

# Alternatives For Children



[www.alternativesforchildren.org](http://www.alternativesforchildren.org)

FALL 2019

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN YEAR END ANNUAL APPEAL  
THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS & THEIR FAMILIES

More than likely you have a family experience, or have a close family friend who has been impacted by the birth of a child with a disability or special needs.

A large number of families across Long Island, in our local communities, your neighbors, turn to Alternatives For Children to give their child what they need to succeed.

Why? Because these families know that their child will receive appropriate programming and top-notch educational and therapeutic services for their child.

Parents also know that their child will be cared for with dignity and respect - not just as a child with a diagnosis or disability. Our dedicated and compassionate special education staff and therapeutic professionals provide a warm, caring environment where children thrive and are given the tools they need to move on to their kindergarten placement.

"The school definitely provides a complete educational experience. The staff is well versed and eager to help."

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OR

**Mail your Donation Today!**

Alternatives For Children  
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN  
14 Research Way  
East Setauket, NY 11733

"Our son has been at AFC for only three weeks and we are already seeing positive results of his therapy and just the day to day school activities. Being able to place our son at AFC has been the best decision we've made."



"Preschool for children with disabilities works, but federal funding for it is plummeting. Special education programs for preschoolers with disabilities are required by law. But as the number of students needing services has doubled, funding per child has decreased 40% in two decades."

The Hechinger Report, July 10, 2019

The Hechinger Report is a national nonprofit newsroom that reports on one topic: education

Your past support and contributions have helped to make Alternatives For Children a leader on Long Island in providing quality care to all children, but especially to those who need it most, at the most critical time in their development.

**We are so grateful to you for helping to create and support our committed team.**

You help Alternatives For Children touch the lives of so many Long Island families.

**Your contribution helps to provide a place for families to turn to when everything else seems to be falling apart.**

Through your financial support you help make their journey a little less difficult.

You make it possible for our staff to create an environment where children are encouraged to learn, create, explore, grow, experiment and thrive!

# Alternatives for Children

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN

### MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

#### Mission Statement

To provide the highest quality special and regular education programs and services to children with disabilities and typically developing peers. Education, medical, pediatric rehabilitation, and support services are integrated to ensure the comprehensive needs of the child and family are met.

14 Research Way  
East Setauket, NY 11733  
631-331-6400  
Preschool Programs  
Child Day Care  
Early Intervention Services  
Universal Pre-K  
Administrative Office

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Aquebogue, NY 11931  
631-722-2170  
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Early Intervention Services  
Universal Pre-K

600 South Service Road  
Dix Hills, NY 11746  
631-271-0777  
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Early Intervention Services

168 Hill Street  
Southampton, NY 11968  
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Dear Family and Friends of Alternatives For Children,

I ran across this Condoleezza Rice quote recently and thought it perfectly embodies our Year End Campaign. *"We are the most individualistic country on the face of the earth...and yet this individualistic society is still one of the most communitarian and undoubtedly the most philanthropic on the face of the earth. How can the most individualistic of societies also be the most philanthropic? Because of another great American tradition: that every individual is worthy, and no one is trapped by their circumstance."*

Our children and their families are worthy - just like you and me. They deserve the opportunity to be supported and lifted up from their circumstance. I often wish that you could have a bird's eye view into the daily happenings at Alternatives For Children and the incredible and innumerable ways that our children are taught, aided, and championed by our educational and therapeutic staff. And you, by your continued financial support, are right in the room cheering on our children and making it all possible! Thank you.

*Marie E. Ficano, Ed.D.*

New York State has a legal responsibility under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to provide a "free and appropriate public education" (FAPE) to all children regardless of disability. Programs such as Alternatives For Children help the state meet this federal mandate. Preschool Special Education programs serve New York State's most vulnerable children but have not been provided with the funding necessary to meet this challenge.

Schools like ours have suffered for many years without any increase in tuition and only in the last few years have they received very small increases. Since 2012, state aid to school districts has gone up by 42%, but during the same time period preschool special education providers have received only an 8% increase in tuition!

This inequity in funding has a significant negative impact on our preschool and other like providers.

We are grateful, and thankful to our dedicated professional staff who have chosen to work in the private not-for-profit sector for far less than their colleagues in the public school system.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN

### CONTINUED GROWTH - CONTINUED SUCCESS

Continued growth and success require that we remain ever vigilant and work diligently to deliver ongoing programming growth, while at the same time ensuring the fiscal viability of Alternatives For Children. We consistently meet the placement needs of the school districts we partner with; remaining the provider of choice for providing quality educational and therapeutic services.

This Spring, anticipating the growing needs of school districts, we submitted applications to the NYS Education Department to further expand our programs. We have received overwhelming support from the school districts that refer children to our programs. Our local NYS Education Department representatives gave us regional support as well. Our applications went through the State offices in Albany and have been approved.

This September we added three new classes. At Alternatives For Children East Setauket we added two additional self-contained classes, a 6:1:1 and a 12:1:1, full day option. Alternatives For Children Dix Hills added one new self-contained class, a 12:1:1, full day option. In addition, Alternatives For Children Dix Hills will be opening another 6:1:1 in early November.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN SENSORY INTEGRATION & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Children are small and fragile. They rely on adults for almost everything, from daily care to teaching them life skills in ways they can understand. This learning is made more difficult for many of our children because of sensory processing issues that present as the difficulty integrating information from the senses. Sensory processing issues are often compounded for many of our children who may not yet have spoken language skills to be able to express their anxiety.

A child's sensory processing issues make it challenging for them to navigate at school, home and in the community. A grocery store is a nightmare of sounds, lights, colors, temperature changes, and smells. Exposure to these stimuli may lead to challenging behaviors. For children with anxiety, any public place or unfamiliar person can trigger fears. There is so much that is unknown even if it's a location they have visited many times or a person they have seen before.

At Alternatives For Children, Occupational Therapists use Sensory Integration protocols to work with children to provide them with needed skills and the ability to take in information from one's own body and the environment, process the information, and respond functionally and appropriately. This process enables them to recognize, use and organize everyday sensory information in order to interact effectively within their environment. Sensory Integration is part of the foundation for learning and aids in the acquisition and development of gross motor skills, fine motor skills, motor planning, attention, coordination and behavior.



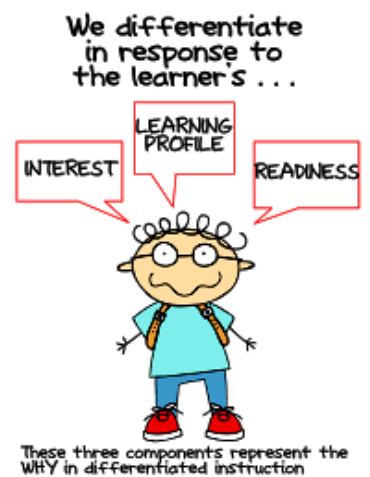
You might ask, what does Sensory Integration have to do with Community Helpers. In the classroom, teachers introduce those Community Helpers who provide for our SAFETY- firefighters, police, doctors, EMS - so that children might begin to have an understanding that these people are here to help us.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN Differentiated Instruction & Special Education Teachers

Each child in our program has a preferred learning style. Teachers use differentiation in the classroom and design lessons and experiences based on students' learning styles; visual, auditory and kinesthetic, - they group students by shared interest, topic, or ability; manage the classroom to create a safe and supportive environment; and continually assess and adjust lesson content to meet each students' individual needs.

Differentiated instruction by our teachers involves thoughtful planning, commitment, and acknowledgement of the varying abilities, experiences, and interests of the children. In the classroom teachers get to know each student; they find out what they are interested in and curious about. Teacher - student connections help teachers plan what to do with children to best fit their learning style in order to help them learn and grow.

In a classroom using differentiated instruction teachers vary their instructional delivery methods; develop plans for facilitating time, space, and materials in the classroom as not all children will be working on the same tasks; identify alternative methods of assessing students performance and understanding; and continually check in on who is where with their knowledge and understanding of skills or tasks.



Differentiating instruction may mean teaching the same material to all students using a variety of instructional strategies, or it may require the teacher to deliver lessons at varying levels of difficulty based on the ability of each student and their IEP goals, all the while maintaining a dynamic early childhood environment that invites children to explore, experiment and learn through their play.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN DEVELOPING MOTOR SKILLS & PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

Learning and growing for typical children often looks like just child's play. For many of our students this child's play is made more difficult because of neurological or developmental disorders, pediatric medical concerns or orthopedic issues that may affect functional ability, general mobility, and being able to safely navigate their world.

Every moment, every day, the children at Alternatives For Children must meet various physical demands in order to be successful from both an educational and a social standpoint. They use important motor skills to get on and off the bus, to move safely in the halls, to navigate the classroom environment without harm, and to safely participate with peers on the playground.

Physical therapists play an important role in facilitating the development of motor skills to allow for optimal participation and freedom of movement in the home, school, and in the community for each student with movement and motor concern goals on their IEP.

The Physical Therapy staff at Alternatives For Children bring with them over 100 years of combined experience in pediatric Physical Therapy. The goal specific outcomes of Physical Therapy promote independence and age-appropriate gross motor development, improve strength and flexibility, enhance learning opportunities, and facilitate the learning of self-help and self-care responsibilities for our children.



Therapeutic interventions are aimed at maximizing a child's ability to participate in daily activities in school and at home.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

What is Speech Therapy? Speech/Language Therapy focuses on receptive language, or the ability to understand words spoken to you, and expressive language, or the ability to use words to express yourself. Speech Therapy also deals with the mechanics of producing sounds or words, such as articulation, pitch, fluency, and volume. For children, Speech Therapy generally involves pursuing language milestones that have been delayed. Speech-Language Pathologists work to find fun activities to strengthen a child's abilities while working on their areas of weakness.

One of our largest departments is our Speech Department. Speech/Language Pathologists at Alternatives For Children are educated at the Masters or Doctoral level, certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, and licensed by NYS. Our Speech/Language Pathologists are trained to address all areas of speech and language development. Our Sequential Oral Sensory trained Speech/Language Pathologists are able to utilize this program for the treatment of problem eaters. Our PROMPT trained Speech-Language Pathologists use a multidimensional, multi-sensory therapeutic system that is recognized for its use of tactile - kinesthetic articulatory cues that help to develop or restructure speech production.

Common Issues Addressed by Pediatric Speech Therapy

Articulation	Stuttering	Phonology	Apraxia
Language Disorders	Feeding Issues	Swallowing Issues	
Cleft Palate	Aphasia	Pragmatic Language	Voice Disorders



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
HELPING THINGS GROW – CHICKS AND CHILDREN



Our 4 1/2 year old son has been at Alternatives for 2 1/2 years now and I can't say enough great things about the school. The staff is great, from the teachers, assistants, therapists, greeter, nurse, etc. They are supportive and encouraging. The teachers and therapists are very responsive and always respond promptly to any questions we have. My son has made so much growth in these last 2 1/2 years and we have them to thank for their hard work and dedication! They truly care about each child! Our son has made growth academically, socially and emotionally. What more could a parent ask for!

PSEG LONG ISLAND VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT  
BENEFITS ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN EAST SETAUKET PLAYGROUND



Paul DiBenedetto, Business Safety Council Chairman at PSEG Long Island, just so happens to belong to a family that is a long-time friend of Alternatives For Children. So when PSEG Long Island, who always tries to find ways to give back to the communities they serve, was looking to partner with a Not-for-Profit, Paul immediately thought of Alternatives For Children.

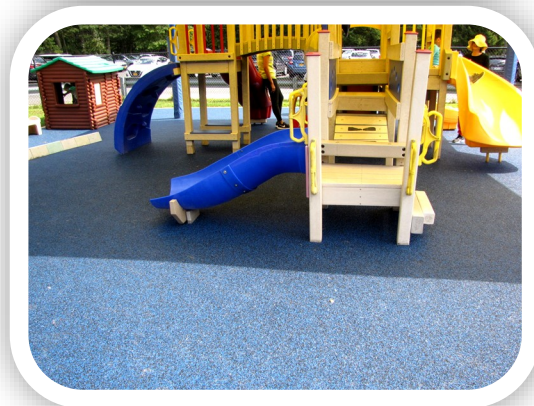
Paul and a cadre of his co-workers put together the PSEG Long Island Volleyball Tournament to benefit Alternatives For Children to raise money for playground equipment at our East Setauket location.

On Saturday June 8th at Sportime in Bethpage, a Round-Robin Tournament with eight teams made up of PSEG employees and their friends and families, helped to raise \$2,100 with PSEG Long Island matching the amount.



The funds raised by the PSEG Volleyball Tournament and matched by PSEG Long Island helped to defray the cost of a sun shade for our infant-toddler playground and to resurface one of our preschool playgrounds in East Setauket.

Many Thanks!



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Many Thanks for the Continued Support  
of the Big Apple Miata Club  
Lots of WINNERS from this group this year!



People's Choice Award Winner  
1961 Chevy Corvette

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
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**15th Annual Golf Outing**



**Monday, June 8, 2020**  
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ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
SCENES OF SUMMER

