family Foundation whose objective is eliminating the cycle of poverty and making the American dream more achievable and opportunity equal.

Since 2006, other private investors have stepped forward and the state has doubled its investment (\$10 million). The grant contract is awarded to the Community Action Project of Tulsa County; Smart Start Oklahoma helps link providers with this network. The number of children served through the State of Oklahoma Pilot Early Childhood Program during year 4 (2009 – 2010) was **2,012**. Total number of classrooms was **76**. In total, 12 agencies operating in more than 14 communities across Oklahoma participated. Ten providers are non-profits, two providers are private/for profit, and one is a Tribal government.

Strengthening Families

Both public and private funding supports the implementation of Strengthening Families with seven Smart Start Communities. Strengthening Families, a program developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, is an approach to improve outcomes for young children by building family strengths. Extensive research on this approach supported five Protective Factors, which when present reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect of young children. These factors include:

- ◆ Parental resilience;
- ◆ Social connections;
- ◆ Knowledge of parenting and child development;
- ◆ Concrete support in times of need, and
- ◆ Social and emotional competence of children (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2004)

Seven Smart Start Oklahoma communities provide elements of the Strengthening Families Program to support parents and other caregivers. Services are delivered in child care centers, social service agencies, and in training/conferencing settings. The seven communities include: Ada, Duncan, Enid, Guthrie, Ponca City, Stillwater, and Tulsa.

Tulsa provides the *Prevention Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent-Provider Partnerships in Child Care* training free for the community. Trainees receive support books and resources for topics presented.

Ponca City hosts caregiver meetings, activity nights and caregiver cafés instead of “parent meetings” to emphasize their supportive approach.

Duncan has mobilized Strengthening Families approaches in Stephens and Cotton counties. They have engaged physicians, parents, child care providers and others to promote healthy family lifestyles.

Guthrie has developed pilot projects at five child care sites in Logan and Kingfisher counties. They serve as the go-to resource for parenting education and support.

Ada has developed three original Pontotoc County pilot sites and three Garvin County sites. All centers have received the *Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Training*, developed by Zero to Three.

Stillwater hosts the Fathers Acting To Heal and Reconnect (F.A.T.H.E.R.) curriculum developed in North Carolina. The curriculum is presented to incarcerated fathers at the Cimarron Correctional Facility in Cushing.

Enid's Strengthening Families initiative currently serves six child care centers. They also have initiated parent-educator visits to their centers to present general child development and community resources to child care staff members.

Total Providers served: **871**

Literacy

Early Literacy Programs are a requirement for all Smart Start Communities. In SFY10 all communities engaged in early literacy efforts. These early literacy efforts were funded by public and private dollars and were one of the following programs:

Raising a Reader
Leap into Literacy
Rx to Read
Reach out and Read
Read Now
Read to Me
Books for Babies
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

These early literacy programs ranged from medical models to classroom models and provided a wealth of early literacy materials to families of young children:

106,838 books distributed
53,158 children served
876 classrooms around the state participated
695 Pre-k, Head Start and child care centers
31 home child care facilities

Smart Start Oklahoma Parent Guide

Oklahoma health officials, child guidance experts, and medical practitioners reviewed and edited the *Parent Guide* in an effort to update the guide with current medical information. The Ronald McDonald House has generously provided funding to give the *Parent Guide* a new look, one that will match other Smart Start products. The *Parent Guide* reaches more than **40,000** parents each year.

From Cradle to College

Smart Start Oklahoma partnered with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to produce and distribute over 2,500 copies of a new publication for parents titled, *From Cradle to College: A guide to Succeeding in Early Childhood and Preparing for College Now*. The publication provides information on early childhood development, suggestions for helping parents of very young children prepare for entering pre-school, and promotes the 529 Plan, a state savings plan for college. Smart Start Communities helped disseminate the publication through health fairs, resource centers and training.

Private donations to support these early childhood efforts have been received from:

Bank of America

Chesapeake Energy Corporation

OPSR/OPSFR Boards of Trustees

Oklahoma Child Care Association

Inasmuch Foundation

George Kaiser Family Foundation

Mark K. Chapman Family Foundation

Public Service Company of Oklahoma

Ronald McDonald House of OKC

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness appreciates the generous support received from these donors.

Community Initiatives

FY10 End of Year Report – Community Mobilization

Smart Start Oklahoma is represented locally in 18 communities, which cover 52 counties across Oklahoma. The following report provides a statewide summary for these local projects for the period from July 2009 through June 2010.

Staffing

YEAR	Number of Full/Part Time Community Employees
2009	53
2010	58

Types of Employees

- ◆ Directors
- ◆ Special projects coordinators
- ◆ Strengthening Families coordinators
- ◆ Oklahoma Parents as Teachers coordinators
- ◆ Fiscal agents and program administrators

Staff Development

YEAR	Number Community Staff Trainings
2009	190
2010	222

Staff Development Opportunities included:

- ◆ State and regional economic summits
- ◆ Outcome measurement
- ◆ Early care
- ◆ Data collection training
- ◆ State/local leadership trainings
- ◆ Advocacy training

Fundraising

YEAR	Communities Participating
2009	50%
2010	83%

Activities included:

- ◆ Golf tournaments
- ◆ Book and supply drives
- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ Community events
- ◆ Grant writing

In Kind Funding – non cash support

YEAR	Communities Reporting	Total In-Kind Support
2009	17	\$532,209
2010	18	\$498,070

Types of in-kind include:

- ◆ Occupancy/Office Space
- ◆ Administrative staff
- ◆ Supplies
- ◆ Incentives and gifts
- ◆ Advertising and printing
- ◆ Event venues
- ◆ Services

Matching Funding – cash support

YEAR	Total Cash Support
2009	\$1,680,061
2010	\$1,976,453

Sources include:

- ◆ Fiscal Agents
- ◆ Public Schools
- ◆ Private donors
- ◆ Local Businesses
- ◆ Local Tribes
- ◆ Foundations
- ◆ County Commissioners
- ◆ Service Organizations

Coalition/Board Meetings

All communities develop and support local coalitions or boards to assist in planning for early childhood issues. Coalitions and Boards meet 4 to 12 times per year. In FY 2010 there were 270 board or coalition meetings held.

Coalition/Board Development

YEAR	Number of trainings/conference held
2009	120
2010	272

Opportunities included:

- ◆ Regional Economic Summits
- ◆ State and local leadership training
- ◆ Outcome measurement
- ◆ Training in the culture of poverty
- ◆ Early childhood advocacy training
- ◆ Early care conferences

Coalition/Board Membership

- ◆ Business/financial sector
- ◆ Health departments
- ◆ Higher Education
- ◆ Early care and education
- ◆ State and local government
- ◆ Head Start/Early Head Start
- ◆ Juvenile Justice
- ◆ Media
- ◆ Health care providers
- ◆ Tribes
- ◆ Public schools
- ◆ Human Services
- ◆ Community volunteers
- ◆ Mental Health Services
- ◆ Child advocates
- ◆ Faith community
- ◆ Foundations
- ◆ Museums
- ◆ Public Libraries

Advocacy Contacts with State and Local Officials

YEAR	Official Contacts Made
2009	215
2010	948

Officials include:

- ◆ Mayors
- ◆ State and National Congressional Members
- ◆ Agency directors
- ◆ Lt. Governor
- ◆ County Commissioners
- ◆ City Council Members

State and Local Events to Educate Policy Makers

YEAR	Events Held
2009	18
2010	31

In 2010 there were **181** participants for the state and local events. There were **180** partner organizations or individuals that assisted.

Events types included:

- ◆ Child Watch Tours
- ◆ Legislative Conference
- ◆ Community Needs Assessment Presentations
- ◆ Leadership Luncheons and Breakfasts

Child Care Conference/Trainings

YEAR	Events Held
2009	41
2010	81

Topics included:

- ◆ Child care and education
- ◆ Child abuse prevention
- ◆ Children's play
- ◆ Strengthening Families
- ◆ PCAN training for child care
- ◆ Health related topics (vision)
- ◆ Economic Issues
- ◆ Screening and Assessment
- ◆ Early Childhood Leadership

Child Care or Early Childhood Education

YEAR	Initiatives	Child Care Centers Served
2009	17	195
2010	91	506

Initiatives included:

- ◆ Strengthening Families
- ◆ Movement and Activity
- ◆ Early Childhood Advisory
- ◆ Social and Emotional Teaching
- ◆ Quality Enhancement Initiative
- ◆ Project Invest
- ◆ Early Birds Program
- ◆ Congressional Members Site Visits
- ◆ Literacy Training for Child Care Staff members

Family Support and Parent Education

YEAR	Number of Parents and Guardians Impacted
2009	11,790
2010	13,773

Efforts included:

- ◆ Strengthening Families
- ◆ Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- ◆ Children's Music
- ◆ Parents as Teachers
- ◆ Family Fun Nights
- ◆ Healthy Marriage Initiatives
- ◆ Ready for Kindergarten/Early Birds
- ◆ Family Play Days
- ◆ Call and Resource Centers
- ◆ Parent Universities
- ◆ Parent Skills Trainings (Cooking, Budgeting)

Health of Children

YEAR	Communities with Health Initiatives
2009	17
2010	18

Activities included:

- ◆ Sooner Care
- ◆ Dental Programs
- ◆ Vision Programs
- ◆ Mental Health Screenings
- ◆ Health Access Networks
- ◆ Safety Checks
- ◆ Fitness for Children
- ◆ Developmental Screening
- ◆ Child Health Information for Parents

Infant/Child Mental Health

YEAR	Community Activities to Promote Infant/Child Mental Health
2009	14
2010	11

Activities included:

- ◆ Parenting After Divorce Class
- ◆ Infant Brain Development
- ◆ Press Releases
- ◆ Systems of Care Involvement
- ◆ Early Birds Program
- ◆ Children's Prevention Programs
- ◆ Mental Health Awareness Day
- ◆ Parent Resources Distribution

Public Engagement Activities

Smart Start Oklahoma communities developed and distributed **5,053** community brochures in FY-2010. In addition there were:

- ◆ 15 Billboard campaigns
- ◆ 23 Websites developed or redesigned
- ◆ 138 Press releases
- ◆ 108 news coverage events
- ◆ 175 community presentations

Smart Start Community Profiles

Ada

Smart Start South Central Oklahoma covers Garvin, Johnston, Murray and Pontotoc Counties in southern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start South Central Oklahoma received \$77,100 in state funds for community activities. East Central University, based in Ada, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Patricia Little and one part time Strengthening Families Coordinator, Cindy Byrd. Coalition members represent health care providers, businesses, local

media outlets, Head Start, Department of Human Services, Chickasaw Nation and faith communities.

Bartlesville

Smart Start Bartlesville/Success by Six covers Nowata and Washington Counties in northeastern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Bartlesville received \$104,100 in state funds for community activities. Washington County Child Care Foundation, based in Bartlesville, serves as the fiscal agent and funding partner. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Jan Boomer, and one Community Outreach Specialist, Rajean Stelfox. Coalition members represent public schools, health care providers, higher education, state legislators, faith communities, city planning, child care centers, businesses and a wide range of local service agencies.

Duncan

Smart Start Stevens County covers Cotton, Jefferson and Stephens Counties in south central Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2005. Smart Start Stephens County received \$50,200 in state funds for community activities. United Way of Stephens County, based in Duncan, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Deborah Smith and a special projects coordinator, Carole Upshaw. Coalition members represent Resource and Referral, Head Start, child care centers, tribal government, domestic violence advocate, public schools, citizen volunteers and health care providers.

Durant

Smart Start Durant covers Atoka, Bryan and Marshall Counties in southeastern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Durant received \$89,600 in state funds for community activities. Southeastern Oklahoma State University serves as the fiscal agent, based in Durant. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Heather Smiley. Coalition members represent consumers, tribal organizations, early childhood education and care, health, higher education, faith-based organizations, and county government.

El Reno

Smart Start Canadian County covers Canadian County in central Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2007. Smart Start Canadian County received \$39,900 in state funds for community activities. Youth and Family Services, based in El Reno, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Christie Adams-Roberts. Coalition members represent health care providers, Head Start, Department of Human Services, parents, juvenile justice, faith communities and a wide range of educational settings.

Enid

Smart Start Northwest Oklahoma covers Alfalfa, Garfield, Grant and Woods Counties in northwestern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Northwest Oklahoma received \$100,700 in state funds for community activities. Community Development Support Association (CDSA), based in Enid, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently has one full time Community Coordinator position, shared by Paula Waters and Dianne Juhnke, as well as two additional part time staff. Coalition members represent health care providers, businesses, public schools, Head Start, Department of Health, faith communities, parents and local service agencies

Guthrie

Smart Start Logan/Kingfisher Counties covers Logan and Kingfisher counties in central Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Logan County received \$81,200 in state funds for community activities. Logan Community Services, based in Guthrie, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs A.J. Griffin as acting Community Coordinator, and one part time Special Projects Coordinator, Linda Blair. Coalition members represent faith communities, child care centers, Oklahoma Parents as Teachers, parents, mental health and disability, tobacco prevention and a wide range of educational settings.

Hugo

Smart Start Tri-County covers Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties in south eastern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2005. Smart Start Tri-County received \$61,400 in state funds for community activities. Little Dixie Community Action Agency, based in Hugo, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Dennis Willeford. The coordinator facilitates three county coalitions in McCurtain, Choctaw, and Pushmataha counties. Coalition members represent Head Start, state and county agencies, Choctaw Nation, public schools, district attorney, libraries, parents, Systems of Care and child care centers.

Lawton

Smart Start Lawton/Success by Six covers Comanche, Harmon, Jackson and Tillman Counties in southwestern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2004. Smart Start Lawton received \$105,100 in state funds for community activities. United Way of Lawton-Fort Sill, based in Lawton, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Jane Mitchell and one part time Special Projects Coordinator, Mary Buchwald. Coalition members represent Department of Human Services, museums, city government, libraries, police department, public schools, businesses, Head Start, faith communities, Resource and Referral, parents and higher education.

Muskogee

Smart Start Muskogee covers McIntosh, Muskogee and Okmulgee Counties in eastern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Muskogee received \$63,800 in state funds for community activities. Green Country Behavioral Health Services, based in Muskogee, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Carrie Colburn. Coalition members represent Resource and Referral, Department of Health, Head Start, Department of Human Services and child care centers.

Norman

Smart Start Norman/Success by Six covers Cleveland and McLain Counties in central Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2004. Smart Start Norman received \$84,600 in state funds for community activities. United Way of Norman, based in Norman, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one part time Community Coordinator, Leisa Speegle and one part time Special Projects Coordinator, Christy Emig. Smart Start Norman Coalition members represent O.U., Norman Public Schools, Cleveland County Health Department, early childcare educators and caregivers, Norman Police Department, Norman Public Library, financial institutions and businesses.

Oklahoma City

Smart Start Central Oklahoma covers Oklahoma County in central Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Central Oklahoma received \$121,500 in state funds for community activities. Communities Foundation of Oklahoma, based in Oklahoma City, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Stacy Dykstra, one full time community planner/evaluation specialist, Allison Loeffler and two additional part time staff persons, Mary Ellis and Steven Davis. Coalition members represent local service agencies, Resource and Referral, public schools, library system, higher education, parents, businesses, and local media outlets.

Ponca City

Smart Start Kay County covers Kay and Osage Counties in northern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Kay County received \$63,400 in state funds for community activities. United Way of Ponca City serves as the fiscal agent, based in Ponca City. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Lilly Freeman. Coalition members represent Head Start, public schools, Oklahoma Parents as Teachers, parents, businesses, and other local service agencies.

Shawnee

Smart Start Pottawatomie County/ United Way Success By 6 covers Pottawatomie and Seminole Counties in central Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since

2003. Smart Start Pottawatomie County received \$61,400 in state funds for community activities. United Way of Pottawatomie County, based in Shawnee, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Donald Pyeatt and an additional part time staff person, Brooke Webb. Coalition members represent government, child care and education, mental health, business, and faith-based organizations.

Stigler

Smart Start Kiamichi Country covers Haskell, Latimer, Leflore and Pittsburg Counties in eastern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2007. Smart Start Kiamichi Country received \$39,900 in state funds for community activities. KI BOIS Community Action Foundation, Inc serves as the fiscal agent, based in Stigler. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Sandie Rutherford. Coalition members represent Head Start, Oklahoma Parents as Teachers, parents, mental health and disability and a wide range of educational settings.

Stillwater

Smart Start North Central Oklahoma covers Lincoln, Noble, Pawnee and Payne Counties in central Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start North Central Oklahoma received \$122,900 in state funds for community activities. Smart Start North Central Oklahoma is incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 agency and is based in Stillwater. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Marama Smith and one full time Special Projects Coordinator, Rita Bridenstine. Coalition members represent public schools, businesses, Systems of Care, local service agencies, parents and higher education.

Tahlequah

Smart Start Cherokee County/Kid Connections, Inc. covers Adair, Cherokee and Sequoyah Counties in eastern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2005. Smart Start Cherokee received \$57,800 in state funds for community activities. Kids Connection Inc, based in Tahlequah, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Bridget Tobey. Coalition members represent public schools, Head Start, Resource and Referral, Cherokee Nation, parents, Oklahoma State Department of Health, mental health and disability and a wide range of local service providers.

Tulsa

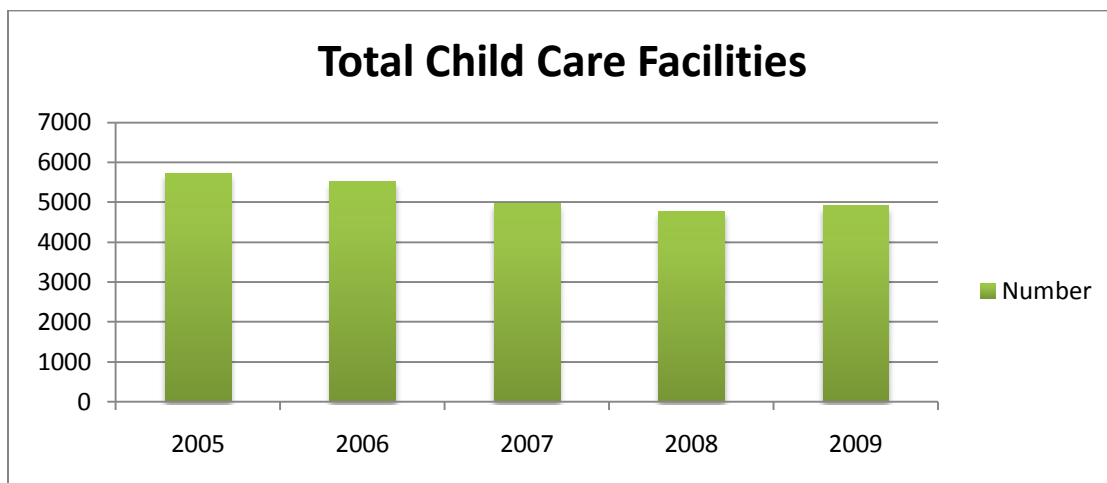
Jump Start Tulsa covers Creek, Rogers and Tulsa Counties in northeastern Oklahoma and has been part of the Smart Start Oklahoma Network since 2003. Smart Start Tulsa received \$133,600 in state funds for community activities. Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, based in Tulsa, serves as the fiscal agent. The community currently employs one full time Community Coordinator, Jan Figart and four additional part time staff members Ginny Utter, Talia Shaull, Coleen Ayres-Griffin, and Melanie Poulter. Coalition members represent local service agencies,

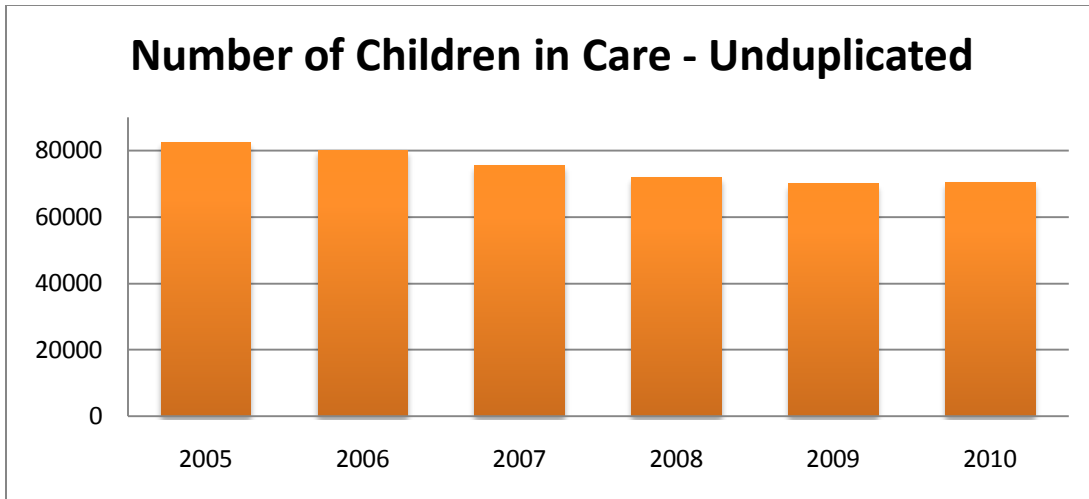
public schools, juvenile justice, businesses, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, parents, health care providers, and mental health services.

Availability and Cost of Quality Child Care

Availability

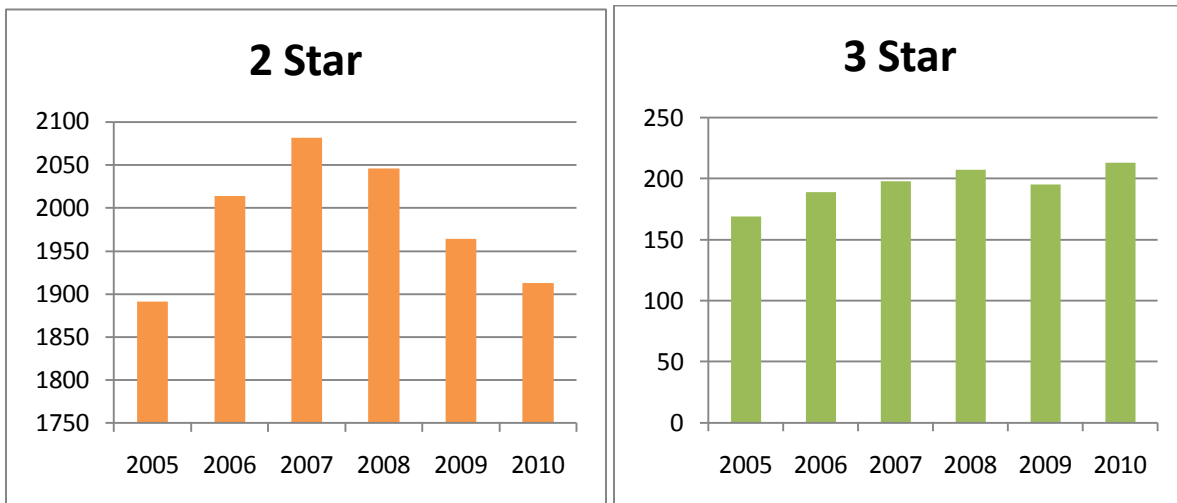
In Oklahoma during 2009, there were 4,696 child care facilities (total centers and homes), with 137,973 slots available. The US Census Bureau estimates the birth to five child population to be 323,421. Data available on all working parents indicates that in 2007, there were 184,640 children of working parents needing child care. The Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Agency indicates that there are approximately 2.3 children per available slot for child care. In 2009, 58.3% of all facilities indicated waiting lists, with 68.3% of the Child Care Centers indicating a waiting list. The number of facilities has declined slightly over the past five years, as has the unduplicated count of children who received child care services.



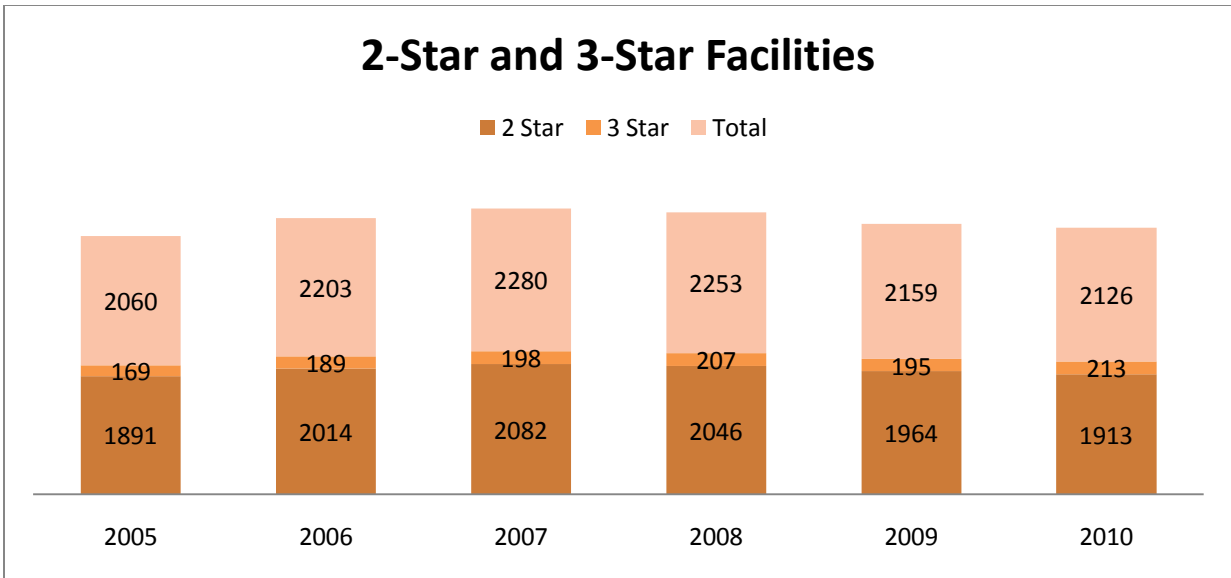


Quality

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care, administers a quality enhancement initiative to improve the quality of child care in Oklahoma, especially for children receiving child care subsidies. Programs can receive a 1-Star, 1-Star Plus, 2-Star, or 3-Star Rating. The numbers of centers that receive the highest star ratings are:



The total number of 2-Star and 3-Star centers has increased over the past six years by 3.2%.



Cost

Cost (weekly) for Child Care in Oklahoma, 2009

Age	Child Care Centers	Child Care Homes
Under 1	130.06	106.32
1 Year	120.05	103.85
2 Years	111.01	96.36
3 Years	103.87	94.1
4 and 5 Years	95.98	90.45

OCCRA, State Profile 2009

Number, Location, and Status of Quality Prekindergarten Programs

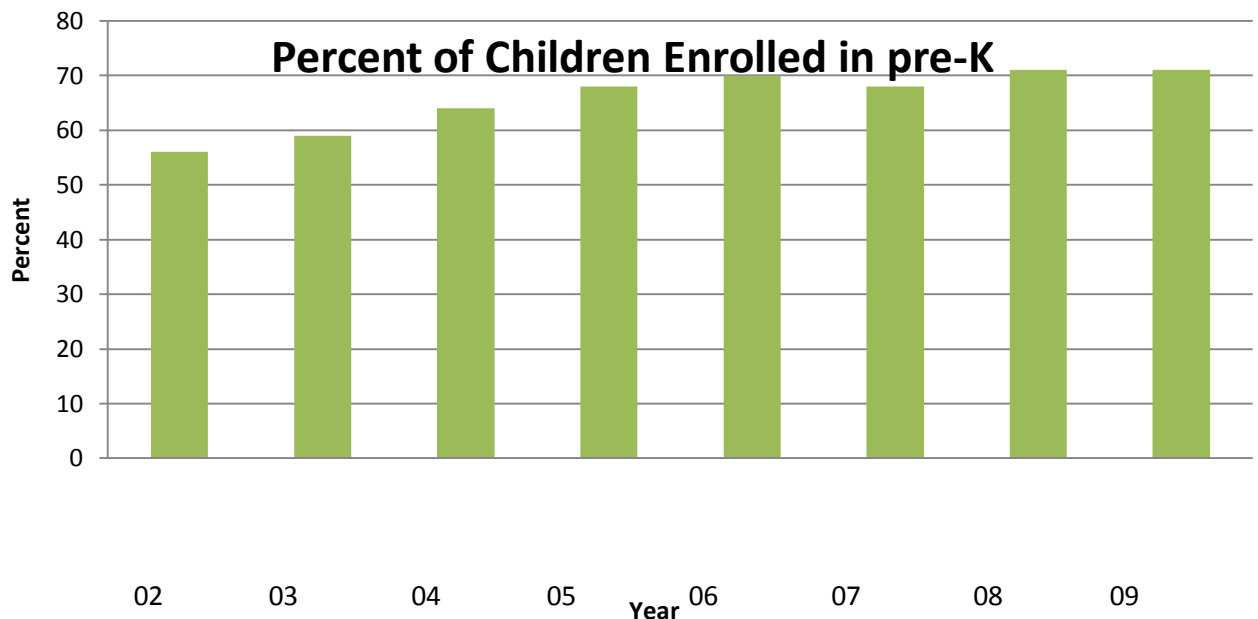
Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs

“An area of tremendous growth over the past ten years is early childhood or pre kindergarten. From the 1999-2000 school year to 2008-09, the kindergarten class has increased 15.7%. The early childhood/pre kindergarten class, which includes 3 and 4 year olds, has increased 80.4% from 1999-2000 to 2008-09. Oklahoma is one of the nation’s leaders in early childhood education. This attention to the education of our youngest students should pay huge dividends in the future of the state.” (Office of Accountability 2009 Annual Report)

Number and Location

In Oklahoma, 99% of all schools provide pre-K programs. While 71% of four year olds are in pre-K programs, an additional 13% of 4 year olds are enrolled in Head Start programs. Across Oklahoma, an increasing number of pre-K, Child Care and Head Start programs are developing collaborative models to integrate resources to increase the number of children having access to quality early learning environments.

- ◆ 71% of 4 year olds enrolled in state-funded preschool programs: Oklahoma ranks first in the nation for the 7th consecutive year for serving the highest percentage of 4-year-olds in state-funded preschool. (NIEER, The State of Preschool 2009)



Quality

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has established a quality Standards Checklist in which to measure 10 Quality benchmarks for state Pre-K programs. Nationally, North Carolina, Alabama, and one program in Louisiana meet all 10 benchmarks. Nine states, including Oklahoma meet 9 of 10 of these benchmarks. These measures and Oklahoma's Benchmarks are:

Policy	State Pre-K Requirement	Oklahoma Benchmark	Oklahoma Meets Benchmark
Early Learning Standards	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Yes
Teacher Degree	BA/BS	BA	Yes
Teacher Specialized Training	EC certification for birth-3	Specializing in pre-k	Yes
Assistant teacher degree	Must Meet NCLB requirements	CDA or Equivalent	No
Teacher in-service	75 clock hours/5years	At least 15 hours/yr.	Yes
Maximum class size	3-year-olds-NA 4-year-olds - 20	20 or lower	Yes
Staff-child ratio	3-year-olds-NA 4-year-olds – 1:10	1:10 or better	Yes
Screening/referral	Vision, hearing, health, Developmental and support Services	Vision, hearing, health and at least 1 support service	Yes
Meals	At least 1 meal	At least 1 /day	Yes
Monitoring	Site visits and other monitoring	Site visits	Yes

Expenditures

- ◆ \$7,853 is spent per child enrolled in pre-K programs (NIEER The State of Preschool 2009)

Evaluation

Rigorous evaluations of the pre-K program in Tulsa have found positive effects on literacy and mathematics learning for all children. Effects are somewhat larger for the most disadvantaged children but are strong for children from every background, including children who are not disadvantaged. (Gormley, W.T., Jr. Phillips, D., & Gayer, T. 2008) Preschool programs can boost school readiness. Science, 320, 1723-1724. Available at <http://nieer.org/resources/research/Gormley062708.pdf>

Three-year-olds

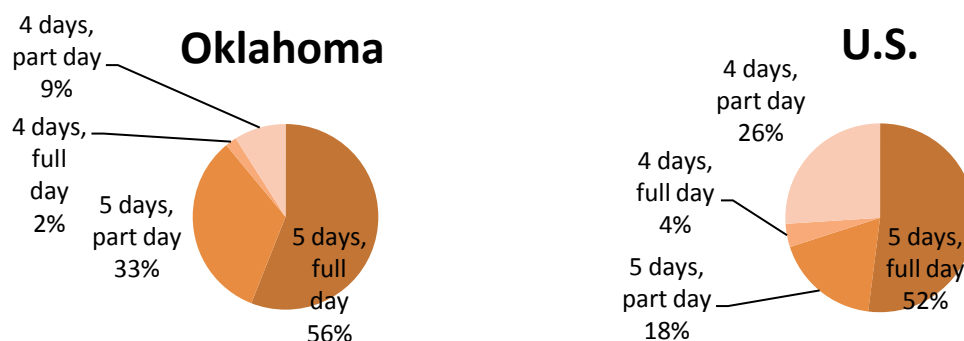
There are no state appropriations for three-year-old pre-kindergarten in the state; however, some districts choose to fund three-year-olds in public schools through a variety of public and private sources (Title I, general funds, special education, e.g.).

District Participation

- ◆ 153 public school districts provide services to 1,970 three-year-olds in Pre-K classrooms in 2009. (NIEER)

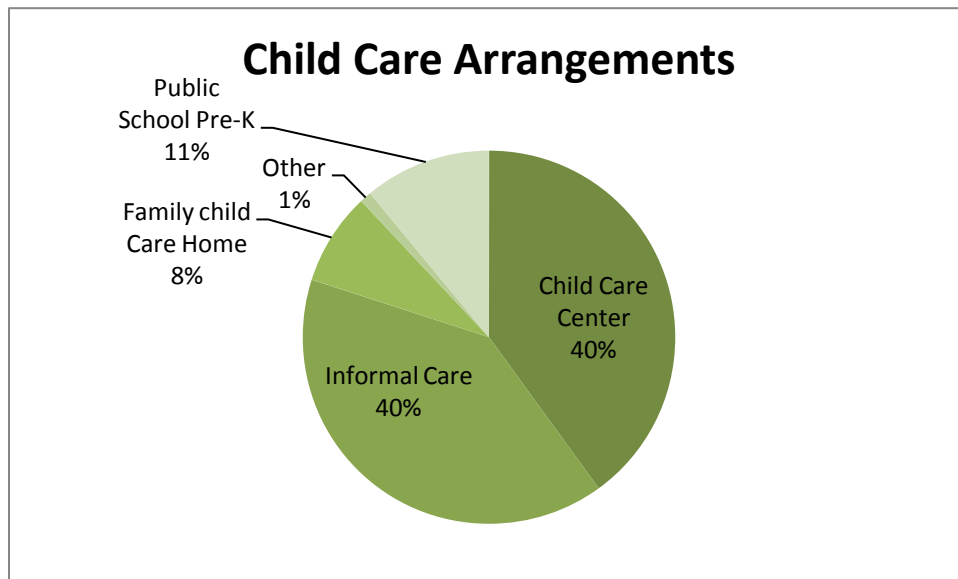
Head Start

Oklahoma served a total of **19,771** children in 2008 through Head Start Programs; 1,708 three-year-olds and 18,063 four-year-olds. Oklahoma provides a greater percentage of five full days of programs than the US average.



There are a number of collaborative models that integrate pre-K, Head Start and/or child care into one classroom. These programs strive to maximize resources to serve an increased number of children through a quality early learning experience. Development of a unified data system will facilitate the ability to measure the number of collaborative models and the number of children benefiting from these models.

In Oklahoma, 11% of Head Start programs operate at least 8 hours per day. Children with working parents who are enrolled in programs that are less than 8 hours will require additional care. The graph below outlines where children enrolled in Head Start received supplemental child care services highlighting the need for cross sector coordination between systems.



Head Start Expenditures

State funding	Federal Actual Spending
\$2,905,620	\$109,613,328

CLASP 2008 PIR Profile

- ◆ \$7,231 is spent per child enrolled in Head Start (NIEER The State of Preschool 2009)

Additional Publically Funded Early Childhood Programs

In addition to state funded pre-K and state and federally funded Head Start, a number of other programs exist in Oklahoma to support parents, provide medical assistance, and serve children with disabilities. All of these programs are critical to improving developmental and education outcomes for Oklahoma's children.

Oklahoma Parents As Teachers

Oklahoma Parents As Teachers (OPAT) is a unique parent education program designed to give children the best possible start in life. The program is built on the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. It is a voluntary program for all parents who have young children birth to three years of age.

The goal of the Oklahoma Parents As Teachers program is to strengthen the capacity of parents to be effective teachers prior to formal education. The program is designed to maximize a child's overall development during the first three years of life, lay the foundation for school success and minimize developmental problems that interfere with the child's learning.

OPAT is also designed to foster an early partnership between home and school so that parents take a far more active role during their children's formal years of schooling. Other intended benefits of the program include: positive parental attitudes toward the school district, early identification of sensory or developmental problems, and reduction in the need for expensive remediation and special education programs. (OPAT Annual Report, FY 2009, OSDE)

School Year	Funding Level	Number of Districts	Families Served
2004-2005	\$1,295,000.00	68	4235
2005-2006	\$2,045,709.00	99	5619
2006-2007	\$2,045,709.00	97	5117
2007-2008	\$2,045,709.00	98	4657
2008-2009	\$2,045,709.00	96	4388

Children First

Children First empowers first-time eligible families to care for themselves and their babies by providing information and education, assessing health, safety and development and providing linkages to community resources, thereby promoting the well-being of families through public health nurse home visitation, ultimately benefiting multiple generations.

Children First was created in 1996 with the goal of reducing child abuse and neglect. To accomplish this, Oklahoma chose to implement the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) model of nurse home visitation services. This evidence-based model, founded by David Olds, PhD, has been researched for over 30 years and proven to deliver beneficial multi-generational outcomes and reduce the costs of long-term social service programs. In SFY 2009, there were 136 home visitors providing home visits to families statewide. Children First nurse home visitors provided 44,239 visits to 4,590 families in 74 Oklahoma counties. (Children First Annual Report, FY09, OSDH)

Start Right

The Office of Child Abuse Prevention was created in 1984 by the Oklahoma Child Abuse Prevention Act, Title 63, O.S. Section 1-227.1 The Act declared that the prevention of child abuse and neglect was a priority in Oklahoma. In accordance with the Act, the Office of Child Abuse Prevention was placed within the Oklahoma State Department of Health to emphasize *prevention* as the focus rather than “after-the-fact” intervention. The Start Right home visitation and community-based services program teaches positive parenting skills and connects families with resources that help reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Twenty two sites across Oklahoma provide services to expectant parents and parents of children birth through age five. For a family to participate in either center-based services or home visitation services, they must complete the Start Right Program screening. During SFY 2009, 2,910 adults were contacted and screened for potential indicators associated with child abuse and neglect. There were 525 adults enrolled in center based services; 663 families and 882 children were served during SFY 2009 with home visitation services. At the time of intake, 79% of the children were less than 6 months of age. (Start Right Annual Report, FY09, OSDH)

SoonerStart

SoonerStart is a statewide program in Oklahoma that provides a range of services to families with infants and toddlers from birth to age three who have developmental delays. Eligibility is not based on income, but on the child's developmental status.

Monthly Average Case Load

2008-2009 4,314

Total Number of Infants and Toddlers Receiving Services

2008-2009 **13,534**

Total Number of Referrals

2008-2009 **9057**

Total Number of Children Referred from Sooner Start to an LEA

2008-2009 **1185**

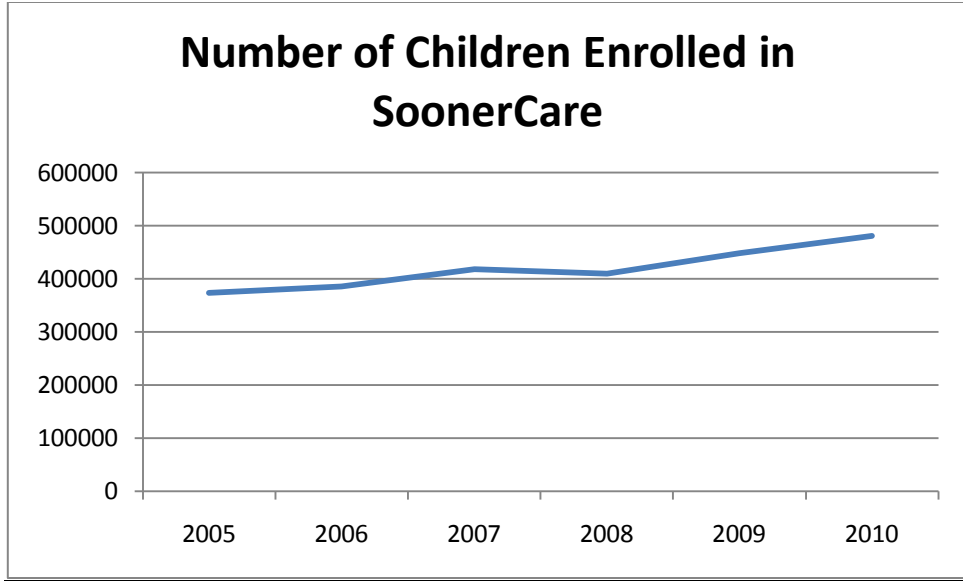
SoonerCare

Health care access is as important to school readiness as quality early care and education. *SoonerCare* (Oklahoma Medicaid) is a health coverage program jointly funded by the federal and state governments. This program helps pay some or all medical bills for many people who can't afford them. The Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) is the state agency that administers the program and determines financial eligibility for the program. Those who qualify for *SoonerCare* can benefit from a variety of services, including physician visits, prescription medicines, immunizations, limited dental and eye care, developmental screening, and much more. For more information, please visit www.okhca.org.

In 2009, OHCA was awarded a federal grant to launch *SoonerEnroll*, an initiative focused on enrolling children who are qualified for *SoonerCare* but not currently enrolled. Four Regional Outreach Coordinators, along with temporary outreach associates, were hired to provide technical assistance and training to organizations such as Smart Start Oklahoma communities that work to market the *SoonerCare* services and to increase enrollment.

In the past year Smart Start Oklahoma has developed a variety of strategies to connect families to *SoonerCare* services. Working through local dental clinics, Smart Start communities have provided incentives to families who enroll. Other Smart Start communities have helped local child care centers and other agencies host *SoonerCare* enrollment training for staff. In addition, all Smart Start communities provide parenting materials through resource vans, centers, and fairs. *SoonerCare* information has been distributed through these venues.

The number of children enrolled in *SoonerCare* has increased from 373,961 in July, 2005 to 481,206 in July, 2010. This represents nearly a 30% increase in children who receive *SoonerCare* benefits. The benefits of increased enrollment are increased access to medical care and other related services for children. The challenge will be to maintain the level funding to provide supports and services to the increasing number of children who are eligible for *SoonerCare* services during a fiscal year faced with increased budget constraints.



Percentage of Third-grade Students Reading at or Above Grade Level

*By July 1, 2008, and each year thereafter, all **third-grade students will read at or above grade level by the end of their third-grade year**, excluding up to fifteen percent (15%) of those students who have an individualized education program (IEP), pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and excluding those students who are English language learners who have been determined not to be proficient in English as defined by a state-designated English proficiency assessment. (Office of Accountability, Annual Report 2009)*

Despite these standards, there are approximately 30% of third grade children who are not meeting satisfactory standards on third grade reading tests.

3rd Grade Reading, CRT, 2009

Satisfactory or above: 71%

Reading Remediation Rates

1st through 3rd Grade: 34.3%

Office of Accountability 2009 Annual Report

Low reading scores are a national concern. The Annie E. Casey Foundation released a special report in May, 2010; *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, highlighting the national crisis of low reading scores across the country for children entering 4th grade. In their report, **Oklahoma ranked 37th** in the percent of children reading below proficient as measured and defined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test in 2009. The report indicates race, family income, geographic location, school (Title I) income were all contributing factors to lower reading proficiency scores.

In response, the Foundation developed four policy recommendations to improve the reading proficiency of children entering the 4th grade. Their recommendations are:

1. Develop a coherent system of early care and education that aligns, integrates, and coordinates what happens from birth through third grade so children are ready to take on the tasks associated with fourth grade and beyond.
2. Encourage and enable parents, families, and caregivers to play their indispensable roles as co-producers of good outcomes for their children
3. Prioritize, support, and invest in results-driven initiative to transform low-performing schools into high-quality teaching and learning environments in which all children,

including those from low-income families and high-poverty neighborhoods, are present, engaged and education to high standards.

4. Develop and utilize solutions to two of the most significant contributors to the under-achievement of children from low-income families – chronic absence from school and summer learning loss.

Continued attention to improving quality early experiences for young children is needed in order to reduce the number of children who are not proficient in reading in the third grade. However, recent progress in the attention to and expansion of quality early learning experiences will show dividends in the future. A unified data system that can track early childhood experiences linked with later school performance can better inform the system on strategies for improvements. It is critical to measure and assure that children who are at greatest risk for school failure and who can benefit the most from early care and learning experiences are provided accessible opportunities to participate in these services.

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OPSR – STATE EXPENDITURES

	FY2009	FY2010
COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION	\$ 1,491,596	\$ 1,514,911
Includes community mobilization contracts and community technical support.		
SUPPORT SERVICES	<u>\$ 538,126</u>	<u>\$ 398,354</u>
Includes professional services, general operating, data processing and public engagement.		
TOTAL OPSR EXPENDITURES	<u>\$ 2,029,722</u>	<u>\$1,913,265</u>

OPSR – PRIVATE DONATIONS

Combined private donations (OPSR Foundation and local Smart Start Communities) received during FY10 totaled:

\$2,626,453