

SEVCA Head Start Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter for December 2025



From the Desk of the
Director...

Dear Parents & Staff,

Wow! I can't believe it is December already! We have been busy over the last three months. So, let me share a few highlights:

We are still waiting to hear from OHS on our Focus Area 2 (FA2) final results, as we had our last follow-up meeting with them on August 28, 2025. Due to the government shutdown, we have not heard anything, now that it is back open, hopefully we will hear soon.

We have not been fully staffed all year...and we are actively looking for the right candidates. We are hiring for the following positions: teacher assistant position for Chester Community Preschool, for the full-year program, and a teacher associates for Pine Street Preschool, for the part-year program. These are both full-time positions and come with benefits, as well as a \$1500 sign on incentive! If

know of anyone thinking about getting involved in early childhood education, NOW is the time! Come join our team! Please contact Jodi Farashahi (jfarashahi@sevca.org) if you know anyone who might be interested. We are hoping to fill this position as soon as possible.

Our annual renewal application for the 5-year grant was approved by the Policy Council and the SEVCA Board at their meetings in November. The grant was submitted prior to the December 1st deadline.

Enrollment is still one of our biggest priorities. We have been hovering around this number since we opened in September. We currently have a few openings in Head Start and Child Care, so if you know of anyone interested in sending their child to a quality ECE program, please have them contact our Family Partners! (Their contact info is listed later in this newsletter!) It is important for us to remain fully enrolled, so please help us reach our

goal of being fully enrolled and establish a waiting list!!

Policy Council elected the following officers during their meeting on November 19, 2025, Suzanne Walden as the Chairperson, Julie Willey Co-Chairperson, TBD (still looking!) Secretary and Jessica Ucci as the PC representative to the SEVCA Board. A **HUGE** thank you to everyone that stepped up to fill these positions. We appreciate your time and effort in contributing to the success of our program.

We are very fortunate to have an incredible staff this year! There is so much talent, experience and dedication that goes into making our program successful every day. A BIG shout out to ALL Head Start staff...thank you for all that you do each and every day. It does not go unnoticed, and we greatly appreciate YOU! You are the "heart" in our Head Start program! Thank you!

I hope everyone gets to spend time with family and friends during this holiday season and take time to enjoy the break!

Happy Holidays!
Lori Canfield
Head Start Director

The following children had **100%** attendance in October:



Chester Community Preschool:

CCP1: Joslyn A., Luna D., Parker M., Arabella U.

CCP2: Brendan K., Lorelei J., Julia L., Brooks L., Colt W.

Pine Street Preschool:

Daisy Room: Mariela W.

Willow Room: Ember M.

Theodore W., Laila P.

In-Kind Winners for the month of

October: **CCP**

CCP, way to go!!

You Rock!!

Important Dates to Remember:

December 5, 2025

P/T Conference #2 will be held.

Centers and Child Care are CLOSED.

December 17, 2025

Policy Council Meeting; 9:30AM

December 23, 2025

Early Release, Ed Meeting. Child Care is OPEN.

December 24-26, 2025

Winter Break, all centers are CLOSED. Child Care is CLOSED, and Head Start Management offices are CLOSED.

December 31, 2025

All Staff In-Service. Centers and Child Care are CLOSED.



Classroom Updates...

Chester Community Preschool

CCP1

Ms. Jodie, Ms. Karie and Ms. Sarah

For the month of November we have been learning about Colors, Shapes & Patterns. We talked about circles, and the kids circle painting with various size circles dipped in paint. We made shape houses and triangle pizza slices for our Pizza Restaurant. We enjoyed a tasty fruit pizza with rice cakes, yogurt, strawberries, blueberries and raspberries. We turned our big letter P into a pumpkin. We painted pumpkins and then gave them a wash in the water table. We read Spookly the Square Pumpkin and then had the kids create their own version of Spookly!



We painted our big letter Y yellow and added yellow yarn to it. We then created yellow ducks by using forks dipped in paint, then added the features of the duck. We read Little Blue Little Yellow and then we did an experiment with playdoh. We gave each child a small ball of yellow and blue playdoh. The kids then mixed the playdoh together to create green playdoh! The kids loved this activity. We then did some handprint color mixing with yellow and blue paint.



We turned our big Letter R into a Rainbow! We created rainbow names by having the kids write each letter of their name on a different color of the rainbow. For a snack we made rainbow fruit kabobs. We also did some patterning with different colored leaves.

We finished off the end of the month with a visit from VINS where Miss Laurie talked about Preparing for Winter which will lead us into our next unit around Winter for December.



CCP2

Ms. Randi, Ms. Kim

What a fun-filled month we had exploring all things fall and farm! We kept busy with our letters, learning L for leaf, P for pig, and A for apple. The kids especially loved making leaf patterns and giggled their way through all our pig-themed fun.

Our art table was overflowing with creativity! We marbled-painted muddy pigs, used handprints to build tree trunks, and sponge-painted bright fall leaves. We even mixed in some yummy fall-themed

nutrition projects, which made our classroom smell extra delicious!

Our room transformed into a full-on farm adventure with a bustling farmers market in dramatic play, farm stamps in art, and lots of beautiful fall paintings at the easel. In the sensory table, the children dug through beans and seeds to complete our acorn letter match, building both literacy skills and lots of smiles.

We also had two special visitors this month. VINS came to bring some nature excitement our way, and Ms. Carrie, our town librarian, shared sweet stories about being thankful. After reading, we made a special craft and talked about all the things we are grateful for.

Next month, we can't wait to jump into our snowy winter theme... and of course, all things gingerbread!

Chester Community Preschool

Family Partner

Katie Murphy

December is already here, and the year seems to be flying by. With November behind us—and the warm weather with it—now is an ideal time to send in warm clothing

for your child. You may also want to keep an extra set of snow pants and boots at the center. If you need help obtaining any of these items, please don't hesitate to reach out; I am happy to support you.

We are grateful to have welcomed Jo White as our guest speaker during the recent Financial Empowerment Parent Meeting. Her insights, strategies, and practical tools were truly valuable, and we hope you found them helpful as well.

Home Visits are continuing to move forward, and we anticipate completing them soon. Thank you for opening your homes and allowing me the opportunity to connect with your family in such a meaningful way. As always, please feel free to contact me if your needs or goals shift at any time. Remember to check the CCP Family-Partner Facebook page, Seesaw, and the center's bulletin board on the ramp for upcoming Family Engagement activities and community events.

- Katie Murphy

Phone: (802) 460-0297

E-Mail: kmurphy@sevca.org

Facebook: CCP Family-Partner
(send me a friend request)

Don't forget to like us on
Facebook: SEVCA Head Start



Pine Street Preschool

Daisy Room

Ms. Sarah, Ms. Alisyn

Happy Fall! In November we have been learning all about Fall, Pumpkins and Apples. We had a special visit from VINS who taught us about squirrels and what different types of animals do to get ready for winter. We have learned about the letters L and P and are moving right around the alphabet.

Now we are learning all about gingerbread men and what they are up to. Will your family bring home Gingerbread Fred? What are gingerbread men up to when you're not at home? Our water table will be Make Your Own Hot Chocolate, and Dramatic play will be their very own Bakery. Here's to a wonderful start to winter.

Willow Room

Ms. Ruby, Ms. Christy, Ms. Crystal

Hello from the Willow Room! ☺

November has been a fun month and we've learned a lot of things about Fall and Five Senses! Kids learned what changes happen when it's fall and what clothes people wear. We enjoyed singing a new song entitled "Leaves Turn Yellow" to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?".



We've also learned about what our senses are and why they're so important. We did a lot of fun activities like

painting with apples, fruit patterning, fall positioning game, identifying loud and quiet objects, things that are soft and hard, made sound shakers, and we also did fall scavenger hunt. We also had so much fun playing the "Touch, Feel and Guess the Object" and also "Guess the sound" games.

We've learned things that we can do to help keep our eyes healthy. Our class has been learning a lot about ways to stay safe using our Second Step- Child Protection Unit

curriculum. VINS also came to visit us and taught us what animals do in the fall and how they prepare for the winter.

Next month, (December) we will be learning about Winter.



Pine Street Preschool Family
Partner

Michohn Parmenter

⚡ **December News from your family partner!** ⚡

Hi Families! Can you believe it's already December? Time sure flies when we're having fun! I wanted to start off by saying a big **THANK YOU** to all the families who welcomed me into your homes last month. It was so special getting to spend that time with you and

getting to know your family dynamics. ♥

I also want to give a shout-out to everyone who came to our **Financial Empowerment Night** — thank you for joining us and making it such a great evening of learning and connection!

∴ Coming Up: Family Craft Night!

Get ready for a fun and creative night with your kiddos! We'll have crafts, snacks, and lots of holiday cheer. **December 9th 5:00-6:00pm**— we can't wait to see you there!

As the weather gets colder, please remember to send in **warm clothes** each day — coats, hats, gloves, and boots if you have them. We go outside every day, and we want everyone to stay cozy and comfy while we play! If you need help with these items, please let me know! ❄️🧢

Thanks for all you do to make our community so special. We're so grateful for your support and can't wait to celebrate this season together!

With warmth,
Michohn Parmenter
mparmenter@sevca.org
802-460-1285

News from the Family/Community/Mental Health Services Manager Barbara Vandenburg

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year?

Fall has quickly tided into winter, and winter brings colder weather and the holidays. 'Tis the season to be jolly! Christmas music fills the air, festive decorations pop up at every corner, and everyone's heart fills with joy - right? Wrong. In fact, many people feel depressed, sad, lonely, and anxious or stressed during the holiday season. In between the shopping, cooking, cleaning, and family get-togethers, routines get pushed aside and it can become difficult to manage the expectations of a perfect holiday experience. The holiday season often brings excitement, anticipation and joy; but for some, it also brings anxiety, stress, and loneliness.

Typical sources of holiday sadness include fatigue, unrealistic expectations, family conflict, stress of managing traditions, financial burdens and the emotional stress that accompanies memories of past holidays or lost loved ones. Holiday stress can be summed up in one word: Demanding! Everywhere we turn, someone needs something! Time, money, donations, a side-dish for the church pot-luck, a gift for the gift-exchange, freshly baked cookies for Santa... somewhere in the midst of all those demands, we can lose sight of what really matters.

The good news is- you can manage holiday stress and avoid the "holiday blues." Consider these helpful hints to stay sane during the holiday season!

Acknowledge your Feelings: If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's important to express your feelings. Don't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

Reach Out: If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events or volunteer your time to help others in need.

Be Realistic: The holidays don't have to be perfect or look exactly like they did when you were a child, or even like they did last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Be flexible with tradition and expectations.

Set Aside Differences: Remember, sometimes loving someone means accepting them for exactly who they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time to work through them.

Stick to a Budget: Be realistic about what you can afford, and set limits for yourself when grocery or gift shopping.

Learn to Say No: Know your limits and don't take on more than you can handle.

Hang on to Healthy Habits: Maintain a normal routine during the holiday season whenever possible. Continue to eat healthy and get plenty of sleep and physical activity.

Slow Down and Enjoy: Don't let all of the preparing, cooking and wrapping take away from the time spent with family and loved ones. Relax and bring the focus back to what really matters.



chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://www.mercycare.org/app/files/public/c17f01c1-1432-4812-9d12-679c13d20436/Managing-Holiday-Stress.pdf>



individuals experiencing homelessness. A key component is the education subtitle, which guarantees that homeless children and youth have the right to immediate enrollment, transportation to their "school of origin," and other support services to ensure they can access a public education without interruption. The act defines homelessness broadly, including youth who are "sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar situations".

News from the Education/Disabilities Services Manager



On November 5th, Community Service members in Chester and Springfield met with Head Start staff to discuss concerns of families with preschool and school age children who are homeless. If your family is experiencing homelessness, please contact your Family Partner for support.

The weather is finally getting colder and snow has arrived, so please make sure to send your child with an appropriate change of clothes. Don't forget snow clothes as well-jacket, hat, mittens, snow pants and boots. Teachers have completed observations for the fall assessment period and will be meeting with parents to share children's progress on Friday, December 5, 2025. We continue the search for a Teacher Assistant at Chester Community Preschool, Teacher Associate at Pine Street Preschool, and substitutes for both centers. Stay warm and have a wonderful holiday!

Did you know?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a 1987 U.S. federal law that provides assistance and protections for

Birthday News for December



Chester Community Preschool

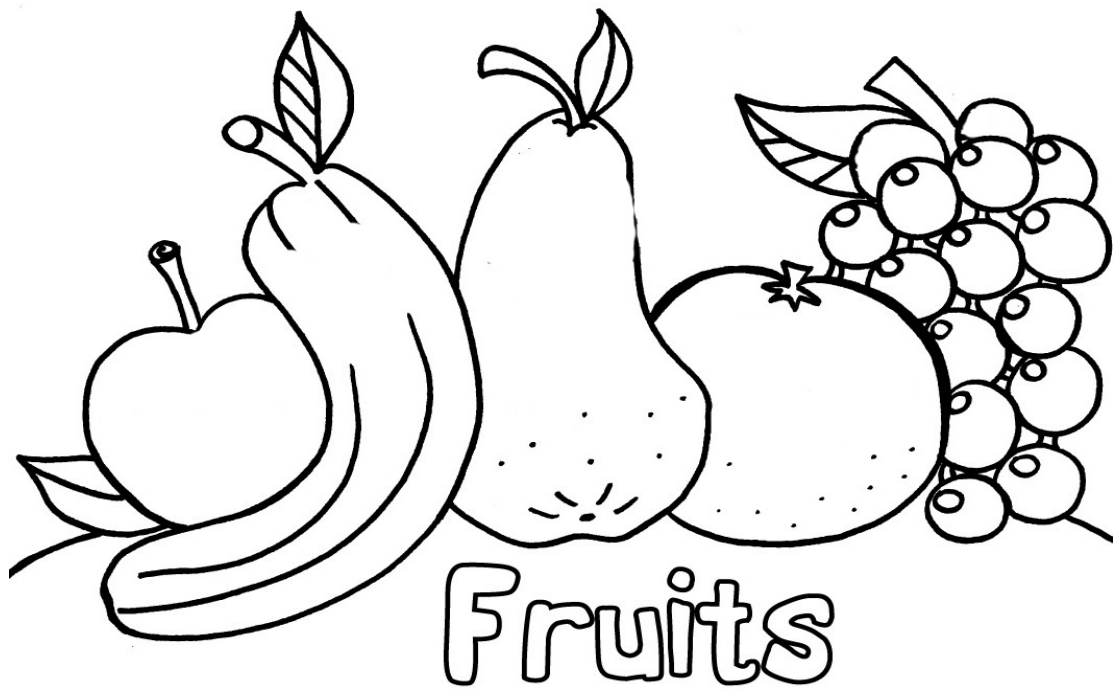
CCP1- None
CCP2- None

Pine Street Preschool

Daisy- None
Willow- None

Staff

CCP's Cook-*Vanessa H. 12/22*
Larissa J. 12/27



- Fruits contain vitamins and minerals that help your child grow and stay healthy.
- Fruits can be fresh, frozen, or canned.
- Choose canned fruits packed in water or 100% juice.

Smoothie Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 banana, small, ripe
- 1 cup Frozen fruit (you choose your favorite)
- 8 ounces yogurt (you choose your favorite)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk; 1% or skim

Directions

1. Peel banana. Using cutting boards and butter knife, cut banana into 1-inch chunks. Place the banana chunks in the blender.
2. Place the frozen fruit, yogurt, and milk in the blender with the banana.
3. Cover the blender and blend on high speed for about 1 minute or until the mixture is smooth.
4. Pour smoothie into cups and enjoy!

WIC APPROVED ACTIVITY

Today your child learned about fruits and colored this picture for you to post on your refrigerator.

To get credit for this WIC Approved Activity, call your WIC Office at **289-0600/295-8820** and let us know the recipe on this



Flu:

A Guide for Parents



Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. Flu is different from a cold and usually comes on suddenly. Each year flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

Flu can be very dangerous for children. CDC estimates that between 2010 - 2020, between 6,000 and 27,000 children younger than 5 years old have been hospitalized from flu each year in the U.S. Flu vaccine is safe and helps protect children from flu.

What parents should know

How serious is flu

While flu illness can vary from mild to severe, children often need medical care because of flu. Children younger than 5 years old and children of any age with certain long-term health problems are at increased risk of flu complications like pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections. Some health problems that are known to make children more vulnerable to flu include asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system.

How does flu spread?

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made when someone with flu coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. A person also can get flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

What are flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with flu will not have a fever.

Protect your child

How can I protect my child from flu?

The first and best way to protect against flu is to get a yearly flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older every year. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for most children.
- It's especially important that young children and children with certain long-term health problems get vaccinated.
- Caregivers of children at higher risk of flu complications should get a flu vaccine. (Babies younger than 6 months are at higher risk for serious flu complications, but too young to get a flu vaccine.)
- Pregnant people should get a flu vaccine to protect themselves and their baby from flu. Research shows that flu vaccination during pregnancy can protect the baby from flu for several months after birth.
- Flu viruses are constantly changing so flu vaccines are updated often to protect against the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season.

Are flu vaccines safe?

Flu vaccines have an excellent safety record. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for vaccination. Different types of flu vaccines are licensed for different ages. Each person should get one that is appropriate for their age. CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend an annual flu vaccine for all children 6 months and older.

What are the benefits of getting a flu vaccine?

- § **A flu vaccine can keep you and your child from getting sick.** When vaccine viruses and circulating viruses are matched, flu vaccination has been shown to reduce risk of getting sick with flu by about 40 to 60%.
- **Flu vaccines can keep your child from being hospitalized for flu in the pediatric intensive care unit.** One recent study showed that flu vaccine reduced children's risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit admission by 74%.
- **Flu vaccine can be life saving in children.**

A study using data from recent flu seasons found that flu vaccine reduced the risk of flu-associated death by half among children with higher risk medical conditions



and by nearly two-thirds among children without medical conditions.

- **Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.**
- **Getting yourself and your child vaccinated also can protect others** who may be more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain long-term health problems.

What are some other ways I can protect my child against fl

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, you and your child should take everyday actions to help prevent the spread of germs.

Stay away from people who are sick as much as possible to keep from getting sick yourself. If you or your child are sick, avoid others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. Also, remember to regularly cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and clean surfaces that may be contaminated with flu viruses. These everyday actions can help reduce your chances of getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others if you are sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best way to prevent flu illness.

If your child is sick

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids.

If your child is 5 years or older and does not have a long-term health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

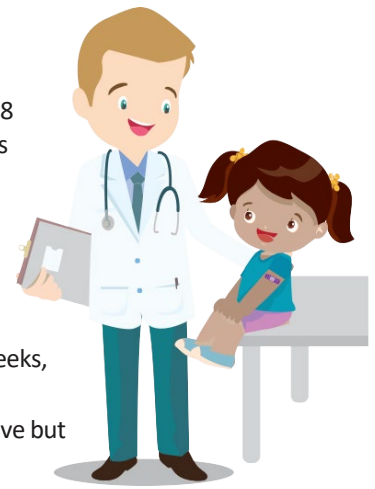
Children younger than 5 years old – especially those younger than 2 years – and children of any age with certain long-term health problems (including asthma or any lung disease, heart disease, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system), are at higher risk of serious flu complications. Because children at higher risk of serious flu complications can benefit from early antiviral treatment of flu, parents of such children should contact their child's doctor if they develop flu symptoms.

What if my child seems very sick?

Even healthy children can get very sick from flu. If your child is experiencing the following emergency warning signs, you should go to the emergency room:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish lips or face
- Ribs pulling in with each breath
- Chest pain

- Severe muscle pain (child refuses to walk)
- Dehydration (no urine for 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears when crying)
- Not alert or interacting when awake
- Seizures
- Fever above 104°F
- In children less than 12 weeks, any fever
- Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions



This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.

Is there a medicine to treat fl

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat flu illness. They can shorten your illness and make it milder, and they can prevent serious complications that could result in a hospital stay. Antivirals work best when started during the first two days of illness. Antiviral drugs are recommended to treat flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or people who are at higher risk of serious flu complications who get flu symptoms. Antivirals can be given to most children and pregnant people.

How long can a sick person spread flu to others?

People with flu may be able to infect others from one day before getting sick to up to five to seven days after. Severely ill people or young children may be able to spread the flu longer, especially if they still have symptoms.

Can my child go to school, day care, or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid spreading flu to other children or caregivers.

When can my child go back to school after having flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care, or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C)* or higher.

*Many authorities use either 100 (37.8 degrees Celsius) or 100.4 F (38.0 degrees Celsius) as a cut-off for fever, but this number can vary depending on factors such as the method of measurement and the age of the person.

For more information, visit



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

1 Breakfast WGR Cereal Peaches 1% unflavored milk Lunch Peanut Butter and Jelly WGR Bread Celery Sticks Orange Slices 1% unflavored milk Snack WGR Triscuits Cucumber Slices	2 Breakfast WGR English Muffins Bananas 1% unflavored milk Lunch Chicken Tenders WGR Rice Roasted Broccoli Cantaloupe 1% unflavored milk Snack Yogurt Pineapple	3 Breakfast WGR Banana Oat Muffins Applesauce 1% unflavored milk Lunch Cheese Pizza on WGR Crust Garden Salad Grapes 1% unflavored milk Snack Graham Crackers Kiwi Slices	4 Breakfast WGR French Toast Mixed Berries 1% unflavored milk Lunch Ground Turkey with WGR Spaghetti Corn Honeydew 1% unflavored milk Snack WGR Multigrain Cheerios Apple Slices	5 CENTERS CLOSED Parent-Teacher Conferences
8 Breakfast WGR Cereal Applesauce 1% unflavored milk Lunch Ground Turkey Sloppy Joe WGR Bun Green Beans Mixed Fruit 1% unflavored milk Snack Cheese Slices Raspberries	9 Breakfast WGR Toast Pears 1% unflavored milk Lunch Ground Beef WGR Tortillas Lettuce and Tomato Peaches 1% unflavored milk Snack Peanut Butter WGR Rice Cakes	10 Breakfast Yogurt Mixed Berries 1% unflavored milk Lunch BBQ Chicken WGR Rolls Corn Pineapple 1% unflavored milk Snack WGR Waffles Strawberries	11 Breakfast WGR Bagel Mixed Fruit 1% unflavored milk Lunch Macaroni and Cheese With Ham Roasted Zucchini Watermelon 1% unflavored milk Snack Carrot Sticks Hummus	12 COOK'S CHOICE 
15 Breakfast WGR Cereal Bananas 1% unflavored milk Lunch Cheese Quesadillas on WGR Tortillas Garden Salad Mixed Fruit 1% unflavored milk Snack Peaches Turkey Roll-Ups	16 Breakfast English Muffins Apple Slices 1% unflavored milk Lunch Beef Patty with Cheese WGR Bun Lettuce, Tomato, Pickles Honeydew 1% unflavored milk Snack Grapes Cottage Cheese	17 Breakfast WGR Oatmeal Strawberries 1% unflavored milk Lunch Ground Turkey WGR Rice Tomato Cucumber Salad Orange Slices 1% unflavored milk Snack Applesauce Wheat Thin Crackers	18 Breakfast WGR Pancakes Mixed Berries 1% unflavored milk Lunch Pork Chops WGR Pasta Salad with Veggies Watermelon 1% unflavored milk Snack Peach and Yogurt Smoothie Teddy Grahams	19 COOK'S CHOICE 
22 Breakfast WGR Applesauce Muffins Pears 1% unflavored milk Lunch Ham and Cheese WGR Bread Carrot Sticks Apple Slices 1% unflavored milk Snack Orange Slices WGR Rice Cakes	23 Family Lunch Today! Breakfast WGR Cereal Pineapple 1% unflavored milk Lunch Ground Beef with Mashed Potatoes Peas and Corn Peaches WGR Rolls 1% unflavored milk EARLY RELEASE	24 CENTERS CLOSED	25 CENTERS CLOSED	26 CENTERS CLOSED
29 Breakfast WGR Cereal Blueberries 1% unflavored milk Lunch Turkey and Cheese WGR Pita Bread Bell Pepper Slices Strawberries 1% unflavored milk Snack Celery Slices Tuna Salad	30 Breakfast Hard Boiled Eggs Bananas 1% unflavored milk Lunch Chicken Alfredo Sauce WGR Rotini Roasted Broccoli and Cauliflower Honeydew 1% unflavored milk Snack Goldfish Cottage Cheese	31 CENTERS CLOSED Staff In-Service	This institution is an equal opportunity provider. <div>  Winter Break  </div>	
				This menu is subject to change. WGR=Whole Grain Rich