

State of Oklahoma

Part C SSIP Narrative: Phase III Year Four

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Oklahoma State Department of Education
SoonerStart & Special Education Services



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Introduction

This report narrates the fourth year of implementation of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) for Part C in Oklahoma. This is the next to final year of implementation on the current SSIP. In 2020, Oklahoma’s Part C program—called SoonerStart—will begin defining a new SSIP for the following years.

SIMR: State-identified measureable result

In FFY 2014, stakeholders determined that the Part C SSIP should choose as its State-identified Measureable Result (SIMR) 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. This has been extended through FFY 2019, per guidance from OSEP. Specifically, the SIMR for Oklahoma is defined as:

By FFY 2019, 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.

Table 1: SIMR Targets & Data for FFY 2014 – 2019

	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	FFY 2016	FFY 2017	FFY 2018	FFY 2019
Target	42%	42%	43%	45%	49%	49%
Actual Rate	50.2%	50.1%	41.6%	46.9%	49.5%	TBD

Table 1 presents the targets and Tulsa County data for Oklahoma’s SIMR. The targets have been met every year but one during the implementation of the SSIP.

Improvement strategies

During consultation with stakeholders in Phase II, 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 through this SSIP: effective data management, targeted parent learning, 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, Statewide 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/implementation. All but one continued in year two: strategy two was terminated because of technical problems with merging the two data systems. The reasons for this were described in the Phase III/year two narrative report.

This past year (year four of implementation), slight changes were made to the design of strategy five to incorporate training completed through strategy six and to ensure that fidelity to implementation of early literacy evidence-based practices could be evaluated. More details about these changes in strategies five and six are provided in Section Two for strategies five and six.

Theory of action summary

The selected improvement strategies are intended to increase the capacity of state and local personnel and parents to increase the early literacy skills of children served through 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 (Appendix A). No changes were made to the theory of action in year four.

Table 2 describes the rationale for implementing each of the remaining strategies and its impact on the SIMR. If the five strategies are implemented with fidelity, we propose that many strategic outcomes will be realized, leading to sustainable improvement in the SIMR. 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.

Overall, implementing these strategies has substantially improved data management and quality, parent knowledge of early literacy best practices, and the professional development of SoonerStart personnel in the areas of assistive technology and early literacy. Evidence of these changes are provided in Section Two. These improvements would not have been made without the SSIP.

Expected changes

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 region will receive early literacy information that will lead to increased caregiver engagement in evidence-based practices that promote early literacy;

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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; and
7. Appropriate personnel will habitually model these best practices with families to improve child outcomes.

With one year remaining in implementation, all expected changes have been achieved or are on track to be achieved by the end of December 2020.

Table 2: The SIMR Improvement Strategies

Core Factors	Improvement Strategies	Rationale for Impact on SIMR
<i>Effective data management</i>	<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>
<i>Targeted parent learning</i>	<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>
<i>Professional development</i>	<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 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 Four of Phase III

As shown in Table 1, the FFY 2018 age-equivalent ECO-B rate in Tulsa County again exceeded the SIMR target. The SIMR increased from the previous year by more than 2.5 percentage points.

Year four accomplishments

The following list highlights strategic achievements in year four. Strategies one, three and four are at the stage of sustainable implementation, and implementation in year four was similar to year three and will be similar in year five.

- Strategy 1: The statewide data system is sustainable and meets the data collection and reporting needs of personnel. Improvements continued to be made on a regular basis. The system is complete and unified, holding comprehensive records for each child served.
- Strategy 3: Statewide data system training has continued to occur through several avenues: local and state coaching and mentoring, targeted interventions, and in-person support. A sustainable PD plan is being developed.
- Strategy 4: Implementation in year four focused on moving all AT training to an online format to create sustainable access.
- Strategy 5: The toolkit implementation was not working as desired in year three, so this strategy was revised to incorporate family coaching in evidence-based practices. One specific EBP (shared book reading) was adopted by personnel as a fundamental practice to model for families and this was successfully implemented in Tulsa County.
- Strategy 6: Work continued to move the early literacy and coaching content to an online format. The coaching and mentoring content was successfully moved, while the early literacy content is still in process.

Stakeholder engagement

Oklahoma's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) has served as the formal stakeholder group to which the leadership team reports in-person on a quarterly basis. The ICC advised the Phase I analysis and Phase II design of the SSIP and receive regular Phase III updates about implementation and evaluation. ICC stakeholders offer 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. Throughout year four, ongoing discussions have been held with stakeholders to gather feedback on implementation, especially for strategy five. 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, including survey results. This report will be made available to stakeholders on the Part C state website, in the data section.

Evaluation summary

The SSIP evaluation team, which consists of OSDE-SES data analysts and evaluators, program specialists, and program directors, worked in year four to ensure that data were collected to measure

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progress on implementation as defined in the strategies' evaluations. Details about the strategic objectives and outcomes, findings and results are described separately for each strategy in Section Two. Evaluation plans were not altered in year four for any strategy except strategy five.

The parent survey used to collect data for strategies five and six was not conducted this year because of the changes to the activities implemented for families to promote early literacy with fidelity. Instead, parents did submit responses to measure the fidelity of implementation for those activities. The modified strategy five activities and evaluation were only implemented in Tulsa County.

The annual personnel survey that captures data about knowledge and practices related to early literacy, AT and the online IFSP system had a higher response rate than the previous year, accounting for nearly half of personnel. All regions and positions are represented at rates that reflect SoonerStart demographics.

Section Two: Strategy Descriptions

This section of the Phase III Year Four Part C SSIP Narrative Report presents a year four review for each implementation strategy, including a description of activities in the summary of progress, additional information about stakeholder engagement, evaluation details, and plans for year five. Please refer to previous years' reports for information on prior implementation activities.

Implementation and evaluation timeframes

All strategy timeframes are generally aligned with 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 four falls between July 2019 and June 2020. 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. Note that the year five implementation cycle will conclude after six months, in December 2020.

● Strategy 1: Develop high quality, sustainable data system

This infrastructure improvement was selected in Phase II to meet growing data collection and reporting needs, by replacing 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 the statewide online IFSP data system, called SoonerStart EdPlan, will consistently meet all short and long-term reporting, case management, and oversight needs and requirements. Oklahoma believes it has met this goal.

This improvement strategy was 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: Phase III year four

All fourth year activities proposed in last year's narrative report have been initiated, although not all completed. Specifically, the activities that were conducted in year four are:

- Regular review and timely revision of local, state and federal reporting tools (Objective 1);
- Regular review and timely revision of interfaces for data collection, including all aspects of child eligibility and the IFSP (Objective 2). (No significant fixes were required in year four.);
- Completion of interface to manage Medicaid billing for OSDE services provided (Outcome 1);
- Continued development of system documentation to support sustainability (Outcome 2); and
- Continued effort to align EdPlan data elements to the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) framework to ensure permanent and sustainable data access and usage (Outcome 2).

Stakeholder Input

The habitual involvement of stakeholders in the design and implementation of the online system is essential to its long-term sustainability. Formally, four mechanisms were used in year four to gather feedback on system functionality:

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- quarterly meetings with regional field personnel,
- monthly meetings with the vendors' programming and response teams,
- annual surveys of all personnel, and
- the message function in the system itself, used to convey field needs directly to the vendor.

All of these have proven very valuable for understanding the immediate and long-term concerns and needs of field personnel, who are the primary essential stakeholders for the success of this initiative. The opportunity to engage in frequent, open communication has helped to alleviate concerns when changes are made and ensured that the system meets the needs of all users. Informal feedback mechanisms continue to be used by all personnel to share immediate and urgent concerns, with email and texts being the most popular.

Evaluation

The objectives and medium-term outcomes for implementation of this strategy are listed just below. Note that goal dates are those from the original timeline.

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 on page 9 summarizes the performance measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives and outcomes. Note that the first year of implementation and evaluation for this strategy was year two of the Phase III of implementation (FFY 2016), so all references to years one through four in Table 3 align with years two through five of the broader Plan. In brief, the system continues to operate smoothly. All objectives and outcomes are being achieved and will be met by the end of year four of implementation.

Activities in year five

Implementation continues to focus on ensuring that the system is functional, meeting daily needs of service provision, and sustainable. In this extended final year of the current SSIP plan, documentation will be finalized to reflect the existing system functionality and status. Currently, all aspects of the operation of the system have been documented, though changes to the system require regular updates to all written material. The team will also continue working to align SoonerStart data elements with the CEDS framework with a completion goal of December 2020. This will ensure that SoonerStart data can be stored permanently in the state's servers and could be used with Part B data to analyze the long-term benefits of early intervention.

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Table 3: Strategy 1 Performance

	Performance Measures	Targets	Year Four 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; maintained in year three	Target met: field and oversight reports are available at any time ¹
Objective 2	System is updated with substantial changes on a biannual basis and significant fixes are completed within two weeks of notification	100% in each year of implementation	Target met: all system changes completed timely ²
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, reimbursement functions, and all data elements required for federal reporting.	60% in year one; 70% in year two; 85% in year three; 100% in year four	Target met: At least 95% of documentation can be completed in the online IFSP system in year four
Outcome 2	Data system meets the following requirements for sustainability and continuous improvement: ³ <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; and 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	Target met: maintenance in elements 1-3; continued improvement made in element 4: system information is being documented ⁴

*Year one of the evaluation: 12/1/2016 to 11/30/2017; year two: 12/1/2017 to 11/30/2018; year three: 12/1/2018 to 11/30/2019; year four: 12/1/2019 to 12/31/2020.

¹ Data source: program documentation; reports counted in data system compared to desired completed reports

² Data source: program documentation; updates counted through change requests and malfunction fixes completed by vendor

³ Recommended characteristics derived from the DaSy-ECTA Quality System Framework.

⁴ Data source: program documentation and observations

● Strategy 3: Develop professional development framework for the data system

This infrastructure improvement was selected with the intention to establish a sustainable, high quality professional development framework for the use of SoonerStart EdPlan. The long-term goal for this strategy is to have a framework in place that will guide current and new personnel in the use of the data system and its maintenance over time. This improvement is critical to advancing the SIMR for two reasons:

1. Firstly, 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 all 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.

Oklahoma's data system professional development framework is nearly completed and on track to be sustainable over time.

Summary of progress: Phase III year four

No substantial changes were made to this strategy's implementation plan in year four. All proposed activities proposed have been initiated, although not all completed. Specifically, the activities that were conducted in year four are:

- Formal and informal training of existing and new personnel (objectives 1 and 2);
- Development of several EdPlan training modules in the state's online PD platform (Outcomes 1 & 2); and
- Modification of the online and in-person IFSP training content, including new procedures and data entry requirements to reflect recent revisions of the IFSP process (Outcomes 1 & 2).

The biggest effort this past year has been dedicated to the production of online training modules as part of this strategy and for other purposes. As mentioned in last year's narrative report, the first module was expected to be completed in late spring 2019, and that goal was met. Since then, 21 individuals have completed the online "EdPlan Navigation" course.

Because the majority of training content has been adapted to the online training format, no formal in-person training for the EdPlan database occurred this past year. This decision was based on the fact that over 94% percent of SoonerStart personnel agree (highly or somewhat) that they have been adequately trained in EdPlan. Additionally, at this point in the strategy's implementation, only 2.2 percent of personnel who responded to a recent survey report being "a little panicked" or "overwhelmed" with EdPlan at this time.

Informal coaching and mentoring continue at the local and state levels. These consist of local expert guidance toward advanced use and direct one-on-one training when needed, both supported by state-level direction given to all personnel through tip sheets and community updates in the online training system. Coaching and mentoring have not been formally incorporated into the framework yet, with other activities taking priority. The online modules took longer than expected to produce, due to a vendor backlog, reducing the time available for framework development and documentation.

SoonerStart revised the family interview process for the development of the IFSP and made modifications to how data were entered on the IFSP in the EdPlan database. The Oklahoma Family Resource Assessment (OFRA) and the Oklahoma Family Interview (OFI) were incorporated into the IFSP

process with families. The data obtained through these information gathering tools are captured on the child's IFSP in the electronic record and used to help the family develop outcomes for their child. Mandatory training was completed for all early intervention personnel statewide on the new processes as well as specific procedures for EdPlan data entry. New staff members are trained in the OFRA and OFI by their site supervisors utilizing a recorded training video within 30 days of employment.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders for this strategy are the full set of personnel across the state, including case managers, clerks and service providers: everyone who uses the system for service provision and reporting. 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 gathered 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 February 2020 in the middle of year four implementation. Many evaluation objectives are measured through data collected via this survey.

Stakeholder feedback on professional development needs is also gathered through regular, personal contacts between state and field personnel. Regional coordinators and lead clinicians advise the state office on training needs and successes, while local personnel are also able to contact the state 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 can be corrected quickly through written guidance.

Evaluation

The objectives and medium-term outcomes reflect the program's need for a highly functional and sustainable PD 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
- Outcome 2: The professional system development plan (for the use of the data system) is sustainable

Table 4 summarizes the performance measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives and outcomes through the middle of year four implementation. Success varied in meetings objectives 1 through 3. SoonerStart continues to share information about updates with personnel in a timely manner, with documentation prepared ahead of release (objective 1). Additionally, all new employees were trained in accessing and using critical features in EdPlan within two weeks of starting by their supervisors. 60 percent of these completed the online module as part of this new hire training. In the future, all new employees will complete this module as they begin their work.

The target for objective 3 was not met, although the personnel reported substantial improvement from the previous year, as shown in the graph that follows Table 4. All components of outcomes 1 and 2 have been achieved or are in process, and will be achieved by the end of 2020.

Table 4: Strategy 3 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Year Four 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 ⁵
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 through five	Target met: 100% of new employees were trained by local personnel within two weeks of hire
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; 75% in year five	Approaching target: Year four: 61% are “confident;” 37% are “calm;” 2.2% are “a little panicked”/ “overwhelmed” ⁶
Outcome 1	To demonstrate high quality, the PD system... 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.	Year one: all elements are partially or fully implemented, incorporating continuous improvement Years two through five: all elements are fully implemented, incorporating continuous improvement	Targets met: 1. Multiple opportunities exist to meet various personnel needs; 2. Adult learning strategies are integrated in training; 3. Climate meets requirements ⁷ ; 4. Coaching and mentoring are available though not institutionalized; 5. All elements undergoing continuous revision for improvement.
Outcome 2	The PD system meets the following requirements for sustainability and continuous improvement: ⁸ 1. Leadership supports and advocates for the system to stakeholders;	Year one: elements 1, 2 and 3 are fully implemented Years two and three: Continued,	Approaching target: Year four: Elements 1-3 maintained at full implementation; elements 4 and 5 are partially implemented:

⁵ Data source: program documentation such as emails and planning documents and training records, also objective 2 & outcome 2.

⁶ Data sources: SoonerStart training and annual personnel surveys

⁷ 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

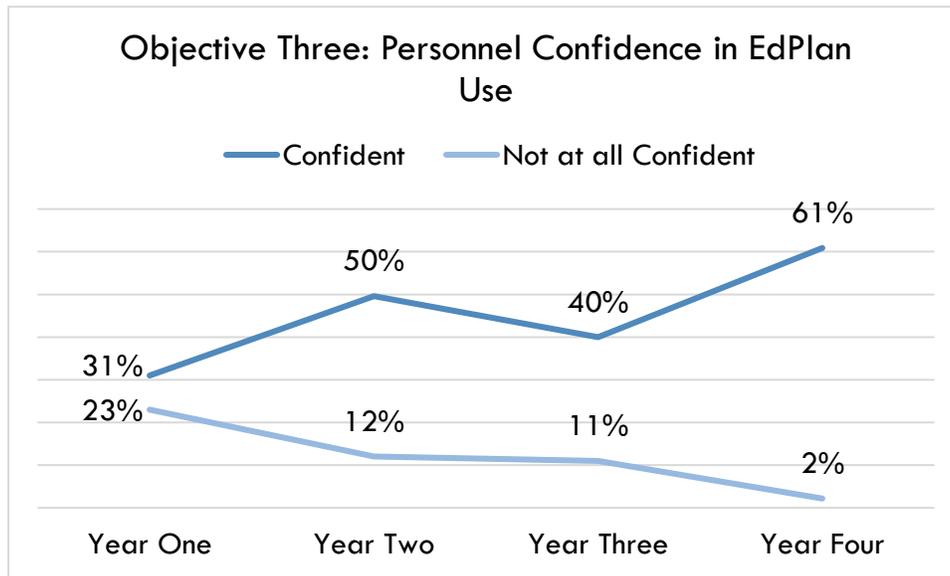
⁸ Recommended characteristics listed in outcomes 1 & 2 derived in part from the DaSy-ECTA Quality System Framework.

Table 4: Strategy 3 Performance

	<p>2. Adequate processes are in place to include stakeholder input to identify enhancements to the system;</p> <p>3. Funding is secured for at least five years to maintain and improve the system;</p> <p>4. Documentation exists to transfer knowledge about the system to new personnel;</p> <p>5. A formal long-term plan is in place.</p>	<p>with development of elements 4 & 5</p> <p>Years four and five: Continued, with elements 4 & 5 fully implemented</p>	<p>documentation and PD plan are being developed</p>
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*Year one: 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017; year two: 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2018; year three: 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019; year four: 7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020; year five: 7/1/2020 to 12/31/2020.

The target for objective 3 was to achieve 70 percent confidence, which was not met. However, this year personnel reported much higher rates of confidence in the system than in previous years, increasing by 20 percent. More importantly, the rate of feeling panicked or overwhelmed dropped dramatically.



Activities in year five

The leadership team will focus on two activities in the final year of implementation to ensure that current training needs are met and long-term sustainability is achieved. First, the online training modules will grow to cover more topics related to system use and data management. Second, SoonerStart local site supervisors will include training with the EdPlan Navigation Modules as part of the new employee orientation procedures for health and education staff. Additionally, the leadership team will continue to document critical system knowledge, including contract and process information, and practices and procedures for all functions, to ensure that the system is sustainable over time.

● 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 (AT) that may improve daily functioning to enhance early literacy. Such devices can be used to help children with disabilities participate more fully in literacy-promoting activities and routines, reducing the impact of restricted mobility and auditory or visual impairments.⁹ Examples include positioning devices to help children sit upright to look at books, and communication boards to help them respond to questions. 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. AT can mitigate those effects, enabling children to learn more quickly and with greater ease. Knowledge and skills will increase with the effective use of AT for children who need it.

Summary of progress: Phase III year four

In year four of implementation, attention has focused on establishing the long-term sustainability of this strategy by moving all training content to the online format. Since in-person training was completed across the state for all sites in year three, new in-person training was not scheduled or delivered. The online modules will ensure that new personnel have immediate access to the information, while seasoned employees can review the content at any time. All content is being developed by experienced ABLE Tech¹⁰ personnel with OSDE-SES and OSDH support. Unfortunately, because of a limited budget to develop new courses, the AT material is not yet online. The modules have been created, but will not be available until summer 2020.

Other activities conducted in year four have attended to the need to: 1) regularly refresh personnel on AT best practices and 2) have an efficient way to submit AT demonstration and use data. Toward the first goal, the ABLE Tech newsletter continues to be shared with all personnel and site-level AT contacts have regular conversations with ABLE Tech personnel about their local needs. Regarding the second goal, the online demonstration reporting tool that was piloted in Tulsa in year three was adopted state-wide in late April 2019. Since the tool was created, service providers have recorded the use of AT devices in 412 visits that otherwise would not have been documented. We do not have prior comparison information, unfortunately, to check whether AT usage rates have increased since the strategy was implemented.

Stakeholder Input

The leadership team monitors progress on this strategy with the assistance of the ABLE Tech SoonerStart 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 ABLE Tech, OSDE and OSDH staff, and early intervention providers. Providers from across the state also have been valuable sources of information during training and implementation.

⁹ Light, J. & Kelford-Smith, A. (1993), "Home literacy experiences of preschoolers who use AAC systems and of their nondisabled peers," *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 9, 10-25.; and Tots-n-Tech (2012), "Using AT to Promote Literacy in Infants and Toddlers," Newsletter, published by Tots-n-Tech at Arizona State University and Thomas Jefferson University, retrieved from http://www.ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/TnT-News-Literacy-Dec12.pdf?utm_campaign=weta&utm_source=readingrockets&utm_medium=sitemap; and Campbell, P., Wilcox, J., & McLeod, J. (2008), "Promoting Young Children's Participation in Activities & Routines through Adaptations & Assistive Technology," Presentation delivered at the 2008 OSEP National Early Childhood Conference, December.

¹⁰ Oklahoma's statewide assistive technology program

Evaluation

Evaluation and monitoring of implementation have continued across the state as the use of the online reporting tool has been scaled-up. The strategic objectives and medium-term outcomes are:

- Objective 1: All relevant personnel are trained on use and benefits of early literacy 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. Because training had been completed statewide by the time of the annual personnel survey, the evaluation team has assessed statewide levels of comfort with and knowledge of demonstrations (objectives 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1), instead of just Tulsa. As shown in the table and the charts that follow, all three measures showed substantial improvements from baseline to year four, though knowledge of the logging process declined slightly (but not significantly) from year three.

Table 5: Strategy 4 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Year Four Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	All personnel (who are likely to demonstrate AT to families) receive updated, two-part training	90% participation	Target met: 92% participated in both training sessions across the state ¹¹
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel report increased comfort with conducting demonstrations Personnel correctly identify best practices more often 	From baseline, statistically significant ¹² improvement	Targets met: ¹³ <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statistically significant improvement of 34.1% Statistically significant improvement of 29.3%
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel are more knowledgeable of the demonstration logging process Personnel conduct 25 percent more demonstrations over time compared to year prior to training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> From baseline, statistically significant improvement Average 25% increase in demonstrations 	Target met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statistically significant improvement of 24.3% Target not met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demos lag behind pre-training numbers by approx. 10 per month¹⁴

¹¹ Data source: project documentation such as training records

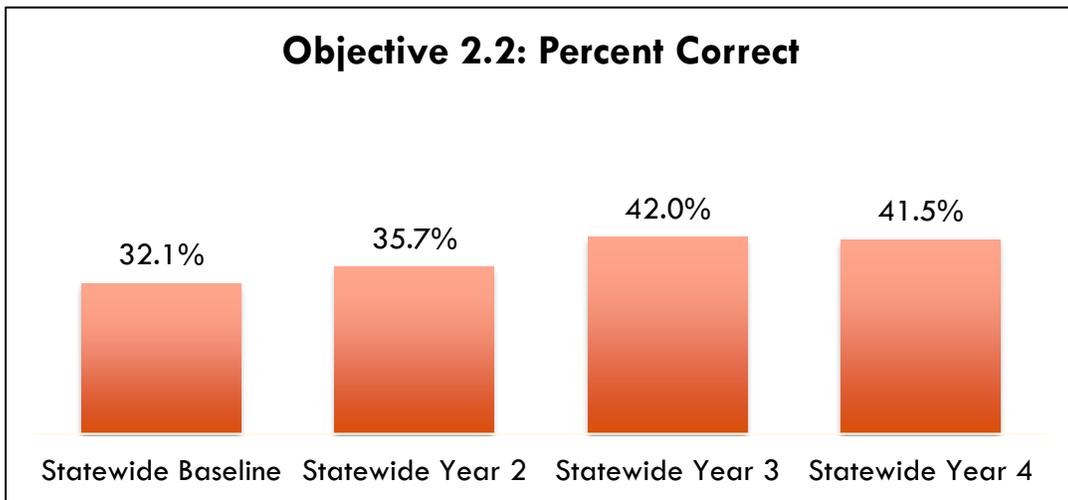
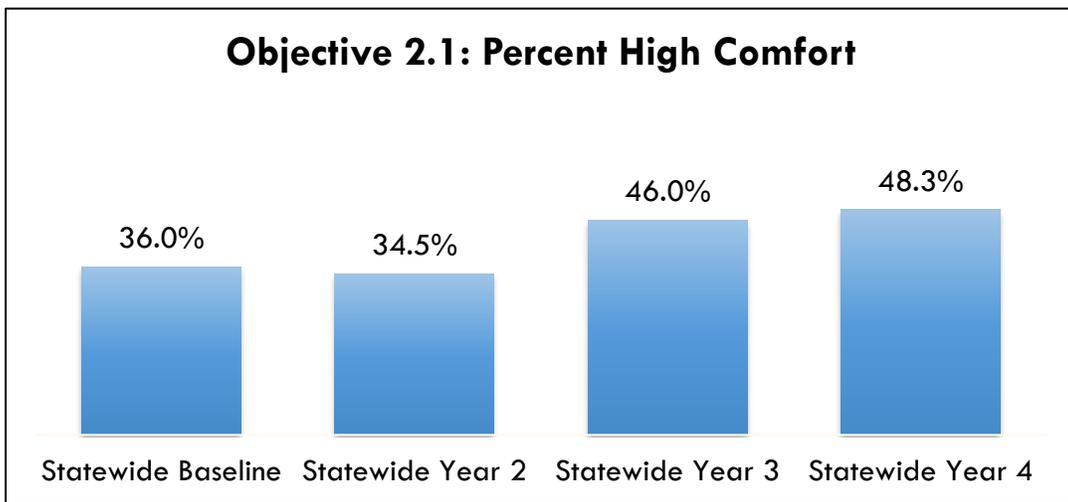
¹² As indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05 in tests of association (also for objective 3.1 & outcome 1.1)

¹³ Data sources: training pre and post surveys; annual personnel surveys (also for objective 3.1)

¹⁴ Data source: Monthly AT demonstration reports (a jump in statewide demonstrations reported from 52 to 106)

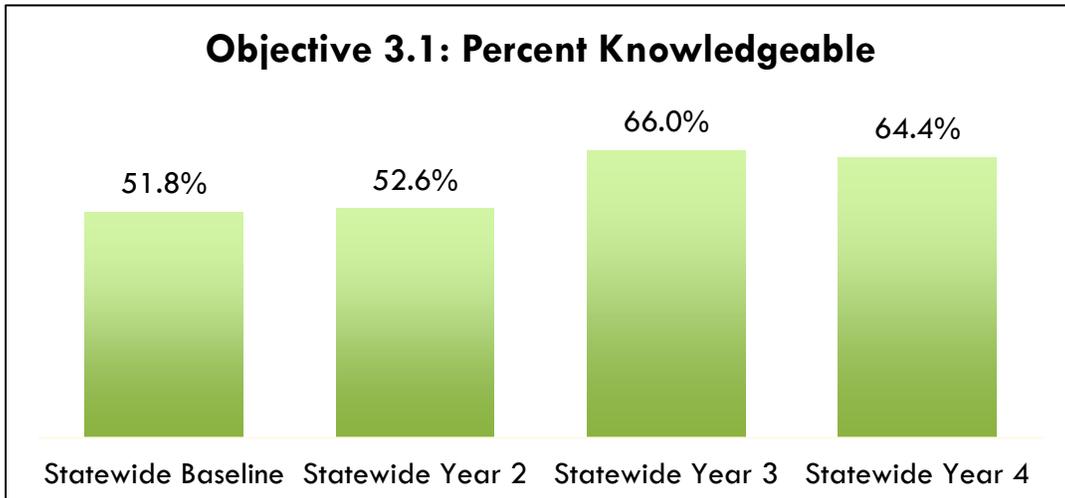
Table 5: Strategy 4 Performance

<p>Outcome 1</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>1. Statistically significant difference in awareness 2. 50% recall demonstrations 3. 80% report “yes”</p>	<p>1.1 and 1.2 not measured in year four 1.3 Target met: 82% reported will use the AT device again¹⁵</p>
<p>Outcome 2</p>	<p>More AT is borrowed by families with young children in Tulsa County</p>	<p>10% increase in borrowed items through ABLÉ Tech</p>	<p>N/A (not measured in year four)¹⁶</p>



¹⁵ Data sources: ABLÉ Tech demonstration data

¹⁶ Data source: ABLÉ Tech assistive technology database



Activities in year five

In year five, this strategy's implementation will focus on developing training modules in the online PD system. These modules would be accessible at all times by personnel, with content appropriate to new personnel primarily. The accessible format would ensure that new personnel would receive the same information as has been provided in-person to all current personnel. The content will also be appropriate for personnel needing a "refresher," as 40 to 50 percent of staff appear to need.

● Strategy 5: Increase family access to early literacy resources

The long-term goal for this strategy has been to increase access of SoonerStart families to local early literacy resources and information. Stakeholders—including local and state leaders, families and community members—initially 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. After three years of work to implement this, the leadership team and stakeholders decided to end this strategy as originally designed. The kits required a lot of resources to produce, were not easily scalable, and were not as effective as desired.

Instead, the team worked with stakeholders in Tulsa to revise its approach to sharing early literacy information with families, making more deliberate use of the training provided through strategy six. The new intervention is to model a single early literacy evidence-based practice (EBP) with each family and provide supplemental materials during the same visit. The selected EBP is “shared book reading.”

This pair of activities—modeling and information-sharing—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.

Early literacy development is influenced by a child’s interaction with adults and the opportunities to explore and interact with their environment. Demonstrating and coaching families in shared book reading practices that are specifically tailored to their child’s specific abilities, helps parents to facilitate activities for their child to develop early literacy skills. The impact of this practice is that children with disabilities who participate more fully in evidence-based literacy-promoting activities and routines will increase their skills and knowledge and lead to improved literacy skills later in life.

Summary of progress: Phase III year four

The kits were phased out of Tulsa County and a nearby region in years three and four. The Tahlequah site adopted the kit¹⁷ as a tool for parents in year three, tailoring it to their families’ specific needs. Unfortunately, the Tahlequah site experienced the same issues as Tulsa County did: a lack of resources inhibited its creation and distribution. It proved too costly in time and funding to continue.

As mentioned in the introduction, this strategy was modified to incorporate a two-prong approach to information-sharing. The first component requires providers to model “shared book reading” with families, using strategies appropriate to the developmental stage of the child. The second component involves sharing related material with the family to support their practice at home. These materials are essentially a brief version of the information shared in the early literacy kit, and include details about best practices and an age-appropriate book.

“Shared book reading” was selected in September 2019 as the evidence-based practice by state and Tulsa stakeholders for three reasons. First, personnel received training in this practice through the strategy six professional development effort in 2017 through 2019. Second, though it is a specific practice, it is customizable to the age of the child and the needs of the family. This has been a concern of Oklahoma personnel in advocating any one specific practice: the needs of the child and the family come first, and most EBPs are not generalizable to all children. Finally, substantial literature exists to support the practice as evidence-based.

“Shared book reading” refers to any time an adult and young child share a book experience together. Reading aloud to children and other shared book reading techniques have been linked to young children’s emergent literacy ability, which can be defined as the skills or knowledge that children develop before learning the more conventional skills of reading and writing which affect children’s later

¹⁷ The details of the items included in the kit were included in the Year Three Narrative Report.

success in reading.¹⁸ These skills necessarily vary by developmental level, which should be taken into account when modeling best practices with families.

During October 2019, the leadership team developed the modeling methodology that all providers in Tulsa County would use along with all supporting materials. This included a fidelity checklist and a parent assessment of the practice modeling (see Appendix B for copies of these documents). Both documents are being used to ensure that implementation has occurred with fidelity to practice. Essentially, providers modeled and coached four aspects of shared book reading that are emphasized as good practice by demonstrating:¹⁹

- how their child can explore books by touching, holding, turning pages or pretending to “read” during shared story time with parent/caregiver.
- how pointing to, tapping or touching a picture or object in a book engages their child during shared story time.
- that shared book-reading can be done a few minutes at a time and it is OK if the parent/caregiver does not read every word or finish the book.
- the types of book that are developmentally appropriate for their child.

All Tulsa service providers were trained in late October on the new required implementation and all related documentation processes. Implementation began on November 1. Any child with an IFSP as of November 1 was to receive the intervention EBP within twelve weeks. Children new to the program (with new IFSPs) should receive the intervention within twelve weeks of their start date. Fidelity to the timeline is being measured along with other fidelity measures.

Stakeholder Input

In year four, input about the redesign of this strategy was gathered from SoonerStart personnel in Tulsa, the leadership team, and the ICC. Several discussions were held through late summer and early fall 2019 to address OSEP’s concerns with the implementation of this strategy and the manner of redesign. Discussions continue to be held to monitor its implementation in Tulsa County.

Challenges

The decision in year three to end the provision of early literacy toolkits to families as the approach to fulfilling this strategy was appreciated by Tulsa personnel because of the time commitment required for creating, promoting and distributing the kits. The redesign has required renewed commitment to implementation, and Tulsa personnel have generally stepped up to the task. However, it has been a challenge to ensure implementation rates, which have been slightly lower than the target set by stakeholders. Upon investigation by local site supervisors, several staff reported that they had forgotten to submit the self-assessment checklists after modeling shared book reading practices with families during intervention visits.

A second challenge was selecting one specific evidence-based activity that would be appropriate to demonstrate to all children regardless of disability, family needs, and circumstances. Oklahoma has held fast to the philosophy that every child has unique needs and that early literacy activities should

¹⁸ Terrell, P. & Watson, M. (2018), “Laying a firm foundation: Embedding evidence-based emergent literacy practices into early intervention and preschool environments,” *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 49(2), 148-164, retrieved from https://pubs.asha.org/doi/full/10.1044/2017_LSHSS-17-0053; and Sim, S. & Berthelsen, D. (2014), “Shared book reading by parents with young children: Evidence-based practice,” *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(1), 50-55, retrieved from <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=192581574559362;res=IELAPA>.

¹⁹ Barton, L.R. & Brophy-Herb, H.E. (2006), “Developmental Foundations for Language and Literacy from Birth to Three Years,” in *Learning to Read the World: Language and Literacy in the First Three Years*, eds. S.E. Rosenkoetter & J. Knapp-Philo, 15–60, Washington, DC: Zero to Three.; also see <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/> for many related references and resources.

be tailored to the child and the family. Shared book reading was selected because it can be implemented with all children and families and tailored to their individual needs and abilities.

Evaluation

Because the activities completed through the strategy changed, the evaluation has changed, also. Because it is the last year of implementation, long-term outcomes are not likely to be found as a result of the redesign. Instead, the evaluation team focused its attention on fidelity to the implementation process. The new objectives reflect this focus, answering the question: “how well are providers coaching caregivers and modeling shared book reading?” See Appendix B for copies of the tools used by providers to record fidelity to practice and by families to report their experiences.

Objective 1: The majority of families receive the intervention within the first three months of the initial IFSP (or implementation)

Objective 2: Each intervention is completed with fidelity

Table 6 summarizes the performance fidelity measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives. Although fewer families than anticipated received the intervention, of those who participated, very high percentages reported that the evidence-based practices were implemented with fidelity.

Table 6: Strategy 5 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Year Four Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	Percent of families who receive the intervention within three months of Nov. 1 or the initial IFSP (if start date is after Nov. 1, 2019)	70% completed in the first four months; 80% through the end of the final year	Approaching target: 64.5% of families received the intervention within three months
Objective 2	1. Percent of interventions completed with fidelity (using a provider self-assessment checklist) 2. Percent of families who report that providers completed all activities in the intervention	90% for elements 1 & 2	Targets met: 1. 91% of interventions reported as completed with fidelity; 2. 97% of families report fidelity

*Year one: 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017; year two: 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2018; year three: 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019; year four: 7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020; year five: 7/1/2020 to 12/31/2020.

Activities in year five

The revised early literacy intervention will be implemented through the end of year five of the current SSIP (December 31, 2020) in Tulsa County, but will not be scaled up to other regions or statewide. The evaluation team will continue to monitor fidelity to implementation during this time period.

The evaluation team is considering whether a supplemental survey of parents will be worthwhile and successful. Tulsa stakeholders have shared a concern that providers and parents will experience survey ‘burnout’ if asked to complete another one asking about their early literacy experiences after the intervention.

● 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.

The training content has focused 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.

The original intent was to ensure that any of a variety of practices could be recommended to families, depending on their needs. However, to meet the obligation to test for fidelity of implementation, providers in Tulsa County have been required to model one specific early literacy activity, as described in the strategy five section. This will reduce the variety of recommendations offered to families, ensuring that all families receive the same intervention.

Summary of progress: Phase III year four

Activities in year four for this strategy have been focused around moving the content to an online format, as described in the previous narrative report. The coaching and mentoring online training module was finalized in fall 2019, and 15 employees—all new—have completed it in the meantime. This constitutes 37 percent of all new employees who provides services to children in OSDE or OSDH. These employees have not yet participated in the early literacy training because it is not yet online. It has been delayed because of a lack of funding. The leadership team anticipates it will be finalized in fall 2020.

All activities related to the modeling of an evidence-based practice are described in the section about strategy five. This strategy's intent was to train personnel in these practices, while strategy five focused on providing that information to families.

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. In year four, input has been gathered from personnel surveys and feedback about the online modules.

Evaluation

The objectives and medium-term outcomes for this implementation strategy are:

- Objective 1: Tulsa personnel participate in at least two early literacy training sessions by June 2017; all personnel participate by June 2020
- Objective 2: All SoonerStart website professional development content is updated to include information on early literacy
- Objective 3: All families receive EL guidance 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

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Table 7 summarizes the performance measures, annual targets and target achievement for each of the objectives and outcomes. A family survey was not conducted in year four, so no data are available for certain performance measures.

Table 7: Strategy 6 Performance			
	Performance Measures	Targets	Year Four Findings: Target Achievement
Objective 1	Percent of service personnel who participate in at least two early literacy (EL) training sessions	90% by the end of year five*	Target not met: 70% of all personnel have participated in the EL trainings ²⁰
Objective 2	Website is updated to provide evidence-based information for personnel and families on EL	100% by year five	Approaching target: Website is being redesigned
Objective 3	Percent personnel who report they share EL information with families	90% reporting 'yes'	Approaching target: 84% of statewide personnel reported sharing information ²¹
Outcome 1	Personnel demonstrate increased knowledge of early literacy key concepts and applications	Statistically significant ²² increase in knowledge	Target met: Between baseline and year four, knowledge statewide increased significantly
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 increases in knowledge and practice	NA (data not collected in year four) ²³

*Year one: 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017; year two: 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2018; year three: 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019; year four: 7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020; year five: 7/1/2020 to 12/31/2020.

Findings

Because of retirements and resignations and the move to online training, not all personnel in Oklahoma had participated in both EL training sessions (content and coaching) by the end of year four (objective 1). Once the EL content module is online, personnel who have not been trained will be expected to complete it. Sixteen individuals have completed the coaching module, all of whom were new in the past year.

The objective 3.1 measure reported last year has been dropped because of the newly adopted objective 2.2 under strategy 5. The former objective 3.2 is now objective 3. Objective 3 is now measured statewide. Overall 84 percent of personnel talk about early literacy with families at least once in a while. However, this varies substantially between the two groups of personnel who work with families regularly: resource (service) coordinators reported talking about EL about 63 percent of the time, while service providers had a much higher rate of 96 percent. This difference between groups

²⁰ Data source: training documentation

²¹ Data source: 2020 personnel surveys; also outcome 1

²² As indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05 in tests of association. Also for outcome 2.

²³ Data source: family literacy surveys

Oklahoma SSIP-C Phase III Year Four Narrative

reflects the different roles of these personnel; resource coordinators are also more likely to report that discussions of early literacy are not appropriate for the purpose of their visits or that they are not comfortable talking about it. However, even though resource coordinators typically do not provide services to children, their knowledge of early literacy is important to ensure that all families have access to that information.

The target for outcome 1 was met in year four. Personnel reported substantial growth in EL knowledge, increasing from 39 percent with high knowledge scores (10 to 12 out of 12 points) at baseline, compared to 62 percent in year four. Knowledge scores also vary substantially between resource coordinators and service providers: 37 percent of RCs have high scores while 76 percent of SPs have high scores in the year four survey.

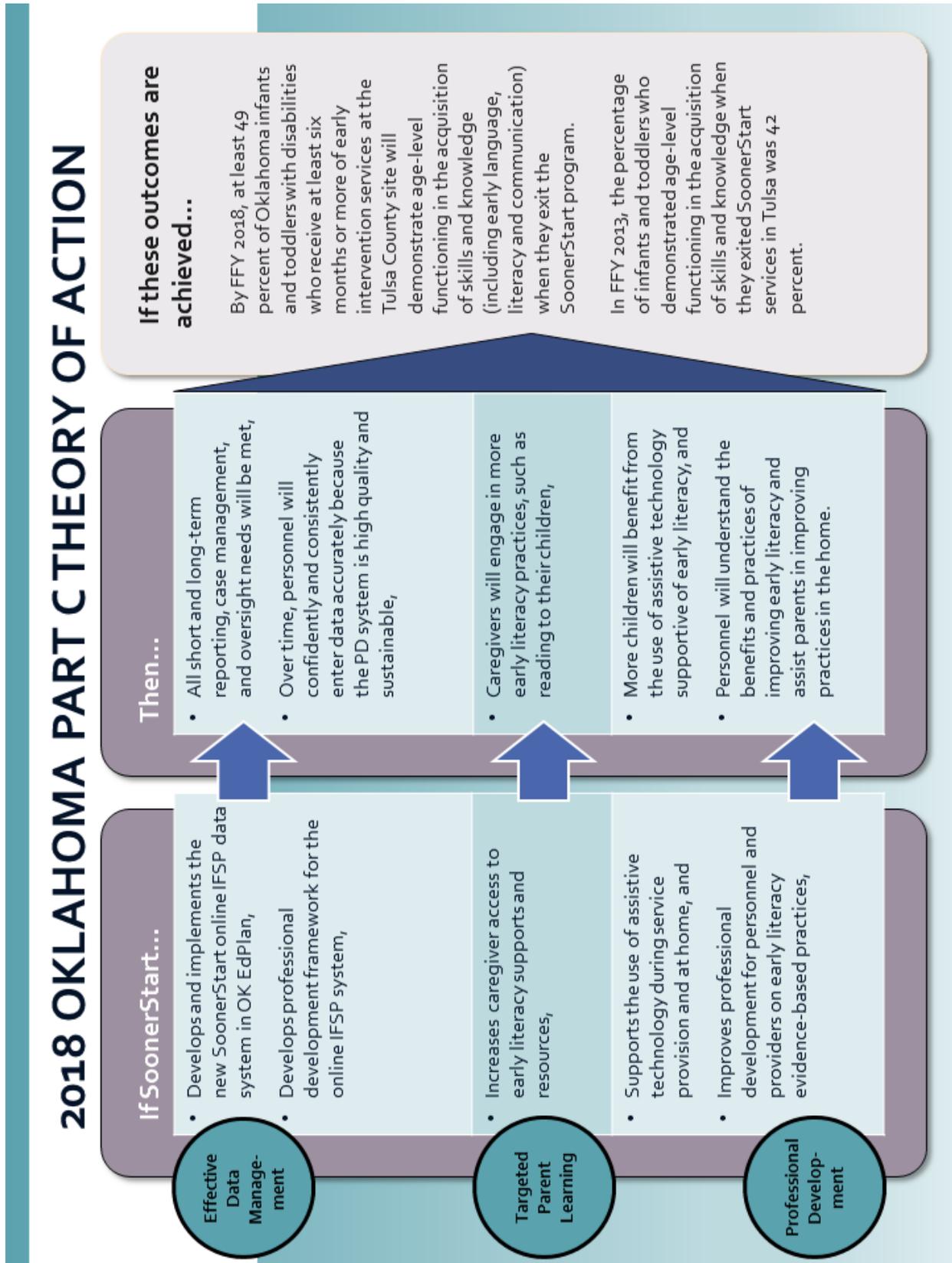
Activities in year five

During the final year of implementation, the leadership team will ensure that the early literacy online training module is finalized and available for use by all new personnel and anyone needing to review its content. The delay in funding for the module will be resolved once the new contract is in place. The team will also continue to coach the evidence-based practice of shared book reading with families.

Conclusion: The Future of SSIP Part C in Oklahoma

In year five, the SoonerStart SSIP leadership team will close out the current SSIP and begin work planning the next round of the SSIP. The state anticipates changing its SIMR and adopting new strategies to improve infrastructure and evidence-based practices to support outcomes unrelated to ECO/knowledge and skills scores. The leadership team will convene a variety of stakeholders, including members of the ICC, to discuss how to transition to a new SSIP. Plans to do this will be developed by June 2020, with stakeholder meetings beginning in late summer or early fall. A full plan should be developed by the next SSIP report deadline.

Appendix A: Oklahoma SSIP-C Theory of Action



Appendix B: Data Collection Tools for Strategy 5

Child Name _____

DOB: _____



**Early Literacy Evidence Based Practice:
Shared Book-Reading
SERVICE PROVIDER CHECKLIST**

Service provider modeled and coached shared book reading evidence-based practices for the parent/caregiver by:

___ demonstrating how their child can explore books by touching, holding, turning pages or pretending to “read” during shared story time with parent/caregiver.

___ demonstrating how pointing to, tapping or touching a picture or object in a book engages their child during shared story time.

___ demonstrating that shared book-reading can be done a few minutes at a time and it is OK if the parent/caregiver does not read every word or finish the book.

___ demonstrating the type of book that is developmentally appropriate for their child.

Early Literacy Handouts/Resources Provided

YES

NO

Service Provider Initials _____

Date _____

Child Name _____

DOB: _____



**Early Literacy Evidence Based Activities
Shared Book-Reading
PARENT/CAREGIVER QUESTIONNAIRE**

My provider discussed how reading aloud with my child helps my child develop language and cognitive skills.

TRUE

FALSE

My provider demonstrated ways my child can explore and play with books.

TRUE

FALSE

My provider modeled ways to engage in shared book reading with my child.

TRUE

FALSE

My provider gave me tips on choosing developmentally appropriate books for my child.

TRUE

FALSE

My service provider gave me handout(s) with reading and book sharing activities that I can choose based on my child's developmental abilities.

TRUE

FALSE

Parent/Caregiver Initials _____

Date _____