



## Partnership. Place. Program. Platform for change.

**Educare Arizona** joins the nation's leading partnership for early learning to the Southwest as the thirteenth **Educare Learning Network** school in the country. Bringing together a **public-private collaboration** to assist underserved children ages **birth to five**, Educare Arizona represents investment in our **community**, our **economy**, and our **future**. [educarearizona.org](http://educarearizona.org)



### What Is Educare?

Educare is a national network of highest quality early learning centers combining the best of Early Head Start, Head Start, childcare, preschool and family support to help low-income children ages birth

to five grow up eager, healthy, and ready for school.

Educare aims to take the most cutting-edge early childhood research and neuroscience from the lab to the classroom. More than just exceptional preschools, Educare schools are the catalysts for change that spark local and national public policy, discourse about the importance of investing in young children, and critical improvements in quality that affect more than 600,000 children in Arizona alone.

Educare Arizona's ultimate goal is to produce a dramatically new standard of excellence and effectiveness for children and families living in and near poverty that delivers long-term gains. The research proves such gains are possible.

Nationwide, Educare anchor funders include the **Buffetts** (Omaha & Milwaukee), the **Irving Harris** Foundation (Chicago), the **George Kaiser** Family Foundation (Tulsa), the **Bill & Melinda Gates** Foundation (Washington), and the **Inasmuch** Foundation (Oklahoma City). In Arizona, the Steve Nash Foundation is joined by **leading family foundations** investing in innovation, hope, and a science-based approach.

### An Early Childhood Movement Grows . . . .

The first Educare opened in 2000, a partnership between the Ounce of Prevention and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. In 2004, they formed the Educare Learning Network, which aids stakeholders in bringing Educare to their communities so as to provide low-income children every opportunity for lifelong achievement. Educare schools support children, families, and the high-risk communities in which they live.



The ELN now consists of 20 Educare schools - Arizona, Atlanta, Central Maine, Chicago, West DuPage, DC, Omaha (2), Tulsa (3), Lincoln, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Denver, Milwaukee, Winnebago, Seattle, Kansas City & Miami - with

more in development. Learn more at [educareschools.org](http://educareschools.org).

### A Collaborative Approach

Each Educare site is designed and built around a research-based model that meets and stimulates children's developmental needs. The schools reflect Educare's core philosophy: putting children first. Each collaboration consists of anchor philanthropists, an Early Head Start/Head Start provider, and a school district. In Arizona, community healthcare and university leaders also have a seat at the table: Educare Arizona offers an adjacent healthcare center, a teacher training platform, and a LEED-certified building that prioritizes the well-being of the little MVPs inside.



## growing health in kids: Steve Nash and Educare Arizona

A founding anchor funder in Educare Arizona, the **Steve Nash Foundation has committed to raising \$2million for Educare's capital campaign**, in addition to contributing to annual operations and national dialogue on early learning.

"There's nothing more powerful than a child having access to high-quality early learning opportunities. There's not a more worthwhile pursuit, not only for that individual, but for our communities."  
~ Steve

### The Place.

Educare Arizona opened on September 6, 2011, on land donated by the Balsz



School District at Brunson-Lee Elementary School (just south of McDowell and 48th Street in Phoenix). The new school is approximately 35,000 sq. feet, and provides full-year curriculum and programming. The thoughtfully designed building supports the programming excellence within and communicate lessons learned statewide: it sends a message to families, policy makers, business leaders and others that children in poverty have value, and are worthy of our investment.

The attached Balsz Educare Arizona Center for Health provides physical, dental and social-emotional healthcare to Educare's, and neighborhood, families, and serves as a clinical practicum site for student nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists and dental hygienists, and both allopathic and naturopathic medical students.

Given Arizona's unique climate, the building qualifies for LEED-certification, maximizing efficiencies and reducing environmental impact.

### The Program.

Renown for its programmatic excellence, Southwest Human Development assists



Educare Arizona in serving up to 191 children. While the majority of Educare's early learners are low-income, Educare Arizona welcomes a small percentage of higher-income children in recognition of research proving the benefits of socio-economic diversity in classrooms. Parents are expected to play an active role in governance, as they receive support in balancing demands of school or work with those of parenting, and one-third of space in the center - of the operating budget - is devoted to the needs of parents. Services range from parental advocacy assistance to family support and referral.

Educare Arizona also fosters teacher training, providing a heightened expectation of quality in Educare teachers, and continuing professional development for all Educare Arizona teachers. Moreover, Educare stands as a statewide hub for professional development, providing the resources needed to most efficaciously impact education around Arizona.

### The Platform.

Educare Arizona's impact extends beyond the walls of the school, providing



a catalyst for change that assists in bridging the gap between what we know and what we do in early education.

Educare Arizona is showroom to demonstrate to legislators, business leaders, philanthropists, policymakers and other dignitaries and parents what high quality, well-implemented care can do for low-income children and their families.

Educare Arizona serves as a community of learning, where future teachers and healthcare providers benefit from best practices, current practitioners hone their skills, and neighbors come together to celebrate their strengths and cultures, and work together to ameliorate conditions for and learning environments of Arizona's children.

To support Educare Arizona's high-quality services, multiple funding streams - a dynamic public-private partnership - are leveraged in innovate and effective ways, underscoring the importance of early education throughout our community.





“This is such a tangible opportunity - an opportunity to grow our children into healthy, strong, confident, intelligent students that can go on to thrive, follow their dreams, and therefore improve our workforce, our economy, and our communities.”

~ Steve

## Core Objectives

The following **core objectives** inform each day, all planning, and every interaction at Educare Arizona:

- reaching **prenatal families** as early as possible;
- developing **stable and supportive relationships** between children, families, and staff;
- promoting social, emotional, physical, language, arts, and early literacy and numeracy **development**;
- maintaining **high standards for staff education** levels and implementing reflective supervision and practice;
- providing **immediate and ongoing child outcome assessment data** as a means to affording individualized instruction and continuous programmatic improvements;
- participating in **state and national efforts** to increase public support for the first five years.

## How It Works

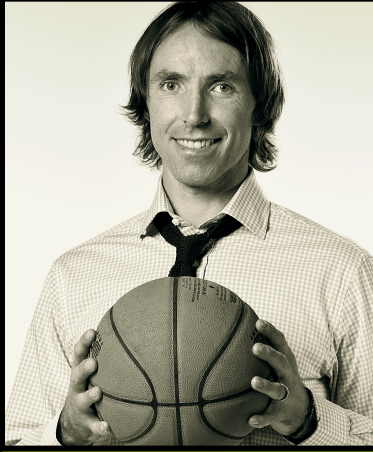
Educare builds on **families' strengths**, employing a child- and family-focused approach based on the understanding that **children thrive with a consistent support system**. To do that:

- **families are involved** in program planning and decision-making;
- **family support staff are degreed in their area of practice**, and hold **small caseloads** to afford more individualized care;
- **low teacher-student ratios** are maintained in every classroom;
- **master teachers with advanced education degrees** in early childhood and infancy provide on-site supervision & training;
- Educare practices “**continuity of care**” to minimize transitions - children remain with the same peer group and caregivers for successive years, transitioning from infant & toddler classrooms to preschool classrooms at age three. This consistency helps children develop the secure, predictable relationships necessary for healthy social-emotional, and cognitive development;
- **longitudinal assessments and child outcome tracking** (social-emotional development, early language & literacy skills) are conducted in cooperation with Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (University of North Carolina)'s national evaluation of the Bounce network and, locally, with ASU.

## Educare Changes Lives: The Results Are In.

- **Educare levels the playing field.** Independent evaluation conducted by the University of North Carolina shows at-risk children who enroll in Educare between birth and two years of age enter kindergarten on par with all children, regardless of income, entering kindergarten across the country. While we know evidence of the achievement gap shows as early as 18 months of age, Educare prevents the achievement gap from taking root in the first five years.
- **Educare children score better on vocabulary and social skills** than most low-income children. Well-developed social skills are critical to school success. Vocabulary is a strong predictor of how well a child will perform in school.
- **Educare is a nationwide network of schools.** Twelve Educare schools, with seven more on the way - including one in the nation's capital - working cooperatively with strategic advocacy groups advancing state and national policy make for a powerful voice heard in Washington and across the country.
- **Educare makes a lasting impact.** Educare of Chicago is the oldest school in the coast-to-coast network - and the first to begin formally following children's performance into elementary school. This longitudinal follow-up study is still in the early stages, but its findings are full of promise:
  - **no “fade out”** of skills at 3rd grade;
  - a solid **majority of Educare children get A's and B's** in reading, math and science in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades - outperforming a comparison sample of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students who did not attend Educare;
  - significantly **fewer Educare children are placed in special education or held back** as compared to the CPS comparison students in the same schools and classrooms. Research shows that even being retained one time in elementary school can mean a student is 30-50% more likely to drop out before finishing high school;
  - a solid **majority of Educare parents remain involved in their child's learning**. About half of Educare graduates attend higher performing schools like magnet, charter and gifted schools.

# EDUCARE ARIZONA

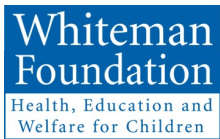


Make the assist.

Join us in bringing best practices for early learning and opportunities for children to Arizona, and all of our communities.

**Your Partnership. Your Place. Your Program. Your Platform. Join us today.**

Educare Arizona is led by the following organizations, in collaboration with the Educare Learning Network:



“It is a rare public policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large. **Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy.** Early interventions for disadvantaged children promote schooling, raise the quality of the workforce, enhance the productivity of schools and reduce crime, teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency. They raise earnings and promote social attachment. Focusing solely on earnings gains, returns to dollars invested are as high as 15-17%.” ~ Nobel economist Dr. James Heckman



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