

Alcott School Early Intervention Program

Toddler Developmental Group PARENT BOOKLET 2018-2019 School Year



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Alcott School is approved as a provider/evaluator of Early Intervention Program (EIP) services under active contract with the Westchester County Department of Health. EIP is a public program for children under three years of age who are suspected of having a developmental delay and/or disability. Potentially eligible children must be referred to the Westchester County Department of Health at 914-813-5094 to receive EIP services. A child's EIP eligibility can be determined only by state-approved evaluators under contract with Westchester County. All services must be authorized by Westchester County. All needed EIP services are identified in collaboration with the parent and approved by Westchester County. Westchester County will arrange for service providers to deliver authorized services. If EIP services are to be delivered in a child care or community location that requires a fee, the parent is responsible for these fees. EIP services are provided at no cost to parents. Health insurance may be accessed for approved services.

Alcott School Early Intervention



Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the Alcott School Early Intervention program. Alcott School began in 1968 as a Montessori Preschool and its mission to provide a quality educational experience for all children in a multicultural environment continues today. Since 1979 Alcott has offered special education classes in addition to its Montessori classes. The curriculum in all of our programs utilizes activities appropriate to the child's age and abilities and is designed to foster the child's competence and self-esteem. The classroom is set up by the teachers to present materials and activities that encourage each child's cognitive, language, motor, and social skill development.

This handbook contains important information that you will need to know. Please read the information carefully and refer to it throughout the school year. We look forward to working with you and your child.

Please feel free to contact me with your questions and/or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Maureen D. Connolly

Maureen D. Connolly, MS Ed.
Early Intervention Program Coordinator

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Alcott School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its policies or admission procedures.

1. SCHOOL POLICY INFORMATION

WHAT TO BRING:

School is a place where children are encouraged to explore the environment and experiment with different kinds of materials. In order to promote these experiences, we recommend that you send your child in washable play clothes. In addition please provide the following supplies labeled with your child's name on the first day of school:

- 1 box of diapers (if needed)
- 1 box of wipes
- 1 book bag/knapsack
- **Please place the following items in a zip lock bag labeled with your child's full name:**
 - (1) Shirt
 - (1) Undershirt
 - (1) Pair of pants or shorts
 - (2) Pairs of Underpants (if toilet trained)
 - (1) Pair of socks
 - (1) Plastic bag for dirty cloths



LABEL ALL ITEMS:

Please be sure to label all items with his/her full name. **Please print the words in bold print** with an indelible marker. In addition, label your child's coat, hat, shoes and any other removable clothing with his/her name. In this way, teachers can readily identify to whom these items belong.

PHOTOS/FAVORITE OBJECTS FROM HOME:

Making transitions and connections between school and home is important. To help with this transition, family photos from home will be used in school. Also, please feel free to take a photo of your child in school with his/her teacher to have at home. Please send in:

- 1 Photograph of your child
- 1 Photograph of your family which includes your child

For safety reasons do not send your child to school wearing jewelry. Also, do not allow your child to bring candy or gum. Do not put your child on the bus with a pacifier or any food items, e.g., leftover breakfast toast, baby bottles, or sippy cups.

SAFETY/VISITOR CONTROL PROCEDURE:

Alcott School will require any and all visitors to the school to:

1. Sign in upon entry to the premises.
2. Indicate in writing the date of the visit and the time of entry to the school.
3. Clearly state in writing the purpose of the visit.
4. Sign out upon departure from the school indicating in writing the time of departure.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IF YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABSENT:

- a.) If your child will be absent, please call the school office at (914)725-7551 and give the reason for his/her absence. This is particularly important in the case of contagious diseases which would require notification to staff and parents of other children in the class. It is requested that children with coughs, colds, diarrhea, fevers or green nasal discharge be kept home until symptoms disappear.
- b.) Please do not send your child to school if you think she/he is ill. If your child cannot go out on the playground because of illness, she/he belongs at home. Note: children must be **fever-free for 24 hours** prior to returning to school after an illness.
- c.) If your child is approved for bus transportation, also call the Bus Company: **All County Transportation Service, Inc.**, telephone number (914)963-9600 so that they do not send a bus to your home unnecessarily.
- d.) When your child returns to school, *she/he MUST bring in an absence note.* Absences of more than a week require a doctor's note when the child returns to school. Hospitalizations of any length require a doctor's note.

If your child has been approved for bus transportation and the bus arrives at school and your child is not on it and no "absence message" has been recorded on the school answering machine, Alcott is required by the Westchester County Department of Health to call you to ascertain your child's whereabouts. Therefore, "absence messages" are a great convenience to all. **Please note**, if you do not contact us or the bus company and we cannot reach you, the bus company, after 2 consecutive days, will not come to your house.

SCHOOL BUS PROCEDURES:

The Westchester County Department of Health contracts with bus companies to provide transportation for children who are approved for this service. The name of the bus company that will be servicing the Alcott children for the 2016-2017 school year is:

All County Transportation Service, Inc. (914-963-9600)



Alcott has no direct responsibility vis-a vis this or any other bus company. The Bus Company and school, which service your child, are two independent organizations.

If your child is approved for busing, please refer to the Westchester County Department of Health "*Preschool and Early Intervention Program Transportation Handbook for Parents*" for complete information.

Bus drivers will only release a child to the care of his/her legal guardian or individuals whom you have designated to pick up your child in your absence. This information is provided on the Student Information form (SIF) that you filled out. It is very important to update this information whenever there is a change.

Please note: WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH policy states that if no one is home to receive the child from the school bus (and the emergency contacts are also unavailable) the child is to be taken to CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES.

Please make sure someone is always at home to receive your child and that your emergency contact numbers are correct on busing forms. When numbers change notify your Ongoing Service Coordinator, your child's teacher and the bus company.

FOR CHANGES ON ANY GIVEN DAY:

If your child does not require transportation or transportation plans change on any given day, **PLEASE:**

1. Call the bus company and alert them to the change.
2. Attach a note to your child in such a way that it will not be pulled off. Write in the note what the changed plans are so that the teacher knows what to expect. (e.g., DO NOT PUT JOHNNY ON THE BUS AT 11:30. I WILL PICK HIM UP MYSELF.)
3. Write a note in the communication notebook with the date of the change of plans and what they are.



If a parent does not notify the school in writing of a change in dismissal procedure; e.g., another person comes to the school to pick up your child, the following will occur:

- a.) Staff will contact the parent by telephone to get permission for release of your child.
- b.) Identification will be taken and photocopied of the person taking the child.
- c.) If parent cannot be reached by telephone, we will call someone on the emergency contact form.
- d.) If no one is able to be reached, your child will stay in school until someone is contacted.

Please Note: Parents are required to fill out an emergency card with business numbers and 3 contact people and their telephone numbers. Parents are asked to give us their telephone and cellular numbers. Emergency cards are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

For more permanent changes in bus pick up or bus drop off locations, please contact your Ongoing Service Coordinator (OSC) immediately. Your OSC will need to complete a new student information form (SIF) and will send it to the Department of Health and the bus company to make this change. The OSC will inform the school (Alcott) when the change is completed.

CHILDREN WHO DO NOT TAKE THE SCHOOL BUS:

For children who are brought to school and picked up at dismissal by their parents: Leave your child with the teacher of the class or teacher assistant only. ***No child can be left unattended at any time.*** Please be on time (or a few minutes early) for drop up and pick up.

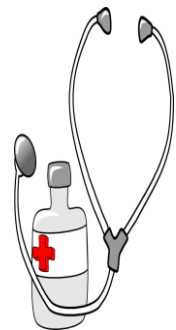
IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY:

Children are transported to the nearest hospital. Children at our Fox Meadow site are transported to White Plains Hospital. You will be notified immediately of a medical emergency and where your child has been taken.

REQUEST FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL:

Medications cannot routinely be dispensed in school since they may only be administered by a licensed health care provider under the N.Y.S. Nurse Practice Act. Since a professional nurse is not in the building 5 days a week, only medication for life threatening anaphylactic conditions may be administered by a non-licensed health provider who receives special training in its administration. All other in-school medication may be administered by the parent or parent designee who is not an employee of the Alcott School. The following conditions must be completed before medication can be dispensed:

- A. Medication must be provided by the parent who should deliver the medication to the school. **Children are not permitted to carry medications to school.** All nonprescription medications must be properly labeled including the name of the medication and unit dosage. All prescription medication must be labeled by a pharmacist including the name of the child, name of the drug, dosage, time of administration and date.
- B. **Request for Administration of Medication in School Form:** Part A must be completed by the physician and Part B or C as it applies, must be completed by the child's parent/guardian.



If administration of medication cannot wait until the child returns home, it is suggested that parents come to school to administer medication to the child themselves. Please note that routine antibiotics (e.g., Amoxicillin given for ear infections) do not constitute a medication that should be routinely given in school. Should your child be on such a medication, please time the dosage so that it can be administered before or after school hours.

If a parent anticipates that an **emergency** may arise such that a child may require medication in school on a day when neither the school nurse nor the parent is available, the **EI Program Coordinator** or **EI Administrative Assistant** should be **notified**. The parent can then be advised of the specific procedure to follow in this situation.

If your child is placed on medication temporarily (e.g., on antibiotics for an ear infection), please write this information in your child's notebook or on the absence note so that the teacher may be informed. Many medications may affect a child's behavior. It is important that the nurse/teacher be aware of the particular medication your child is taking. It is requested that parents not ask that their child be given antibiotics in school. Please time the dosage of these medications so that they can be given at home during non-school hours (see "Medications" section in this booklet). **DO NOT SEND MEDICATION OF ANY KIND ON THE BUS WITH YOUR CHILD!!**

SNOW EMERGENCY/SCHOOL CLOSING:



Inclement weather may sometimes necessitate closing school. School closings will be announced on the school website at www.alcottschool.org and messages will be sent via email, text, and/or robo call using information provided on your communication form. Closings will also be announced on radio stations WFAS (1230 AM) and WHUD-FM (100.7 FM) or you can log on to www.wfasam.com or www.whudfm.com. In addition, school closings will be posted on Cable Channel 12 News in Westchester and FIOS 1. When in doubt, call the school and listen to the message on our answering machine. Please understand that delaying and/or closing is not something we do without a great deal of thought. Our primary concern is the safety of your children.

If we are already in school and the weather gets very bad or the power goes out, we will use our emergency contact system to inform you about closing early. Please be sure that your emergency and communication forms are updated and in the office so that we can reach you or the person you have designated to pick up your child. Please feel free to come and get your child at any time if you are concerned about weather conditions.

For safety reasons, the bus companies do not like to operate in severe weather conditions. If the weather is severe, they may pick up the children early from school and take them home. Keep in mind that it usually takes 2 or 3 times longer for the children to arrive home in bad weather. Before we can send children out early, we must be sure someone will be waiting at home for them.

WEBSITE CLASSROOM CORNER:

Weekly Newsletters and classroom photographs can be viewed on Alcott's secure website at www.alcottschool.org by visiting the "Classroom Corner" section of the website.

COMMUNICATION NOTEBOOKS:

Each child will be given a notebook, marked with his/her name. Each Teacher or Therapist will write in the book once a week about activities at school. This is to let parents know what is happening that week. Please be aware, these are brief communications as our teachers need to be spending time with your children while they are at school.

We encourage parents to write back about things that go on at home - simple things like "I took Johnny to the park today. He enjoyed the slide." or other events such as: "Danny has not been sleeping well - We got a new dog."

POCKET TREASURES:

From time to time every child takes home something from school, either inadvertently or by plan. Often these items are very small in size like a tiny block or miniature toy, but frequently they represent the smallest part of a set. If any unidentifiable objects turn up at your house, please return them to the school. We can tell you at a glance if they are important pieces of apparatus or random objects picked up from a friend.

BIRTHDAY OBSERVANCE IN CLASS:

Children will be recognized in class on their birthdays. If parents wish to send refreshments, please talk to your child's teacher. Many children have allergies which need to be considered when bringing food into the classroom. We prefer parents send in fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers rather than cookies or other sweets. Teachers will advise parents if there are any dietary problems among members of their child's class. Remember ~ we are a peanut-free facility. To build up our book collection, we suggest your child donate a book to the class library on his/her birthday.



SNACKS:

Alcott provides snack consisting of foods such as fruits, vegetables, cereal and water. Please note: Alcott maintains a peanut-free environment. Please be sure to read all labels when sending snacks to school. Traces of peanut products are contained in such unsuspecting products as Dunkin Donuts, M&M's & frosted Cheerios. Be sure to update your child's food allergies if they change during the year.

Please Note: The Fox Meadow Site, it is a kosher facility. At the Temple's request, no meat, chicken or shell fish can be brought into the facility. If you have any questions regarding any food items, please speak to your child's Teacher or the EI Program Coordinator.

PLAYGROUND/GYM:



Toddlers need time to develop gross motor skills and release their energy. Outdoor playground or gym activities are part of each day's routine. Please be sure to dress your child warmly in the winter and put on sunscreen in the summer. Children should wear rubber-soled shoes or sneakers which tie or buckle in order to safely play on gym equipment. "Floppy" sandals are dangerous and NOT permitted. Socks should always be worn to prevent blisters and injury. Water shoes need to be worn for outdoor summer water activity.

PROGRESS REPORTS/IFSP MEETINGS:

As a provider of Early Intervention services for your child, Alcott is required to write periodic progress reports for each type of service we provide to your child. These reports will be shared with you and your On-going Service Coordinator.

THERAPY:

Speech and occupational therapy are provided using a "push-in" model. This refers to the integration of therapy services into the classroom to facilitate a child's use of language and fine and gross motor skills with peers and teachers. Children who require a sensory integration approach may receive some additional "pull-out" services at the discretion of the therapist. This means they may be taken out of the class for occupational therapy for all or part of a session.

TODDLER DEVELOPMENTAL GROUP CURRICULUM:

The toddler classroom curriculum is developmental, presenting learning activities that are appropriate to the child's developmental age. Our model utilizes a structured environment to facilitate children moving to different centers within the classroom to obtain learning experiences they may not seek out if left on their own. The children utilize a visual schedule to help them learn to follow daily routines and increase their independence throughout the day. The structured classroom model helps children learn the beginning and end of an activity and increases their ability to attend to a task and organize their time. With this approach teachers, teacher assistants and therapists provide individual support to help children reach their goals. Visual cues, photographs and/or real objects can be used to assist with transitions and develop communication skills.

FAMILY VACATIONS:

Please remember that Early Intervention is a fee for service system. **This means we are only reimbursed for the days that your child attends school and receives his/her services.** We strongly suggest that you schedule your family vacations(s) based on the school calendar. Please review the school calendar which indicates the date's school is closed for holidays and breaks before making your plans. Please be aware that since Early Intervention is a 12 month program, there are classes through all of July and through the beginning of August. Please notify us at your earliest convenience if you are not sending your child to the summer program.



CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:

Confidentiality of your child's records is guaranteed by law: (the Buckley Amendment of Family Educational Rights & Act) and by Alcott School policy. No records may be released without parental written permission, except to funding sources such as the County of Westchester and the State Education Department. Further information on this subject is available from the EI Program Coordinator. A parent has a right, by making an appointment with the EI Program Coordinator, to review records in his/her child's file at any time, and to copy records at a reasonable cost. A full copy of Alcott's policy on record access and confidentiality is available upon request.

INSURANCE/MEDICAL INFORMATION:

At some point, parents may be asked information about their insurance or Medicaid coverage by Alcott staff. This is done to comply with County or State requirements. Both County and State are investigating alternate means to fund some services to children with special needs. Accessing Medicaid or private insurance will not result in any charge to parents for Early Intervention Services.

ELIGIBILITY DATES FOR EI PROGRAMS:

In order to maintain placement in the Early Intervention class you must follow the State and local guidelines. This requires "transitioning" your child to the Committee for Pre-School Education (CPSE) in your local school district by the day **BEFORE** your child's 3rd birthday. A CPSE meeting must be held that reviews the current evaluations and overall progress of your child. The CPSE committee will determine if your child meets eligibility for services through CPSE. If the child is eligible, THEN the family MAY also be eligible to continue with their EI plan of service and exit on August 31st or December 31st, depending on which month the child turns 3 years old. Placement by the CPSE can be deferred until the child "officially" leaves Early Intervention. Your OSC should be assisting you in this transition process. The EI Program Coordinator, Teacher and Therapists will help prepare you for this CPSE Meeting. The EI Program Coordinator and/or teacher may attend the meeting with you.

2. PARENT INVOLVEMENT*

Alcott staff serves families as well as individual children. The following is an outline of parent involvement activities offered during the school year.

INFORMAL PARENT VISITS/OBSERVATIONS:

Parents are invited to visit their child's classroom at any time and to join their child's class on the playground. These visits will enable you to observe your child in class and see the routines of the class. A call to the school prior to your visit, to let them know you are coming, is preferred and appreciated.



PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES:



Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year unless you are already having monthly team meetings. Usually one is held in late Fall/Early Winter and again in Spring. At these conferences, IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) goals/objectives and how your child is functioning in the classroom setting are discussed. Parental input is important and parent's issues/concerns along with your child's progress are discussed. Both parents are strongly encouraged to attend. More specific information as to the content of parent conferences will be furnished closer to the date of the first scheduled meeting.

If questions arise in between conference times, please feel free to phone your child's classroom teacher or the EI Program Coordinator. Additional conferences may be scheduled if needed at the request of a parent or an Alcott staff member.

Functional outcomes are updated with parents at the 6 month and annual review meetings.

COLLABORATIVE (TEAM) MEETING:

If your child's IFSP includes a collaborative (team) meeting we will meet with you and the different providers as is mandated on the IFSP (e.g., monthly, every other month). Team meetings are times to share information about your child's performance at home and at school and to develop mutual goals.

PARENT WORKSHOPS/EDUCATIONAL/INFORMATION WORKSHOPS

(Group Sessions):

Both day and evening support groups and workshops on educational topics may be offered. Sessions are facilitated by a social worker or professional with expertise in a specialized field (e.g., a Speech Pathologist). Examples of these sessions are: development of social skills, speech and language development, limit setting, emotional implications of rearing a child with special needs, siblings. All parents/guardians/care-givers are invited. Please let us know if you have any additional suggestions for Parent Workshops.

ALCOTT PARENT COMMITTEE:

Alcott School has a Parent's Committee composed of parents from the Montessori and special education classes. This committee sponsors fund-raising events and special programs for the children throughout the year. Parents are also asked to volunteer for special jobs; e.g., helping with specific activities in the classroom.

VISITORS OTHER THAN PARENTS:

Whenever possible, other special people in the child's life are invited to visit school and observe their child's class. We do ask that the parent call before coming to inform and give permission, preferably in writing, for this person to visit and to make sure that the teacher expects them and allows time in her schedule to answer questions, etc. Siblings are welcome to join you in the classroom when they have a holiday from their own classes.

- * Here, as elsewhere in this booklet, the term "Parents" includes legal guardians and foster parents.

3. APPENDIX

Programs offered at Alcott for children in the Early Intervention program are available as follows:

- On-going Service Coordination.
- Toddler Developmental Group:
10 Early Intervention Children, one Certified Special Education Teacher, and 2 Teacher Assistants; Speech & Language and Occupational Therapist available.
- Special Instruction or Family Training provided at home or daycare.
- Evaluations (core and supplemental).

Families may receive one or more of the above listed services from our school as approved by the WCDOH Early Intervention. The services which your child is receiving are listed on his/her IFSP. Funding for all of our Early Intervention Services (children birth to three) is regulated by Westchester County Department of Health (DOH), Westchester County and the State of New York.