The Cleo L. Craig Child Development Laboratory–Rise Program (CDL-Rise) on the Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma, provides a focused program for children with developmental delays/disabilities and typically-developing children ranging in age from 12 months to 6 years. Physical, occupational, speech & language, and music therapies are part of the regular schedule. Additionally, warm water activities are offered on a weekly basis. Developmentally appropriate practices are utilized when selecting and implementing program curriculum, teaching strategies, and ongoing assessment of children.

Research is one unique component that strengthens and distinguishes the OSU CDL-Rise Program from the other Rise Programs across the country. The purpose of the research at the CDL-Rise Program is to examine how children’s participation in the program is related to developmental outcomes and family functioning. Data is gathered quantitatively from parents and teachers through questionnaires, as well as qualitatively from parents through focus groups. Research findings continue to be promising. This report highlights data from the 2010-2011 school year, as well as longitudinal findings.

Key Facts about the CDL-Rise Program

The Cleo L. Craig Child Development Laboratory–Rise Program provides high-quality early childhood educational services for all children in an inclusive environment. This unique, integrated program not only serves children and families, but plays many other important roles in the community and state of Oklahoma. Key points about the CDL-Rise Program are listed below.

- Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Recognized as a Three-Star Facility by Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- Children enrolled in the CDL-Rise Program represent five school districts in Central Oklahoma: Cushing, Morrison, Pawnee, Ripley, and Stillwater. Educational and financial collaborations have been established with three of those districts.
- Based on research findings indicating strong parent interest, a Parent-Teacher Organization was formed in 2011. Objectives of the PTO include: fundraising, parent-school-community networking, technology/equipment expansion, and program support.
- Teacher training is provided on-site for in-service and pre-service early childhood teachers.
  - Over 200 students in the OSU Early Childhood Education program spend time in CDL-Rise classrooms as a component of their teacher training program.
- Community partnerships and organizations support the CDL-Rise Program through fundraising and financial gifts.
  - The Mya Gonzales Foundation raises funds and provides scholarships for children to attend the CDL-Rise Program.
  - The Trans Siberian Orchestra—Stone City Attractions, Inc. provides a financial gift each year to support therapies for children. To date, over $45,000 has been contributed.
  - The Gamma Phi Beta Sorority at OSU hosts an annual “Pancake Palooza” fundraising event, with proceeds going to the CDL-Rise Program.
- University and community service are provided in several ways, including:
  - Practicum site for OSU students in the following departments: Human Development & Family Science; Communication Sciences & Disorders; Recreation Management/Therapeutic Recreation; Design, Housing, & Merchandising
  - Practicum site for Northern Oklahoma College nursing students
  - Host site for high school and community college tours
  - Observation labs for researchers and parents
  - Parenting programs
- Advisory Boards exist at the state level and local level. Comprised of members from state agencies, the Oklahoma legislature, the university, and parents, these advisory boards provide counsel and recommendations about matters related to curriculum, research, teacher training, community service, and special events.
- Establishment of the Growing the Future Endowment to provide long-term support for the CDL-Rise Program.
Key Research Findings

Children’s Developmental Gains
Research indicates that children are making important developmental gains. Children with delays/disabilities who attended the Rise School of Stillwater prior to July 2010, then attended the CDL-Rise Program in 2010-2011, have seen significant growth in many areas of development, including the following domains:

- Expressive communication skills
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Coping skills
- Community living skills

Positive Family Outcomes
Parents made numerous comments in the focus groups and in open-ended questions about the ways that the CDL-Rise Program has positively affected not only their children, but also their family lives. This was also supported in the quantitative data. In the 2011 wave of data collection, parents reported positive changes from 2010 that approached statistical significance in several family-related variables. From 2010 to 2011, parents reported:

- Increased positive affect in their parenting practices
- Decreased negative feelings towards parenting
- Decreased marital stress

“The way my children have blossomed has made life great. I’m doing better at work because I’m not worried about them. So we are all just peaceful, and we get home and they are taking initiative to do other things now. Before it was all ‘Mommy, Mommy I need you’ and now she’s independent.”

“(My child) started walking immediately … just having the classroom where everything was at her level and she could move about freely in such a nice space…I cried over the facility when we moved into it.”

Parent Satisfaction
Compared to the previous two years, there was a sizeable increase in parent-reported satisfaction after the integration into the CDL-Rise Program.

- 100% of parents rated the quality of the CDL-Rise Program as “good” or “excellent.”
- 100% of parents reported that they were satisfied with the services they received at the CDL-Rise Program.
- 98% of parents reported they would definitely recommend the CDL-Rise Program to their friends.

“Everything they offered this year, the water therapies, all the extras besides OT, PT, speech, and feeding therapy was just amazing to us. It allows us to be a typical family. I felt normal again; I felt I could focus on my other kids, not just my special needs child.”

“It has been exciting for us to see how wonderful the program is; to see just how much the program was meeting our child’s academic needs and not just those therapy needs.”

“(My child) started walking immediately … just having the classroom where everything was at her level and she could move about freely in such a nice space…I cried over the facility when we moved into it.”

“It was obvious to me…that they were teaching a great lesson to our kids to accept diversity and something that’s new.”

“‘My daughter has become more appropriate with her friends. There are many typical children in her class…they play with her and she tries to interact and has learned. I can see her progress in actually playing with them.’

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

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