

Picayune School District's
Pre-K Program

FAMILY
HANDBOOK
2022-2023



Picayune

SCHOOL DISTRICT



Dear Pre-K Family Member,

I would like to welcome you and your child to the Picayune School District Pre-Kindergarten Program. I am very excited about having this program in our school district and we are committed to ensuring the future success of the children that we serve. We would like to make this experience for you and your child a memorable one. We also look forward to working with you to support your child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.

This handbook has been prepared to highlight basic information that can help you and your child begin a successful pre-kindergarten year. All staff members are here to help you in any way needed, so feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions.

Best wishes for a successful school year!

Dr. Pamela Thomas,
Picayune School District
Early Childhood Programs Director

Welcome to Pre-K!

COVID-19 Guidelines

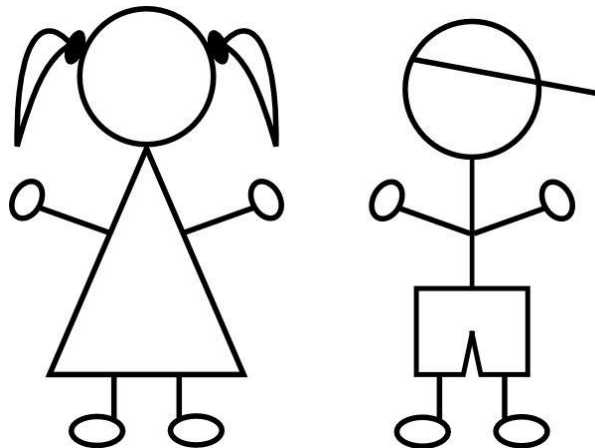
Picayune School District Pre-K Program will be following state licensing policies and the Office of Head Start's guidance regarding COVID-19 precautions. Parents will be required to adhere to these policies for all children's well-being as well as for themselves. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Picayune School District Pre-Kindergarten Program is to empower families to achieve life goals, support the development of our children, and impact the community by setting a standard of high quality education. This includes fostering parental, school, and community supports for the positive growth of our young children.

Philosophy

We at the Picayune School District Pre-Kindergarten Program believe that along with parental support and collaboration, children can benefit from a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate educational program. Working together, families and the community can help children to be "Ready By Five".



ABOUT THE PSD PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The Picayune School District Pre-Kindergarten program is designed to promote children's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas—cognitive, social, emotional, physical and kinesthetic. We are also here to establish a foundation for a lifetime of learning. The tools introduced in this program will ensure children the skills to handle educational objectives within our program are language/literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, physical development, fine and gross motor skills, health and safety, personal and social development and technology applications.

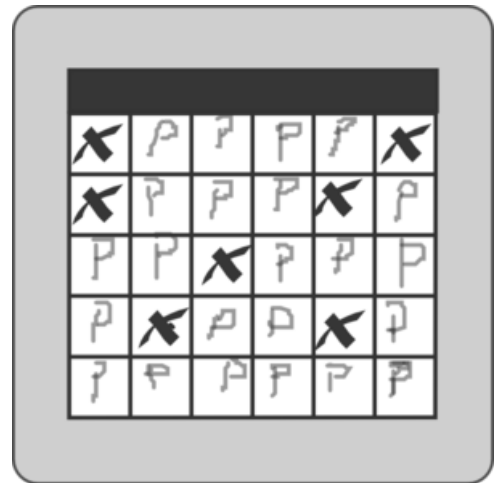
Our program believes that children are active learners. That is why this program is a center-based learning program. All children like to play and they have fun while learning. Each center in the classroom is based on all developmental components as mentioned above. While exploring each center the child learns meaning and understanding through full participation in their learning environment.

ADMISSION: Admission to all PSD Pre-K Programs will be on a space available basis. A waiting list system is currently being used. When a parent places a child on the waiting list, the date is noted. As space becomes available parents are contacted in the order they signed up. Children must be 3 or 4 years old on or before September 1 and potty trained. Parents will be notified by phone call and in writing of accidents. After the third accident, the child will be released from the program.



Attendance Policy

The attendance policy is in place in order to enhance the educational experience for your child. Routines are a very important part of your child's education. All rules are in place to meet the state guidelines for educational regulations. Children are required to have 365 educational minutes daily. The attendance policy set forth will help ensure our program meets all requirements.



- Children must be at school by 8:00 a.m. 8:01 a.m. is considered tardy. All children must be checked in through the front office and receive a tardy slip beginning at 8:01 a.m. If teachers are no longer on duty, you are considered tardy.
- The result of 3 tardies will lead to a meeting with Dr. Thomas.
- Children will not be allowed in after 9:00 a.m. without a doctor's note.
- **NO CHILD WILL BE DISMISSED BETWEEN 1:30 p.m.-2:20 p.m. AT THE SOUTHSIDE LOWER CAMPUS AND 1:30p.m.-2:00 p.m. AT THE CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CAMPUS.** If for some reason you need your child before the 2:20 p.m. dismissal time, they must be checked out by 1:30 p.m.

The rules and regulations stated are policies that will be strictly enforced. Please abide by the rules and policies as provided or your child will be asked to leave the program. At anytime these above rules and regulations are not abided by, they will be documented and reported. We are looking forward to a wonderful year and with your cooperation and working together we will make this year a success.



DRESS CODE. Children are to wear burgundy, white or gray polo style shirts with or without the “Picayune School District logo or logo/writings associated with the elementary school name the child is attending. Pants, shorts and dresses must be hemmed. Khaki and navy SOLID only are allowed. Skirts/shorts and dresses/jumpers must be worn to cover

the kneecap and must be fitted around the waist. South Side Lower Elementary shirts may also be worn any day of the week at the South Side Lower Campus. We will send home notification when those shirts can be purchased. Field trip shirts may also be worn as an alternative school shirt at both campuses. Tennis shoes or closed toe shoes are the only acceptable shoe to be worn. If child participates in assigned “Dress Down Days” a sleeved shirt must be worn. No tank tops, muscle shirts or sleeveless shirts are allowed. Parents will be contacted if children are not in proper dress code. Parents will have to bring an appropriate uniform to school or the child will be dismissed for the day.

FOOD PROGRAM:

Picayune School District Pre-K Programs take part in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is operated year-round and provides non-residential child care services in PSD Pre-K centers, child care centers, and day care homes. The children receive three meal types each day: breakfast, lunch, and snack. USDA recently revised the CACFP meal patterns to ensure children have access to healthy, balanced meals throughout the day. These changes are based on the scientific recommendations from the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics and stakeholder input ([https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP InfantMealPattern FactSheet V2.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP%20InfantMealPattern%20FactSheet%20V2.pdf))

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that any program receiving federal financial assistance provide annual training to its staff on civil rights. Specifically, USDA states that all “frontline” staff that work with or assist program applicants or participants are required to receive civil rights training as well as those persons who supervise “frontline” staff.

A center that participates in the CACFP is expected to provide annual training to all front-line staff to be in compliance with Civil Rights Laws. All sponsors of the CACFP must have an understanding of their responsibilities to ensure that the civil rights of all applicants and participants are protected. These responsibilities include:

- The collection and use of racial/ethnic data.
- The development of an effective public notification system.
- A plan for equal access to programs.
- The requirements for reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities.
- A reasonable accommodation for language assistance.
- A plan for conflict resolution which includes the development of a complaint procedure.

Click the link provided in order to receive a short training on the CACFP Civil Rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaNXTHK1eolI>

All meals and snacks will meet the MS Department of Health guidelines. A weekly menu will be posted in the room for your information. With an occasional exception for special events, **NO CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO BRING FOOD TO THE CENTER UNLESS HE/SHE HAS SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS. IN THIS CASE, A LETTER FROM A PHYSICIAN STATING DIETARY REQUIREMENTS MUST BE ON FILE IN THE CENTER. THIS INCLUDES ALLERGIES TO MILK.**

IMMUNIZATIONS: Children must be up-to-date on all immunizations as required by the State of MS. Children not immunized for medical reasons must have a note on file from the child's physician stating the nature of the child's illness or disability which prohibits immunization. The note must also state whether this is a permanent or temporary exemption for each vaccine. Children who are not properly immunized and do not have a physician's note will not be allowed to attend the Picayune School District's Pre-K until immunizations are current.

ILLNESS: Unless a note is provided from a physician stating that a condition is non-contagious, we cannot keep children who have had a fever above 99 in the last 24 hours, or children who are vomiting or have diarrhea, measles, mumps, pink-eye, strep throat, or other contagious illnesses. When a child is released by a physician or the health department a written, signed, note should be returned to the center. No medicine will be administered to children by staff members. The school nurse is available to administer any needed medications. If a child appears to be ill while at the information form that indicates that their child is covered by insurance. If the child is not covered by insurance, the form allows parents to sign a release accepting full responsibility for any accident or injury received while their child is participating in the Picayune School District's Pre-K Program.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS NOT ALLOWED!

CHILD ABUSE: MSDH - Rule 1.7.2 - Any operator or employee of a Child Care facility who has suspicion or evidence of child abuse or neglect shall report it immediately to the Mississippi Department of Human Services in accordance with the state's Youth Court Act. (Appendix "A" Miss. Code Ann. §43-20-8.)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT: There must be a signed statement for each child from the parent authorizing the center to obtain emergency medical treatment. In case of a medical crisis, emergency services will be called immediately, parents will be notified by phone as soon as possible, and first aid or CPR will be administered until medical personnel arrives or the child has been taken to a medical facility. A signed consent release form is also available which will allow the child to be seen by the school nurse, this allows children to be evaluated and treated by a registered nurse. In case of an injury, other than minor, parents will be notified. Minor injuries will be reported on the daily note.

INSURANCE: The Picayune School District is required to insure the property of schools making every effort to minimize accidents and work with our insurance company to make sure schools offer safe environments to all employees, students and visitors on the premises. Each child is to be covered by accident insurance which covers them while they are in the building, on the playground, and on any field trip.

PERSONAL INFORMATION: The Picayune School District's Pre-K Program will not release personal information about the children or parents to anyone without permission.

FIELD TRIPS: Parents will be notified of each field trip in advance. The children will be accompanied by an adequate number of adults.

COMPLAINTS: If you have a complaint about the center's policies, practices or a staff member you may file a written complaint to the Picayune Early Head Start Director.

TOYS: Please do not send toys or other items from home to the center. On special occasions your child's teacher will request that the children bring an item from home, please check daily folders.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: In the event of an emergency (fire or weather), you will be notified by the Picayune School District where to pick up your child. Please do not rush to the school as you may cause traffic problems and further confusion. In the event of an industrial disaster, your child will be transported to a safe place away from the disaster. See emergency evacuation plan handout. You will be contacted by the office as to when and where you may pick up your child. **IN THE CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY, PLEASE GIVE US A CHANCE TO CALL YOU.** Parents calling in on the phone lines will keep us from getting to you as soon as possible.

Tobacco Use on Property / Smoke Free Zone. No person shall use any tobacco product on any educational property as defined in this act. Any adult who violates this section shall be subject to a fine and shall be liable as follows:

- (a) For a first conviction, a warning
- (b) For a second conviction, a fine of \$75.00
- (c) For all subsequent convictions, a fine not to exceed \$150.00 shall be imposed.

Possession of Weapons on School Grounds or at School Activities.

The possession of a handgun or other weapons, including mace, pepper spray, stun gun, etc. on school premises by a parent, visitor or any individual, including those persons having permits for possession of such weapons is prohibited. Other dangerous weapons include, but are not limited to, hunting knives, spears, machetes, archery equipment, etc. Appropriate steps will be taken if anyone violates this policy.

HOLIDAYS: The Picayune School District's Pre-K Program follows the district school calendar for teachers. See the School District Calendar for the 2022-2023 school year below.

Picayune School District
2022 - 2023 District Calendar
On-line Registration Begins 6/1/2022

July

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August

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September

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October

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November

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27	28	29	30			

December

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REVISED

July	
4	Independence Day
25	On-Site Registration 11:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.
26	On-Site Registration 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
August	
1-3	Teacher Workdays (No Students)
3	Meet the Teacher 1st - 6th 3:30 - 5:00
4	1st Day for Students (Grades 1-12)/1st 9 Weeks Begins
4,5,8,9	Kindergarten Screening
10	Kindergarten Meet the Teacher 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
11	First Day for Kindergarten Students
September	
5	Labor Day
October	
7	2nd 9 Weeks Begins
10	Columbus Day
November	
21-25	Thanksgiving Holidays
December	
19-30	Christmas/New Year's Holidays
January	
2-3	Christmas/New Year's Holidays
4-5	Teacher Workday (No Students)
6	Students Return/3rd Nine Weeks Begins
16	Martin Luther King Holiday
February	
20-21	Mardi Gras Holiday
March	
15	4th Nine Weeks Begins
April	
3-10	Spring Break
May	
24	Last Day for Students/Report Cards
25	GRADUATION
25-26	Teacher Workdays
29	Memorial Day

January

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
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May

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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Staff Only - No Students
 Holiday

180 Days - Students 187 Days - Staff

BOARD APPROVED 3/22/2022

MY CHILD'S LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Classroom Learning Environments

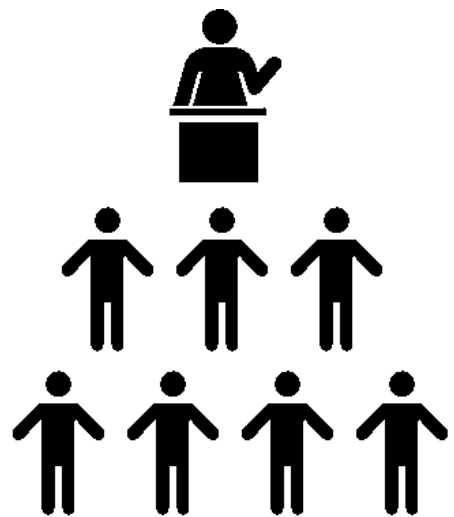
Our center-based environment gives each child the opportunity to develop by offering the following:

- Self-confidence through conscience discipline
- Responsibility to complete tasks
- Sense of responsibility or completing tasks
- Ability to share and cooperate with others
- Ability to identify feeling of self
- Ability to identify feelings of others
- Language and literacy skills
- Mathematical thinking through patterns, one to one correspondence, puzzles, etc.
- An understanding of their surroundings and community
- Healthy habits and routines
- Fine and gross motor opportunities

Centers provide opportunities for different types of learning. Children learn at individual paces and this type of environment ensures they reach their full learning potential at their own time.

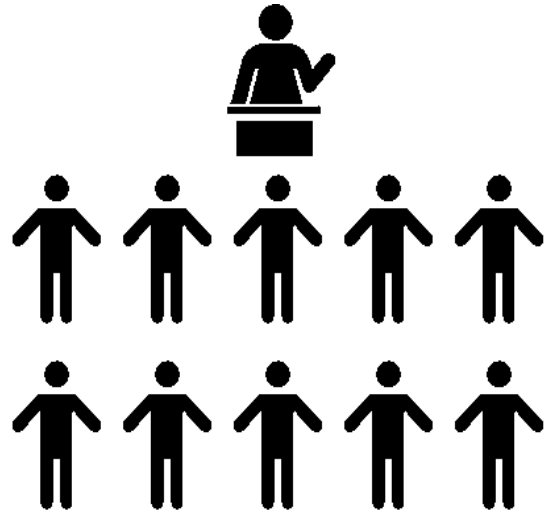
Teacher-Child Ratio (3-year-olds)

For 3-year-old classes, there will be one (1) certified teacher for every seven (7) children, with a maximum of fourteen (14) children per classroom and a minimum of five (5) children per classroom. Each classroom teacher has a certified teaching license with the state of MS and each paraprofessional (teacher's assistant) has an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Also, all instructional staff receive at least fifteen (15) hours of professional development annually.



Teacher-Child Ratio (4-year-olds)

For 4-year-old classes, there will be one (1) certified teacher for every ten (10) children, with a maximum of twenty (20) children per classroom and a minimum of five (5) children per classroom. Each classroom has at least one teacher with a certified teaching license with the state of MS (i.e., Bachelor's Degree or higher). Paraprofessionals (teacher's assistant) have a minimum Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Also, all instructional staff receive at least fifteen (15) hours of professional development annually.



Curriculum & Assessment (3-year-olds)

All Pre-K 3 classrooms will utilize the scientifically-based Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers as the foundation for its early education program.

This curriculum was selected because it is scientifically based, includes strategies for the continuity of care, addresses age appropriate early learning strategies and covers all domain elements identified in the the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for 3 and 4 year olds, which also ensures that all children's learning will be aligned with school readiness goals.



The Creative Curriculum allows the educational staff flexibility in individualization and instruction. Preschoolers' individual pattern of development and learning will be supported by using the Creative Curriculum for Preschool to ensure a developmentally appropriate and

child-centered curriculum. Staff will also use information from health exams, developmental screenings, assessments, ongoing observation, and parental insight in order to determine how to best respond to each child's individual strengths and needs. Daily schedule and lesson plans will provide time for children to work alone, in pairs, or groups and children will also be allowed to work at their own pace and pursue their own interests and questions. Staff will also encourage each child to organize his or her experiences, to understand concepts, and to develop age appropriate literacy, numeracy, reasoning, problem solving and decision-making skills by: (1) Supporting each child's learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration. This includes providing opportunities for children to: learn the functions and properties of objects, classify materials into groups, test cause and effect relationships, pose problems, and ask open-ended questions while teachers encourage guesses and extend their ideas and observations; (2) Ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement. This includes providing unstructured materials, available in all learning centers, for children to manipulate: blocks, paint, clay, writing tools and paper, musical instrument, and props in dramatic play. Teachers will also plan art activities, model imaginative story-telling, and plan rhythmic activities that involve rhymes, musical instruments, and movement; (3) Promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults. This includes teachers and children having back-and-forth conversations about what the children are doing as well as children sharing ideas with the other children in the class; and (4) Supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development through materials and activities according to the developmental level of each child. This includes linking verbal and written language and discussing similarities and differences among different objects.

Curriculum & Assessment (4 Year Olds)

All Pre-K 4 classrooms must use the Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children adopted by the Mississippi Department of Education. The Picayune School District Pre-Kindergarten -4 program uses the OWL Literacy comprehensive curriculum to guide classroom instruction.

Make Every Moment Count with OWL!
Materials and Resources to Maximize Time Spent Teaching and Learning



The pre-K years are a time of promise, a time when young children's bodies and minds are growing at an incredible rate. The pre-K years are a time for learning. Amid the growing awareness of the importance of quality early childhood education, researchers and policymakers are underscoring how critical it is for children to be prepared for kindergarten. With Opening the World of Learning™ (OWL) as your Pre-K comprehensive curriculum, you can rest assured that your kiddos will be *On The Way To K!* Opening the World of Learning is a comprehensive pre-K curriculum, equitable in English and Spanish. OWL prepares children for Kindergarten with ongoing assessment of research-based success predictors and playful, purposeful, and personalized instruction. OWL is based upon the belief that immersion in a learning-rich, pre-K environment is critical but not sufficient. The environment and interactions must be thoughtful and purposeful. All parts of the day should be considered opportunities for learning, and the teacher should know the curriculum content, instructional strategies, and individual children well enough to be responsive in a variety of situations. Through the use of essential questions, teachers help children connect content to their experiences, which takes them beyond rote learning and leads to thoughtful, reflective learning.

Program Features

The OWL curriculum is designed to develop oral language and early literacy skills for Pre-K children. All components include English and Spanish versions.

Research

OWL is based on thorough knowledge of the research on early learning and childhood development. Pearson is also committed to examining the implementation and effectiveness of our curricula.

Discipline

Picayune School District Pre Kindergarten Program implements the principles of Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline. As we support children's needs for attachment, belonging, self-regulation, emotional expression and respect, we teach children the appropriate ways to act through the establishment of developmentally appropriate routines, modeling, providing language, and leading children through the problem solving process. Rather than use time out with children, we use redirection whenever necessary. To make sure that children's needs are met in appropriate ways; teachers and parents can consult managers and mental health professionals to assist with behavioral issues. We do not use corporal punishment, and view conflicts as opportunities for children to learn how to get needs met in respectful ways.

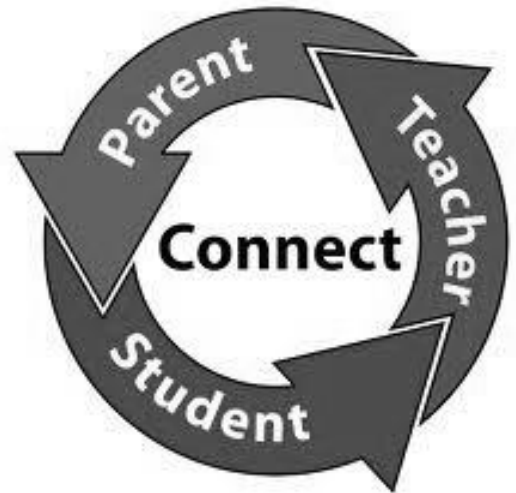
Change of Clothing

Parents should bring an extra change of clothing for their child, which will be kept in the child's classroom cubby. This change of clothes does not have to be a uniform.



Parent Involvement

You are already your child's first and most important teacher. The Picayune School District Pre-Kindergarten Program recognizes the parent-child bond as the child's most significant relationship. Your child learns from what you say, do, believe and value. The relationship between staff and family is based on respect for the child and family's home culture. The program provides a number of experiences and opportunities for family participation. Parents or family members are welcome to join our classroom at **ANY TIME**. Any parent or family member interested in visiting our class needs to sign in, in the office. You will be given a visitors pass to join our classroom.



Family/Teacher Conferences

A minimum of three mandatory family / teacher conferences will be offered to families during the school year. During this conference the Assessment Reports will be shared with families. While sharing the results with families, the teacher will provide information about your child's performance in language development, cognitive development, approaches to learning, physical development, and social emotional development.

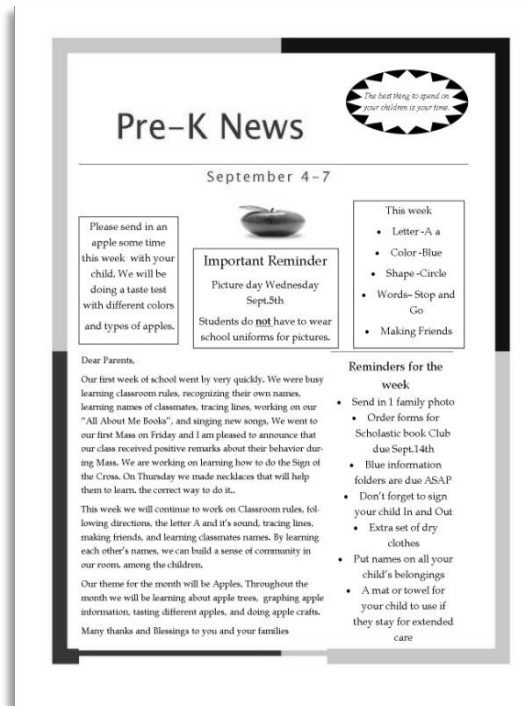
The Mississippi Early Learning Standards for classrooms serving four-year-old children can be found at:

<http://earlychildhood.msstate.edu/resources/curriculumforfour/index.php> . They can be used as a discussion guide during teacher conferences about your child's progress.

Pre-Kindergarten Newsletters

Keeping parents informed is a yearlong responsibility that has the potential to make a positive difference in each child's educational experience. For this reason, the Picayune School District Pre-Kindergarten Program provides weekly and monthly newsletters that provide:

- Menus for the month
- Announcement of upcoming events
- News about upcoming trips and celebrations
- Invitations to class activities or open house
- Reminders
- Thank you notes to families who help out
- Descriptions of study units and suggestions of ways to supplement units at home
- Explanations of grading policies, standardized testing, and other means for assessing and evaluating performance
- Explanations of behavior standards and consequences of misbehavior
- Highlights of community resources
- Children's writing and artwork
- Any other important information that should be provided to parents



Acknowledgement of Receipt (Parent Copy)

I have received a copy of the 2022-2023 Picayune School District Pre-K Family Handbook. I have read and understand the policies contained in the Handbook, and I agree to adhere to them while my child is enrolled in the PSD Pre-K Program for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Child Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Picayune
School District