

Scholars for Excellence in Child Care



Survey Findings and Implications

What is the Scholars Program?

Scholars for Excellence in Child Care (Scholars) is a scholarship program funded by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) Division of Child Care and administered through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The Scholars Program provides financial aid and assistance to enable child care providers to attend community colleges throughout the state.

To facilitate the program, Scholar Coordinators are employed at community colleges throughout the state of Oklahoma and are responsible for recruiting child care providers into the program. Coordinators also mentor Scholars and assist them in navigating the enrollment and financial aid processes.

The Scholars Program was initially developed to support child care facilities in attaining higher star levels and also aims to:

- Increase the quality of child care in Oklahoma
- Reduce staff turnover
- Increase teacher compensation (OKDHS, 2002)

Look inside...



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Human Development & Family Science
Deborah Norris, Principal Investigator
Sherri Gosney, Project Manager

Did you know...

- *4500 child care providers have participated in the Scholars Program since its inception
- Research has shown that education is an important predictor of quality of care ¹
- In OK, 53% of children under the age of 5 have working parents and need child care²

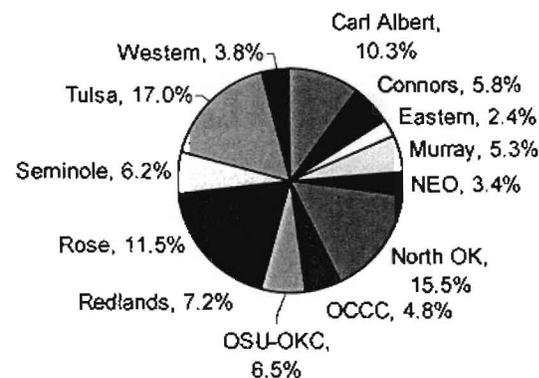
THE PROGRAM EVALUATION SURVEY

A research team at Oklahoma State University (OSU) led by Dr. Deborah Norris has provided evaluation of the Scholars Program since June 2002. Various methods have been used to collect research data, all with the aim of better understanding Scholars' experiences in the Scholars Program so that the program could be continually refined for maximum impact.

Each Fall and Spring semester, the program evaluation survey was distributed to enrolled Scholars. Scholar Coordinators facilitated the distribution and collection of the surveys, and the OSU research team entered and analyzed the data.

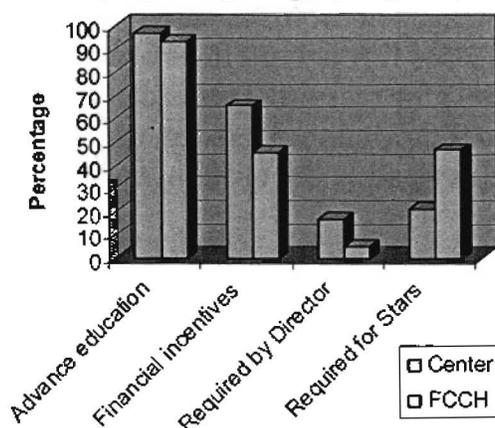
In the survey, Scholars were asked to report on multiple issues including demographic information, salary, changes in star status, support and satisfaction in the workplace, and child care practices.

This report summarizes findings from surveys collected in the 2006-2007 academic year.



Scholars by community college, Spring 2007

Reason for participating, Spring 2007



ABOUT THE SCHOLARS

Each Fall and Spring semester, active Scholars report on their marital status, their experience in child care, their place of employment and other such basic issues. This descriptive data has remained fairly stable over time, and these pieces reveal key aspects of the population served by the Scholars Program. Specifically, of the 754 Scholars who completed the survey in Spring 2007:

- Almost all are female (98.6%)
- The majority are married or live with their partner (59.7%)
- Most are employed in child care centers (73.7%)
- Most participate in the Scholars Program because they want to advance their education (96.4%)
- Most have worked in child care for less than 10 years (74.6%)
- The majority plan to continue working in child care for 15 years or longer (54.3%)



Did you know...

During Fall 2006/Spring 2007 school year

- 372 Scholars completed surveys while enrolled in classes both semesters
- 328 Scholars in the Fall only and
- 372 Scholars in the Spring only

THE SCHOLARS PROGRAM AND CHILD CARE PRACTICE

The Berkeley-Yale Inventory

A revised survey was introduced in the Fall semester of 2006 that included the Berkeley-Yale Inventory (BYI).³ These items were initially developed for use as a telephone survey and were based on indicators of quality as measured by commonly used environmental rating scales. (The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS).)

Some key facts about the BYI:

- The BYI consists of 2 subscales, based on the age of children taught by the respondent.
- Providers report on various aspects of their child care practices (areas seen in charts to the right) and these responses are summed to get a subscale total score.
- Higher scores indicate better quality child care.
- In previous research, child care providers' reports on the BYI were able to successfully predict scores on the ECERS and FCCERS.³

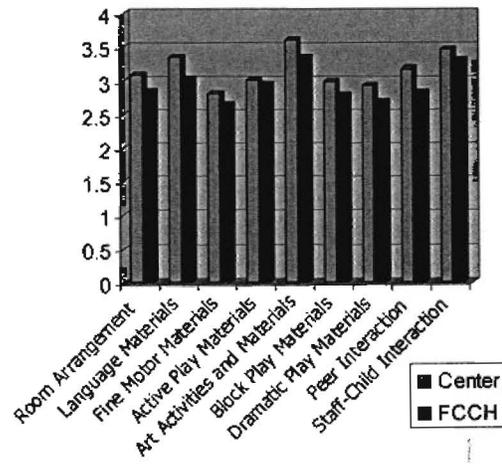
Infant Toddler Classrooms

As seen in the graph in the upper right hand column, teachers in child care centers reported higher scores than providers in family child care homes. This finding is consistent with other national research studies.⁴

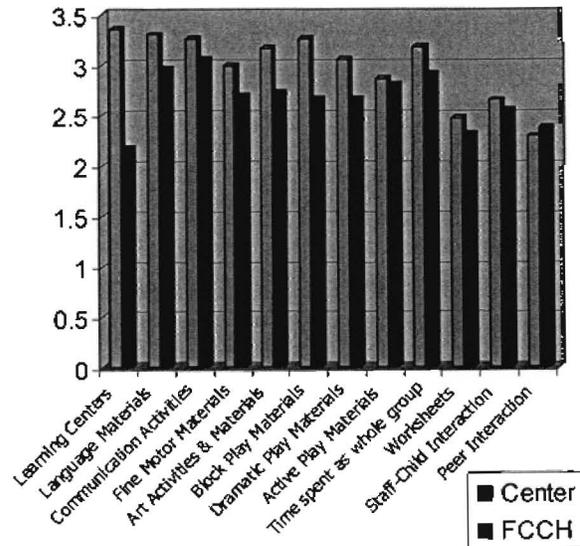
Scholars enrolled in classes during both the Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters instead of just one semester during the year reported more opportunities in the classrooms for

- Book reading
- Block play
- Dramatic play
- Play with manipulatives and small toys

Infant-Toddler Classroom Averages, Spring 2007



Preschool Classroom Averages, Spring 2007



Preschool Classrooms

As seen in the graph above, teachers in child care centers reported higher scores than providers in family child care homes for Spring 2007. This finding is consistent with other national research studies.⁴

Scholars enrolled in classes during both the Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters instead of just one semester during the year reported that children in their classrooms

- Spent less time in total group activities
- Did fewer worksheets
- Had a greater variety of art activities



Professionalism and the Scholars

- Scholars enrolled in both semesters during 2006-2007 were more likely to belong to a professional organization than those enrolled for only one semester
- 84% of the Scholars were satisfied with the freedom they have on their job to use their own judgment and try out their own ideas in their job
- 60% of the Scholars were satisfied with their salaries given the level of responsibility they have on their job
- 47% of the Scholars were satisfied with their opportunities for advancement. Twenty-two Scholars had been promoted to Lead Teacher and nineteen Scholars had been promoted to Assistant Director within the previous six months

Employer Support for Scholars

The Scholars completing the surveys identified several sources of support they received from their employers as they worked to further their education.

- 92% were encouraged by their employers to attend classes
- 88% were encouraged by their employers to share with others the new ideas they learned in class
- 85% of the Scholars indicated that their colleagues and employers showed an interest in they were learning in classes
- 75% of the Scholars reported receiving time off from their place of employment to attend class, do observations, or complete homework

References

- 1 Howes, C., Whitebook, M., & Phillips, D. (1992). Teacher characteristics and effective teaching in child care: Findings from the National Child Care Staffing Study. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 21*, 309-414.
- 2 2005 Oklahoma Child Care Portfolio published in 2006 by Oklahoma Resource and Referral Association, Inc.
- 3 Holloway, S.D., Kagan, S.L., Fuller, B., Tsou, L., & Carroll, J. (2001). Assessing child-care quality with a telephone interview. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 16*, 165-189.
- 4 Kontos, S., Howes C., Shin, M., & Galinsky, E. (1995). *Quality in family child care and relative care*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- 5 Phillips, D., Mekos, D., Scarr, S., McCartney, K., & Abbott-Shim, M. (2000). Within and beyond the classroom door: Assessing quality in child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 15*, 475-496.
- 6 Phillipsen, L., Burchinal, M.R., Howes, C., & Cryer, D. (1997). The prediction of process quality from structural features of child care. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 12*, 281-303.

Did you know...

- 65% of the Scholars have received a raise since participating in the Scholars Program
- 40% of the Scholars have received an education stipend since participating in the Scholars Program

Salaries and the Child Care Profession

The good news is that many of the Scholars have received raises as a result of participating in the Scholars Program. Previous research has found that higher quality child care is associated with higher salaries for child care staff. ^{5 6}

Scholars who were enrolled for both Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters have higher salaries (\$17,451) when compared with Scholars who were enrolled for just one of the semesters (\$15,724).

The bad news is that according to the Oklahoma Wage Network Dental Assistants (\$24,364), Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors (\$24,120), Animal Trainers (\$23,451) and Chefs and Head Cooks (\$21,747) had higher annual earnings than the Scholars participating in the Scholars Program (<http://www.oesc.state.ok.us/lmi/OWN/default.htm>).

REWARD Oklahoma is a statewide initiative that helps to address salary inequities in the child care profession. Salary supplements are paid to teaching staff and directors for increase levels of education and commitment to the field of child care. See the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development website for more information about this program (www.cecpd.org).

For more information about the Scholars Program

Contact your local Scholar Coordinator (see www.okhighered.org/scholars)

Or contact Kiki McWilliams at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education 405-225-9397 or 866-343-3881

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