





Path to Strengthening Our Exemplary Schools and Amplified Impact

2025-2029

TULSA EDUCARE

Dear Friends and Partners,

In 2006, the first Tulsa Educare school opened its doors founded by George Kaiser Family Foundation with the promise to test a new approach to early childhood education. The goal was to see if the research suggesting that the achievement gap could be avoided through high-quality early care and education could be replicated here in Tulsa.

Eighteen years later, Tulsa Educare has grown into four exemplary schools and there is a published study utilizing a rigorous methodology that definitively demonstrates the transformative impact of high-quality care, as exemplified by Tulsa Educare. And, Tulsa Educare now has impactful community programming to influence the lives of children who do not attend our schools.

While we have done so much, we are ready to continue deepening our impact. In that spirit, here is our Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. Our work is centered around two focus areas:

1. Exemplary Schools, dedicated to continuous improvement and delivering exceptional early education and
2. Amplified Impact, leveraging our expertise to create programs for the Tulsa community and influence the broader early learning system.

The Table of Contents below provides a roadmap of what is in this document.

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Thank you for your continued support and belief in our vision. Together, we will create a brighter future for children and their families.

With gratitude and determination,

CINDY DECKER
Executive Director

ANNIE KOPPEL VAN HANKEN
Board President

TULSA EDUCARE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029

OUR VISION

A world where a young child's family income, race, and adverse experiences do not predict life success

OUR MISSION

To transform lives through high-quality early childhood education, meaningful family engagement, and impactful early learning supports

OUR GOALS

EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS

AMPLIFIED IMPACT

ENGAGED CHILDREN



Nurture children's innate curiosity and love of learning through intentional environments anchored in play, equity, exploration, and meaningful relationships

CONNECTED FAMILIES



Collaborate with families to support parent-child relationships, foster a strong school-home partnership, and build on existing strengths and skills to enhance family wellbeing

HEALTHY SCHOOLS



Operate supportive, efficient, and sustainable environments that promote growth and cultivate a culture of teamwork and continuous improvement

SUPPORTED COMMUNITY



Provide caregivers and other adults in Tulsa beyond our schools with knowledge, resources, and opportunities to further spark children's growth and development

FURTHER INFLUENCE



Impact the early learning system through research, advocacy, shaping discussions, educating funders and leaders, and influencing public policies

OUR VALUES

LEARNING



RELATIONSHIPS



COMMITMENT

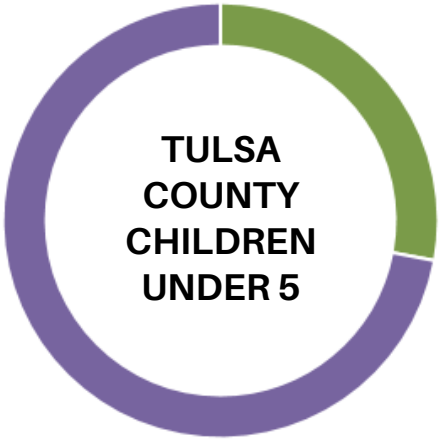


DATA



OUR PRIORITY POPULATION

Our priority population is the estimated 12,147 children under five in Tulsa County whose families are facing economic barriers. These children live in households with income under 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and comprise twenty-eight percent of all children under five living in Tulsa County. For a household of three in 2026, this is an annual income under $35,516.



28%, 12,147
LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOME UNDER 130% OF FPL

72%, 31,326
LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOME OVER 130% OF FPL

Data from 2024 American Community Survey

WHAT WE DO

We provide our priority population with access to high-quality early learning experiences and strive to ensure these opportunities occur across diverse early childhood settings—whether in early education programs, at home, in community spaces, or during everyday interactions such as riding in the bus or car, shopping for groceries, or waiting in the doctor's office. Our goal is for all children to experience enriching, developmentally appropriate moments at every turn.

We do this by operating four exemplary early childhood schools and then using the insights and expertise gained from these schools to share this evidence-based approach with the broader Tulsa community. We also influence the early learning system through research, advocacy, shaping discussions, educating funders and leaders, and influencing public policies.

> **Babies arrive in this world with more brain power than we adults have but they have no context for it. If you can help that child at the earliest stage, make the appropriate synaptic connections in the brain, then the brain architecture is built in a way that is constructive for life success.**
> **George Kaiser, Chair of Tulsa Educare**

WHY QUALITY EARLY LEARNING MATTERS

High-quality early learning in the first three years of life, which can happen with any parent or caregiver and in everyday interactions, shapes the brain's architecture and supports optimal brain development. This strong foundation fosters future learning and accelerates cognitive and social-emotional growth.

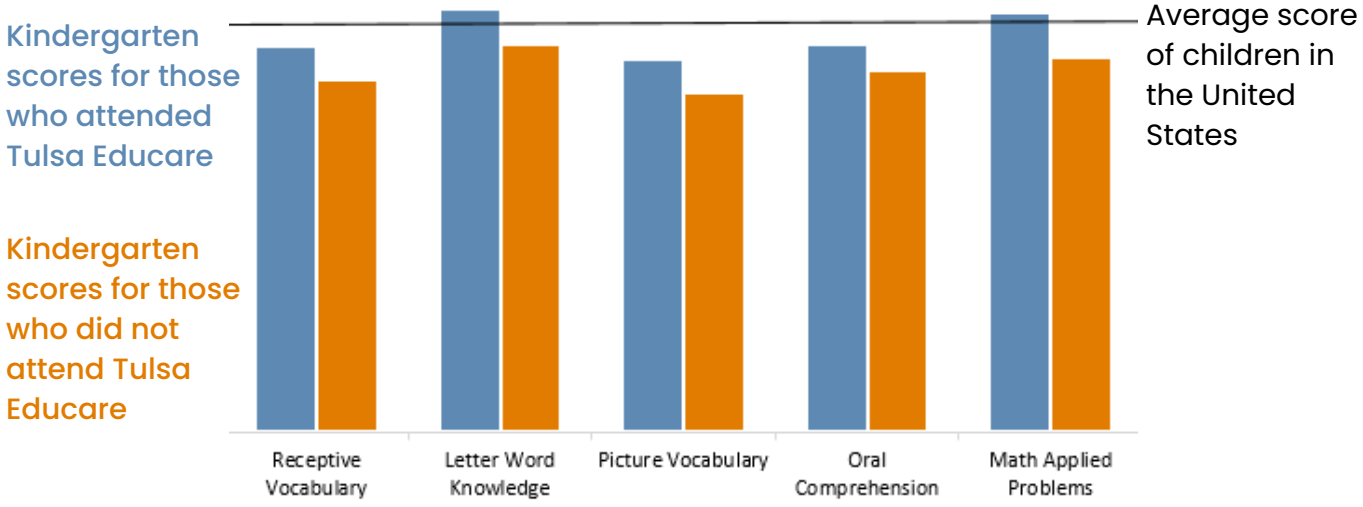
Ensuring that our priority population has access to high-quality learning is key to closing opportunity gaps and, in turn, preventing achievement gaps. It enables children from families facing economic barriers to enter elementary school on par with their higher-income peers, setting them up for long-term success.

While high-quality early learning can take place in a variety of settings, children under five benefit greatly from attending high-quality early childhood schools and child care programs. Some additional advantages include:

- Improving child attendance in elementary school;
- Decreasing participation in special education and being retained in grade;
- Strengthening the tax base by enabling parents to enter or remain in the workforce;
- Stabilizing families and may decrease adverse childhood experiences (ACEs);
- Increasing post-secondary school attendance;
- Delaying the age at which individuals become parents; and
- Reducing interaction with the criminal justice system.

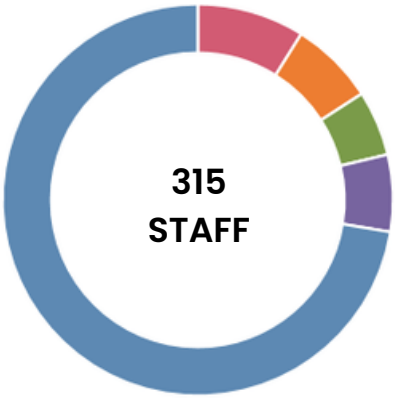
EVIDENCE OF OUR IMPACT

Researchers from the Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI) at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa studied the impact of attending Tulsa Educare. They found that it provides children with significant long-term academic benefits that extend into elementary school. The chart below shows that children who enrolled in Tulsa Educare at or before 18 months of age scored higher on Kindergarten assessments than similar children who did not attend.



OUR STAFF

Tulsa Educare employs 315 staff, with 72% teaching and supporting teachers.



72%, 228, Teachers, coaches, classroom support staff
9%, 28, Family engagement staff
7%, 22, Other leadership and administrative roles
6%, 17, Community outreach roles
6%, 20, Other school positions

> Tulsa Educare utilizes data to back up facts while adding human connection and spirit. That combination touches the mind and the heart, and that is what must happen to impact families' lives in a positive way.
> Tulsa Educare employee

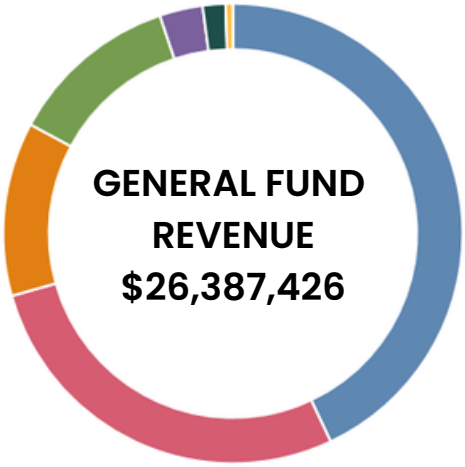
OUR BUDGET

Tulsa Educare's 2024-25 annual budget is $24.7 million. Of this, $19.7 million funds our exemplary schools, $3.3 million funds our amplified impact, and $1.7 million covers indirect expenses.

OUR REVENUE SOURCES

We are a Head Start grant recipient with 43% of our projected 2024-25 revenues coming from the Office of Head Start.

43% Head Start - $11,347,775
27% Private - $7,289,242
12% Child Care Subsidy - $3,226,870
12% Okla. Early Childhood Program- $3,164,773
3% Child Nutrition (CACFP) - $802,410
2% Tulsa Public Schools/State PreK - $422,856
1% Other - $133,500







TULSA EDUCARE

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Learn more





EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS: A CLOSER LOOK

Our four research-proven exemplary schools collectively serve 620 children from six weeks of age until they transition to elementary school.



4
SCHOOLS

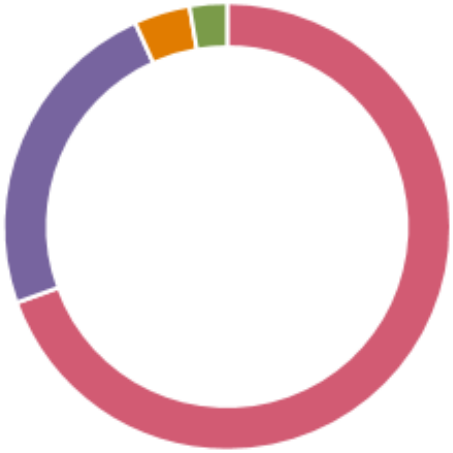


68
CLASSROOMS



620
CHILDREN

Our program supports families navigating economic challenges and those children benefiting from individualized services. The chart below describes how many children qualified by category in January 2026. Our program is free for nearly all families.



69%, 456, Participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

24%, 156, Income below or just above the Federal Poverty Level

4%, 27, Experiencing homelessness

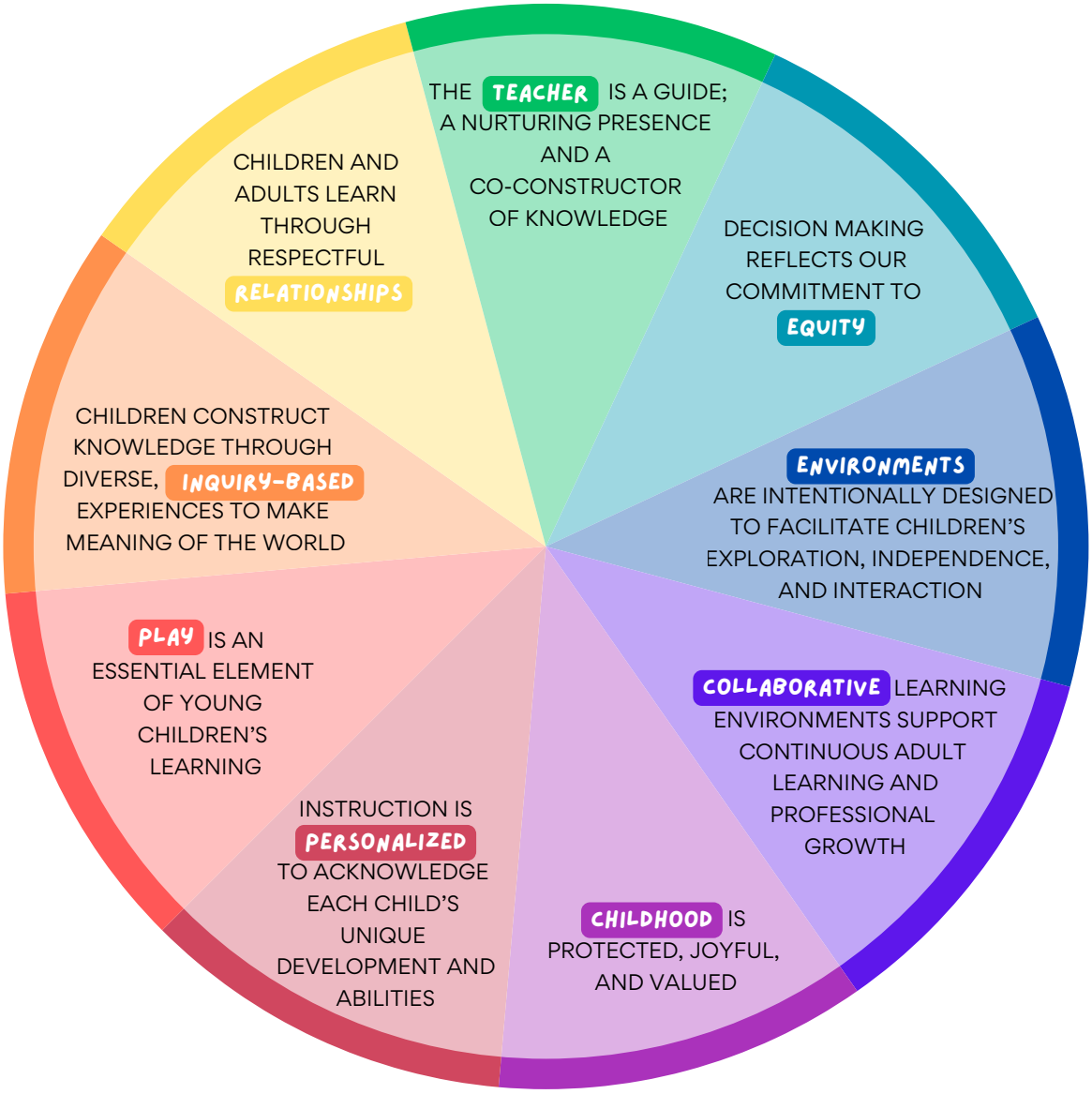
3%, 17, Child benefits from individualized services

What makes our schools exemplary?

- Supporting children's cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development and mental health through a holistic approach to learning
- Ensuring individualized care and attention with low child-teacher ratios, and all teachers holding relevant degrees and certifications
- Hiring staff dedicated to supporting families and building partnerships, because they are integral to their child's learning and development
- Providing nutritious meals daily and ensuring children receive up-to-date well-child visits, vision, hearing, and developmental screenings
- Partnering with a local university to apply data and evidence in enhancing our program
- Operating seamlessly from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, with no separate before- or after-care

Our schools are guided by School Principles

Our School Principles, adopted in 2024, translate Tulsa Educare's vision and mission into action for our schools. The principles, displayed on the next page, were inspired by the Trust for Learning's Principles of Ideal Learning.



Some common questions

Are we a school, a child care center, or a daycare? We are all of these, and none of these. There is no single term that fully captures what we do, so we use "school" because it best conveys that our primary focus is the development of children into capable, responsible, and engaged members of society.

Full-day, seamless programming from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM with no separate before- or after-care is rare in early childhood settings. Why do we do it given the significant investment financially and in terms of the workforce effort? Put simply, it creates meaningful impacts.

- Full-day programming improves parent wellbeing, which in turn benefits children.
- The need for children to have multiple places for care is reduced, and this decreases anxiety and stress for children and parents.
- Consistent care allows for deeper bonds with caregivers and peers, supporting social-emotional growth.

EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS: GOAL INITIATIVES



Tulsa Educare will nurture children's innate curiosity and love of learning through intentional environments anchored in play, equity, exploration, and meaningful relationships.

- Ground classroom practices in our School Principles to include: 1) a commitment to play, 2) language-rich, intentional learning environments, and 3) inquiry-based, collaborative approaches to learning
- Foster social-emotional growth and address challenging behaviors by implementing a tiered approach integrated with our existing infant and early childhood mental health services
- Adopt preschool-specific practices and approaches that improve learning environments, enhance children's experiences, and meet the unique developmental needs of this age group



Tulsa Educare will collaborate with families to support parent-child relationships, foster a strong school-home partnership, and build on existing strengths and skills to enhance family wellbeing.

- Support healthy parent-child interactions and parent-teacher relationships through staff professional development, reflection, and an intentional focus on recognizing and building on families' strengths
- Honor families by offering meaningful opportunities for engagement and empowering them to advocate for their child's needs, while building a culture where parent participation is valued
- Recognize family contributions and achievements and regularly celebrate these moments together



Tulsa Educare will operate supportive, efficient, and sustainable environments that promote growth and cultivate a culture of teamwork and continuous improvement.

- Enhance staff engagement and retention by encouraging self-reflection, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, improving the classroom staffing model, and offering regular access to high-quality professional learning
- Empower collaborative leaders who prioritize listening and responding to feedback, follow through on commitments, excel at developing and supervising staff, and drive excellence
- Ensure continuous, active supervision of children through ongoing monitoring, reviewing relevant data, and making timely adjustments to maintain high standards of care and support

EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS: PROGRESS MEASURES

CHILD MEASURES ARE THE NORTH STAR AND A FUNCTION OF PROGRESS ON ALL THREE EXEMPLARY SCHOOL GOALS:

- Child social-emotional wellbeing as measured by the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), based on teacher reports
- Child emergent literacy behaviors as measured by the Infant Toddler Literacy Assessment (ITLA), based on teacher reports
- Child receptive language proficiency as measured by the Preschool Language Scale through direct assessment
- Additional metrics measuring pre-math knowledge and executive function skills

ENGAGED CHILDREN:

- Classroom quality data assessed by OU-ECEI using standardized measures (i.e., ITERS-3, CLASS, QCIT)
- Parent survey response to "I believe my child's teacher is a good educator"
- Teacher survey response to whether they have time each week to focus on completing essential tasks, learning, or reflection

CONNECTED FAMILIES:

- Child attendance at school
- Parent response to "It is easy to be in tune with what my child is feeling"
- Parent response to question on how many times they told their child a story in the past week
- Parent response to whether they have someone they can talk to for advice
- For children transitioning out of Tulsa Educare, parents response to a question of whether they attended an informational meeting with Educare staff about the transition to elementary school

HEALTHY SCHOOLS:

- Staff turnover
- Percent of funded positions that are filled
- Employee survey response to "I am satisfied with the culture"
- Employee survey response to "I receive meaningful recognition"
- Employee survey response to whether they trust leadership
- Number of child health and safety incidents

AMPLIFIED IMPACT: A CLOSER LOOK

We leverage the knowledge and expertise gained from operating exemplary schools to share impactful programs with the wider Tulsa community and influence the broader early learning system.

Supported Community

As shown in the table to the right, we offer a variety of programs designed for child care providers, non-profit organizations, parents, and caregivers, all aimed at positively impacting children who do not attend our schools. Our programs for child care providers reach approximately 45% of Tulsa's licensed family child care homes.

> Working with Tulsa Educare has not only improved the quality of our program but also expanded the services and resources available to support every aspect of our children's development.
> Lena Riser, owner of Miss Lena's Child Care

Our community outreach center, branded as Early Learning Works, serves as a hub for community events, raising awareness, and expanding our reach beyond the walls of our schools.

KEY PROGRAMS FOR:

Child care providers
- Child Care Partnership
- Virtual Talking is Teaching
- Learning Getaways
- Saturday Virtual Trainings
- CPR & First Aid
- Coaching & Consultation
- Playground Inspection
- Creando Sueños

Non-Profit Organizations
- Early Learning Workshops
- Lunch & Learns

Parents & Caregivers
- Talking is Teaching
- Active Parenting
- Parent Support Groups
- Family, Friends and Neighbors



1
COMMUNIITY OUTREACH CENTER



130+
TULSA CHILD CARE PROVIDERS REACHED



1500
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPANTS



4500
TALKING IS TEACHING PARTICIPANTS

Further Influence

Our broader impact on the early learning system is achieved through a combination of research, advocacy, and external engagement. Some examples include:

- Providing in-person tours that advance knowledge on early learning
- Creating through advocacy a reasonable pathway for large family child care homes to have approved permits from the City of Tulsa
- Supporting early learning programs across the nation by sharing what we know and what we do
- Shaping the research priorities and practices within the Educare Network to advance the field
- Advocating for early childhood education by meeting with federal legislators in Washington, DC

AMPLIFIED IMPACT: GOAL INITIATIVES AND PROGRESS MEASURES



Tulsa Educare will provide caregivers and other adults in Tulsa beyond our schools with knowledge, resources, and opportunities to further spark children's growth and development.

- Child care providers in Tulsa recognize Tulsa Educare as the go-to resource for strengthening both their business operations and pedagogical practices
- Maintain a proactive and consistent approach to securing public funding for early learning in Tulsa
- Enhance the quality, reach, and diversity of early learning offerings for parents, caregivers, and staff at non-profit organizations

PROGRESS IS MEASURED THROUGH:

- Number and percent of licensed child care providers who accept subsidy reached by Tulsa Educare
- Total participants reached through workshops, trainings, and parent-child events
- Training attendee response to "The presentation met my needs & expectations"



Tulsa Educare will impact the early learning system through research, advocacy, shaping discussions, educating funders and leaders, and influencing public policies.

- Provide engaging tours of Tulsa Educare to showcase the impact of high-quality early learning and the breadth of Tulsa Educare's work
- Advocate for early learning and actively contribute to the Educare Network
- Participate in research studies to inform best practices, influence policy, and strengthen the early learning system

PROGRESS IS MEASURED THROUGH:

- Number of tours given
- Meetings with policymakers, public comments on policy changes, conference participation, and media contributions
- Participation in high-quality research studies and the application of findings to inform practice and policy

This is a living document.
This version is current
as of September 2026.

Kendall-Whittier



Hawthorne



MacArthur









Celia Clinton



Early Learning Works



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