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[Download a photo of class participants](#)

Healthy Habits Lead to Positive Health Outcomes

Sunbeam Partners with OSU Extension, INTEGRIS Health to Improve Health Outcomes for Children and Families

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – In June, Sunbeam Family Services partnered with OSU Extension and INTEGRIS Hospital to provide free health and nutrition classes to improve health outcomes for children and families. The training, which took place at Tony Reyes Bilingual Child Development Center, was attended by 19 parents whose children attend one of Sunbeam’s early childhood learning centers.

The four-week, hands-on series takes place every June in English and Spanish. It addresses health topics such as: nutrition, exercise and food safety. The program, called Healthy Futures, is in its second year at Sunbeam.

“I feel very rewarded when parents are excited about attending these educational series and learn how to live a healthier life for long lasting results,” said Dora Evans, Early Childhood Health Services coordinator. “We are so fortunate to work in collaboration with OSU Extension and INTEGRIS Hospital to coordinate the logistics and hands-on experiences for the families.”

Evans said several parents have shared stories with her about how the series has helped them live healthier lives. One parent said her blood sugar levels have dropped because the class taught her how to read labels and choose healthy foods. Others said they are spending more time in the kitchen with their families, trying new foods and inspiring their children to make healthy choices.

A survey of graduates from the 2018 class showed that the program is effective in improving healthy habits. The survey found that 93 percent of graduates reported improvements in the health of their diets, such as eating more fruits and vegetables or drinking fewer sugary beverages. Additionally, 73 percent reported increased physical activity, and 73 percent reported improvements in food safety practices.

Sunbeam is a leader in early care and education. Children who are not prepared to start school at age 5 are at risk of never catching up, leaving an achievement gap that can persist throughout their entire lives. To help children and families thrive in our community, Sunbeam provides opportunities for families who might normally have difficulty in accessing high quality early learning and care programs. By providing full-day, full-year center based services in more than 15 locations across the Oklahoma City metro, families are able to invest in their children during this crucial period of development. The nonprofit’s Early Head Start home-based program is also available for children ages birth to three.

Families are involved in every aspect of Sunbeam’s Early Childhood Services program and participate in their children’s development, as well as their own personal and professional development. Through Sunbeam’s Early Childhood Services, each family has a dedicated family advocate who actively helps problem solve, locate resources within the community and achieve child and family goals. Families are also invited to volunteer with classrooms and are encouraged to apply for employment opportunities. The educational nutritional series is just one of the ways in which Sunbeam seeks to serve the whole family. This holistic approach addresses both the needs of the child and the personal and professional goals of the parent.

Join the movement to help children grow, heal, learn and thrive. Through Aug. 31, donations made to help children will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$5,000. This donation match is made possible thanks to Tall Oak Midstream. To make a donation visit SunbeamFamilyServices.org/thrive 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 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.