

ReadyStart

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OPENetwork

Your Choices Shape Their Chances

Blueprint

[1/10/2022]

# Introduction

OPENetwork stands for Ouachita Parish Early Childhood Network. OPENetwork's goal is to make high quality early care and education available to in-need children in Ouachita Parish and that all children will enter kindergarten healthy and ready for success. OPENetwork will also work to help families to make the best choices for their child's early care and education and to be involved in supporting their child's early development.

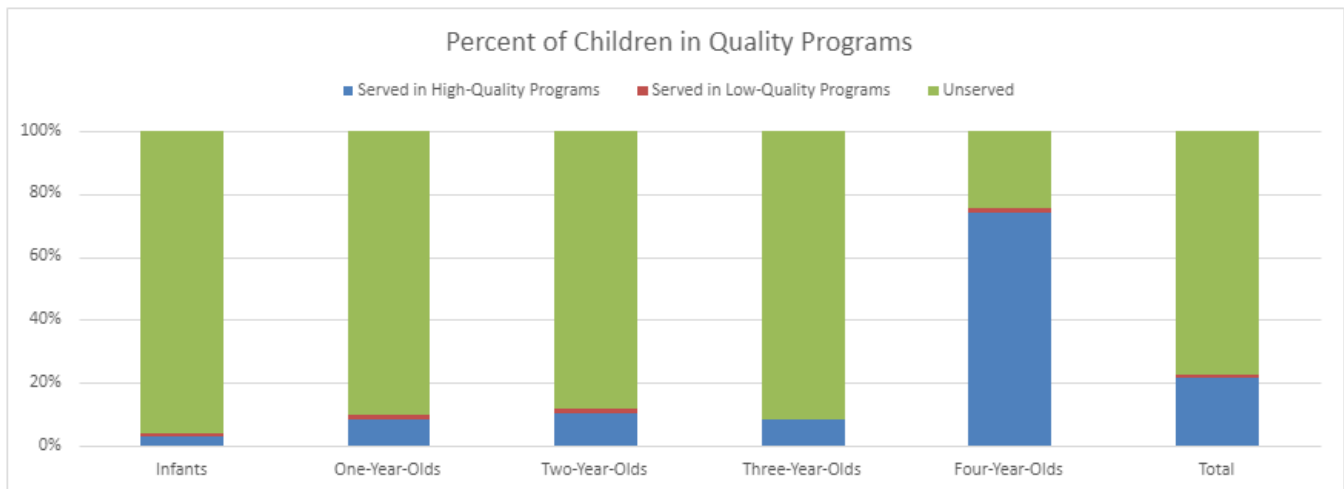
In 2012, the Louisiana legislature passed Act 3, the Early Childhood Act. Act 3 requires BESE (the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education) to create a unified system to manage all publicly funded early childhood programs. To begin this process, the Louisiana Department of Education selected communities around the state to become "Early Childhood Network Pilots." Ouachita Parish was one of 13 communities selected to become a pilot in the first round.

All publicly funded early childhood programs must comply with Act 3. These programs include public school programs (LA 4, 8g, Title I), special education programs, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Steps, and the Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) program.

The primary goal of the OPENetwork is to make high quality early care and education available to all children in Ouachita Parish so that all children will enter kindergarten healthy and ready for success. OPENetwork works to help families to make the best quality choice for their child's early care and education and to be involved in supporting their child's early development.

Ouachita Parish has critical gaps in access to quality early care and education for our communities' youngest learners. In 2020-2021 only 19% of the Infants and Toddlers group had access to quality early care and education programs. Investing in Infants, Toddlers and Threes is key to the success of our community today and tomorrow.

## Access to Quality Early Childhood Ouachita Parish by Age Group 2020 – 2021



## Guiding Statements

Statement: Your Choices Shape Their Chances

Purpose: Children in Ouachita Parish will enter kindergarten healthy and ready for school.

## Strategic Plan

**Goal 1: Increase access to early care and education opportunities for Infants, Toddlers and Threes.**

Strategies:

- Evaluate availability of current Infant, Toddler and three-year-old seats by age and location with monthly child count.
- Identify potential sites to add additional slots
- Request PDG funding for B-3 seats
- Explore EHS funding options

Resources:

- Existing: 5 EHS centers and two EHS childcare partnership sites. Several child-care centers with space to provide care for Infants, Toddlers and Threes.
- Needed: PDG funding to fund available spots for Infants, Toddlers and Threes.

Performance Metrics: Increased enrollment of Infants, Toddlers and Threes by 30 children overall.

Annual Progress Update:

- 2020-2021 Winter 2021 OPENetwork applied for Birth to three seats. However, the network was not awarded seats as seats were prioritized for Ready Start Networks and OPENetwork was not yet a Ready Start Network. Summer 2021 OPENetwork applied to become a Ready Start Network.
- 2021-2022 OPENetwork was awarded Ready Start in Fall 2021. OPENetwork is currently in the process of applying for Birth to Three seats for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year.

**Goal 2: Increase access to quality ECE for four-year olds.**

Strategies:

- Ready Start Coach for all programs (CLASS, Curriculum, GOLD)
- MMCI coaching for all Pre-K classrooms
- Professional development training (conscious discipline, TBRI, Frog Street)
- Regularly scheduled trainings offered to PreK teachers during professional development days during the school calendar. These trainings are prioritized for sites that are proficient or lower.

Resources:

- Existing: Instructional Support Kits to all Pre/Ks classrooms in the OPENetwork
- Needed: Trainings and workshops

Performance Metrics: CLASS Scores/Performance Profiles - all Preschool programs high proficient or excellent

Annual Progress Update:

- 2020-2021 During Spring 2021, Conscious Discipline training was offered to preschool teachers. Teachers completed the training, received Emotional Support Materials.
- 2021-2022 August 2021, PreK teachers were trained in CLASS Instructional Support and CLASS Instructional Support Kits were provided to all preschool classrooms.

**Goal 3: Increase parent and community awareness of their ECE options when choosing a program for their children.**

Strategies:

- Marketing Campaign - TV ads, radio PSAs, digital ads, social media, posters, flyers, postcards
- Hold informational parent events
- Share Choosing Quality Child Care checklist

Resources:

- Existing: Templates already exist for flyers and posters. Met with marketing team to create a new more informative TV ad.
- Needed: Update flyers and posters.
- Survey parents on experience following Coordinated Enrollment.

Performance Metrics: survey data

Annual Progress Update:

- 2020-2021 Held a virtual parent Q & A via Zoom prior to early childhood roundup week. Shared early childhood program "spotlights" in the weeks leading up to early childhood roundup. The marketing campaign included improved TV ads, radio PSAs, digital ads, social media, posters, flyers, postcards.