The Cleo L. Craig Child Development Laboratory – RISE Program
The Child Development Laboratory-RISE Program 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 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 are 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 2012-2013 school year, as well as selected longitudinal findings. To date, research findings have been disseminated locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally through peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, technical reports, and media including:

- Journal of Early Child Development and Care
- Society for Research in Human Development
- Society for Research in Child Development
- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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 program are listed below.

- Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
  ◦ Scored 100% or 100%+ in 9 of 10 categories
  ◦ Scored 96% in 1 of 10 categories; classrooms scored 96%
- 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: Morrison, Pawnee, Edmond, Guthrie, 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 and professionals in other related fields.
  ◦ 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 provide financial support for the CDL-RISE Program through funding and financial gifts.
  ◦ The Mya’s Promise Foundation raises funds and provides scholarships for children to attend the program.
  ◦ The Trans Siberian Orchestra—Stone City Attractions, Inc. provides a financial gift each year to support therapies for children. Since 2007, over $68,000 has been contributed.
- University and community services 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; Nutritional Sciences; Applied Health & Educational Psychology.
  ◦ Practicum site for Northern Oklahoma College nursing students
  ◦ Host site for high school and community college tours
  ◦ Observation labs for researchers and parents, and community organizations
  ◦ Teacher training site
  ◦ Parenting programs
- An Advisory Board exists at the local level. Comprised of members from state agencies, the university, parents, and community members, the board provides counsel and recommendations about matters related to curriculum, research, teacher training, policies and procedures, community service, and special events.
- The Growing the Future Endowment provides long-term support for the Child Development Laboratory.
Key Research Findings

Children’s Developmental Gains

For the fourth consecutive year, research has indicated that children with developmental delays and disabilities are making gains in their adaptive behavior. Development of these skills is a crucial component of an individual’s ability to function independently on a daily basis. Children with delays/disabilities who attended the CDL-RISE Program prior to July 2012 then attended the CDL-RISE Program in 2012-2013 have seen significant growth in multiple areas of their communication skills and living skills.

- Expressive communication skills
- Receptive communication skills
- Written communication skills
- Community living skills
- Personal daily living skills

The Importance of Therapies

“Our son had many ear infections and had to have tubes in his ears. The infections affected his ability to hear and speech development. Not being able to communicate was so frustrating for him. We started doing speech therapy here at the CDL-RISE and that has made a tremendous impact for us at home. I don’t think his speech would have improved elsewhere at the rate it did here attending the CDL-RISE.”

“The myriad of therapies (available at the CDL-RISE) have been wonderful. My child went from saying maybe a dozen words to now speaking rudimentary sentences. That’s a huge step for a kid with autism. It is wonderful to hear him speak and even give some opinions.”

“There aren’t words to describe the support this school offers. If the CDL-RISE were not here we would have to research the therapies our child needs ourselves and may or may not be able to afford it. Early intervention is the key. We will never know the full benefits of the CDL-RISE, we can only be thankful that our child has attended for 3 years.”

Positive Family Outcomes

Parents of children who attended the CDL reported statistically significant positive changes in several family-related variables. These findings are important, as positive changes in these variables have the potential to in turn positively impact parent-child relationships, family relationships, and children’s peer relationships.

- Increase in parent-reported child pro-social behavior
- Increase in teacher-reported child pro-social behavior
- Decrease in parent reported stress due to financial impact of child therapies

Parent Satisfaction

Parent satisfaction for the CDL-RISE was 100% in 4 key areas:

- 100% of parents rated the quality of the CDL as “excellent” or “good.”

“We are very grateful that the CDL-RISE has been available for our daughter. The education and therapies provided have been excellent and have made a huge difference for our daughter and our family.”

- 100% of parents reported that they were satisfied with the services they received at the CDL.

“Our son has Down syndrome and wasn’t walking when we started here. If he wasn’t here at the CDL-RISE we would have to research services ourselves and may or may not be able to afford it. We pay tuition here and it’s covered. He has physical therapy twice a week and now he’s walking on his own. He also receives speech therapy, OT, and music therapy.”

- 100% of parents reported that they would recommend the CDL to their friends.

“Everything about here is welcoming, everyone is very kind and tolerant. I feel comfortable and that’s important to be able to leave your child here for that amount of time every single day.”

- 100% of parents reported that they were satisfied with the educational goals that the teachers set for their child during parent-teacher conferences.

“The teachers at the CDL-RISE have worked with us to identify things we can do with our child to help them be better prepared for elementary. The teachers are knowledgeable and respectful. They share practical skills and genuinely care for the children and family!”

The Unique Inclusive Environment

Parents of children with and without disabilities have reported positive outcomes in their children and in their families as a result of the inclusive environment within the CDL-RISE.

“The inclusion environment has been an enormous help and benefit to our daughter (with special needs). We don’t believe she would be where she is socially with peers if it weren’t for that environment.”

“The CDL-RISE does a great job fostering both typical and special needs development. The integrating I feel is a win-win. Tolerance and understanding for typical kids and behavior modeling for special needs.”

“My husband and I know that our child is getting the education that meets his immediate needs. So we do not worry about him not being challenged. The program has opened our eyes to the many things that other families struggle with and overcome.”

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