

Introduction

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

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 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 2020-2021 Program Year, OECP partnered with nine agencies, which included a total of thirty site locations in both urban and rural areas. This resulted in 2,667 children served through OECP across Oklahoma.

Program Requirements

- Provide quality early education services and serve low-income children ages birth through three
- Maintain licensure with the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services
- 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)
- 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 West Ed-based PITC training, comprised of Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Modules I, II, III, & IV for first-year infant and toddler teaching staff

Provider Overview

2020-2021 Provider Overview

Provider	Slots by Location	Total Slots	Total Classrooms	County	Rural	Time in Program
Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP Tulsa)	Center-Based: 1,222 Learning@Home: 125	1,347	101	Tulsa Osage		2006-2020 14 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 & 2017-2020 5 years
Crosstown Learning Center, Inc.	Tulsa: 33	33	3	Tulsa		2009-2020 11 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	2006-2020 14 years
Sunbeam Family Services	OKC Educare: 130 Tony Reyes: 48 Pierce ELC: 96	274	14 6 12	Oklahoma Oklahoma Oklahoma		2006-2020 14 years
Tri County Technology Center CDC	Bartlesville: 20	20	2	Washington		2007-2020 13 years
Tulsa Educare, Inc.	Educare I: 147 Educare II: 160 Educare III: 96 Educare IV: 147	550	16 16 12 16	Tulsa Tulsa Tulsa Tulsa		2009-2020 11 years
Union Public Schools (UPS) Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center	Tulsa: 190	190	10	Tulsa		2008-2020 12 years
W.L. Hutcherson Family YMCA	Tulsa: 45	45	4	Tulsa		2007-2020 13 years
Total		2,667	239			

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic implicated OECP during the 2020-2021 program year. OECP staff transitioned to virtual communication and ensured availability to better assist partners as they navigated the stresses of the changing world.

Quality assurance and technical visits shifted to a virtual setting and OECP specialists remained in frequent communication to offer support via zoom, emails, and phone calls with all partners. Further, staff documented the various struggles faced by many of the sites. With this information, the specialists were able to provide various forms of documentation, presentations, and trainings to ensure partners were able to support their on-site staff.

Many offerings required by the program also shifted to a virtual platform to ensure partners maintained compliance. Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) training, on-site visits, audits, and the annual summit are just a few examples of requirements that were once performed in person and were transitioned to a virtual format to ensure partnering agencies were served.

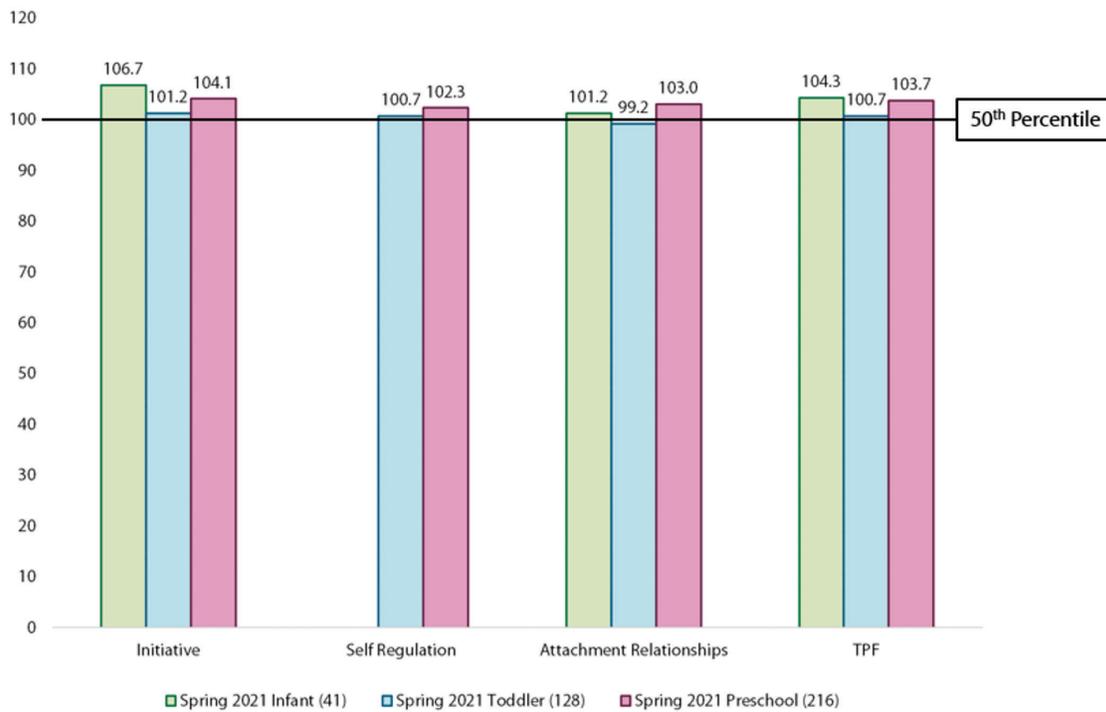
If partners closed their sites and/or classrooms due to COVID-19, OECP staff communicated regarding anticipated reopening plans. This information was tracked monthly and used to evaluate the level of additional support needed by a partnering agency.

Ongoing Quality Assessment

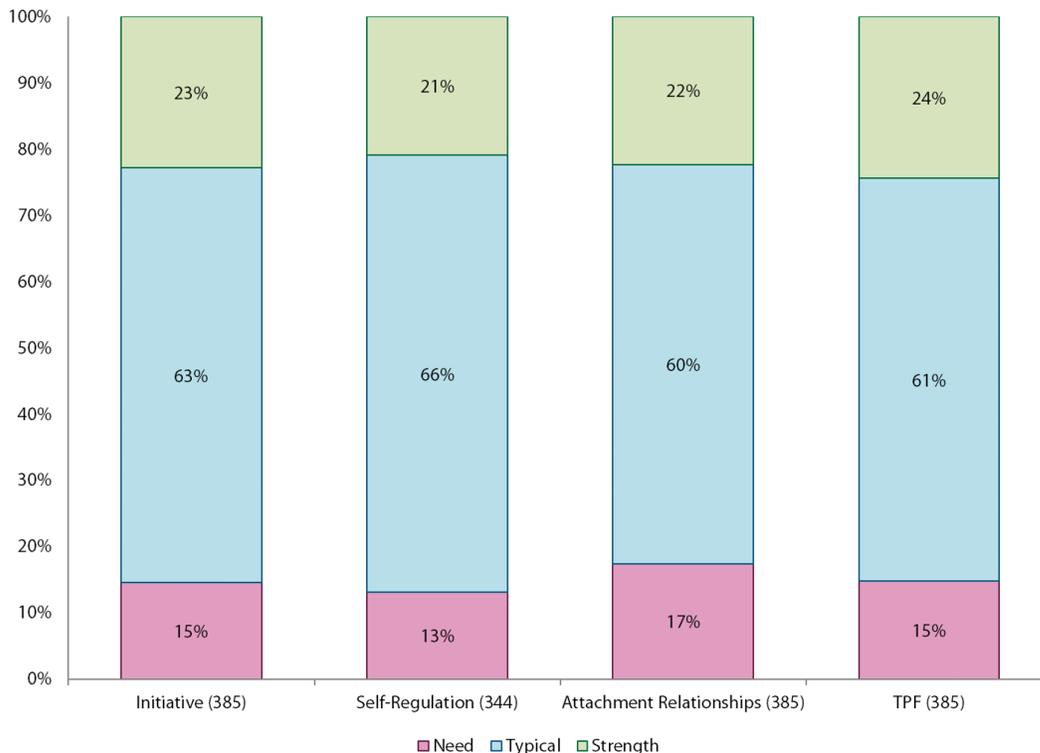
OECP developed a 2020-2021 evaluation plan that closely aligned with the successful, but interrupted, pilot evaluation of the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECP) in 2019-2020. The plan represented all OECP partners and included a measure of child achievement in addition to classroom quality observations. Selected measures were designed specifically to evaluate skills and quality teaching practices of very young children. OECP sought to obtain robust evidence of program quality via two means. First, we included a child-oriented social-emotional assessment. Second, we included classroom observation data via a traditionally used measure in three-year old classrooms and a newly developed measure specifically designed to assess the quality of caregiver-child interactions in infant and toddler classrooms.

As a result of the disruptions in operations due to the pandemic and out of concern for the safety of children, staff, and observers, the 2020-2021 full evaluation plan was not implemented. Neither fall child assessments nor classroom observations were conducted. Spring child assessments were conducted in sampled classrooms representing all OECP partners. In addition to infant and toddler classrooms, three-year-old classrooms from multiple OECP partners were included, which was new to the evaluation in 2020-2021. The increased representation of three-year-old classrooms in the evaluation was a response to the growing number of OECP-funded three-year-old classrooms across partners.

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 are the sub-domains of attachment/relationships, initiative, and self-regulation; inclusion of sub-domains varies by age. eDECA has three assessment forms, each tailored to be representative of a set of age-appropriate skills (Infants 1-18 months, Toddlers 18-36 months, Preschoolers 3-5 years). This assessment includes five-point Likert-scale questions. Spring standard score averages show that the average child enrolled within the OECP program was at or above the 50th percentile (standard score of 100). Higher scores on these domains indicate stronger resilience. Sample sizes by age include: 41 infant children, 128 toddler children, and 216 preschool children. The total spring sample size was 385 children.



For each of the domains assessed, eDECA classifies a child’s rating into one of three categories: strength, typical, or need. Nearly a quarter of students (24%) in the OECP evaluation had scores that represent a strength in the total protective factors domain. More specifically, within the subscales, 23% of students with scores that represent a strength in the initiative subscale. Across subscales, between 13% (initiative) and 17% (attachment/relationships) of students had scores that represent a need for support in building those resilience skills.



In addition to these subscales representing resilience, eDECA includes a screener for behavior concerns on the preschool form for students that are three to five years old at the time of the assessment. High scores on this screener indicate that students have displayed concerning behaviors and may need support in their behavior development. On average, the 216 preschool aged students included in the evaluation scored below the 50th percentile with an average standard score of 95.6. Twenty students (9%) had scores that represent a need for support in their behavior development. Further, the eDECA platform provides classroom teachers and partner leaders with information about domain strengths and needs, along with strategies to support resilience and development.

For the 2021-22 evaluation, OECP is partnering with teachers in OECP classrooms to collect fall and spring eDECA child assessment data for students in the sample. OECP has contracted with the University of Oklahoma Early Childhood Education Institute (OU-ECEI) to collect observations related to classroom. The OU-ECEI team will conduct observations and provide classroom level feedback forms for all classrooms included in the sample. To assess the quality of caregiver-child interactions in sampled infant-toddler classrooms, the Quality Care for Infant and Toddlers (QCIT), will be utilized. In preschool classrooms, OU-ECEI will conduct observations with the widely used measure of classroom quality, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Classroom-level feedback from all observations will be provided to the OECP administration team and shared with partner staff. 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.

Training and Technical Assistance

OECP Professional Development Specialists maintained ongoing contact with participating partners and worked collaboratively to identify strengths and needs throughout the program year. Because all participating partners have unique strengths and opportunities, this relationship-based approach allowed the team to work individually with each partner, 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 2020-2021 school year, as well as facilitated and provided assistance with several other professional development workshops to participants seeking continuous learning opportunities. These trainings were offered virtually, and the specialists also provided individualized training and technical assistance to each partner based on strengths, needs, and interests of staff. This included setting site or individual classroom goals using data through assessments, feedback, and observations. These tools were also used to consider trends affecting all OECP partners and to study site-specific strengths and challenges.

OECP Professional Development Specialists supported the partners by providing technical assistance specific to each site. Technical support generally focused efforts on identifying needs and offering suggestions that generated solutions, provided resources and materials, set goals for instruction for teaching teams, and connecting sites to other useful resources. All of this assistance provided a continuous focus on improving and maintaining high quality care.

OECP Professional Development Specialists provided 265 combined training and technical assistance hours to all partners. Training included PITC series (consisting of four modules that are eight hours per module) and other continuation training. Continuation training consisted of both formal and informal hours. Examples of topics offered include: e-DECA support, Culture and Diversity, Relationships, Challenging Behaviors, Social and Emotional Development, Loose Parts, Authentic Observation and Planning.

Family Support

A unique feature of 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 Specialists or Advocates ensure that enrolled families have access to community resources that meet their needs.

The partners 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 2020-2021 school year, 12,315 referrals (including basic needs, emergency interventions, and other community service assistance) were made by Family Support Specialists or Advocates throughout OECP partners.

Family Support Stories

"Family Advocate worked directly with a parent on using social-emotional learning strategies with their child after information was presented during a Parent Meeting. The child was having a meltdown at the door, and the family advocate advised mom to use the strategies that had been shared. The parent calmly used the strategies and was able to successfully help the child into the site."

—**Crossroads Summit Ridge**

"A family moved from a two-bedroom apartment, which included seven individuals, to a four-bedroom home with assistance from the housing authority. Mom needed furniture assistance. The family advocate referred her to Focus on Homes and she was approved! Her entire house was furnished, which also included items for the kitchen. Children received their own beds as well as decorations for their rooms."

—**Sunbeam OKC Educare**

"Family Support Specialist provided different activities to the families and encouraged fathers to use the materials provided to engage with their children. One of the fathers requested the Family Support Specialist to follow up with the family on how the activities went, since the father would be unable to attend the online group. During the follow up, the father shared how much fun the family had building the bird house that was included in the activity bag. The father shared with excitement in his voice how amazed he was with his children and how each played a role in building the house."

—**UPS Rosa Parks ECEC**

Funding and Budgets

Total funding for the 2020-2021 year remained the same as 2019-2020, with \$12,000,000 in state funds and \$18,000,000 in private matching funds.

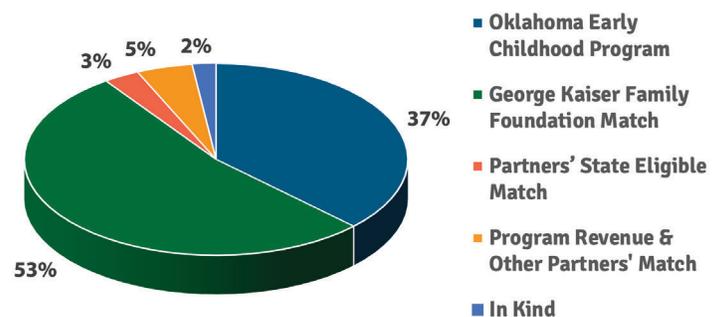
Below are the revenue and expenditures for the 2020-2021 program year.

OECP Revenue & Expenditures 2020-2021

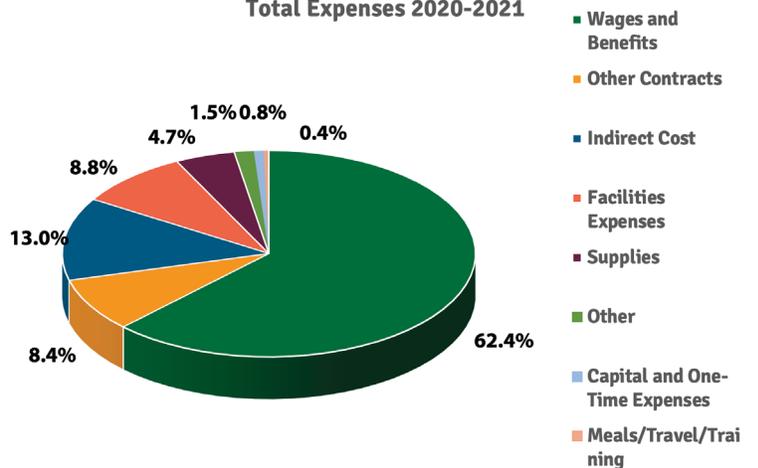
Revenue	
Oklahoma Early Childhood Program	12,000,000
George Kaiser Family Foundation Match	17,051,453
Partners' State Eligible Match	972,248
Program Revenue & Other Partners' Match	1,515,934
In Kind	644,031
Total Revenue	32,183,127

Expenditures	
Wages and Benefits	20,087,352
Indirect Cost	4,184,446
Facilities Expenses	2,144,942
Other Contracts	2,703,041
Supplies, including school meals	1,501,335
Other	489,941
Meals/Travel/Training	127,501
Capital and One-Time Expenses	247,578
Total Expenses	32,183,127

Total Revenue for 2020-2021



Total Expenses 2020-2021



OECP Administrative Staff

Kathryn Black, Ph.D., Associate Director, Research & Innovation, OECP, and ECP Projects

Sarah Score, Team Lead, OECP

Ava Armstead, OECP Professional Development Specialist

Grace Frey, OECP Quality Assurance Specialist

Rebecca Taylor, OECP Professional Development Specialist

Partner Leadership

Denise Stevens, Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Inc. (CAP Tulsa)

Wendy Swatek, Crossroads Youth & Family Services

Derek Latta, Crosstown Learning Center, Inc.

Darla Galyon, Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc.

Paula Gates, Sunbeam Family Services

Heather Pollock, Tri County Technology Center Child Development Center

Cindy Decker, Ph.D., Tulsa Educare, Inc.

Alycia Pennington, Union Public Schools Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center

Keisha Gibson, W.L. Hutcherson Family YMCA

For more information on the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program,

Visit the website: okecp.org

Contact OECP via email: oecpdepartment@captulsa.org