



## **Brenda Mendez will be honored with the State Association Oral Health Award for her outstanding work with Head Start and Early Head Start Children**

For Immediate Release

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**TALLAHASSEE, FL – December 1, 2024**—Brenda Mendez, Health Specialist at Pasco County Schools Early Childhood Programs, is set to receive recognition from the Florida Head Start Association (FHSA) for outstanding leadership. Her unwavering commitment to enhancing the oral health of children and their families in Pasco County has left a lasting impact.

Promoting effective oral health hygiene is just one of the Head Start Program Performance Standards that Head Start Programs must implement to ensure all children have access to dental and oral hygiene education. Having implemented several innovative initiatives, their Tooth Fairy Visits Your Classroom program led by Ms. Mendez has most notably made the most significant impact in reinforcing the importance of dental care in a creative, positive, and wonderful experience. The Tooth Fairy visits the classroom and reads, “Brush your Teeth, Please,” followed by a practical demonstration of proper teeth brushing. Each student receives a toothbrush and educational materials for parents that address the importance of dental care, promote healthy eating habits, and address the need for regular dental visits. This year, Pasco County Tooth Fairy has visited ten school sites for a total of 342 students who participated in the Tooth Fairy oral health activity.

Under Ms. Mendez's leadership, toothbrushing has become a fun and engaging activity. Her initiatives educate children and caregivers about oral hygiene and provide a positive learning experience they cherish.

The FHSA annual awards luncheon will occur on December 11, 2024, at the DoubleTree by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal Orlando as part of the association's 25th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Conference. Complete details are available at [www.FLHeadStart.org](http://www.FLHeadStart.org).

### **About FHSA**

*The Florida Head Start Association (FHSA) is a nonprofit organization that empowers its members to advocate for and enhance education, health, and social services for 45,000 children and families in Florida. Head Start is a key player in the early childhood education landscape, providing critical services, including school readiness and comprehensive health support, guided by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Since 1999, FHSA has organized impactful events and training sessions to elevate discussions within the Head Start community. FHSA's dedication to this cause is unwavering, striving to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the most at-risk children and families.*

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