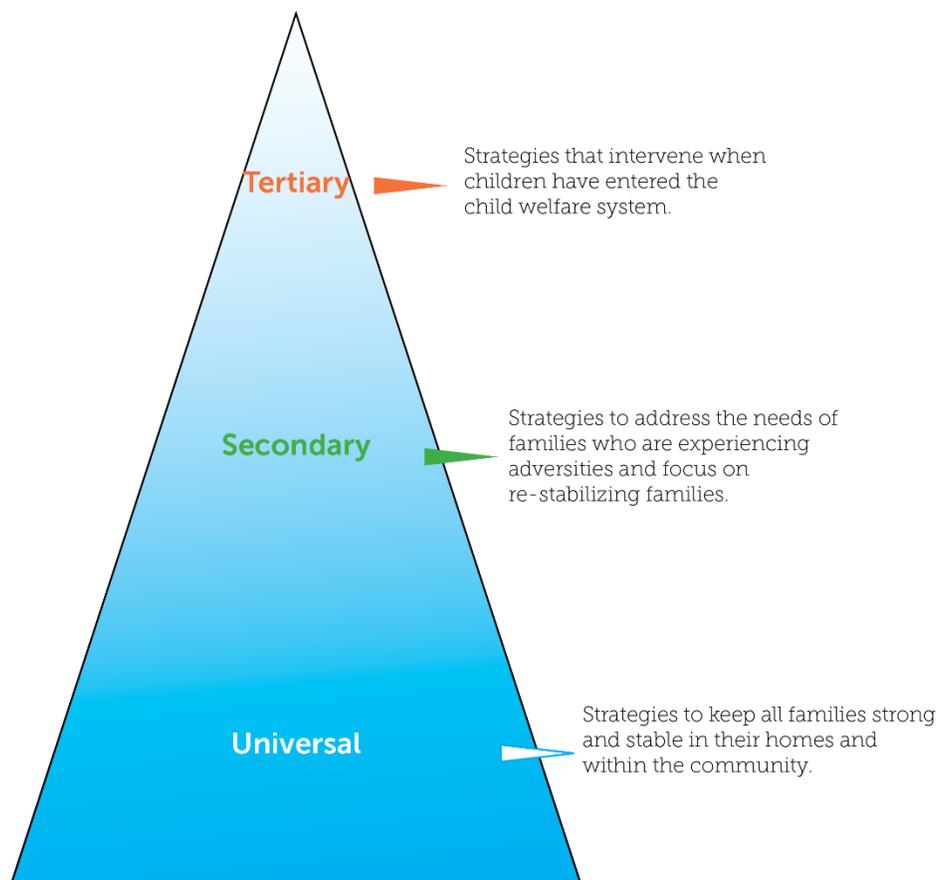


OKFutures Strategic Plan and Child Welfare Related Provisions Through Lens of Public Health Pyramid

The [OKFutures Strategic Plan](#) is a product of a federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) awarded to the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in December 2018. This plan was created to align with the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to ensure a seamless system of early care and education (ECCE) services is accessible to children and their families who are involved or at-risk of becoming involved in the child welfare system. State level leadership jointly crafted strategies to ensure the ECCE system and child welfare services have a shared vision and common goals.

This document includes a summary of OKFutures objectives at the intersection of early childhood and child welfare. Objectives listed below are organized to align with the public health model tiers of intervention.



Primary/Universal Intervention – For all; Preventative; Proactive

- **Objective 1.5 subpoint 3:** Establish cross-sector community transition teams that provide education and resources to families about transitions throughout the early years prior to school entry, and which include representatives from Head Start/Early Head Start, Tribal ECCE programs, child welfare, child care, teachers, parents, and schools.
- **Objective 4.7:** Increase the availability of programs that build healthy attachments between parents and children to combat the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences.
 - Identify risk factors among families, identify children experiencing adverse childhood experiences, and be trauma reactive in making appropriate referrals.
 - Build the capacity of the State Department of Health and Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' joint efforts to ensure parents are attuned to their children and open to new ways of relating to them through the Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) framework.
 - Expand the reach of specialized interventions offered through the Departments of Human Services, Health, Mental Health, and other providers such as infant massage and behavior management training, which promote healthy bonding and positive parent-child interactions.
- **Objective 5.2 subpoint 2:** Expand the scope of the OKDHS Human Services Child Welfare Program's education, outreach and liaison office to include information for parents of young children.
- **Objective 5.2 subpoint 6:** Create more equitable opportunities for families with young children to live healthy, stable lives by offering education and training services that are accessible to working parents and families with diverse needs, including offerings on trauma-informed care, distinguishing healthy development from more serious behavioral health issues, and the value of accessing support services.
- **Objective 5.3 subpoint 2:** Leverage existing trusted relationships with pediatricians, home visitors, ECCE providers, child welfare workers and other highly-trusted sources to deliver core messages and promote increased use of resources.

Primary Prevention Services Available in Oklahoma:

1. **Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program (pre-k).** Operated by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, universal pre-k entitles children who turn 4 on or before September 1 to attend half-day or full-day pre-k.
2. **Head Start/Early Head Start.** Head Start has followed federal standards to serve children living below the federal poverty level through an array of services to support school readiness and,

ultimately, successful transitions to kindergarten. Early Head Start serves pregnant women and children under age 3.

3. **American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start/Early Head Start.** Federal Head Start/Early Head Start funds are awarded to tribal governments and implemented with tailored supports for AIAN communities. Fifteen American Indian Tribal organizations in Oklahoma provide Head Start/Early Head Start programs.
4. **Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP).** This federal initiative expands ECCE quality and availability by merging Early Head Start and child care subsidy funding to serve low-income infants, toddlers, and their families.
5. **Educare.** Educare is a national model for comprehensive, high-quality ECCE for low-income children aged birth to 5 and their families. Educare blends public and private funding to provide services aimed at breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty, and provides full-day, full-year ECCE and family support services. Two Educare programs operate four schools in Oklahoma: three in Tulsa and one in Oklahoma City. Each Educare program serves 150 to 200 children a year. Educare leverages federal (Head Start/Early Head Start, Child Care), state (Oklahoma Early Childhood Program), and private resources.
6. **Oklahoma Child Care.** The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) operates child care licensing, Quality Rating and Improvement System (Reaching for the Stars), and the state child care subsidy program.
7. **Tribal Child Care.** Across Oklahoma, 62 child care programs are operated by tribes, 81 state-licensed programs (homes and centers) contract with tribes to provide care, and 3 additional programs are licensed by the Native American Coalition of Tulsa.
8. **State-Administered Home Visiting.** The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) administers the state's home visiting programs: Children First, SafeCare, and Start Right. Program models are Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and SafeCare Augmented.
9. **Tribal Home Visiting.** The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is the only current tribal MIECHV grantee in Oklahoma. The Parents As Teachers program model is delivered to and enhanced by culturally relevant activities for tribal members.
10. **IDEA Part B and Part C.** The Oklahoma State Department of Education, Special Education Services, is the lead agency for administration of SoonerStart (Part C) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). OSDE contracts with the Oklahoma State Department of Health and directly employs regional staff to deliver statewide early intervention services to children with disabilities and developmental delays from birth to three. Local school districts provide Part B

services once children turn 3. Child Welfare Services (CWS) policy requires child welfare staff to refer children younger than three years of age who are victims of substantiated child abuse or neglect to SoonerStart.

11. **Child Guidance.** The Child Guidance Program provides center-based screening, assessment, parenting, and treatment services to all families with children birth to age 13 regardless of income on a sliding fee scale. The Oklahoma Child Care Warmline and the Oklahoma Child Care Mental Health Consultation network are administered through the Child Guidance Program, and these services are supported through the CCDF and targeted to child care providers who receive subsidy payments.
12. **Early Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT).** Oklahomans under the age of 21 who are receiving medical benefits may receive EPSDT, a set of services administered by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA). It authorizes, as indicated in its name, screening, and diagnostic and treatment services. Mental health services, when deemed medically necessary, qualify under EPSDT.
13. **Additional Mixed-Delivery System Components.** In consideration of the mixed-delivery system, Oklahoma recognizes the role that many nontraditional early childhood programs play. License-exempt child care providers such as family, friend, and neighbor caregivers or part-time programs are able to meet the needs of many vulnerable and underserved families. Nutrition programs such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are critical to support healthy development. Libraries are valuable resources for families to access early literacy resources, and access to internet and technology is especially valuable in rural communities. Health centers and physicians are trusted sources for families in supporting their child's development and early literacy through 86 Reach Out and Read programs. Finally, faith-based organizations of all denominations and religions are sources of important support and information to families of young children.

Secondary Need-Based Intervention – For those At-Risk; Group Interventions

- Objective 3.4 subpoint 1: Streamline consent processes for services for children living with kin caregivers, particularly grandparents, to access to Early Childhood Care and Education and other support services.
- Objective 3.4 subpoint 2: Provide evidence-based home visiting programs and community supports to all children and their families who are eligible for the Family First Prevention Services Act.
- Objective 3.4 subpoint 5: Train early care and education providers in the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework and other trauma-responsive strategies in their interactions with children, parents, and kin caregivers.
- Objective 3.4 subpoint 6: Offer “front porch” access to more comprehensive health and social services to increase quality in family child care homes where children are at risk of becoming involved in the welfare system.
- Objective 4.6: Provide families with mental health or substance use disorders the services and supports they need to keep their family in tact.
 - Address the needs of pregnant women impacted by substance use disorder (SUD) through integrated prenatal care and SUD treatment, as well as those of infants affected by neonatal abstinence syndrome.
 - Emphasize the use of family-centered treatment, wherein each family member has a treatment plan and receives individual and family services.
 - Ensure participation in ECCE services is built into treatment plans for pregnant women and caregivers impacted by SUD.
 - Create portals of access through embedded behavioral health consultants in primary care facilities, clinics, and schools.

Secondary Need-Based Intervention Services Available in Oklahoma:

1. **Child Guidance.** The Child Guidance Program provides center-based screening, assessment, parenting, and treatment services to all families regardless of income on a sliding fee scale. The Oklahoma Child Care Warmline and the Oklahoma Child Care Mental Health Consultation network are administered through the Child Guidance Program, and these services are supported through the CCDF and targeted to child care providers who receive subsidy payments.
2. **SafeCare.** SafeCare® is an evidence-based parent training program for the prevention of child maltreatment. The program focuses on three key factors that are universally important for all families: improving the relationship between parents and their children, keeping homes safe, and keeping children healthy. SafeCare® as a high-risk prevention program is designed to prevent involvement in child welfare due to child maltreatment. In Oklahoma,

additional components to address managing child behavior and intimate partner violence have been integrated into the model. This program is provided by community agencies in Oklahoma and Tulsa County through contracts with DHS and OSDH, and in Northeast Oklahoma through Cherokee Nation. This program is for families not involved with child welfare and have no more than two prior child abuse and neglect referrals accepted by OKDHS.

3. **Parent Assistance and Sexual Abuse (SA) treatment services.** These services provide education, support, and child care while parents attend education and counseling sessions as well as SA treatment services that provide individual, family, and group counseling for children and families affected by SA. These services are contracted through OKDHS with agencies throughout the state and provided to families and children at risk for or involved in child abuse and neglect.
4. **Comprehensive Home-Based Services (CHBS) and Parent Aide Services (PAS).** In CHBS, families receive assistance on child-rearing and ways to improve parenting, housekeeping and budgeting skills. Services are provided in the home and community. Both are provided statewide by community agencies through contracts with OKDHS. Services are home-based, structured according to the needs of the family, and are provided to families that are involved with child welfare.
5. **Intensive Safety Services (ISS).** An intensive family preservation program provided statewide by community agencies through contracts with DHS. ISS are home-based and serve families at imminent risk of removal with a more immediate and intensive response. ISS utilize Master's level providers who deliver frequent services in the home three to five times a week for 4 to 6 weeks. ISS providers utilize individual and family assessment and analysis tools to determine the needs, and based on those needs are able to directly provide Motivational Interviewing (MI), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and Healthy Relationships. Additionally, ISS providers are responsible for connecting the family to appropriate community resources and assisting the family with any barriers to accessing these resources.

Tertiary Early Intervention – Specific Trauma-Responsive Interventions

- Objective 2.4 subpoint 6: Implement an enhanced rate for providers who serve infants and toddlers in the child welfare system, whether in foster care or living with their family as part of Oklahoma’s Family Centered Services Program (FCS)/Family First Prevention Services Act Prevention Program.
- Objective 3.4 subpoint 3: Require that, when a young child in foster care is enrolled in an early childhood program, maintaining that enrollment is a prioritized factor when a change in foster care placement is necessary.
- Objective 3.4 subpoint 4: Create a transition plan for young children in foster care enrolled in ECCE programs to increase continuity in early learning by supporting placement or continued placement in a stable ECCE setting.
- Objective 3.4 subpoint 7: Prioritize an adequate number of slots in early childhood care and education programs to enroll children involved in the child welfare system, whether receiving family preservation services or placed in foster care.
- Objective 3.5 subpoint 3: Require annual training for all DHS Child Welfare Care Workers on why and how to connect children in out of home placements to ECCE services.
- Objective 4.3 subpoint 3: Expand existing home-based parenting models approved for families eligible to receive services under the Family First Prevention Services Act.
- Objective 4.8: Increase the number of care and support options for justice and child welfare involved families with young children.
 - Create a cohesive system of services and referrals to ensure that all young children and their families who are eligible for the Family First Prevention Services Act are connected to ECCE services and supports.
 - Implement the Title IV-E Prevention Services Program to ensure that all young children and their families eligible for the FFPSA are able to address substance use disorder and mental health treatment needs.
 - Recruit and contract with child care providers to serve children when family emergencies occur.

Tertiary Early Interventions Available in Oklahoma:

1. **Department of Human Services.** There are multiple DHS programs that provide services for the same population served by CWS. Strategic planning occurs at all agency levels to promote safety, permanency, and well-being for Oklahoma children and families. The DHS strategic plan is to strengthen Oklahoma individuals, workforce, communities, and practices. Title IV-A (TANF) funding is utilized to specifically support CWS programs within each component of the service continuum. Other programs delivered by DHS that support families served by CWS include:

- a. **Child Welfare Services (CWS).** CWS is the DHS division responsible for administering the state's child welfare services to identify, treat, and prevent child abuse and neglect ensuring reasonable efforts are made to maintain and protect the child in the child's own home. When this is not feasible, CWS provides a placement that meets the child's needs.
 - b. **Adult and Family Services (AFS).** AFS provides public assistance services, including Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF programs statewide with offices in every county. AFS administers Health Related Medical Services (HRMS), such as SoonerCare, short-term (Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Aged, Blind, Disabled-related), Long-Term Care, such as Nursing Home, ADvantage, and Personal Care, Supplemental Security Income – Disabled Children's Program (SSI-DCP), Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA), as well as the State Supplemental Payment. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) includes the Winter Heating program every December; the Energy Crisis Assistance Program (ECAP) every March; and the Summer Cooling program every July. Child Care Subsidy staff supports the administration of the Child Care Subsidy Program. This includes development of policy and guidelines for eligibility and training on policy and procedures. Staff also manages Child Care provider contracts and provides training materials to child care providers. AFS operations staff oversees and takes a lead role in various special projects and programs that have included Community Collaborative projects and tribal TANF liaisons.
 - c. **Child Support Services (CSS).** CSS acts as an economic advocate for the children of Oklahoma, ensuring parents financially support their children. CSS helps families become self-sufficient, and for those who are not receiving public assistance to remain self-sufficient.
 - d. **Child Care Services (CCS).** CCS is responsible for ensuring children and parents have access to licensed, affordable, high-quality child care where children have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment.
2. **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.** Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) is Oklahoma's single state authority responsible for publicly funded mental health prevention and treatment services. CWS refers children and families to local community mental health centers or other approved providers for the assessment of mental health needs and the recommendation of treatment and services based on identified need. Their assessment process is the primary mechanism used in the state. ODMHSAS also provides statewide contracted outpatient substance abuse treatment services to caregivers in need of treatment. These same services can also help to create a safe home environment. ODMHSAS contracts with facilities that provide inpatient and residential substance abuse services. While these services are not available in each county, the facilities provide services to anyone in the state.
 3. **Systems of Care (SOC).** SOC is a comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other support services that are organized into coordinated networks to meet the multiple and changing needs of children, adolescents, and their families with a serious emotional disturbance. This is

accomplished by providing community-based, family-driven, youth-guided, and culturally-competent services statewide.

4. **Behavioral Health Consultant (BHC) Program.** CWS contracts with ODMHSAS to provide one BHC supervisor and five consultants. These six BHCs provide consultation to CWS staff for children and families involved with the child welfare system. Each consultant is assigned to one region in the state, but also responds, as needed, to requests from areas outside the assigned region. These consultants provide follow-up services, make referrals, and serve as liaisons between CWS, ODMHSAS, and behavioral health providers.
5. **Parent Assistance and Sexual Abuse (SA) treatment services.** These services provide education, support, and child care while parents attend education and counseling sessions as well as SA treatment services that provide individual, family, and group counseling for children and families affected by SA. These services are contracted through DHS with agencies throughout the state and provided for families and children at risk for or involved in child abuse and neglect.
6. **Comprehensive Home-Based Services (CHBS) and Parent Aide Services (PAS).** In CHBS, families receive assistance on child-rearing and ways to improve parenting, housekeeping and budgeting skills. Services are provided in the home and community. Both are provided statewide by community agencies through contracts with OKDHS. Services are home-based, structured according to the needs of the family, and are provided to families involved with child welfare.
7. **Domestic Violence (DV).** CWS connects/refers victims and families to domestic violence programs certified by the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office. Those certified programs are located in 46 counties and also cover counties without a certified program. Statewide, 63 programs are certified to provide treatment for the DV batterers. The Native Alliance Against Violence identifies 26 Tribal DV programs that provide service to tribal members.
8. **Sexual Assault.** CWS connects/refers victims and families to sexual assault programs certified by the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office. Those certified programs are located in 46 counties and also cover counties without a certified program.
9. **Intercept.** Intercept is an intensive in-home, family-centered model provided through a public/private partnership with Youth Villages to serve children ages 0-17yrs and families in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and surrounding areas with the goal of increasing permanency rates for youth in DHS custody. Intercept is a reunification program that requires an identified family or permanent caregiver for the youth for program admittance and consist of comprehensive services to youth and families in their own homes. Specialists meet with families at least three times weekly and provide 24-hour on-call support, responding in person as needed. Intercept tailors services to meet each family's needs and identifies appropriate, strength-based interventions to address the referral behavior(s), such as family therapy, parenting skills education, educational interventions, development of positive peer groups, and extensive help for families and children in accessing community resources and long-term, ongoing supports. Intercept services generally last six to nine months.