



Background Information

SEED for Oklahoma Kids (SEED OK) is a seven-year initiative designed to test and promote matched savings accounts at birth for all children. The purpose of the SEED OK study is to test the policy concept of universal children's savings accounts by assessing the impact of giving every child an account at birth. The initiative, which is part of a larger national program known as SEED (Saving for Education, Entrepreneurship, and Downpayment), will set the stage for a broad, national policy for asset building among children, youth, and families. The theory of asset building suggests that accumulating assets or savings within households changes the thinking and outlook within those households, which in turn may lead to more positive outcomes for families, such as an increase in children who obtain college degrees.

Study Details

The SEED OK study aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the patterns of participation in SEED OK?
- How much is saved in SEED OK?
- What factors facilitate saving, and what factors are barriers to saving?
- What is the impact of SEED OK on saving for children?
- What are the impacts of SEED OK on parents' expectations and behaviors regarding children's education and life chances?
- What are the impacts of SEED OK on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, and their attitudes and behaviors regarding education?

Approximately 2,700 Oklahoma parents (primarily mothers) of infants from a random sample of birth records from the state will be interviewed over the course of the seven-year study. The selection includes oversamples of American Indians, African Americans, and Latinos.

Researchers conducted baseline interviews with participants from August 2007 through April 2008. After initial interviews, about 1,350 randomly selected participants received deposits of \$1,000 into state-owned Oklahoma College Savings Plan accounts for the benefit of their infant child. Income-eligible families who receive the \$1,000 and opt to open and make deposits into a separate Oklahoma College Savings Plan account for their infant child will be matched up to \$250 each year over a four-year period. The remaining infants serve as a control group and do not receive state-owned accounts. Their parents, however, will participate in the study by completing periodic interviews about their saving behaviors.



Why was Oklahoma selected for this study?

Oklahoma was selected as the state partner for this initiative through a competitive Request-for-Proposal process. The state has a diverse population, offering the chance to examine the effects of SEED OK on different subsets of the population, including different ethnic groups and families living in urban or rural areas.

Diversity of Children born in Oklahoma (2006)	
Ethnicity	Percentage of Total Population
White or Caucasian	69%
Hispanic or Latino	12%
American Indian and Alaska Native	10%
Black or African American	8%
Asian	2%

In addition, the proportion of Oklahoma adults holding a bachelor’s degree is 20 percent below the national average, a statistic that has serious economic implications for the state. The SEED OK study offers an opportunity to measure the impact of incentives on participation in college savings plans that, in turn, may determine the impact on college attendance in Oklahoma.

Funding for SEED OK

Funding for SEED OK was provided to the Center for Social Development by the Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and Lumina Foundation for Education. RTI International is the study’s survey research firm.

About the Center for Social Development

The Center for Social Development (CSD) is a research and policy center at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. Founded in 1994, CSD focuses on social development research to inform how individuals, families, and communities can increase their ability to formulate and reach life goals and contribute to the economy and society. Major areas of work include asset building, civic engagement and service, and productive aging. CSD has a multipurpose agenda that encompasses social theory, research, policy innovation, projects in the community, and teaching. CSD connects academic and applied interests, and builds bridges across public, nonprofit, and private sectors. CSD emphasizes academic excellence and real-world involvement.

For more information

Visit http://www.ok.gov/treasurer/SEED_for_Oklahoma_Kids/index.html for additional information about SEED OK.