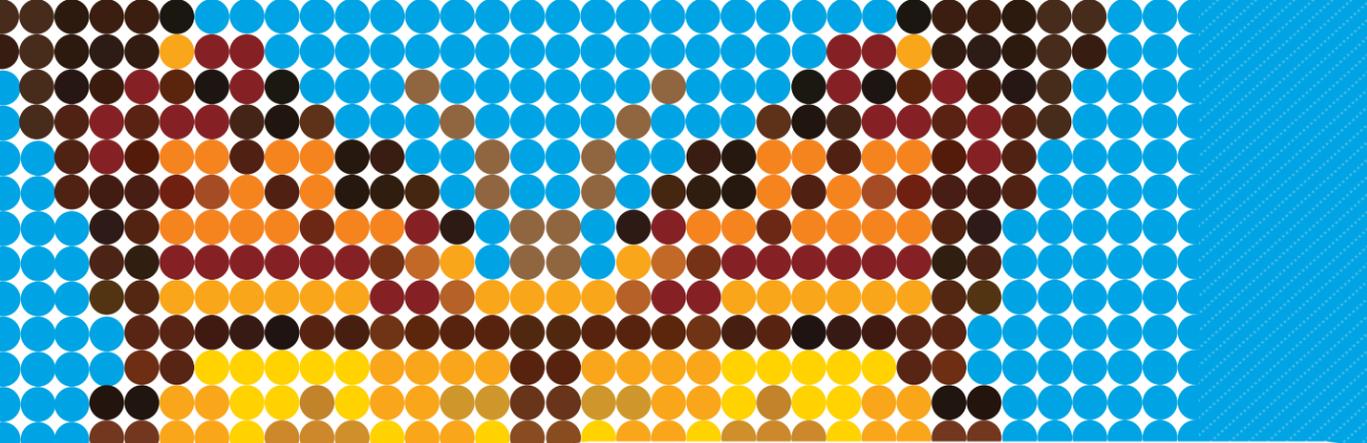




ready for a  
**smart start**  
in school

smart start  
oklahoma

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## Solutions

Input from partners has resulted in the development of a long range plan for bringing people and resources together to create lasting, positive change for families with young children. The goals that were set relating to components of school readiness are as follows:

### Physical and Social/Emotional Health

1. Children have a source of comprehensive, family-centered primary health care.
2. Families have the knowledge and resources to make decisions on healthy practices and long-term wellness.
3. Families of children with special health care needs receive the support and resources they need.
4. Families have access to individualized mental health services that address the social/emotional needs of their children.

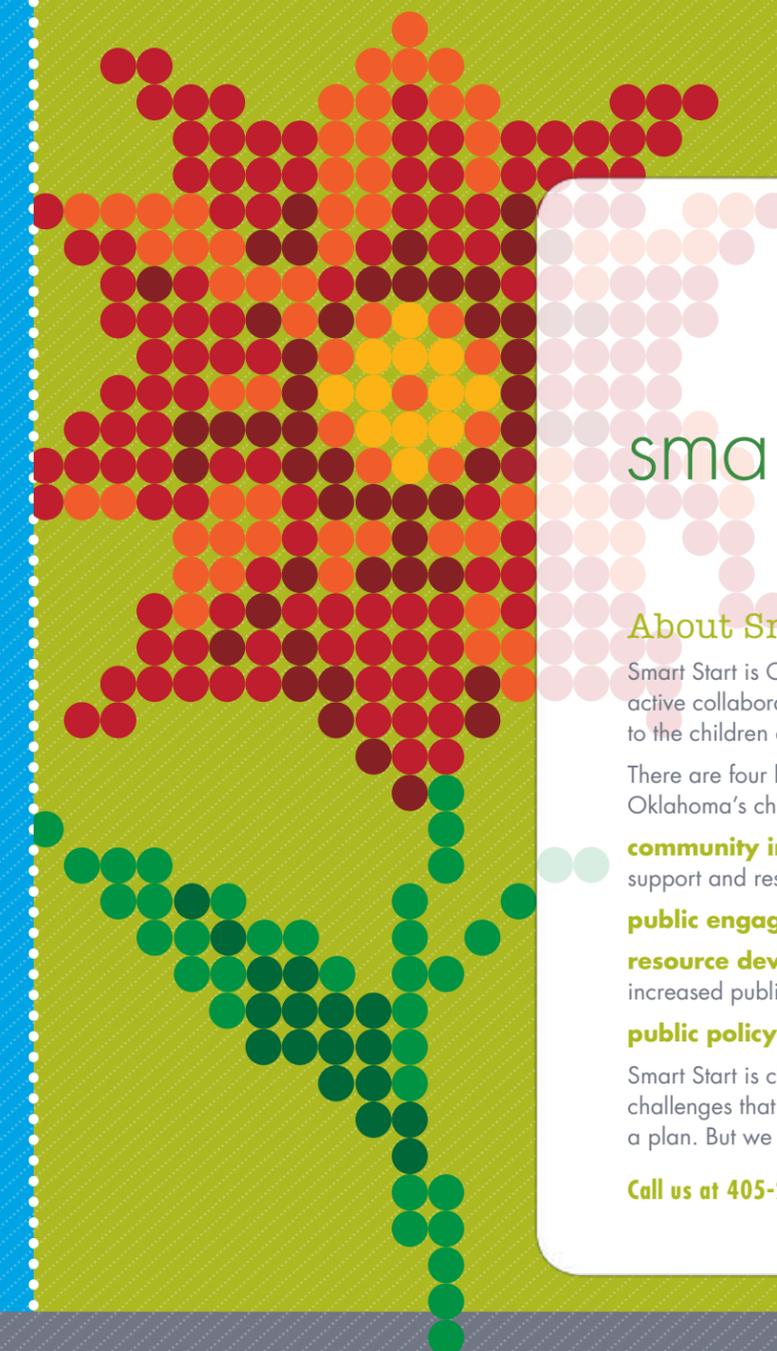
### Family Support

1. Parent education programs are available to families to ensure that they have the tools and resources to be their children's first and most important teachers.
2. Family support services assist families in providing a safe and nurturing environment.
3. Families have access to resources that support them in becoming economically self-sufficient.

### Early Care and Education

1. Children have access to a variety of high-quality, developmentally appropriate early care and education programs when needed.
2. Schools have the resources to ensure that high quality early learning environments are available to all parents who wish their preschool child to attend.
3. Adequate public and private funding is available to assist with the cost of early education programs.

working to create  
**change and opportunity**  
 for oklahoma's youngest children.



  
 smart start  
 oklahoma

### About Smart Start Oklahoma

Smart Start is Oklahoma's statewide early childhood initiative. Through a shared commitment, active collaboration, and innovative leadership, Smart Start seeks to provide better opportunities to the children and families of our state.

There are four key strategies that guide our efforts toward achieving our goal of giving Oklahoma's children a smart start.

**community initiatives** Responding to the needs of children and families by leveraging local support and resources to meet identified needs.

**public engagement** Educating Oklahoma on the importance of the early years.

**resource development** Committing resources at both the state and community level with increased public and private funding devoted to early childhood services.

**public policy** Improving public policies to support young children and their families.

Smart Start is closing the gap. We know the issues. We know the causes of many of the challenges that stand in the way of a healthier, more productive, more successful state. We have a plan. But we can't do it alone.

**Call us at 405-278-6978 for more information on how you can help give children a smart start.**

## What is School Readiness?

School readiness is arriving at school with the knowledge, skills and physical and emotional health needed to successfully participate. School readiness includes having very basic human needs such as food, shelter and loving, nurturing relationships met so that children can focus on learning. Children develop at different paces, and standards for measuring a child's readiness for school vary. Experts agree that children are born ready to learn; but, what they learn varies widely as a result of their experiences.

Students with undiagnosed vision, hearing or dental problems may find it difficult to concentrate on classroom activities or homework. The ability of a child to be fully engaged in the classroom is also affected by their social and emotional health, including getting along with others, following instructions and regulating emotions and behaviors.

Families must have the resources necessary to nurture, teach and provide for their children. This includes parent education programs, services that support economic self-sufficiency and support services for preventing child abuse and neglect. Failure to provide these supports increase various risk factors that can lead to poor child outcomes.

Finally, participation in quality early education programs has also been proven to affect a child's readiness for school and success later in life. Evidence indicates that participation is associated with a number of positive outcomes, including a greater likelihood of future academic success, lower unemployment rates, greater earning potential and lower crime rates.



**ensuring a brighter future  
for oklahoma's children...**

## Needs

Kindergarten teachers in Oklahoma say that 30 percent of students entering kindergarten during the 2006-2007 school year were not performing at kindergarten grade level. Based on social and emotional development alone, teachers indicate that 16 percent of students are not performing at kindergarten grade level.

Factors that may contribute to our children's lack of readiness for school:

- 1 in 9 children under age six do not have health insurance.
- 1 in 3 Oklahoma babies are born to mothers who did not receive adequate prenatal care.
- 1 in 4 births in Oklahoma are to mothers with less than a 12th grade education.
- 1 in 10 children under age six is being raised by a relative.
- 1 out of 50 children under age six in Oklahoma is abused or neglected
- 1 in 2 children under age six lives in a low-income family.