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Interagency Coordinating Council
for Early Childhood Intervention

SOONERSTART

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

SOONERSTART

AGENCIES INVOLVED

Oklahoma State Department of Education

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

Oklahoma Health Care Authority

Oklahoma State Department of Health

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

Oklahoma Department of Human Services

2009

The

mission of the SoonerStart

Early Intervention Program is to

enhance the abilities of Oklahoma

infants and toddlers with disabilities and

developmental delays and strengthen the

capacity of their families to

support their development.

Annual Report Message from the Chair

The Interagency Coordinating Council leads the efforts of our community to see that all infants and toddlers are identified and receiving SoonerStart early intervention services. This annual report documents our ongoing commitment to early childhood intervention in Oklahoma.

Entering our 20th year of services, SoonerStart, led by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, served 13,532 infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities this past year. We appreciate the continued commitment to provide quality services to meet the unique developmental needs of each child necessary to improve their early development. Each child served through Sooner-Start has unique needs and unique stories, and parents have unique dreams for their children. In addition to the numbers provided in this report, we encourage you to read some of these stories included to realize the impact that such a service provides for children and their families.

Tara Lozano

ICC Chair and Parent

What is the Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Intervention?

Oklahoma's Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Intervention was established by a gubernatorial executive order in 1987, is appointed by the governor and is required by Public Law 99-457, Part C as amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Public Law 108-446. It is the responsibility of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth to administer the ICC, which in turn advises and assists the Oklahoma State Department of Education in fulfillment of its responsibilities. Through the Interagency Coordinating Council, OCCY works collaboratively with SoonerStart partners and other early childhood entities to improve services for Oklahoma's youngest children.

Who is the Lead Agency?

The Oklahoma Early Intervention Act has designated the Oklahoma State Department of Education as the lead agency for administration of the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program. OSDE is responsible for monitoring progress and providing oversight in the administration of early intervention services for infants and toddlers and their families to ensure that the intent of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is achieved in Oklahoma. Oversight by the OSDE includes the use of various processes for accountability.

What is SoonerStart?

SoonerStart is Oklahoma's Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months, who have developmental delays and their families. SoonerStart offers a collection of services families may need to promote healthy development in their child. SoonerStart can provide developmental screenings, evaluation, assessment and early intervention. When the lives of children and families are enhanced, the community will be enriched. The commitment of resources to early intervention will result in substantial, long-term savings to families, citizens, school systems and the state.

Early intervention services are designed to meet the developmental needs of each eligible child and the needs of the family related to enhancing the child's development.

SoonerStart Can Help Families:

- Learn about and enhance their child's development
- Find information and community resources
- Connect with parent-to-parent support networks

Does Early Intervention Work?

There are three primary reasons for early intervention for children with special needs – to enhance the child's development, to provide support and assistance to the family and to maximize the child's and family's benefit to society. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as amended in 2004 is the law that ensures that children with developmental needs and their families are given the best chance for a productive and healthy start. Decades of research show that investing in the lives of vulnerable children earlier rather than later can generate considerable returns for children, their families and society as a whole. High-quality early intervention programs can contribute significantly to improved outcomes in terms of school success, productivity in the workplace and responsible citizenship (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2008). The period between birth and 3 years is a time of rapid cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and motor development. SoonerStart has the opportunity to provide children with developmental delays a strong foundation for their educational, cognitive, physical, emotional and social development.

The Outcome:

- In fiscal year 2006, 452 children graduated from the program prior to their third birthday
- In fiscal year 2007, 352 children graduated from the program prior to their third birthday
- In fiscal year 2008-2009, 586 children graduated from the program prior to their third birthday

Who is Eligible?

Children eligible for early intervention services in the state of Oklahoma are infants and toddlers age birth to 36 months who are developmentally delayed.

Developmentally delayed means children of the chronological age group birth through 2 who fall under one of five criteria:

- Exhibit a delay in their developmental age compared to their chronological age of 50 percent
- Score two standard deviations below the mean in one of the following areas or in a subdomain of one of the following developmental areas:
  - cognitive
  - communication
  - adaptive
  - physical
  - social or emotional
- Exhibit a delay in their developmental age compared to their chronological age of 25 percent.
- Score 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two or more of the following areas or in a sub-domain of two or more of the following developmental areas:
  - cognitive
  - communication
  - adaptive
  - physical
  - social or emotional
- Have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in delay.

How Many Children are Referred?

New referrals are received by all 77 Oklahoma counties. Almost half of the referrals are children under 12 months of age. Data shows that Oklahoma's SoonerStart Early Intervention Program exceeded the target for serving children with developmental delays under the age of 1.

4,314 – average monthly caseload

Oklahoma Early Intervention Referrals

- During fiscal year 2009, the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program received 9,057 referrals.

Our 2007-2008 Investment Resulted In:

- 13,534 children, ages birth to 3, received screening, evaluation, assessment and services.

Ages	%
< 12 months	45
12-23 months	28
24-36 months	27

How Many Children are Referred? (Continued)

Race:	%
White (not Hispanic)	64.00
African American	14.00
Hispanic	12.00
American Indian	9.00
Asian	1.00

Data Source: SDE EI database 2009 extract

Reasons for referral range from concerns about speech development, prematurity, developmental delays, automatic qualifiers and motor delays.

Characteristics of children referred to SoonerStart:

Gender: 41 percent are females
59 percent are males

Language:

Ninety-four of these referrals listed English as the child's primary language. Only five percent of the referrals noted that they needed an interpreter.

Who Connects Families with the SoonerStart Program?

Referral Sources:	%
Families, relatives or friends	30.00
Oklahoma State Department of Health	9.02
Oklahoma Department of Human Services	24.75
Local schools and community programs	11.01
Health care providers and hospitals	24.72
SoonerStart	2.12
Social Service Agencies	1.8
Other	2.52

The SoonerStart Program receives referrals by telephone, fax, mail and e-mail to connect families with the supports and services they need. Each family is assigned a resource coordinator whose job is to help the family coordinate the early intervention process, to access services and resources and to work with the family to meet their unique needs.

During fiscal year 2009, 33 percent of the families referred themselves or were referred by a health care provider (29.12 percent) for services.

to access services and resources

CALL 211

What Services are Available?

SoonerStart is designed to help families maximize their child's potential. Parents and service providers are partners in developing and implementing a program to achieve the best possible results for the child. SoonerStart services are provided by qualified personnel: child development specialists, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, registered dieticians, resource coordinators, speech and language pathologists, social workers and many others.

Depending on individual needs, SoonerStart offers one or a combination of the following services:

SoonerStart Services

- Assistive technology services
- Audiology – hearing
- Early identification with screening, evaluation and assessment services
- Family training, counseling and home visits
- Medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- Service coordination for toddlers and their families
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Special instruction
- Psychological services
- Speech-language pathology
- Social work services
- Vision services
- Nursing services

How are Services Delivered?

Natural Environments is the term used in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA 2004, to refer to settings that are typical for infants and toddlers. It is used as a contrast to more traditional treatment settings such as clinical or medical-based programs and includes families' homes, early care and education programs and other community settings. When caregivers maximize learning opportunities in the child's daily routines and activities, then the child has many opportunities for intervention every day, throughout the day and in a meaningful and responsive manner (Woods, J. 2008, providing early intervention services in natural environments).

The environment has the greatest potential to influence the child's developing brain during a child's first few years of life.

As required by the U.S. Department of Education, the Oklahoma State Department of Education provided U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, with information regarding infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities from birth through 2 who received early intervention services. The chart below shows a point in time count of infants and toddlers served, not a cumulative count.

December 1, 2008
Natural Environment point in time child count data:

Natural Environment	Home Community	Other Setting	Child Care
98%	93%	3%	2%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Special Education Services, Part C Child Count

U.S. Department of Education Determination Letters on State Implementation of the IDEA

In accordance with Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, each state has in place a state performance plan that evaluates the state's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part C and describes how the state will improve such implementation.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education received their determination letter identifying the SoonerStart Early Intervention program as meets the requirements and purposes of the IDEA. The Oklahoma State Department of Education Special Education Services provided valid and reliable data reflecting correction or high levels of compliance for timeliness of services, transition and monitoring. The ICC commends the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program for their continuous quality enhancement efforts. Oklahoma can be proud of the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program.

The IDEA details four categories for determination by the United States Secretary:

- Meets the requirements and purposes of the IDEA.
- Needs assistance in implementing the requirements of the IDEA.
- Needs intervention in implementing the requirements of the IDEA.
- Needs substantial intervention in implementing the requirements of the IDEA.

State Monitoring

The SoonerStart Early Intervention Program uses a quality assurance process to monitor federal and state compliance. The Oklahoma State Department of Education must report annually to the public on the performance of each SoonerStart early intervention site located in the state on the 14 federal indicators, such as timely services, child find, child and family outcomes and transition.

SoonerStart Early Intervention Program Summary of Site Determinations for Federal Fiscal Year 2006-2007

- In 2007-2008, 20 sites results indicated Meets Requirements.
- Sixteen sites have been in Meets Requirements for three years in a row.
    - Four sites improved to Meets Requirements from Needs Assistance
    - Six sites are in Needs Assistance.
- Overall state results was Meets Requirements.

The SoonerStart program is required to have procedures to resolve disputes and to investigate complaints. The dispute resolution data are counts of the written, signed complaints; mediation requests; and hearing requests for children age birth to 3.

There were two written complaints received by the Oklahoma State Department of Education in state fiscal year 2009. Both complaints were investigated. One complaint required action and findings of noncompliance with federal law. The second complaint was withdrawn by the family. There was one hearing request filed and one resolved without a hearing.

The Special Education Resolution Center (SERC)

The program is the result of a contract between Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma State Department of Education for the purpose of managing the special education due process hearing system for the State of Oklahoma. The duties of SERC have been expanded to include innovative programs to assist parents and SoonerStart to settle disputes at the earliest stage possible. At no cost to the parents, SERC provides highly trained mediators to assist with disputes, which may develop at any time during the relationship of the parties over special education issues. Additionally, SERC also provides highly trained facilitators during required resolution sessions of due process.

Part C Allocations to Oklahoma

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides funding to states to plan, monitor and provide services for children from birth to three years of age with developmental delays and disabilities. Most of the resources made available to Oklahoma fund direct services.

Interesting Facts and Data About SoonerStart

The financial crisis faced by the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program today results from not receiving the requested funds for State Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009. The SFY2009 appropriation left SoonerStart funding $1,353,329.00 short of what was necessary to provide services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided a one-time large increment in IDEA Part C funding of $5,272,256.00. The State Department of Education received the first 50 percent on April 1, 2009, and obligated $1,354,329.00 of the ARRA IDEA Part C funds for direct services to infants and toddlers and to help avert cuts in the SoonerStart program. Drastic action was required to simply continue SoonerStart services this current year.

Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Intervention

The ICC met face to face in June to do its annual strategic planning. We had frank conversations about funding sources and family cost participation. The much needed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds has helped with the program's budget shortfall, however, it was agreed by the Council that further investigation was needed to support the SoonerStart program. Oklahoma did a cost analysis several years ago on what the program might do to pull in fees compared to what it cost to implement the system. The ICC agreed to look at other states' hard data and identify what is needed for SoonerStart to determine whether it makes sense financially to go with a cost sharing system.

This is the first year Oklahoma will be reporting on Early Childhood Outcomes in the State Performance Plan to the U.S. Department of Education.

Success Stories

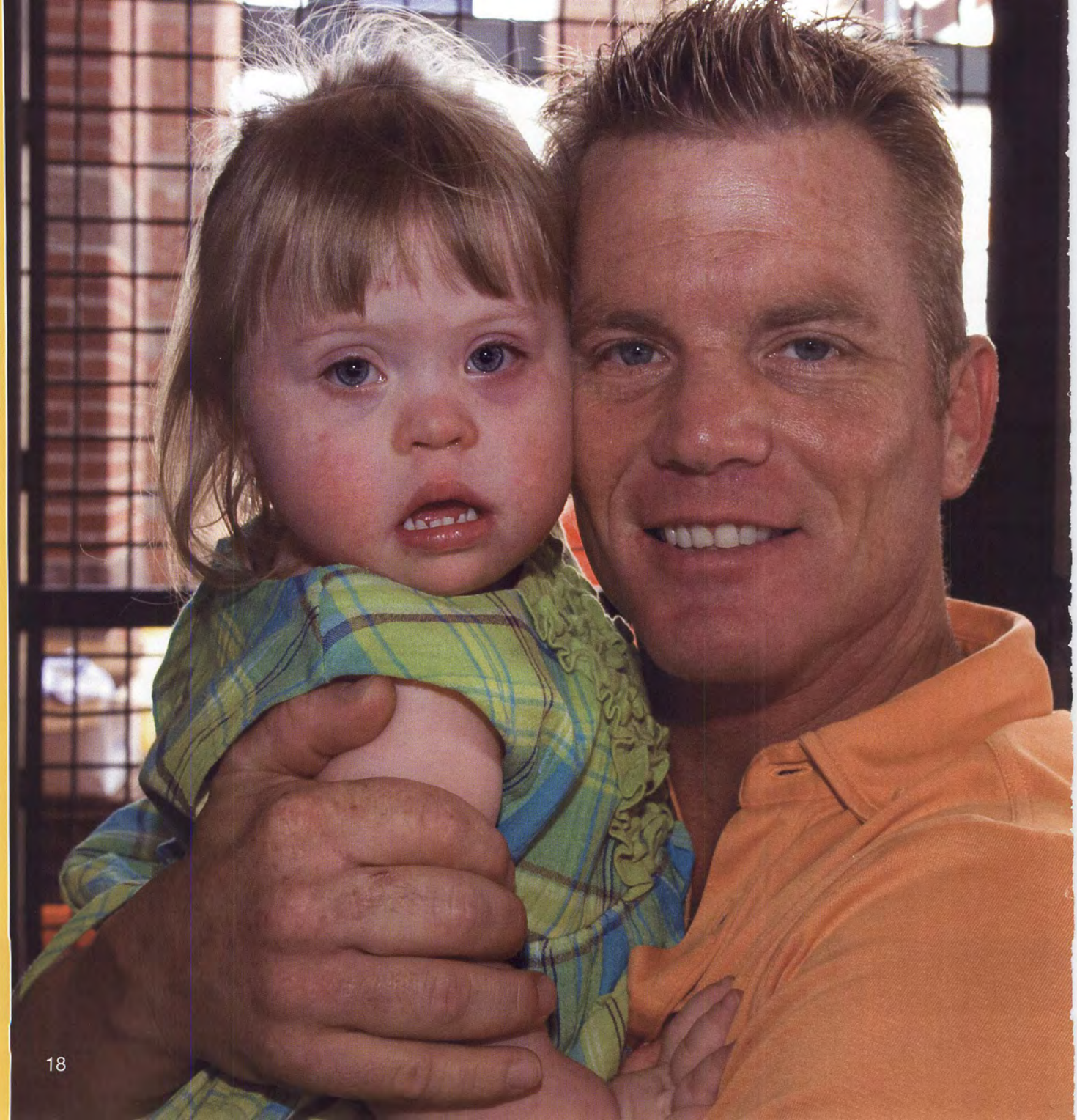
"My name is Jenifer, and I live in Oklahoma City. I have a son who was born prematurely, at 26 ½ weeks, and then was diagnosed with autism at age 3. Since he was born so early, he qualified for SoonerStart early intervention services. Their services helped us to make sure that my son was meeting his developmental milestones, and also helped us to identify when there might be a problem that we should have evaluated further.

"I feel that SoonerStart is a very important service, because they, along with the family, can identify the child's needs, and then refer them to the appropriate service provider, which will then help to enhance the child's development. SoonerStart utilizes a family-centered program philosophy. In this way, family members are involved in every aspect of service planning and delivery. SoonerStart recognizes that partnerships are important and also encourages families to get involved with the program in various ways, to include program development and implementation, training, advocacy, and also working with staff and professionals."

"I truly credit SoonerStart with the fact that Jeremy is so mobile and walking around today. They were just as determined to get him to walk as he was determined not to use the trash-can stander, walker or gait belt. SoonerStart is a valuable resource for families." (Lora, mom to Jeremy)

Parent Survey

- In an effort to continue to evaluate the SoonerStart program and determine parent satisfaction, the Oklahoma State Department of Education Special Education Services provided parents with a copy of a parent survey developed by the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring.
- In 2008, 98.79 percent of families reported that SoonerStart helped the family know their rights.
- In 2008, 96.60 percent families reported that SoonerStart helped the family communicate their children's needs.
- In 2008, 98.40 percent families reported that SoonerStart helped the family help their children develop and learn.



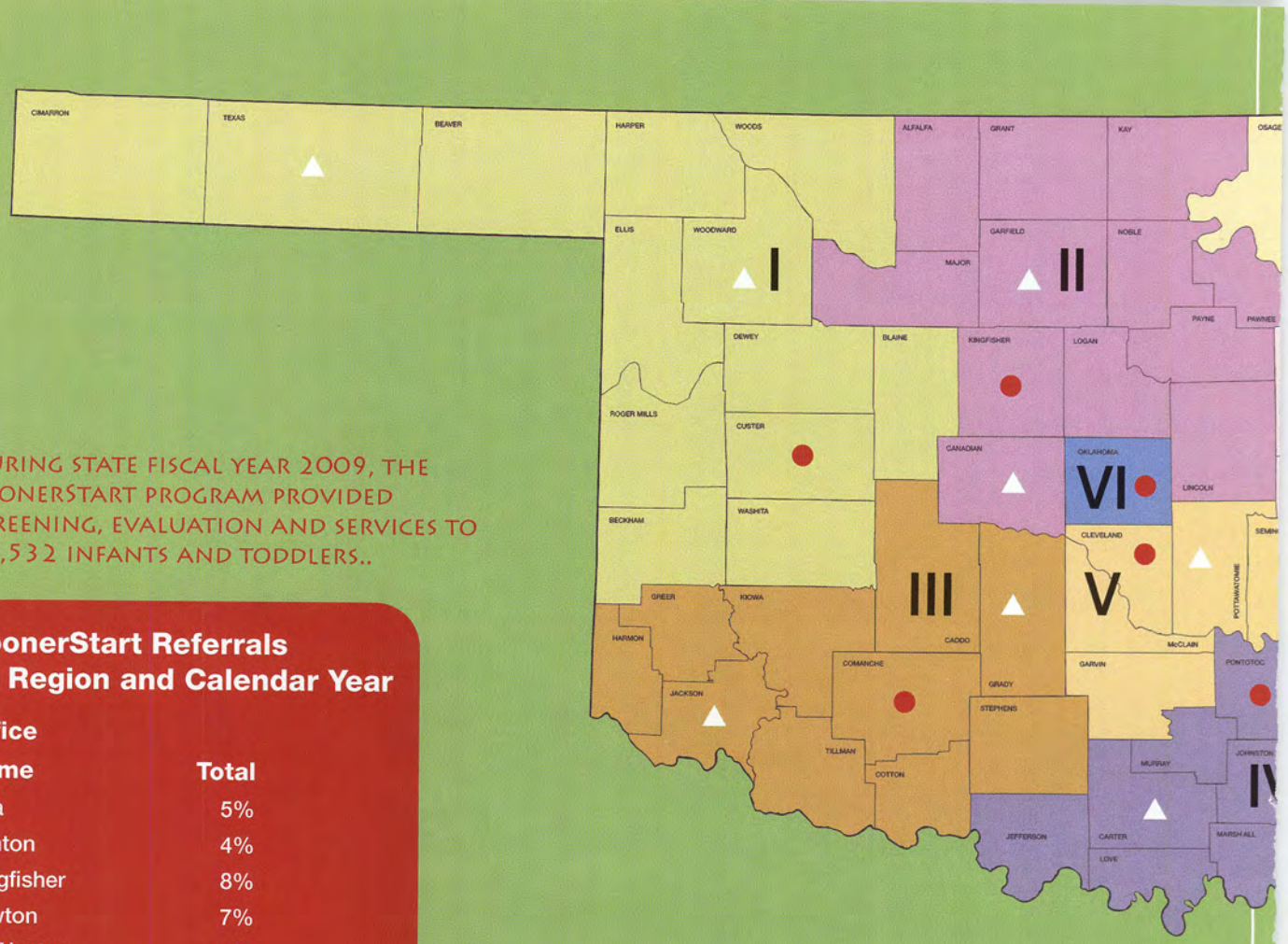
What's New with SoonerStart?

SoonerStart – Oklahoma's Early Intervention Program – Policies and Procedures 2009
The Oklahoma State Department of Education Special Education Services revised the SoonerStart Policies and Procedures Manual and will release the document for public comment in fiscal year 2010.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education received a comprehensive program review report.
Key program areas reviewed:

- General Supervision
- Service Pathway
- Family Issues

Statewide Training and Regional Support Team Training
STARS continue to provide a web-based orientation and a CORE training track for all SoonerStart staff and contractors.

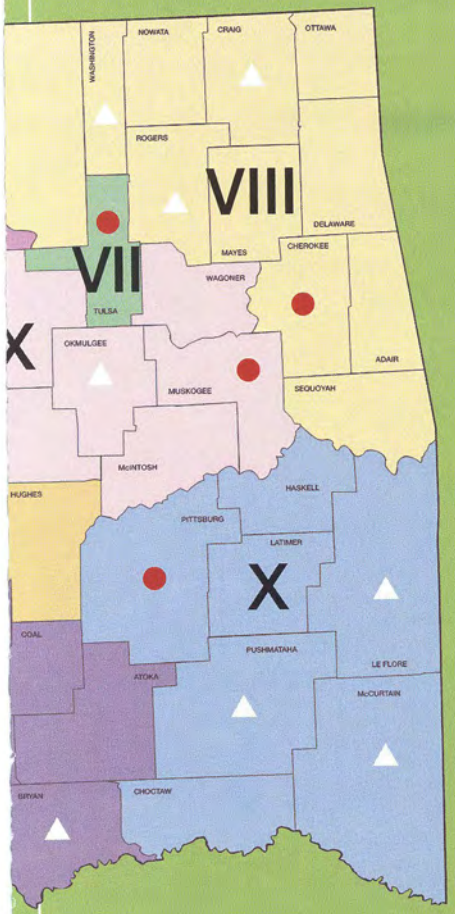


During state fiscal year 2009, the SoonerStart program provided screening, evaluation and services to 13,532 infants and toddlers..

SoonerStart Referrals by Region and Calendar Year

Office Name	Total
Ada	5%
Clinton	4%
Kingfisher	8%
Lawton	7%
McAlester	4%
Muskogee	10%
Norman	10%
Oklahoma County	24%
Tahlequah	10%
Tulsa	18%
Statewide	9,055

Regional Offices
Satellite Offices



Regional Offices

Satellite Offices

Region I
Texas, Beaver, Cimarron, Custer, Beckham, Blaine, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Roger Mills, Washita, Woods and Woodward Counties

Region II
Canadian, Garfield, Major, Alfalfa, Grant, Kingfisher, Lincoln, Logan, Payne, Pawnee, Noble and Kay Counties

Region III
Comanche, Caddo, Cotton, Jackson, Greer, Harmon, Kiowa, Tillman, Grady and Stephens Counties

Region IV
Carter, Jefferson, Love, Pontotoc, Murray, Johnston, Bryan, Marshall, Coal and Atoka Counties

Region V
Cleveland, Garvin, McClain, Pottawatomie, Seminole and Hughes Counties

Region VI
Oklahoma County

Region VII
Tulsa County

Region VIII
Craig, Ottawa, Cherokee, Adair, Delaware, Mayes, Sequoyah, Washington, Osage, Nowata and Rogers Counties

Region IX
Creek, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, McIntosh, Muskogee and Wagoner Counties

Region X
Pittsburg, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pushmataha and Choctaw Counties

SoonerStart Contacts

Region I

Texas, Beaver, Cimarron, Custer, Beckham, Blaine, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Roger Mills, Washita, Woods and Woodward Counties

Regional Coordinator:
Jeanette Atha
Custer County Health Department
3030 Custer Avenue
Clinton, OK 73601
Office (580) 323-2100, Fax (580) 323-2282

Region II

Canadian, Garfield, Major, Alfalfa, Grant, Kingfisher, Lincoln, Logan, Payne, Pawnee, Noble and Kay Counties

Regional Coordinator:
Lori Jackson
Kingfisher County Health Department
124 East Sheridan, Room 101
Kingfisher, OK 73750
(405) 375-3008, Fax (405) 375-5978

Region III

Comanche, Caddo, Cotton, Jackson, Greer, Harmon, Kiowa, Tillman, Grady and Stephens Counties

Regional Coordinator:
Robbyn Morris
Grady County Health Department
205 Chickasha Ave., Suite 4
Chickasha, OK 73018
(405) 224-1050, Fax (405) 222-3324

Region IV

Carter, Jefferson, Love, Pontotoc, Murray, Johnston, Bryan, Marshall, Coal and Atoka Counties

Regional Coordinator:
LouAnne Mullens
Pontotoc County Health Department
1630 East Beverly
Ada, OK 74820-2645
(580) 332-2011, Fax (580) 332-9537

Region V

Cleveland, Garvin, McClain, Pottawatomie, Seminole and Hughes Counties

Regional Coordinator:
Stephanie Kite
Cleveland County Health Department
250 12th Ave. N.E.
Norman, OK 73071-2800
(405) 321-4048, Fax (405) 364-6761

Region VI

Oklahoma County

Regional Coordinator:
Jenni Replogle
Oklahoma County SoonerStart
4545 N. Lincoln Blvd., Suite 250
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
(405) 271-9477, Fax (405) 271-9497

Region VII

Tulsa County

Regional Coordinator:
Ellen Schmeder
Tulsa County SoonerStart
209 S. Lakewood
Tulsa, OK 74112-1713
(918) 835-8691, Fax (918) 836-4505

Region VIII

Craig, Ottawa, Cherokee, Adair, Delaware, Mayes, Sequoyah, Washington, Osage, Nowata and Rogers Counties

Regional Coordinator:
Michele Presley
Cherokee County Health Department
906 S. College
Tahlequah, OK 74464
(918) 458-6577, Fax (918) 458-6592

Region IX

Creek, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, McIntosh, Muskogee and Wagoner Counties

Regional Coordinator:
Melissa Green
Muskogee County Health Department
530 S. 34th St.
Muskogee, OK 74401
(918) 683-0321, Fax (918) 683-8053

Region X

Pittsburg, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pushmataha and Choctaw Counties

Regional Coordinator:
Shaun Kondos
Pittsburg County
Health Department
620 S 3rd St.
McAlester, OK 74501
(918) 423-1267, Fax (918) 423-2948

ICC Membership

The ICC is composed of a minimum of 15 governor-appointed members as specified in federal law including:

- parents of young children with disabilities;
- public and private providers of early intervention services; and
- representatives from the state legislature, higher education
- agencies that provide or pay for early intervention services.

Agency Representatives

Martha Buchanan
Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Raymond Haddock
Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Terrie Fritz
Oklahoma Health Care Authority

Misty Kimbrough
Oklahoma State Department of Education

Edd Rhoades
Oklahoma State Department of Health

Frank Stone
Oklahoma Insurance Department

Others Appointed by Governor

Lynn Rambo-Jones ..... Edmond
Candye Chavez ..... Oklahoma City

Parent Representatives

Lathonya Shivers ..... Oklahoma City
Heather Pike ..... Edmond
Tara Lozano, ICC Chair ..... Oklahoma City
Amy Owens ..... McAlester
Tammy Rogers ..... Oklahoma City

Legislative Representatives

Senator Sean Burrage ..... Claremore
Representative Jeannie McDaniel ..... Tulsa

Provider Representatives

Paula Brown, Head Start Agency ..... Pawnee
Shari Kinney, County Administrator ..... Norman
Jim Lewis, M.D. ..... Tahlequah
Jan Matthews ..... Oklahoma City

Personnel Preparation Representatives

Marti Ferretti, MPH, PT
OUHSC - Division of Rehabilitation Sciences
Kermit McMurry, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Children Leave the SoonerStart Program Every Day

"Gracie's resource coordinator and therapists have been activeluy involved in advocating for what is best for Gracie as she starts to transition into our school district."

Many children graduate because they no longer need the SoonerStart program. Children also transition into school district special education programs or other community-based programs when they reach the age of 3. When a child is not eligible for SoonerStart services information about community resources is provided to the family.

Infants and Toddlers Exiting the Program

88.15% children exiting Part C received timely transition planning with transition steps and services.

97.12% children exiting Part C and potentially eligible for school services, notification to the local school occurred.

84.5% children exiting Part C and potentially eligible for school services received a transition planning conference.

(Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education, Part C Child Count)

Early intervention = brighter tomorrows for Oklahoma children.

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OKLAHOMA
OKDHS
EXCELLENCE
OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES