



Oklahoma Project LAUNCH

Cohort 5, Funding Period 2013–2018

Grantee Overview

Through the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), Oklahoma Project LAUNCH promotes and enhances the social-emotional health of young children ages zero to eight and their families. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH focuses its local implementation activities in Claremore within Rogers County, a small rural community with significant health disparities and access to care issues. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH strives to improve coordination and collaboration across local, state, tribal, and federal agencies to ensure integration and replication of services that align with the promotion of wellness for infants and young children and their families. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH continues to work towards a seamless service delivery system across child serving settings while using culturally relevant evidence-based prevention and wellness promotion practices that are easily accessible to families. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH is aligned with Oklahoma’s Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Framework for Change (2015-2020).

Project Milestones

All [Project LAUNCH](#) grantees implement five core promotion and prevention strategies intended to increase access to high-quality prevention and wellness promotion services for children and their families. In Oklahoma Project LAUNCH, these five strategies are implemented through the following activities:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Oklahoma Project LAUNCH’s efforts with screening and assessment are integrated within the other three Project LAUNCH strategies: behavioral health integration in primary care, home visiting, and early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC). In particular, screening efforts have been a part of the [Healthy Steps](#) implementation process in [Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#) clinics. As part of ECMHC, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH completed screenings on children from 13 public school Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms using the [Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition](#) (BASC-2). Oklahoma Project LAUNCH also added the BASC-2 to the [Ages & Stages Questionnaire®, Third Edition \(ASQ-3™\)](#) and [Ages & Stages Questionnaire®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition \(ASQ:SE-2™\)](#) already used in 4 [Head Start](#) classrooms in Rogers County. In addition to these screenings, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH made sure that vision and hearing screenings are available to young children by purchasing two sets of otoacoustic emissions tests for physician assistants and nurses to use in their health clinics. At the state level, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH partnered with the [Oklahoma Child Care Warmline](#) to assist child welfare workers in making referrals to appropriate mental health resources for children under the age of four. This partnership has led to the implementation of screeners like the modified Pediatrics Symptoms Checklist and [The Survey of Wellbeing of Young Children](#).

- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** In the pilot area, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH implemented ECMHC in Rogers County Head Start programs, and expanded ECMHC to two public school districts' Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms. Eight consultants from partner agencies (three community mental health centers and the OSDH [Child Guidance Program](#)) were trained in ECMHC and began providing services to 11 school classrooms, 11 Head Start classrooms, and three child care facilities in 2015. Consultants were also trained in evaluation tools looking at outcomes at all levels including at the individual child, teacher/child relationship, teacher competency, and classroom. Through Oklahoma Project LAUNCH, teachers have received in-service training in early childhood social and emotional development and “what to expect” from ECMHC. As part of the ECMHC consultant workforce development plan, all consultants in Rogers County meet regularly with an ECMHC trainer/mentor for reflective consultation. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH continues to evaluate the development of consultant competencies so that it will be in a better position to understand the workforce development needs of mental health professionals providing ECMHC services.
- **Enhanced Home Visiting:** Oklahoma Project LAUNCH expands home visitation services for children birth to age 5 by implementing [Parents as Teachers \(PAT\)](#) in two school districts within Rogers County. In addition, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH continues to enhance the current home visitation system in the pilot area by offering trainings in the evidence-based [Infant Massage](#) program for all home visiting programs serving children birth through age five and [Systems of Care](#) providers working with children birth to age 21. Two cohorts of home visitors and family support providers have completed training in Infant Massage, and at least 40 Early Intervention providers from [Part C](#) of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#), nurses from [Child First](#), Head Start providers, and child development specialists in Rogers County and other parts of the state have attended the trainings and are working on their certification in Infant Massage. To date, 45 families have received instruction on Infant Massage either in classes as part of their home visitation services, or individually in clinic visits with service providers. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH continues to provide reflective consultation to two home visitors who serve children from birth to eight years old in support of their application for Infant Mental Health Endorsement through the [Oklahoma Association for Infant Mental Health](#).
- **Integrating Behavioral Health Into Primary Care:** Oklahoma Project LAUNCH partnered with the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa (OU-Tulsa) and George Kaiser Family Foundation to bring [Healthy Steps](#) trainings to the state of Oklahoma. As a result, Child Development Specialists were able to receive training on how to better provide services to families enrolled in WIC as part of an enhanced program called WIC PLUS+ (Providing Learning, Understanding, and Support). Besides providing trainings on Healthy Steps, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH and one partner implemented [Reach Out and Read](#) in Claremore as another effort to integrate behavioral health into primary care settings. Since this partnership in bringing models like Healthy Steps to Oklahoma, there has been a better-developed relationship with OU-Tulsa's School of Psychiatry; a child psychiatrist is now offering “grand rounds” to pediatricians and others on social-emotional and behavior topics, and will soon offer consultation to pediatric practices. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH's workforce development efforts have also resulted in creation of infant mental health coursework at Oklahoma State University, in particular the [Institute for Building Early Relationships](#).

- **Family Strengthening:** Oklahoma Project LAUNCH works to assure that services are available to families with infants, toddlers, and young children by infusing evidence-based family support programs into the service delivery system in Rogers County. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH partnered with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services – Child Welfare Services and [SoonerStart](#) (Part C of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)) to enhance coordination in providing referrals for children who enter foster care. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH’s work continues to focus on increasing services for families with infants and toddlers as the community had identified that this was an area that was not being addressed. In particular, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH collaborates with child care centers to provide [Positive Solutions for Families](#) parent support groups, and partnered with Muscogee Creek Nation to provide [Incredible Years](#) trainings and implement the [Classroom Dinosaur Curriculum](#) at local Head Start sites. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH also prioritizes workforce development since there is a shortage of mental health providers meeting competencies to serve families with infants and young children across the continuum of care. In particular, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH hired an additional behavioral health clinician whose focus is to provide services at Child Clinic in Claremore for children ages birth to five, totaling to seven behavioral health clinicians in Rogers County. This system increases access to behavioral health services for families living in rural areas. Oklahoma LAUNCH continues to build family strengthening through its partnership with Safenet Services, Inc., a domestic violence shelter for battered women and children where Infant Massage and [Circle of Security International \(COS\)](#) services are available to them.

Systems Integration

Project LAUNCH is intended to improve coordination and collaboration across systems that serve young children and their families. In efforts to develop the workforce, Oklahoma Project LAUNCH collaborated with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to offer training on the evidence-based parent support program COS where two cohorts of professionals completed the training in various practice settings. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH has made great strides through its partnership with state agencies to ensure that infant mental health assessment is accessible and usable for professionals, providers are reimbursed at higher rates, and systems barriers against infant and early childhood services are minimized. In addition to these state efforts, early childhood partners have joined their state advisory workgroup, the Young Child Wellness Council. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH also led the early childhood track for the state-wide Children’s Behavioral Health Conference bringing numerous state and national experts to speak about young child wellness.

Through Oklahoma Project LAUNCH local efforts, a provider who has been using COS for numerous years provided telephone-based technical assistance as follow-up support to professionals who completed the training. Meanwhile, technical assistance calls for the two cohorts occur on a monthly basis. Oklahoma Project LAUNCH also hosted other training events for early child care education providers in the community. For instance, the local coordinator worked with local public schools to provide in-service trainings on young child wellness as part of the school year’s regular trainings. Through Oklahoma Project LAUNCH, the local community organized a local child care conference to support the training needs of child care providers who may not have been able to travel to larger conferences in the metro areas due to limited funding. At this local conference, speakers covered a range of topics including brain development, classroom strategies to support children who have

experienced trauma, ways to create a nurturing environment for children, and specific training on ECMHC.

Grantee Events and Materials

Click on the following links to access information about grantee-developed resources.

- [Tulsa Child Development Specialist Offers Parent Tips For Discussing Bullying](#) – Child Development Specialist Trena Hickinbotham discusses the do's and *don'ts* for parents when talking about bullying from their children's classmates.

Quote from the Grantee