



FAMILY SERVICES

Family Service Department NEWSLETTER

SPOTLIGHT:



Julie Reiter

Celebrating a Nursing School Graduate: We are proud to recognize one of our dedicated parents, Julia R. (Chairperson) for achieving an incredible milestone—graduating from nursing school! Inspiring, family responsibilities, school, and countless hours of studying in no small feat, yet Julia demonstrated remarkable perseverance, commitment, and passion throughout the journey. Please join us at congratulating Julia on this outstanding accomplishment! (Nicholson Early Head)



Amanda

Amanda Trikoche will be graduating from Arizona State University as a Bachelor of Social Work with a Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice and a 3.9 GPA. This achievement represents years of dedication, hard work, and perseverance. I am deeply grateful for the Early Head Start program and the support, encouragement, and resources it has provided along the way. EHS has been a meaningful part of helping me continue working toward my goals while supporting my family. My goal is to use my education to make a positive difference in the lives of others, especially individuals who have faced challenges or justice involvement. I hope to help people defend their lives, find success, and move beyond the stigma that often follows a mistake. I am especially passionate about supporting young people through early intervention and community-based services. I believe that with guidance, encouragement, and the right support, young people can thrive beyond their circumstances and build a brighter future. (Nicholson)



Tabitha

Nicholson Early Head Start-Parent Spotlight: Graduating with a Degree in Health Science

We would like to spotlight, Tabitha Oscura for completing the Health Science Program at Pearl River Community College. Today, we celebrate your hard work, your sacrifices, and your success. The journey wasn't easy, but you made it and that's something to be proud of every single day.

You are not just building a brighter future for yourself, but also setting an amazing example for your family and



Nicole Huesmann

After months of intense studying, countless clinical hours, and balancing the beautiful chaos of raising six children, I am thrilled to announce my graduation from nursing school. This journey required tireless dedication, turning late-night studying into early-morning parenting, and finding strength in moments that seemed impossible. Through it all, I relied on my faith and the promise in Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." This degree is a testament to that dedication, and I am excited to bring compassion, empathy, and a heart for service into my new career, knowing that I am serving the Lord through caring for others. (Annie's Kindergarten)



Congratulations!!!
From the Staff of Early Head

(March) In-Kind

Annie's	6,589.24
PRCC	1,594.32
NEHS	7,057.21
EHS	13,066.04
Picayune HS	13,583.02
Pre-K	4,194.60
Poplarville HS	2,273.85

Transition Ceremonies

PRCC (May 1, 2026)
EHS, NEHS & Annie's (May 11*)
Picayune HS (May 12*)
Pre-K (May 20*)
Poplarville (May 15*)

Teacher Appreciation

Week (May 4-8)
Poplarville HS Parent Appreciation (May 12th)
NEHS Pancakes with Pops (May 15th)
NEHS Mommie & Me Picnic (May 8*)
PHS Queens & Sweet Treat (May 1*)
PHS Donuts & Dudes (May 21*)
Pre-K (May 18*)

Parent Meetings

NEHS (May 6th 8:00 a.m.) / EHS / Annie's (May 5th 5:00 p.m.)
Parent Curriculum: April 14, 2026
Picayune Head Start (May 8th 4:00 p.m.)

EDUCATION -EHS/CCP

Dear Head Start and Early Head Start Families,

It is the last month of the school year! As we look forward to next year, we also reflect on how much your children have grown and learned this year! Early childhood is an amazing period of development, and it has been our joyful work to be a partner in your precious children's first school experience.

This month, our teachers and children are working hard preparing for transitions. All children will be in a new classroom, program, or school next year, and it is our goal to prepare them for the next step in their education. It is so important that you continue to work with your children over the summer; talk with them, read, and explore with them. Help them to grow physically through gross motor play like going to the park or riding bikes, and work on fine motor skills and hand strength by playing with playdoh, scribbling with crayons, and using silverware at the table.

The Pearl River County libraries offer wonderful story times, children's activities, and lots of high-quality programming for adults as well! Please visit the library with your families this summer! For information on library events, check out their website at <https://pearlriver.lib.ms.us/>

Over the summer break, many children increase their consumption of electronic media. It is important to think critically about how your child engages with devices and media. This is a complex issue and simply limiting "screen time" is not how our digitally native children will benefit the most from media. To hear a great a conversation on this topic from the American Academy of Pediatrics, please visit

[https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/media-and-child/center-of-excellence-on-social-media-and-youthmental-health/qa-portal/qa-portal-library/qa-portal-library-questions/screen-time-guidelines/.](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/media-and-child/center-of-excellence-on-social-media-and-youthmental-health/qa-portal/qa-portal-library/qa-portal-library-questions/screen-time-guidelines/)

We urge you to learn more about the complexity of how children of all ages engage in modern media, and how you can make good decisions about what is best for your child.

This month's Creative Curriculum studies include exploring all kinds of seats in Early Head Start, and Head Start children will investigate balls, water, trees, and recycling. As always, please extend all of this important learning at home by talking and reading with your child, and exploring how these things are used in your home and community.

As always, we are so grateful to our dedicated teachers! If you see any of these lovely ladies, please take a moment to thank them for all that they do every day:

- Picayune Head Start: Hope Dabrovolskis and Marlee Smith
- Poplarville Head Start: Teresa Bowden
- EHS Rosa: Aaliyah Stewart and Elisha Underwood
- CCP: Makya Thomas at Miss Annie's PreK
- EHS Nicholson: Jamilya Frazier & Nora Barquero-Mejia.

We sincerely thank all of our families for your support this year, and for sharing beautiful children with us. We are wishing you all a very happy and safe summer!

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

TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Jamilya Frazier, CDA
EHS Nicholson Site



Nora Barquero-Mejia, CDA
EHS Nicholson Site



Makya Thomas
EHS CCP Agency

DISABILITY SERVICES

HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START

Disability Services Newsletter – May Edition

From the Disability Services Area Manager

A Message to Our Families

As we enter the month of May, we celebrate growth, progress, and the amazing achievements of our children! This is also a time of transition and reflection as we prepare for summer and the next steps in your child's educational journey. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Social-Emotional Development

Helping children understand their feelings supports positive behavior:

- Name emotions: "You seem happy/sad/frustrated."
- Teach calming strategies like deep breathing
- Praise positive behaviors and efforts

Strong emotional skills build confidence and relationships.

May Focus: Helping Your Child Grow Every Day

Children develop skills through everyday moments. Here are simple ways you can support learning at home:

- Build Language Skills**
Talk with your child throughout the day. Ask questions and encourage them to express their thoughts.
- Encourage Independence**
Let your child try things on their own like putting on clothes, brushing teeth, or cleaning up toys.
- Practice Fine Motor Skills**
Coloring, drawing, using scissors, and playing with small objects help strengthen hand muscles.

Let's Get Moving!

Physical activity supports healthy development:

- Play outside daily when possible
- Practice running, jumping, climbing, and balancing
- Try fun family activities like walks, dancing, or games

Supporting Children with IEPs & IFSPs

If your child receives services:

- Continue working on goals at home through play and routines
- Stay in contact with teachers, therapists, and service providers
- Attend all scheduled meetings and ask questions—your input is important

Remember: You are your child's first and most important teacher!

Important Reminders

- Keep all scheduled screenings and appointments
- Share any outside evaluations or concerns with us
- Stay connected with your child's teacher and service team

Transition Tips for Families

If your child is moving to preschool, kindergarten, or another program:

- Talk positively about the new school environment
- Practice routines like sitting, listening, and following directions
- Read books about starting school
- Visit the new school if possible

Transitions can be emotional—reassurance and consistency help children adjust.

We Are Here to Support You!

If you have concerns about your child's development or need assistance, please reach out:

Disability Services Area Manager
 ☎ 601-795-1402
 ✉ slather@pcu.k12.ms.us

Final Thought

Every child learns and grows at their own pace. With patience, support, and encouragement, great things happen!

Thank you for being an important part of our Head Start/Early Head Start family. Have a safe, happy, and healthy May!

Final Thought

Every child learns and grows at their own pace. With patience, support, and encouragement, great things happen!

Thank you for being an important part of our Head Start/Early Head Start family. Have a safe, happy, and healthy May!

Together, we support every child, every step of the way.

MENTAL HEALTH

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

When we think about children's health, we often think about check-ups, health food, and sleep- but mental health is just as important. In early childhood, mental health is about how children feel, connect, express themselves, and handle life's small (but big to them) challenges. These early years are powerful. A child's brain is growing rapidly, and every interaction helps shape how they see themselves and the world around them.

What Mental Wellness Looks Like

Mental wellness in children doesn't mean they are always calm or happy. It means they are learning, little by little, how to handle their emotions. It looks like a child who feels safe enough to express themselves, who is beginning to trust others, and who is slowly learning how to calm down with support. These skills take time, guidance, and consistency.

The Power of Everyday Moments

Supporting your child's mental health doesn't require special tools or perfect parenting. It happens in everyday moments—when you listen, when you comfort, when you slow down and give your attention. When a child is upset and you stay calm, you are teaching them how to manage emotions. When you name what they're feeling, you are giving them language. When you spend time together, you are building security and trust. These moments may seem small, but they have a lasting impact.

When to Look a Little Closer

All children have difficult moments, but if challenges begin to happen often or feel overwhelming, it may be time to seek additional support. Changes in sleep, frequent intense outbursts, or withdrawing from others can all be signs that a child may need extra help. Reaching out early can make a meaningful difference.

Simple Ways to Support Your Child

Talk to your child about their feelings, even the hard ones, so they begin to understand what's happening inside of them. Keep daily routines as consistent as possible, because predictability helps children feel safe.

During challenging moments, your calm presence matters more than having the "perfect" response. Children learn how to regulate themselves by first experiencing someone else staying calm with them.

Encouraging play, creativity, and expression gives children healthy ways to release emotions—and simple games can make this both fun and powerful.

Try a game called "Feelings Check-In." At the end of the day, ask your child to describe their day using a weather report. They might say, "It was sunny when I played," or "stormy when I got upset." This helps children express emotions in a way that feels safe and easy.

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

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
4. Breakfast: Cheese Toast, Apple Sauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Chili on Bun, Yam Patty, Strawberries, Milk, Water	5. Breakfast: Grits, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheesy Chicken w/Rice, Turnip Greens, Corn Bread, Diced Pears, Applesauce, Milk, Water	6. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: BBQ Chicken on Bun, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water	7. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water	8. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Diced Pears, Milk, Water Lunch: Baked Chicken Tenders, Fresh Baked Roll, Steamed Carrots, Mandarin Oranges Milk, Water
11. French Toast, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Yam Patty, Strawberries, Milk, Water	12. Breakfast: Cheesy Grits, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Red Beans and Rice, Spinach, Fresh Baked Roll, Mandarin Oranges Milk, Water	13. Breakfast: Chex Cinnamon Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Steamed Carrots, Fresh Baked Roll, Blueberries, Milk, Water	14. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Baked Beans, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	15. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Sliced Baked Potatoes, Strawberries, Milk, Water
18. Breakfast: Oatmeal, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water Lunch: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Spinach, Fresh Baked, Applesauce, Milk, Water	19. Breakfast: Biscuit with Egg Patty, Mandarin Oranges, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger Steak w/ Gravy, Fresh Baked Roll, Strawberries, Milk, Water	20. Breakfast: Rice Chex Cereal, Diced Pineapple, Milk, Water Lunch: Grilled Chicken on Bun, Broccoli, Diced Pears, Milk, Water	21. Breakfast: Grits, Applesauce, Milk, Water Lunch: Cheese Pizza, Steamed Carrots, Diced Peaches, Milk, Water	22. Breakfast: Waffle, Kiwi, Milk, Water Lunch: Hamburger on Bun, Sweet Potato Fries, Applesauce, Milk, Water
25.	26.	27.	28.	29.
<h1>Happy Summer Break</h1>				

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