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[Download a photo of a Sunbeam teacher in action.](#)

Teachers at the Heart of Sunbeam’s Early Childhood Services
Sunbeam Celebrates Teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – In recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week (Monday, May 6 through Friday, May 10), Sunbeam is recognizing teachers of its Early Childhood Services program, which includes Educare Oklahoma City and 15 early childhood partner sites. These teachers make an unmatched impact in the lives of young children and their families every day. They play a pivotal role in children’s lives, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and discovery and making a difference in their well-being and long-term success.

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

“Every person in this country is impacted by a teacher, one way or another. They are foundational to the success of our families and communities,” said Paula Gates, director of Early Childhood Services for Sunbeam.

Learning begins long before a child starts kindergarten. 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 their fullest potential. Children who are not prepared to start school at age five are at risk of never catching up, leaving an achievement gap that can persist until high school. This gap can be linked to social and economic problems later in life, including illiteracy, teen pregnancy, and high-dropout rates.

Sunbeam’s Early Childhood program is a leader in early childhood education. This program prepares children from prenatal to five to enter kindergarten with the skills necessary to be ready for school - and beyond. 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 at no cost to the family of the child. Last year, this program served a total of 614 children and more than 2,100 family members and maintained an average monthly enrollment of 74 percent.

For more information, visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org or call 405-609-8994.

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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.