**FOR** **IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Oct. 26, 2018

**CONTACT:**

Angie Doss

Chief External Relations Officer

adoss@sunbeamfamilyservices.org

405.609.2311 (o) | 619.347.4057 (c)

[Download photos of healthy cooking in action at OKC Educare.](https://www.flickr.com/photos/sunbeamfamilyservices/31056570208/in/album-72157671681213687/)

**Fresh Produce Grows on OKC Educare Children and Families**

Supports Healthy Eating Habits

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)** – This year, Sunbeam Family Service’s Oklahoma City Educare has increased the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables served to children to help them thrive.

“We are committed to providing healthy food to our children,” said Jim Priest, chief executive officer of Sunbeam Family Services. “Many of our OKC Educare families struggle to have meals prepared with fresh fruit and vegetables. In fact, one in four children in Oklahoma has inconsistent access to healthy food. Research shows children under five need fresh fruit and vegetables to grow a healthy brain and be ready for a day of learning.”

Each week, children make smoothies with fresh fruit in their classrooms. This serves as an excellent opportunity for children to learn how to make healthy meals using produce. The children help make the smoothies, which teaches them fine motor skills, as well as relationship skills through sharing food and using table manners.

“The children really enjoy making the healthy smoothies and chant ‘Blend it, blend it!,’” said Priest.

All meals served to children at OKC Educare are prepared on-site and feature fresh fruits and vegetables. Every Friday, students take home a bag of fresh, in-season produce for their family to support healthy family eating habits.

Children who attend OKC Educare develop strong social skills, including self-confidence and emerge better prepared for kindergarten. OKC Educare is a state-of-the-art school that provides early childhood education and ignites a love of learning in children birth to five years old. OKC Educare builds partnerships with families, coming alongside them to help with goal-setting and accessing community resources.

Sunbeam’s mission is to provide people of all ages with help, hope, and the opportunity to succeed through Early Childhood, Foster Care, Counseling and Senior Services programs. For more information about Sunbeam visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org or call 405-528-7721.

###

About Sunbeam Family Services

Founded in 1907, Sunbeam Family Services is one of Oklahoma’s longest serving nonprofits, providing help, hope and the opportunity to succeed to people of all ages and all stages of life in central Oklahoma through early childhood, counseling, foster care and senior services. To learn more, call 405-528-7721, visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org, or follow them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

About OKC Educare

Children who attend OKC Educare develop strong social skills, including self-confidence and emerge better prepared for kindergarten. OKC Educare is a state-of-the-art school that provides early childhood education and ignites a love of learning in children birth to five years old. The school nurtures early learning and close the achievement gap of children who are in families who face the greatest number of obstacles to success. OKC Educare builds partnerships with families, coming alongside them to help with goal-setting and accessing community resources. For more information visit okceducare.org or call 405-605-8232.