

Overview of Major Oklahoma Laws Relating to Children 0 – 5

General

O.S. 10 § 640.1 creates the [Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness](#), requiring the Board to serve as the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council, fulfill the responsibilities described in the Head Start Act of 2007, and outlining [responsibilities](#) [O.S. 10 § 640.2] of the Board.

Education

[O.S. 70 § 10-105.4](#) requires an early childhood pilot program to serve at-risk children (Educare).

Statute provides that legislative intent is to provide [a free public kindergarten](#) [O.S. 70 § 18-108] for every five-year-old child in this state, with the requirement that each district offers full day kindergarten (allowing for intra-district transfers to satisfy the requirement so not every school has to offer it).

[O.S. 70 § 11-103.7](#) allows districts to offer to four-year-olds the opportunity to participate in an early childhood education program.

The [Oklahoma Early Intervention Act](#) (SoonerStart) [O.S. 70 § 13-122] intends to fulfill the requirements of IDEA Part C by providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

[O.S. 10 § 151](#) for the education of children in orphanages and charitable institutions.

Oklahoma SDE has an [Early Childhood and Family Education division](#) that “provides information and resources to support children and families birth to age 8.” This division has a [birth through age 3 page](#) that links to early learning guides for [ages 0-2](#) and [ages 3-5](#), as well as linking to the [Head Start Early Learning Framework](#). Other resources on the agency’s website include [The Early Childhood Learning Environment](#), [Oklahoma’s Preschool Profile](#), as well as resources ranging from [parental involvement to ensure school readiness](#) to information about [child care services](#). In addition, the [Oklahoma EDGE](#) plan – the state’s ESSA Consolidated State Plan – includes as its first strategy under Pillar 1, Achieve academic success, a focus on early childhood education. Pillar 3, create engaged communities, also includes an early childhood focus, with the goal of aligning “early childhood education and learning foundations to ensure at least 75% of students are ‘ready to read’ upon kindergarten entry.” The plan also mentions Oklahoma Academic Standards being vertically aligned beginning in Pre-K, establishing a foundation for more comprehensive standards.

Health

Oklahoma statute requires [University Hospitals Authority](#) [O.S. 63 § 1-280.3] to establish a program modeled after Early Foundations, to provide early intensive behavioral intervention for children with autism.

[O.S. 10 § 404](#) provides requirements for child care facilities.

[O.S. 10 § 601.1](#) creates the Commission on Children and Youth and [O.S. 10 § 601.3](#) provides powers and duties.

[O.S. 10 § 601.81](#) provides certain requirements for Home-Visiting Services. That statute also requires the Early Childhood Advisory Council (OPSR) to submit an annual report.

In 2014, the federal government reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the program through which the federal child care subsidy program is administered. States, territories and tribes use CCDBG funds to support access to child care for low-income families. Following the reauthorization of CCDBG, the Department of Health and Human Services released new regulations to support states in implementing the new law and provide guidelines to ensure children receive safe and high-quality early learning experiences. Provisions include a requirement that 3 percent of grant funds be set aside to “improve the supply and quality of providers serving the youngest children.”

The law was designed to both improve the quality of child care (e.g., through increased professional development for the workforce) and increase access (e.g., by extending eligibility to parents looking for work). State lawmakers around the country have enacted legislation to bring states into compliance with the updated federal law. In 2018, Congress increased the CCDBG by \$2.3 billion to fully implement the requirements of the reauthorization. *Source: Office of Child Care, Administration for Children & Families*

Bipartisan Policy Center ranked Oklahoma 19th for [creating a coordinated, integrated early care and education system](#). The strengths outlined in the ranking include IDEA Part C and Part B being administered within the same agency, and the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is mandatory for providers receiving subsidies, ensuring quality of care for all children. The Center’s recommendations for Oklahoma’s Early Care and Education system are below:

- Increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight by aligning the administration of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) with state Pre-K and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Improve program alignment and efficiency by co-locating CCDF with state Pre-K and the Head Start Collaboration Office.
- Ensure the State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care, mandated by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, is fulfilling its required activities, including conducting a statewide needs assessment on the quality and availability of early care and learning programs.
- Include licensing as the entry level for state QRIS to ensure program quality.