

State of Oklahoma

Part C SSIP Narrative: Phase I

April 1, 2015
Oklahoma State Department of Education
SoonerStart & Special Education Services



Indicator 11: State Systemic Improvement Plan

Baseline and Targets

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

Results indicator: The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Baseline Data

FFY	2013
Data	42.50%

FFY 2014 - FFY 2018 Targets

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target	43.50%	44.50%	46.00%	48.00%	50.00%

Description of Measure

Brief Description of SIMR: Data and infrastructure analysis indicates that early literacy is a key issue in our state. Oklahoma infants and toddlers are less likely to exit SoonerStart functioning at age-level in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) when compared to the age-level performance of the other two child outcomes measured. Oklahoma's percentages for Child Outcome Summary Statement B2 have decreased over the past three years. Eleven local SoonerStart sites also experienced decreased results for this summary statement over the same time period. Oklahoma's decreasing percentages for the infants and toddlers exiting SoonerStart demonstrating age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge may be a contributing factor to the increasing percentage of Oklahoma children in Grades K through 3 at-risk for attaining acceptable reading levels.

Ultimately the impact will be statewide, however, one subpopulation has been targeted to receive intervention first – Tulsa County. Oklahoma's focus will be on increasing the percentage of children who exit SoonerStart services demonstrating age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early literacy, language, and communication). Oklahoma's SIMR is aligned with the Oklahoma State Department of Education's (lead agency) current initiatives and priorities as well as state legislation. The Oklahoma Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) was designed to ensure that all Oklahoma children are reading on grade level at the end of the third grade. The OSDE is currently redesigning academic standards with emphasis on instruction time in the classroom. Although half of Oklahoma's counties rank as medium to high-risk for children being unprepared for school, Universal Pre-K programs statewide increase literacy opportunities. The SIMR was selected through a systematic process of data analysis and infrastructure analysis by the SSIP stakeholders (see Data Analysis section) during regular meetings held throughout 2014. Data analysis provided trend results for Oklahoma's Part C early childhood outcomes. Site-level results identified local sites showing a decrease in the percentage of infants and toddlers who demonstrate age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) when they exit SoonerStart. State and local infrastructure supports were considered. Data quality and staff training were identified as priorities for coherent improvement strategies.

Brief Description of State Program: SoonerStart is Oklahoma's early intervention program designed to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays. The lead agency in the SoonerStart program is the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) contracts with OSDE to provide direct services to the children, and this interagency agreement has been implemented since the inception of the program. Oklahoma's Early Intervention Act (1989) provides the framework for the SoonerStart program. This legislation outlines the governance, funding, quality standards and partner agencies supporting IDEA Part C services to infants and

toddlers. Within the statewide system, local SoonerStart staff receives professional development and training to improve the provision of evidenced-based services as well as the measurement of child outcomes. However, local procedures vary as to when the entry and exit Child Outcome Summary Forms (COSFs) are completed in the SoonerStart process and also vary as to the extent of family involvement. Oklahoma’s dramatic 10% decrease from the baseline established for Child Outcome Summary Statement B-2 in FFY 2010 raised concerns about data quality among the SSIP stakeholders. Improvement strategies designed to help Oklahoma achieve the SIMR will address issues in ECO procedures and data quality.

Brief Description of the Process Used for Developing Phase I of the SSIP: Oklahoma formed a state team to guide the development of the SSIP. The initial meeting, held in January 2014, consisted of SoonerStart leadership personnel from the OSDE (lead agency) and OSDH (partner agency) who developed a plan of activities, timelines and lists of potential stakeholders. A diverse group of Early Childhood stakeholders was assembled and were included in all aspects of the SSIP development process. The stakeholders represented state office personnel, local site personnel, and representatives from Head Start, childcare agencies, preschool services and other early childhood initiatives in Oklahoma.

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

Brief Overview of Stakeholder Involvement: The stakeholders were presented an explanation of the SSIP process and participated in a broad discussion regarding improving outcomes for children across the state. Stakeholders were presented in-depth information about the required components of IDEA Part C programs and the structure of Oklahoma's SoonerStart program. Stakeholders met approximately 8 times since 2014 to discuss broad data and infrastructure analysis and then narrow the focus through in-depth data and infrastructure analysis. The following entities were represented in the stakeholder involvement:

- Preschool Coordinator – Oklahoma State Department of Education
- Program Manager – Child Care Division, Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- Disability Coordinator – Oklahoma Head Start and SICC member
- Special Education Director – Moore Public Schools
- Director – Smart Start, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness
- Director - Oklahoma Parents Center
- Researcher – Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- KIDS COUNT Project Consultant - Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
- Medicaid Coordinator - Oklahoma Health Care Authority
- Coordinator - Oklahoma Family Network and SICC member
- SoonerStart Program Managers – Oklahoma State Department of Education
- SoonerStart Program Consultant – Oklahoma State Department of Health
- SoonerStart Director – Oklahoma State Department of Health
- SoonerStart Executive Director – Oklahoma State Department of Education
- SoonerStart Regional Coordinators
- SoonerStart Speech/Language Pathologist (Service Provider)
- SoonerStart Child Development Specialist (Service Provider)
- SoonerStart Administrative Support Staff
- SoonerStart Resource Coordinator
- Facilitator – Southeastern Regional Resource Center (SERRC)
- Facilitator – Special Education Resolution Center (SERC)
- Speech Pathologist/Assistive Technology Specialist – Oklahoma ABLE Tech

Indicator 11: State Systemic Improvement**Plan****Data Analysis**

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

Results indicator: The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Data Analysis

A description of how the State identified and analyzed key data, including data from SPP/APR indicators, 618 data collections, and other available data as applicable, to: (1) select the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families, and (2) identify root causes contributing to low performance. The description must include information about how the data were disaggregated by multiple variables (e.g., EIS program and/or EIS provider, geographic region, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.) As part of its data analysis, the State should also consider compliance data and whether those data present potential barriers to improvement. In addition, if the State identifies any concerns about the quality of the data, the description must include how the State will address these concerns. Finally, if additional data are needed, the description should include the methods and timelines to collect and analyze the additional data.

1(a) How Key Data were Identified and Analyzed:

Oklahoma engaged in a systematic process to identify, select, and analyze existing data to determine if a significant number of infants and toddlers with disabilities that received early intervention services were exhibiting improvement or functioning within age expectations by the time they exited the program. The state agency leadership team identified data sources from SPP/APR indicators, 618 data collections, and other data impacting outcomes for children to review. Key stakeholders were identified to engage in the data analyses. The state agency leadership team presented an overview of the SPP/APR and the data results for compliance and performance APR indicators from FFY 2010 through FFY 2012. Stakeholders identified the results for Early Childhood Outcomes as the most applicable data to analyze to determine areas of low performance for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Additional data outlining risk factors that may contribute to low performance and impact school readiness were identified as relevant. Interviews with select stakeholders also provided information regarding current initiatives and programs in various agencies throughout the state. The SSIP stakeholders participated in the data analysis and discussion to identify root causes of low performance. The data analyses along with the infrastructure analyses were used to determine the State-identified Measurable Results (SIMR).

Multiple data sources were used in data analysis to identify root causes contributing to low performance. These included:

- SPP/APR trend analysis
 - Early Childhood outcomes trend data by district
- 618 data collections
- *Kids Count* data
- *Risk and Reach* report from the Department of Human Services
- Targeted Third grade reading scores
- Four year old readiness for preschool
- Part C Monitoring data
- Maternal and Child Health data
- Child Care data
- Head Start data
- March of Dimes - Premature report card for Oklahoma
- National Center for Children in Poverty data

SPP/APR Data**Early Childhood Outcomes Data**

Annual Performance Report data generated by the Oklahoma State Department of Education were utilized to determine the percent of infants and toddlers served in early intervention programs who demonstrate age

expected results in:

- a. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)
- b. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (Including early language/communication and early literacy)
- c. Use of appropriate actions to meet needs

The APR data for Early Childhood Outcomes were reviewed for FFY 2010, FFY 2011 and FFY 2012 for each of the Outcome statements. The percentage of infants and toddlers who increased their rate of growth in positive social-emotional skills (A1) increased while the percentage who increased their rate of growth in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (B1), and in the use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs (C1), dropped slightly.

Summary Statements	FFY 2010 Data	FFY 2011 Data	FFY 2012 Data
Outcome A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)			
1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.	77.60%	81.40%	80.80%
Outcome B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)			
1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome B, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.	88.60%	87.90%	86.30%
Outcome C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs			
1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome C, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.	87.80%	88.50%	85.30%

There were mixed results in the percentage of infants and toddlers who were functioning within age expectations when they exited the SoonerStart program. In positive social-emotional skills (A2), the percentage of toddlers functioning within age expectations increased slightly, but in the use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs (C2), the percentage of toddlers functioning within age expectations decreased slightly. The most significant change in the trend data for Early Childhood Outcomes was a drop of more than 10% in the percentage of children who were functioning at age expectations in the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Summary Statements	FFY 2010 Data	FFY 2011 Data	FFY 2012 Data
Outcome A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)			
2. The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they exited the program.	54.60%	57.20%	56.00%
Outcome B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)			

2. The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome B by the time they exited the program	60.50%	50.40%	49.20%
Outcome C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs			
2. The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome C by the time they exited the program.	53.80%	52.00%	50.50%

The ECTA Center Data Quality Report of Oklahoma’s Early Childhood Outcome data for FFY 2011 and FFY 2012 revealed that the state reported higher percentages on each of the Outcome Statements 1 than the national average, but slightly lower percentages on the Outcome Statements 2 (Appendix C). Oklahoma’s data included complete child outcomes data for only 24% of children reported as exiting the Part C program. For Part C, at a minimum, it is expected that states report data on 28% or more of exiting children (Appendix D).

Family Survey Data

SoonerStart utilizes the *Family Survey for Early Intervention (Version 2.0)* developed by the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) to collect data used in reporting family outcomes. Participation in the Family Survey is voluntary and family responses remain confidential. The Family Survey is administered and collected by the Oklahoma Parents Center (OPC), the statewide federally-funded Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). The OPC provides a summary of the data to the OSDE SoonerStart program to analyze for reporting on the state’s Annual Performance Report (APR). The stakeholders were provided the Family survey results reported on the APR for FFY 2010, FFY 2011, and 2012.

The percentage of families who reported that SoonerStart services helped their family: (A) know their rights; (B) effectively communicate their children’s needs; and (C) help their children develop and learn decreased slightly in the past three years. The response rate for FFY 2010 through FFY 2012 was 9.42%, 10.26% and 15.77% respectively. While the positive outcomes reported by a high percentage of families are viewed as program strengths, SoonerStart acknowledges that more work is needed to increase the number of surveys returned.

Percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family:	FFY 2010 Response Rate 9.42%	FFY 2011 Response Rate 10.26%	FFY 2012 Response Rate 15.77%
<i>A. Know their rights</i>	96.95%	98.48%	94.77%
<i>B. Effectively communicate their children’s needs</i>	97.78%	96.96%	90.27%
<i>C. Help their children develop and learn</i>	97.33%	96.58%	93.71%

618 Data
The

stakeholders reviewed Child Count and Settings data from FFY 2010 to FFY 2012. The data were disaggregated by age, gender, race/ethnicity and service settings. Overall, the results were consistent from year to year. Over 50% of the infants and toddlers who received SoonerStart services were between the ages of 2 and 3 years old. Males represented over 60% of the total number of children served. While Oklahoma emphasizes that services to infants and toddlers must be individualized to the needs of the family, the data reflects that services are primarily in the child’s natural environment. With the exception of the number of

Hispanic/Latino infants and toddlers served in FFY 2012, the numbers of children in each race/ethnicity category were similar across the three-year period. Further discussion determined that different Part C data analysts collected data for FFY 2011 and FFY 2012 and it is unknown if similar methodologies were utilized (Appendix F).

Kids Count Data

The Oklahoma Kids Count Partnership, a project of the Oklahoma Institute of Child Advocacy (OICA), reports on the well-being of children and youth in Oklahoma. The 2014 Oklahoma Kids Count Data Book reflected the following trends:

- Preschool enrollment increased with more 4-year-olds accessing early education programs which have been shown to decrease achievement gaps and improve school readiness. However, during the 2011-2012 school year more than one in five (23.0%) third-grade students did not read at or above the proficiency level.
- Improved birth outcomes in recent years resulted in decreases in the number of preterm births, the number of babies born at low birth weights and infant mortality.
- Child maltreatment rates have rapidly increased in Oklahoma. As a result, children are entering foster care more frequently and staying in custody longer without being reunified with parents.
- Oklahoma is experiencing a time of economic growth, but poverty is increasing among the state's children and is becoming more concentrated.
- The state is becoming more diverse, with birth rates of racial and ethnic minorities outpacing those of Caucasians. In 2012, more than one in four Oklahoma children was a minority (28%).
- Two-thirds of Oklahoma children under 18 years reside in counties which are considered urban metropolitan areas. More than one in five (21.7%) live in Tulsa and Oklahoma Counties alone. Child well-being varies greatly from county to county (Appendix G).

Risk- by- Reach Data

The Oklahoma School Readiness Reach-by-Risk Report 2014 contained current data on factors that place children at risk of being unprepared for school and on the reach of services and programs that promote school readiness for each of the state's 77 counties. Thirty-eight counties in Oklahoma have overall rankings that categorize them as high or high-medium risk for children being unprepared for school. The factors considered for each of the 77 counties included:

- Hispanic/Latino children
- American Indian children
- English Language Learners
- Maternal education
- Young maternal age
- Migrant children
- Children in poverty
- Children with single parents
- Abuse and neglect
- Foster Care

Programs reviewed to determine the reach of services and programs promoting school readiness include:

- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Oklahoma's Universal Pre-K program;
- Child Care and Child Care Subsidy Programs; and
- Home Visitation Programs (Oklahoma Parents as Teachers-OPAT, Children's First, SoonerStart).

Oklahoma has two high-quality specialized programs offered in limited areas. Educare offers full-day, year-round education targeting low-income children from 6 weeks to 5 years old who are at-risk for being unprepared for school but there are only four sites – 3 in Tulsa and 1 in Oklahoma City – in the state. The

Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECF) provides comprehensive, full-day, year-round services in a range of settings to improve the quality and expand the capacity of early education services for low income children from birth to age 3. These services are provided in Tulsa and Oklahoma counties and in five counties in southeastern Oklahoma (Appendix H).

Education

The Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) ensures that all Oklahoma students are reading on grade level at the end of third grade (a critical juncture when students go from learning to read to reading to learn). RSA supports Oklahoma children in Kindergarten through third grade. Oklahoma's percentage of children in grades K-3 at-risk for attaining acceptable reading levels has increased between FFY 2008 and FFY 2012. While reading scores improve from October to April during the school year, the April to October data indicate that children do not continue to make improvements in reading sufficiency before returning to school in the fall (Appendix I).

Maternal and Child Health Data

Oklahoma received a grade of "C" on the March of Dimes Premature report card (Appendix J). The state's rate of premature births in 2013 was 12.8%. Preterm infants face an increased risk of lifelong health consequences such as breathing and feeding problems, cerebral palsy, and learning problems. Successful, evidence-based interventions to prevent preterm birth do exist (Appendix K). Several programs, like the Nurse-Family Partnership (Children First), Healthy Start, and Centering Pregnancy (group prenatal care in a supportive atmosphere) are already being implemented in Oklahoma. However, the need far exceeds the current capacity of these programs.

"Preparing for a Lifetime, It's Everyone's Responsibility," coordinated by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), is Oklahoma's statewide initiative focused on reducing infant mortality. The statewide initiative focuses on priority areas identified through data as points for improving the health status of mothers and infants (Appendix L).

Head Start and Child Care Data

Head Start provides comprehensive child development services to children and families who are economically disadvantaged. Head Start programs promote school readiness through improved access to educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and their families. Early Head Start was created in 1994 to address the comprehensive needs of children under age 3 and pregnant women in families with low incomes. Between FFY 2010 and FFY 2013, enrollment of children ages 0-3 in Oklahoma's Head Start and Early Head Start increased from approximately 2,400 children to over 3,300 children (Appendix M).

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services Child Care program helps ensure trained supervision, nutrition and education for children while their parents or caregivers are at work, in training or receiving an education through their licensing requirements. Oklahoma has over 1,500 licensed child care facilities which are encouraged to utilize *The Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers and Twos*. These guidelines were created to serve as a foundation to connect what is taught by child care providers with what is appropriate for very young children. They also provide a framework to encourage consistency among early childhood programs across Oklahoma (Appendix N).

National Center for Children in Poverty Data

Data from the National Center for Children in Poverty reflect that in 2012, 55% of young children under the age of six in Oklahoma now live in low-income households. Economic hardship paired with the following risk factors may indicate a greater chance of poor outcomes:

- Households without English speakers
- Large family
- Low parental education
- Residential mobility
- Unmarried parent
- Teen mother
- Unemployed parent

(Appendix O)

1(b) How Data were Disaggregated

Each data source shows how data was disaggregated within its section in this narrative. Sections below explain in detail how the SoonerStart database disaggregates data entered.

Broad Data Analysis Summary

Children in Oklahoma have many risk factors affecting their educational and developmental outcomes. The percentage of children in grades Pre-K through 3 who exhibit school readiness in Oklahoma has decreased in the past 3 years. The outcomes of infants and toddlers with disabilities have an impact on future learning. Improving the outcomes of infants and toddlers with disabilities in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy, and communication) is an important factor in school readiness and grade level learning. The SSIP stakeholder's analysis of SoonerStart SPP/APR data indicated that compliance requirements do not present a barrier to improvement of child outcomes. Additional in-depth data analysis is needed to determine the root cause for the decrease in the percentage of toddlers who exited from SoonerStart with age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge over the past three years and to determine if any issues of data quality exist.

In-Depth Data Analysis

The SSIP stakeholders identified that increasing the percentage of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who were functioning within age expectations in the acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language, literacy and communication) upon exit from SoonerStart would result in improved outcomes for children with disabilities in Oklahoma. Trend data from the SoonerStart APR indicated that this percentage decreased from FFY 2010 to FFY 2012.

To identify the root causes in relation to the poor performance, information from the statewide database was first disaggregated by SoonerStart site (26). Twelve sites showed percentage decreases each year from FFY 2010 to FFY 2012. Four of those sites had a significant drop in the number of ECOs completed which impacted the results due to a smaller sample size. The remaining eight sites represented one metropolitan area (Tulsa County), one city, five small towns and one rural area (Appendix P). For FFY 2013, the Tulsa County site reported completion of 308 ECOs which represented 37% more completed ECOS than the other seven sites combined (195). The number of ECOs completed for the Tulsa County site represented 24% of the number of ECOs completed statewide (380 of 1263)(Appendix Q). The Tulsa County results had a significant impact on the total results for child outcomes reported in Oklahoma. The stakeholders recommended that further disaggregation of data for the Tulsa County site would provide more insight into the factors contributing to low performance of infants and toddlers who were functioning within age expectations in the acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language, literacy and communication) upon exit from SoonerStart.

FFY 2013 data was disaggregated and reviewed for the Tulsa County site. The 618 exiting data indicated that 490 infants and toddlers exited the SoonerStart program in Tulsa County in FFY 2013 which represented 20% of the total of children who exited the program statewide. Race and ethnicity data indicated that over half (56%) of those infants and toddlers were minorities (Appendix R) and two-thirds (67%) were male (Appendix S).

APR data for FFY 2013 indicated that two-thirds (69%) of all children who exited from the Tulsa County SoonerStart program after receiving services for six months or longer, had both entry and exit ratings for early childhood outcomes. Approximately 20% of the children did not receive IFSP services for 6 months or longer and 11% did not receive valid entry or exit dates. FFY 2013 data indicated that 27% of children statewide did not receive IFSP services for 6 months or longer and 9% did not receive valid entry or exit dates. The FFY 2013 Tulsa County site data showed very similar results compared to the FFY 2013 statewide data in reporting results for the early childhood outcome statements.

Stakeholders also reviewed additional data related to the Tulsa County site that could be contributing to low performance of infants and toddlers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Tulsa County was ranked 39 out of 77 counties in school readiness for children under the age of 5 in the *Oklahoma School Readiness Reach-by-Risk Report 2014*. While Tulsa County has medium to high-risk indicators for poor school performance in the percentage of Hispanic/Latino children (21%); English Language Learners (17%); low maternal education (23%); children in poverty (27%); and children with single parents (33%); other risk factors - Foster care (2%); Abuse and neglect (1.4%); and young maternal age (10%) – are not as prevalent (Appendix H).

1(c) Data Quality

The current system of collecting EI data involves two separate databases and requires redundant data entry as well as more opportunities for potential data error. Data are currently validated manually. Oklahoma continually works on data quality through:

- on-site reviews to verify the accuracy of data submitted through the record reviews;
- provision of technical assistance on data entry and accuracy;
- policies on timeliness of data submission at the local sites; and
- supervision to monitor compliance with program policies related to data.

Oklahoma is in the process of developing a more robust single data system with automated data checks and enhanced data reports to improve program capacity. The new data system will allow for more timely data with increased validity and reliability.

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Data Quality for Early Childhood Outcomes

Additional analysis of data quality pertaining specifically to the calculations for Early Childhood Outcomes was conducted by the state leadership team and provided to the SSIP stakeholders. The stakeholders were given a detailed explanation of Early Childhood Outcomes (ECOs) and the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) used to record the data for this indicator. They were also given additional information on how the "COSF Calculator" found on the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center website is utilized to calculate the percentages for each of the Outcome statements. Discussion among stakeholders centered on the stringent parameters employed by the COSF calculator when determining if the entry and exit COSF completed by each SoonerStart provider spanned a timeframe of EXACTLY 180 days (6 months) or more.

Early Intervention providers reported that SoonerStart procedures allow for COSFs to be completed on a date no more than 30 days prior to or following the child's third birthday. The COSF completion date is entered into the SoonerStart database. Oklahoma's new Part C Data Analyst reviewed the database and determined that the COSF completion date is reported as the "exit" date when entered in the COSF calculator. However, if the actual closed or completed date for the child is after the COSF completion ("exit") date reported in the database, children who actually received services for 6 months were excluded by the COSF calculator. Upon further review of the COSF calculator and examples of the calculations, the Part C Data Analyst determined that if the child's closed or completed date in the SoonerStart database was even one day less than the actual 6 months, the child's ratings were excluded by the COSF Calculator. The stakeholders voiced concerns that ECO results may have been affected by the way entry and exit dates were calculated using the COSF calculator and that staff were not trained to consider the actual closed or completion date of services as the "exit" date instead of the date the COSF was completed.

The explanation of the data calculation for Early Childhood Outcomes raised questions regarding the quality of data being used to determine Oklahoma's results. Stakeholders outlined the following concerns:

1. Current procedures for data entry of COSF entry and exit dates do not accurately represent the span of time the child received early intervention services.
2. Lack of business rules to determine how previous years' entry and exit data were calculated by the former Part C Data Analyst.

The strength of Oklahoma's current Part C database is that it captures the entry and exit dates for infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services six months or longer. Oklahoma will be implementing a new comprehensive Part C data system in the near future with additional edit checks designed to prompt data entry staff in entering accurate dates.

In the meantime, the following are necessary to obtain valid and reliable data:

1. SoonerStart procedures must be changed to give clear instructions on what constitutes an "entry" and "exit" date.
2. Statewide staff training on new procedures.
3. Business rules for current and future Part C Data Analysts in calculating results for Early Childhood Outcomes.

1(d) Considering Compliance Data

Compliance data were reviewed for FFY 2010 through FFY 2012 at the state, region and site level. The SSIP stakeholders reviewed APR compliance data to determine if timelines for IFSP development, initiation of services or transition activities presented barriers to improving child outcomes. The areas of noncompliance were compared to the outcomes data to determine if there was a correlation.

SoonerStart reported increased percentages of infants and toddlers receiving timely IFSPs, initiation of services and transition activities from FFY 2010 to FFY 2011 but slippage in all of the transition indicators in FFY 2012. The decrease in the percentages of timely Notification to the LEAs and Transition Planning Conferences (TPCs) occurring in FFY 2012 was of significant concern. However, Part C monitoring data determined that, although not timely, Notifications to the LEAs, and TPCs did occur for each infant and toddler potentially eligible for Part B services (Appendix A).

There were no systemic issues found through data review or monitoring documentation to indicate that the compliance requirements for timely services, 45-day timeline or transition services presents a potential barrier to improvement.

1(e) Additional Data

SSIP stakeholders determined that a potential root cause for the lower results in the percentage of infants and toddlers who are functioning at age-level in the acquisition of skills and knowledge upon exit from the SoonerStart program may be the process that service providers utilize to complete the ratings. Due to the caseload size and similar results to the state's APR data, the stakeholders proposed that service providers at the Tulsa County site be surveyed for information about the completion process for Early Childhood Outcomes. The survey will provide qualitative data from the following questions:

- When is the entry ECO completed?
- What information is considered at entry?
- Who participates in the completion of the ratings at entry?
- When is the exit ECO completed?
- What information is considered at exit?
- Who participates in the completion of the ratings at exit?

SoonerStart lead agency staff will provide the survey to all Tulsa County service providers through electronic mail by April 1, 2015. Results will be returned in the same manner to the Program Manager by May 1, 2015. The survey data will be presented at the SSIP Stakeholder's meeting by May 31, 2015. The results will inform the activities, steps and resources required to implement the coherent improvement strategies in Phase II of the SSIP.

Additional data may be obtained from the Oklahoma Tech Act Program – Oklahoma ABLE Tech - regarding the implementation of assistive technology (AT) within 25 of the 26 SoonerStart sites. Data would include the number of AT demonstrations/assessments for infants and toddlers completed and reported within each federal fiscal year for the last three years. Data would be available by May 31st, 2015.

1(f) Stakeholder Involvement in Data Analysis

Oklahoma has a long history of stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of all aspects of the Part C system. The individuals chosen as stakeholders for the SSIP development are the same throughout the process and a complete list may be found in Appendix R.

Oklahoma understands that stakeholder involvement leads to a better process, greater community support and buy-in, more ideas on the table, a better understanding of the systems and challenges and, ultimately, a more effective effort to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers. SSIP stakeholders were involved in the process to select, identify, and analyze existing data through:

- regularly scheduled meetings;
- broad and detailed data compiled and presented for review and discussion;
- small group analysis and comments;
- inferences based on data review and the impact to the program; and
- selection of additional relevant data to review.

The stakeholders provide ongoing input and direction while working with the state agency leadership team. Based on review of both SoonerStart and state data, the stakeholders decided to focus on improving outcomes for infants and toddlers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge to improve early literacy skills in support of the state's overall emphasis in this area.

Indicator 11: State Systemic Improvement**Plan****Analysis of State Infrastructure**

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

Results indicator: The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity

A description of how the State analyzed the capacity of its current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in EIS programs and/or EIS providers to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. State systems that make up its infrastructure include, at a minimum: governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring. The description must include current strengths of the systems, the extent the systems are coordinated, and areas for improvement of functioning within and across the systems. The State must also identify current State-level improvement plans and other early learning initiatives, such as Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge and the Home Visiting program and describe the extent that these new initiatives are aligned, and how they are, or could be, integrated with, the SSIP. Finally, the State should identify representatives (e.g., offices, agencies, positions, individuals, and other stakeholders) that were involved in developing Phase I of the SSIP and that will be involved in developing and implementing Phase II of the SSIP.

2(a) How Infrastructure Capacity was Analyzed

Oklahoma conducted a broad analysis of the state infrastructure to determine systemic issues that may present barriers to the performance of infants and toddlers with disabilities. The SSIP stakeholders (Appendix A) worked to identify and document systemic issues that support or hinder the capacity of the SoonerStart program to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. The broad infrastructure analysis was conducted along with the broad data analysis leading to the identification of a focus area for improvement for the SSIP.

The *SERRC Broad Infrastructure Analysis Template* was reviewed with stakeholders to begin the discussion of the SoonerStart infrastructure. This tool outlined the essential functions of the SoonerStart system within each component area: governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance and accountability.

Using the *SWOT Infrastructure Analysis* tool developed by SERRC, the SSIP stakeholders engaged in a systematic process to identify the strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T) to the capacity of the State infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity at the local level in relation to the SIMR. In addition, region-specific issues were identified and plans to address those SWOT areas will be addressed as part of Phase II Infrastructure Development.

2(b) Description of the State Systems

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), as the lead agency, supports the infrastructure functions of Governance, Fiscal Operations, Accountability, Data, Professional Development and Technical Assistance for the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program. The OSDE partners with the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) to implement service delivery functions. The OSDH maintains Quality Standards for personnel, provides direct early intervention services for families, and a data system for entering all services delivered. The Part C Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) members appointed by Governor advise and assist the OSDE.

GOVERNANCE:

The OSDE is responsible for the administrative structures (e.g. SoonerStart Early Intervention Program) to carry out IDEA through implementation of state policies and the necessary leadership to ensure an accountable system of services. The *Oklahoma Early Intervention Act* defines the statewide structure of the SoonerStart program. A centralized IDEA Part C administration through the OSDE provides support for the eight SoonerStart regions. The OSDH, as a legislated partner agency, provides supervisory support for early intervention service providers. SoonerStart Program Managers provide onsite and database monitoring to ensure accountability to IDEA Part C requirements as part of Oklahoma's general supervision system.

Stakeholders identified the statewide governance, plus local level support for early intervention services and staff, as the primary strengths of the SoonerStart program. Oklahoma has state leadership who advocates for and leverages fiscal and human resources to meet the needs of the system and use strategies that promote collaboration and overall improvement of the early childhood system.

The agency director of the OSDE is the state superintendent of public instruction and is elected every four years. The possibility of a change in agency leadership, thus a potential change in SoonerStart leadership and policies, presents a challenge in developing long range goals for the SoonerStart program.

FISCAL:

The OSDE uses fiscal data for SoonerStart program planning, budget management, and reporting. The agency is responsible for disbursing funds (e.g. making payments, reimbursing expenses) efficiently and effectively, and monitoring finances and resources to ensure that spending is in compliance with all federal, state and local fiscal requirements. SoonerStart receives state and federal funds to implement early intervention services.

The strong collaborative relationship between the OSDE (lead agency) and the OSDH (partner service provider agency) is a strength of the SoonerStart program. Both agencies are committed to coordinating and aligning resources statewide in order to improve program effectiveness. The OSDE and the OSDH provide in-kind support through various methodologies and have implemented cost-cutting measures to maximize the program's ability to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities.

The SSIP stakeholders identified decreased state funding as the primary challenge in maintaining adequate resources and personnel to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Oklahoma does not have family cost participation or third party payment procedures, but depends solely on federal (Part C and Medicaid) and state-appropriated funds to support SoonerStart services. Developing a long-term financial plan is difficult because state appropriated funding is contingent on year-to-year state revenues.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Oklahoma is continually working to improve its accountability and service improvement system at all levels through use of data and planning processes that are designed to achieve results for children and families. The SSIP Stakeholders have committed to the process of improving outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities by enhancing capacity at all levels to use data-informed practices to implement effective accountability and improvement systems.

Statewide standards for the SoonerStart program are tied directly to the IDEA Part C regulations. A current strength of the SoonerStart program is the ability to collect and analyze data to determine the quality of the system and if results are being achieved. Using the statewide database, OSDE Program Managers evaluate local programs on an ongoing basis and hold them accountable to meeting compliance and performance requirements. SoonerStart personnel are evaluated through the Performance Management Process (PMP) on a bi-annual basis. Oklahoma's yearly Annual Performance Report (APR) as well as data disaggregated by local site is publically reported on the OSDE website.

A program challenge identified by the stakeholders is the existence of two separate databases containing unique data that do not have the capability to merge. The OSDE database contains specific data required to be collected by IDEA for general supervision and reporting. The OSDH database contains data documenting service provider visits. Dual data entry and retrieval is labor intensive, however both are necessary to maintain documentation of accountability. A new Part C statewide data system is being developed which will be able to integrate OSDH data with the Part C requirements. Oklahoma continues to explore strategies for making positive changes in collecting and analyzing data to promote accountability practices.

DATA:

The OSDE has identified the development of a data system that has the capacity to support results driven accountability, program operations and program improvement as a priority for the SoonerStart program. SoonerStart utilizes a web-based statewide database to collect demographic and required program information for IDEA, Part C annual performance reporting. Reports generated through the database assist SoonerStart personnel in the analysis and use of data to inform program decisions. Oklahoma's Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) ensures data governance structures exist and roles and responsibilities clearly establish decision-making authority and accountability.

Several SSIP Stakeholders utilize the SoonerStart database on a regular basis and provided detailed feedback regarding challenges the current system presents. The database is not considered "user friendly" by most users. Information regarding a child and each service is collected on several pages making retrieval time consuming. Reports are static and cannot be modified without a modification to the data system itself. Program administrators are unable to retrieve data directly but must request third party assistance from the data governance office (OMES) for any data not contained in a pre-generated report. The current data system does not collect longitudinal data which could be used to inform practice.

SoonerStart leadership has shared the purpose and vision of a comprehensive data system and the OSDE's plan for developing a new Part C database. As part of the SSIP to improve results for children, stakeholders support a culture of data use, including providing professional development and supports to ensure knowledge and skills to access, understand, interpret and use data effectively at all levels. Coherent improvement strategies will be developed to incorporate opportunities for stakeholders to give input about the new data system.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

The Statewide Training and Resource Systems (STARS) was designed and implemented as Oklahoma's IDEA Part C professional development system in the 1990s. The comprehensive system offered training and seminars statewide to Part C personnel as well as parents and early childhood professionals in public

schools. Following several years of state funding cuts to the Part C program, the STARS network was discontinued as lean budgets were focused solely on service provision to families.

The SSIP Stakeholders asserted that in order to positively impact outcomes for infants and toddlers, the SoonerStart program needs to develop a coordinated professional development system. However, opportunities for training do exist outside of the Part C program. SoonerStart personnel have been approved to be included in the Registry for Professional Development through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) Early Childhood training system. SoonerStart staff members participating as SSIP Stakeholders reported that mentoring occurs in most local sites as well as group “lunch-and-learn” type trainings.

Ongoing professional development opportunities remain a weakness in the state infrastructure. To improve results for infants and toddlers, Oklahoma’s SSIP will include strategies to incorporate stakeholder and staff input, and data to inform a professional development system.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Oklahoma’s SoonerStart program has a strong technical assistance system. As part of the general supervision system, Program Managers work with local sites in identifying noncompliance and providing assistance in correcting systemic issues leading to noncompliance. Each Program Manager serves 15 local sites and is available to provide trainings or in-service instruction on IDEA Part C regulations as well as program requirements. Informal telephone assistance is available for immediate issues and troubleshooting.

SoonerStart also designates discipline-specific technical supervisors from tenured staff. These supervisors provide consultation and technical assistance to personnel within the same discipline (i.e. speech-language pathology; child development, etc.)

Based on the review of APR trend data, SSIP stakeholders affirmed that the technical assistance provided to local sites by technical supervisors and Program Managers had a positive correlation on the increase in results statewide. Oklahoma will continue to explore strategies to increase the capacity of its current technical assistance system as part of the SSIP to improve outcomes for children in our state.

QUALITY STANDARDS:

SoonerStart service providers are employed by the OSDH and must meet rigorous educational standards and in most instances, obtain licensure, to provide services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The Routines Based Interview (RBI) process has been adopted by Oklahoma as the standard for IFSP development. However, the infrastructure analysis by SSIP stakeholders revealed that SoonerStart has not established early care and education standards to support the implementation of high quality practices that are appropriate for children with disabilities. The OSDE and OSDH has in place an interagency agreement which ensures that the program operates in accordance with all Part C statutes and regulations and the referral, eligibility and IFSP development process is consistent statewide. Stakeholders have identified, however, that additional written standards to enhance the delivery of evidence-based early intervention services statewide is a priority. Improvement strategies to develop these written standards for SoonerStart staff will be included as part of Oklahoma’s SSIP.

2(c) Systems Strengths and Areas for Improvement

SUMMARY OF INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS

The SSIP Stakeholders identified the strengths and weaknesses of its infrastructure in each of the component areas: Governance, Fiscal, Accountability (General Supervision), Quality Standards, Data, Professional Development and Technical Assistance.

The areas of strengths were identified as:

- Statewide Governance structure - strong stakeholder involvement, the OSDE and OSDH collaborative partnership and interagency agreement, local-level support for early intervention services.
- Accountability – statewide standards aligned with Part C regulations; general supervision system of monitoring utilizing data and on-site reviews; Performance Management Process (PMP) for personnel evaluation; local and state data publically reported.
- Data – new Part C Data system designated as a priority for the OSDE; strong data governance system; dedicated data analysis staff.
- Technical Assistance – designated Program Managers to assist local sites with program and Part C compliance; discipline-specific technical supervisors.
- Professional Development – Possibly include staff ability to train and mentor other staffers, given the financial backing, staffers have shown the ability to provide quality PD; staff desire for PD, option to receive PD from quality programs such as SERC and ABLE Tech.
- Quality Standards – high-qualified personnel- most licensed; RBI as statewide standard for IFSP development.

The areas of weaknesses were identified as:

- Statewide Governance structure – Possibly include room for improved collaboration among the OSDE and OSDH leaders; personnel shortages across the state; high turn-over; need for frequent and close collaboration between OSDE and OSDH regarding implementation of the SSIP; lack of a consistent and effective communication strategies for disseminating information to all staff and service providers; need to support new data system, interagency expectations, not understanding the federal requirements at the local level, consistency in general guidance, and frequency of onsite guidance
- Accountability – Possibly include lack of staff, local access to data not permitted, inability to disaggregate data to show a complete picture of results, current data systems do not integrate with each other
- Fiscal resources – decrease in state funding required cost-cutting measures in order to preserve direct services; heavy reliance on in-kind agency supports that may not be available each year; narrow funding stream with no third-party payors or family cost participation; varying year-to-year appropriations is a challenge for long-term financial planning.
- Data – SoonerStart database not “user friendly”; retrieval of some data requires third-party agency; does not collect longitudinal data; lack of detailed business rules for data-entry for local site staff; secondary database operated by OSDH does not feed information into OSDE SoonerStart database; Possibly include lack of funding
- Technical Assistance – Possibly include lack of Technical Supervisors, Vacancies, funding by

legislature, and unfunded mandates

- Professional Development – lack of comprehensive professional development system designed specifically for early intervention personnel, Possibly include lack of funding, scheduling make-up sessions for infants and toddlers when service providers miss sessions to receive PD, reactionary PD vs proactive PD; need for a PD coordinator; insufficient pre-service training
- Quality Standards – no written standards for early care and education to support high quality practices and evidenced-based interventions for children with disabilities. Possibly include lack of training/competencies collaboration with groups/disciplines

Building on the strengths of each component of the SoonerStart infrastructure and coordinating improvement strategies to address the weaknesses will increase the ability of Oklahoma’s Part C program to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Oklahoma views literacy programs, initiatives and activities as a priority statewide. The Oklahoma State Department of Education continues to focus many of its resources to help children in our state become better readers. The Oklahoma Legislature has enacted legislation addressing literacy requirements in schools. Head Start, Child Care Services and other public and private initiatives offer services and resources for children of all ages and their families. Oklahoma’s SSIP will integrate improvements for specific components of the SoonerStart system with successful age-appropriate activities of existing literacy programs to develop coherent improvement strategies to address Oklahoma’s SIMR.

2(d) State-level Improvement Plans and Initiatives

ADDITIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN OKLAHOMA:

The SSIP Stakeholders identified additional programs and initiatives that align with Oklahoma’s Part C SIMR to increase the percentage of infants and toddlers who demonstrate age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) when they exit SoonerStart. Integrating these programs with the Part C SSIP would increase the capacity of local SoonerStart programs and providers to implement strategies that lead to measureable improvement in the outcomes of infants and toddlers with disabilities. The emphasis on reading skills by Oklahoma’s education and legislative leaders aligns with Oklahoma’s Part C SIMR to improve outcomes for children in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication).

Oklahoma Universal Pre-Kindergarten:

The Oklahoma State Department of Education is responsible for the state's publicly funded universal pre-kindergarten (pre-K) program. As of October 2012, approximately 40,000 4 year-old children were enrolled in pre-K. Although not state funded, some school districts also serve 3 year olds in pre-K classrooms.

Reading By Third Grade:

Oklahoma believes a child’s early learning environment has a profound impact on early learning and the

most crucial element is reading. The Oklahoma Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) was enacted to ensure that all students are reading on grade level at the end of third grade (a critical juncture when students go from learning to read to reading to learn). RSA supports children in Kindergarten through third grade.

iRead:

iRead is an initiative by the Oklahoma State Department of Education to ensure literacy for all Oklahomans from birth to 12th grade. The iRead initiative asks all parents and educators to read to children and to provide opportunities for children to read on a daily basis. Literacy is the foundation of all other learning. It is the key to our third-grade graduation reform, which requires all students to be reading on grade level by the end of third grade before being promoted. This will help ensure future success as a child progresses through school.

Head Start and Early Head Start :

Oklahoma Head Starts and Early Head Starts provide comprehensive child development services to children and families who are economically disadvantaged. These programs promote school readiness through improved access to education, health, nutrition, social and other services to enrolled children and their families. During 2012-2013, 36 organizations, including 14 American Indian programs, served approximately 17,520 children in all 77 counties through Head Start and 2,572 children in 41 counties through Early Head Start.

Child Care Initiatives:

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services Child Care program helps ensure trained supervision, nutrition and education for children while their parents or caregivers are at work, in training or receiving an education. Licensed child care facilities utilize *The Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers and Twos* as a foundation to connect what is taught with what is appropriate for very young children. The guidelines are a resource that includes commonly held expectations and widely accepted best practices for children in various age groups.

Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECF):

The OECF is a public/private partnership to improve the quality and expand the capacity of early education services for low income children from birth to age 3. OECF-funded programs provide comprehensive, full-day, year round services in a range of settings. Child and family eligibility is based on one of the following: family income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, demonstrated income eligibility for DHS or tribal child care assistance, or in foster care. Currently programs are offered in Tulsa County, Oklahoma County and seven rural counties in Northeastern and Southeastern Oklahoma.

Smart Start Oklahoma:

Smart Start is Oklahoma's statewide early childhood initiative and serves as the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council. Smart Start Oklahoma seeks to provide better opportunities to the children and families in our state by coordinating an early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness for all children. There are currently 19 Smart Start communities in Oklahoma implementing strategies that support children from birth to six and their families. The "Raising A Reader" early literacy project engages parents in a daily read-aloud routine with their children from birth to age 5. This project has

expanded to over 500 early childhood and Head Start classrooms across the state and serves 5,000+ children and their families.

Reach Out and Read Oklahoma:

Reach Out and Read prepares America's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Doctors, nurse practitioners, and other medical professionals incorporate *Reach Out and Read's* evidence-based model into regular pediatric checkups, by advising parents about the importance of reading aloud and giving developmentally-appropriate books to children. In Oklahoma, *Reach Out and Read* has 41 clinic locations, with 26,803 children served, and 39,336 books distributed annually.

Ready to Learn:

Ready to Learn is an early literacy initiative of the Oklahoma Literacy Resource Office in partnership with the [Oklahoma Educational Television Authority](#) (OETA). The effort celebrates literacy, promotes family reading, and provides early literacy training and information to parents and child care providers. Each month the Oklahoma Literacy Resource Office distributes more than 1,400 books to preschool children throughout the state. Schools selected for this opportunity serve children at risk for low literacy. The goal of this *Ready to Learn* focus is to place books into the hands of children who may never have owned a book of their own and to help children build home libraries.

Oklahoma Parents As Teachers:

Oklahoma Parents As Teachers (OPAT) is a free, voluntary parent education program designed to foster an early partnership between home and school. The program is available for all expectant parents as well as parents with children birth to age three based on the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most important teachers.

The goal of the OPAT program is to strengthen the capacity of parents to be effective first teachers in providing children the best possible start in life, maximize a child's overall development during those first three years, lay the foundation for school success, and minimize developmental problems that interfere with the child's learning.

Talking is Teaching:

The *Talking is Teaching* campaign launched in Tulsa, OK in conjunction with the "Too Small To Fail" initiative encourages parents and caregivers to talk, read and sing to their young children every day. In doing so, they help develop important vocabulary as well as cognitive, social and emotional skills necessary for later learning. The campaign partners assert that the more words children hear spoken to them directly every day, the better they learn.

Early Steps to Literacy:

Located in far southeast Oklahoma,

the Choctaw Nation Child Care Assistance *Early Steps to Literacy* Program is designed to enhance the experience of parents and children sharing books at home. It encourages families to make reading together

a valuable family activity and the opportunity to build home libraries. Each week an educator will bring the family a free book and activity card. This education program is free to eligible families with children under the age of six.

2(e) Representatives Involved

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS

The individuals chosen as stakeholders for the SSIP development are involved in early childhood initiatives and programs in the state and include:

- Preschool Coordinator – Oklahoma State Department of Education
- Program Manager – Child Care Division, Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- Disability Coordinator – Oklahoma Head Start and SICC member
- Special Education Director – Moore Public Schools
- Director – Smart Start, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness
- Director - Oklahoma Parents Center
- Researcher – Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- KIDS COUNT Project Consultant - Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
- Medicaid Coordinator - Oklahoma Health Care Authority
- Coordinator - Oklahoma Family Network and SICC member
- SoonerStart Program Managers – Oklahoma State Department of Education
- SoonerStart Program Consultant – Oklahoma State Department of Health
- SoonerStart Director – Oklahoma State Department of Health
- SoonerStart Executive Director – Oklahoma State Department of Education
- SoonerStart Regional Coordinators
- SoonerStart Speech/Language Pathologist (Service Provider)
- SoonerStart Child Development Specialist (Service Provider)
- SoonerStart Administrative Support Staff
- SoonerStart Resource Coordinator
- Facilitator – Southeastern Regional Resource Center (SERRC)
- Facilitator – Special Education Resolution Center (SERC)
- Speech Pathologist/Assistive Technology Specialist – Oklahoma ABLE Tech

(Appendix R)

2(f) Stakeholder Involvement in Infrastructure Analysis

SSIP stakeholders were involved in determining strengths and weaknesses of the SoonerStart infrastructure and identifying relevant state resources that could impact child outcomes through:

- regularly scheduled meetings;
- presentations and printed materials from applicable agencies, programs or initiatives;
- utilizing the SWOT infrastructure analysis tool; and
- small group discussion.

The SSIP stakeholders provided ongoing input and direction while working with the state agency leadership team. Based on the analysis of the SoonerStart infrastructure and Oklahoma's focus on literacy objectives,

the stakeholders affirmed their decision to focus on improving outcomes for infants and toddlers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge to improve early literacy skills in support of the state's overall emphasis in this area.

The SSIP stakeholders were selected for their expertise in early childhood care and education. SoonerStart values their commitment to improving outcomes for children in Oklahoma and is pleased that the current SSIP stakeholders have agreed to continue their involvement in PHASE II of the SSIP. Additionally, new stakeholders representing the specific implementation site (Tulsa County) have been recruited to serve as SSIP stakeholders for PHASE II.

Indicator 11: State Systemic Improvement**Plan****Measurable Result for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities***Monitoring Priority: General Supervision***Results indicator: The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.****State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and Their Families**

A statement of the result(s) the State intends to achieve through the implementation of the SSIP. The State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families must be aligned to an SPP/APR indicator or a component of an SPP/APR indicator. The State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families must be clearly based on the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses and must be a child- or family-level outcome in contrast to a process outcome. The State may select a single result (e.g., increase the rate of growth in infants and toddlers demonstrating positive social-emotional skills) or a cluster of related results (e.g., increase the percentage reported under child outcome B under Indicator 3 of the SPP/APR (knowledge and skills) and increase the percentage trend reported for families under Indicator 4 (helping their child develop and learn)).

Statement

By FFY 2018, at least 49% of Oklahoma infants and toddlers with disabilities who receive at least six months or more of early intervention services at the Tulsa County site will demonstrate age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) when they exit the SoonerStart program. The percentage of infants and toddlers who demonstrated age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) when they exited SoonerStart services in Tulsa in FFY 2013 was 42%.

*Description***3(b) Data and Infrastructure Analyses Substantiating the SIMR**

Broad data analysis was initiated by reviewing trend data from SoonerStart Annual Performance Reports (APRs). This information was presented as an overview of past performance and through an explanation of the Early Childhood Outcomes process. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services' "Oklahoma School Readiness: Reach-by-Risk Report 2014" was presented to stakeholders with detailed data outlining factors that place children at-risk of being unprepared for school and on the reach of services and programs that promote school readiness for each of the state's 77 counties. This data, coupled with SoonerStart APR trend results, helped stakeholders link the importance of improving early childhood outcomes to improving school readiness. Stakeholders also concluded that improving school readiness would improve outcomes for another Oklahoma initiative - reading at grade level by the 3rd grade. The stakeholders focused on discussion of statewide initiatives that are designed to impact early childhood outcomes. This broad infrastructure analysis resulted in identifying programs or initiatives that currently partner with SoonerStart or programs or initiatives in which further collaboration is desired. Based on the in-depth infrastructure analysis and review of Oklahoma's historical performance of early childhood outcomes, (specifically when a child exits the SoonerStart program), and a review of other Oklahoma initiatives designed to improve child outcomes, the stakeholders developed the first draft of Oklahoma's State-identified Measureable Result (SIMR). The stakeholders determined that increasing the percentage of children who exit SoonerStart services demonstrating age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early literacy, language and communication) will improve outcomes for infants and toddlers in Oklahoma (ECO Outcome Statement B-2).

The stakeholders reviewed information from the statewide database disaggregated by SoonerStart sites (26). Only four sites met Oklahoma's target of 61% for the targeted outcome statement. Twelve sites showed percentage decreases for Statement B-2 each year from FFY 2010 to FFY 2012. Comparing Oklahoma with national results and with the results of other states with similar eligibility requirements, the stakeholders expressed concerns that the target was not in alignment with those results. The stakeholders made a recommendation that Oklahoma's targets for Early Childhood Outcomes, specifically the statement B-2

reflecting age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge, be re-set by the Part C Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC). After reviewing data specific to the individual local sites, it was determined that developing improvement strategies to positively impact childhood outcomes should be initiated at the local site level. The criteria for site selection were identified as failure to reach the 61% state target in FY 2013 and large enough to provide services to a sufficient number of infants and toddlers to make a statistical difference in the statewide results. The Tulsa County site was chosen as the local site to initiate improvement strategies due to historically low results related to the percentage of children who exit SoonerStart functioning at age-level in the acquisition of skills and knowledge and the potential to positively impact a larger number of children due to the large caseload. Using the FFY 2013 data for the Tulsa County results for Early Childhood Outcome statement B-2, the baseline for measuring improvement was set at 42.50%. Targets were set for FFY 2014 through FFY 2018 and the final SIMR established.

Factors contributing to low performance were identified and improvement strategies developed. Statewide and SoonerStart challenges were identified. The stakeholders discussed potential initiatives in the state related to the SIMR; potential evidenced-based interventions; partners that can help SoonerStart to achieve the SIMR and; professional development activities needed. The stakeholders developed the theory of action and refined the evidenced-based improvement strategies that would be implemented at the Tulsa County site. Additional stakeholders from the Tulsa community were identified to join the existing stakeholders as the SSIP is implemented and Phase II begins.

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Oklahoma's Early Intervention Act (1989) provides the framework for the SoonerStart program. This legislation outlines the governance, funding, quality standards and partner agencies supporting IDEA Part C services to infants and toddlers. Within the statewide system, local SoonerStart staff receives professional development and training to improve the provision of evidenced-based services as well as the measurement of child outcomes. However, local procedures vary as to when the entry and exit Child Outcome Summary Forms (COSFs) are completed in the SoonerStart process and also vary as to the extent of family involvement. Oklahoma's dramatic 10% decrease from the baseline established for Child Outcome Summary Statement B-2 in FFY 2010 raised concerns about data quality among the SSIP stakeholders. Improvement strategies designed to help Oklahoma achieve the SIMR will address issues in ECO procedures and data quality.

Oklahoma's SIMR is aligned with the Oklahoma State Department of Education's (lead agency) current initiatives and priorities as well as state legislation. The Oklahoma Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) was designed to ensure that all Oklahoma children are reading on grade level at the end of the third grade. The OSDE is currently redesigning academic standards with emphasis on instruction time in the classroom. Although half of Oklahoma's counties rank as medium to high-risk for children being unprepared for school, Universal Pre-K programs statewide increase literacy opportunities.

3(c) SIMR as Child-Family-Level Outcome

Oklahoma's chosen SIMR is a child-level outcome versus a process outcome. By implementing the improvement strategies within the timeline provided, the SSIP should lead to improving the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early literacy, language, and communication) for infants and toddlers with disabilities by the time they exit the program as measured by the Early Childhood Outcomes. Since Tulsa County makes up a great percentage of the state as a whole and is a large metropolitan area with diverse ethnicity, it is anticipated that providing targeted resources and technical assistance to Tulsa initially will improve the local program. Once improvement strategies are implemented, Tulsa County staff and service providers agree to train-the-trainer to improve results on a state-wide basis.

3(d) Stakeholder Involvement in Selecting the SIMR 3(e) Baseline Data and Targets

The SIMR was selected through a systematic process of data analysis and infrastructure analysis by the SSIP stakeholders (see Data Analysis section) during regular meetings held throughout 2014. Data analysis provided trend results for Oklahoma’s Part C early childhood outcomes. Site-level results identified local sites showing a decrease in the percentage of infants and toddlers who demonstrate age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) when they exit SoonerStart. State and local infrastructure supports were considered. Data quality and staff training were identified as priorities for coherent improvement strategies.

SSIP stakeholders determined that for the SIMR to have an immediate impact on improving results for infants and toddlers, the state should focus the implementation of improvement strategies on a subset of the statewide system. Due to limited resources and the need to demonstrate a significant impact on our chosen SIMR in a short period of time, the local Tulsa SoonerStart site was chosen as the initial implementation site. The factors considered in selecting Tulsa were:

- Site-level FFY 2013 ECO data mirrors FFY 2013 statewide data;
- Significant drop in percentage results for ECO statement B-2 in three year period;
- Sufficient sample size to make a statistical difference in statewide results;
- Diversity in demographics
- High level of interest from local site;
- Site-level administrative support for changes in policies and procedures;
- Variety of methods of service delivery (staff, contract); and
- High percentage of 3rd graders (32.6%) in Tulsa school district scoring unsatisfactory in reading compared to state results (15.6%).

Literacy is a primary concern in Oklahoma and a key skill in determining college, career and citizenship readiness. It is our belief that skills and knowledge impacts a child’s ability to be prepared for school and future success. Oklahoma has strong initiatives, commitment and legislation on literacy. Identified strategies are expected to improve outcomes and increase parental ability to help their child grow and learn.

3(e) Baseline Data and Targets

This below table represents the baseline data for Oklahoma’s SIMR. SSIP stakeholders determined the following measureable and rigorous targets for FFY 2014 through FFY 2018.

FFY 2014	FFY 2015	FFY 2016	FFY 2017	FFY 2018
42%	42%	43%	45%	49%

On a statewide level, Oklahoma has continued to decrease in performance from 60.50% in FFY 2010 to 50.40% in FFY 2011, to 49.20%. This was discussed as a stakeholder group during a series of meetings.

Indicator 11: State Systemic Improvement**Plan****Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies**

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

Results indicator: The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies

An explanation of how the improvement strategies were selected, and why they are sound, logical and aligned, and will lead to a measurable improvement in the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families. The improvement strategies should include the strategies, identified through the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses, that are needed to improve the State infrastructure and to support EIS program and/or EIS provider implementation of evidence-based practices to improve the State-identified result(s) for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The State must describe how implementation of the improvement strategies will address identified root causes for low performance and ultimately build EIS program and/or EIS provider capacity to achieve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families.

4(a) How Improvement Strategies were Selected:

As a stakeholder group, improvement strategies were determined based on priority groups:

1. Fiscal Resources/Leadership
2. Data Quality
3. Quality Standards Regarding Procedures and Activities
4. Professional Development

These priority groups align with the Part B SSIP and focus on improving the weaknesses found from analysis of root causes and infrastructure functions.

The stakeholder group then discussed what would be long-term goals (5 years) and short-term goals (1 year). Stakeholders selected the improvement strategies that would best align with Part B SSIP for continuity and long-term child success in literacy.

SIMR is allowing the stakeholders to create a vision and plan that otherwise had not been the focus of early intervention in Oklahoma. For this reason, and others mentioned previously, data has continued to decline over the past several years.

4(b) How Improvement Strategies are Sound, Logical and Aligned

The chosen improvement strategies are sound, logical, and aligned with state initiatives targeting early literacy. By targeting a SIMR that mirrors the Part B SSIP, Oklahoma is positioning itself for carryover and success statewide and over the long-term. The multitiered analysis of infrastructure from Governance to Professional Development and Data is planned to reach from the state level through SoonerStart to families and children.

4(c) Strategies that Address Root Causes and Build Capacity

The outcomes of infants and toddlers with disabilities have an impact on future learning. Improving the outcomes of infants and toddlers with disabilities in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy, and communication) is an important factor in school readiness and grade level learning. By targeting acquisition of knowledge and skills including early literacy, language, and communication, Oklahoma will be addressing a root cause in the number of children not exiting at age-level expectations. By focusing on governance, professional development, and data, Oklahoma will be able to build capacity statewide.

Improvement Strategies that will address root causes and build capacity include:

- Creating, disseminating, and implementing guidelines to improve the Child Outcome Summary process;
- Creating, disseminating, and implementing standardized procedures for data collection to help report accurate rating information;

- Implementing the DEC Recommended Practices *In Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education 2014 as reliable evidence-based practice.*

4(d) Strategies Based on Data and Infrastructure Analysis

The foundation of our implementation strategies comes from our data and infrastructure analysis. It focuses on improving our weaknesses as stated in our analyses.

Strategies to Address Fiscal Resources:

To address fiscal resources, Oklahoma plans to advocate for increased funding through the development of talking points. Leadership will educate staff on SSIP talking points. Increased funding would allow for increased staff and professional development targeting early literacy. Leadership will plan for building capacity, and developing and maintaining statewide partnerships with programs and initiatives that will promote the goals of the SSIP.

Through effective collaborative efforts of the OSDE lead agency and OSDH partner agency, a comprehensive long-term fiscal plan will be developed to maximize the capacity of the SoonerStart program to provide supports and services to improve the number of infants and toddlers exiting the program at or above the level of their typically developing peers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication).

- Oklahoma must explore all options to increase the capacity of the SoonerStart program to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities. A comprehensive, long-term funding plan that expands options for fiscal support to include agency in-kind commitments and leverages community resources at the local level, in addition to state and federal funding, will provide the foundation towards achieving the state's SIMR.
- Oklahoma plans to increase staff capacity.

Strategies to Address Data Quality:

Through an improved early childhood outcomes measurement and data collection process, there will be an increase in the number of infants and toddlers exiting the program at or above the level of their typically developing peers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication).

- Oklahoma's current Part C data system has limited end-user reports and the retrieval of some data used for federal reporting requires a third-party agency. The state has a current contract with a software vendor to develop a new Part C statewide data system. With the improved data system, the state will improve their early childhood outcome collection process and build SoonerStart capacity to report on the achievement of Oklahoma's SIMR.
- Oklahoma's collection of early childhood outcomes data is dependent on data entered at the site level by locally trained staff. Comprehensive, standardized procedures or "business rules" for data entry of child outcome ratings are necessary across all SoonerStart sites. Consistency in data entry procedures will improve the program's capacity to report on achievement of Oklahoma's SIMR with validity and reliability.
- Since 2005, Oklahoma has utilized the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) to document entry and exit ratings for child outcomes as a way to summarize data on children for federal reporting purposes. SoonerStart will update the current procedures to incorporate the philosophy that the "Child Outcomes Summary *Process*" (rather than the Child Outcomes Summary Form or COSF) is a team process, not just a form. Using the tools and resources provided by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center to guide staff in a measurement approach that improves accountability and program planning, will build SoonerStart service provider capacity to achieve the State-identified Measurable Result for

infants and toddlers with disabilities (Appendix Y).

Strategies to Address Quality Standards:

Through the development and implementation of written standards to support high quality practices and evidenced-based interventions for children with disabilities in the SoonerStart program, there will be an increase in the number of infants and toddlers exiting the program at or above the level of their typically developing peers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication).

- Oklahoma employs highly qualified personnel and requires most of the early intervention service providers to hold master's level education degrees, licensure and/or certification (i.e. speech/language pathologist, occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, child development specialists, vision and hearing specialists). Service providers adhere to their discipline-specific practice standards, however comprehensive, cross-disciplinary, evidence-based written standards for early intervention services and supports will provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve learning outcomes and promote the development of young children. The development of high quality written standards will build SoonerStart service provider capacity to achieve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families.
- Oklahoma will utilize **DEC Recommended Practices In Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education 2014** (The Division For Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children) as the foundation for developing written standards for the provision of SoonerStart services. Incorporating the guidance provided by the **DEC Recommended Practices** across the eight domains: leadership, assessment, environment, family, instruction, interaction, teaming and collaboration, and transition, will lead to comprehensive program standards that inform provider practice statewide. Consistency in high quality, evidence-based early intervention practices will result in better outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and in the achievement of Oklahoma's SIMR (Appendix Z).
- By working with the state's AT Act Program (Oklahoma ABLE Tech), early literacy AT will be provided to SoonerStart sites in order to further enhance/promote evidence-based practice as it relates to AT and the development of early literacy, language, and communication.
- With increased staff capacity, Oklahoma will be able to increase intensity of services and obtain more family engagement and buy-in for early literacy. Success stories will be collected and shared all of which will lead to increased parent participation on the Routines Based Intervention. More family involvement will help build a strong foundation for literacy throughout the child's educational experience.

Strategies to Address Professional Development:

Through participation of all providers in a standardized, comprehensive professional development system designed to enhance evidenced-based early intervention practices, including early literacy, there will be an increase in the number of infants and toddlers exiting the program at or above the level of their typically-developing peers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication).

- In 1993, Oklahoma implemented the Statewide Training and Regional Support (STARS) as the comprehensive personnel development system for SoonerStart staff and other early childhood professionals. The STARS was suspended in 2010 due to funding constraints. Professional development activities continue to be offered but are limited to the core functions of the SoonerStart program and new initiatives. Developing a robust, comprehensive, standardized professional development system will improve and increase the capabilities of early intervention staff to improve consistency and fidelity of completing the Early Childhood Outcomes as it relates to early literacy and language, recording data, using evidence-based practice, and available early literacy resources for infants and toddlers with disabilities and lead to achieving Oklahoma's SIMR.

- SoonerStart personnel will have the opportunity to participate in the Registry for Professional Development through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) Early Childhood training system.
- Oklahoma's early intervention professional development system will minimally include trainings and instruction highlighting **DEC Recommended Practices** that serve as a platform for the SoonerStart written standards of practice. Collaborative agreements with other state and local agencies will expand professional development opportunities for staff and reduce training expenses. In-kind supports will be enhanced by utilizing early intervention staff mentors to provide individualized discipline-specific training. SoonerStart will leverage the resources of local programs and initiatives at the site level to broaden the scope of professional development activities available to personnel. Developing a sustainable, coordinated system of professional development which includes multiple methodologies and sources of instruction and training will build the capacity of the SoonerStart program and staff to achieve the State-identified Measurable Result for infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- Evidence-Based Practice on early literacy will be prioritized, disseminated, trained on and implemented. Families will be given access to early literacy activities and programs at home.

Local literacy partners will be made and will include trainings for agencies and offices, educating doctors and promoting SoonerStart and early literacy.

Each broad strategy incorporates actions that address an area of need within and across the SoonerStart system at the state, regional and local level. While the SIMR target area (Tulsa County) is a subset of the statewide system, Oklahoma has a plan to expand procedures and activities that will enhance statewide capacity. Beginning with Tulsa County, Oklahoma will create and disseminate a survey regarding the Early Childhood Outcomes form then analyze the results. This will impact the development of training materials and modules that will teach Tulsa County as well as all other counties how to consistently determine the entry and exit dates of services as well as whether or not the child is exiting at age-level expectations in the area of acquisition of skills and knowledge including early literacy, language, and communication. Business Rules for the Data Analysts will also be developed based on the results of this survey, and additional training/modules will be created and disseminated in a timely matter. The PHASE II plan will be scaled up to include all SoonerStart programs statewide. The SSIP stakeholders determined that implementing these strategies will improve the state infrastructure and build the capacity of EI providers to implement evidence-based practices.

4(e) Stakeholder Involvement in Selecting Improvement Strategies

The stakeholder group (see Appendix R), led by a facilitator from the Special Education Resolution Center (SERC) participated in meetings where the list of priorities was determined. This list was then presented to the ICC for input and feedback. Oklahoma SSIP stakeholders selected improvement strategies to lead to the SiMR based on the data and infrastructure analysis. Data analysis indicated that the areas of low performance were primarily related to the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) at both the early intervention level and the Pre-K through third grade level. Oklahoma educators and legislators are promoting literacy initiatives at all levels. SoonerStart's improvement strategies are aligned to current state initiatives.

Indicator 11: State Systemic Improvement**Plan****Theory of Action**

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

Results indicator: The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Theory of Action

A graphic illustration that shows the rationale of how implementing the coherent set of improvement strategies selected will increase the State's capacity to lead meaningful change in EIS programs and/or EIS providers, and achieve improvement in the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families.

Submitted Theory of Action: [Oklahoma Theory of Action](#)

Provide a description of the provided graphic illustration (optional)

Description of Illustration

5(b) How Improvement Strategies will Lead to Improved Results:

By looking at the percentage of children in Oklahoma who have continued to decline in exiting SoonerStart services at or above age-level expectations, Oklahoma has been able to identify the root causes and weaknesses in the infrastructure and data systems currently in place. This SSIP outlines specific tasks to be completed that will greatly reduce the identified root causes and strengthen the areas of weakness which will ultimately lead to an increase in the percentage of children who exit SoonerStart services at or above age-level expectations.

Leadership will develop guidelines for increasing funding as well as plans for building staff capacity which will allow for staff to provide increased intensity of services, increased learning opportunities and implementation of evidence-based practices.

5(c) Stakeholder Involvement in Developing the Theory of Action:

The stakeholder group has been consistent throughout this SSIP process. Through large and small group discussions, the group has participated in all parts of the creation and analysis of the this Theory of Action.

Oklahoma's Theory of Action describes how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will lead to the achievement of improved results for infants and toddlers and their families.

As depicted in the graphic illustration, if SoonerStart improves the SSIP stakeholder identified infrastructure weaknesses in the areas of Fiscal/Resources, Data Quality, Quality Standards and Professional Development, then the capacity of EI staff to provide evidence-based, high quality services increases and improves. As the capacity of EI staff increases and improves, Infants and toddlers receiving appropriate individualized early intervention services will have improved outcomes across all developmental domains. Ultimately, as children in the SoonerStart program improve their outcomes, there will be an increased percentage of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who exit the SoonerStart program exhibiting age level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication).

In determining the strategies to address areas of weakness in the state's infrastructure, the SSIP stakeholders discussed the relevance of targeting the identified areas, reviewed research information and materials, and determined that research supports their decisions. Research indicates that high-quality, evidence-based standards for providers in early childhood programs along with a comprehensive professional development system for ongoing staff support are necessary components in promoting positive

outcomes for young children. The ability to find and maintain funding for these programs as well as valid and reliable data to inform the efficacy of current practices are also crucial (Appendix AA).

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CONCLUSION OF PHASE I:

Oklahoma has developed Phase I of a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that is a comprehensive, ambitious yet achievable plan for improving results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. The basis for this plan is a detailed data and infrastructure analysis that SSIP stakeholders used to determine the State-identified Measureable Result (SIMR). Increasing the percentage of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who exit the SoonerStart program exhibiting age level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early language, literacy and communication) was selected as the SIMR and the Tulsa County site was chosen as the target site for implementation. The SSIP stakeholders assessed the capacity of the current Oklahoma infrastructure systems and the ability to enhance the infrastructure to increase the capacity of EIS programs and providers to implement, scale up, and sustain evidence-based practices that will result in improved outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. This assessment guided the development of the strategies to increase the State's capacity to structure and lead meaningful change in early intervention service (EIS) programs and providers. The Theory of Action, depicted as a graphic illustration, describes how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will lead to the achievement of improved results for infants and toddlers and their families.