

# Delaware Tribe

## Bartlesville and Claremore, Oklahoma

The EHS-CCP is making an impact on the lives of children and families in tribal communities. Delaware Child Development (DCD) is one of the EHS-CCP tribal grantees operating in the communities of Bartlesville and Claremore in Oklahoma. They provide services to children from the Delaware Tribe, as well as other children who are not a part of the tribal community. Partnership funding enables DCD to build new learning spaces, enhance professional development opportunities for staff, lower teacher-child ratios so that children receive more individualized attention, and expand comprehensive services, such as health and developmental screenings for children and families. In addition, through cost allocation, the grantee ensures that all classrooms funded by the partnership are mixed-income, so all children can learn and grow together.

### FAST FACTS

116

Children Directly Benefiting

177

Children Indirectly Benefiting

23

Child Care Partners

5

Local Communities Affected

\$1.7M

Total Grant Amount

### THE MODEL STANDOUTS

**Supporting Tribal Communities:** DCD's program model supports inclusive teaching practices that honor each child's family and culture. The program encourages parents to send in pictures to post in the classroom, to share dishes from their heritage, and to volunteer. Staff engage children and families in multicultural activities and celebrate cultural traditions. They connect tribal families to resources that, in many cases, families had no prior knowledge of, including housing, transportation, state assistance, and career services, among others.

**Low Teacher-Child Ratios:** One of the main benefits of the partnership funding is that it enables the program to lower its teacher-child ratio so that children have more individualized care. It also has the benefit of improving the working conditions for staff, and it helps teachers be more effective in their work and feel in control of their classrooms. Research shows that very young children learn through one-on-one interactions, making ratios a critical programmatic quality indicator.<sup>3</sup>

**Mixed-Income Delivery System:** From the beginning, DCD has been committed to ensuring that all of their classrooms have children of a variety of incomes. In fact, the grantee cites the ability to offer mixed-income early learning as one of the most important benefits of the



Source: Photo provided by Delaware Child Development.

EHS-CCP. They use cost allocation with funding from the EHS-CCP grant, the CCDF, and other sources to ensure that at least half of the children in each center are on subsidy and eligible for Early Head Start and that half are higher income.

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*"No one has ever asked me what I thought about my son's school before."*

*—Partnership Father*



**Professional Development:** Partnership funding enables DCD to provide higher-quality and more intensive professional development for staff. Staff receive educational coaching from specialists and have trainings once a week (as opposed to four times a year, prior to the partnership grant). They also have intentional growth plans, which are personal and professional plans that help staff set and achieve their goals. The program offers weekly CDA classes and pays staff a stipend for attending classes. Partnership funding also allows the program to hire substitute teachers so that full-time teachers can take breaks, attend more trainings during the day (not after hours), attend higher education courses, and have access to sick leave. Each of these

benefits assists with retention efforts, professional development, and continuity of care for children.

**Comprehensive Services:** DCD uses the partnership grant and leverages other funds (such as the CCDF) to expand access to comprehensive services for all children, not only those enrolled in the EHS-CCP. All children receive mental health, vision, hearing, and developmental screenings and supports. Each center has a family support staff person on site to build relationships with all parents, and they also offer a fatherhood engagement initiative. Many fathers say that this is the first time they have been asked to engage in their child's learning and development.

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*“This is exactly what we need. As men, we do not have an opportunity to talk and get the problems of the world off our chest, so we hold it in. This initiative was a great idea, and I cannot wait until our next meeting.”*

*—Partnership Father*

## THE RESULTS

- **Partnership funding enabled four additional teachers and assistants to attain a CDA.** DCD anticipates that between 12 and 15 individuals will participate in the upcoming CDA cohort. DCD is also supporting two additional staff members who are working toward a bachelor's degree.
- **Every teacher who moved up in their education level received a pay increase of approximately \$2 per hour, or \$4,000 per year.**
- **Partnership funding enabled DCD to construct a new center that will fit 94 children** and to construct additional classrooms in an existing center that will provide space for 54 more children.
- **The EHS-CCP allowed for more consistent family engagement.** Before the EHS-CCP funding, family engagement was sporadic. A part-time family support staff was hired temporarily while funding was available, but the families needed more time than what was offered. Now, DCD has a family support staff at each location that works with all enrolled families.
- **Partnership funding enabled DCD to offer weekly trainings to their staff, totaling about 400 annual hours of additional training,** on topics such as lesson planning, continuity of care and bonding, car-seat safety, and outdoor play in natural environments.

## THE TAKEAWAYS

Partnership funding allows DCD to enhance the quality and scope of the services they offer to the children of the Delaware Tribe. The grantee notes that the most important benefits of the partnership funding are (1) lowering teacher-to-child ratios, (2) providing more family engagement opportunities, and (3) enhancing staff professional development. While the program has always known that individualized care and learning

through smaller ratios, stronger partnerships with families, and more qualified staff are critical to child success, they lacked a reliable funding source to make it happen. Incorporating these three components into the partnership makes a big difference in the lives of the children and families they serve.





*One mother enrolled in the program was previously homeless and is now in safe housing and has successfully started a new job. She is enrolled to begin a certified nurse-assistant program. Her infant is receiving high-quality child care and making strides developmentally.*

DCD notes that there has been a paradigm shift in the way teachers view their jobs. Enhanced training and access to higher education is professionalizing their work. The time they have to attend trainings and meetings with administrators helps give them a voice and fosters buy-in to the organization. The lower child-to-teacher ratios enable them to spend more time with children individually and meet their unique learning needs without being overwhelmed. Combined, these factors make an important difference in their work and in the quality of services they provide to children and families.

Though the partnership is making an important difference in the tribe and around Oklahoma, the need across the rest of state and in other tribal communities is great. For example, one-third of the 4,000 young children in Washington County, Oklahoma, are living in poverty. Local data indicate that nearly 40 percent of pregnant mothers in the county either did not receive prenatal care or received delayed prenatal care, which can affect maternal and child health outcomes. The vast majority of these children and their families do not have access to the rich array of services that the EHS-CCP offers.

