



**SoonerStart Early
Intervention Program
FAMILY HANDBOOK**



**OKLAHOMA
Education**



MY SOONERSTART SITE & LOCAL TEAM MEMBERS

SoonerStart Site: _____

Site Address: _____

Site Phone Number: _____

Resource Coordinator: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Service Provider: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Other: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Other: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

WELCOME

This handbook will give your family an overview of the SoonerStart program as well as a convenient place to keep track of your SoonerStart team's contact information.

SOONERSTART MISSION STATEMENT

To help Oklahoma children develop to their fullest potential while providing individualized, family-centered early intervention services to empower families to support and advocate for their children with developmental needs.

WHAT SOONERSTART DOES

SoonerStart is Oklahoma's Early Intervention program designed to help parents and children 0-36 months with developmental delays gain the knowledge and confidence they need to be successful in life. Through visits with SoonerStart professionals, the family receives information, supports, guidance, and consultation. Early Intervention services are provided in the home, childcare center, the park or other natural settings in the community. SoonerStart serves the entire family, not just your child.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Collaboration between SoonerStart staff and your family.
- SoonerStart staff coach your family members so that you can implement strategies throughout your daily routines, not just when the professional is present.
- SoonerStart staff provides emotional support, offers guidance about child development, points families to other community resources, and helps your child and family meet your goals. It is a family-centered process that is customized to your individual needs!

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

- We believe in family centered care, which is the recognition that families are the constant in the child's life.
- We believe you are your child's first teacher.
- We believe children learn through play and routines. We will develop strategies, to support your child's development, in your family's naturally occurring routines.
- Services will be provided in your child's natural environment (home, childcare provider, preschool, or other community setting such as a playground or park).
- A **primary service provider (PSP)** approach will be used when working with your child and family. This means one provider will be selected to see you regularly and other providers will consult with the team (family and providers). **Coaching** strategies will be used to support your family and the service providers in meeting the outcomes developed for your child.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

SoonerStart treats all people the same. If your child meets the eligibility criteria, he/she will not be turned away because of ethnicity, age, religion, socio-economic background or disability.

Services are voluntary and at any time you can refuse, decline, or withdraw from early intervention services.

SOONERSTART STAFF

Resource Coordinator:

The ultimate goal of the Resource Coordinator is to empower family members and to ensure that your family receives appropriate services to support your child's developmental needs. Responsibilities include:

- Supporting your family to gain skills and confidence in your roles and responsibilities related to your child's needs.
- Linking your family to other resources.
- Informing your family of your rights, obligations, and responsibilities under the SoonerStart program.
- Assisting your family and other SoonerStart team members in the development and implementation of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- Assisting your family as your child transitions from SoonerStart at age 3.

Service Providers:

SoonerStart Service providers are a team of highly qualified professionals that work together to ensure the best. Your primary service provider may be a Nurse, Child Development Specialist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Language Pathologist, etc... The multi-disciplinary team is used to ensure that our staff are addressing all the child/family needs. Our providers will work with your family to develop and implement strategies to address your child's specific needs.

PROGRAM PROCESS

The following will occur **within 45 days** of the date of the referral:

Intake

- Your Resource Coordinator will gather information, discuss program services, and obtain required consents.
- Upon completion of the Intake, your Resource Coordinator will schedule a Multidisciplinary Developmental Evaluation.

Screening

- A developmental screening may be completed to determine if further evaluation/assessment (eligibility evaluation) may be necessary.

Multidisciplinary Developmental Evaluation

- Two professional staff will complete the MDE using the Battelle Developmental Inventory and at least one other evaluation tool.
- You will participate by answering questions and sharing background information.
- We will observe your child and engage him/her in various activities that help determine his/her developmental ranges.
- If a child does not qualify for SoonerStart - Referrals to other services are made for your child and family.
- If a child qualifies for SoonerStart - The Oklahoma Family Interview/ Individualized Family Service Plan is scheduled with your family (allow 2 hours).
- Note: If a child has an “automatic qualifying condition/diagnosis”, no formal evaluation will be completed but medical documentation will be necessary and may need to be provided to SoonerStart by the parent/guardian.

Your child will be evaluated in the following developmental domain areas:

- **Adaptive:** Self Care
- **Cognitive:** Attention, Memory, Reasoning and Perception
- **Communication:** Expressive and Receptive Communication
- **Motor:** Fine and Gross Motor, Perceptual Motor
- **Personal-Social:** Adult Interaction, Peer Interaction, Self-Concept

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for SoonerStart services, your child's scores must reflect either one 50% delay (-2.00 standard deviation) in one of these areas OR two 25% delays (-1.50 standard deviations) in two or more of these areas.

INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP)

- The team will develop a plan (IFSP) that lists the outcomes or goals that result from discussion of the family's day and the concerns the family has for their child. Family selected IFSP outcomes are designed to meet the needs of your child and family. Based on the IFSP outcomes, services will be decided at this meeting by the IFSP team, which includes the family.

Other information in the IFSP will include:

- Present levels of development
- Outcomes
- Transition plan (plans for your child when exiting early intervention).
- Services and how often your child will receive them.

- Your child’s IFSP is valid for one year or up until the day before your child’s third birthday; whichever comes first. A new IFSP will be developed annually.
- The IFSP will be reviewed at least six months after the initial IFSP date and every six months thereafter.
- Your rights (Family Rights Brochure) will be reviewed, and a copy offered to you any time changes are made to your child’s IFSP.

IFSP SERVICES IN A CHILDCARE SETTING

The family is SoonerStart’s primary focus is the family, however there are times when it is appropriate to work with the staff in a childcare setting. When this happens, SoonerStart staff partners with the childcare staff to support your child’s goals. SoonerStart staff are not permitted to take your child outside of their classroom without a family member present.

- The parent will discuss with their childcare provider the option of ongoing SoonerStart services being provided in the childcare setting.
- The parent obtaining permission from the childcare center for SoonerStart staff to come into the childcare setting for services
- The parent to identify and confirm participation of a “primary learner” during the intervention visits at childcare... this can be the parent, childcare teacher/director, a relative, a family friend, etc.
- The parent to notify their Resource Coordinator (RC) of the childcare service details... name/address of the childcare center, name/contact phone number of the identified “primary learner” who will participating in intervention services
- The parent to provide signed consent for SoonerStart information to be shared with the childcare/primary learner if the parent will not be present for intervention services
- Presence and participation of the parent for the initial IFSP development meeting and other required IFSP review meetings as required
- The possible completion of a childcare interview by the family’s RC with the childcare to assist in identifying potential IFSP outcomes specific to the child’s participation in daily childcare activities
- Ongoing and open communication between the parent and SoonerStart staff especially when the parent is unable to be present for intervention visits.

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

SoonerStart staff will review the evaluation results, answer your questions, and provide community resource information and/or home activity suggestions.

If you continue to have a concern about your child’s development after 6 months from the initial multidisciplinary evaluation, you may contact the SoonerStart program for an additional developmental evaluation.

TRANSITION

- Your Resource Coordinator will assist you in transitioning your child to the next appropriate setting (i.e., public schools, private preschool, Head Start, playgroups, home, etc.).
- A transition plan will be developed for all eligible children after the child reaches 27 months of age.
- You will be offered a Transition Planning Conference (TPC) which is a meeting with you, your Resource Coordinator and may include at least representatives from any of the following groups: local public school, private pre-schools and/or other community childcare setting or anyone else you choose to invite.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Program Hours

- Monday through Friday; 8:00am to 4:30pm
- The SoonerStart offices are closed in observance of most federal and state holidays.

Copies of Records/Reports

- While your child is enrolled in our program, you will receive copies of all reports (evaluation summaries and IFSPs) at no cost to you in a timely manner upon their completion. Copies of reports will also be sent to others upon your request and with your written consent.
- Additional copies of reports and records can be provided to families at no cost

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All SoonerStart staff are required by state law to report any suspected abuse or neglect of your child/children.

ILLNESSES/CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES

You must report contagious diseases to SoonerStart staff immediately, so that any necessary precautions can be taken.

You must cancel your child's appointment if your child or any family member present during the session have any of the following (including, but not limited to):

- Temperature above 99.5 in the last 24 hours
- Illnesses/conditions such as COVID, tuberculosis (TB), scabies, lice, conjunctivitis ("pink eye"), flu, strep throat, pinworms, viral infections, measles, mumps, chickenpox, scarlet fever, hand/foot/mouth, infected glands, etc...
- Discharge from eyes/ears/nose or coughing up yellow/green mucus.
- Skin rashes such as scabies, impetigo, etc.
- Vomiting or diarrhea 24 hours before the visit.

- If at any time during your child's session your child or family members present develops any of the above symptoms, the session will end.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for SoonerStart staff to support your child and family, you are required to respect the following guidelines:

Attendance Policy

- You are expected to keep all scheduled appointments. If you need to cancel an appointment, please call or text your provider at least 24 hours before your scheduled time.
- If you and your child are not at the agreed upon location at the appointment time, this will be considered a no-show. Two consecutive no-shows or three consecutive cancellations (or a combination of both) will result in a suspension of services. Services will be reinstated once the family contacts the program. An IFSP or eligibility evaluation may need to occur prior to reinstating services.

Participation/Communication

- You are expected to participate during your child's sessions by providing feedback, trying new suggestions, asking questions, etc.
- You are expected to implement the suggestions/strategies developed by you and your team throughout your child's daily routines and activities.
- Please be respectful and appropriate during sessions (e.g. refrain from use of all electronics, etc.).

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- You are responsible in providing a safe environment for the service providers, in your home or other agreed upon location.
- You will refrain from smoking or using e-cigarettes/vape pens during your child's sessions.
- Pets must be secured (chained, put in a kennel) away from the entries and walkways. You will not let pets loose when the service providers are present.
- Indoor pets must be secured in another room or put outside during the time the service providers are at your home.
- SoonerStart has the right to discontinue services if the home or agreed upon location is unsafe. Other options/solutions will be considered so services can resume.

ETHICAL CONDUCT

- SoonerStart staff will act with honesty, integrity, and respect.
- SoonerStart staff will adhere to their individual professional code of ethics, and advocate for children and families, as appropriate.



FAMILY RIGHTS

- Your Resource Coordinator will review your Family Rights with you. If you do not understand your rights, you can ask any staff member to explain them to you. If you have a concern with the services your child is receiving, you can discuss it with your Resource Coordinator or Regional Coordinator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Everything about your child and family is confidential. SoonerStart must get your permission in writing before sharing your information with anyone outside of the EI system. Your Resource Coordinator will review the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which describes your right to confidentiality

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

- You are welcome to provide suggestions and input at any time. The Resource Coordinator can be contacted to discuss any issues you may have. If there is no resolution, you can notify the Regional Coordinator to discuss additional options for your family. For issues you are unable to resolve at the local level, your Resource Coordinator can assist you in filing a formal complaint with the Department of Education, Special Education Services Section if needed. All services continue pending the outcome of any complaint, mediation and/or due process hearing.

COMMON ACRONYMS IN SOONERSTART

- AT:** Assistive Technology
- CDS:** Child Development Specialist
- DD:** Developmental Delay
- DDSD:** Developmental Disabilities Service Division
- DHS:** Department of Human Services
- EI:** Early Intervention
- EHS:** Early Head Start
- ESY:** Extended School Year
- FAPE:** Free and Appropriate Public Education
- FERPA:** Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
- HS:** Head Start
- IDEA:** Individual with Disabilities Education Act
- IEP:** Individualized Education Program
- IFSP:** Individualized Family Service Plan
- MECATS:** Multidisciplinary Evaluation Child Assessment Team Summary
- OFI:** Oklahoma Family Interview
- OFRA:** Oklahoma Family Resource Assessment
- OHCA:** Oklahoma Health Care Authority
- OPC:** Oklahoma Parents Center
- OSDE:** Oklahoma State Department of Education
- OSDH:** Oklahoma State Department of Education
- OT:** Occupational Therapy
- PCP:** Primary Care Physician
- PSP:** Primary Service Provider
- PT:** Physical Therapy
- RC:** Resource Coordinator
- RN:** Registered Nurse
- SLP:** Speech Language Pathologist
- SSI:** Supplemental Security Income
- SSI-DCP:** Supplemental Security Income-Disabled Children's Program
- TANF:** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- TEFRA:** Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act
- TPC:** Transition Planning Conference
- WIC:** Women, Infants and Children



HELPFUL LINKS & IMPORTANT NUMBERS

State Agencies:

Department of Education: <https://sde.ok.gov>

Department of Health: <https://www.ok.gov/health>

Department of Human Services: <http://www.okdhs.org>

Health Care Authority: <http://www.okhca.org>

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse: <https://ok.gov/odmhsas>

Oklahoma ABLE Tech: <https://www.okabletech.org>

Developmental Resources:

Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org

Know the Signs: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html

AAP Early Literacy: www.aap.org/en-us/literacy/Pages/For-Families.aspx

Early Intervention:

Oklahoma Parents Center: www.oklahomaparentscenter.org

Wrights Law: www.wrightslaw.com

Resource Information:

ParentPro – <http://parentpro.org>

State & Federal Benefits: <https://www.benefits.gov/categories>



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