Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2020
July 1, 2019 — June 30, 2020
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This report was submitted to Governor Stitt and the legislature as required by Title 10 O.S. § 640.2.
Dear Governor Stitt,

It is with great pleasure that I present the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) 2020 Annual Report to you and the Oklahoma legislature. This document highlights the tremendous work by OPSR staff, professional consultants, and numerous partners throughout the state.

As we well know, Oklahoma has been a long-time leader in the area of early childhood. We have taken great pride over the years in providing guidance to other states about Oklahoma’s work with pre-kindergarten implementation, our childcare rating system, and our formal early childhood collaborations lead by the private-public efforts of OPSR.

However, while Oklahoma has made great strides in the early childhood arena, there is ample work to do to assure that all families have the knowledge they need to raise happy, healthy, thriving children. All parents must know how important brain development is between birth and five years of age. This critical information, coupled with the fact that Oklahoma has more than 300,000 children under the age of five, and the majority of these children need childcare because of their parents’ employment, means that parents must have high-quality, affordable, accessible childcare options. These options are not always available – particularly in the rural part of our great state.

Yet, OPSR staff, with support from its 32-member Board of Directors, has been working diligently to make top-notch childcare a priority and a reality for our hard working families and our state. This past year, OPSR provided several opportunities to increase the skill sets of early childhood professionals by offering their annual conference as well as other workshops and trainings. They studied the effect of messaging, so that they could learn who parents trust most when seeking advice about childcare and early childhood issues. They partnered with numerous state agencies in moving forward with an integrated data system for early childhood. And perhaps most importantly, they developed a strategic plan so that all stakeholders, from parents to providers, could voice their opinions about what is needed to strengthen our network and support families.

The below report is just a sample of OPSR’s significant work during this past year. I know for certain that they are fulfilling the mission set out for the agency in 2003 by visionary leaders: “coordinate the early childhood system and ensure that ALL children are ready for school.” With your support and leadership, OPSR will continue to build a strong foundation and bright future for Oklahoma’s future workforce.

Sincerely,

Annette Wisk Jacobi, J.D.
OPSR Chair
Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth
Executive Director
Imagine going to the grocery store intending to purchase a complete meal for your family, only to learn that meats are available in this store, but you must find separate stores for vegetables, fruits, milk and bread. Imagine that you only have the time and transportation to get to one store, and you learn you must fill out separate applications to shop at other grocery stores in order to purchase a well-balanced meal. Once you successfully complete your applications, you are then put on a waiting list before you can purchase vegetables, and the only milk store at which you are approved to shop is too expensive and too far away. As a result, your family will lack the nutrition they need to thrive.

The above analogy involving a fragmented and complex system of obtaining food mirrors precisely what Oklahoma families with young children too often face when attempting to access the early care and education, family support, and health and mental health services they need to support their children during their most critical period of development from birth through age five. To address this need, the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) was created to reduce barriers and increase access to and affordability of high-quality services. OPSR facilitates collaborative planning and decision-making to increase coordination between programs, to maximize the use of public and private funding, and to pursue policies that improve learning opportunities and environments for Oklahoma’s children under age six. OPSR is a public-private partnership made up of two branches: the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board and the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation. The OPSR Board was created under the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act (Title 10 O.S. § 640), and is the designated body that serves as Oklahoma’s State Early Childhood Advisory Council as authorized under the federal Head Start Act of 2007 (PL 110-134, Section 642B). The OPSR Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit created under Oklahoma law (Title 10 O.S. § 640.3) to serve as a fiduciary partner with the OPSR Board and accepts both public and private funds to support early childhood initiatives.
History

- **2000**: Governor’s Task Force on Early Childhood formed by Executive Order of Governor Frank Keating.

- **2001**: Governor’s Task Force Report on Early Childhood is published highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and needs of Oklahoma’s early childhood programs.

- **2002**: Local grassroot efforts evolved through partnerships with United Way, Bank of America, and Oklahoma Department of Human Resources.

- **2003**: Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act (HB 1094) is signed by Governor Brad Henry.

- **2008**: Governor Henry designated the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness as Oklahoma’s Early Childhood Advisory Council as established by Federal Law as a result of the reauthorization of the Head Start Act 2.

- **2009**: Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness reauthorization (HB 1012) signed by Governor Brad Henry.

- **2010**: Oklahoma legislation designates the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness as the State’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (HB 3126).

- **2013**: Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness reauthorization (HB 1699) signed by Governor Mary Fallin.

Mission

Our mission is to lead Oklahoma in coordinating an early childhood system that strengthens families and ensures all children are ready for school.

Vision

Our vision is that all Oklahoma children are safe, healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter school.
**Legislative Duties Under the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act**

- Conduct an assessment of existing public and private programs to determine their effectiveness and efficient use of state dollars.

- Implement a public engagement campaign and establish a structure to facilitate communication to develop and improve school readiness opportunities at the local level.

- Encourage public and private programs, services, and initiatives be brought together to provide coordinated, community-based, effective and cost-efficient programs.

- Maximize the extent to which private sector funding is leveraged and federal, state and local funds are coordinated with private funds.

- Establish standards of accountability in school readiness programs and policy and recognize and promote best practices.

- Submit an annual report to the legislature and governor.

**Legislative Mandates of the Annual Report**

As part of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act, the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness submits an Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature that shall include, but not be limited to the following information:

- Preparedness level of children entering kindergarten

- Status and results of the efforts of the Board to engage the public regarding the care and education of children under the age of five years and of the efforts of the Board to develop and promote private sector programs and voluntary parental involvement

- Detailed summary of community initiatives and programs funded in whole, or in part, by the Board

- Availability and cost of quality child care for children under five (5) years of age needing care outside their home

- Number, location, and status of quality pre-kindergarten program in the state

- Percentage of third-grade students reading at or above grade level
In conjunction with the establishment of OPSR, the OPSR Foundation (OPSRF) was created to solicit and receive public and private funds. The foundation supports OPSR’s mission and vision by expanding the breadth in which our organization can financially support early childhood research, programs and initiatives. In this capacity, the OPSR Foundation operates as a 501(c)3. Currently, the foundation is made up of passionate, dedicated advocates, some of whom worked to improve school readiness prior to the formation of OPSR. Our foundation is proud of OPSR’s hard work over the past 15 years but knows there is much more to be gained if Oklahoma continues to invest in children from birth to the time they enter school. OPSR is thankful to all officers who generously shared their time to serve on the Foundation and its committees and help spread OPSR’s mission.

Debra Andersen
Executive Director

Ginny Bass Carl
Governance Chair effective Jan. 2020

Jerry Burger
Governance Chair until Jan. 2020

Caren Calhoun
Director

Ann Cameron
President until Jan. 2020

Kathy Cronemiller
Treasurer

Phil Dessauer
Director

Carl Edwards
Vice President effective Jan. 2020

Ashley Godwin
Director

Robert Harbison
Director

Annie Koppel Van Hanken
President effective Jan. 2020

Lindsay Laird
Director

Janet McKenzie
Secretary

Liz McLaughlin
Director

Suzanne Thompson
Director

The following members serve on OPSRF’s committees:

Debby Hampton
Governance Committee

Will Lightfoot
Finance Committee

Frank Merrick
Governance Committee

Beth Shortt
Governance Committee
The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board is comprised of agency leaders and governor appointees that are responsible for carrying out state and federal legislatively defined mandates. During SFY20, the following members served on the OPSR Board.

**Polly Anderson**
*Executive Director*
Oklahoma Educational Television Authority
Designee: Curtis Calvin

**Justin Brown**
*Director*
Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Designee: Jennifer Towell

**Natalie Burns**
*Governor Appointee*
Community Volunteer

**Ann Cameron**
*Governor Appointee*
Community Volunteer

**Kevin Corbett**
*Chief Executive Officer*
Oklahoma Health Care Authority
Designee: Shelly Patterson

**Kathy Cronemiller**
*Governor Appointee*
Child Care, Inc.

**Joy Culbreath**
*Education Director*
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**William “Bill” Doenges**
*Governor Appointee*
Community Volunteer

**Marianne “Marny” Dunlap, MD**
*Governor Appointee*
Children’s Hospital at OU Medical Center

**Kay C. Floyd**
*State Director of Head Start Collaboration*
Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies
Designee: Zach Cole

**Melinda Fruendt**
*Director*
Oklahoma State Department of Rehabilitation Services
Designee: Chris Dvorak, Rita Echelle

**Col. Lance Frye**
*Interim Commissioner of Health*
Oklahoma State Department of Health
Designee: Ed Rhoades, Joyce Marshall

**Kent Gardner**
*Governor Appointee*
The Funk Companies

**Joy Hofmeister**
*Superintendent*
Oklahoma State Department of Education
Designee: Cindy Koss and Tiffany Neill

**Annette Jacobi**
*Executive Director*
Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

**Glen Johnson**
*Chancellor*
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
Designee: Gina McPherson

**Melody Kellogg**
*Director*
Oklahoma Department of Libraries

**Brent Kisling**
*Executive Director*
Oklahoma Department of Commerce
Designee: Marshall Vogts

**William Lightfoot**
*Governor Appointee*
CBRE

**Marcie Mack**
*Director*
Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education
Designee: Janet Karner

**Misty Montgomery**
*Governor Appointee*
Community Volunteer

**Ray H. Potts**
*Governor Appointee*
Potts Exploration, LLC

**Sarah Roberts**
*Governor Appointee*
Inasmuch Foundation

**Carrie Slatton-Hodges**
*Interim Commissioner*
Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Designee: Audra Haney

**Anthony Stafford**
*Governor Appointee*
Big Five Community Services, Inc.

**Annie Koppel Van Hanken**
*Governor Appointee*
George Kaiser Family Foundation
OPSR Board

Stephan M. Wilson, PhD, CFLE  
Regents Professor and Dean  
College of Human Services Oklahoma State University  
Designee: Jennifer Stepp

OPSR would also like to thank the following Board members who served during the SFY20 year: Gary Cox, Jessica Ockerhauser and Terri White.

OPSR Board Officers

Annette Jacobi  
Chair

Sarah Roberts  
Vice Chair

Angie Clayton  
Secretary

William Lightfoot  
Treasurer

Natalie Burns  
Immediate Past Chair

OPSR Staff

The OPSR staff works every day to carry out OPSR’s mission and implement its many projects across various sectors of health and mental health, policy, early care and education, and family supports. Staff during SFY20 included,

Debra Andersen  
Executive Director

Vicki Bumpas  
Accountant

Torri Christian  
Program Coordinator

Angela Duckett  
Program Coordinator

Gabrielle Jacobi  
Program Coordinator

Kimberly Jumper Brown  
Program Coordinator

Chris Lee  
Office Manager

Courtney Maker  
Administrative Coordinator

Carlye McQuiston  
Program Director

Katherine Parker  
Community Relations Specialist
**Strategic Plan**
OPSR's five-year OKFutures Strategic Plan was accepted by the Administration for Children and Families in Oct. 2019. OPSR retained the Oklahoma Policy Institute to develop a report on legislation and expenditures on early childhood in Oklahoma (p. 37).

**ECIDS**
An Oklahoma Early Childhood Integrated Data System plan was finalized Jan. 2020 (p. 36).

**Early Childhood Messaging Recommendations**
OPSR worked with Advocacy and Communication Solutions LLC to develop a communication and outreach strategy (p. 39).

**Estimating the Cost of Quality Care Report**
OPSR contracted with the RAND Corporation to develop an Estimated Cost of Early Childhood Care and Education Study in Oklahoma (p. 36).

**Pyramid Model**
Under the coordination of OPSR, Oklahoma joined 31 other states to implement the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (p. 36).

**Conscious Discipline Training**
OPSR held a Conscious Discipline Training on Jan. 30 and 31 for nearly 200 child care providers (p. 34)

**Professional Development Conference**
OPSR hosted the OKFutures Moving Forward: 2019 Professional Development Conference on Nov. 2, 2019. The Conference was held in eight locations across the state and had over 800 attendees (p. 34).

**Story Gathering**
Under Project HOPE, OPSR collected 155 stories from families about their experiences during pregnancy, birth, and the first year of their child’s life. During the summer of 2020, OSPR collected nearly 400 stories regarding families’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic (p. 35).

**Strategic Plan**
OPSR's five-year OKFutures Strategic Plan was accepted by the Administration for Children and Families in Oct. 2019. OPSR retained the Oklahoma Policy Institute to develop a report on legislation and expenditures on early childhood in Oklahoma (p. 37).
Kindergarten Readiness
OPSR Pathway

Pathway Summary
The Oklahoma School Readiness Pathway serves as our roadmap to identify, monitor and report how Oklahoma is, or isn’t, meeting school readiness benchmarks. It was developed to depict the complexities of the interlocking systems that comprise school readiness with OPSR’s goal that Oklahoma’s early childhood system be coordinated, aligned and adequately funded. The Pathway illustrates how health, early care and learning, and family support influence a child’s readiness for school. Beginning at birth through school entry, this framework allows us to monitor outcomes and indicators that inform action such as policy changes and investments in quality improvement.

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL READINESS PATHWAY

Babies Must Be Born On Time & Healthy
Toddlers Must Be On A Positive Developmental Trajectory
Three-Year-Olds Must Be Safe, Secure & Healthy
Four-Year-Olds Must Be On A Path To School Readiness
Five-Year-Olds Are Ready For School

Children & Families Have Access to Health Services
- Babies who are born on time & healthy.
- Children have access to health care.
- Children are physically & emotionally healthy.
- Children are on a positive development trajectory.

Children Engaged in High Quality Early Care & Learning
- Children have access to high quality, developmentally appropriate programs with professionals.
- Children attend early learning programs & schools consistently.
- Children learn in safe environments with positive climates that support social-emotional development.

All Parents Have Access to Education & Support Services
- Children have safe, stable & nurturing relationships with their caregivers.
- Families have the knowledge, skills & social supports for their children’s optimal development.
- Children live in economically secure families.
- Communities are safe, toxic-free & economically viable in support of children & their families.
Pathway Framework
To help guide the pathway, OPSR adopted a framework to articulate skills and system components that must be in place to ensure children are prepared and successful in kindergarten and beyond. This framework differs from the pathway because it provides a broader context of how a community can support specific skills to prepare children for school. Families, communities, and schools each have responsibilities in providing opportunities for children to be prepared upon school entry.
Children Are Engaged in High-Quality Early Care & Learning

In 2019, Oklahoma was home to 302,792 children under age 0-5\textsuperscript{1}. There are three main programs within our state’s early childhood care and education (ECCE) mixed delivery system that serve our children: licensed child care, universal pre-k, and Head Start/Early Head Start (including Tribal Head Start/Early Head Start). Children, families, communities, and the state as a whole benefit from high-quality child care. Current research shows that 90% of brain development occurs during birth to five and a child’s earliest experiences affect their brain development and lay the foundation for their current success. It’s also critical that families have high-quality child care options available to them, so they can work. Because 62% of Oklahoma children 0-5 have all parents in the workforce\textsuperscript{2}, it is an economic imperative that Oklahoma has high-quality ECCE available to working parents ready to help grow Oklahoma’s economy. In 2018, 9% of families reported someone in the family had to quit a job, not take a job, or greatly change a job because of problems with child care\textsuperscript{3}.

\textsuperscript{1} Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile
\textsuperscript{2} Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile
\textsuperscript{3} National Survey for Children’s Health 6.18
\textsuperscript{4} Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile
\textsuperscript{5} Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile
\textsuperscript{6} Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile
Availability and Cost of Quality Child Care

In 2019, Oklahoma had a total of 3,038 licensed child care centers and homes that had the capacity to serve 117,031 children. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) receives and administers the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) which helps low-income parents pay for high-quality, licensed child care in order to help parents work and/or complete their education or employment training. Subsidized, licensed child care also helps prevent neglect or abuse that can occur when children are left unattended or with unqualified caregivers. In SFY19, DHS received an increase in federal funding to help ensure compliance with CCDBG. This new federal funding was used to increase provider child care subsidy rates by as much as 50%, revised the eligibility/copayment chart, increased the eligibility income threshold to the federal maximum and significantly reduced copayments for most families. Licensed child care programs that contract with DHS to provide subsidized child care services receive a higher reimbursement rate based on their star level. As such, 96% of children receiving child care attended two- or three-star programs.

### Average Weekly Costs of Child Care in Oklahoma by Age in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt; 1</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>4-5 years</th>
<th>School age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>$148.37</td>
<td>$139.75</td>
<td>$147.02</td>
<td>$124.31</td>
<td>$115.94</td>
<td>$97.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>$120.83</td>
<td>$116.91</td>
<td>$113.40</td>
<td>$113.17</td>
<td>$110.06</td>
<td>$99.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Licensed Child Care Star Ratings in Oklahoma in 2019

- 1 Star: 3%
- 2 Star: 43%
- 3 Star: 9%
- 1+ Star: 3%

7 [Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile](#).
8 [2019 Oklahoma Department of Human Services Annual Report](#).
9 [Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile](#).
10 [Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral 2019 State Profile](#).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in Oklahoma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant eligibility level for child care subsidy above 200% of Federal Poverty Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocated CCDBG funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group size requirements meet or exceed EHS standards: 1 age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult/child ratio requirement meet or exceed EHS standards: 1 age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of teacher qualification for licensed child care required by state: No credential beyond a high school diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant/toddler credential adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State reimburses center-based child care at/above 75th percentile of market rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State includes “at-risk” children as eligible for IDEA Part C services or reports that they serve “at risk” children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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11 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
Number, Location and Status of Quality Pre-K

The National Institute for Early Education Research’s (NIEER) 2019 State of Preschool Report\textsuperscript{12} lists Oklahoma as the number three state in the country for preschool access with 76% of four-year-olds attending Oklahoma Pre-K. Only the District of Columbia and Vermont served more students. Additionally, 99% of school districts offered state-funded pre-k with 766 full day pre-k programs in the state. State funding for pre-k totaled $181,685,479, up 21% (adjusted for inflation) since last year. State spending per child in pre-k increased $490 this year to equal $4,264. Oklahoma was one of only nine states that met at least nine of the ten quality standard benchmarks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>OK PRE-K</th>
<th>BENCHMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; developmental standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>Specializing in Pre-K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>HSD</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>15 hours/year, PD plans; Coaching</td>
<td>For teachers and assistants: at least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>18 (3-year-olds); 20 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:9 (3-year-olds); 1:10 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening &amp; Referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, immunizations</td>
<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous quality improvement system</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{12} NIEER 2019 State of Preschool Report
**Number, Location and Status of Quality Pre-K**

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, NIEER introduced policy recommendations and advised pre-k programs to quickly develop guidelines to provide emergency services and educate young children remotely for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. On March 25, 2020, State Superintendent Joy Hofmeister and the State Board of Education unanimously approved an order that implemented distance learning for all grades, including a unique partnership with the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority to broadcast programming tailored to the Oklahoma Academic Standards.

**Head Start/Early Head Start**

Oklahoma Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) is a federal program that promotes school readiness of children from birth to age five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. Children from low-income families, as well as children in foster care, homeless children, and children from families receiving public assistance are also eligible for HS/EHS services. However, 30 programs across the state remain closed at the publication of this report due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also because of the COVID-19 pandemic, no data from the 2019-2020 program year is available. The following is enrollment data from program year 2018-2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS</th>
<th>TOTAL # OF CHILDREN SERVED</th>
<th># OF HOMELESS CHILDREN &amp; FAMILIES SERVED</th>
<th># OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE SERVED</th>
<th># CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES SERVED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 programs (grantees) under Region IV/Dallas; 13 Tribal Programs under Region XI/Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>20,446 total enrollment in all programs HS/EHS combined</td>
<td>1,237 children served &amp; 1,179 families served</td>
<td>1,094 children in foster care served during program year</td>
<td>2,132 children in HS identified by LEA as eligible to receive special education services; only 36 did not receive services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grants: 65; 21 HS Region VI; 23 EHS Region VI; 13 HS Tribal; 8 EHS Tribal</td>
<td>5,361 children and 183 pregnant women enrollment in all EHS programs</td>
<td>303 families acquired housing during this enrollment period</td>
<td></td>
<td>571 children in EHS were identified by SoonerCare to be eligible for Part C Services; only 1 did not receive services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Information provided by the Oklahoma Head Start Collaboration Office
Children & Families Have Access to Health Services

Early childhood has historically focused on the health of children, families and communities as critical to school readiness. Oklahoma’s early childhood system coordination continues this tradition by working to address the substantial health needs among young children and families. Supporting health and mental health are critical to ensuring family well-being and allowing families to enjoy all the potential benefits of participation in high-quality ECCE programs. The rate of brain growth is faster in the first three years than at any later stage in life and it is this growth that sets the stage for subsequent development. Recognizing the strong body of research that shows healthy students have better attendance, behavior and achievement, OPSR believes that connecting children and their parents to health services is a critical step toward school readiness.

Babies Are Born on Time and Healthy

Good physical and mental health provide a strong foundation for Oklahoma’s children to develop physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. A child’s health and development begin before birth, which is why ensuring mothers have access to prenatal care is critical. In 2019, 6.8% of mothers who gave birth reported late or no prenatal care received during the pregnancy. The preterm birth rate for Oklahoma in 2019 was 11.4% and the infant mortality rate was 7.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. While these three indicators have shown improvement over recent years, they still are worse than the national average. Additionally, significant racial disparities are apparent within these indicators. For example, the infant mortality rate is nearly three times greater for black infants than it is for white infants (14.2 and 5.7 respectively).
Children have access to health care
Existing studies and original data analysis also document substantial racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in child and adult health, as well as healthcare coverage. Health insurance coverage is a pressing issue in our state with Oklahoma having the second highest uninsured rate in the country\(^\text{17}\). In Oklahoma, 14% are uninsured, including 6.9% of our low-income infants and toddlers\(^\text{18}\). Lack of coverage can create challenges for young families and ECCE providers as families who are uninsured face difficulty accessing health services. In order to stay on track developmentally, a child and their family must continue to have access to health services during that child’s earliest years. According to the National Survey for Children’s Health, Oklahoma children from birth to five are more likely to have had a well-child visit in the past 12 months than the national average\(^\text{19}\). However, the percentage of Oklahoma children receiving a well-child visit falls below national averages from six to 17 years-old\(^\text{20}\).

![PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN RECEIVING PREVENTIVE CHECK-UP IN PAST 12 MONTHS IN 2018](image)

\(^{17}\) Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts
\(^{18}\) 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
\(^{19}\) National Survey for Children’s Health
\(^{20}\) National Survey for Children’s Health
Children are on a positive developmental trajectory

During this rapid period of growth, access to screenings and early interventions are essential to address potential developmental delays. In 2018, 35.2% of Oklahoma children received a developmental screening, which was above the national average. However, this number fell below the national average in 2019 to 30.2% (national average is 31.1%). The Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities known as SoonerStart (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) is a federal grant program that assists states in operating a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities, ages birth through two, and their families. Research shows that children who receive periodic developmental screenings and early interventions for developmental delays may be more likely to enter school ready to learn. Of Oklahoma infants and toddlers, 5.2% are receiving IDEA Part C services compared to 9.7% nationally. Factors that may contribute to this lower rate include fewer infants and toddlers are enrolled in early care and education services where delays might be identified, a lack of information on identification of developmental delays provided to parents and early childhood providers, and Oklahoma’s more restrictive eligibility criteria resulting in children with milder delays not receiving services. In order to be in compliance with IDEA Part C, each infant and toddler in the program needs an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). It is critical that each infant and toddler receives the early intervention services on their IFSPs in a timely manner. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Education, infants and toddlers with IFSPs who received the early intervention services in a timely manner was 98.62% in FFY 2018.

21 National Survey for Children’s Health
22 National Survey for Children’s Health
23 National Survey for Children’s Health
24 National Survey for Children’s Health
25 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
26 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report: Part C
**Health Policy for Young Children in Oklahoma in SFY 2020**

Access to good nutrition and affordable maternal, pediatric and family health care is essential to ensure that babies and young children receive the nourishment and care they need for a strong start in life. Although in SFY 2020, Oklahoma had not expanded Medicaid, this measure was passed in a statewide election on June 30, 2020. As such, OPSR is hopeful that some health indicators and outcomes will improve over the next few years due to this expansion of health care coverage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medicaid expansion state</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Medicaid Policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid plan covers social-emotional screening for young children</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at home</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at pediatric/family medicine practices</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid plan covers IECMH services in early childhood education settings</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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27 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
Family Support

Defining Family Support
Family support services supplement health services to improve family well-being. These services are key to ensuring that children can participate and succeed in the ECCE system, as healthy growth and development are bolstered by family economic security, good parenting, and adequate supports for ECCE access.
Safe, stable, nurturing relationships with caregivers
Young children develop within the context of their families. This is why stability, safety and supportive relationships are key to nurturing their growth and ensuring they’re prepared for school. One way families can foster nurturing relationships is by eating meals together. Eating together gives young children the opportunity to learn more words and practice communicating with others. Many studies have also shown a link between eating family meals and better grades and school achievement, as well as lowered chance of risky behaviors. In 2018, 56.6% of Oklahomans with children ages birth to five reported eating a meal together with all family members every day. This was slightly above the average of 54.2%. Another way caregivers can foster a nurturing relationship with their young children is by talking, reading and singing with their child every day beginning at birth. By doing these activities, not only is the caregiver increasing their child’s language, reading, thinking and social skills, but they’re also creating a stronger emotional bond with that child.

PERCENTAGE OF OKLAHOMANS WITH CHILDREN 0-5 EATING A MEAL TOGETHER WITH ALL FAMILY MEMBERS EVERY DAY 2018

PERCENTAGE OF OKLAHOMANS WITH CHILDREN 0-5 REPORTING THAT THEY TOLD STORIES OR SANG TO THEIR CHILD EVERY DAY 2018

28 National Survey for Children’s Health
29 National Survey for Children’s Health
Safe, stable, nurturing relationships with caregivers

Unfortunately, Oklahoma’s rate of child maltreatment ranks higher than national averages on a number of indicators. For example, the infant and toddler maltreatment rate in Oklahoma is nearly double that of the national average (30 and 15.9 per 1,000 children respectively)\(^{30}\). And while substantiated cases of child abuse have dropped 57% since 2012, substantiated cases of neglect have risen 211% in that same time frame\(^{31}\). This rise may be due to increased efforts to educate citizens and professionals on how to recognize and report neglect, which is more broadly defined than physical abuse. The most common type of neglect is threat of harm, which is when a child faces a direct threat from their environment. Common examples of this type of neglect are when drug use is present in the home, a child is exposed to domestic violence, and failure to protect a child. Some have speculated that the opioid epidemic and rising popularity of drugs like methamphetamine have also contributed to the rising numbers of neglect.

Research has increasingly recognized the consequences of various types of trauma known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Oklahoma is the only state that falls in the highest prevalence quartile for eight of the most commonly assessed ACEs. The prevalence of ACEs in Oklahoma is concerning given that research has linked ACEs to a variety of outcomes, including higher likelihood of risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, incarceration, and lower educational attainment and earnings. Adults’ ACEs can also affect children’s development. One study found that for each parental ACE identified, a child’s suspected risk of developmental delay increased by 18%\(^{32}\).

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\(^{30}\) 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
\(^{31}\) The Good, the Bad, and the Puzzling in Child Maltreatment Counts
\(^{32}\) Parental Adverse Child Experiences and Offspring Development at 2 Years of Age
\(^{33}\) 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
\(^{34}\) 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
Families have knowledge, skills and social support for their children’s optimal development

All families benefit from parenting supports, and many require access to additional resources to help meet their child’s daily and developmental needs. Nearly 87% of parents of children 0-5 in Oklahoma reported that during the past 12 months, there was someone that they could turn to for day-to-day emotional support with parenting or raising children\(^\text{35}\). This type of support is critical for parents of young children, particularly as a method for mitigating postpartum depression in mothers. More mothers in Oklahoma reported less than optimal mental health (23.3%) than the national average (19.8%)\(^\text{36}\). Poor maternal mental health can hamper a child’s growth and their development may be negatively affected as well. Even very young infants are sensitive to the environment and quality of care that surrounds them. Prolonged or severe mental illness can affect mother-infant attachment, breastfeeding, and infant care. Therefore, it is critical to address the mental health needs of Oklahoma mothers.

One support resource Oklahoma has to provide for its families is the state’s home visiting programs. In SFY19, 2,865 families and 2,494 children were served by home-based family support programs\(^\text{37}\). These programs are provided to families free of charge and are targeted to those families with risk factors that include being low-income, having low-educational attainment, being a single parent, or being a young parent (under 25). All of these factors are associated with increased incidents of child maltreatment, poorer health, and decreased school readiness. Home visitors assess family information to tailor services, provide direct education and support, and make referrals and coordinate services.

\(^{35}\) National Survey for Children’s Health
\(^{36}\) 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
\(^{37}\) 2019 Oklahoma Home Visiting Annual Outcomes Report
\(^{38}\) 2019 Oklahoma Home Visiting Annual Outcomes Report
Families have knowledge, skills and social support for their children’s optimal development

Parental educational attainment is an important predictor of a child’s educational and behavioral outcomes. One study concluded that maternal education was significantly linked to children’s intellectual outcomes, even after controlling for a number of socioeconomic factors, such as household income. In Oklahoma, the highest education level of adult(s) in a child’s household was less than a high school education for 9.9% of families.

Having access to the internet is becoming more critical for families to find information, knowledge and educational resources, thus increasing opportunities for learning in and beyond the classroom. Oklahoma currently ranks 26th in access to the internet. While most residents living in the state’s two metro areas reported having access to internet, thousands of others in rural areas reported not having any internet connection at all. Only 57.8% of Oklahoma’s population has access to broadband coverage. Having access to affordable internet coverage became especially more critical as the state shifted toward online learning and parent education services during the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020.

Children live in economically secure families

Oklahoma children from birth to age five are slightly more likely to be living in poverty than the national average with 22.6% living below the federal poverty level (FPL). Families with lower incomes struggle to consistently meet the basic needs of their children and living in poverty can affect a child’s ability to succeed in school and future potential earnings. Exposure to chronic stress, such as low access to food, health care, and stable housing can impair a child’s development and can have negative implications on a child’s health in the future.

PERCENTAGE OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS LIVING IN POVERTY 2020

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39 Long-term Effects of Parents’ Education on Children’s Education and Occupational Success
40 National Survey for Children’s Health
41 Internet Access in Oklahoma
42 Internet Access in Oklahoma
43 National Survey for Children’s Health
44 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
**Children live in economically secure families**

Food insecurity refers to being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious food. Food insecurity is nearly two times greater among non-Hispanic Black or Hispanic households than it is among non-Hispanic white households. Food insecurity results in mental and physical stress impacts health, brain development and growth. In particular, children are especially susceptible to the impacts of food insecurity because their brains and bodies are still developing. In Oklahoma, 15.6% of households were food insecure, compared to 11.7% nationally.45 Among children, food insecurity is associated with anemia, asthma, depression and anxiety, cognitive and behavioral problems, and a higher risk of being hospitalized.

There are several programs that aim to combat the negative effects of child poverty and food insecurity. The Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) provides nutritious foods to supplement the diets of women, infants and children. WIC provides family support by giving information about healthy eating and active lifestyles. There are several documented benefits of WIC, including a higher likelihood of receiving prenatal care and breastfeeding, higher birthweights, higher likelihood that a child has a regular source of medical care, and referrals to healthcare or social services programs. As of FFY18, 79.6% of Oklahoma infants eligible for WIC were receiving benefits. However, only 38.7% and 56.6% of WIC-eligible children and mothers, respectively, were receiving benefits.46

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45 America’s Health Rankings
46 Kids Count Data Center
47 America’s Health Rankings
48 Kids Count Data Center
Children live in economically secure families
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation’s most important anti-hunger program. In FFY19, 574,000 Oklahomans, or 14% of the state’s population, received SNAP benefits. Of those recipients, 72% were families with children, helping to keep an estimated 55,000 children out of poverty between 2013-2016.49

Communities are safe, toxic-free in support of children and families.
Families, neighborhoods and communities are all affected when violent crime occurs. Not only do violent crimes cause physical harm, but in neighborhoods where it is prevalent, it can lead to less physical activity. Violent crimes disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities. In 2019 in Oklahoma, the rate of violent crime (murders, rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults) per 100,000 people was 466, above the national average of 381.50 This could explain why 7.5% of parents of children 0-5 years old reported that they did not think their children lived in a safe neighborhood, nearly double the national average of 3.9%.51

Another concerning indicator is the prevalence of domestic violence in Oklahoma. Nearly half (49.1%) of Oklahoma women and 40.7% of Oklahoma men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner rape, and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes.52 Domestic violence creates a violent and hostile environment that affects a child’s physical and emotional health. Children exposed to violence in their homes may have difficulty paying attention and display depression and withdrawal. It also has many long-term impacts on children. Children who witness domestic violence (an ACE indicator) are at a greater risk of health problems as adults, including obesity, cancer, heart disease, depression, substance abuse, tobacco use, and unintended pregnancies. Additionally, they are much more likely to perpetuate the cycle of abuse in their own relationships as they grow into adulthood.

Strong Families Policy for Young Children in Oklahoma in SFY 2020

<table>
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<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>State Earned Income Tax Credit</td>
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49 Center on Policy and Budget Priorities
50 America’s Health Rankings
51 National Survey for Children’s Health
52 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
53 2020 State of Babies Yearbook
Public Engagement
Media
Throughout SFY20, OPSR engaged the public by utilizing both traditional (print and broadcast) and social media, as well as hosted events and disseminated information through partner networks and other communication tools including a newsletter and the OPSR website.

Traditional and social media highlighted projects and activities that OPSR completed as part of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five, with an increase in engagement seen around both the OKFutures Moving Forward Conference and the Public Library Family Engagement Project. The library project, in particular, earned attention in five print publications and on one broadcast channel from across the state, including the Ada News, Duncan Banner, El Reno Tribune, Guymon Daily Herald, Lawton Constitution and KSWO.

Similar trends were seen with paid media that OPSR utilized to promote the OKFutures Moving Forward Conference and Project HOPE. Paid print and digital ads were placed with the CNHI network as well as digital ads placed with Griffin Communications to ensure registration in the OKFutures Moving Forward Conference. Paid ads on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were also used to increase brand recognition and encourage survey participation as part of Project HOPE. Both mediums saw consistent return on investment with high conference registration numbers, and Project HOPE ads reached over 51,000 people on Facebook alone.

In addition, OPSR regularly connected with over 900 early childhood stakeholders and state leadership through a monthly newsletter to share accomplishments, challenges and plans for the future. Moreover, the OPSR website served as a hub for all of OPSR’s latest work and information. From reports and presentations to media highlights, the public were able to invest in OPSR’s mission and vision by way of consistent and clear communications that aligned with the regular reporting requirements of our major grant funders. All of these efforts have helped build a positive public image of OPSR while ensuring OPSR is a reliable source of information for Oklahoma’s early childhood providers and advocates.
OKFutures Moving Forward: 2019 Professional Development Conference

On Saturday, Nov. 2, 2019, OPSR hosted the OKFutures Moving Forward: 2019 Professional Development Conference for early childhood care and education professionals and parents. The conference was held in eight locations: Ada, Durant, Enid, Lawton, Norman, Tahlequah, Thackerville and Tulsa. Nearly 900 early childhood educators attended, earning 619 training certificates and 3,714 credit hours. Because of funding from the Preschool Development Grant B-5, OPSR was able to keep costs for participants to attend low, in addition to providing participants a $40 stipend for attending.

Featuring four different training tracks, each one highlighting an important part of developing better outcomes for children, conference participants learned about trauma-informed care, infant and toddler care, brain development, the importance of play and teacher well-being. Overall, 84% of participants said they’d be “likely” or “very likely” to attend an OPSR event again.

“I appreciated being able to attend a quality training close to home. The low cost and stipend payment made it affordable for my entire center staff to attend. I was glad there were different sessions to choose from so we could each pick the one that would benefit us the most. I hope that similar trainings will be offered again on a variety of topics.”

– Amy D., the director of Kristie’s Kids in Tishomingo

Conscious Discipline Training

On Jan. 30 & 31, 2020, almost 200 cross-sector early care and education professionals participated in Conscious Discipline training. Survey results revealed 96 percent of attendees said they found the trainer “very engaging” and 94 percent of attendees said they would recommend Conscious Discipline to a co-worker.

Participants also received copies of the books “Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms,” “Creating a School Family: Bully-Proofing Classrooms Through Emotional Intelligence” and “I Love You Rituals.” This training was supported by the OKFutures grant.
Alliance for Early Success
OPSR received funding from the Alliance for Early Success to support rural child care, grassroots advocacy efforts, and federal advocacy. This funding offered the opportunity to participate in a community of practice with other states across the nation to discuss and gather insights into further supporting child care in rural areas. This funding also supports working with communities in Oklahoma to create policy change and working collaboratively with a federal advocacy community of practice seeking federal funding for child care amidst COVID-19.

Project HOPE
In 2018, OPSR received funding and technical support from Nemours Children’s Health System, through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to implement Project HOPE (Harnessing Opportunity for Positive, Equitable Early Childhood Development) in Oklahoma. The goal of HOPE is to promote optimal well-being of children birth to five by preventing and mitigating early childhood adversities and reducing racial, ethnic, geographic and economic inequalities. Under HOPE, OPSR worked to advance state level strategic planning, strengthen partnerships, engage communities, and create a long-term plan to improve wellbeing and reduce inequities in children ages birth to five.

In SFY19, OPSR analyzed data and found significant disparities in the rates of infant mortality in Oklahoma. In order to gain a better understanding of the resources and barriers that families face during the first years of a child’s life, OPSR contracted with the Center for Public Partnerships & Research at the University of Kansas to utilize a story gathering tool called SenseMaker. SenseMaker gives community members the opportunity to share and reflect on their lived experiences. By examining the patterns and acting on trends, OPSR hopes to use stories shape the resources, programming and policies in communities across the state. OPSR developed its SenseMaker Framework to examine the challenges and successes families in Oklahoma face during pregnancy, birth and the first year of their child’s life. Since developing our SenseMaker framework, titled Hopeful Futures, OPSR successfully collected stories from nearly 200 families between December 2019 and February 2020. Stories were collected at the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, Muscogee Creek Nation Head Start, Infant Crisis Services, and ReMerge.

Oklahoma Standard
When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, OPSR saw an opportunity to update the Hopeful Futures SenseMaker framework to understand how Oklahomans are responding to the crisis. This project, called the Oklahoma Standard, aimed to shine a light on the unknown by letting the voices of families, practitioners, and communities be heard. Information gathered from these stories will be shared with decision-makers to help meet basic needs, build upon successes, and act on surprising trends before they become widespread problems.

OPSR released an application for community organizations across the state to collect stories in May of 2020. By the end of SFY 2020, 28 organizations applied to assist in story collection and story collection quickly began the first month of SFY 2021.
**ECIDS**
Beginning in FY19, as part of the OKFutures Preschool Development Grant (PDG B-5), OPSR partnered with Third Sector Intelligence (3Si) and Foresight Law + Policy to build upon existing efforts to create an Oklahoma Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) through the development of a comprehensive data inventory, data integration, and data governance plan. This plan was finalized in January 2020, and was made possible through the collaboration of hundreds of Oklahoma’s early childhood stakeholders who helped target priority use cases for Oklahoma’s ECIDS plan. More information about the ECIDS project and full plan details can be found on [OPSR’s website](#).

**Pyramid Model**
In April, 2020 the OPSR Board approved the creation of the Pyramid Model State Leadership Team (PMSLT), which in addition to OPSR, currently has representation from 15 other organizations. Oklahoma joined 31 states that support and implement the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children.

Oklahoma identified six major outcomes:
1. Enhance the capacity of workforce to adopt the Pyramid Model.
2. Increase the number of high-quality Pyramid Model trainers and coaches.
3. Develop a cadre of high-fidelity program-wide and community-wide implementation sites.
4. Partner with families to enhance skills and strategies to support their children.
5. Increase children’s pro-social skills and reduce challenging behavior.
6. Prevent and limit expulsion and suspension in early childhood settings

Partnering organizations represented on the PMSLT include: Child Care Inc., Early Childhood Education Institute OU-Tulsa, George Kaiser Family Foundation, Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies/Head Start, Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association, Inc., Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Potts Family Foundation, Tulsa Educare and UCAP Inc. Head Start.

**Estimating the Cost of Quality Care Report**
As part of the OKFutures Preschool Development Grant (PDG B-5), OPSR sought to understand the cost of quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) in Oklahoma. OPSR contracted with the RAND Corporation to gain insight into the estimated per-child cost of ECCE for Oklahoma’s infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. As part of this study, the RAND Corporation also developed a cost model that considers fundamental ECCE cost drivers. The study’s key findings and recommendations can be found [here](#).
Strategic Plan

OPSR partnered with the Urban Institute to conduct a needs assessment and strategic plan as part of a federal grant awarded to the state of Oklahoma by the US Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in Dec. 2018. The OKFutures Strategic Plan was finalized in SFY 2020 and accepted by ACF in Oct. 2019.

The OKFutures Strategic Plan targets the following outcomes:
- All children meet optimum health and developmental milestones upon entry to school.
- All families are able to provide safe, positive, and nurturing environments for children.
- All children and their families live in healthy and supportive communities.
- Oklahomans benefit from the efficient use of tax dollars and a healthy, productive workforce.

The plan has five goals to address urgent priorities, especially for vulnerable children and families. It also includes four “pillars” for long term success.

OPSR retained the Oklahoma Policy Institute (OK Policy) to support strategic planning efforts for the OKFutures Preschool Development Grant (PDG B-5). OK Policy was tasked with reporting on early childhood legislation, rules, and policies, and submitting an analysis of Oklahoma early childhood expenditures complete with policy recommendations. OK Policy’s reports on legislation and expenditures with recommendations were completed in October 2019 and are available in Appendices E and F of the OKFutures Strategic Plan. The full plan can be read [here](#).
Development and Promotion of Voluntary Parent Involvement
Maximizing Parent Choice: Advocacy and Communication Solutions

In order to align with insights gained by the OKFutures Needs Assessment and to achieve OKFutures’ goal of maximizing parent choice, during FY20, OPSR worked with Advocacy & Communication Solutions (ACS) to develop a communication and outreach strategy.

ACS engaged with OPSR staff and OKFutures’ Family and Community Engagement Team to conduct a statewide messaging analysis and survey Oklahoma parents about who they trust and where they get their information. Key findings of these surveys included 89 percent of respondents who said they had some, or a great deal, of trust in pediatricians/health care providers as messengers on a child’s early development and learning. In addition, respondents said messages to make them more likely to send their child to preschool included those related to social-emotional skills, brain development and building foundations for life. For example, “The first 2000 days of a child’s life are most important. There are 2,000 days before kindergarten, and your most important job as a parent is to make each of those days count,” struck a positive note with respondents and was seen as persuasive. Survey findings also noted that respondents overwhelmingly seek information about their child’s health, well-being and early education from family and doctor’s offices, at 84 percent and 77 percent respectively.

This work culminated into three actionable road maps that target rural families, ultimately increasing families’ knowledge about the importance of early childhood and resources that are available to them. These actionable road maps are focused on: 1) creating alignment and consistency around early childhood messaging used by state agencies, advocates, tribal governments, health care providers and regional providers; 2) raising awareness about the value of early childhood development, local opportunities, and services available; and 3) cultivating early childhood champions to connect state leaders and legislators to the value of early childhood. The full analysis can be found here.

Public Library Family Engagement Project

OPSR partnered with the Oklahoma Department of Libraries and the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA) to build capacity in public libraries to support early literacy for infants and toddlers via the Public Library Family Engagement Project. Funded by the OKFutures grant, 29 of Oklahoma’s libraries were awarded up to $2,000 to improve young children’s language development and pre-reading skills.

Participating libraries were: Ada Public Library, Altus Public Library with the Southern Prairie Library System, Atoka Public Library, Beaver County Library, Beyond the Pages, Blackwell Public Library, Champion Public Library, Davis Public Library, Donald W. Reynolds Community Center and Library, Duncan Public Library, El Reno Carnegie Library, Elk City Carnegie Library, Fairview City Library, Gleason Memorial Library, Healdton Community Library, Hollis Public Library with the Southern Prairie Library System, Johnston County Library, Laverne Delphian Public Library, Lawton Public Library, Love County Library, Mary E. Parker Memorial Library, Miami Public Library, Mustang Public Library, Piedmont Public Library, Pioneer Library System Foundation, Ponca City Library, Ponca Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Stillwater Public Library and Wilson Public Library.
Third grade reading proficiency represents the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level on the Oklahoma third grade reading test. The test was called the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test prior to the 2016-2017 school year. Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, it changed to the Oklahoma State Testing Program (OSTP). The OSTP is a criterion-referenced test designed to indicate whether students have achieved the competencies defined by the Oklahoma Academic Standards. Each student’s performance is compared to a preset standard of expected achievement by subject at each grade level. The level of academic rigor that students must meet is established by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education approved more rigorous standards for the 2016-2017 school year. Direct comparison with prior year data is not valid.
In 2011, Oklahoma amended the Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) to require schools to retain students who do not pass a reading test and do not meet other criteria for exemptions by the end of the third grade. The purpose of the RSA is to ensure that all Oklahoma students are reading on grade level at the end of the third grade, a critical juncture when students go from learning to read to reading to learn. The RSA supports Oklahoma children in Kindergarten through third grade.

**National Assessment of Educational Progress Scores**

In addition, we look at fourth grade reading levels for a more accurate portrayal of disparities. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth grade reading score for Oklahoma in 2019 was 216, which is slightly lower than the national average of 219. The average score for for students in Oklahoma in 2019 was not significantly different from their average score in 2017 (217) or in 1998 (219).

<table>
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<th>REPORTING GROUPS</th>
<th>% OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>AVERAGE SCORE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE AT OR ABOVE NAEP BASIC</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE AT OR ABOVE NAEP PROFICIENT</th>
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<td>Not eligible</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>79</td>
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**Score Gaps for Student Groups**

- In 2019, Black students had an average score that was 24 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (30 points).
- In 2019, Hispanic students had an average score that was 17 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (21 points).
- In 2019, female students in Oklahoma had an average score that was not significantly different from that for male students.
- In 2019, students who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), had an average score that was 21 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (23 points).
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<td>SFY 2014</td>
<td>$1,554,928</td>
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<td>SFY 2015</td>
<td>$1,580,362</td>
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<td>SFY 2016</td>
<td>$1,439,785</td>
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<td>SFY 2017</td>
<td>$518,611</td>
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<td>$819,562</td>
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<td>SFY 2018</td>
<td>$267,849</td>
<td>$442,800</td>
<td>$710,649</td>
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<td>SFY 2019</td>
<td>$283,024</td>
<td>$690,076</td>
<td>$973,100</td>
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<td>SFY 2020</td>
<td>$440,554</td>
<td>$2,986,988</td>
<td>$3,427,542</td>
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SFY 2010 TO SFY 2020 OPSR TOTAL EXPENDITURES

OPSFRF SY20 Donors
OPSFRF and OPSRF would also like to thank the following private donors for their contributions in FY20: Alliance for Early Success, George Kaiser Family Foundation, Inasmuch Foundation, Nemours Children's Health Systems, and the Potts Family Foundation.

Additional SY20 Donors
The OKFutures Moving Forward Conference was made possible because of OKFutures funding as well as our tribal partners’ generosity. We are grateful for the support of the following: Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Comanche Nation, Osage Nation and United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians.
The pandemic emerging across the nation in mid-March resulted in an unimaginable disruption to Oklahoma’s exemplary early childhood services. Schools and Head Start classrooms closed, leaving essential workers scrambling to find education and care for their children. Throughout the pandemic a countless number of child care homes and centers remained open or quickly reopened their doors out of dedication to the children in their care. Unlike their early childhood counterparts in state and federally funded programs, when child care businesses closed, providers were not paid. Child care providers experienced a significant reduction of income and increased operating costs to ensure the health and safety of children and their staff. Throughout this pandemic, child care providers navigate evolving protocols for responding to staff and children who test positive for COVID-19, sanitize their homes and buildings, and modify classrooms to follow best practices for group size and quarantine recommendations. Despite these challenges, service over financial gain has kept child care open. This year’s Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) Annual Report is dedicated to the child care providers of Oklahoma, our unsung heroes who have sacrificed so much to care for our youngest children during this challenging, uncertain and difficult time.

I’d like to thank the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board and Foundation members for their dedication to promoting school readiness in Oklahoma and their support to the OPSR staff, making the development of this report possible. Thank you to OPSR staff Torri Christian, Gabrielle Jacobi, Chris Lee, Courtney Maker, Carlye McQuiston, and Katie Parker for their contributions to this report and in achieving our organization’s FY20 accomplishments.

Oklahoma’s early childhood community is strong, connected and mutually supportive of the diverse programs and services that promote child wellbeing and school readiness. This report reflects the collective work of this community. Together we will continue to ensure that families have equitable access to affordable and high-quality early childhood care and education, health, mental health and family support services. We wish to thank our partners and our generous donors who support OPSR to achieve our vision of a future in which all children are safe, healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter school.

With gratitude,

Debra Andersen
Executive Director