

OUR IMPACT

Your support helps build brighter futures with all children and families. Together, we're building a stronger, more resilient Oklahoma where all can grow and thrive through high-quality Early Head Start and Head Start, with specialized support for entire families. This includes mental health services, and programs to help foster families and grandparents raise their grandchildren.

Last year alone, Sunbeam experienced a 58 percent increase in requests for our services. This resulted in supporting 6,211 Oklahomans – a 51 percent increase from the previous year.



6,211

**Oklahomans
Supported**



306,406

**Service
Deliveries**



ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN OKLAHOMA



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can affect children for the rest of their lives. ACEs are bad or stressful events, like abuse, neglect, or living in a home with problems. These tough experiences can affect how a child's brain grows, their emotions, and their health.

In Oklahoma, many children face tough experiences early in life, with 20% to 48% having more than one ACE before turning 18. This makes Oklahoma one of the states with the highest number of children dealing with ACEs. ACEs can cause problems in school, relationships, and health, but with the right help and positive experiences, children can overcome these challenges and grow up healthy and successful.

Children Only Get One Chance at a Head Start

A recent OKFutures study found that 63% of young children in Central Oklahoma are living in impoverished or low-income households. The study also indicated more than 70% of children are not currently receiving care in a pre-school setting.



HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START



High-Quality Support for All Children & Families

As an Early Head Start and Head Start provider in Oklahoma County, Sunbeam is a leader in early childhood education. We provide special support for families and help children through age four grow physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. Our early education centers and Home Visitation Program give kids from birth to age 4 the skills to enter kindergarten and be ready for school.

We create a foundation for kids to succeed by building partnerships among schools, teachers, and families. Because parents are a child's first and most important teachers, we involve them in every aspect of their child's learning and development and give them opportunities for personal and professional development.

- Family Advocates help families problem-solve, locate resources within the community, and set and achieve goals.
- Through the monthly Parent Committee Meetings, families have the opportunity to talk to other families, share ideas and compare notes about their children's experience in the program.
- Through the Policy Council, families can help plan and make decisions about our programs, including goals and objectives, policies and procedures, program monitoring, and program funding proposals.

HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START



High-Quality Support for All Children & Families

- The Health Services Advisory Committee and Education Committee allows families to help guide health-related services and classroom curriculum activities.
- Families are invited to volunteer in their child's classroom, apply for jobs, join in Parent-Child Interaction activities, and participate in monthly Parent Education Workshops.
- We offer Male/Father Engagement activities monthly to encourage father figures and male family members to be actively involved in parenting.



HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START

Last year:

High Quality Learning Environments

- 73% of children had progressed at the proper levels in literacy and language.
- 72% of children had progressed at the proper levels in math and science.

Good Health and Well-Being

- 89% of children showed competency on the DECA for social-emotional development.
- 100% of children with social-emotional and behavioral challenges maintained enrollment due to trauma-informed and hope-centered interventions.

Strong Families

- 92% of parents demonstrated increased knowledge in raising their children.

96% of parents with housing at enrollment maintained or enhanced their housing.



Your Support Provides Hope

Helping children thrive involves supporting the entire family. Families like Cameesha's benefit from comprehensive support systems.

Cameesha, a dedicated mother of three, initially struggled with depression. She expressed the challenges of motherhood, emphasizing the desire to provide a great life for her children despite facing setbacks.

"Sometimes, you're not prepared for life the way that you expect," shared Cameesha. "When you become a mother, you just want to give them a great life. When you don't have the opportunities to do that, and something knocks you down, you get one step forward – but you always feel three steps behind."

Enrolling her children at the Pierce Early Education Center connected Cameesha and her family to a compassionate team. This team includes a Family Advocate who assists in problem-solving, locating community resources, and achieving family goals.

Cameesha's children are now meeting their developmental milestones and enjoy a nurturing classroom environment where they learn and play with friends. Inspired by her children's learning experiences, Cameesha began her career as a Sunbeam Teacher Apprentice, supporting teachers in classrooms.

Sunbeam is a leader in early childhood education and is committed to helping promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of young children. This prepares babies and toddlers for continued growth, development, and success in school and in life.

Founded in 1907,
Sunbeam is

Building **BRIGHTER** Futures

with All Children and Families

I see three little beautiful, amazing beings that are going to flourish because of Sunbeam.

-Cameesha

[Scan or click here to learn more about Cameesha and her family's journey.](#)



Mental Health



According to the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health, Oklahoma ranks 5th in the nation for rates of mental illness, and 115,000 adults and 27,000 children in Oklahoma County can be diagnosed within a given year with a mental illness of some kind. Additionally, according to United Way of Central Oklahoma Research, Oklahoma County residents have on average 4.5 poor mental health days each month.

The pandemic has also negatively impacted mental health. Researchers are still working to quantify COVID's long-term impact, but early reports show higher rates of anxiety and depression across all demographic areas. The community's demand for Sunbeam's mental health services has never been higher, as indicated by our 135% increase in service deliveries in the last five years.

Sunbeam Family Services offers trauma-informed, hope-centered mental health, and culturally responsive support for people of all ages. Our clinical team provides compassionate therapy for pregnant individuals and young children (ages 0-5), along with therapy and group services for children, teens, adults, couples, and families. Sunbeam's experienced therapists are trained in various areas, including play therapy, trauma care, and managing anxiety and depression.

Last Year:

- 93% of clients gained a sense of hopefulness due to services
- 92% of clients experienced improved emotional well-being
- 90% of clients increased their personal growth through the development of coping skills
- 83% of clients demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in treatment progress
- 95% of clients did not need higher levels of care, including hospitalization
- 84% of clients maintained their housing, preventing homelessness

FOSTER CARE



Safe and Loving Homes for Children in Foster Care

Since Oklahoma no longer has overnight shelters operated by the state and space in youth shelters is limited, the child welfare system relies on quality foster homes to provide safe shelter and a support system to children in foster care. Around 10% of the children in OHS custody are waiting on their forever home as the rights of their parents have been terminated either by the court system or by the parents themselves. The child welfare system depends on finding quality foster parents who will provide a loving home and maintain a relationship and communication with birth families. Foster families are expected to be a bridge resource to biological families and help keep kin and culture intact for foster children when deemed safe to do so.

Sunbeam has been supporting children in foster care through foster parent recruitment, certification, and case management since the 1930s, when Sunbeam evolved from its orphanage roots as Oklahoma's foster care system was being established. Today, Sunbeam is a traditional foster care agency, meaning it partners with OHS to recruit, certify, and support foster parents throughout their fostering experience. Foster families need support to be successful when caring for a child in foster care and navigating the complex child welfare system. The agency has a thorough vetting process for potential foster families and provides extensive training and support to best prepare them to open their home to children. Sunbeam's highly trained and compassionate case managers, certification specialists, and mental health practitioners help Sunbeam maintain a placement success rate average of over 95%.

Sunbeam —voted Metro Family Magazine's Family Favorite Foster Care Agency— provides expert support to foster families from the start of their application process through each placement. We give foster families 24/7 assistance, priority placement in our early education centers, access to trauma-certified therapists, mental health consultation, Parent's Night Out, and more.

FOSTER CARE

Last Year:

- 94% of children maintained their placement until reunification and/or adoption was achieved
 - 100% of children were safe from a substantiated finding of abuse/neglect in their foster home
 - 100% of foster parents had an increase in knowledge as a result of access to available community services and training
 - 98% of foster families maintained a sense of hopefulness throughout the placement, an increase from 85% in the prior year
 - 100% of potential foster families received contact from Sunbeam within 48 business hours
- 100% of clients maintained housing, preventing homelessness



SUPPORT FOR GRANDFAMILIES



Support for Grandfamilies

According to the United Way Vital Signs on Aging in Central Oklahoma, the aging population is growing at a rate that will soon rival the size of their younger counterparts. At the same time, life expectancy has also increased. Oklahoma seniors experience poorer health choices, higher poverty levels, and more depression than the national average. This is exemplified by the over 43,000 children who are being raised by their grandparents, 31% of whom identify as being disabled.

Sunbeam has been addressing the needs of seniors for over half a century. The Program builds brighter futures with grandparents who are raising their grandchildren across central Oklahoma by giving them the tools they need to take care of themselves while they are providing care for their grandchildren. Sunbeam's services address socioeconomic and emotional burdens faced by grandparents who are raising their grandchildren to ensure that grandfamilies have the support they need to thrive together.

Specialized support groups are offered in person and virtually to provide grandparents the opportunity to build social bonds with others who are caring for a younger generation. Grandparents are also connected to training opportunities to learn more about their caregiving role and the various topics relevant to raising their grandchildren. Sunbeam also provides support through holiday and school supply assistance to help alleviate the financial burdens grandfamilies face.

To build a more comprehensive support system for grandfamilies, Sunbeam has hired Care Navigators that provide case management services to our grandparents raising their grandchildren. Care Navigators help the grandparent set and achieve family goals while also connecting them to resources from across the community and Sunbeam's other program areas. Sunbeam Care Navigators are certified Behavioral Health Case Managers and Certified Wellness Coaches. They help strengthen the social safety net for grandparents, creating a multi-generational impact by stabilizing the entire family unit.

SUPPORT FOR GRANDFAMILIES

Last year:

- 100% of caregivers reported increased coping skills, an increase from 91% in the prior year
- 97% of seniors served reported reduced feelings of isolation/loneliness, an increase from 86% in the prior year
- 98% of seniors served demonstrated an improved sense of hopefulness, an increase from 91% in the prior year
- 100% of seniors served maintained housing, preventing homelessness, an increase from 96% in the prior year

98% of potential clients received contact from Sunbeam within 48 hours of initial contact, consistent with the prior year



PARENTING EDUCATION



Parents are their child's first and most influential teachers. Sunbeam's parent education services help parents and caregivers acquire the skills needed to build healthy families and communities.

Scientific research shows relationships with adult caregivers build a foundation of neural connections in the brain. This foundation has lifelong implications for health, education, and other social outcomes. Parent education reduces the risk of child abuse and neglect by encouraging positive parenting practices that promote safety, well-being, and permanency for children and families.

Parents referred from OHS are required to complete the evidence based Nurturing Parenting Skills class as their foundational learning experience. Because Sunbeam believes that there are multiple "pathways" to becoming a better parent, the agency offers additional evidence-based curriculums to parents who wish to continue to build a stronger parenting foundation. Infant Massage, Circle of Security Parenting, and Making Sense of Your Worth groups are offered to OHS referred parents to provide a holistic approach to help them cope with their emotions, heal past traumas, and reduce the likelihood of future child abuse and family violence. These classes are also offered to the public.

Last year, Nurturing Parenting Class:

- 80% of clients gained a sense of hopefulness due to program completion
- 95% of clients experienced improved emotional well-being
- 99% of clients increased the development of coping skills
- 98% of clients who completed the program increased their knowledge of Nurturing Parenting Skills utilizing the Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS 3.0)
- 98% of clients who completed the program reported an increased usage if Nurturing Parenting Skills

EARLY BIRDS

Sunbeam also provides Early Birds classes for parents and caregivers of young children and is designed specifically to help expectant parents, people caring for newborns, and anyone caring for children through age 5. Early Birds is a research-based parenting program that helps parents enhance their bond with their child through connection-based activities and learning experiences, recognizing that strong attachments are pivotal for children's solid foundation for academic excellence and personal growth.

Last Year, Early Birds Class:

- 99% of parents and caregivers felt supported as a caregiver
- 99% of parents better understood their roles as a parent/caregiver
- 99% of parents were better prepared to support their child
- 100% of parents learned ways to maximize learning opportunities for children through play and everyday activities
- 100% of parents reported they plan to increase how often they read to their child

