



JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Picayune School District Early Childhood Programs



Nicholson Early Head Start

Story Time with Debbie W.

EDUCATION -EHS/CCP

Welcome to a bright, shiny New Year! We are very excited about all of the learning and growth that your children will experience in 2026! The first 5 years of life are so important as these early years lay a foundation for children's future well-being.

This month, we will celebrate our 100th day of school! Your children will participate in lots of fun learning activities by counting objects, preparing special snacks, creating crafts and artwork, and playing games all related to the concept of 100. Check out this article for some wonderful children's books that you can get from the library to help bring math to life!
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2017/now-read-this-books-bring-math-life>

Curriculum investigations for this month include a study of shoes in Early Head Start, while Head Start children will continue their exploration of trees and move onto a study of clothes. In our curriculum, we start with ideas that children have some experience and knowledge about, so we can build on those ideas to foster deeper learning in all areas of development. Please take time to talk with your child about the things that are in his or her world every day. Discuss colors, sizes, textures, amounts, and what things are used for. Ask your child to share his or her thoughts, feelings, and opinions. These intentional conversations will help your child to develop language and mathematical thinking, and build important background knowledge that is essential for future learning and connections. Most importantly, it's a loving way to spend time with your little one.

For some great tips on building rich background knowledge with your child, please visit:
<https://www.headstart.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/big5-strategies-parents-families-background-knowledge-eng.pdf>.

In closing, please help us to show our appreciation for our wonderful January Teachers of the Month, who devote so much to our children's loving care and learning every day.

- Picayune Head Start: Alexa Dickens and Annice Semmes
- Poplarville Head Start: Betty Young
- EHS Rosa: Dajon Evans and Alyssa Esposito
- CCP: Orianna Polk from Ms. Annie's PreK
- EHS Nicholson: Rebecca Donald

The Education Team wishes all of our families and precious children a joyful and healthy New Year! Thank you for allowing us the privilege of working with you and your children.

Sincerely,

Jessica Stubbs, Education Director
 Charlotte Nixon, EHS Education Manager
 Robette Watts, CCP Education Manager
 Ashley Veerkamp, Head Start Education Manager
 LaKeshia Price, Head Start Mentor Coach
 Dinah Thanars, Head Start Mentor Coach

TEACHERS OF THE MONTH



Alyssa Esposito
Rosa EHS



Dajon Evans, CDA
Rosa EHS



Rebecca Donald
Nicholson EHS



Orianna Polk
Ms. Annie's Site

FAMILY SERVICE DEPARTMENT



Family Service Department DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Family Service Department strives 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 our family accomplishments and upcoming events at Early Head Start /Head Start CCP.

SPOTLIGHT ON PARENT



Spotlight on Our Top Volunteer!

SHOUT OUT to Ms. Tristion Stuart for contributing the most volunteer hours for the month of December! Early Head Start, Monica Raines. She has successfully completed Nursing School from Northshore Technical Community College. Once again congratulations and remember, "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to just one more time.



Spotlight on Our Top Volunteer!

A Big Shout out to Aryna Hollander, parent at Annie's Daycare for having the most volunteer hours in the month of December. Hard work will ultimately pay off.



Spotlight on a Parent Accomplishment!

We would like to take this opportunity to spotlight and congratulate one of our parents from the Poplarville Head Start, Monica Raines. She has successfully completed Nursing School from Northshore Technical Community College. Once again congratulations and remember, "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to just one more time.

In-Kind Per Site	Upcoming Events
Site	EHS/Annie's Fatherhood (Donuts with Dad)
Annie's	Raffle (January 20 - 30) 50 inch TV
PRCC	Martin Luther King Celebration (Jan 15 th)
EHS	NEHS that is scheduled for month (100 days)
NEHS	100 days of School (CBA)
Picayune Head Start	Picayune Head Start: Martin Luther
Poplarville Head Start	King Celebration
Start	Poplarville Head Start: Martin Luther
Pre-K South Side	King March (Jan 10 th)
Monthly Parent Meeting	
NEHS: January 13 th 4p.m.	
EHS: January 13 th 5p.m.	
PRCC: January 14 th 3:30 p.m.	
Poplarville Head Start	
January 7 th 4:30p.m.	
Picayune HS / Pre-K:	
January 8 th 4:00 p.m.	

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY (NO SCHOOL) December 22, 2025 - January 6, 2026
 Return to School on (January 7, 2026)

ERSEA

HEAD START RECRUITMENT DECEMBER 2025

HOLIDAY CHEER WELCOMES NEW FAMILIES AT SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT EVENT!



In the spirit of the season, the day began with a festive touch! The first three families to arrive received a special holiday treat directly from "Santa" and our dedicated EHS EEF. This gesture helped set a fun and welcoming tone, reinforcing our commitment to making every family feel special from the moment they join our community.

Progress and Partnership
 The event proved highly productive, serving as a vital touchpoint for both staff and parents.

- Document Collection: We successfully gathered essential enrollment documents, significantly streamlining the initial registration process.
- Questions Answered: Our team was on hand to answer the most common and important questions parents had, ensuring clarity and peace of mind about our services and curriculum.
- Recruitment Advanced: Most importantly, the day was a significant step forward in our recruitment efforts, bringing us closer to filling our available spots and starting new partnerships with enthusiastic families.

It was truly rewarding to see so many families dedicate their time to visit us and express such keen interest in joining our program. Their commitment is the best sign that we are offering a needed and valued service.

We look forward to continuing the enrollment process and officially welcoming these wonderful new families into the Picayune community!



MENTAL HEALTH

Welcome to January!
It's **Mental Wellness Month**

Building Emotional Health in the Early Years
— For children ages 12 months to 5 years. —

12-24 Months	2-3 Years	3-5 Years
Security & Attachment Feeling Safe & Loved	Navigating Big Feelings Understanding Emotions	Social Skills & Self-Esteem Making Friends & Feeling Capable

Naming the Clouds =
— Helping Kids with Emotions —

1. Name It "You seem really upset."	2. Validate It "It's okay to feel sad."	3. Calm Together "Let's take a deep breath."
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— Just for You: The Caregiver's Corner —
— Take 5 Minutes for Yourself Each Day: —

- Breathe & Relax**
- Unplug Before Bed**
- Acknowledge Your Wins**
You matter, too.

Wishing you a happy & healthy January!

DISABILITY SERVICES

January Disability Services Newsletter
Picayune School District Head Start & Early Head Start

Happy New Year, Families! 🎉

As we begin a new year, the Disability Services team is excited to continue partnering with families, teachers, and community providers to support the growth, inclusion, and success of every child. January is a time for fresh starts, collaboration, and strengthening routines that support children's developmental needs.

January Focus – Disability Services

- Inclusive classroom support and routines
- Monitoring IFSP/IEP progress
- Family and provider collaboration

Developmental & Instructional Support

Disability Services supports children by monitoring **IFSPs** and **IEPs**, collaborating with teachers on **individualized strategies and accommodations**, observing progress across environments, and partnering with families to support developmental goals at home and school.

Family Tip: Share updates with your child's teacher or Disability Services staff about progress or concerns you notice at home.

Social-Emotional & Behavioral Support

Transitions after the holidays can be challenging. Disability Services supports emotional regulation, positive behavior strategies, and consistent routines. Please reach out with any concerns—early support makes a difference.

Winter Health & Safety Tips

- Dress children in layers for outdoor play
- Wash hands frequently
- Keep children home if sick
- Keep emergency contact information updated

Family Engagement & Goal Setting

Families are essential partners. January is a great time to review goals, share observations, and participate in scheduled meetings or follow-ups.

Disability Services & Inclusion

We provide inclusive services for children of all abilities, including screenings, evaluation referrals, coordination with Early Intervention and Special Education partners, and ongoing monitoring of services and progress.

Important Reminders

- Attend scheduled meetings
- Keep contact information current
- Notify staff of outside therapy or evaluation updates

Thank you for partnering with Disability Services. Together, we are committed to ensuring every child is supported, included, and given the opportunity to succeed.

Disability Services Contact Information

Picayune School District – Head Start/Early Head Start
Disability Services Department
Phone: 601-799-1716 | 601-795-1402
Email: slather@pcu.k12.ms.us

Sincerely,
Sonya Lather-Newkirk
Disability Services Manager
Picayune School District Head Start/Early Head Start
Inclusion, collaboration, and early support make a difference. 🌟



January 2026 (Head Start / Early Head Start Center-Based Menu)

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