



# JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Picayune School District Early Childhood Programs







## From the Desk of Dr. Pamela Thomas, Program Director

Dear Head Start Families and Staff,

Happy New Year! I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits as we embark on another exciting year of learning and growth at our Head Start/Early Head Start and Pre-k programs.

As we kick off the New Year, we are excited to have you back with us. Your presence and contributions are valuable to our team, and we look forward to achieving great things together in the coming months.

We understand that transitioning back to work and school after the holidays can sometimes be challenging, but we are here to support you every step of the way. If there's anything you need or any questions you have, please don't hesitate to reach out. Our team is ready to assist you and make your return as seamless as possible.

Also, I'm filled with optimism and enthusiasm for the possibilities that lie ahead. Our team of dedicated educators is committed to creating a nurturing and engaging learning environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential. We will continue to implement evidence-based practices and innovative strategies to enhance the quality of our programs and ensure that our students are well-prepared for future success.

I am also excited to announce that we have some exciting initiatives planned for this year. We will be introducing new enrichment programs, expanding our community partnerships, and providing additional resources and support for our families. These efforts are aimed at creating a comprehensive and holistic experience for our children, empowering them to become lifelong learners and active contributors to their communities.

I would like to extend a special thank you to our incredible staff for their tireless dedication and passion for early childhood education. Your hard work and commitment to our students are truly commendable, and I am grateful for the positive impact you make in their lives every day.

I encourage you all to stay connected with us through our newsletter, social media platforms, and parent engagement activities. We believe that open communication and collaboration are key to creating a thriving Head Start community.

As we embark on this New Year, let us remember that every day is an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our children. Together, we will create a brighter future for each and every child in our care.

Warm regards,

Dr. Pamela Thomas  
Head Start Program



# EHS – EHS-CCP Education

Happy New Year!!

We hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits as we enter the New Year. As we begin this New Year, our focus is on "Planting Good Seeds" in our students, and we invite you to do the same. We understand that not everyone may have formal training as a teacher, but as parents, you are your child's first teacher. Many simple, everyday routines provide excellent opportunities for developing your child's emergent literacy skills.

Emergent literacy refers to the stage in children's development before they can read or write independently. It recognizes that literacy learning begins at birth and develops gradually over time, with the foundation for later reading success being laid during this period.

For example, by the time your child turns 1, you would have spent approximately 8,760 hours providing consistent care. By the time they start kindergarten at age 5, you would have accumulated 43,800 hours over 1,000 days, during which growth and development continuously occur. This period of development is crucial when it comes to literacy.

We have three quick, yet impactful suggestions for quality literacy experiences:

1. Tell Stories: Language development begins before a child speaks actual words. Sing, talk, read, and tell stories to your children. This month, we will be studying various topics such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Winter, and Community Helpers. These are topics you can discuss with your children and read about together.

2. Look Around: Use every day routines and surroundings to create a print-rich environment. Label items within your household and ask your children to name symbols they see in the community, such as store signs. This helps children learn letters, words, and the purpose and meaning of printed language.

3. Make Books Available: In addition to reading to your child, make books easily accessible for them to explore physically. Children develop emergent literacy skills by showing an interest in books. Encourage your child to turn the pages of a book and pretend to read. This pre-reading skill sets the foundation for their awareness of words, pictures, and the purpose of reading.

These are just a few suggestions that can be incorporate into your daily routines, and by doing so you can create a nurturing environment that fosters your child's early literacy skills and sets them on a path to future success.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in your child's education. Together, we can make a difference in their lives.

Early Head & CCP Education Team

EHS Ed Manager: Charlotte Nixon, B.S.  
CCP Ed Manager: Robette Watts, M.S.  
EHS Mentor Coach: Kaycee Schielder, B.S.

# ERSEA

Dear EHS/HS Families:

Let us begin by wishing you all a Happy New Year filled with many successes and continued progress. During winter break, we hope you had the chance to catch up with friends and family and enjoy some rest and relaxation. We certainly spent some time reflecting on 2023 and think about the work and opportunities that lie ahead in 2024

As we approach the holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. King's work, and his legacy, we get ready to plan the upcoming events for our service area and continue to provide a high-quality service for children and families. We are excited to begin our work for the second half of the school year to ensure that learning continues.

We are receiving new applications, collecting all documents for those transitioning children from EHS to HS and updating information for children on the waiting list for the 2024-2025 school year. Also at the end of January we'll be sending out an Enrollment Intention Form to our current EHS families in order to assure your child's slot for the upcoming school year, remember to participate in your mandatory Parent Meetings and if you have questions about Enrollment, Attendance or any other concerns please let us know.

With Regards,  
Your ERSEA Coordinators EHS/CCP: Jhoanny Vargas, M.S.  
HS/PreK: Kaylin Richard, B.S

# Teachers of the Month

Early Head Start Rosa



Cathy Littles, CDA



Keanna Mitchell, CDA

Nicholson Early Head Start Poplarville Head Start



Joelec Buffinet, CDA



Ola Faye Kendrick, HS Floater

Nicholson Early Head start

South Side Lower



Robertah Rancifer, CDA



Olivia Mason

## Family Service Department

It is an honor to provide you updated events from the Family Community Engagement edition of the newsletter. We thrive to keep our families informed of upcoming events, important dates and resources that can support the child's development and enhance family engagement.



### Spotlight

In the month of December Nicholson Early Head Start displayed their holiday spirit throughout the hallways with decorative doors and walls. NEHS had to the honor of one of our parents (Emery Lafontana Allen)

to grace our center with her talents as an artist. She freely displayed her illustration by drawing the theme "The Grinch who stole Christmas". She would volunteer for several hours drawing and coloring the picture. This display caught not only our children eyes as they passed by but the parents was amazed also. Mrs. Allen thank you for your time and effort, it was appreciated.

### In-Kind

In-kind contribution is a key part of a grantee's fiscal operation. This gives a record of the financial "sweet equity" for potential funders. The equity is a contribution to a project in the form of time and effort. The Early Head Start Program is funded by the federal government and they would like to know whether the group is supported by the community. In-kind tracking demonstrates this, and also provides documentation of a match to the monetary support. We are asking that all parents that the time to complete their daily in-kinds. If you are having any problems please feel free to stop by your family advocate office for support.

### Upcoming Events

- Martin Luther King Celebration (TBA)
- Parent Curriculum (January 16, 2024) "Helping Young Children Learn to Cooperate"
- Martin Luther King Holiday (January 15, 2023) NO SCHOOL
- Parent Café Podcast (January 19, 2024)

### Monthly Parent Meeting (All Parent Meeting are Mandatory)

- Nicholson Early Head Start (January 9, 2024) 4 p.m.
- Early Head Start (Rosa) (January 9, 2024) 5 p.m.
- Poplarville Head Start (January 9, 2024) 5 p.m.
- Picayune Head Start (January 10, 2024) 5 p.m.
- PRCC Lab School (January 11, 2024) 5 p.m.

### Upcoming Events Community

- Martin Luther King Parade (January 15, 2023)
- January 20, 2024 "Krew of Pawdi Gras Parade" downtown Picayune

The Family Service Department wishes each of you a Happy New Year. We encourage our parents to take part in their child's early education experience. We are looking to have a successful year with the support of our parents. If you have any questions or concerns our family service team is always available to assist you. Once again thank you for all your support that you contribute to the Early Head Start/ Head Start Program.  
Angie Wilson, Family Community Engagement Coordinator

## Disability

We hope this newsletter finds you well! We are excited to share with you some of the highlights and updates from the Disability Services department for the month of January. Here are a few key points worth mentioning:

### 1. New Inclusion Initiatives:

- In January, we launched several new inclusion initiatives aimed at creating a more inclusive and accessible environment for all children in our program. These initiatives include staff training on disability awareness, the implementation of assistive technology, and the creation of individualized support plans for children with disabilities.

### 2. Collaborative Partnerships:

- We continued to strengthen our partnerships with local organizations and agencies that provide services to children with disabilities. By working together, we are able to better support the unique needs of each child and ensure they have access to the resources and support they require.

### 3. Parent Engagement:

- Our team has been actively engaging with parents and caregivers to ensure they are informed and involved in their child's development. We organized virtual workshops and webinars on topics such as advocating for their child's rights, accessing community resources, and promoting inclusive practices at home.

### 4. Professional Development Opportunities:

- In January, we facilitated various professional development opportunities for our staff members. These included workshops on best practices for supporting children with disabilities, strategies for managing challenging behaviors, and updates on the latest research and trends in the field of disability services.

### 5. Celebrating Achievements:

- We celebrated the achievements and progress of children with disabilities in our program. Through individualized goal-setting and continuous assessment, we have witnessed remarkable growth in their abilities and overall development. We are proud of their accomplishments and the hard work of our dedicated staff.

We are committed to providing the highest quality of care and support to all children in our program, regardless of their abilities. If you have any questions, suggestions, or would like to share your success stories, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We value your feedback and input.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the children and families we serve. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of these young learners.

### Your Disabilities Services Team:

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

**Happy New Year! I hope you all had a safe and enjoyable holiday season! We are excited to get back to begin a Healthy and Safe New year!**

We have a few announcements that we would like you all to be aware of.

**1. Early Headstart/ Headstart will be partnering with MSDH Certified and Internationally Board Certified Consultants Desire Richard, CLC, and Stephanie Gable, RN, ICLC for breast feeding classes which will be held at Early Head Start location: 1620 Rosa Street, Picayune, MS, every Thursday from 10:00am – 12:00pm. Anyone in the community that is expecting or planning to start a family is encouraged to attend. Important information as well as instructions will be provided by qualified Lactation Specialist.**

**2. We are asking all parents that love to cook to please share your favorite recipes with us to include in a section of our newsletter. We encourage all cultures to participate and share their love for food and cooking.**

**3. January is National Blood Donor Month. Join the City of Picayune Thursday 1/11/24 from 10:00am -4:00pm at the Council Chamber Room located at 203 Goodyear Blvd. Help make a difference in someone's life. You can sign up online at [thebloodcenter.org](http://thebloodcenter.org) and walk-ins are alsowelcome.**

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please don't hesitate to contact the health team:

### Your Health Team:

Pam Frazier, RN – Manager HS/PRE-K  
Neterior McCormick, RMA, BS – Manager EHS/CCP  
Yvette Burton, LPN – Rosa/Annie's  
Chelsea Dennis, LPN –Nicholson/PRCC

## Mental Health

From Dr. Nicole Stelter:

How are you taking care of your mental health this January?

As the new year unfolds, many of us reflect on the past year while also looking forward to new beginnings. It's a great time to prioritize self-care and create goals for better mental health and emotional well-being.

Nicole Stelter, Ph.D., LMFT and director of Behavioral Health for Blue Shield of California, offers four tips to help you make and maintain New Year's resolutions that foster good mental health.

**1. Prioritize self-care.** Self-care is not a luxury; it's a necessity for good mental health. Make a commitment to prioritize self-care in your daily and weekly routines. Whether it's taking a leisurely walk, practicing meditation, indulging in a hobby or simply allocating time for relaxation, prioritize activities that rejuvenate your mind and spirit.

**2. Set realistic, attainable goals.** Focus on short-term, realistic goals to get to long-term objectives. Creating new year resolutions that are overly ambitious or "big" can lead to disappointment and frustration, which may adversely affect your mental health. Instead, focus on setting small, manageable goals. For instance, rather than aiming to "completely eliminate stress," consider incorporating daily mindfulness practices or allocating specific time every week for self-care activities.

**3. Focus on building supportive relationships.** Human connections are crucial for mental health. Make it a priority to nurture and strengthen relationships with family, friends or support groups. These connections provide emotional support, companionship and a sense of belonging, which are fundamental for good mental health. In addition, consider enlisting a friend or family member to help keep your resolutions on track. You could even work toward the same or similar goals together.

**4. Be kind to yourself.** As you embark on a new year filled with aspirations and resolutions, be kind and compassionate to yourself. Accept that setbacks might occur, and know that it's okay to recalibrate your goals throughout your journey.

"Start the new year with a commitment to nurturing your mind, body and soul for a fulfilling and mentally healthy year ahead," Dr. Stelter said. By incorporating these tips into your resolutions, you're not only aiming for personal growth but also prioritizing your mental health and happiness.

### Your Mental Health Team:

HS/PreK: Ashley Benson, M.S. & Bianca Pierce, M.S.  
EHS/CCP: Rewa Haralson, M.S.



# January 2024 (Head Start / Early Head Start)

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
				<b>5. Breakfast: French Toast, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>
<b>8. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Chili on Bun, Spinach, Tropical Fruit, Milk, Water</b>	<b>9. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg patty, Strawberries, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Baked Chicken Tenders, Mixed Veggies, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>10. Breakfast: Cheese Grits, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Macaroni &amp; Cheese, Broccoli, Diced Pineapples, Milk, Water</b>	<b>11. Breakfast: Rice Chex Cereal, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Chicken Alfredo, Steamed Carrots, Fresh Baked Roll, Tropical Fruit, Milk, Water</b>	<b>12. Breakfast: French Toast, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>
<b>15. Martin Luther King, Jr. HOLIDAY</b>	<b>16. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>17. Breakfast: Cheese Grits, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Chicken &amp; Dumplings, Green Peas, Tropical Fruit, Milk, Water</b>	<b>18. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Mixed Veggies, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>19. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Chicken Spaghetti, Yam Patty, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>
<b>22. Breakfast: French Toast, Strawberries, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Chili on Bun, Spinach, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>	<b>23. Breakfast: Cheese Grits, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Baked Chicken Tenders, Yam Patty, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>24. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: BBQ Chicken Bun, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water</b>	<b>25. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Macaroni &amp; Cheese, Broccoli, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>	<b>26. Breakfast: Chex, Cinnamon, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Steamed Carrots, Tropical Fruit, Milk, Water</b>
<b>29. Breakfast: French Toast, Strawberries, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Yam Patty, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>	<b>30. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Spaghetti/ Meat Sauce, Mixed Veggies, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>31. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Spaghetti/ Meat Sauce, Mixed Veggies, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>	<b>1. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Diced Pears, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Applesauce, Milk, Water</b>	<b>2. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water</b>  <b>Lunch: Marconi &amp; Cheese, Broccoli, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water</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**