



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 caregiver supports designed to foster income-qualified 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 2023-2024 Program Year, OECP continued its expanded reach within the state of Oklahoma by retaining one Professional Development partner. Further, OECP supported community programs aimed at improving collaboration between child development specialists and pediatricians to promote children’s healthy growth and development.

2023-2024 OECP Partner Slot Chart Overview				
Partner Type	Total Partners	Total Locations	Total Classrooms	Total Children
Traditional	8	36	279	2,860
Professional Development	1	18	67	806
Total	9	54	346	3,666

OECP partnered with nine agencies who have locations in both urban and rural Oklahoma. The nine partners have a total of 54 school locations and 346 classrooms, which served 3,666 children. Further, through an existing traditional partner, an additional four childcare centers and two family childcare homes were also included. Finally, an **additional 6,700** children and caregivers were served through related services, for a total impact of over 10,000 people benefitting from supports through OECP in 2023-2024.

Program Requirements

- Provide quality early education services and serve income-qualified children ages birth through three
- Maintain licensing requirements as provided by the Oklahoma 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 a credentialed Lead and Assistant Teacher at all times
- Provide services of one credentialed Family Support Specialist or Advocate per 50 families
- Use OECP-approved technology systems for classroom curriculum, assessment, and data collection
- Participate in initial and annual trainings in infant and toddler development, curriculum, and caregiver education

Partner Overview

2023-2024 OECP Partner Slot Chart Overview: Traditional Partners							
Provider	Location	Slots	Classrooms	Total Slots	Total Classrooms	County	Rural
Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Inc.	Briarglen	188	19	1300	113	Tulsa	X
	Disney	191	16				
	ECDC Reed	85	5				
	Eugene Field	90	9				
	Frost	139	14				
	McClure	190	17				
	Reed	96	12				
	Rosa Parks	48	6				
	Sand Springs	74	6				
	Skelly	99	9				
Learning At Home	100	-					
Crossroads Youth & Family Services	Beginnings Academy	24	3	136	17	Comanche	
	Children's Chateau	32	4				
	Education Engine	32	4				
	First Start	32	4				
	Summit Ridge	16	2				
Crosstown Learning Center		33	3	33	3	Tulsa	
LIFT Community Action Agency	Antlers EHS/ELC	32	4	80	11	McCurtain	X
	Broken Bow ELC	24	3			Choctaw	X
	Hugo EHS	12	2			Pushmataha	X
	Idabel EHS	12	2				X
Sunbeam Family Services	Edwards EEC	80	10	378	44	Oklahoma	
	OKC Educare	144	16				
	Pierce EEC	106	12				
	Tony Reyes	48	6				
Tulsa Educare, Inc.	Educare I	154	16	699	77	Tulsa	
	Educare II	154	16				
	Educare III	154	16				
	Educare IV	154	16				
	Jewel's Place	32	4				
	Jus Kid'N	6	1				
	Peppermint Pete's	8	1				
	Pine Premier	25	3				
	Toya for Tots	6	1				
Tulsa Women/Children	6	3					
UPS Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center		190	10	190	10	Tulsa	
W.L. Hutcherson Family YMCA		44	4	44	4	Tulsa	
Traditional Partner Total				2,860	279		

Ongoing Quality Assessment

OECP developed an evaluation plan that represented all OECP traditional partners and included:

- A measure of child achievement via the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)
 - DECA measures children’s resilience skills through the subscales of attachment/relationships, initiative, and self-regulation
 - Scores within these three subscales are combined, and children are categorized as having *age-typical* resilience, *strength* within resilience skills, or having a *need* within resilience skills
 - Children three-years-old and older are also rated on a behavior concerns screener; high scores on this screener indicate these children may need additional support in behavior development
 - DECA rates children on a five-point Likert scale

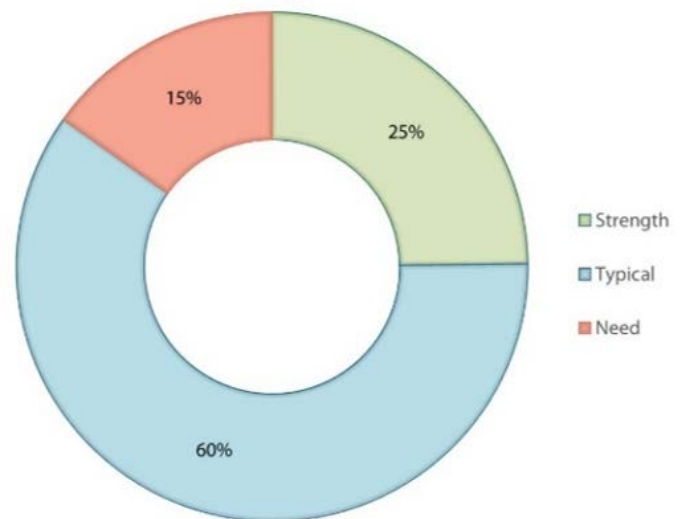
- A measure of classroom quality via the Quality Care for Infant and Toddlers (QCIT) in infant-toddler classrooms
 - The QCIT provides scores for three domains: support for social-emotional development, support for language and literacy development, and support for cognitive development
 - Four 10-minute observation cycles are conducted
 - Classrooms are scored on a seven-point Likert scale; scores of 6-7 denote *strong* quality of interactions, 3-5 denote *building* quality of interactions, and 1-2 denote *emerging* quality of interactions

Fall and spring child assessments were conducted in sampled classrooms, and classrooms were observed using the classroom quality measure in late fall or winter.

Spring child sample sizes by age included: 62 infant children, 232 toddler children, and 399 preschool children. The total spring sample size was 693 children.

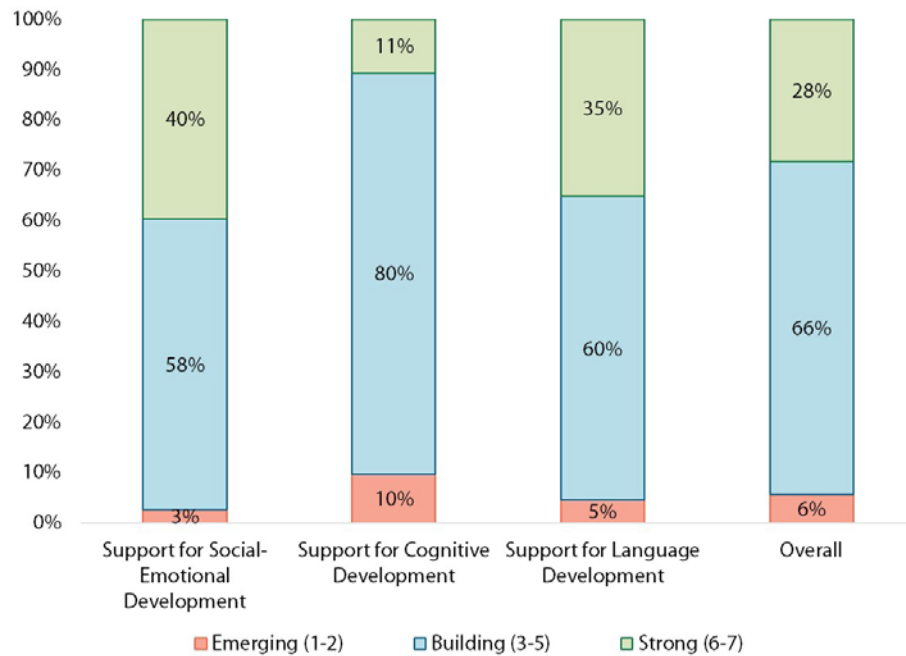
In spring, 85% of children were rated as having age-typical resilience or as possessing strength within resilience skills.

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment



In addition to the child measure, OECP contracted with the University of Oklahoma Early Childhood Education Institute (OU-ECEI) to collect observations related to classroom quality. Fifty-three classrooms were included within this sample.

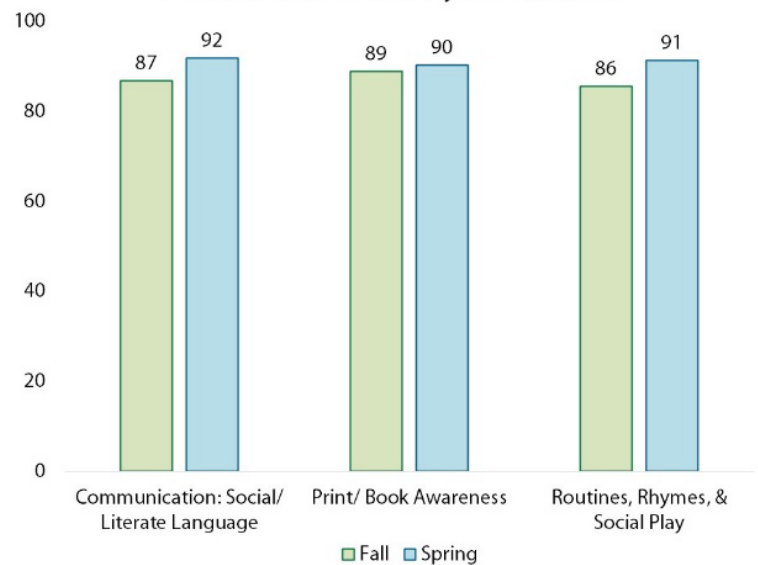
Overall, 28% of OECP classrooms had *strong* quality of interactions between the caregiver and child via the QCIT. More than a third of classrooms scored in the *strong* category for both the social-emotional and language development domains.



In addition to the collection of these data, the OECP evaluation piloted a child literacy assessment that is age appropriate for the children enrolled. Infant Toddler Literacy Assessment, ITLA, scores children within three domains, including: Communication, Print/Book Awareness, and Routines, Rhymes, and Social Play.

As noted in the chart to the right, growth was experienced from fall to spring within all domains, with larger growth noted for Communication and Routines, Rhymes, and Social Play.

Infant-Toddler Literacy Assessment



Additionally, new this year was the collection of a teacher survey. The goal of this data collection included better understanding teacher well-being and experiences within OECP-funded classrooms. Eighty teachers responded to the survey, and notable results include:

- Forty-three percent of teachers were Lead Teachers; 55% were Assistant Teachers
- Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported having been teaching young children for 16+ years
- Twenty percent of teachers reported being new to their agency (<1 year tenure)
- Teachers responded to our Modernity Scale, which seeks to better understand child-centered versus adult-centered perspectives, with a greater child-centered perspective
 - Child-centered perspectives reflect more progressive teaching practices
- Eighty percent of teachers reported planning to remain in early childhood education for at least five more years, which is an indicator of OECP partners promotion of teacher retention
 - Importantly, teachers noted that the impact they have on children and supporting families is the main reason they continue in this field
- Most teachers agree that they have the foundational supports needed at their school, like professional development opportunities

Training and Technical Assistance

Early Learning Specialists collaborated with partners to identify strengths and needs throughout the program year. Because all 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.

The Early Learning Specialists also conducted on-site technical visits with each partner multiple times throughout the program year, seeking to promote instructional leadership. Technical support focused on:

- Identifying needs and offering suggestions that generated solutions
- Providing resources and materials
- Setting goals for instruction for teaching teams
- Connecting schools to other useful resources

This assistance provided a continuous focus on improving and maintaining teacher effectiveness and improving child outcomes.

Teaching and Learning Specialists also facilitated 199 hours of Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) training throughout the program year. Additionally, OECP hosted partner leaders and family support staff to attend a leadership-oriented training in the fall. Together, these trainings equated to 438 early childhood leaders and teachers in attendance across the state of Oklahoma.

Training Satisfaction

Satisfaction surveys were conducted with all attendees at the completion of each training. Importantly, teachers noted high satisfaction with OECP trainings, specifically:

- Agreement that trainings are clear and strongly structured
- Agreement that facilitators possessed the ability to respond to questions with relevant examples and possessed the knowledge necessary to enhance the training experience
- Agreement that teachers perceive they could apply principles learned during the training within their classroom
- Agreement that trainings are high quality and meeting teacher expectations

“Conversation was key to learning, and we had a lot of great conversations. Facilitators were personable and made me feel comfortable about participating fully.” —**Teacher Participant**

Professional Development Partners

In 2023-2024, one agency also participated as a professional development partner. This professional development partner was retained as a third-year partner, with the goal of providing robust professional learning opportunities related to trauma-responsive practices by Dr. Barbara Sorrels. To achieve this goal, Dr. Barbara Sorrels facilitated two professional learning days with teachers, as well as a two-day fellowship for early childhood leaders. Together, this totaled 372 staff attending across all trainings.

2023-2024 OECP Partner Slot Chart Overview: Professional Development Partner					
Provider	Location	Slots	Classrooms	County	Rural
United Community Action Program, Inc.	Beggs EHS	17	1	Okmulgee	X
	Blackwell EHS	50	4	Kay	X
	Bristow EHS	83	7	Creek	
	Cleveland EHS	58	5	Pawnee	
	Cushing EHS	33	2	Payne	X
	Drumright EHS	25	3	Creek	
	Guthrie EHS	50	4	Logan	
	Henryetta EHS	33	3	Okmulgee	
	Hominy EHS	33	3	Osage	
	Okmulgee EHS	67	5	Okmulgee	
	Pawhuska EHS	41	4	Osage	
	Pawnee EHS	25	2	Pawnee	X
	Perry EHS	33	3	Noble	X
	Ponca City EHS	67	5	Kay	X
	Sapulpa EHS	32	4	Creek	
Sapulpa 0-5 EHS	59	4			
Stillwater EHS	16	2	Payne	X	
Stillwater 0-5 EHS	84	6			
Total		806	67		

Related Services

To further extend the reach of this grant and provide services to income-qualified families, OECP private funding supported the HealthySteps program which served 6,700 children during 2023-2024. The HealthySteps program partners child development experts and medical providers within clinical settings to support caregivers and improve the health and well-being of babies and toddlers. More specifically:

- Specialists of the HealthySteps program join pediatricians at well-child visits to provide developmental and behavioral services with screenings, referrals, and positive parenting guidance
- Families benefit from increased collaboration and education to help facilitate the child's healthy growth and development

In addition to supporting the HealthySteps program, OECP private funding also supported the English as a Second Language (ESL) program during the 2023-2024 program year. The ESL program offers classes to help caregivers learn to effectively communicate with their child's teachers and medical professionals in English. During 2023-2024, OECP served 222 caregivers.

Family Support

A unique feature of OECP is the focus on Family Support—the provision of staff and critical wrap-around services for caregivers and caretakers. 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 caregivers 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, employment training, and other employment services through formal and informal networks within the community

Over the course of the 2023-2024 school year, 12,740 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

“Mom stated to family support that she and her two girls needed to leave their current residence because of domestic violence. The Family Support Specialist was able to assist the family in finding a safe place to stay for the weekend. Further, mom was referred to Neighborhood Services Organization to find a more permanent solution. Mom was able to find a safe place to stay with a family member until she finds permanent housing.”

—**Sunbeam Family Services**

“A family requested information about approaching their child for hugs, as he rejects them with shouts and screams. The Family Support Specialist provided information to help the family to be affectionate while also respecting the child’s personal space.”

—**Crosstown Learning Center**

“Mom reported to the Family Support Specialist that she was concerned about her daughter’s speech development. The Family Support Specialist helped mom schedule an appointment with the family’s pediatrician to further discuss her worries and obtain a referral for a speech pathologist. Mom expressed gratitude to family support for helping her to navigate this issue.”

—**W.L. Hutcherson Family YMCA**

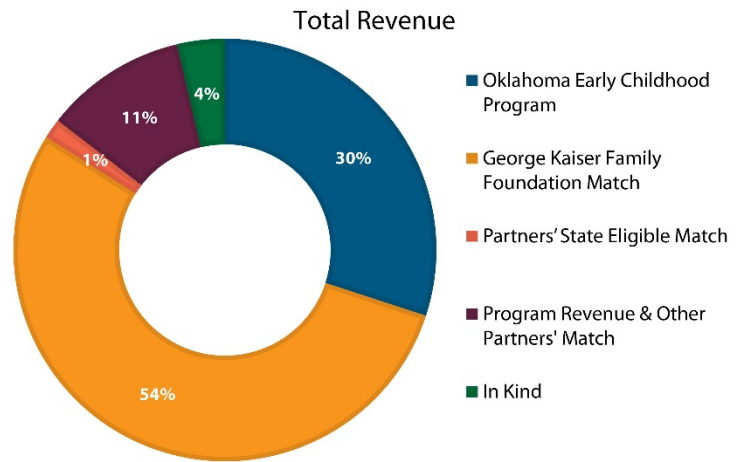
“With the help of the Family Advocate, mom was given budget and savings ideas to help her achieve her goal of purchasing a car. With the help of this information, mom successfully purchased a car.”

—**LIFT Community Action Agency**

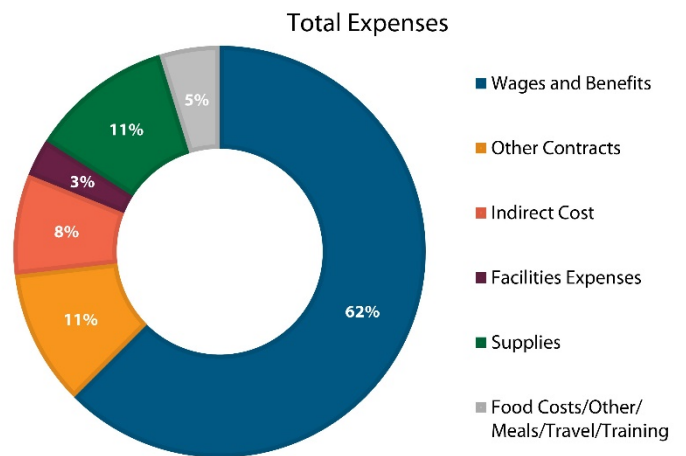
Funding and Budgets

Below are the revenue and expenditures for the 2023-2024 program year.

Revenue	
Oklahoma Early Childhood Program	12,000,000
George Kaiser Family Foundation Match	21,552,408
Partners' State Eligible Match	609,684
Program Revenue & Other Partners' Match	4,333,703
In Kind	1,456,998
Total Revenue	\$39,952,793



Expenditures	
Wages and Benefits	24,967,320
Other Contracts	4,281,254
Indirect Cost	3,154,177
Facilities Expenses	1,181,665
Supplies	4,474,582
Food Costs	1,092,383
Other	254,723
Meals/Travel/Training	546,690
Total Expenditures	\$39,952,793



OECP Administrative Staff

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

Sarah Score, Senior Project Management OECP Specialist

Traditional Partner Leadership

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

Wendy Swatek, Crossroads Youth & Family Services

Kristina Ellis, Crosstown Learning Center, Inc.

Darla Galyon, LIFT Community Action Agency, Inc.

Paula Gates, Sunbeam Family Services

Cindy Decker, Ph.D., Tulsa Educare

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: oeepdepartment@captulsa.org