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.

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
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!
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 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.
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.
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!

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?

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!
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.”

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.

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!

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.
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

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?
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.