



SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Picayune School District Early Childhood Programs



EDUCATION -EHS/CCP

Welcome, Early Head Start Families!

We are so glad you are a part of our EHS Family! At Picayune Early Head Start, our mission is to help your young child get ready for school, and on behalf of the Education Department, we are excited to have the opportunity to teach and care for your precious little ones!

During the month of August, the teachers have been busy getting to know the children. They have been working on activities and screenings that help them to understand each child's unique personality, development, abilities, and preferences. We are already seeing wonderful things going on in the classrooms as the children have been playing, learning routines, and getting to know their new friends and teachers! We work to ensure that all children are making progress through a variety of areas of development including physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language, literacy, and mathematics. Believe it or not, even our youngest infants have the ability to develop in these areas and all of our children are learning and growing every day!

The Picayune EHS program utilizes the Creative Curriculum. The Creative Curriculum is a play-based curriculum designed to foster enthusiasm for learning in infants and toddlers by focusing on active exploration, individualized learning, and whole-child development across all of the areas listed above. All learning and development is promoted through warm, trusting relationships and positive interactions. Each classroom has comprehensive, child-friendly resources which our teachers use to design inviting learning environments and support children's social-emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development. The Creative Curriculum is fully aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and Mississippi state standards. Parents and caregivers are strongly encouraged to download the ELOF2Go app or explore the Head Start Interactive Early Learning Outcomes Framework to learn about all of the areas of learning and development we focus on at school, and how you can help your child learn at home.

August was a busy month! The children and teachers spent time getting to know one another, establishing routines, and learning about families. This month, our children learned about containers. The children and teachers described and explored the colors, shapes, functions, and sizes of lots of different kinds of containers. You can extend this learning at home with your child and sort, stack, and nest containers of different sizes. Talk about the shapes, colors, sizes and purposes of different containers in your home. You'd be surprised how many language, math, and cognitive concepts can be developed by simply talking about everyday objects!

In September, we will discuss different feelings and emotions. As our children grow, we must help them to identify and talk about their feelings. Children learn how to manage feelings from observing how the grown-ups in their lives experience feelings and recover from strong emotions. As we help our children learn about feelings, they grow in the ability to express themselves, get along with others, share, persist with challenging tasks, and play together. Social-emotional learning is foundational for learning in all other areas, and helping our children to grow in social-emotional development can help to give your child a happy and healthy start in school.

To help your child at home, name and validate your child's many feelings. You can say "I see you feel happy because we are going to the park," or "I see that you are mad that you can't have the cookie before dinner." Remember, there are no "bad" feelings, but there are strong feelings, and it is our job to help our children to express these feelings and work through them so they can recover, and get back to playing and learning

Looking ahead, September is National Literacy Month! We are so fortunate to have a beautiful library so close by! Please take advantage of the library by getting your library card, and bringing your child to enjoy and check out books! Children learn so much more rich language through literature than they do through conversational speech or screen time. Reading with your child- even with the youngest infants can help build strong language and pre-reading skills, and gives your child the happy, safe feeling of listening to a story on the lap of his or her favorite person. For more information on the benefits of reading with your young child, please visit <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/13-things-babies-learn-when-we-read-them>.

The Education Team is looking forward to seeing you in upcoming Family Meetings and working together to help our children grow and learn! It is an important and exciting time for your little one as we give them the very best head start possible. We certainly could not do this joyful work without you, and we are so grateful for your support.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone in our department if you have questions or would like to learn more about how to support your child's learning and development.

Have a Wonderful September!

Sincerely,
Jessica Stubbs, Education Director
Charlotte Nixon, Education Manager, Rosa and Nicholson
Robette Watts, Education Manager, Annie's and PRCC

EDUCATION – HS/PRE-K

Welcome, Head Start Families!

We are so excited to welcome our new and returning families to a wonderful new school year in Head Start. Your children and their teachers have been very busy getting to know everyone, working on routines and transitions, and diving into the concepts of the curriculum.

For this first newsletter, we feel it is important to share some information about the curriculum and the engaging learning experiences your children will participate in. Below is a list of learning tools and a description of how they help all of our young learners get ready for school:

Math Shelf: Math Shelf is an evidence-based Pre-K and Kindergarten tablet math program proven to increase students' achievements two years in just six months. Students complete lessons on Math Shelf for 20 minutes each week.

GoldFinch: This is a research-driven, observational and game-based assessment platform for young children that provides teachers with efficient, objective, and actionable insights into each child's developmental progress. Students engage in a gamelike activity on an iPad, which provides an assessment of a variety of language, math, and cognitive skills each week.

Renaissance Star Early Literacy: Star Assessments provide consistent data that helps educators make informed decisions, including next steps, throughout the year. Our students complete this assessment at least three times per year. Collaborative classrooms complete this assessment monthly.

Creative Curriculum: The Creative Curriculum for Preschool empowers children to be confident, creative, and caring learners through play-based, hands-on investigations.

Al's Pals: Al's Pals is an evidence-based, comprehensive social-emotional learning curriculum designed to meet the specific needs of preschool children. Al's Pals promotes skills such as self-control, problem-solving, friendship, and healthy decision-making.

STEAM Xpress: The STEAM Xpress curriculum integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics concepts into unique hands-on applied learning experiences.

Mississippi Beginnings: The Office of Early Childhood provides an open-source curriculum for four-year-old preschool classrooms (public, private, childcare, home care, Head Start). The MS Beginnings: Pre-K curriculum is intended to support any preschool teacher in providing rich, play-based, intentional, developmentally appropriate instruction. When implemented with fidelity, the MS Beginnings: Pre-K curriculum builds social-emotional, executive function, language, literacy, math, and vocabulary skills.

As you can see, we are so fortunate to have access to a wide variety of resources and materials to engage our children in wonderful learning experiences, and track progress and growth throughout the year. It is always exciting to see our young learners grow in all areas of the curriculum.

In addition to the resources listed above, our caring teachers participate in monthly professional development opportunities, and they work closely with members of the education team to ensure that they implement the curriculum with fidelity, and develop inviting, exciting, and age-appropriate learning environments and instruction.

The Head Start Education Team is looking forward to meeting with families during our monthly parent meetings, at special school events, and during family workshops and training. We certainly could not do the important work of helping young children get ready for school without the support of our wonderful community of families. We are honored to have the opportunity to work with your children and give each and every one of them the best head start possible.

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

TEACHERS OF THE MONTH



Cherielyn Dannemiller
Annie's Kindergarten & Daycare



Monysya Gibson, CDA
EHS-Rosa Site

FAMILY SERVICES

Family Service Newsletter (August)

Family Service Department would like to welcome our parents to Picayune School District Early Head Start / Head Start, school year of 2025-2026. Our department is excited to have the opportunity to work together to support your child's growth and success. Our goal is to work with our families to achieve self-sufficiency while promoting families well-being and a safe, nurturing environment for the child. Family Service will keep our families informed of upcoming events, important dates and resources that can support the child's development and enhance family engagement. Congratulation to our 2025-2026 Parent Committee Officers.

Early Head Start / Annie's

Meaghan Ford Chairperson
Kelisha McMorris Vice-Chairperson
Mahaganey Magee Secretary
Chaniece Woodson Asst. Secretary
Macie Cowart Treasurer
Amanda Barrios Parliamentarian

Nicholson Early Head Start

Julia Reiter, Chairperson
Haley Crawford, Co-Chairperson
Natasha Wilson, Secretary
Denisse Coronel Co-Secretary
Kelli Smith Treasurer
Amanda Tricoche Parliamentarian

Picayune Head Start

Kelisha McMorris Chairperson Ariel
Marchetta Co-Chairperson
Allison Jones Secretary
Savannah Folse Asst. Secretary
Andrea Orgeron Treasurer
Mandy Mathis Parliamentarian

Poplarville Head Start

Ashley Jordan Chairperson
Straley Reiter Vice-Chairperson
Blanche Keesee Secretary
Ebony Pittman Assistant Secretary
Derek Lee Treasurer
Sabrina Ruit, Parliamentary

ERSEA

RECRUITMENT

Don't Miss Out on community news!

We'll let our picayune families know about their services and MONTHLY food drives

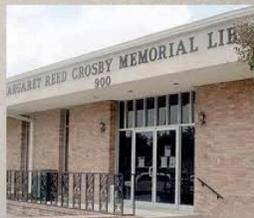
ON AUGUST 19, OUR TEAM HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF VISITING JACOB'S WELL MINISTRIES IN POPLARVILLE DURING THEIR FOOD DISTRIBUTION EVENT. THIS INCREDIBLE EFFORT PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO 512 HOUSEHOLDS! IT WAS INSPIRING TO WITNESS THE DEDICATION OF THE VOLUNTEERS, WHO WORKED TIRESLESSLY FOR HOURS ORGANIZING GOODS AND LOADING CARS UNDER THE HOT SUN, ALL WHILE MAINTAINING RADIANT, PATIENT SMILES. WHILE THERE, OUR TEAM DISTRIBUTED OVER 250 FLYERS AND ENGAGED IN MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS WITH FAMILIES AS THEY WAITED IN LINE. THESE MOMENTS ALLOW US TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROGRAM, LISTEN TO THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY, AND CONNECT FAMILIES WITH RESOURCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



TO START OUR RECRUITMENT EFFORTS, our team joined the Library Book Sale, a wonderful event where families of all ages come together, not only to find their favorite books but also to connect, share real-life stories, and build new friendships.

During the event, we had the chance to meet A LOVELY COUPLE OF grandparents. Our conversations naturally turned to the importance of social skills and other developmental milestones in early childhood. THEY WERE interested in learning how Early Head Start can support their 19-month-old granddaughter, and they shared that they would encourage their daughter to connect with us for more information. We also distributed flyers featuring program details with the Picayune School District calendar on the reverse side, and donated laminated bookmarks for visitors to take home, a small gesture to make reading even more enjoyable!

Moments like these remind us how vital community events are, not only for discovering great books but also for strengthening relationships and supporting families in their parenting journey.



In-Kind

Completing your in-kind daily is very important. We ask that you contribute to completing our monthly goals at Early Head Start/ Head Start. If you are having problems please reach out to your Family Advocate.

Upcoming Parent Meetings

The parent committee is to provide every parent of an enrolled child with the opportunity to receive up-to-date information on all component service of the program and assist in the decision making of program planning and activities of their children. We ask that everyone please attend their child's scheduled Parent Meeting.

Nicholson Early Head Start: (Tuesday, September 2, 2025 @ 4 p.m.)

Early Head Start: (Tuesday, September 2, 2025 @ 5 p.m.)

PRCC Lab School (Wednesday, September 3, 2025 @ 3:30 p.m.)

Poplarville Head Start (Wednesday, September 3, 2025 @ 4:30 p.m.)

Picayune Head Start (Thursday, September 4, 2025 @ 5 p.m.)

Upcoming Event: Grandparents Day

(September 5, 2025) Early Head Start / NEHS/Annie's

Poplarville Head Start (September 19th) Picayune Head Start (TBA)



HEALTH

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBSEITY AWARENESS MONTH



Childhood obesity is a complex disease with many contributing factors, including genetics, eating patterns, physical activity levels, and sleep routines. Compared to children with healthy weight, children with obesity are at a higher risk for asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems, type 2 diabetes, and other health issues. Although there is no one solution, there are many ways parents and caregivers can help children have a healthy weight and set up lifelong healthy habits.

- Model a healthy eating pattern
- Move more as a family
- Set consistent sleep routines
- Replace screen time with active family time
- Provide plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grain products
- Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils and beans for protein
- Include low-fat or non-fat milk or dairy products, such as cheese and yogurt
- Encourage your family to drink water instead of sugary drinks

START HEALTHY HABITS EARLY!! FROM THE HEALTH TEAM

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

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1. Labor day Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Milk, Water	2. Breakfast: Cheesy Grits, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Red Beans and Rice, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges Milk, Water	3. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Steamed Carrots, Fresh Baked Roll, Blueberries, Milk, Water	4. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Baked Beans, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	5. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Strawberries, Milk, Water
8. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Milk, Water	9. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger Steak w/ Gravy, Green Peas, Fresh Baked Roll, Strawberries, Milk, Water	10. Breakfast: Rice Chex Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	11. Breakfast: Grits, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Steamed Carrots, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water	12. Breakfast: Waffle, Kiwi, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Sweet Potato Fries, Applesauce, Milk, Water
15. Breakfast: Cheese Toast, Apple Sauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Chili on Bun, Yam Patty, Strawberries, Milk, Water	16. Breakfast: Grits, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheesy Chicken w/Rice, Turnip Greens, Corn Bread, Diced Pears, Applesauce, Milk, Water	17. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: BBQ Chicken on Bun, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water	18. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water	19. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Diced Pears, Milk, Water Lunch: Baked Chicken Tenders, Fresh Baked Potatoes, Steamed Carrots, Mandarin Oranges Milk, Water
22. Breakfast: French Toast, Apple Sauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Baked Sliced Potatoes, Strawberries, Milk, Water	23. Breakfast: Cheesy Grits, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Red Beans and Rice, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges Milk, Water	24. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Steamed Carrots, Fresh Baked Roll, Blueberries, Milk, Water	25. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Baked Beans, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	26. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Strawberries, Milk, Water
29. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Milk, Water	30. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger Steak w/ Gravy, Green Peas, Fresh Baked Roll, Strawberries, Milk, Water	1. Breakfast: Rice Chex Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	2. Breakfast: Grits, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Steamed Carrots, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water	3. Breakfast: Waffle, Kiwi, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Sweet Potato 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

MENTAL HEALTH

Preparing for student's mental wellness in the upcoming year!!

The Mental Health Team would like to welcome everyone into the new school year with open arms and minds. We are here to support a program wide culture that promotes children's mental health, social and emotional well being, and overall health. We will be the support for our positive learning environment with strategies for supporting children with challenging behaviors and other social, emotional, and mental health needs. Also, we will be working with licensed Therapist to assist with meeting the children and families needs.



At a Glance



What is Children's Mental Health?

Being mentally healthy during childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones and learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems. Mentally healthy children have a positive quality of life and can function well at home, in school, and in their communities.

What are common childhood mental disorders?

Among the more common mental disorders that can be diagnosed in childhood are attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety (fears or worries), and behavior disorders.

Other childhood disorders and concerns that affect how children learn, behave, or handle their emotions can include learning and developmental disabilities, autism, and risk factors like substance use and self-harm.

What are the symptoms of childhood mental disorders?

Symptoms of mental disorders change over time as a child grows, and may include difficulties with how a child plays, learns, speaks, and acts, or how the child handles their emotions. Symptoms often start in early childhood, although some disorders may develop during the teenage years. The diagnosis is often made in the school years and sometimes earlier; however, some children with a mental disorder may not be recognized or diagnosed as having one.

Can childhood mental disorders be treated?

Childhood mental disorders can be treated and managed. There are many treatment options based on the best and most current medical evidence. Parents and doctors should work closely with everyone involved in the child's treatment—teachers, coaches, therapists, and other family members. Taking advantage of all the resources available will help parents, health professionals, and educators guide the child towards success. Early diagnosis and appropriate services for children and their families can make a difference in the lives of children with mental disorders.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Head Start & Early Head Start "Disability Service Area" Newsletter

Welcome to a New School Year!

Dear Families,

We are excited to welcome you and your child to a brand-new school year in our Head Start and Early Head Start programs! The beginning of the year is always a special time, filled with new routines, friendships, and opportunities for learning and growth.

The First 45 Days of School

The first 45 days of the school year are especially important. During this time, teachers and staff focus on:

- Building strong, trusting relationships with children and families.
- Helping children adjust to daily routines and classroom expectations.
- Observing each child's strengths, interests, and areas where support may be needed.
- Completing important developmental screenings to better understand your child's needs.

These first weeks set the foundation for a successful year!

Developmental Screenings & Assessments

Within the first 45 days, all children in Head Start and Early Head Start will receive screenings in key areas such as:

- Hearing and vision
- Speech and language development
- Social-emotional skills
- Motor development
- Cognitive and problem-solving skills

Screenings are quick, child-friendly, and help us ensure your child is on track. If any concerns are identified, we will talk with you right away and work together on next steps.

Early Intervention Matters

Early intervention is the key to helping children thrive. When children receive support early in areas such as communication, behavior, or learning, they are more likely to succeed later in

school and life.

- If a screening shows your child may need additional support, we will guide you through available services and resources.
- Families are an important part of this process—your input helps us understand your child best.

Working Together

Your partnership is at the heart of our program. Please:

- Share updates about your child with teachers.
- Attend family meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Ask questions about screenings or developmental milestones.

When families and teachers work hand-in-hand, children make the greatest progress.

Tips for a Smooth Start

- Establish a consistent bedtime and morning routine.
- Talk with your child about their day, even if they use few words—listening matters!
- Read together daily, even for just 10 minutes.
- Celebrate small successes—new friends, new skills, and new routines.

We look forward to a year of learning, laughter, and growth with your child. Thank you for trusting us to be part of your child's early learning journey!

Warm regards,
Sonya Lather-Newkirk, MS
Disability Manager, EHS-HS

