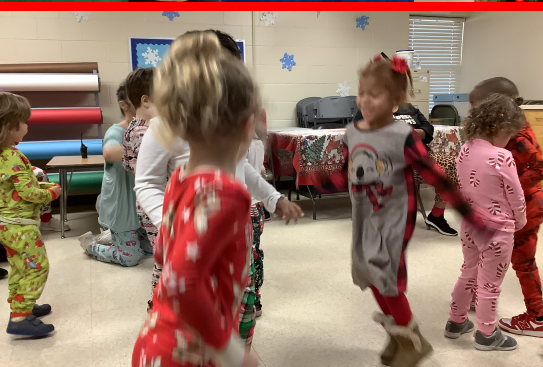
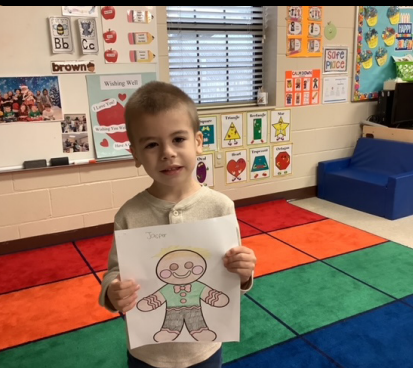




JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

Picayune School District Early Childhood Programs



From the Desk of Dr. Pamela Thomas, Program Director

Dear Families and Staff,

Happy New Year! As we welcome January 2025, I hope you all enjoyed a joyful holiday season filled with warmth and love. The start of a new year brings fresh opportunities for growth, learning, and connection within our Head Start/Early Head Start community.

****Reflecting on Our Achievements****

As we look back on the past year, we are proud of the progress our children have made in their development. From enhancing their social skills to achieving significant milestones in literacy and numeracy, each child's journey is a testament to the dedication of our families and staff. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

****A Fresh Outlook for Family Engagement****

As we kick off the new year, we encourage all families to take an active role in our program. Your involvement is crucial in creating a supportive environment for our children. Here are some ways you can engage:

- ****Volunteer Opportunities:**** We welcome parents and caregivers to volunteer in classrooms or during events. Your presence enriches our learning environment and strengthens our community bonds.

- ****Join Parent Committees:**** Consider joining one of our parent committees. This is a fantastic way to share your ideas, collaborate with other parents, and contribute to program planning and activities.

- ****Attend Workshops:**** We will be hosting a series of workshops designed to empower families with tools and resources. Topics will include child development, effective parenting strategies, and navigating community resources. Stay tuned for dates and details!

****Continuous Support for Families****

We understand that parenting can be both rewarding and challenging. Our program is committed to providing continuous support to all families. Here are some resources available to you:

- ****Family Support Services:**** Our dedicated family support staff are here to assist you with any challenges you may face, from accessing community resources to providing guidance on child development.

- ****Monthly Check-Ins:**** We encourage families to participate in monthly check-ins with our staff. These informal meetings are an opportunity to discuss your child's progress, share concerns, and celebrate successes.

- ****Resource Library:**** Our resource library is available for families to borrow books and materials on child development, parenting techniques, and more. We believe that knowledge is power, and we want to equip you with the best tools for success.

****Looking Ahead****

As we move forward into the year, let's embrace the possibilities that lie ahead. Together, we can create a nurturing environment where our children can thrive. Your partnership is invaluable, and we look forward to working alongside you in the months to come. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to our program. Here's to a successful and fulfilling year ahead!

****Reminders****

As we enter the winter season, please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Layered clothing, hats, gloves, and boots can help keep them warm during outdoor activities.

Additionally, please remember to communicate any changes in your family's situation or needs. We are here to support you and ensure your child's success.

****Thank You! ****

**Dr. Pamela Thomas
Program Director**

Family Service Department
January 2024
Newsletter

Family Service department thrive to keep our families informed of upcoming events, important dates and resources that can support the child's development and enhance family engagement. It is my privilege to update you with the Family Service edition of the newsletter.



Spotlight

Congratulations to Elise Duke for Graduating from the University of Southern Miss. With a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. Elise completed her final semester interning with the Picayune School District Head Start. She has shown professionalism, great work ethics, and competency while working with the Head Start the Past few months. She has created good working relationships with not only the parents and students but with all the staff members as well.

She began this school year showing great enthusiasm in everything that she does, from greeting the parents and students in the morning, to interviewing parenting and gathering required information needed to best help each individual family. That enthusiasm seemed to only grow as time passed.

Elise has a Bright Future ahead of her, and we would like to once again congratulate her on her recent Graduation.

Veronica Lord: *Congratulations on completing the Certified Nursing Assistance Program at Pearl River Community College*

In-Kind (November)

EHS	Amount	Head Start	Amount	CCP	Amount
EHS Rosa	\$17,264.95	Picayune HS	\$11,383.37	Annie's	\$9,010.95
NEHS	\$10,842.28	Poplarville HS	\$3,992.33	PRCC	\$2,248.53
		Pre-K	\$6,971.15		

Congratulation to Early Head Start and Head Start on reaching there In-Kind for the year.

Picayune Early Head Start: **Goal:** \$259,682.00 **Actual Amount:** \$286,011.48

Picayune Head Start: **Goal:** \$259,682.00 **Actual Amount:** \$293,899.51

Upcoming Events

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return Back to School (January 6, 2025) PRCC return back to school (January 13, 2025) Martin Luther King Holiday (January 20, 2025) | Parent Meeting Schedule | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEHS (January 7, 2025) 4:00 p.m. EHS/Annie's (January 7, 2025) 5:00 p.m. PRCC (January 15, 2025) 11:00 a.m. Poplarville Head Start (January 8, 2025) 4:00 p.m. Picayune Head Start (January 9, 2025) 5:00 p.m. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Teachers of the Month



Leana Clemmons, A.A.
EHS Rosa Site



Patricia Johns
EHS Rosa Site



Sholanda Brown, CDA
Annie's Kindergarten & Daycare



Joelee Buffinet, CDA
EHS Nicholson Site

EDUCATION – HS/PRE-K

Dear Head Start and Pre-K Families,

In just a few short months, some of our students will be transitioning to Kindergarten. Our teachers work so hard to prepare them for Kindergarten while they are with us at school but here are some tips to help you prepare your child for Kindergarten at home, according to NAEYC:

- Help him/her to develop independence at home.** Encourage your child to dress themselves, take his/her coat on and off and hang it up, use the bathroom without assistance, wash his/her hands without constant reminders, and put on his/her own shoes. Provide serving spoons so your child can serve themselves at the table and clear his/her own dishes. These skills will take him/her from the coatroom to the lunchroom and beyond.
- Focus on self-help skills.** Your child should know how to wipe his/her face after lunch without prompting and blow his/her nose without assistance. But be sure they are also comfortable asking an adult for help when necessary.
- Teach responsibility.** Start transferring small responsibilities over to your child, if you haven't already. After a family trip to the pool, you might put your child in charge of emptying the backpack, refilling the water bottles, or hanging up his/her wet swimsuit. Even when it may be easier for you to complete these tasks, let him/her accept the responsibility.
- Develop and follow routines.** Set up morning routines that will transfer into a school setting. Getting up around the same time every day, getting dressed, and having an early breakfast together is a great way to transition to school.
- Read aloud to your child.** Get your child a library card, take him/her to the library to check out books, and be sure to read to your child every day. Read a variety of books, read the captions under pictures in the newspaper, and even share the comics. Just read!
- Engage him/her in meaningful literacy activities.** Encourage your child to help you with thank you cards, shopping lists, or notes. They may start with scribbles or pictures, move into scattered letters, and finally some recognizable words as they enter school. Appreciate their attempts and watch their skills develop with practice.
- Acknowledge his/her feelings.** Avoid talking about school too much, or wait until the end of summer is near. Your child may express being nervous, not wanting to go or, alternately, feeling very excited to start school. Whatever they feel, take time to appreciate where they are.

Congratulations to our Teacher of the Month, Zykeria Parker! Zykeria is a Teacher Assistant in Pre-K 3 at South Side Lower. Thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely,
 The Education Team
 Ashley Veerkamp, Education Manager
 Dinah Thanars, Teacher Mentor Coach
 LaKeshia Price, Teacher Mentor Coach

EDUCATION – EHS / CCP

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 and sensory development. Providing an environment that supports children's emergent literacy skills and sensory development throughout early childhood will help them to excel.

Here are some wonderful activities to help in literacy and sensory development.

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

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 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.

Touch and Feel Board Books: Infants and toddlers love looking at books. Touch and feel board books add a sensory dimension that is particularly engaging for little ones.

Ice Art: Freeze some water in a shallow tray makes a great canvas for some process art. You can paint on the ice with tempera paint, paint sticks or water colors. Each will achieve a slightly different effect. This is a brilliant one for encouraging kids to explore and experiment.

Little Bins for Little Hands: This easy-to-make sparkly snowflake slime is a fun squishy sensory activity. The slime is created by mixing together school glue, liquid starch, and water. You can add sparkles and decorations such as snowflake confetti, glitter or anything else you have available. Encourage your child to discover the feeling and appearance of the slime as it's squished between their fingers.

These are just a few suggestions that you can incorporate into your daily routines, and by doing so you can create a nurturing environment that fosters your child's early literacy and sensory skills, setting 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 Start and CCP Education Team
 Charlotte Nixon, EHS Education Manager
 Tonya Spiers, NEHS Education Manager
 Robette Watts, CCP Education Manager



ReGen Health Care
My Family, My Future, My Choice

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

HAPPY NEW YEAR! January is Birth Defects Prevention Month." We know that not all birth defects can be prevented. But, you can increase your chances of having a healthy baby by doing what you can to be your healthiest self both before and during pregnancy. What is best for you is also best for your baby.

"Making Healthy Choices to Prevent Birth Defects - Make a PACT for Prevention." We know that not all birth defects can be prevented. But, we also know that women can increase their chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and adopting healthy behaviors before and during pregnancy. Please encourage all pregnant women and those who may become pregnant to make a **PACT** to:

- Plan ahead
 - Get as healthy as possible before becoming pregnant.
 - Get 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.
- Avoid harmful substances
 - Avoid drinking alcohol, smoking and doing drugs.
 - Be careful with harmful exposures at work and home. (Ex. cleaning products)
- Choose a healthy lifestyle
 - Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy, and lean proteins.
 - Be physically active.
 - Work to get medical conditions like diabetes under control.
- Talk to your healthcare provider
 - Get a medical checkup.
 - Discuss all medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
 - Talk about your family medical history.

Health Services Team

EHS/CCP Manager: Neterior McCormick, BS, RMA

HS/PRE-K Manager: Pamela Frazier, RN

Site Nurses: Rosa/Annie's: Yvette Burton, LPN

Nicholson/ PRCC: Chelsea Dennis, LPN



As we step into a new year, January brings an important focus- National Mental Wellness Month. This is the time to reflect on the importance of mental health and emotional well-being, especially in our children.

Mental wellness in children is more than just the absence of stress or struggles; it's about helping them build resilience, manage emotions, and navigate challenges with confidence. In a world that often feels fast-paced and overwhelming, fostering mental wellness gives children the tools they need to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

"Nurturing mental wellness in children today builds the foundation for a brighter tomorrow!"

How Families Can Support Mental Wellness at Home

- **Open Communication:** Create a safe space for your child to share their thoughts and feelings.
- **Healthy Routines:** Encourage regular sleep, balanced meals, and physical activity, all of which support mental and physical health.
- **Mindfulness Activities:** Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing or journaling together.
- **Limit Stress:** Help children manage their schedules to prevent overwhelm, and teach them how to handle setbacks positively.
- **Model Self-Care:** Show your child that it's okay to rest, seek help, and prioritize well-being.

Why Mental Wellness Matters for Children

- **Emotional Growth:** Learning to express and manage emotions helps children build stronger relationships and self-awareness.
- **Academic Success:** A healthy mind is better equipped to focus, solve problems, and achieve goals.
- **Lifelong benefits:** Developing good mental health habits early provides a foundation for future success and happiness.

This January, let's make mental wellness a priority for our children. By working together, we can provide the support they need to grow into healthy, happy individuals.

DISABILITY

January is National Braille Literacy Month

January recognizes the legally blind and visually impaired for National Braille Literacy Month. The observance raises awareness of the importance of Braille to the blind and visually impaired community. As audio technology progresses, the use of Braille dwindles. However, its significance remains, especially in the workplace and the classroom.

Most legally blind children in the U.S. **don't** use Braille resources. Believe it or not, **34% of the more than 59 thousand legally blind American children are considered non-readers.**

LEGO Braille Bricks are molded with the same number of studs used for individual letters and numbers in the Braille alphabet, while remaining fully compatible with the LEGO System in Play. To ensure the tool is inclusive allowing sighted teachers, students and family members to interact on equal terms, each brick will also feature a printed letter or character. This ingenious combination brings a whole new and playful approach to get blind and visually impaired children interested in learning Braille, enabling them to develop a breadth of skills needed to thrive and succeed in a fast-paced world.



Here at Picayune Head Start and Early Head Start we are committed to creating an inclusive environment that welcomes and supports children with disabilities. **ALL CHILDREN**, regardless of ability, are provided with equal and fair access to learning and growth opportunities.

Recommended resources:

Our family resources and educational opportunities are available to any family who are seeking workshops, training sessions, and support groups. Take a look at our offerings:

- Resources: *Tools to Grow*, personal library of various books and resources upon request.
- Educational Materials: Helpful topics can be searched on Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube.
- Parent Training: Topics such as "Simple Activities to Increase Preschooler's Attention Span, and Ways to include Children with Autism." In-person training available upon Request.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions, suggestions, or to simply share your success story. We value your feedback and input!

Peace and blessings,

Ann Brock
Disability Coordinator for Early Headstart
abrock@pcu.k12.ms.us
601-749-3306

Sonya Lather-Newkirk
Disability Coordinator for Headstart
slather@pcu.k12.ms.us
601-799-1716

January 2025 (Head Start / Early Head Start Center-Based Menu)

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
6. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Applesauce, Milk, Water	7. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger Steak w/ Gravy, Green Peas, Fresh Baked Roll, Strawberries, Milk, Water	8. Breakfast: Rice Chex Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	9. Breakfast: Grits, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Steamed Carrots, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water	10. Breakfast: Waffle, Kiwi, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Sweet Potatoe Fries, Applesauce, Milk, Water
13. Breakfast: Cheese toast, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Chili on bun, Yam Patty, Strawberries, Milk, Water	14. Breakfast: Grits, Mandarin, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheesy Chicken w/Rice, Turnip Greens, Corn Bread, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	15. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: BBQ Chicken on Bun, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water	16. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water	17. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Diced Pears, Milk, Water Lunch: Baked Chicken Tenders, Fresh Baked Roll, Steamed Carrots Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water
20. MLK DAY HOLDIA Y	21. Breakfast: Cheesy Grits, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Red Beans & Rice, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin, Milk, Water	22. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Steamed Carrots, Fresh Baked Roll, Blueberries, Milk, Water	23. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Mandarin, Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Baked Beans, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	24. Biscuit with Egg Patty, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Strawberries, Milk, Water
27. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Applesauce, Milk, Water	28. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger Steak w/ Gravy, Green Peas, Fresh Baked Roll, Strawberries, Milk, Water	29. Breakfast: Rice Chex Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	30. Breakfast: Grits, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Steamed Carrots, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water	31. Breakfast: Waffle, Kiwi, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Sweet Potatoe Fries, Applesauce, Milk, Water

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