



Partnership goals

In order to strengthen the quality of state-funded early learning programs and ensure that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn, Oklahoma is prioritizing the alignment of the state's early learning standards and assessments, including selection and use of an early learning inventory (ELI). REL Southwest is working with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) and other partners such as Head Start State Collaboration Office and Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness to support the following goals:

- ▶ Examine and address issues of equity in Oklahoma's state-funded early childhood programs.
- ▶ Support Oklahoma's use of an ELI to assess children's knowledge and skills at the start of kindergarten.

Projects

In partnership with REL Southwest, members engage in a learning cycle that includes training, coaching, technical support, applied research, and engagement activities to support the goals of the SWECE partnership. This work reinforces member capacity to use research in solving high-leverage education challenges. To learn more about our current projects, please visit <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/partnerships/swece.aspx>.

Over the course of the partnership, REL Southwest and members will support Oklahoma's priorities to align the state's early learning standards and assessments and examine issues of equity in state-funded early childhood programs. Through partnership-driven research and technical support, REL Southwest will provide lessons learned from other states and coaching on understanding the key characteristics and selection of an ELI. REL Southwest will also provide research and technical support for field testing the ELI.

To help examine and address issues of equity in state-funded early childhood programs, REL Southwest will review evidence about which subpopulations of children are less likely to participate in Oklahoma's public prekindergarten (preK) program and provide coaching on survey development to collect information on program characteristics to help gain a better understanding of the types of curricula and evidence-based practices being implemented across the state's public preK classrooms.

Engaging our region

Engaging stakeholders is crucial to the REL mission of translating research into practice. Sharing research, learnings from training and coaching sessions, and insights from partnership members with stakeholders in the region is critical to Oklahoma's goals to examine and address issues of equity in early childhood programs and to support the state's use of an ELI. For example, REL Southwest conducted a [webinar](#) describing the use of early learning inventories that is available to view online.

Visit the [REL Southwest website](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) to learn more about our work. You can also sign up for the [REL Southwest Spotlight newsletter](#) for regular updates and browse our upcoming [events](#).

Investing in the future: Giving every child a strong start

A child's earliest years are a crucial period of development.¹ But risk factors, such as poverty and trauma, can result in developmental delays that compound over time.²



Studies show that quality early childhood education can help close gaps caused by risk factors and boost young children's development.³



Early childhood education in Oklahoma

Oklahoma is committed to giving all children a strong start through access to quality early childhood education, including Head Start, licensed child care subsidized through the Department of Human Services, and free public preK for all 4-year-olds.⁴

Oklahoma's universal public preK

Participation

99% of school districts participating⁵
73% of 4-year-olds enrolled⁵

Class size

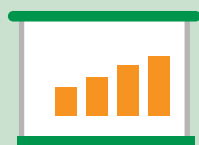


20-child class size limit²
10:1 child-to-staff ratio²

Teacher requirements



At least a bachelor's degree⁵
Certified in early childhood⁵
75 hours of professional development⁵



Research on Oklahoma's preK program has found gains in children's **language and mathematics** development, with **Black, Hispanic, and low-income children benefiting the most.**⁶



Every \$1 invested in Oklahoma's preK program returns at least \$2 for the state through improved overall health and productivity and reduced crime and social spending.⁶

References

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