



Introduction

The **Oklahoma Early Childhood Program** (OECP) was created in 2006 to improve the quality of early education and expand capacity to serve children from birth through age three statewide.

OECP provides the fiscal structure to align state and private resources to promote high-quality standards tied to minimum teacher qualifications, ongoing professional development, and parent supports designed to foster low-income families' independence and economic success. Public funding for the OECP flows through the Oklahoma State Department of Education as a match to private funds provided by philanthropists and corporations throughout the state.

During the 2019-2020 Program Year, OECP partnered with ten providers, which included a total of thirty locations, in both urban and rural areas, resulting in 2,737 children served through OECP across Oklahoma.

Program Requirements

- Provide quality early education services and serve low-income children age's birth through three
- Maintain Oklahoma State Department of Human Services' licensure
- Offer care and education services forty-four (44) weeks of the year, operating at least eight (8) hours per day
- Meet specified program requirements (based on selected Early Head Start Performance Standards)
- Be NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited, or begin the accreditation process
- Staff each classroom with two staff members at all times, one credentialed Lead Teacher and one Assistant Teacher
- Ensure additional classroom staff have, at a minimum, a CDA credential
- Provide services of a Bachelor degreed Family Support Specialist
- Use OECP approved technology systems for classroom curriculum, assessment, and data collections
- Attend WestEd-based PITC training, comprised of Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Modules I, II, III, & IV for first-year teaching staff

Provider Overview

2019-2020 Provider Overview						
Provider	Slots by Location	Total Slots	Total Classrooms	County	Rural	Time in Program
Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP Tulsa)	Tulsa: 1,291 Sand Springs: 164 Learning@Home: 125	1,580	119	Tulsa Osage Tulsa		2006-2019 13 years
Crossroads Youth & Family Services	Beginnings Academy: 24 Children's Chateau: 32 Education Engine: 24 First Start: 32 Summit Ridge: 16	128	3 4 3 4 2	Comanche	x	2006-2008 & 2017-2019 4 years
Crosstown Learning Center, Inc.	Tulsa: 33	33	3	Tulsa		2009-2019 10 yrs.
Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc.	Antlers: 32 Broken Bow: 24 Hugo: 12 Idabel: 12	80	4 3 2 3	Pushmataha McCurtain Choctaw McCurtain	x x x x	2006-2019 13 years
Sunbeam Family Services	OKC Educare: 130 Tony Reyes: 48 Pierce ELC: 80	258	14 6 10	Oklahoma Oklahoma Oklahoma		2006-2019 13 years
Tri County Technology Center CDC	Bartlesville: 20	20	2	Washington		2007-2019 12 years
Tulsa Educare, Inc.	Educare I: 147 Educare II: 160 Educare III: 96	403	15 16 12	Tulsa Tulsa Tulsa		2009-2019 10 years
Union Public Schools Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center	Tulsa: 190	190	10	Tulsa		2008-2019 11 years
W.L. Hutcherson Family YMCA	Tulsa: 45	45	4	Tulsa		2007-2019 12 years
Total		2,737	239			

COVID-19 Pandemic

OECP felt the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic during the third and fourth quarters of the 2019-2020 program year (January-June 2020). In order to fight the spread of COVID-19 beginning mid-March through the end of June, a majority of partners closed their centers. This resulted in PITC trainings being canceled and the decision to discontinue spring assessments. Throughout the remainder of the program year, OECP continued to communicate with and support partners.

To stay in communication with partners and help support staff and families during this time, OECP staff:

- extended the deadline for partner reapplications, monthly reports, financial reports, and PITC training completion, and
- checked in with partners through virtual visits, and communicated up-to-date resources to the OECP partners on a weekly basis.

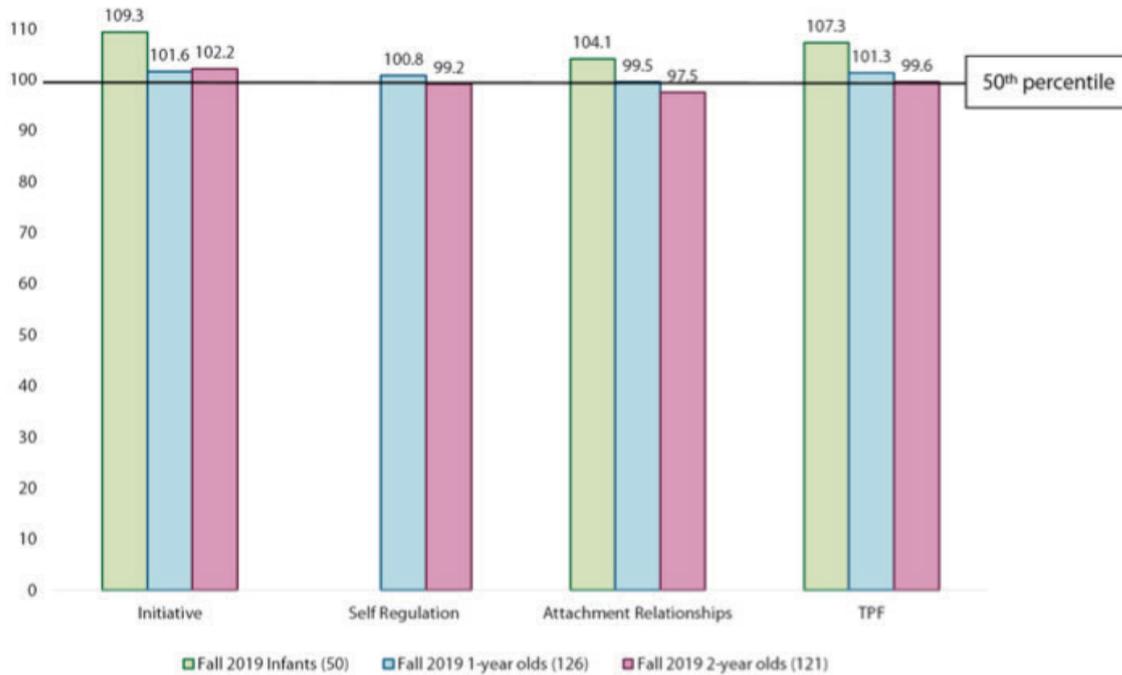
If partners closed their centers due to COVID-19, OECP staff communicated with them about their anticipated reopening plans.

While centers were closed, OECP partners connected with families through social media posts about activities for parents to implement with their children, phone contact and referrals to services by Family Advocates, distance learning and virtual classrooms with teaching staff, and distribution of resources including food and diapers for families.

Ongoing Quality Assessment

In 2019-20, OECP engaged in a revised evaluation seeking to prioritize obtaining more robust evidence of program quality via inclusion of a social-emotional assessment completed for children. For this evaluation, OECP sought to include random sampling and the collection of classroom observation data from a newly developed measure specifically designed to assess the quality of caregiver-child interactions in infant, toddler, and two-year old classrooms. The primary goals of the pilot evaluation included: a robust and informative design which includes the measurement of child achievement, the exploration of a new high-quality classroom observation tool, and the representation of all OECP partners within the evaluation sample.

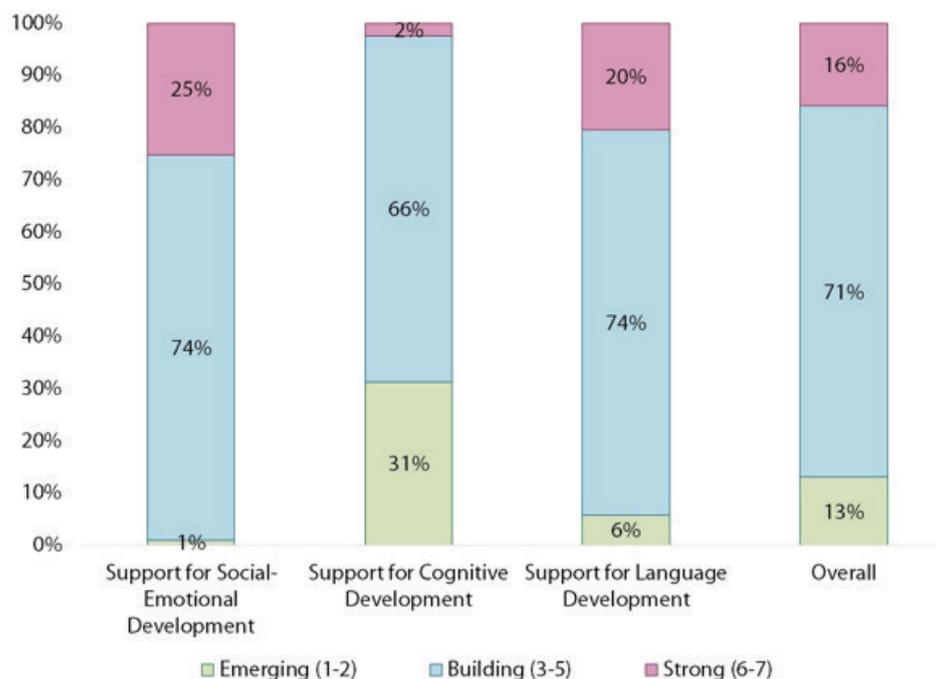
At the child level, the electronic version of the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (eDECA) was collected within the evaluation. This tool collects children's social-emotional skills via the domain of total protective factors (TPF). Included within this domain the sub-domains of attachment/relationships, initiative, and self-regulation; inclusion of sub-domains varies by age. This assessment includes 5-point Likert-scale questions and is completed by the teacher in fall and spring; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were unable to complete these assessments in spring of 2020. Fall standard score averages show that the average child enrolled within the OECP program was at or above the 50th percentile (standard score of 100). Sample sizes by age include: 50 infant children, 126 one-year old children, and 121 two-year old children. The total fall sample size was 297 children.



For each of the domains assessed, eDECA classifies a child’s rating into one of three categories: strength, typical, or need. 23% of the students in the OECP evaluation had scores that represent a strength in the initiative domain as well as in overall total protective factors. For both self-regulation and attachment relationships, 19% of students had scores that represent a need for support in building those resilience skills. The eDECA platform provides classroom teachers and school leaders information about domain strengths and needs, along with strategies to support resilience. Due to the lack of spring data, OECP was unable to measure children’s progress during the second half of the program year.



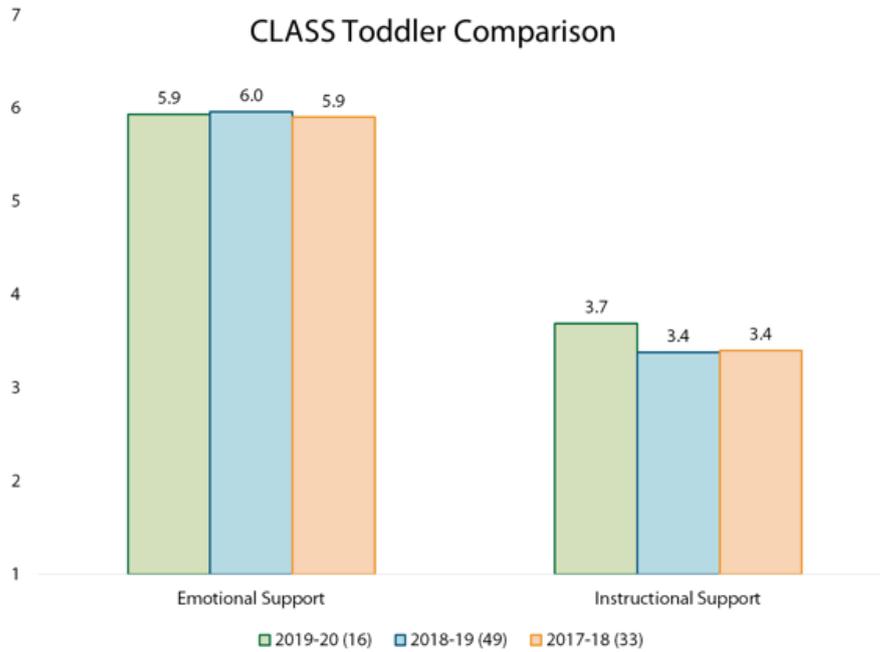
To collect quality of classroom observations, OECP contracted with the University of Oklahoma- Early Childhood Education Institute (OU- ECEI). The OU-ECEI team conducted all observations and provided classroom level feedback forms for all classrooms included in the sample. To assess the quality of caregiver-child interactions in these classrooms, the Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infant and Toddlers (Q-CCIIT), was utilized. The Q-CCIIT provides scale scores for three support domains: support for social-emotional development, support for language and literacy development, and support for cognitive development. Four 10-minute observation cycles are conducted to create the scale scores. Classrooms are scored on a 7-point Likert scale. Scores of 6-7 denote strong quality of interactions, 3-5 denote building quality of interactions, and scores of 1-2 denote emerging quality of interactions. Overall, 16% of OECP classrooms had strong quality of interactions between the caregiver and child and 71% of OECP classrooms had building quality of interactions between the caregiver and child. 41 classrooms were included within this sample.



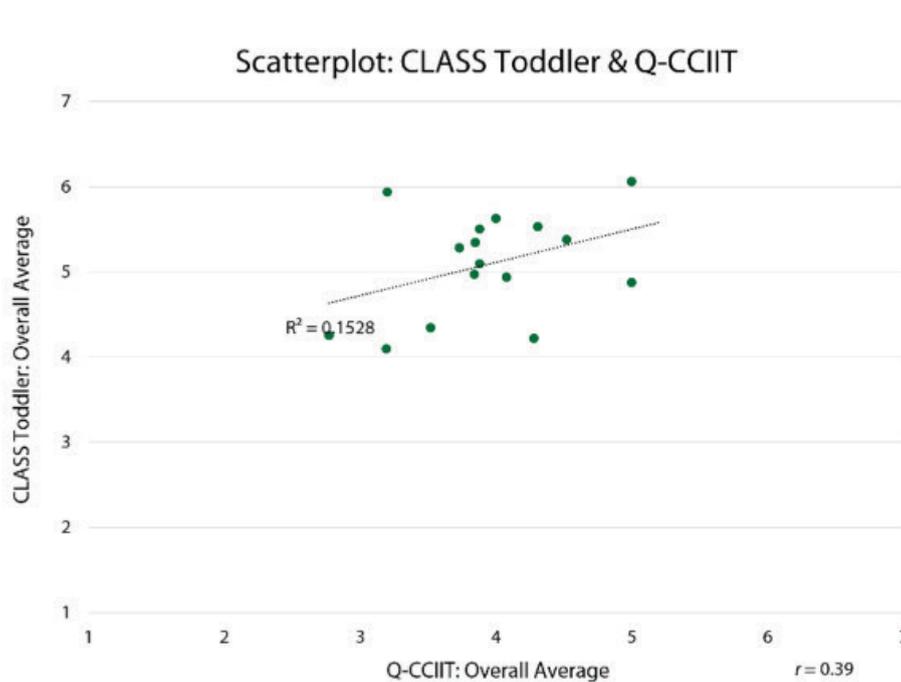
To examine the concurrent validity of the new classroom quality measure, a subset of classrooms within the sample also received a Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation at the same time as the Q-CCIIT observation. CLASS is a widely used measure of classroom quality and has often been included as part of the OECP evaluation. As we continue to seek more robust, informative, and actionable indicators of classroom quality, OECP sought to examine the relationship between the new instrument and the traditionally used one.

CLASS primarily measures a timed sampling of the quality of teacher-child interactions (Emotional Support for Learning), and instructional support (Engaged Support for Learning) including materials and curriculum. The instrument is assessed using a 7-point Likert scale. A score of 1 or 2 is considered Low-Range; a score of 3, 4, or 5 is considered Mid-Range; and a score of 6 or 7 is in the High-Range.

Sixteen of the 41 classrooms included in the evaluation received the toddler version of CLASS. The average Infant/Toddler classroom scored within the mid-range on both emotional support and engaged support for learning. Although there is no Office of Head Start comparison for Toddler CLASS, these averages are considered adequate or strong.



Correlations via scatterplots were conducted to assess concurrent validity for the two classroom quality measures. The scatterplots found moderate positive linear relationships between overall scores of Q-CCIIT and CLASS. This provides some evidence of concurrent validity in measurement of global classroom quality between the new measure, Q-CCIIT, and the widely used measure, CLASS.



To conclude, upon completion of each observation, Q-CCIIT and CLASS, the University of Oklahoma- Early Childhood Education Institute completed feedback forms for partners and OECP administration. This feedback was provided to the OECP administration team, and was then discussed with partner staff, either internally with the site administration or with OECP Professional Development Specialists. The observation feedback forms are specific to individual classrooms and provide detailed information related to the quality of the environment at the time of the observation. This feedback is utilized in a variety of ways, including opportunities for professional development and instructional coaching. With these observation tools, the feedback serves as a guide to assist partners in making well-informed choices as to which areas/indicators they might emphasize for program/classroom improvement and how the OECP team might assist them in doing so.

Trainings and Technical Assistance

The OECP Professional Development Specialists maintained ongoing contact with participating partner sites and worked collaboratively to identify strengths and needs throughout the program year. Because all participating providers have unique strengths and opportunities, this relationship-based approach allowed the team to work with each provider individually, at appropriate levels, and with a continuous focus on improving quality care.

OECP Professional Development Specialists presented multiple opportunities for Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) training during the 2019-20 school year as well as facilitated and provided assistance with several other professional development workshops to participants seeking continuous improvement opportunities. The Specialists also provided individualized training and technical assistance to each partner/site based on strengths, needs, and interests of staff. This included setting site or individual classroom goals based on data such as assessments, feedback, and observations. These evaluative tools are also used to consider trends affecting all OECP partners and to look at site-specific strengths and challenges.

OECP Professional Development Specialists supported the participating partners by providing technical assistance specific to each location. Technical assistance was provided through in person visits, zoom meetings, email, and phone exchanges. Due to COVID-19, all support was conducted virtually, after March. Technical support staff generally focused efforts on identifying needs and offering suggestions that generated solutions, provided resources and materials, set goals for instruction for teaching teams, and connected sites to other resources to assist with any concern. All of this assistance provided a continuous focus on improving and maintaining high quality care.

OECP Professional Development Specialists provided 304 combined training and technical assistance hours to all partners. Training included PITC and continuation training. Continuation training consisted of both formal and informal hours. Topics included: Culture and Diversity, Relationships, Challenging Behaviors, Social and Emotional Development, Loose Parts, Authentic Observation and Planning. The OECP team was also involved in partnering, planning, and executing a one-day training sponsored by Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) in eight locations across Oklahoma. At these trainings, eight hours of PITC inspired content was presented to over 400 participants.

OECP Professional Development Specialist also extended PITC training to early childhood programs that were not partner providers for three additional PITC series (consisting of four modules that are eight hours a module) in Tulsa, Tahlequah and Edmond. In partnership with OPSR, OECP was able to supply all locations represented at these series with high quality indoor/outdoor materials that support the philosophies of PITC.

Family Support

A unique feature of the OECP is the focus on Family Support—the provision of staff and critical wrap-around services for parents and caretakers. In building family partnerships, Family Support (or family advocates) staff ensure that enrolled families have access to community resources that will meet their needs.

The providers work collaboratively with families to identify and assess services and resources that are responsive to each family's needs and goals, including but not limited to:

- Emergency assistance in areas such as food, housing, clothing, and transportation
- Education and other appropriate interventions, including opportunities for parents to participate in counseling programs or to receive information about mental health issues that place families at risk, such as substance abuse, child abuse & neglect, and domestic violence
- Opportunities for continuing education and employment training, and other employment services through formal and informal networks within the community

Over the course of the 2019-2020 school year, 16,729 referrals (including basic needs, emergency interventions, and other community service assistance) were made by Family Support Specialists at OECP partner locations across the state.

The last four months of the 2019-2020 program year were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many OECP partners closing from mid-March into the summer. Family Support played a vital role in keeping partners connected to families as schools closed and many families were put under "Safer at Home" orders to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Family Support staff and teachers worked together to provide educational resources, food, diapers, wipes, formula, and resource referrals to all families in need, and remained in contact with families via phone, internet, and video chats multiple times per week.

Tiered Requirements

As the administering agency of OECP, CAP Tulsa established the following goal for 2019: Utilize tiered requirements to deliver more individualized training and technical assistance based on partners' unique needs. As a result, a Traditional and Training Tier System was created. This approach will amplify the reach and impact of OECP across the state and will decrease the amount of duplicative and sometimes cumbersome program requirements for partners. Starting in the 2020-21 program year, OECP will vary requirements across OECP partners based on their track and add additional partners in the Training program track. Current OECP partners will fall into either the Traditional Head Start or Childcare track, while new partners will be placed in the Training Program track. When new partners enter the Training tier, they will receive training and other support to improve quality.

Research and recruitment took place to identify potential new partners in various regions of Oklahoma. Research for new partners was completed throughout the months of December 2019 and January 2020. The list of potential partners was further narrowed down and finalized in February 2020 based on location, viability, Head Start and DHS status. Initial contact with potential partners was scheduled to commence in March 2020, however, the onset of the COVID-19 crisis delayed the time frame. An email was sent to potential training partners to garner applicants for the training tier. Contacts and information from the email was further impacted by COVID-19 due to the closure of many facilities. The overall result was a delayed application for partners for the new Training tier offered by OECP and recruitment efforts will resume in the new program year.

The matrix on the following page details the requirements and services provided through the new Tier System.

Requirement	Training Individual	Training Program	Traditional Head Start	Traditional Childcare
PITC Training for Teaching Staff	X*	X	X	X
Submit Annual Application/ Monthly Reporting		X*	X	X
Receive Funding		X**	X	X
Continuation Training for Program		X	X	X
Staff			X	X
DHS Licensed		X	X	X
Serve Children year-round		X	X	X
Serve at-risk children		X	X	X
Attend OECP Annual Summit		X	X	X
Classroom Evaluations			X	X
Curriculum			X	X
Have a Family Advocate			X	X
Lead Teacher Comparable Salary			X	X
Meet NAEYC Teaching Qualifications			X	X
Receive T/TA Visit			X (1)	X (2)
Receive QA Visit			X (1)	X (2)
NAEYC Accredited				X
PITC Planning Guide***				X
Service Plans				X

*Modified Reporting and application

**Contingent on OPSR funding and could include a stipend

***Program requirements, not related to OSDE specific requirements

Family Support Specialists Success Stories

“Due to COVID-19 and being at home, a mom called the Family Support Specialist (FSS) saying she was struggling with the new normal. She explained that her daughter was really struggling and the disruption in her routine was doing harm to her daughter’s daily rhythm. The FSS told her that they understood and that it has been a big adjustment for everyone. Over the phone, mom and the FSS came up with a schedule to mirror the child’s day at school. They set aside morning reading time, center time, and learning time. The mom is currently working from home and has not been able to work due to figuring out a new routine for her child. The resulting plan mom and the FSS came up with is that during her daughter’s “learning time”, they both sit at the table together and mom works while her daughter “works.” The FSS has provided activities to do each day and a list of websites that mom can access to get additional ideas for activities.”

—Sunbeam Family Services, OKC

“An FSS had the opportunity to meet with the mother and father of one student to complete the Family Success Plan (FSP). During the meeting, the mother shared that her goal was to obtain employment, in order to help the father with the family finances. After discussing the mother’s work experiences and professional degrees, the FSS invited the mother to complete a skills inventory. The mother expressed a concern with her English proficiency and FSS encouraged mom to volunteer in her child’s classroom and then to put in an application. The FSS gave mom employment resources to help with her search. The mother applied for employment at CAP Tulsa and was later hired. The FSS congratulated the mother and celebrated her accomplishment. Recently, FSS asked mom what her next step would be now that her goal was accomplished. Mom stated she is thinking about going to college to complete a CDA.”

—Union Public Schools Rosa Parks ECEC, Tulsa

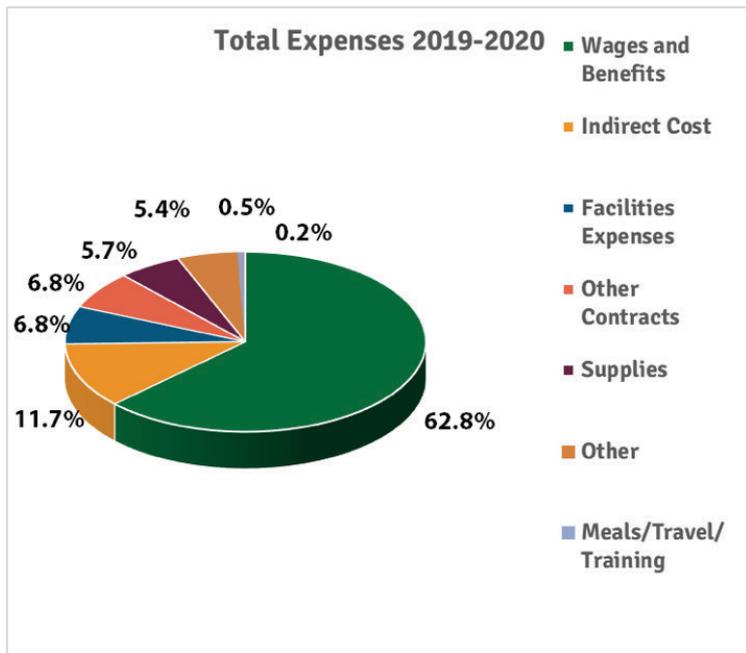
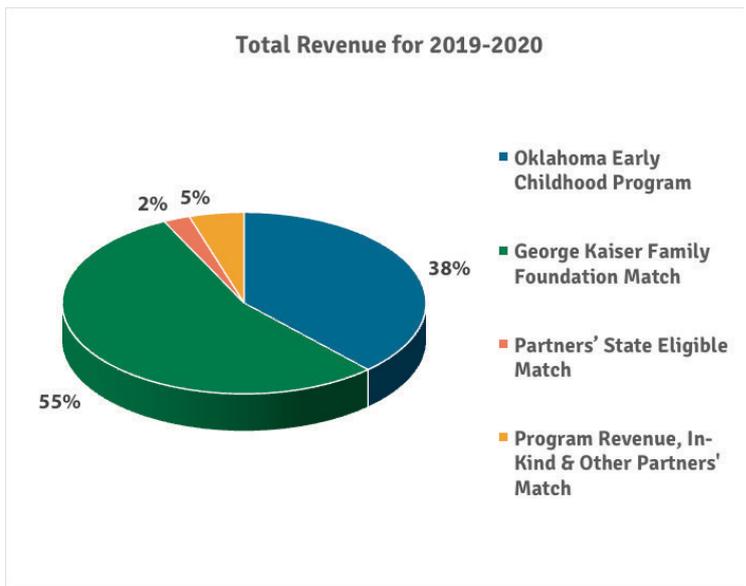
Funding and Budgets

The Oklahoma Early Childhood Program increased funding by 13% in 2019-2020 grant year with 40% in state funds of \$12,000,000 requiring 60% in match funding of \$18,000,000.

Below are the revenue and expenditures for the 2019-2020 program year.

OECP Revenue & Expense 2019-2020

Revenue	
Oklahoma Early Childhood Program	12,000,000
George Kaiser Family Foundation Match	17,219,759
Partners' State Eligible Match	742,967
Program Revenue & Other Partners' Match	1,531,832
In Kind	3,807
Total Revenue	31,498,365
Expenditures	
Wages and Benefits	19,796,596
Indirect Cost	3,696,373
Supplies	1,796,637
Facilities Expenses	2,144,942
Other Contracts	2,143,450
Meals/Travel/Training	157,277
Other	1,693,463
Capital & One-Time Expenses	69,627
Total Expenses	31,498,365



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For more information on the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program,

Visit the website: okecp.org

Contact OECP via email: oecpdepartment@captulsa.org