



Great Plains Child Care Resource & Referral August Newsletter

Sunny Days, Growing Minds



CPR CLASS - SW REGION R&R
DATE: AUGUST 16, 2025.
COST: \$20.00 Per Person
Space is very limited

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E49ADA62CA3F5C52-57314880-cpraugust#/>

Details in the sign up.

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation (OPSRF) is excited to announce a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community Child Care Capacity and Quality Grants. This grant opportunity is designed to strengthen Oklahoma's early childhood care and education (ECCE) system by supporting enhancements that directly increase the quality and capacity of licensed child care programs serving children from birth to five.

This initiative is funded through the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) (Grant #90TP0094

The primary goal of this funding opportunity is to:

Increase the capacity and quality of an operating licensed child care program.

Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants must:

Eligible applicants are non-profits, for-

Back to School Without The Scents

Back-to-school season is upon us! It's time to shop for new supplies to set kids up for a healthy and successful year. As you are searching the aisles for everything your kids might need, it's important to know that many everyday school supplies and cleaning products contain added fragrance. While these scents may seem harmless or even pleasant, they often hide a mix of chemicals (i.e., Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and phthalates) that can trigger asthma, allergies, headaches, or other health issues, especially in children. Children are more sensitive to these chemicals than adults because their bodies are still growing.

Fragrance shows up in all kinds of back-to-school essentials:

Disinfecting wipes and sprays, Hand sanitizers, Soaps, Tissues, Markers and other art supplies, Lotions, chapsticks and other personal care products

Choosing fragrance-free products is a simple way to minimize unnecessary chemical exposure and maintain cleaner, healthier indoor air. Look for labels that say "fragrance-free", which is different from "unscented". "Unscented" products often contain additional chemicals to mask scents. Check ingredient lists for words like "fragrance" or "parfum." By making small swaps, we can collectively create healthier learning environments where all children (and staff!) can breathe easier and feel their best.

-Eco-Healthy Child Care

profits, community or faith-based organizations, county or city governments that operate a licensed child care program as defined in the Oklahoma Child Care Facilities Licensing Act (10 O.S., SS 401-410) and serve children from birth to five.

Applicants must have a subsidy contract with OKDHS.

Applicants must have been in business since January 2023.

Preschool Development Grant requires 30% matching funds. OPSRF will give priority to organizations that can provide matching funds.

For More Information visit

www.okschoolreadiness.org or click [HERE](#)



The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation (OPSRF) is now accepting proposals for a new grant opportunity focused on enhancing parent and family engagement in Oklahoma's early childhood care and education system.

Funded by the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5), this opportunity supports short-term projects that help families access, understand, and connect with early childhood services and resources for children birth to age five.

"We know that when families are meaningfully engaged from the beginning, children are more likely to thrive in school and beyond," said Carrie Williams, Executive Director of OPSR. "This funding supports the critical work of helping families navigate services, build relationships, and create strong foundations for their children's future."



FRAGRANCES



WHERE ARE FRAGRANCES FOUND AND WHAT ARE THE DANGERS?

The word "fragrance" covers dozens, sometimes even hundreds, of chemicals on product labels. Many common household products and personal care items contain fragrances. Examples include cleaners, air fresheners, scented detergents, hand lotions, candles, incense, and felt-tip art markers.

Children are exposed to fragrance chemicals primarily through the inhalation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that readily evaporate from the scented product into the air or direct skin contact.

Synthetic chemicals in fragrances are petroleum-based and can be harmful to human health. Chemicals found in fragrances include phthalates, which are endocrine disruptors, and carcinogens benzophenone and styrene. In addition, some children and adults have allergic reactions to fragrance chemicals. Asthmatic children are at especially high risk.



IS "UNSCENTED" THE SAME AS "FRAGRANCE-FREE"?

A "fragrance-free" label indicates that the product contains no added fragrance chemicals. An "unscented" label means that fragrance chemicals may have been added to mask odors. Be sure to select products labeled as "fragrance-free."

www.cehn.org/ehcc

ARE SCENTED CANDLES & ESSENTIAL OILS OK TO USE?

Scented candles are popular gifts but harmful fragrance chemicals that are added to them can be released into the air and inhaled by children. In addition, fragrance oils can soften the wax so that the candle does not burn cleanly—emitting more black soot. Black soot damages homes and furnishings and is harmful to human health.

Essential oils are used in many cleaning and personal care products. They are often advertised as "green" or "all-natural." However, even though they are derived from plants, they are not necessarily safer. The chemical compounds found in essential oils are highly concentrated and can be harmful to human health, causing skin irritations, respiratory distress, and even cancer.



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HOW CAN I MINIMIZE MY USE OF FRAGRANCES?

- Know your labels: scented vs. "unscented." Unscented products may still contain fragrance chemicals. Choose "fragrance-free" products.
- Avoid products that contain "fragrance" or "parfum" on the label.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when working with fragranced products, such as personal care products, cleaning products, perfumes, and home care products.
- Clean does not have a smell. Choose third party certified green cleaning products to lower harmful chemical exposures. Environmental Protection Agency's "Safer Choice" label, Green Seal or ECOLOGO.
- Deodorizing a room is possible just by opening a window or placing an open box of baking soda or a small bowl of vinegar somewhere in the room—out of the reach of children.
- Keep trash sealed at all times and take it outside frequently.



Grants range from \$50,000 to \$500,000, with a total of \$1.1 million available in 2025. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, school districts, tribal governments, libraries, and other community-based organizations serving families with young children. All projects must be completed by December 30, 2025.

For More Information visit www.okschoolreadiness.org or click [HERE](#)



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
- 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!

Enroll Your Program in the Oklahoma Strong Start Program:

To ensure your employees can 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.



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

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

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@gpccrr.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.

More Information about Scholars

Great Plains CCRR Staff



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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 copy!

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



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.

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



TELE THERAPY 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.



This publication was made possible by grant number 90100004-01-00, to contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

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@okschoolreadiness.org.



This publication was made possible by grant number 90100004-01-00, to contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Check www.OkRegistry.org for upcoming trainings and events

Okregistry

Be Sure to follow us on Facebook to follow our adventures, fun drawings and games, and keep to date on upcoming training and events



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