

State of Oklahoma

Part C SSIP Narrative: Phase III Year Two

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Oklahoma State Department of Education, Special Education Services



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Introduction

Starting in FFY 2013, the US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) required all state early intervention service programs to develop a state systemic improvement plan (SSIP) as part of OSEP’s updated state performance plan and annual performance report (SPP/APR) process. Each state program had to analyze infrastructure and performance weaknesses in Phase I (FFY 2013), create the improvement plan in Phase II (FFY 2014), and implement the plan in Phase III (through FFY 2018). States were to define their plans with a desired outcome in mind.

SIMR: State-identified measureable result

In Phases I and II, Oklahoma Part C SSIP stakeholders made a decision to focus on improving outcomes for infants and toddlers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge to improve early literacy skills, aligning with the State’s broader emphasis on literacy achievement. Early literacy describes the reading, writing and speaking knowledge and skills that young children obtain prior to achieving conventional literacy. Stakeholders determined that Oklahoma should focus on increasing the percentage of children who exit early intervention services demonstrating age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including early literacy, language and communication) as measured by Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) Statement B-2. More specifically, the State-identified Measureable Result (SIMR) for Oklahoma is defined as:

By FFY 2018, at least 49 percent 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.

In FFY 2013, the percentage of infants and toddlers who demonstrated age-level functioning in the acquisition of skills and knowledge when they exited SoonerStart services in Tulsa was 42 percent.

Oklahoma witnessed an annual decrease in performance in ECO Statement B-2 from 60.5 percent in FFY 2010 to 46.5 percent in FFY 2013. This statewide decline encouraged Phase I stakeholders to target improvements in this area for the SSIP. However, in FFY 2014, results for ECO Statement B-2 jumped substantially to 50.6 percent across the state. A similar increase was realized in Tulsa County. These results were maintained through FFY 2015. Table 1 presents the targets and Tulsa County data for Oklahoma’s SIMR.

	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	FFY 2016	FFY 2017	FFY 2018
Target		42%	42%	43%	45%	49%
Actual Rate	42.5%	50.2%	50.1%	41.6%		

Although Tulsa happened to meet the FFY 2018 SIMR target in FFY 2014 (prior to implementation of any strategies) and maintained it in FFY 2015, the percentage of children

rated ‘peer-equivalent’ dropped again in FFY 2016 (mirroring a statewide decline to 45.2 percent). Because all ECO scores fell a few percentage points in FFY 2016, we suspect this is due to more thorough reporting; the rate of completion of exit ECO ratings nearly doubled between FFY 2015 and FFY 2016 from 33 percent to 61.5 percent¹. Annually, Oklahoma will strive to realize incremental increases back toward the SIMR goal. We want to be careful that a push for improvement does not lead to poor ECO assessments and reporting for improvement’s sake.

Ongoing dialogue with SoonerStart service providers has provided insight into how staff procedures for reporting ECOs vary across regions and even within sites. While we have no evidence that inconsistencies in reporting have affected the drop in peer-equivalent ratings, service providers have expressed a desire for additional training on rating and reporting ECOs. The SSIP leadership team as well as selected stakeholders from the Tulsa site and other regions will be working with the SoonerStart Professional Development Specialist to develop and implement training within the next year.

Improvement strategies

In consultation with stakeholders, Oklahoma adopted six improvement strategies to implement in Phase III of the Part C SSIP. These strategies were selected to support the achievement of its SIMR. Improvements in early literacy rely on many factors, including three highlighted here: effective data management, targeted parent engagement, and internal professional development. The six strategies as originally defined were aligned with these three core factors, as shown in Table 2 below. The selected strategies were:

System-focused, State-wide Data Infrastructure

1. Develop new Part C state-wide data system linked to the Part B system;
2. Develop interface between new Part C data system and OSDH’s tracking and billing system;
3. Develop and provide training on procedures for data input, management, and use;

Site-specific Support (Evidence-based Practices)

4. Support the use of assistive technology during service provision and at home to enhance the child’s language and early literacy development;
5. Increase provider, family and community access to early literacy resources; and
6. Improve methods for professional development for personnel, providers, and community.

Oklahoma began implementing all strategies in year one of Phase III. All but one continued in year two: strategy two was terminated because of technical problems with merging the two data systems.

Theory of action summary

As stated in the Phase II document, selected improvement strategies are intended to increase the capacity of state and local personnel and parents to provide services to children in

¹ As measured by the “Percentage of Children Exiting who are Included in Outcome Data” 2017 Part C Results-Driven Accountability Matrix

SoonerStart. With greater core capacity, personnel and caregivers will be more likely to influence child outcomes positively, as described by the Theory of Action for the Part C SSIP. To support fidelity of implementation, the original theory of action has been updated in year two of Phase III to reflect the current SSIP's dedicated attention to the five continuing strategies (Appendix A).

If the five strategies are implemented with fidelity, we propose that many strategic outcomes will be realized, leading to improvements in the SIMR in the long-term. The five strategies address three critical factors for improving child outcomes: effective data management, targeted parent learning, and professional development. All strategies support each other: the listing of strategies is not intended to be hierarchical or chronological. Effective data management, targeted parent learning and professional development are equally important pieces of the overall plan to support the SIMR and improve outcomes for infants and toddlers in Oklahoma. Table 2 lists each strategy and the rationale for its SIMR impact.

Expected change

When all improvement strategies are fully implemented, Oklahoma expects to see the following changes in its Part C infrastructure and programs:

1. All IDEA Part C data will be finalized and stored in a statewide data system, where all child data are collected, managed and reported for local, state, and federal use;
2. The online data system will be very high quality and sustainable for years to come;
3. The data system will be supported by a high quality, sustainable professional development framework that ensures that all personnel are able to enter and report child, region and state level data with a high degree of accuracy and reliability;
4. All children who may benefit from any form of assistive technology will be identified early and will receive appropriate aid through the support of their service providers and ABLE Tech;
5. All families in the targeted regions will receive meaningful early literacy information that highlight local resources and supports, leading to increased caregiver engagement in evidence-based practices that promote early literacy; and
6. All personnel will be well-trained in early literacy evidence-based practices and adult coaching techniques so that they can serve as mentors and coaches to caregivers who bear the primary responsibility for improving their children's literacy when they are very young.

In summary, all of these activities and developments through the lifecycle of the SSIP will lead to substantial changes that will support improved knowledge and skill outcomes for all children exiting SoonerStart who received early intervention services for six months or more.

Table 2: The SIMR Improvement Strategies

Core Factors	Improvement Strategies	Rationale for Impact on SIMR
<p><i>Effective data management</i></p>	<p>Strategy 1 Develop and implement the new SoonerStart data system in OK EdPlan</p> <p>Strategy 3 Develop and provide training on data input, management and use in OK EdPlan</p>	<p>These improvements affect the SIMR because early childhood outcome ratings are collected, managed and reported through the data system. A fully functional system supported by well-trained personnel ensures that staff reliably enter ratings and reports are accurate, resulting in SIMR scores that are high quality and trustworthy. Furthermore, high quality professional development ensures that all child data are collected, managed and reported well. This promotes data quality through a child’s entire experience in the program, leading to improved outcomes overall.</p>
<p><i>Targeted parent learning</i></p>	<p>Strategy 5 Increase caregiver access to early literacy supports and resources</p>	<p>Families that are more knowledgeable about early literacy are more likely to engage in supportive activities and practices in the home. On-going caregiver practice of early literacy evidence-based activities will result in improved knowledge and skills outcomes for children.</p>
<p><i>Professional development</i></p>	<p>Strategy 4 Support the use of assistive technology (AT) during service provision and at home</p> <p>Strategy 6 Improve professional development for personnel on early literacy evidence-based practices</p>	<p>To positively impact child outcomes, personnel must be knowledgeable and skilled in critical areas. For the SSIP, that includes early literacy. Providers’ ability to coach families to engage in evidence-based practices is critical for increasing a child’s skills and knowledge with regard to early literacy. Children will then grow in skills and knowledge when their caregivers do, affecting the SIMR over time.</p> <p><i>Strategy 4:</i> Many children’s special needs inhibit their ability to learn and strengthen the fundamentals of early literacy. AT can mitigate those effects, enabling children to learn more quickly and with greater ease. Personnel must be skilled in the use of AT.</p> <p><i>Strategy 6:</i> With evidence-based training, personnel will be more likely to share information and demonstrate early literacy activities with families, promoting these practices in the home.</p>

Section One: Summary of Year Two of Phase III

As shown in Table 1, the FFY 2016 age-equivalent rate did not exceed the SIMR target, as it did in FFY 2014 and 2015. The change from the previous year was substantial, declining 8.5 percentage points. Oklahoma SoonerStart suspects this decline is due to a near doubling in the completion rate of ECO ratings for children who exited SoonerStart in FFY 2016. In FFY 2015, only 33 percent of exiting children received exit ratings, while 61 percent did in FFY 2016. As the number of completed ratings increases, the percent deemed age-equivalent decreased. Although the SIMR declined, Oklahoma believes this data is more valid and reflective of true child outcomes in Tulsa County.

Oklahoma has made progress on the implementation of each continuing improvement strategy. The Oklahoma SSIP-C leadership team is confident that the state is on target for meeting its strategic implementation goals. The following list highlights strategic achievements in year two.

Strategy 1: The online IFSP system (**statewide data system**) is well on its way to sustainability and sufficiency. All activities planned for year two have been initiated, including data validation, system enhancements and improved reporting. The system is complete and unified, holding comprehensive records for each child served by SoonerStart.

Strategy 3: Statewide data system training has continued to occur through several avenues: local and state coaching and mentoring, targeted interventions, and in-person training. The long-term goals for this strategy have expanded to include building a high quality, sustainable PD system.

Strategy 4: After successful implementation in Tulsa, AT training has been scaled-up to three additional regions with the assistance of key stakeholders. It is on track to be implemented statewide in year three of Phase III.

Strategy 5: Early literacy resource sharing has been successfully implemented in Tulsa. Plans for extending Tulsa implementation and scaling-up to another region have been made with stakeholder support.

Strategy 6: Despite delays in implementation caused by changes in personnel, the early literacy professional development in Tulsa is on track to be completed by the end of year two while training has been expanded to two additional regions.

Stakeholder engagement

Oklahoma's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) has served as the formal stakeholder group to which the leadership team reports on a quarterly basis. The ICC advised the Phase I analysis and Phase II design of the SSIP. Council members periodically provide feedback on the evaluation outputs and process. ICC stakeholders **overwhelmingly have preferred to** offer **principally** broad oversight for the ongoing implementation of the SSIP, delegating decision-making authority to a designated leadership team. This team consists of state and local Part C personnel, and members of the Oklahoma Parents Center and ABLE Tech.

Implementation for each strategy has been significantly informed by stakeholders specific to the targeted intervention. The leadership team has worked diligently to identify important

stakeholders for each strategy, seek out their perspectives, and direct implementation based in part on their recommendations. For most strategies, the key stakeholders are themselves participants in the activities, such as caregivers and personnel. More details about strategic stakeholders are described in the synopses in the next section.

All stakeholders are regularly informed of implementation updates and evaluation findings. This report will be made available to stakeholders on the Part C state website, in the data section.

Section Two: Strategy Descriptions

This section of the Phase III Year Two Part C SSIP Report presents the progress for each implementation strategy, including a summary of progress in year two, evaluation details, and plans for year three.

Implementation and evaluation timeframes

All strategy timeframes are based loosely in the Oklahoma fiscal year, running from July to the following June. Planning for design and implementation of all improvement strategies began at the end of Phase II in April 2016. Implementation began for most strategies in fall 2016, the first year of Phase III (July 2016 to June 2017). Year two falls between July 2017 and June 2018. However, each strategy has a different start date and its baseline evaluation data were collected at different points in year one. This has caused the evaluation timeframe to vary across strategies, especially when we need to collect data annually (twelve months apart). Each strategy's evaluation timeframe is listed with the performance target data for that strategy.

Strategy 1: Develop high quality, sustainable data system

This infrastructure improvement is intended to upgrade an older tracking and reporting database with full functionality for the whole term a child receives services through SoonerStart. The long-term goal, as stated in the logic model, is that **this** online IFSP system, called SoonerStart EdPlan, will consistently meet all short and long-term reporting, case management, and oversight needs and requirements. Oklahoma believes it is well on its way to meeting this goal. This improvement is critical to advancing the SIMR because early childhood outcome ratings are collected, managed and reported through EdPlan. If the system is dysfunctional, personnel will not be able to reliably enter and report ratings, and the data that define the SIMR scores will not be high quality or trustworthy. With a high quality, sustainable system, child, region and state-level outcomes reports will be valid and consistent.

Summary of progress: Year two

All activities proposed in the year one report have been initiated: data validation activities, system enhancements, and improved reporting. As of April 1, 2018, Part C personnel have been using the **online IFSP system** for 16 months. It is a complete unified system holding comprehensive records for each child from referral through transition, enabling the online record to stand in for a paper file for many functions. All personnel are using EdPlan for this purpose. In many cases, paper records are even now only used in special circumstances. Expanding the long-term functionality of the system is one of the primary goals of biannual

updates. State leadership has set a tentative goal of dispensing with paper records completely by 2025. In February 2018, several improvements were made toward this goal:

- A progress note function was incorporated to allow online documentation of contacts and service visits. The function enables progress notes to be printed for submission for reimbursement to Medicaid.
- Digital signatures were enabled.
- Rules of completion were enacted for the documentation of delays for transition activities and first service visits.

Although the system is primarily built to enable electronic record keeping at the child level, it has the capacity to serve as the primary data source for federal and state reporting as well as monitoring and oversight. Reports made by the Part C Data Manager in conjunction with stakeholders are available for general use to view data of many kinds, from provider-specific caseload timelines to a summary table of the annual one-day child count. The system management team (consisting of the Part B and Part C Data Managers, the Part C Program Manager, and related personnel) work continuously to refine current reports and produce new ones to ensure all personnel have access to any records or data they might need. At the time of this submission, approximately 90 percent of desired reports are available for field personnel, while about 70 percent of desired reports are available for reporting and oversight purposes. All reports are available at any time directly through EdPlan. SoonerStart personnel work regularly with state data personnel to develop and improve reports for various needs.

Regarding the long-term sustainability of the system, three elements listed as desirable requirements for sustainability have been fully implemented as shown in Table 3. Additionally, work has been done to establish consistent and permanent professional development for skills and competencies related to the data system. These are documented in Strategy 3.

Stakeholder Input

The involvement of stakeholders is essential to the long-term sustainability of the system. Formally, several mechanisms are used to gather feedback on system functionality:

- quarterly meetings with regional field leadership,
- annual surveys of all personnel, and
- training feedback.

All of these have proven very valuable for understanding the concerns and needs of field personnel, who are the fundamental stakeholders for the success of this initiative. Additionally, informal mechanisms exist for personnel to voice general concerns or report urgent malfunctions. The SoonerStart program manager serves as the primary conduit of informal feedback. That position has been tasked with responding to and relaying system malfunctions, cataloguing desired updates and changes, and fielding questions about functionality and use. The program manager receives numerous emails and phone calls daily about system issues, documenting them for discussion at meetings with leadership and the vendor. Some concerns are deemed urgent for review, while others are set aside as future updates when feasible.

Evaluation

As reflected on the logic model, the objectives and medium-term outcomes have been updated to reflect the long-term functionality and sustainability of the data system:

Objective 1: Secure, accurate reports are available to all personnel for reporting, caseload management, and oversight by December 1, 2018

Objective 2: System is updated regularly to meet user needs

Outcome 1: Data system is capable of eliminating need for paper records by 2020 (though not yet required until 2025)

Outcome 2: Data system meets requirements for long-term sustainability by 2020

Table 3 summarizes the performance measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives and outcomes. Overall, the system is developing smoothly. Both objectives are being met, close to or exceeding the first year’s targets: critical reports have been created and updates are made regularly to improve system functionality. As system functionality improves, the long-term sustainability improves, as does its ability to serve as a fully online record (taking the place of paper). Outcomes 1 and 2 are on their way to being realized within the next two years.

Table 3: Strategy 1 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	Reports that meet stated needs are readily available to any user at the requested time	80% in year one*; 100% in year two	Met Target: 80% in year one: field reports are nearly complete; oversight reports are not ²
Objective 2	System is updated with substantial changes on a biannual basis and significant fixes are completed within two weeks of notification	100% in years one and two	Target Close: 95% updates completed timely in year one: one major system update not yet completed after 8 months of development ³
Outcome 1	Data system contains all components required to replace 98% of paper records, including all evaluation and IFSP-related documentation, contact logs, progress notes, transition documentation, signatures,	60% in year one; 70% in year two; 85% in year three; 100% in year four	Met Target: At least 60% in year one: all evaluation and IFSP-related documentation is online, as are contact logs and all data elements required for federal reporting; other

² Data source: program documentation; reports counted in data system compared to desired completed reports

³ Data source: program documentation; updates counted through change requests and malfunction fixes completed by vendor

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	reimbursement functions, and all data elements required for federal reporting.		functions being developed or finalized
Outcome 2	Data system meets the following requirements for sustainability and continuous improvement: ⁴ <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership supports and advocates for the system to stakeholders; 2. Adequate processes are in place to include stakeholder input to identify enhancements to the system; 3. Funding is secured for at least five years to maintain and improve the system; 4. Documentation exists to transfer knowledge about the system to new personnel. 	Year one: elements 1, 2 and 3 are fully implemented Years two and three: Continued, with development of element 4 Year four: Continued, with element 4 fully implemented	Met target: 100% in year one: leadership advocate strongly for the system and are involved in all decision-making; meaningful processes are in place for stakeholder input; funding is secured Year two: maintenance in elements 1-3; improvement made in element 4: system information is being documented ⁵

*Year one includes 12/1/2016 to 11/30/2017; year two includes 12/1/2017 to 11/30/2018.

Lessons Learned

Building a high quality, sustainable system that is easy to use takes a substantial amount of time and resources. Oklahoma has benefited from a large stakeholder group of local personnel who are always willing to identify system weaknesses as they adjust to using a new system. Ongoing communication with personnel alleviates some opposition to change, as does following through with requested updates. Their participation in designing changes has eased users' acceptance of changes, also. Another lesson learned is that it is critical to have clear lines of communication with the system vendor, particularly during system updates and refinements. Collectively, the team was able to avoid some problems through precise and timely communication.

Activities in year three

The leadership team has identified two goals for year three of implementation for this strategy. The first is continuous improvement. Local and state Part C personnel have begun to identify desired changes to the system that could be adopted within the next six to twelve months, depending on remaining contract funding. Most improvements are minor, including functionality updates to system elements such as the progress review feature and the contact log page. Internally, the team will work to create additional reports for local personnel and for federal reporting. As we conclude writing the data collection processes using the IDC toolkits, we are also updating the reports needed to streamline federal reporting.

⁴ Recommended characteristics derived from the DaSy-ECTA Quality System Framework.

⁵ Data source: program documentation and observations

The second goal is to begin to document processes, practices and procedures for data system monitoring, maintenance and improvement. This will ensure that critical knowledge about system performance and functionality is easily transferred in the event that new personnel take the lead in managing the system. Discussions will begin for this process in May 2018. This activity should be concluded by the end of year four at the latest.

Strategy 3: Develop professional development framework for the data system

This infrastructure improvement is intended to establish a permanent sustainable, high quality professional development framework for the use of the online data system (SoonerStart EdPlan). Oklahoma believes it is well on its way to establishing a sustainable, high quality framework for all personnel. This improvement is critical to advancing the SIMR for two reasons:

1. Directly, early childhood outcome ratings are stored in the online data system. With proper training, personnel will consistently enter accurate data that define the SIMR scores over time. This training ensures that data are high quality and compliant.
2. Over time, high quality professional development for the use of the data system ensures that all child data are collected, managed and reported well. This supports high quality data collection at every level, through a child's entire experience in the program, leading to improved outcomes overall.

Summary of progress: Year two

The initial steps for this strategy were to ensure that all current personnel were adequately trained to use the system when launched in December 2016. This goal was achieved as described in the Phase III Year One SSIP Narrative. Training was provided statewide the week of launch for all current personnel. SoonerStart provided a second round of training across the state in year one in March 2017, as the system's functionality improved. Year two implementation has not included all activities planned in the year one report. Caseload report training has been done, but regional staff have not been trained in advanced report creation because personnel did not indicate any interest in receiving such training. Additionally, training was not scheduled for fall 2017; the leadership team opted for spring training instead.

In year two, training has continued to occur through several avenues: local and state coaching and mentoring, targeted interventions, and in-person training. A new round of training is scheduled for April 2018 in eight locations across Oklahoma, focusing on recent updates, improved functionality, and reporting. All personnel are expected to attend. The training will be a collaborative effort between the vendor and state leadership.

During the year, the most common method of data system training has been through local coaching and mentoring by experienced personnel. This consists of direct one-on-one training, providing general guidance to all personnel, and identifying local persons who can serve as an 'expert' mentor when specific needs and questions arise. This method has been particularly useful when new employees are hired to enable them to function in the system as soon as possible.

Targeted interventions occur when personnel or data reveal potential problems. The SoonerStart program manager identifies the need for intervention by reviewing two data

sources: requests and recommendations from personnel at all levels, and data reports. By reviewing data reports, the program manager—who is responsible for monitoring and oversight—is able to identify systematic patterns of poor data entry, missing data, non-compliance, etc. These reports have lead the program manager to create immediate directives to staff to improve data entry or update missing data, as examples of targeted interventions.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders for this strategy are pulled from the full set of personnel across the state. Stakeholders are provided several opportunities to engage in decision-making for the professional development framework and provide feedback on the implementation of the strategy. The broadest level of feedback is **gatherer** through an annual survey of all SoonerStart personnel on topics relevant to the SSIP and general operations. The survey asks respondents to report on their perceptions of the quality of training provided, the areas of training needed, and how well they are using the system. The responses help to direct the planning team when designing training content and approaches. The most recent survey was conducted in January 2018 in the middle of year two implementation. Many evaluation objectives are measured through data collected via this survey.

A second formal feedback mechanism is provided through the trainings themselves. The sessions are designed to be highly collaborative, providing an open space for discussion of concerns with the data system and the training itself. Participant comments and recommendations are used to guide training in the moment, while feedback surveys are used to guide future sessions.

Finally, stakeholder feedback on professional development needs is gathered through contacts between state and field personnel. Regional coordinators and lead clinicians advise the state office on training needs and successes, while personnel are also able to contact state personnel directly about their concerns. For example, state leaders meet at least quarterly with regional coordinators and lead clinicians to review and discuss training needs. Also, the SoonerStart program manager serves as the primary conduit of informal feedback. Through monitoring, she tracks implementation directly. Data system reports often reveal knowledge and practice deficiencies that need to be corrected through training and notices. Several “bugs” that have needed fixing were identified through this process, leading to quick updates.

Evaluation

As reflected on the logic model, the objectives, medium-term outcomes and the long-term outcome have been updated to reflect the long-term functionality and sustainability of the professional development framework:

Objective 1: Guidance documents and best practice tips are available to all personnel for every process in the data system

Objective 2: All relevant personnel are quickly trained to use the data system

Objective 3: Trained personnel feel confident in their ability to work with records in EdPlan

Outcome 1: The professional development system design (for the use of the data system) is high quality

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Outcome 2: The professional system development plan (for the use of the data system) is sustainable

Long-term outcome: SoonerStart has institutionalized a sustainable, high quality professional development framework to support the use of its online IFSP system

Table 4 summarizes the performance measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives and outcomes. All targets were met for this strategy, except for the level of confidence among personnel in year one (objective 3). Even so, the changes between years one and two in the performance measure for objective 3 are dramatic: confidence increased by nearly 60 percent, while feeling panicked or overwhelmed halved. The objective 3 chart (after the table) shows these changes over time as reported in personnel surveys. These survey findings demonstrate that the professional development provided to personnel is meeting its goals: the capacity of personnel to use the data system and their confidence in their capacity are growing.

Table 4: Strategy 3 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	Prior to new functions and updates, the state will prepare and issue tip sheets or usage notifications to all personnel	100% prior notification	Target met: Personnel received pre-notification and/or a tip sheet for 100% of all new updates ⁶
Objective 2	Percent of new SoonerStart employees who are trained in data system within two weeks of hire	70% in year one*; 85% in year two; 95% in years three & four	Target met: 86% of new employees were trained by state or local personnel within two weeks of hire ⁷
Objective 3	Percent personnel who feel “confident” in their ability to work with child records in the system	40% confident in year one; 50% in year two; 60% in year three; 70% in year four	Year two target met: Year one: 31.0% are “confident;” 46.0% are “calm;” 23.0% are “a little panicked” / “overwhelmed” Year two: 50% are “confident;” 39% are “calm;” 11% are “a little panicked” / “overwhelmed” ⁸

⁶ Data source: program documentation such as emails and planning documents

⁷ Data source: program documentation such as training records

⁸ Data sources: SoonerStart training and annual personnel surveys

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<p>Outcome 1</p>	<p>To demonstrate high quality, the PD system...⁹</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides a variety of training and technical assistance opportunities to meet personnel needs; 2. Employs evidence-based PD practices that incorporate a variety of adult learning strategies; 3. Fosters a climate of openness, collaboration and mutual respect; 4. Incorporates long-term coaching and mentoring mechanisms to support continuous improvement. 	<p>Year one: all elements are partially or fully implemented, incorporating continuous improvement</p>	<p>Targets met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiple opportunities exist to meet various personnel needs; 2. Adult learning strategies are integrated in training; 3. Climate meets requirements¹⁰; 4. Coaching and mentoring are available though not institutionalized; 5. All elements undergoing continuous revision for improvement.
<p>Outcome 2</p>	<p>The PD system meets the following requirements for sustainability and continuous improvement:¹¹</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership supports and advocates for the system to stakeholders; 2. Adequate processes are in place to include stakeholder input to identify enhancements to the system; 3. Funding is secured for at least five years to maintain and improve the system; 4. Documentation exists to transfer knowledge about the system to new personnel; 5. A formal long-term plan is in place. 	<p>Year one: elements 1, 2 and 3 are fully implemented</p> <p>Years two and three: Continued, with development of elements 4 & 5</p> <p>Year four: Continued, with elements 4 & 5 fully implemented</p>	<p>Targets met:</p> <p>100% in year one: leadership advocate strongly for the system and are involved in all decision-making; meaningful processes are in place for stakeholder input; funding is secured¹²</p> <p>Year two: Elements 1-3 maintained at full implementation; elements 4 and 5 are partially implemented: documentation and PD plan are being developed</p>

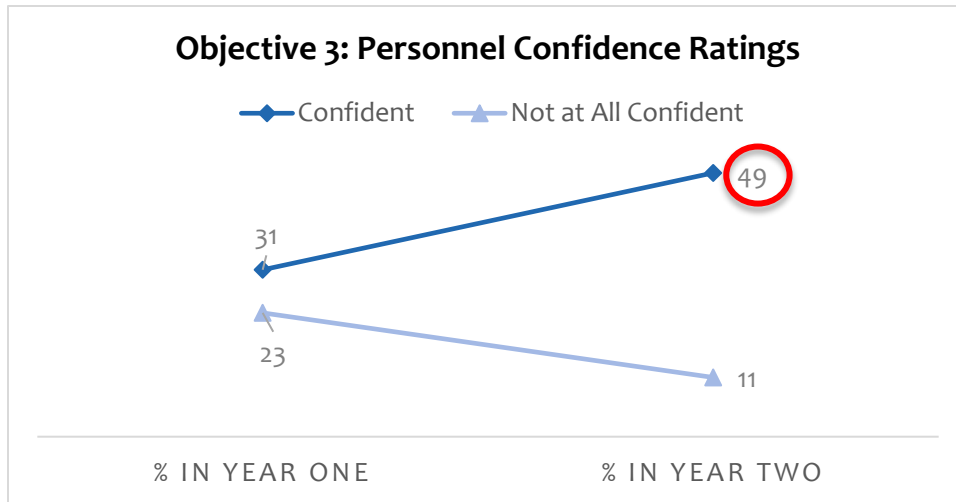
*Year one includes 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017; year two includes 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2018.

⁹ Recommended characteristics derived from two sources: Gaumer Erickson, A.S., Noonan, P.M., Brussow, J. & Supon Carter, K. (2016). Measuring the quality of professional development training. *Professional Development in Education*. DOI: 10.1080/1941525.2016.1179665.; and the DaSy-ECTA Quality System Framework

¹⁰ Data sources: survey results on training quality indicated high approval in key characteristics; qualitative data collected through interactions with personnel reflect positive communication climate for PD

¹¹ Recommended characteristics derived from the DaSy-ECTA Quality System Framework.

¹² Data source: program documentation and observations



Activities in year three

The lead for this strategy is now the newly hired PD Specialist. In year three, this position will work with state and field personnel and the vendor to achieve several goals: continued training based on identified needs, enhancing the coaching and mentoring process, increasing documentation for sustainability, and developing a long-term PD plan. More specifically, plans include:

1. Training will continue via all three avenues mentioned in the narrative: in-person, coaching and mentoring, and targeted interventions. As the experience of personnel in the data system moves from beginner levels to intermediate, training opportunities will expand from orientation to capacity-building. The goal is to ensure that all personnel are capable of using the full spectrum of system functions to enhance services to children.
 - a. As part of this, the coaching and mentoring processes will be enriched through written state guidance, ‘train the trainer’ opportunities, and targeted best practice sharing. Local coaches and mentors may be formally designated and trained as a part of this enrichment process.
2. To ensure the system is sustainable over time, the leadership team will work diligently to document critical system knowledge, including foundational contract and process information as well as practices and procedures for all functions. This should be completed by the end of year four.
3. A long-term plan to ensure all personnel receive up-to-date information and training on system use in a timely manner will be established and followed. The team will begin stakeholder discussions to develop the long-term plan in May 2018, and should complete it by the end of year four. This plan will include details about:
 - a. the goals, purpose and content of the professional development framework;
 - b. the methods and types of professional development, such as online orientation webinars or courses, in-person sessions, and on-site mentoring and support;
 - c. the supporting materials that should be developed;
 - d. the personnel responsible for and involved in any professional development;

- e. the scheduling of training;
- f. the expectations for participation and completion, including who should participate and when; and
- g. methods of evaluation and tools for feedback.

Strategy 4: Encourage and support family and child use of AT

This practice improvement is intended to ensure that children have greater access to and experience with assistive technology that may improve daily functioning. The long-term goal is to ensure that more children will benefit from the use of assistive technology. The achievement of this strategy is critical for advancing the SIMR because many children’s special needs inhibit their ability to learn and strengthen the fundamentals of early literacy skills. Assistive technology can mitigate those effects, enabling children to learn more quickly and with greater ease. Knowledge and skills will increase with the effective use of assistive technology for children who need it.

Summary of progress: Year two

In year two of implementation, the primary focus of this strategy’s leadership team has been on scaling-up the training to other regions in Oklahoma, while local Tulsa leadership has focused on implementing the strategy with fidelity to the plan. A second leadership focus has been on evaluating practice change in Tulsa, following training in 2016 and 2017. These activities reflect those described for year two in the year one report.

Scale-Up Activities

During an annual statewide SSIP discussion, leaders in three of the eight regions volunteered to participate in the first round of AT training outside of Tulsa. Adhering to the original framework designed with Tulsa stakeholder input, two rounds of training were planned: one on the basics of conducting demonstrations and reporting them, and a second on the transition and funding processes. The first training session has been conducted at all three sites, with more than 100 personnel in attendance across all three. One site has also completed the second session, with plans to conduct the other two by the end of March. Based on input from local personnel (the key stakeholders on this strategy), one site chose to hold both training sessions in one day rather than half-day sessions on different days. The leadership team agreed to the change in format because it was considerate of local personnel, many of whom would have to travel far distances to attend the training. All sessions are being conducted by experienced ABLE Tech¹³ personnel with OSDE-SES and OSDH support.

Tulsa

The Tulsa team has dedicated time and resources to recording demonstrations through weekly staffing meetings, monitoring the demonstration kit and its usefulness (and whether any items need updating), and working with ABLE Tech to provide resources to families. Because demonstrations are unique to the needs of each child, practice fidelity has not been supervised.

¹³ Oklahoma’s statewide assistive technology program

Rather, the average number of demonstrations has been observed over time. The evaluation section reports on whether change has been maintained.

Evaluation Activities

Evaluation and monitoring of the first year's implementation continues in Tulsa with comparisons to other regional personnel. The comparison of Tulsa to other locations has permitted an evaluation of the impact of the unique training intervention. As the scale-up continues, the statewide data collected in years one and two will support an evaluation of the continued training.

Data has been collected on the objectives and outcomes for this strategy through two main sources: personnel surveys and staff demonstration reports submitted directly to ABLE Tech. The personnel surveys collect data on the employees' perceptions of efficacy and confidence while also 'testing' them on AT knowledge and procedures. The staff demonstration reports collect data on reported demonstrations, including the type of device and how it was received (whether parents were satisfied that assistive technology could meet their child's needs).

Stakeholder Input

The leadership team monitors progress on this strategy with the assistance of the ABLE Tech Quarterly Task Group. This group meets four times a year to review demonstration data across the state to identify the project's strengths and opportunities for growth. Members include OSDE and OSDH staff, as well as early intervention providers and other stakeholders from various disability groups. The team gathers input from personnel via surveys as well as local staffing meetings.

Evaluation

As shown in the original logic model, the objectives and medium-term outcomes are:

Objective 1: All relevant personnel are trained on use and benefits of EL AT

Objective 2: Trained personnel can competently guide families in use of AT

Objective 3: Demonstrations increase for AT devices that support language and early literacy

Outcome 1: Families are more aware of the benefits and uses of AT supportive of early literacy

Outcome 2: Increase in child use of AT supportive of early literacy as well as other knowledge and skills

Table 5 describes the performance measures used for each objective and outcome, the target achievement rates and the current level of achievement of performance. All measures are for Tulsa County personnel and families only, as that is the targeted area for the SSIP and SIMR. As shown in the table, most targets were met initially, although performance has been more difficult to maintain (see objectives 2 and 3). The medium-term outcomes have been achieved, however, suggesting that the project has been a success. Following the table, two sets of evaluation data are reported. The first is from surveys of personnel that assess knowledge gained and retained over time. The second is from a set of follow-up interviews with training participants. We conducted these to determine why knowledge was not retained as expected.

Table 5: Strategy 4 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	All personnel (who are likely to demonstrate AT to families) receive updated, two-part training	90% participation	Met target: 90% participated in both training sessions in Tulsa ¹⁴
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personnel report increased comfort with conducting demonstrations 2. Personnel correctly identify best practices more often 	From baseline: 50% increase at post-training; maintain at follow-up	<p>Met initial targets; targets not maintained:¹⁵</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 49% increase at post-training; 5% decrease at follow-up 2. 72% increase at post-training; 33% decrease at follow-up
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personnel are more knowledgeable of demonstration logging process 2. Personnel conduct 25 percent more demonstrations over time compared to year prior to training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From baseline: 50% increase at post-training; maintain at follow-up 2. Average 25% increase in demonstrations 	<p>Met initial target for 3.1; target not maintained:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 64% increase at post-training; 33% decrease at follow-up <p>Target not met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The average number of demos. has decreased compared to the prior year by approximately 50%¹⁶
Outcome 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents report greater awareness of AT 2. Parents recall that AT demonstration was conducted 3. Parents report that AT will meet their child’s needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statistically significant¹⁷ difference in awareness 2. 50% recall demonstrations 3. 80% report “yes” 	<p>Met targets¹⁸:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness increased by 42% on average, which represents a significant difference between means 2. 59% recall having seen an AT demonstration 3. 90% reported “yes”
Outcome 2	More AT is borrowed by families with young children in Tulsa County	10% increase in borrowed items through ABLE Tech	Target not met: 14% decrease in borrowed items through ABLE Tech ¹⁹

¹⁴ Data source: project documentation such as training records

¹⁵ Data sources: training pre and post surveys; annual personnel surveys (also for objective 3)

¹⁶ Data source: Tulsa monthly AT demonstration reports from the past several years

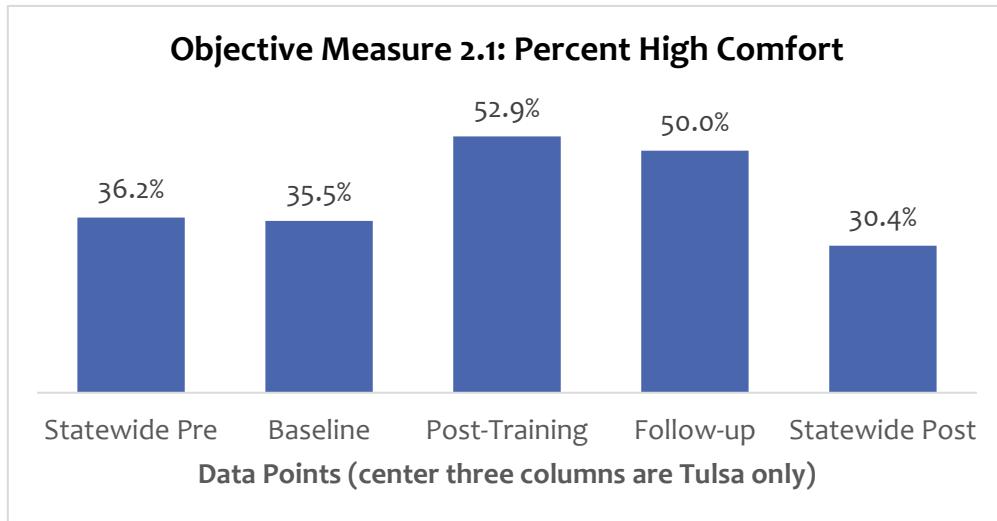
¹⁷ As indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05 in tests of association.

¹⁸ Data sources: 2016 and 2017 family literacy surveys and ABLE Tech demonstration data

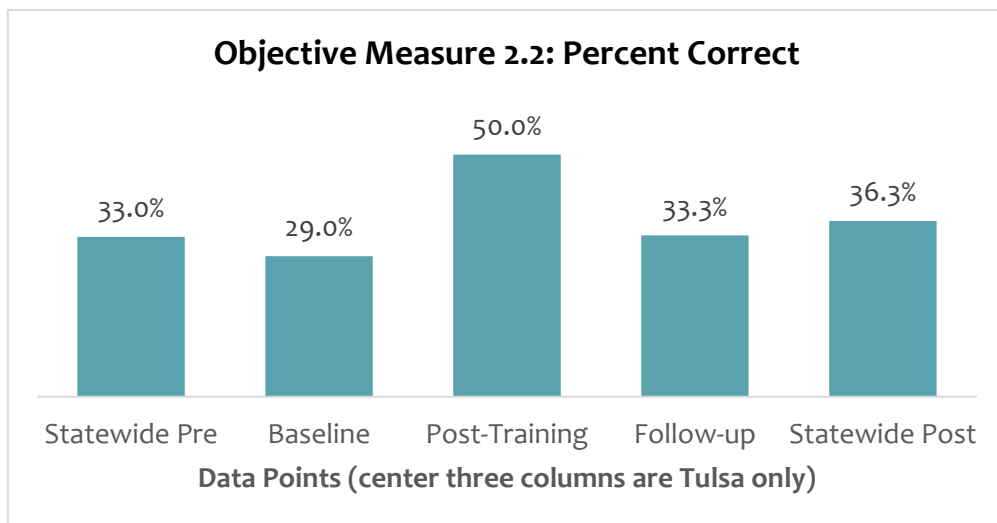
¹⁹ Data source: ABLE Tech assistive technology database

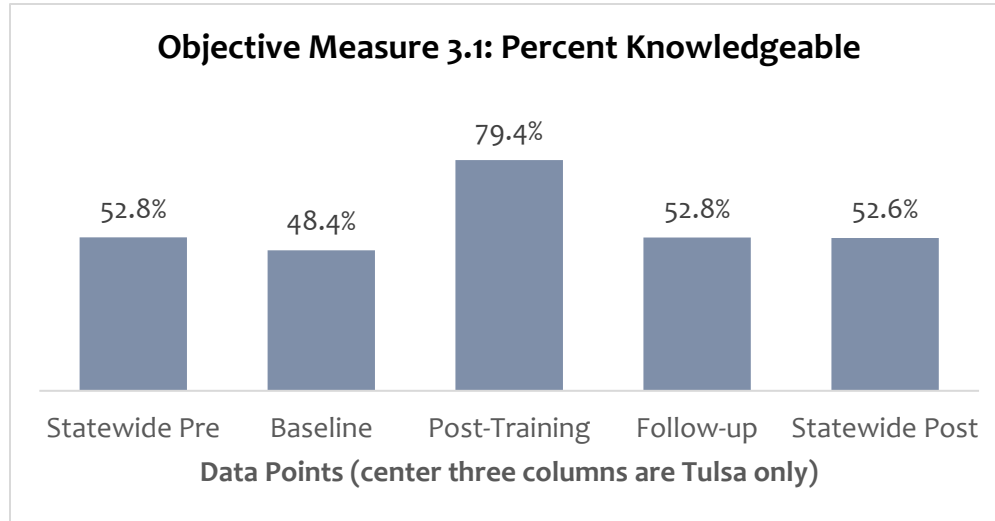
Survey Findings

Data for objectives 2 and 3 are shown in more detail on the following three graphs. The first and last columns in each graph show the statewide averages (excluding Tulsa). The “Statewide Pre” corresponds in time to the Tulsa Baseline data; both were collected in September 2016. Likewise, the “Statewide Post” corresponds to the Tulsa Follow-up data, both collected in January 2018. The Tulsa baseline and statewide pre have similar percentages for each objective measure, though Tulsa personnel scored lower than the rest of the state across all three.



As shown in each graph’s “Post-Training” column, the training intervention caused immediate substantial increases in comfort (measure 2.1) and knowledge (measures 2.2 and 3.1). Unfortunately, on the knowledge measures, that ‘surge’ did not sustain itself. Tulsa personnel’s response rates returned to the statewide level eight months after training.





Furthermore, the monthly average number of AT demonstrations in Tulsa (measure 3.2) has dropped 50 percent to a count of 17 in the months since the first training in September 2016. During the year prior to training, the monthly average count of demonstrations was 32 (as shared in the SSIP C Phase III Year One Narrative).

These findings have important implications for the long-term sustainability of the training and knowledge gained, especially when coupled with the demonstration numbers that also fell in the long-term after training. They suggest that additional follow-up training, coaching, and/or other informational reminders are needed to maintain practice change after training.

Fortunately, the findings for the performance measures for outcome 1 are much more promising. Families who responded to the annual literacy survey noted two things: first, that on average, they are more aware of tools and aids that can improve quality of life for their children, and second, that they can recall seeing an AT item demonstrated to them in the past year. These are positive results sought by the strategy. However, a similar increase in the number of borrowed items from ABLE Tech was not realized (outcome 2). It is difficult to draw too many conclusions from this single piece of data, however, since we do not know whether demonstrations were primarily for items that are considered “simple” technology—things that parents can make at home or obtain cheaply in stores.

Interview Findings

The SSIP evaluation team decided to interview personnel to understand why demonstration counts have fallen in half in the past year. Specifically, the goal was to determine whether providers experience any obstacles to conducting and/or reporting AT demonstrations. Interviews were conducted by the SoonerStart Professional Development Specialist and Program Manager, and participation was voluntary and confidential. Of the 34 service providers in Tulsa County, 29 were interviewed. They represented seven disciplines. Overwhelmingly, the findings demonstrate that obstacles to reporting are the primary reason numbers of demonstrations have fallen.

Obstacles to conducting demonstrations: The interviews do not indicate that personnel face any significant obstacles to conducting demonstrations. In fact, of those interviewed, 22 said they

had conducted an AT demonstration in the past month (76 percent). These 22 respondents estimated they had conducted around 200 demonstrations just in the past month. This is tremendously higher than the reported number of demonstrations in the official documentation. For example, the vision specialist stated that she may conduct up to 15 demonstrations a week in her role as service consultant. Unfortunately, she does not report any of these. The seven providers who did not conduct a demonstration in the past month indicated that it was because the children with whom they were working did not need one, or that they asked a colleague with more experience to do it.

Obstacles to reporting demonstrations: In Tulsa, the AT demonstration counts are logged during weekly staff meetings on a form provided by ABLE Tech. Of the staff members who reported conducting an AT demonstration, eight (36 percent) stated that they had not reported the activity on the AT demonstration log. Their reasons for not reporting included:

1. The provider did not attend the meeting every week;
2. the AT demonstration log did not make it around the room before the meeting was over;
or
3. The provider did not think the AT demonstration should be logged if the AT device had not been provided by ABLE Tech.

For example, one provider said “No [I don’t report], because I only used low-tech stuff” like laundry baskets and towel rolls. Another said she does not report demonstrations because she never attends the staffing meetings.

Lessons Learned

The survey and demonstration data suggest that without repeated, regular intervention, personnel will not maintain their knowledge about AT and the demonstration process, or conduct a consistent or growing number of demonstrations. Certainly, the latter measure may not be a perfect reflection of improved practice: personnel are encouraged to only conduct demonstrations when deemed beneficial for a child. If providers do not conclude that a child needs AT, then he or she will not do a demonstration. As a result, the number of demonstrations depends in part of the needs of the children currently receiving services.

Despite this caveat, the information gleaned from the interviews clearly indicates that the collection procedures for AT demonstration data need to be modified to more accurately reflect the current obstacles. Efforts will be made in year three to ensure that providers maintain their knowledge about AT and the associated demonstration, funding and transition processes, and practice accordingly.

Activities in year three

Year three implementation will be very similar to year two. Training will occur in the remaining four regions, completing the scale-up process, starting in late summer 2018. The evaluation will continue in Tulsa.

The findings from the follow-up surveys have suggested to the leadership team that additional activities are needed to support and maintain the knowledge and practice gains achieved immediately after the initial training. We will consider several types of support activities:

- a. Provide quarterly updates about site demonstration status as compared to other regions;
- b. Share ABLE Tech newsletter with all personnel;
- c. incorporate annual ‘maintenance’ training in all locations that are led by peers rather than ABLE Tech, to build local capacity;
- d. Develop the skill sets of designated local AT contact personnel to act as coaches; and
- e. Collect more information about seasonal changes in demonstration counts, regional variation, and related data.

Strategy 5: Increase family access to early literacy resources

The long-term goal for this strategy is to increase access of SoonerStart families to local early literacy resources and information. Stakeholders—including local and state leaders, families and community members—chose to select a specific activity for implementation: the creation and distribution of literacy information kits to share with families and spur conversation about early literacy goals and skills. This activity aligns directly with the SIMR: if families are more knowledgeable about early literacy, they are more likely to engage in supportive activities and practices in the home. If change happens early in their SoonerStart experience, this will result in improved knowledge and skills’ outcomes for their children at the time of exit from SoonerStart. The long-term vision for this strategy is that all SoonerStart families will access and use early literacy resources to improve child outcomes. The kits have provided personnel a concrete way to share early literacy resources with families that may not otherwise access them.

Summary of progress: Year two

As described in the year one report, the leadership team has focused in year two on the creation and distribution of resource kits to families in Tulsa and the development of a scale-up plan. Both of these have occurred. As planned, the evaluation has also continued through year two, producing important findings that are detailed in the evaluation section.

Tulsa

As described in the 2017 report narrative for this strategy, separate kits were created to be developmentally appropriate for different age groups: birth to one, one to two, and two to three years old. Each one includes a book suitable for that age group along with other age-related materials supportive of early literacy. All materials were described in detail in the year one report.

Tulsa personnel distributed the first set of fifty kits by September 2017. Subsequently, another 200 kits were created by SoonerStart personnel. The target date for distribution was December 2017. This target was nearly achieved: all kits were given to families by February 2018. Resource coordinators pick up a kit before meeting with a family, signing out who took it and to which family it would be given. Before expanding the distribution to continue through 2018, the leadership team selected to evaluate the activity to determine if it should continue based on the achievement of the objectives and outcomes. The project evaluation is included in the evaluation section that follows.

Scale-Up

In June 2017, at the end of the year one implementation cycle, SoonerStart leadership selected a region that neighbors Tulsa for the first location to scale up this strategy. Regional leaders strongly supported the project and wanted to implement it at their sites. The region is dramatically different from Tulsa: it is predominately rural, has several office sites spanning multiple counties out of which services are provided (Tulsa has only one), and its total personnel count is smaller. The sites in the region vary in the literacy resources available to families, giving a different challenge to this strategy. Local leaders have begun devising a plan to implement the strategy, with the hopes of having local resource kits available by the start of the third year of implementation in July 2018.

Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder input into the Tulsa implementation began in year one with a parent focus group and community group discussions. In year two, input has been gathered through the family literacy survey and through discussions with SoonerStart personnel. The family survey results are discussed in the next section. The strategy's leadership team used input from personnel to make the resource kits more accessible, changing the initial distribution site in the office to a centralized location. This has provided a clear reminder to personnel to take kits when preparing to meet with families.

Challenges

Initially, despite the regular reminders from local supervisors and team leaders, personnel in Tulsa did not regularly remember to take kits when meeting with families. This was in part due to their storage location and the mistaken view that they were to be given to the "neediest" families first. Once these problems were straightened out, personnel reported that they were regularly giving families the resource kits. Another challenge has been finding resources to include in the kits: books have been difficult to get, and some sponsors are no longer producing a few of the local resources included in the kit. These factors have made new kits harder to make.

Another potential problem is the continued perception by personnel that families are not interested in early literacy and are not using the resource kits. The data from the family literacy surveys only partially support this perception. Among respondents, only 36 percent recalled receiving a literacy resource kit. Of the remainder, just more than 50 percent were not sure if they had received one. This result suggests that the kits did not make a long-term impression on the respondents who received them (not all families may have been in the first rounds of distribution).

Despite this finding, the survey results also show that among those who recall receiving the kit, they valued the materials enclosed and kept them. Each type of kit item was rated "very helpful" by at least a third of respondents, with the book being the most valued. (The assistive technology documents and the local resource list were the least valued, on average.) Further, contrary to the beliefs of personnel, nearly 40 percent of families said that they are "very concerned" about developing their toddler or baby's early literacy skills at this time. An additional 34 percent said they are "somewhat concerned." This supports the efforts of the SIMR to engage families and increase discussions of and practices related to early literacy.

These challenges are now being addressed through concerted communication with personnel about the survey findings. The leadership team wants to ensure that personnel who

work directly with families understand that most families highly value the resource kit and that they are interested in promoting their children’s early literacy knowledge and skills. These findings support plans in year three to expand this strategy to another region.

Evaluation

As shown on the logic model, the objectives and medium-term outcomes are:

Objective 1: Families are more aware of Tulsa-area resources supportive of early literacy

Objective 2: Families are more knowledgeable about benefits of and best practices that promote early literacy

Objective 3: Families use more early literacy resources

Outcome 1: Parents engage in more early literacy practices, such as reading to their children daily

Table 6 summarizes the performance measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives and outcomes. Most performance measures did not meet the desired targets, although one objective (1.1) and one measure of outcome 1 (the second) did. Fortunately for the purposes of this evaluation, these two measures are the least likely to be confounded by outside effects. Both are the results of single questions on the family literacy survey and directly reference the resource kits. All other measures refer generally to types of literacy behavior and knowledge, such as the frequency of reading (a question included in the engagement index measure) and familiarity with receptive language (a question included in the knowledge index measure). Many respondents rated themselves very highly on these measures, suggesting that the resource kits may have only a marginal impact on such broad indicators.

Table 6: Strategy 5 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	Families who recall receiving a kit report: ²⁰ 1. The local resource list was “helpful” 2. Accessing more other local EL resources	1. 50% in follow-up survey 2. Statistically significant ²¹ difference in access	Met target: 1. 53% reported the list was somewhat or very helpful Target not met: 2. The difference between groups in accessing local resources is not significant
Objective 2	Families who recall receiving a kit report higher knowledge levels	Statistically significant difference in knowledge levels	Target not met: The difference between recall and non-recall groups in knowledge levels is not significant

²⁰ Data source: 2017 family literacy survey; also for objectives 2 and 3, and outcome 1.

²¹ As indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05 in tests of association. Also for objectives 2 and 3, and outcome 1.

SSIP-C PHASE III YEAR TWO NARRATIVE

Objective 3	Families who recall receiving a kit report accessing more EL resources	Statistically significant difference in resource access	Target not met: The difference between recall and non-recall groups in accessing EL resources is not significant
Outcome 1	Families who recall receiving a kit report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Greater engagement with their children That they are doing “a lot” more with their children as a result of what they have read & learned 	Statistically significant difference in both engagement elements	Target not met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The difference between recall and non-recall groups in child engagement is not significant Target met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The difference between recall and non-recall groups in reported “change” is significant

Activities in year three

During the remainder of year two, a decision will be made about continuing distribution of kits in Tulsa. Some items included in the kits have become more difficult to collect, discouraging long-term production. The findings from the family literacy survey, however, suggest that the kits are generally well valued and have changed some behaviors, if not all being evaluated. In year three, the leadership team and stakeholders will revisit the kits’ enclosures and consider what to continue to provide and what should be replaced or introduced. These same discussions will take place in the scale-up region as well, with a goal of having kits ready for distribution in early fall. The goal in the second region is to make the kits locally relevant while also providing a wide variety of resources. The evaluation for this strategy will be expanded to include this second region because of the vast differences between it and Tulsa County.

Strategy 6: Early literacy professional development

This infrastructure improvement is intended to improve providers’ knowledge and understanding of early literacy best practices. With this knowledge, providers will work with families to improve practice in the home. Because providers have limited time with children in SoonerStart, their ability to coach families to engage in evidence-based practices is critical for increasing a child’s skills and knowledge with regard to early literacy. With appropriate training, personnel will be more confident and more likely to speak to families about these topics. Children will then grow in skills and knowledge when their caregivers do, affecting the SIMR over time.

As described in the year one report, the training content focuses broadly on the variety of ways in which providers and caregivers can enhance and promote very early literacy knowledge and skills for very young children. Because each child and family is different, the stakeholders—who included early literacy specialists from OSDE and SoonerStart service providers and lead clinicians—determined that advocating any one specific evidence-based practice would be less

effective for improving child outcomes than promoting a broad set of approaches that support early literacy. In light of this decision, practice fidelity is not an outcome being evaluated. Rather, the goal for this strategy is to increase conversations and modeling with families to improve their children’s literacy given their specific needs.

Summary of progress: Year two

The focus for year two has been on completing the second EL training session in Tulsa and scaling-up the training in other regions. Two regions were selected to begin this year. With the exit of the 619 Coordinator, this strategy is now being led by a recently hired Professional Development Specialist for SoonerStart. This transition process has delayed implementation slightly, but has also ensured that critical resources are now properly dedicated to this strategy. The plan described in year one’s report to record the training and upload it for general use has not been implemented. During the middle of the year, a new online PD system was adopted. The format will allow courses to be developed that will be more interactive and informative than a video would be. Year three will focus on the adaptation of early literacy training to this new format.

Tulsa

As reported in the narrative report for the first year of implementation, the early literacy training planned under this strategy did not occur until late in the year. In early May, three training sessions were held for all providers, divided into three groups: child development and nursing, speech and language, and occupational and physical therapists. Each group was trained by local leaders in the disciplines, after working with the 619 coordinator to develop the content and format. The three training sessions were very similar, diverging slightly to accommodate disciplinary differences. The original goal of the training was to highlight the different ways various disciplines can incorporate evidence-based literacy activities into service provision. Unfortunately, based on follow-up interviews, discipline-based practices were not highlighted to the extent originally planned. The views of participants are presented in the “stakeholder input” section below. Despite the lack of variation, personnel reported learning some valuable techniques for improving early literacy.

The second training session will be provided this coming May. It will focus on coaching and adult learning/training methods that personnel can use with families. Because the strategic goal is ultimately to enable families, the local Tulsa personnel felt that this would be the best content to learn, even though it is **only peripheral to** early literacy. It will be led by two peer trainers who have been trained on coaching and mentoring²². They are also peer leaders in Tulsa and work as mentors to other personnel. May was selected as the month for training because Tulsa must participate in other training opportunities earlier in the spring, unrelated to this strategy.

Scale-Up

The two scale-up regions were selected because local SoonerStart leaders were very interested in training their personnel and improving child outcomes. These two regions cover nearly 25 counties in Oklahoma and 10 of the 27 sites. They do not have large urban areas and lack access

²² Training led by Juliann J. Woods, PhD, CCC-SLP, Director of the Communication and Early Childhood Research and Practice Center and Professor in the School of Communication Science and Disorders at Florida State University, Tallahassee.

to many resource available in Tulsa, and wanted to receive the training as early as possible in the scale-up process. The Professional Development Specialist has already conducted the first early literacy training session in these two regions, expanding on the content provided in the first training in Tulsa. The second training session on coaching and adult learning methods will be held at the start of the third year of implementation, in July or August. It will be led by the same trainers as in Tulsa, with the assistance of the PD Specialist.

Stakeholder Input

The leadership team has sought out and received substantial input from stakeholders, including ICC members and local team leaders, for the implementation of this strategy. Several methods have been used to gather this input: personnel surveys have revealed the broad needs and desires for early literacy training; group personnel interviews have identified the perceived strengths and weaknesses of current training content and methods; and family surveys have highlighted the needs of families. Some things we have learned from stakeholders:

- More than 90 percent of families reported in the initial survey that they wanted more information on a variety of topics related to early literacy. Of these, nearly 80 percent said they would appreciate SoonerStart’s help in accessing relevant information.
- Tulsa personnel drove the original decision to adopt content that included discipline-based early literacy practices and updated content on coaching and adult learning methods, based in part on their higher level of exposure to early literacy guidance prior to and in addition to SSIP early literacy training.
- The Tulsa office has been very proactive in seeking out information on this topic. In the large group interviews held soon after the May training, Tulsa personnel noted that the first training was too basic for them. We acknowledged this and determined that the trainer had not done a good job listening to the needs of local personnel when designing the May training. We agreed to target the first training more closely to local needs during scale-up.
- Other regions’ personnel then influenced the decision to *not* implement discipline-based early literacy practice training in other regions, and to use the content from the first training in Tulsa last May. This was decided after other regions’ personnel voiced their preference for basic content on early literacy.

Challenges

Scheduling conflicts have proven to be one of the biggest challenges for this strategy. Because of various time constraints on personnel in Tulsa and the original trainers, it has been difficult in both years of implementation to plan and schedule training sessions for this strategy. The initial plan was to have both training sessions completed by June 2017, but that did not happen. Instead, the second will be held toward the end of year two (by June 2018). Although this is problematic for SSIP timing, these decisions were made in the best interests of Tulsa personnel and the strategic goals; rushing each training without proper planning was less desirable. The addition of a PD Specialist to the state SoonerStart office has alleviated some of the planning and scheduling pressures, especially as scale-up begins.

Evaluation

As shown on the updated logic model, the objectives and medium-term outcomes have been adjusted slightly to the following:

SSIP-C PHASE III YEAR TWO NARRATIVE

Objective 1: Tulsa personnel participate in at least two early literacy training sessions by June 2017

Objective 2: All SoonerStart website professional development content is updated to include information on early literacy

Objective 3: All families receive guidance on EL benefits and practices from SoonerStart personnel

Outcome 1: Tulsa SoonerStart personnel demonstrate a deep understanding of EL benefits, practices and assessment

Outcome 2: Families report increased EL knowledge and practice

Table 7 summarizes the performance measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives and outcomes. Most performance measures met the desired targets, despite the lack of official SSIP training for personnel on early literacy. We suspect this is partly due to the Tulsa’s proactive stance toward early literacy and their willingness to seek out training on their own. Notably, the outcome measures have been achieved. Knowledge of both personnel and families have increased significantly, as has practice frequency for both groups. We are quite confident from these findings that SoonerStart is improving families’ awareness of the benefits and practices of early literacy skills and knowledge.

Table 7: Strategy 6 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	Percent of personnel who participate in at least two EL training sessions	90%	Target not met: only one training coordinated through SSIP was held in the timeframe ²³
Objective 2	Website is updated to provide evidence-based information for personnel and families on EL	50% updated in year one*; 100% in year two	Met target: family pages are updated
Objective 3	1. Percent families who report they received EL guidance from SoonerStart 2. Percent personnel who report they share EL information on a regular basis	90% in year one; 95% in year two	Met target: 1. 95% in year one ²⁴ Did not meet target: 2. 85% in year one (an increase of 8.7% above baseline) ²⁵

²³ Data source: project documentation

²⁴ Data source: 2018 family literacy survey

²⁵ Data source: 2016 and 2017 personnel surveys

SSIP-C PHASE III YEAR TWO NARRATIVE

Outcome 1	Personnel demonstrate increased knowledge of early literacy key concepts	Statistically significant ²⁶ differences in knowledge and practice	Met target: between personnel surveys, knowledge increased by 21% on average for Tulsa personnel, which represents a significant difference between means. No change was witnessed in the comparison control group. ²⁷
Outcome 2	At the end of first year of implementation, families report: 1. Greater knowledge of early literacy key concepts 2. Greater frequency of engaging in evidence-based practices	Statistically significant differences in knowledge and practice	Met target: between family surveys, knowledge and practice increased on average by 20% and 9% respectively, which represent significant differences between means ²⁸

*Year one includes 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017; year two includes 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2018.

Activities in year three

Scale-up will continue in year three. The second training session (coaching and adult learning methods) will be provided to the two regions that have already received the first training. This will likely happen in summer 2018. After that, more regions will be identified to participate in the training. The PD Specialist will work with regional leadership to determine which regions will participate in year three. The evaluation of implementation in Tulsa will continue.

Additionally, at least one course related to early literacy will be developed in the new online PD system. This will serve as orientation material for new employees and others who need a basic review of the topic. Over time, more advanced and specialized courses will be developed to ensure that all personnel have access to additional online training in early literacy that benefits their practice. We believe this is the best method for targeting and promoting specific disciplinary evidence-based practices across the state.

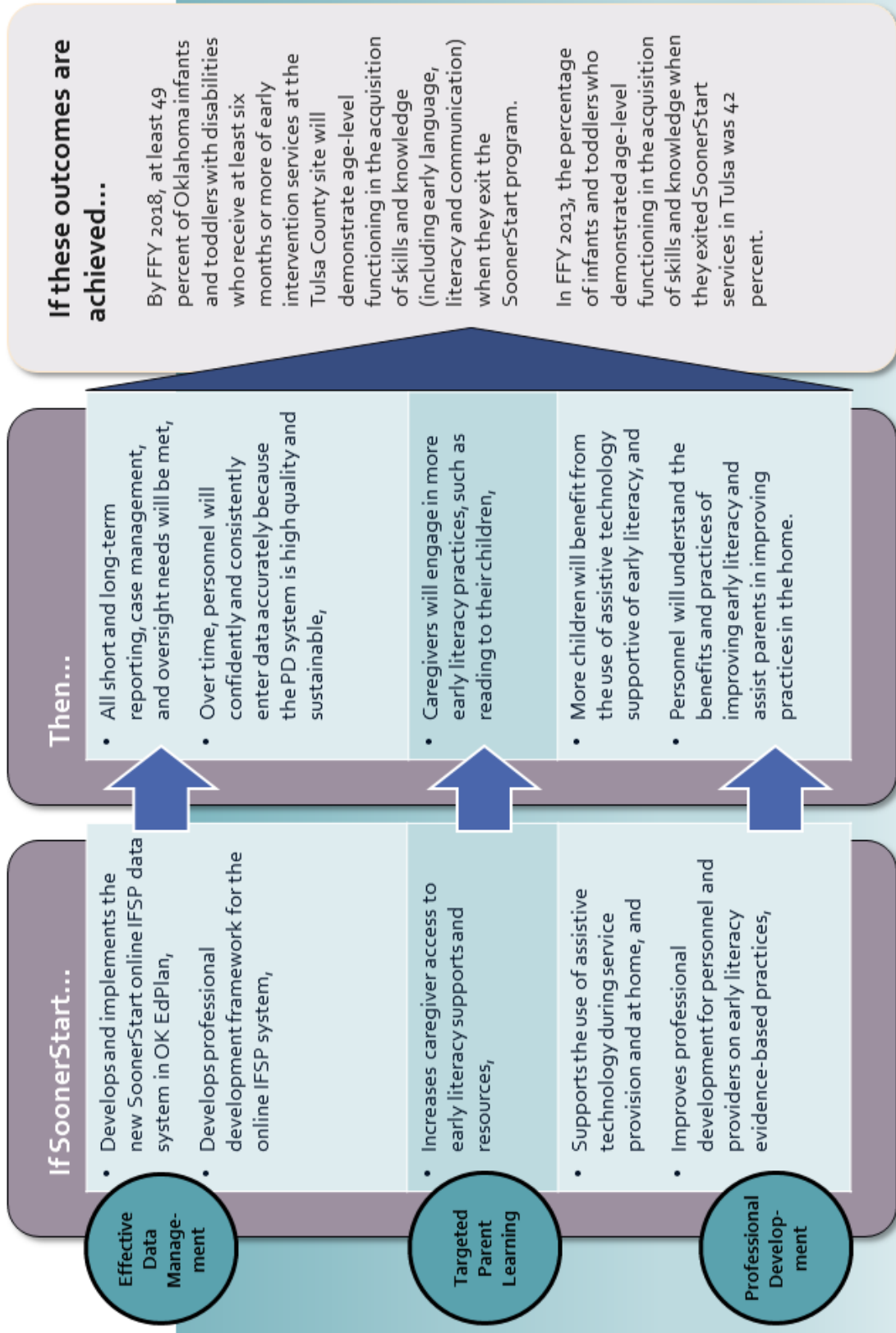
²⁶ As indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05 in tests of association. Also for outcome 2.

²⁷ Data source: 2016 and 2017 personnel surveys

²⁸ Data source: 2016 and 2018 family literacy surveys

Appendix A: Updated Oklahoma SSIP-C Theory of Action

2018 OKLAHOMA PART C THEORY OF ACTION



SSIP-C PHASE III YEAR TWO NARRATIVE