

Alternatives For Children



www.alternativesforchildren.org

FALL 2017

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

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.



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

Who do families throughout Long Island turn to when they are faced with this journey? If they are like most in our communities, they turn to Alternatives For Children.

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



Parents also know that their child will be treated like a real person, not a diagnosis or disability, by dedicated, compassionate special education and therapeutic professionals in a warm, caring environment.

Your past contributions have helped make Alternatives For Children a leader 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.



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



You are helping Alternatives For Children touch the lives of so many Long Island families. Your contribution provides a place for families of children with special needs to turn to when everything else seems to be falling apart. Through your financial support you help make their journey a little less difficult.

Your gift is extremely important because it offers immediate resources that are directed to support children with special needs. You make it possible for our staff to create an environment where children are encouraged to be creative, explore and experiment in order to meet or exceed the criteria established for their age.

Please mail in your Donation Today!
Alternatives For Children
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN
14 Research Way
East Setauket, NY 11733

DONATE NOW

GIVE ONLINE @

<http://www.alternatives4children.org/annual-campaign.html>

Alternatives for Children

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

1116 Main Road
Aquebogue, NY 11931
631-722-2170
Preschool Programs
Child Day Care
Early Intervention Services
Universal Pre-K

600 South Service Road
Dix Hills, NY 11746
631-271-0777
Preschool Programs
Child Day Care
Early Intervention Services

168 Hill Street
Southampton, NY 11968
631-283-3272
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ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For the past thirty years, Alternatives For Children has been there for thousands of children with special needs and their families. ***Your gift of \$100 or more to our Year End Annual Appeal will help make an immediate impact on the urgent needs of the children of our communities.***

Our Board of Trustees, administration, teachers, therapists, and support staff – ***everyone here who works to provide for and serve the children, join with me in thanking you for your generous partnership and support.*** Please send your gift today. ***All of our children and families are counting on your support.***

As we continue our work, Alternatives For Children is committed to staying at the forefront in providing educational and therapeutic opportunities – for every child with special needs in our communities. ***Please help to make this possible with your contribution. Your donation is helping to make a difference in our children's future and will help to give them the tools they need to succeed.*** Thank you so much for your continued support! *Marie E. Ficano, Ed.D.*

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN THANKS OUR 2017 CLASSIC & SPORTS CAR ROAD RALLY SPONSORS AND DONORS

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Alternatives For
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Our Wonderful
Parents



Starting Line Sign

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ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN 2017 CLASSIC & SPORTS CAR ROAD RALLY
THEY MADE IT TO THE END & THEY ARE WINNERS!



Thanks for all the goodies
In our Swag Bags!

Mercedes-Benz Financial



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN
CELEBRATES OUR PHYSICAL THERAPISTS!

Each October during National Physical Therapy month, we take the opportunity to recognize and celebrate our Physical Therapists. You might ask, who are the Alternatives For Children Physical Therapists?

Our Physical Therapy staff brings with them over 120 years of combined experience in pediatric Physical Therapy. Children with a wide variety of diagnoses, including Autism Spectrum Disorders, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Developmental Coordination Disorder, Spina Bifida, and ADD/ADHD, many of whom experience gross motor delays, benefit from the staff's compassion, dedication, and clinical expertise. Each therapist is licensed by NYS and participates in ongoing continuing education to further advance their knowledge and skills.



Physical Therapy: it's all about

movement

Physical Therapists provide therapeutic interventions aimed at maximizing a child's ability to participate in daily activities in school and at home. The goal specific outcomes of PT 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.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN
USING ART FOR EXPLORATION & DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS

Children get enjoyment, practice organization and self-regulation skills, and a boost to their self confidence from tackling art projects or simply exploring art materials. That they are practicing life skills while doing so may not enter their minds. At Alternatives For Children, teachers encourage a child's self-expression through process-oriented art: simply put, art that is based on exploration and allows different outcomes, rather than emulating a preconceived finished product.



Expressing feelings and ideas through images is very natural for children. Using art as a form of communication allows children the opportunity to "speak" with a paintbrush and paper thoughts and feelings they may otherwise struggle to express.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN DIX HILLS
Our Everyday Super Heroes!

While they make movies about fictional superheroes, there are real life heroes walking among us. Who are these heroes? Our staff! While our staff don't typically wear capes and a mask, or have superpowers and a sidekick, special education professionals are indeed heroes. If you're feeling skeptical, here's our list of 5 reasons that special educators are heroes:

- **They Can Read Minds** - Some children with special needs have difficulty communicating their needs and desires; their teachers must learn how to understand unique communication styles.
- **They're Super Flexible** - Needs in special ed classrooms can change rapidly, so the teachers need to be adaptable.
- **They have Super Strength** - With the weight of deadlines, paperwork, scheduling, and the needs of the children all on their backs, special education pros keep going.
- **They Have a Superhero Team** - The Avengers have nothing on these super teams. Teachers and therapists work together with parents to provide the best environment for each child's success.
- **They Can Organize in a Single Bound** - It's not easy keeping all the unique needs, goals, and desires of their students organized, but our special ed heroes get it done!



This Bat signal, recognized by all as a call for help to a Super Hero, can be found at Alternatives For Children Dix Hills near Harmony Boulevard & Acceptance Street!



Many thanks to the Milleridge Inn of Jericho for the pumpkins for our Pumpkin Patch!



Our Students are Super Heroes Too!

Many of the children in our programs have been defying odds and expectations since the day they were born. They work hard everyday to overcome challenges that may affect their fine motor skills, gross motor skills, and oral motor functioning. These children embody the spirit of perseverance in the face of adversity. That's why we recognize them as Super Heroes! We are privileged to work with these children and look forward to seeing what Super Hero adventures await them!

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN EAST SETAUKET
HANDS ON STEM LEARNING

When is a pumpkin not a Jack-O-Lantern? When it becomes an object for exploration and discovery for preschoolers! There is no better way to teach children STEM than to give them the tools they need to learn. Before the pumpkin was carved, the children had an opportunity to compare the weight of the pumpkins to other objects found around the classroom. Which is heavier? They had to choose which was the biggest, smallest; and they even lined them up in size order. After all this investigation, the children were given a pumpkin with a hole carved in the top. The rest was up to them. How do we get the seeds out? Fine motor skills - using a spoon and hands to scoop. What do the seeds feel like? Literacy skills builder - wet, slimy, slippery, yucky. How many seeds? Endless possibilities for learning!



Excited by Science! Eager Learners! Enthusiastic Students! So much to DO! So much to LEARN! So much FUN!

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN SOUTHAMPTON
Beginning the Year - Developing Social/Emotional Skills

Our classrooms are busy places where young children learn all sorts of things, such as how to express feelings and how to work together with friends on a project; these are known as social/emotional skills. There are five primary skills needed for a child's social emotional development; Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship skills, and Responsible decision-making.

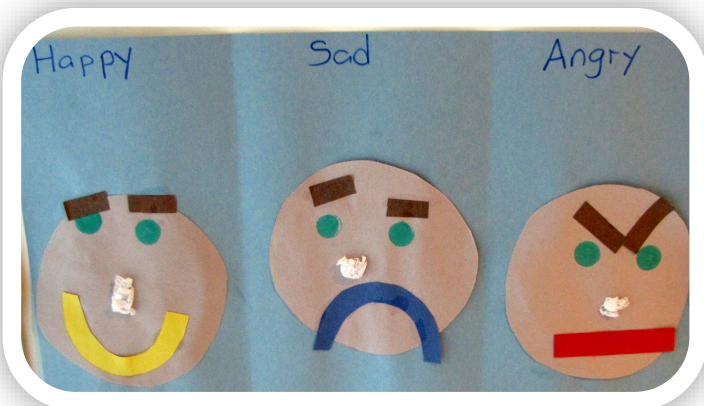
What should we do if we get sad or scared at school?

What are our rules for school?

How do we make and keep friends?

When young children do not know how to identify emotions, handle disappointment and anger, or develop relationships with peers, a teacher's best response is to teach! And so, at the beginning of each school year, teachers in the classroom and our therapeutic staff spend a considerable amount of time intentionally teaching social/emotional skills, laying the groundwork for the continued learning of prosocial behaviors. This systematic teaching approach allows our students to acquire and use these new skills easily, over time, and in a variety of situations.

As children develop new social skills, they gain access to a wider variety of play and learning opportunities; increase the duration and complexity of play interactions and engagement in social interactions; build friendships with peers; and feel good about themselves. A true win-win situation!



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN
PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS – COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Each parent of a child with special needs and/or disabilities approaches their situation in their own unique way. Having the support and understanding of other parents who are walking in their shoes can provide a priceless measure of comfort and connection. Nobody truly knows how they feel, better than another parent who is in the same situation. Sharing experiences, suggestions, and resources can help relieve some of the stress parents may feel. Sometimes it just helps to connect with someone who wants to listen because they've "been there."



Coffee & Conversation provides a place where parents, yes, Dads are welcome . . . can have frank and confidential discussions about the issues related to raising a child who has special needs and/or disabilities

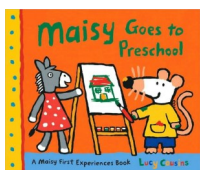
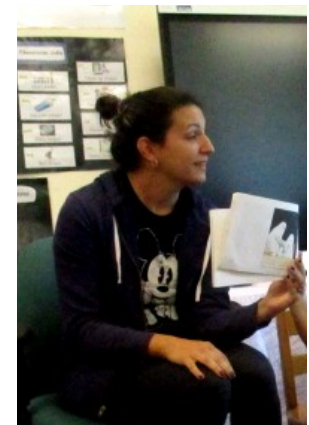
Our Parent Support Groups, "Coffee & Conversation" are just that, Coffee and Conversation. These sessions are offered to provide a nurturing environment in a small group setting for parents to process their experience of raising a child with special needs. Facilitated by members of our Psychology/Social Work Department, and offered at all four of our locations, parents exchange ideas and successful strategies gaining skills on a variety of developmental and behavioral issues. Families learn about navigating special needs services in both educational and community settings, and are given the tools to enhance their confidence in managing developmental challenges and increase the potential for more positive interactions with their child.



Working with families and giving them the tools they need to become life-long advocates for their child goes hand-in-hand with our mission of providing the highest quality special and regular education programs and services to children with disabilities and their typically developing peers.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN
MYSTERY READER PROGRAM

Mystery Readers surprise our students with a visit to class to share their love of reading! Family members who are Mystery Readers choose age-appropriate books to read to the class. Some select favorite stories from their childhood, others bring props or costumes related to their stories, and some even choose to bring a craft related to the story. No matter what they choose to do, the children enjoy spending time learning with them!



Our Mystery Reader Program welcomes families into the classroom, creating opportunities to foster positive parent/child interactions

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN SOUTHAMPTON & AQUEBOGUE
EARN FOUR STAR RATING FROM QUALITYSTARSNY

Congratulations to Donna Menna, our East End Site Coordinator, our Staff Trainer Dorothy Creegan, and our dedicated and hard-working staff for attaining a **4 Star Active rating from Quality Stars NY!** The Day Care program and integrated classrooms at our Aquebogue and Southampton locations have been rigorously examined in terms of the quality of the *learning environment*, the *qualifications and experience of the teachers*, the *management and leadership* of the program, and, finally, *family engagement*. This 4 Star active rating is exceptional for a first measure of excellence and demonstrates our commitment to providing high quality early childhood education.

QualityStarsNY Standards are organized into four categories:

- Learning Environment
- Family Engagement
- Qualifications and Experience
- Management and Leadership



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN FIRE SAFETY MONTH

We celebrated Fire Safety Month in October with visits from local Fire Departments. Aside from just being a fun day for the children, this event is important because we know that there are special challenges associated with teaching fire safety to children who have special needs.

Most children learn about Stop, Drop, and Roll at an early age - in kindergarten or preschool - but they may not understand what it really means for a few years after that. Children with special needs have unique difficulties that typical children do not have to contend with, and it's important to prepare our students for what they might hear and see and need to do in case of fire either at school or at home.



Now we know what to do and where to go if there is a fire at school or in our house!
And, not to be afraid of the firefighters when they have on their firefighting gear!

Thank You!

Jamesport Fire Department
Setauket Fire Department
Southampton Fire Department



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EVERYDAY THINGS AS TEACHABLE MOMENTS

This class took the lessons learned from the firefighters and put them into action! Together with their teacher they planned evacuation routes for the dolls and pets from the playhouse, warned them NOT to hide under the bed, NOT to be afraid of the firefighters, and talked about where to meet up outside.

Taking it one step further, the children created flames on the roof of the playhouse, using shaving cream tinted orange and yellow. Then they pretended to be the firefighters. Some children led the people to safety, while others doused the flames with water from their pretend hoses.

More skills taught in this lesson than we can even count!
Can you name a few?





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SAVE THE DATE
13th Annual Golf Outing



Monday, June 11, 2018
Port Jefferson Country Club

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN
AUTISM & SENSORY INTEGRATION

A significant number of the children at Alternatives For Children fall within the autism spectrum or have an autism diagnosis. Many of these same children also experience, to a lesser or greater degree, sensory integration challenges. Over sensitivity to sensory stimuli may be characterized by a tendency to be either fearful and cautious, while children with under sensitivity, may have a tendency to either crave intense sensations or to withdraw from engagement.



What is Sensory Integration (SI)?

All human beings receive information from their environment through the senses: vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell, and vestibular (movement) and proprioception (information from muscles and joints).

Sensory Integration is 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 us to recognize, use, and organize everyday sensory information in order to interact effectively with our environment. Sensory Integration is part of the foundation for learning and the acquisition and development of gross motor skills and fine motor skills, motor planning, attention, coordination and behavior.

Sensory integration treatment, is a technique used by occupational therapists, providing playful, meaningful activities that enhance an individual's sensory intake and leads to more adaptive functioning in daily life. Occupational Therapists work with classroom staff to help incorporate sensory integration techniques in the classroom providing constant reinforcement for children and carry-over from the therapeutic setting.