



# PSD Early Childhood Spotlight! December 2023



## 2023 KING and Queen Results!

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### Rosa (EHS) / Annie's (EHS-CCP) Royal Court

- King:** Cori Nixon  
**Queen:** Brielle Spikes  
**Prince:** Chayse Peters  
**Princess:** Anna Gugluzzi  
**Duke:** Blaze Scales  
**Duchess:** Angela Rios  
**Royal Court:**
- Giovanni Gonzales
  - Masiyah Harper
  - Thiago Gonzalez

### Nicholson EHS Royal Court

- King:** Zayden Polk  
**Queen:** Adella Cohen  
**Prince:** Kysin Hall  
**Princess:** Armani Palmer  
**Duke:** Wendell Sanderson  
**Royal Court:**
- Branson Dennis
  - Chance McDonald

### PRCC Lab School (EHS-CCP) Royal Court

- King:** Nolan Tillman  
**Queen:** Lucy Lang  
**Prince:** Karson Hubbard  
**Princess:** Toriana Robinson  
**Duke:** Knox Robinson



### Picayune HS Royal Court

- King:** Kaiser Nelson  
**Queen:** Giovani Batiste  
**Princess:** Kinley Marks  
**Duchess:**
- Ne'Riyah Newton
  - Kamryn McMorris
  - Amora Sanderson
  - Destiny Solis
  - DeAshiah Christopher
  - Blakely Mars
  - Alivia Eisman
  - Ziah Smith

### Poplarville HS Royal Court

- King:** John McGhee  
**Queen:** Abaleen Rhodes  
**Prince:** Boone Robinson  
**Princess:** Sy'lon Johnson  
**Duke:** Kamani Serrano  
**Duchess:** Nova Pace
- Royal Court
    - Hagen Price
- Pre-K (SSL) Royal Court**
- King: August Graham
  - Queen: Paisley Kelly
  - Prince: Hunter Dannemiller
  - Princess: Diamond Brown
  - Duke: Cannon Peters
  - Duchess:
    - Memphis Dennis
    - Zoey Berry
    - Makayla Brown

### CEREMONY DATES:

- Rosa/Annie's  
December 1, 2023 @ 9:30 a.m.
- NEHS  
November 30, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.
- PRCC LAB SCHOOL  
November 29, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.
- Picayune HS  
December 1, 2023 @ 9:30 a.m.
- Poplarville HS  
December 8, 2023 @ 9:30 a.m.
- South Side Pre-K  
November 30, 2023 @ 9:15 a.m.







## SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Head Start Families,

As we come to the end of this extraordinary year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we have undertaken together. It has been a year filled with challenges, resilience, and most importantly, unwavering dedication to our children's growth and development.

First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your collaboration, support, and trust in our Head Start program. The commitment you have shown in working alongside our staff has been truly remarkable. Your involvement and active participation have been instrumental in achieving our goals and ensuring the success of our children.

As we enter the holiday season, I am reminded of the immense strength and resilience that our Head Start community possesses. Together, we have faced numerous obstacles, adapted to new learning environments, and embraced change with open hearts. Your continuous support and understanding have made a significant impact on our ability to provide a safe and nurturing environment for our children to thrive.

During this festive time of year, I wanted to take a moment to extend my warmest wishes to all of our Head Start families. May your holidays be filled with joy, love, and cherished moments spent with your loved ones. May the spirit of the season bring you peace, happiness, and renewed hope for the upcoming year.

As we embark on a new chapter in 2024, I am confident that together, we will continue to overcome any obstacles that come our way. Your partnership is truly invaluable, and I look forward to another year of collaboration, growth, and success.

Thank you once again for entrusting us with the privilege of being a part of your children's early education journey. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Head Start Director.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

"Grateful Hearts and Festive Cheer: Thank You for Partnering with Us to Make a Difference! Wishing You a Joyful and Peaceful Holiday Season!"

Dr. Pamela Thomas, Head Start/Early Head Start Director



## Community Events:

Toys for Tots (December 15, 2023) Last day to donate  
Christmas Parade (December 4, 2023)

Late night shopping (December 1, 2023)  
5p.m. – 8p.m.

Santa Workshop, Jack Reed Park (December 2, 2023)  
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Shop by Candle Light (December 2, 2023)  
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.



## Upcoming Events:

Christmas Parade (December 4, 2023)

Christmas Spirit Week (December 11-15th)

Polar Express (December 19th)

Christmas Holiday (December 20th – January 5th)

## Family Service Department

It is a pleasure to bring you the December edition of the Family Community Engagement newsletter and update events. Our focus is to keep our families informed of upcoming events, important dates and resources that can support the child's development and enhance family engagement.

We encourage our parents the importance of being involved with the child's early education experiences. This is a very important time of their life's and with your support it lighten up their day. If you have any questions or concerns our team is always available to assist you. Thank you for all that you contribute to the Early Head Start / Head Start Program, we are looking forward to another successful year. Enjoy your Holidays.


Warm regards,  
Angie Wilson  
Family Community Engagement Coordinator





## Parent Conferences

It is that time once again to update your family outcome. The family advocates will be contacting you to schedule a interview to update your family outcome. In the month of December we are having a Transition meeting for students that will be transitioning out of Early Head Start to Head Start and the children that will be transitioning from Head Start/Pre-K to Kindergarten. A date will be scheduled and sent out to all parents.



### Parent Workshops:

The family Service Department will be conducting a parent curriculum class on December 12, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m. the topic will be "Listening and Talking to young children". We encourage our parents to take part in the class, it will provide you with information to support your child developments.



### Spotlight

Congratulation to our Parent Keviyada Jenkins on receiving her CNA certification. You have accomplished a big milestone in your life and we are very proud of you. Good luck !!

## Community Workshops

The Mississippi Division of Medicaid invite you to join them for their virtual Medicaid, Mississippi CAN and CHIP workshop, the topics to discuss: benefit, open enrollment, finding a provider, transportation and what is the difference between Medicaid and Medicare? Dates for workshop, December 4 – 7 @2:00p.m. and December 11th-14th @ 11:00 a.m. December 18th 2p.m. and December 19th @ 11 a.m. Please contact the office of Coordinated Care for additional information at 1-800-421-2408 or 601-359-3789.



# Mental Health

It's that time of year again.... Where some people feel "It's the most wonderful time of the year". But to be honest for many, it can be the MOST stressful or most depressing time of the year. With the changes in the season often comes with it, overwhelming holiday expectations. Many people stress about additional expenses, overwhelming expectations set by others and by self. Although it may seem like a farfetched impossibility, December is National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month. And although we may not be able to be totally stress free during the holidays, we can most definitely be intentional about alleviating unnecessary stress. Please know that stress is a part of life and can at times be beneficial. However, this holiday season we encourage you to be intentional about alleviating stressors that cause you to feel overwhelmed and hopeless. From trying to buy everyone the perfect gift, or planning the perfect holiday get together. The holiday should be Merry and Bright. Your light helps to make the season bright and can't afford to be dimmed by unwanted stress.

## Disabilities Services

As the holiday season approaches, we wanted to take this opportunity to share some exciting ideas and resources with you to make this December a memorable one for your family. This newsletter is specifically tailored to provide support and inspiration for families with children in our Head Start who work closely with our Disability Team.

**1. Sensory-Friendly Holiday Activities:** We understand that sensory sensitivities can make the holiday season overwhelming for some children. To ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience, we have compiled a list of sensory-friendly holiday activities that you can do at home. From creating calming sensory jars to building quiet retreat spaces, these activities will help your child navigate the festivities with ease.

**2. Inclusive Holiday Crafts:** Engage your child's creativity with inclusive holiday crafts that are adaptable for children with different abilities. From making tactile ornaments to creating accessible gift tags, these activities will allow your child to express their holiday spirit while practicing fine motor skills and sensory exploration.

**3. Virtual Holiday Storytimes:** Many libraries and organizations are offering virtual holiday storytimes for children with disabilities. These events feature inclusive stories and engaging visuals, making them accessible and enjoyable for children of all abilities. Check out the list of virtual storytime events in your community and participate in these interactive sessions with your child.

**4. Adaptive Gift Ideas:** Finding the perfect gift for a child with disabilities can be a challenge. To help you in your search, we have put together a list of adaptive gift ideas that promote sensory exploration, fine motor skills development, and cognitive growth. These gifts are not only fun but also supportive of your child's unique needs and abilities. (Checkout our Information Board/Table at each location.)

**5. Online Support Groups:** The holiday season can bring about a mix of emotions for families, and having a support network is crucial. Consider joining online support groups specifically tailored to families of children with disabilities. These groups provide a safe space to share experiences, seek advice, and connect with others who understand the unique challenges and joys of raising a child with disabilities.

We hope these ideas and resources bring joy and inspiration to your family this holiday season. Remember, your Head Start Disability Team is always here to support you and your child's unique journey. Wishing you a warm and wonderful December filled with love, laughter, and inclusive celebrations.

HAPPY HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Ann Brock, Disability Coordinator for Early Head Start  
abrock@pcu.k12.ms.us, 601-749-3306  
Sonya Lather, Disability Coordinator for Head Start  
slather@pcu.k12.ms.us, 601-798-2537



## Health

We are excited to bring you the December edition of our Health and Safety Newsletter, where we provide important information and updates to help ensure the well-being of our children, families, and staff. Here are some key highlights:

**1. Winter Safety Tips:**

With the arrival of the winter season, it's essential to keep our little ones safe and healthy. During the month, we will be sharing valuable tips on how to prevent common winter illnesses, protect against cold weather hazards, and promote overall well-being during this time of year.

**2. COVID-19/FLU/RSV Updates:**

As the COVID-19 continues, we understand the importance of staying informed and taking necessary precautions. Please make sure to dress the little ones in the appropriate clothing's as well as providing a jacket to go outside for play. We will be posting and providing information at each of our facilities on the latest guidance from our health authorities, reminders on proper hygiene practices, and resources to support mental health and well-being during these challenging times.

**3. Holiday Safety:**

The holiday season brings joy and excitement, but it's crucial to ensure a safe environment for all. We provide helpful tips on childproofing holiday decorations, selecting age-appropriate toys, and managing holiday stress. Additionally, we share ideas on fostering inclusivity and cultural sensitivity during holiday celebrations.

**4. Emergency Preparedness:**

Preparing for emergencies is a priority for us. This month, we highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and offer guidance on creating emergency kits, developing evacuation plans, and practicing drills to ensure the safety of our children and staff. Please remember this is the time of the year where we have lots of fires. Let's Be Prepared and Be Safe!!

**5. Nutrition and Wellness:**

Promoting healthy eating habits and overall wellness is a core aspect of our program. Please stop by our information board/table at each site for nutritious recipe ideas, information on managing food allergies, and suggestions for engaging children in physical activities during the colder months.

We hope that this December edition of our Health and Safety Newsletter proves to be a valuable resource for you and your family. As always, we encourage you to reach out to our team if you have any questions or need further assistance.

Wishing you a safe and joyful holiday season!

FROM YOUR HEALTH TEAM

Your Health Team  
HS/PRE-K Manager: Pamela Frazier, RN  
Nicholson/ PRCC: Chelsea Dennis, LPN  
EHS/CCP Manager: Neterior McCormick, BS, RMA  
Site Nurses: Rosa/Annie's: Yvette Burton, LPN





## EDUCATION – EHS / CCP

As we approach the festive season, we wanted to take a moment to share some December highlights from our Early Heart Start program. We believe it's important to keep you informed and involved in your child's education and development. Here are a few activities and events that we have planned for this month:

- 1. Winter-themed crafts:** Our little ones will be engaging in various winter-themed crafts, such as making snowflakes, snowmen, and holiday decorations. These activities will help develop their fine motor skills and creativity, while also getting them into the holiday spirit.
- 2. Holiday sing-alongs:** We will be organizing special sing-along sessions where the children will learn and perform traditional holiday songs. Singing together encourages social interaction, language development, and coordination. We hope you'll enjoy hearing your child's sweet voice fill the air with holiday cheer.
- 3. Festive storytime:** Our dedicated teachers will be reading holiday-themed books to the children, exposing them to different traditions and values celebrated during this time of the year. Storytime is not only a fun and engaging activity but also helps foster a love for reading and language skills.
- 4. Classroom decorations:** The classrooms will be adorned with festive decorations, creating a warm and joyful environment for your children. We believe that a visually stimulating space enhances their creativity and imagination.
- 5. Family involvement:** We encourage you to get involved in our December activities by sharing any family traditions, stories, or recipes that are meaningful to you during this time of the year. This will help create a sense of community and strengthen the bond between home and school.

We hope these highlights give you a glimpse into the exciting activities planned for December in our Early Heart Start program. We look forward to fostering a nurturing and joyful environment for your child during this festive season.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful holiday season filled with love, joy, and cherished moments.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Season Greetings to you all!  
PSD EHS Education Team,  
EHS ED Manager: Charlotte Nixon, B.S.  
CCP Ed Manager: Robette Watts, M.S.  
Mentor Coach: Kaycee Schielder, B.S.

## EDUCATION – HS/PRE-K

As we approach the holiday season, the Head Start Education Team is excited to bring you a variety of engaging activities for December. In this month's newsletter, we have included winter-themed crafts, holiday story time recommendations, cooking ideas, and cultural celebrations to explore. We encourage you to involve your child in these activities to foster creativity, learning, and family bonding. Additionally, we have introduced a gratitude jar activity to promote a positive mindset and appreciation for the blessings in our lives. We wish you a safe and joyful holiday season filled with love and happiness.

**Winter Wonderland Crafts:**

Encourage your child's creativity by engaging in winter-themed crafts. Build snowflakes using Popsicle sticks, create paper snowmen, or design winter landscapes using cotton balls and paint. These activities not only enhance fine motor skills, but also introduce children to the magic of winter.

**2. Holiday Story Time:**

Read holiday-themed books together as a family. This is a great way to bond and instill a love for reading in your child. Some recommended titles include "The Polar Express," "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," and "The Snowy Day." Discuss the stories, ask questions, and let your child's imagination soar.

**3. Holiday Cooking:**

Involve your child in simple holiday cooking activities. Bake cookies, make hot cocoa, or decorate gingerbread houses together. Cooking provides opportunities for math skills, following directions, and sensory exploration. Your child will not only enjoy the delicious treats but also develop important life skills.

**4. Cultural Celebrations:**

Take this time to explore and learn about different cultural celebrations that occur during December. Discuss traditions, customs, and the significance behind holidays such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or Diwali. This helps foster an appreciation for diversity and promotes understanding and respect for others.

**5. Gratitude Jar:**

Create a gratitude jar as a family. Each day, encourage everyone to write down something they are grateful for and place it in the jar. On New Year's Eve, read the notes together and reflect on the abundance of blessings in your lives. This activity cultivates a positive mindset and teaches children the importance of gratitude.

**"Brilliant Beginnings: Highlighting Preschooler's Achievements!"**  
All transitioning students were assessed on Renaissance Star Early Literacy in November. When students take the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, they are expected to score a 498 to be considered Kindergarten Ready. The highest score on our Fall Assessment came from Room 1 at Poplarville Head Start. This student scored an 838.

**"Wishing you a Season of Learning and Joy!"**

Your Education Mangers,  
HS/Pre-K Ed Manager, Ashley Veerkamp, B.S.  
Mentor Coaches: Dinah Thanars, B.S. & LaKeshia Price, M.S.



# Teachers of the Month

# ERSEA

## Rosa Early Head Start



Priscilla Acker, A.A.



Myeisha Banks, A.A.

## Picayune Head Start Teachers



Towada Newkirk, B.S.

## Poplarville Head Start Teachers



Kim Revere, B.S.

## South Side Lower



Akesha Carter, M.Ed.

Dear Head Start and Early Head Start Families,

Season's greetings from your ERSEA TEAM!! As we embrace the holiday spirit, we would like to extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. May this festive season bring joy, peace, and happiness to your homes.

In the spirit of the holidays, we also want to remind you of a few important updates and events related to Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility, and Attendance (ERSEA) for our program:

### Enrollment Renewal:

As we approach the end of the year, we kindly remind you to secure your child's spot for the upcoming school year by renewing their enrollment. Our program highly values your participation, and we encourage you to contact our enrollment office as soon as possible to complete the necessary paperwork.

### Holiday Closure:

Please take note of our program's holiday closure dates. We will be closed from December 20, 2023 to January 5, 2024 to allow our staff and families to enjoy quality time with their loved ones. We kindly request that you plan accordingly and make any necessary arrangements for your child's care during this period.

### Sharing the Holiday Spirit:

We believe in the power of community and reaching out to those in need. If you are in a position to do so, we encourage you to consider participating in local holiday drives or volunteering opportunities. Let's come together to spread joy and make a positive impact during this special time of the year. As always if you know of any families who are in need of services please share your experiences about the programs.

We hope that this holiday season brings you moments of love, laughter, and cherished memories. If you have any questions or concerns regarding ERSEA or any other aspect of our program, please do not hesitate to reach out to our enrollment office.

Once again, we wish you a joyful and safe holiday season, filled with warmth and happiness.

~Your ERSEA Coordinators

EHS/CCP: Jhoanny Vargas, M.S. HS

PreK: Kaylin Richard, B.S.





# DECEMBER 2023 HEAD START / PRE-K / EARLY HEAD START (CENTER-BASED) MENU

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
<b>4. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Chili on bun, Spinach, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>	<b>5. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Blueberries, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Baked Chicken Tenders, Yam Patty, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>6. Breakfast: Grits/Toast, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Marcaroni &amp; Cheese, Broccoli, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water</b>	<b>7. Breakfast: Rice Chex Cereal, Strawberries, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: BBQ Chicken on Bun, Steamed Carrots, Tropical Fruit, Milk, Water</b>	<b>8. Breakfast: French Toast, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Milk, Water</b>
<b>11. Breakfast: French Toast, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Red Beans &amp; Rice, Turnip Greens, Cornbread, Tropical Furit, Milk, Water</b>	<b>12. Breakfast: Cheese Toast, Strawberries, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Yam Patty, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>13. Breakfast: Grits, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Macaroni &amp; Cheese, Broccoli, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water</b>	<b>14. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>	<b>15. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Mixed Veggies, Blueberries, Milk, Water</b>
<b>18. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Strawberries, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>	<b>19. Breakfast: Riced Chex Cereal, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Macaroni &amp; Cheese, Broccoli, Tropical Fruit, Milk, Water</b>	<b>20.</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CHRISTMAS BREAK: NO SCHOOL</b>				
25	26	27	28	29
<b>CHRISTMAS BREAK: NO SCHOOL</b>				
1	2	3	4	5
<b>CHRISTMAS BREAK: NO SCHOOL</b>				

## Picayune School District Early Childhood Programs - (601) 799-4702

- Early Head Start - Rosa • Early Head Start – Nicholson • EHS CCP – Annie’s Kindergarten & Daycare • EHS CCP – Pearl River Community College Child Development Lab School • PSD Pre-K Program • PSD Head Start – Picayune • PSD Head Start – Poplarville