

Alternatives For Children



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FALL 2012

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN EAST SETAUKET WELCOMES NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REGENT ROGER TILLES



In October, Dr. Marie Ficano, and the staff at Alternatives For Children East Setauket welcomed Mr. Roger Tilles, the NYSED Regent who represents our region. Long Islanders are extremely fortunate to have Regent Tilles represent us to the Board of Regents, which oversees and supervises all educational activities within the state. Regent Tilles is not afraid to take on the tough issues that face New York's educational system. His vast experience, vigilance, and thoughtful balanced approach, have made him a strong force within NYSED as he advocates for improving student performance and outcomes in our schools.



Regent Tilles spent time visiting classrooms, therapy areas, talking to staff, and seeing first hand the fine work we accomplish every day at Alternatives For Children.

Thank You Regent Tilles

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN 2012 ANNUAL YEAR END CAMPAIGN

The Children Thank You!

In this difficult and challenging economic climate, we are asking you to aid us in our mission, and help to bring change to the life of a child with special needs.

Give a Gift that
Makes a Difference

Please help us reach our goal for our
2012 Annual
Year End Campaign

Please mail in your Donation Today!



We have set a \$10,000 goal for our 2012 Annual Campaign.

See how quickly and easily it adds up?

100 contributions of \$100 = \$10,000

200 contributions of \$50 = \$10,000

400 contributions of \$25 = \$10,000

Your contribution Makes a Difference! YOU can Make a Difference!

Become one of the 100!



Aniyah came to school on the first day and felt happy.

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

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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

175 Wolf Hill Road
Melville, NY 11747

631-271-0777

Preschool Programs
Child Day Care
Early Intervention Services

168 Hill Street
Southampton, NY 11968

631-283-3272

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Child Day Care
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After completing our successful six week summer program through July and August, the 2012-2013 school year got off to a smooth start - and then came Sandy. Please know that our hearts and thoughts are with all of you in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. We know that many of you, along with our staff, were hard hit by this storm and the aftermath is still taking a toll on all our daily lives.

Many of you were without power for several days, had extensive flooding, waited hours in line for gasoline, and then endured the Nor'easter and the snow that came with that storm.

I extend my sincere concern for all of the Alternatives For Children family and the many situations that have effected us. Unlike many schools and day care providers throughout Long Island, we were fortunate to have suffered only minimal damage at our four locations, and for that we are all extremely thankful. Please know that our staff is being especially watchful for any signs of fear or trauma that the children may be experiencing as a result of Sandy, and as always will be diligent in communicating any concerns with the families of our children.

It is so difficult for me to ask for your financial support in light of the fact that Sandy has had a such a great negative economic impact on all Long Islanders. The New York State and County budget lines that provide reimbursement for the programs and services that Alternatives For Children provides have not changed from last year, in fact there is an even greater tightening and more controls on these funds.

Alternatives For Children relies so heavily on your continued generosity in support of our mission. Your financial contributions enable us to provide the high quality programming and services that have become our hallmark. I ask you once again to be as generous as your means allow when considering a donation to our 2012 Annual Year End Campaign. Every dollar spent really does ***Make a Difference*** in the life of a child with special needs.

On behalf all of us at Alternatives For Children, but mostly because of the children, I thank you for your continued support. Stay safe and know that all of us at Alternatives For Children wish you and your loved ones the best in this holiday season.



Marie E. Ficano, Ed.D.
Executive Director



Alternatives For Children
gratefully acknowledges a generous donation
from Reverend Richard D. Visconti, Rector
and the Vestry of the
Caroline Church of Brookhaven East Setauket.

The Children Thank You!

Alternatives For Children
Celebrates 25 Years & Begins the Future

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN AQUEBOGUE AND SOUTHAMPTON
 PARTNER WITH CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF SUFFOLK COUNTY TO FOSTER HEALTHY NUTRITION

For the past year the staff, children and families of Alternatives For Children Aquebogue and Southampton have benefitted from the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program. NAP SACC is part of the Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play in Suffolk County Grant which focuses on creative strategies to prevent and reduce obesity-related health problems and improve overall health. The NAP SACC program works directly with child care center directors and staff to improve children's level of physical activity and nutritional behaviors. The grant was funded by the New York State Department of Health.

Kerri Kreh Reda, of the Cornell Cooperative Extension NAP SACC program, guided our staff through a self-evaluation of our nutrition and physical activity environment. In order for us to make the necessary changes to support healthy behaviors in our young children, Kerri provided our staff with year long in-service training so that we could establish improved plans and procedures to provide a healthy nutritional and physical environment for our children.



Components of in-service training and areas we explored together were:

- An overview of the issue of obesity as it effects our children.
- Instituting healthy eating habits in young children.
- The how, why, and when of physical play activities and creating a program for increasing physical activity in young children.
- The how and why of reducing screen media in early childhood, i.e. TV time, video games, hand-held devices. Turn it off and get up and have FUN!
- Exploring and discussing staff attitudes of personal health and nutritional habits. How do we need to change?
- Working with families - Introducing methods of outreach to parents to promote healthy behaviors at home.

As a result of our participation in NAP SACC we . .

Instituted change to the snacks we offer; more fruits & veggies - fewer crackers, etc.

Increased the amount of indoor and outdoor "moving around" time to encourage physical activity.

Received a variety of physical activity toys; hula hoops, balls, and parachute for indoor and outdoor play.

Received a plaque recognizing our successful participation in the NAP SACC program.

Alternatives For Children was 1 of 12 Preschools in Suffolk County chosen to participate in the NAP SACC program

Key Areas of NAP SACC



Nutrition

- Fruits and Vegetables
- Meats, Fats, and Grains
- Beverages
- Menus and Variety
- Feeding Practices
- Foods Offered Outside of Regular Meals and Snacks
- Supporting Healthy Eating
- Nutrition Education
- Nutrition Policy

Physical Activity

- Active Play and Inactive Time
- Play Environment
- Supporting Physical Activity
- Physical Activity Education
- Physical Activity Policy

These are the key areas of focus when making changes to the child care environment.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN EAST SETAUKET
 A VISIT FROM THE SETAUKET FIRE DEPARTMENT

WE LEARN ABOUT FIRE SAFETY!



Firefighters are Heroes!



Thank You Setauket Fire Department for teaching us to be safe!



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN AQUEBOGUE
PRAISE FROM A PARENT OF A 2012 GRADUATE

When Brayden was a toddler, Keith and Maeghan Mackie, his parents, had some concerns about his development and turned to Alternatives For Children Aquebogue for an evaluation under the Early Intervention Program, and a relationship was born.

Fast forward to November 2012 - Brayden, a 2012 graduate of Alternatives For Children Aquebogue and a kindergarten student at Westhampton Beach Elementary School, was recently recognized for demonstrating the October character trait of "Friendship." Under the school's John Wooden's Pyramid of Success program, faculty at Westhampton Beach teach and focus each month on a different character trait from the pyramid helping their students reach their personal best.

Mindful that Brayden's progress was made possible by the quality programming and services he received at Alternatives For Children, Keith and Maeghan wanted us to know how wonderfully and easily he has made the transition to the kindergarten environment.

They share their excitement and joy in this letter to Aquebogue Teacher Karen deMey

Ms. Karen & Company,

I just wanted to take a few minutes and share the attached letter that we received yesterday from Brayden's principal. I hope it brings as much joy to you and the staff at Alternatives For Children in Aquebogue as it did to us. We feel that you all played a part in this too! We can't thank you enough for your hard work and dedication with Brayden over the past years.

Brayden is doing WONDERFULLY in kindergarten. He loves going to school, and truly loves to learn. His handwriting is really great, it's much neater. He can write his full name on his own, in lower and uppercase letters, he does not require any assistance when writing. He is not receiving any services either, nor does he require a behavior plan. He can read short stories, and recognizes letters when he sees them on signs and things of that nature. He cuts with a scissor correctly, he only cut two huge holes in his t-shirt the first week or so of school. He even speaks Spanish and can say hello, introduce himself, and ask you your name in Spanish. He sings a few songs too! Much to NO ONES surprise, his favorite class is GYM! He truly loves it. He rides the bus to and from school with no problems.

Everyone at school speaks very highly of him. They say he is an absolute pleasure to have around, and as we all know, he's QUITE the funny man.

I hope everyone there is well, and fared well with the storm. Again, thank you to the ENTIRE staff for such a great job done.

Keith & Maeghan Mackie



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN
FAMILY HOLIDAY WISH PROGRAM

Alternatives For Children thanks eVero Corporation
for sponsoring our Family Holiday Wish Program



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For information or to donate to our
Family Holiday Wish Program contact Susan Ennis
631-331-6400 ext 229

Our Annual Holiday Party
for the children and their families
will be held on Sunday, December 2nd
at Setauket Elementary School
134 Main Street - Setauket
from 1:00 - 3:30 pm.

We are in need of the following items:
holiday coloring books new boxes of crayons
holiday stickers holiday candy holiday pencils
any holiday fillers for goodie bags

Please call

Dorothy Creegan 631-331-6400 x215
Ingrid Trouvé 631-331-6400 x307
If you can help us out in any way!

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN EAST SETAUKET
QUALITY STARS NEW YORK

You may remember from our Spring 2011 newsletter that Alternatives For Children East Setauket served as a field test site for Quality Stars NY, a new quality rating and improvement system being overseen by the Early Childhood Advisory Council and coordinated by the NY Early Childhood Professional Development Institute.

We have just completed and submitted the lengthy self-study documentation required to receive a STAR rating.



Alternatives For Children East Setauket is 1 of only 8 programs in Suffolk County submitting the required Self-Study Documentation for a STAR rating under the Quality Stars NY program



A new rating system for licensed New York State child care providers which evaluates and grades all aspects of a child care program using nationally recognized and universally accepted rating tools. The "star" rating that a facility receives will help parents recognize high quality programs.

Quality Stars NY is receiving documentation from over 400 participating programs from across NYS

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN SOUTHAMPTON
LAUNCHES NEW TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Alternatives For Children is proud to announce our new **Transitional Bilingual Education Program**. This program based from Alternatives For Children Southampton is designed to meet the growing needs of the East End communities and their Spanish speaking population.

Alternatives For Children is licensed by the NYS Office of Children & Families Services as a provider of child day care for preschoolers ages 3 – 5. Our day care is also an approved contractor with the Department of Social Services, offering those families meeting the financial eligibility criteria, low or no cost child day care. For other families, participation in our affordable child day care program is available as well.

Our new bilingual program will be taught by a Special Education/Regular Education teacher and teacher assistant, both of whom are fluent in the Spanish language. Children needing speech therapy, approved by their school district, will have services provided by a bilingual speech pathologist. In addition, Alternatives For Children is an approved NYS Education Department preschool provider and can provide comprehensive evaluations, programs and services as approved and authorized by school districts.

- Research has demonstrated the importance of early literacy skill development in the child's dominant language, which in this case, is Spanish.
- An individual program will be developed for each child dependant upon their developmental ability and readiness to transition to English.
- A core curriculum tied to NYS Learning Standards will be employed to maximize student achievement.

A key component of the Transitional Bilingual Education Program is transition planning for Kindergarten with the school district to facilitate optimal learning for the children in the program.

It is the goal of the Transitional Bilingual Education Program to have children ready to learn and succeed as they transition into their kindergarten program.

The Transitional Bilingual Education Program will offer a parent component aimed at building a relationship between the home and school. Regular parent participation will be encouraged and be an integral component of the program.

Parent training topics will include:

- How to assist your child to succeed in school
- Reading with your child
- Accessing DSS Subsidized Assistance low cost Day Care
- Bridging the Home/School Gap

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Mr. Robert Underwood, the Grand Prize winner of the Road Rally Raffle, visits with Dr. Ficano at Alternatives For Children East Setauket to receive his winnings.



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Belle Terre Community Center

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Mike Russell

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