In the fall of 2010, the Rise Program of Stillwater integrated with The Cleo L. Craig Child Development Laboratory on the Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The Cleo L. Craig Child Development Laboratory-Rise Program (CDL-Rise) continues to provide a focused program for children with developmental delays and typically developing children ranging in age from 12 months to 6 years.

The Rise Program provides unique integration of children with disabilities among their peers without disabilities. Physical, speech, and music therapies are part of the daily schedule. Children enrolled in the Rise Program represent eight school districts, including Perkins, Pawnee, Ripley, Stillwater, Cushing, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, and Mannford.

Research is another component that strengthens and distinguishes Stillwater’s Rise Program from its six peer institutions across the country. The purpose of the research at the Rise Program is to examine how children’s participation in the Rise Program is related to developmental outcomes and family functioning. Findings from three years of research are promising. This report reflects the findings from Spring 2007 to Spring 2010.

Key findings from the first 3 years

Research indicates that children are making important developmental gains.

- Children with disabilities are gaining communication skills.
- Children with disabilities are gaining fine and gross motor skills.
- Children with disabilities are gaining interpersonal relationship skills.

Research also indicates that parents report benefits from their children’s attendance at the Rise Program.

- Parents of children with disabilities attending the Rise Program report a significant increase in their positive feelings towards parenting.
- 93% of parents report that they have developed meaningful relationships with school staff.
- 98% of parents report that they talk to Rise Program staff about personal problems.
- 71% of parents report that their relationship with another child from the Rise Program has made a positive impact in their life.

Parent satisfaction at the Rise Program remained generally high.

- 100% of Rise Program parents would recommend the Rise Program to a friend in a similar situation.
- 93% of Rise Program parents are satisfied with the quality of the Rise Program.
- 93% of Rise Program parents are satisfied with the services their child receives at the Rise Program.
Parents of children attending the Rise Program said:

“Our child has flourished at Rise. We have seen significant strides in social interactions, speech, and overall motor skills. Our child is also better at expressing her needs through words and sign language.”

“Rise has been nothing but wonderful for my child. He amazes us every day with his accomplishments. Without the program, we don’t know where he’d be in his development.”

“She has blossomed. When she got here she could barely walk and she’s running. At 21 months old she is putting 3 and 4 word sentences together. She handed me a purple crayon the other day and told me it was purple.”

“I feel empowered as a parent with some of the skills I have learned from the therapists. You can interact with them very openly. I feel both my husband and I are empowered in that sense because of the coordination and collaboration.”

“I love that my child is getting the opportunity to see that just because someone is a little bit different, it’s not wrong or scary, they can be your friend just as easily.”

“My child has become much more autonomous. She wants to do it on her own and at 21 months old you don’t see that a lot. One of her new favorite phrases is ‘I got it’ or ‘I can do it.’ You try to help her put her shoes on and she says ‘I got it, I got it.’ It’s amazing to me just to see her take those steps to being that much more of her own person.”

“He’s matured a lot. I think that my child being around typically developing kids has helped him because he sees what they are doing, and he wants to follow them and walk with them.”

“I don’t ever worry when we drop him off here. I think his self-esteem is through the roof. I know someday the world is going to be a really tough place for him but that is not this world.”

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