



Great Plains Child Care Resource & Referral November Newsletter

A Season of Gratitude



We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Carrie Williams, our State OPSR Executive Director, as she transitions into a new professional chapter. Her leadership, commitment, and steady guidance have made a lasting impact on early childhood initiatives across Oklahoma.

Her dedication to supporting children, families, and providers has strengthened our statewide system, and her vision has helped move the work forward in meaningful ways. While we will miss her



Wrapping Up Our 2025 Southwest Road Trip

As we wrap up this year's GPCCRR Southwest Road Trip, our hearts are full and our gratitude is overflowing. Over the past several weeks, our team has traveled across all corners of Southwest Oklahoma, connecting with providers, delivering resources, and visiting programs that are truly the

presence at OPSR, we are excited to see her continue making a difference in her new role.

We wish her every success and thank her for her service, partnership, and unwavering support of early childhood in Oklahoma.



GPCCRR staff recently met with the Statewide Resource & Referral team for professional development focused on strengthening services for providers. The training offered valuable updates, shared strategies, and enhanced tools to better support child care programs across Southwest Oklahoma. Our team remains committed to ongoing learning and high-quality service for the providers we serve.



**Enroll Your Program in the
Oklahoma Strong Start
Program:**

To ensure your employees can

heartbeat of early childhood in our region.

These visits are always one of the highlights of our year. Nothing replaces the value of being able to walk into classrooms, shake hands, share stories, and see firsthand the incredible work happening every single day. Your commitment to quality care, your dedication to families, and the way you show up for children, even through the long days, the challenges, and the ever-changing demands, continues to inspire us.

We appreciate your warm welcomes, your openness, and the time you carved out to visit with us. Every conversation helps strengthen our shared mission of supporting safe, nurturing, and high-quality environments for all children in Southwest Oklahoma. To all our providers, Thank you. Thank you for the early mornings, the late evenings, the patience, the problem-solving, the love you show your children, and the ongoing partnership you've built with our GPCCRR team. It is an honor to support you, advocate for you, and celebrate the incredible work you do.

We look forward to continuing these connections throughout the year and can't wait for next year's road trip!

access this new benefit, we need your help in enrolling your child care program as a participating provider.

To qualify, your program must:

- Be currently licensed by OKDHS as a child care facility
- Have an active subsidy contract with the State of Oklahoma
-

Submit an application using the button below, and be approved based on established policies

[Apply Today!!!](#)

We know the early childhood field has faced incredible pressure in recent years. This program is one way we are working to ensure that those who care for Oklahoma's youngest children can access the care and support they need for their own families — helping you keep your staff, serve your community, and stay in the profession you love.

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Scholars Program

The Scholars program awards scholarships to eligible child care professionals to complete coursework in the area of child development or early childhood education, as well as the Child Development Associate (CDA) and Certified Childcare Professional (CCP) Credential Assessment. These scholarships enable child care providers in Oklahoma to improve their skills through education, receive an educational stipend.

[More Information about Scholars](#)



November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month:

a great time to ensure all children have access to environments that are healthy and free from smoke. Even in homes and child care facilities where active smoking indoors does not take place, children still may be exposed to thirdhand smoke.

Thirdhand smoke, unlike firsthand (ie., the smoke inhaled directly by the person smoking) and secondhand (ie., the smoke exhaled by smokers and the smoke from the burning cigarette, cigar or pipe), is not inhaled from being near a smoking source. Instead, it is the solid film that smoke leaves behind on surfaces, clothing, skin, and hair. It has all the same cancer-causing qualities as its first and secondhand counterparts. If a caretaker goes out to smoke and then returns to take care of children without washing their hands or taking off an outer “smoking” layer (like a jacket or large shirt), children may come into skin contact with thirdhand smoke.

You can protect children from thirdhand smoke by putting a complete no-smoking policy in place. You can also advise staff who smoke to do the following:

- Go outside, completely off the property (and out of sight), to smoke.
- Wear an outer layer of clothing while smoking that can be taken off before re-entering the facility and spending time with children.
- Wash hands after smoking and before interacting with kids.
-

Learn more about what you can do to improve your facility or home’s air quality [here](#), and learn more about how you can create smoke-free environments with [Resources and Training from Raise Smoke Free Kids](#) (American Lung Association).

Did you know you qualify for FREE Telehealth and Teletherapy just for being a Child Care Professional?



WHY JOIN THE THRIVE NETWORK?

The Thrive Network provides free resources, professional development and peer connection for Oklahoma home child care providers and prospective providers. While you take care of working Oklahomans’ families, we take care of you, supplying the support and guidance you need to be successful.

BENEFITS

- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Executive Level Membership
- NAFCC Accreditation Self-Study Kit with trained mentor support
- Free Telehealth and Teletherapy for you, your family and your assistants
- Access to specialized trainings like the Pyramid Model Community of Practice
- Subscription to shared services
- Subscription to Brightwheel (child management software)
- Monthly newsletter

Recently, our state agency, OPSR has launched FREE access to Telehealth and teletherapy benefits to ALL child providers, their employees, and their dependents through Shared Services.

If you are a Family Child Care Home please contact Athena Jarvis and she can help you through the process. Ajarvis@gpcrr.org

This is an incredible opportunity and easy to sign up. Have staff and families that would like to sign up follow the link below.


The enrollment link for child care staff to complete: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JK7K39V>.

For any questions or additional information needed, please utilize telehealth@okschoollreadiness.org.

You are welcome to reach out to CCRR staff and we will try to direct you as well.

- Monthly trainings tailored towards family child care home providers

Help Oklahoma Thrive - Support working parents and your community by becoming a child care provider today!



Purpose

The Southwest Thrive Communication Welcome Bags are designed to celebrate and equip new Southwest Family Child Care Providers who join the Southwest Thrive Network and who are actively engaging in professional growth. These bags promote connection, collaboration, and ongoing learning among Southwest Oklahoma child care professionals.

Eligibility

Providers will receive a Thrive Communication Welcome Bag once the following steps are completed:


1. Thrive Membership Form – Provider has officially joined the Thrive Network by completing the membership form.
2. Engagement Requirement – Provider has attended two Thrive-hosted trainings

Distribution


- Bags will be distributed during in-person Thrive events, provider visits, or mailed if necessary.
- Staff will track eligibility through Thrive registration and training attendance logs.
- A signed acknowledgment form (digital or paper) will confirm that bags are for professional use only.

Usage Guidelines

- Welcome bags and their contents are for use within your child care business to support professional development and program quality
- Items are not for resale or personal profit.
- Thrive branding and materials should be displayed or used in ways that align with the program's mission of collaboration and continuous improvement.

**OPSR**
CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL

Contact information: Athena Jarvis, Business Consultant
email: aj Jarvis@gpcrr.org phone: 888-878-4417





Telehealth for Child Care Professionals

Getting to a doctor can be hard when your work day is dedicated to caring for children. Now, child care professionals, their employees, and their dependents can seek medical advice anytime, anywhere without a co-pay!

HOW IT WORKS

Talk directly with a physician or licensed mental health professional on your schedule, anytime, anywhere within minutes by phone, video, or mobile app - 24/7/365



SERVICES OFFERED

- Unlimited use, no per-call fees or co-pays
- Services are completely confidential and available to employees and their dependents.
- Prescriptions called into your local pharmacy



TELEMEDICINE

24/7 access to a board-certified doctor for non-emergency care for your employees and their families anywhere, and anytime in order to get help with many common conditions, including: cold & flu, fever, rashes, asthma, allergies, sports injuries, sore throat, and more.

TELETHERAPY AND MENTAL HEALTH

24/7 access to a experienced therapists, counselors, psychiatrists and behavioral health specialists to support many common issues, including: alcohol and substance use, stress, life changes, trauma, and more.



For training opportunities visit okregistry.org or click [HERE](#)

Telehealth Registration and Enrollment

How to participate in this free benefit:

Completed by CCR&R

1. At the beginning of the month, your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency will send out a registration [link](#) to all child care centers and homes.

Completed by Program Director

2. Program Directors will send the registration [link](#) to their employees.

Completed by Individual

3. Employees wanting to participate will use the registration link to indicate that they are interested in receiving this benefit. This is to register employees only. Participants who register by the 15th of the month will be eligible to enroll in the benefit starting the first day of the following month. For example, if someone registers on October 12, they will be eligible to enroll in the free telehealth benefit November 1. If someone registers on October 30, they will be eligible to enroll December 1.

Completed by OPSR

4. By the end of that month, OPSR will register you to receive these benefits.

Completed by individual

5. Starting on the first day of the month after you have registered, you will receive an e-mail from Optima Benefits and Payroll, which will detail how you will complete enrollment to receive these benefits. It is during this enrollment time that you can sign up your dependents.

For questions, please e-mail telehealth@okschoollreadiness.org.



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Okregistry

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