

# Agency Impact: Kai's Story

By Steven D. Wilson, Ed.D.



Kai (l) tackles a math problem with Educational Aide Elijahjuan Pennington of The Children's Home. Pennington says his student is among his brightest and is looking forward to him successfully transitioning back to his public school setting.

"I can't say enough about Kai," says Elijahjuan Pennington, upper school educational aide at The Children's Home. "He's one of my best students, best athletes, has great perspectives to share in class and holds other classmates accountable."

Pennington is talking about The Children's Home Upper School student Kai S., who is preparing to transition from receiving educational services at the nonprofit agency back to his home school. Kai has been with The Children's Home for five years.

When he first entered the academic and therapeutic halls on the agency's main campus, his outlook on school life was different.

"Fights," said Kai. "Cursing out teachers. Leaving class. All that."

Now, Kai says he is looking forward to what his academic and life's future may hold. He said if he could share one thing that he'd like everyone to know about The Children's Home it's that TCH is "filled with a lot of caring people."

He doesn't see strife or the constant struggle with fighting on the horizon.

"No need for fights," he said. "[It's] not worth it. Just be cool."

In his time with The Children's Home, Kai's sense of humor has also bubbled to the surface.

"He's probably one of the goofiest students I have," said Pennington, with a smile toward his student. "If I'm walking down the hallway and accidentally bump his elbow, he'll go flying across the hall like he was attacked by the Hulk or something."

Kai said when he returns to his regular school setting, he is looking forward to playing sports. Pennington said he was looking forward to seeing him play but added, "He's never beat me in basketball."

Pennington's young protégé was not about to let that slide.

"Yeah. You know he don't believe that," he said.

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Kai (l) and Educational Aide Elijahjuan Pennington. Pennington has been able to uncover Kai's sense of humor during his time at The Children's Home.



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“I’m very proud of what Kai and our educators and behavioral health therapists have worked on during his time with us,” said Pam McKie, chief operations officer at The Children’s Home. “Educators like Mr. Pennington have the ability to mentor young students dealing with adversity and help them in life-changing ways. The future is very bright for this incredible young man.”