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[Download a photo of a child at Educare OKC and her mother.](#)

Sunbeam Awarded \$18,624,629 Grant to Help Even More Children Thrive

Nonprofit Receives Third Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grant

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Today, Sunbeam Family Services announced it was awarded an \$18,624,629 grant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and Early Head Start Expansion (CCP 3). Sunbeam is the only nonprofit in Oklahoma to receive all three Child Care Partnership grants, totaling an anticipated \$53,261,686 from 2015 through 2024. With the addition of CCP 3, each year Sunbeam will help 680 children from birth to age five prepare for school – and life.

“Providing nurturing learning environments in which young children can grow and thrive is a priority for Sunbeam Family Services,” said Paula Gates, director of Early Childhood Services at Sunbeam. “Our aim is to partner with parents, and caregivers in their home community, to help their children achieve school readiness by offering a comprehensive early care and education program in early childhood centers throughout the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. With the addition of CCP 3, we are going to serve an additional 160 children each year who live in Oklahoma County’s most impoverished zip codes.”

CCP 1, 2 and 3, a braided partnership from the federal Office of Child Care and the Office of Head Start, promote school readiness and are designed to break the cycle of generational poverty. Through CCP3, Sunbeam will continue to provide comprehensive early childhood education, mental health, health nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families. Sunbeam focuses on families with children in foster care, children of teen parents, children experiencing homelessness, children who are dual language learners and children of mothers facing incarceration.

Studies show early learning strengthens a child’s verbal and math abilities, prepares them socially to interact with others, teaches them self-regulation skills and supports development to the fullest potential. Through its Early Childhood Services program, Sunbeam helps families who might normally have difficulty in accessing high quality early learning and care programs by providing home-based and full-day, full-year center-based services free of charge.

“We are going to where families are, working within their community, to provide the highest quality early care and education,” said Gates. “The impact goes beyond the classroom. We are raising the bar on how we provide supportive and engaging services for school and life success to children, their families and our communities.”

Integrating Early Head Start comprehensive services and resources into the array of traditional child care and family child care settings creates new opportunities to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers and their families. Child care centers and family child care providers respond to the needs of working families by offering flexible and convenient full-day and full-year services. In addition, child care providers have experience providing care that is strongly grounded in the cultural, linguistic and social needs of the families and their local communities.

Long-term outcomes include:

- A more highly educated and fully qualified workforce to provide high-quality infant/toddler care and education

- Increased community supply of high-quality early learning environments and infant/toddler care and education
- Well-aligned early childhood policies, regulations, resources and quality improvement support at national, state and local levels
- Improved family and child well-being and progress toward school readiness

"Through these programs, young children benefit from low teacher-to-child ratios, and smaller class sizes. Qualified teachers receive continued professional development and coaching to support implementation of curriculum and responsive caregiving," said Gates. "These programs support thriving partnerships that expand high-quality early learning opportunities for hardworking families, helping low-income children break the cycle of poverty to reach their full potential."

Sunbeam first received funding from the office of Head Start in 2015 through CCP 1, which helped the organization provide quality Early Head Start services to 240 young children. In 2017, Sunbeam received additional funding through CCP 2 to serve an additional 86 young children. With the new CCP 3 grant, Sunbeam will provide quality early childhood education to 486 children through CCP, as well as 170 young children age five and below at Educare Oklahoma City, a program of Sunbeam. At the end of each five year cycle for CCP 1, 2 and 3, Sunbeam anticipates it will continue to receive the cycles consecutively.

Children who are a part of Sunbeam's Early Childhood programs also have access to medical, dental, mental health and family support services. To walk alongside families, Sunbeam supports and partners with early childhood programs across the metro-area including Educare Oklahoma City, Tony Reyes Bilingual Early Childhood Center and Emerson Alternative High School Early Childhood Center.

For more information about Sunbeam's Early Childhood Services program, visit SunbeamFamilyServices.org or call 405-528-7721.

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. The nonprofit is committed to meeting the growing needs of Central Oklahoma's most vulnerable citizens.

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About Sunbeam Family Services

Founded in 1907, Sunbeam Family Services is one of Oklahoma's longest serving nonprofits and is one of the original United Way of Central Oklahoma Community partners. Sunbeam's mission is to provide 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 join the conversation on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.