



Alcott School

Little Class Program

Parent Booklet

2024-2025

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Related Service

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

Mission Statement

The Alcott School is a Montessori preschool whose objective is to provide all children with the opportunity to develop independence, an awareness of their own abilities and a feeling of self-worth. These objectives are met by providing developmentally appropriate, multi-cultural learning environments. Alcott School recognizes the significant role parent education and support for the family plays in the development of young children. Alcott School is dedicated to helping support the families enrolled in its programs.

Regulatory Oversight

The Alcott School is affiliated with the American Montessori Society and is a not-for-profit corporation chartered under the New York State Board of Regents. Alcott is a licensed day care center with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The Alcott School also has oversight from the New York State Department of Education and the Westchester County Department of Health.

A copy of the Office of Children and Family (OCFS) regulations can be found in the front office.

Our licensor, Leslie Geathers– Tel: 914-801-3253

New York State OCFS

Westchester Regional Office

117 East Stevens Ave., 3rd Fl.

Valhalla, NY 10595

Tel: (845) 708- 2414

The OCFS Child Care Complaint Line is 1-800-732-5207

Board of Directors

Alcott School is governed by its Board of Directors:

Simrun Gialleonardo

Debra Dalal

Debbie Mumford

Arlene Donegan

School Policy Information

Arrival & Dismissal

Little Class hours: Full Day

9:30 AM-2:30 PM

The bus company will notify parents as to pick up and delivery times. All transportation arrangements **must** be made with the bus company **directly**, not through the school. If normal transportation arrangements are not to be followed on a given day, notify your child's bus company directly and send a note with your child so that the teacher will know of the change in plans.

Forms

We are required by law to have certain forms and information in your child's file. The list of required forms is as follows: Day Care Registration (blue card), Medical Statement, Prescriptions, Emergency Release, Photo Policy form, Emergency Alert Communication form, Transportation release, Vision Form, Individual Health Care Plan, Authorization to Release/Share Information, Class List release, Parental Consent to Use Email, Consent for Medical/RX release, School Policy attestation, Parent Questionnaire.

Each medical form is valid for one year from the date of your child's physical.

Forms must be completed and returned to school before your child's first day of school. The medical and immunizations record must be filled out and returned before your child can attend school.

Copies of government-issued photo IDs are required for all adults listed on the child's emergency form.

Please post the Alcott calendar in a conspicuous place. You will need to refer to it frequently during the year. The calendar is also available on the school website at www.alcottschool.org.

Safety/Emergency Plans

Your children's safety is very important to us. Children are supervised at all times during program hours.

Emergency Drills

In order to be prepared for emergencies, we conduct monthly fire drills and two shelter in place drills per year. Our One Call Now Emergency Alert system will be used in an emergency to inform you of events and student collection locations.

Evacuation Plans

Relocation may be necessary if the staff and students are unable to safely remain in the school building.

Primary evacuation site: Mercy College. Staff and children will proceed to 565 Broadway (formerly Our Lady of Victory Academy, now part of the Mercy College Campus) and into the school gym.

Secondary evacuation site: Sacred Heart Church Hall. Staff and children will safely walk down Broadway and enter the church which is at the intersection of Broadway and Ashford Avenue.

Safe Sheltering in Place:

We have systems in place to immediately notify the staff and children of the need to shelter in place. **All plans are available for review in the front office, however, for obvious reasons we will not make public where our students and staff will safely shelter should the need arise. Please note** that although we hope emergency situations will not arise, should one occur, the safety and well-being of your children are of utmost concern to us. The children will believe that we are going on an adventure. The staff will bring food, water and other necessary supplies with them.

Child Injuries/Accidents

If your child is injured on the school premises, a staff person will inform you in person (at pick up time) or write in the notebook about minor scrapes. You will be informed about bumps to the head, large or small, by telephone after the incident occurs. You will either be asked to read and sign an accident report at

pick-up time on the day the accident occurs, or a copy of the form will be sent home for your signature (please return the signed form the next day). If your child takes the bus and sustains any kind of head injury, you will be called to pick them up. We do not send children home on the bus after they have had a head injury.

Clothing

Children should be dressed in washable play clothes. They should be dressed as much as possible in clothes they can handle themselves to facilitate independence. Sweaters, jackets and hats should be labeled.

What Your Child Will Need on the First Day of School

Send your child on the first day of school with a change of clothes in a shoe box labeled with his or her name. If your child requires diapers, please send a box with him/her and label it with the child's name. When the teacher runs out, she will let you know. Please send a small, **preschool child-sized backpack** each day with your child. Large, heavy backpacks can be detrimental to your child's physical development.

You will receive labels for your child's first few days of school. Please write your child's name on the label and place it on the back of their shirt. This will ensure a smooth identification process.

Lunch/Snacks

Full day classes will be eating lunch at school. Parents will send lunch with their child each day. Lunch should be something that can be eaten cold or sent in a thermos to stay warm. Staff will not be heating up lunches. Snacks will be provided by Alcott School for all children. All lunch items should be peanut-free. Nut spreads such as almond butter or Nutella are never permitted. Candy is also never permitted in school.

Food Allergy Guidelines

Our staff strives to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. We follow these guidelines to the extent possible, but do not guarantee that we can keep our environment completely free of food or other allergens that might cause a severe reaction.

- All children's allergies that require treatment must be documented by a medical professional, including symptoms that indicate a reaction is occurring and instructions for administering medication. Appropriate Alcott

School documentation must be completed and turned in before the start of school.

- A written emergency action plan is prepared for all students with a life-threatening allergy to insure prompt recognition and treatment.
- We talk to the children about the importance of keeping the classroom safe and healthy for fellow classmates.
- We encourage frequent hand washing, especially before and after snack.
- We clean tables and other work surfaces at least twice a day, before school begins and after lunch.
- We do not permit the sharing of food at snack.
- We post lists of children's allergies in every classroom. The teachers and assistants are required to be familiar with every child's allergy.

- We make every effort to avoid serving foods that contain peanuts or tree nuts or may contain traces of such foods.
- Other foods such as shellfish, eggs, or milk may be served on a classroom-by-classroom basis, depending on the food allergies present in that classroom.
- If children have life-threatening allergies to food, they must provide an acceptable non-perishable snack to be kept at school and served as an alternative, as needed.
- We ask that parents speak with their child's classroom teacher regarding children with allergies in the classroom before sending in special snacks or treats.
- Our guidelines apply to all functions in the school building in areas where children would be present.

Keeping Your Child Healthy

Our goal is for all the children enrolled at Alcott School to have a healthy, productive school year. We are asking for your help in achieving this goal. The following guidelines will minimize the chances of your child contracting an illness during the school year.

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands frequently, especially before eating, after toileting, before coming to school, and after leaving school.
- Teach your child to blow his or her own nose and to wash hands afterwards.
- Teach your child to cover his or her mouth when he or she coughs.
- Be sure your child gets 10-12 hours of sleep each night.
- Encourage healthy food choices with an emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Keep your child home if he or she is sick or looks like they may become sick during the day. Young children who do not feel well do not enjoy their time at school.
- Be sure to notify the school if your child has a contagious illness such as "pink eye," so that we can take necessary precautions.

Promoting Healthy Living Habits

The following is to share information with you about healthy food and beverage choices and the prevention of childhood obesity.

The foods children eat and lifestyle habits they learn have a lasting effect on their health. There are ways that Alcott School is promoting healthy habits while your child is in our care:

- We offer a fresh fruit and vegetable snack program.
- We engage in daily physical activity.
- The children engage in food preparation activities at school. For example, peel and slice a cucumber.
- We involve the children in food preparation, table setting, and self-serving.
- Our staff sits with the children at mealtimes and models appropriate table manners and conversation.

The following are ideas, in partnership with us, to help your child set healthy living habits:

- Offer the fruits and vegetables you see served in your child's classroom at home.
- Sometimes new foods take time. Offer new fruits and vegetables many times.
- Ask us about our policy on celebrations.
- Share your child's favorite healthy recipes with us.
- Allow your children to help with food preparation, table setting and food planning at home.
- Cook and bake together.
- Chart how many different fruits and vegetables the family eats each week using stickers or drawings.
- Eat together.
- Talk about the healthy foods that you eat as a family.
- Stay active together. Going for walks or bike rides or playing in a local park are great ways to enjoy activity with your children.
- Limit screen time. Physical activity helps children's bones and muscles grow strong and lowers the risk of weight gain.

For more information about healthy eating and exercise, visit:

Choose My Plate

www.choosemyplate.gov

Eat Smart New York

www.otda.ny.gov/programs/nutrition

Core Nutrition Messages for Healthier Food Choices

www.fns.usda.gov/fns/core-nutritionmessages/default.htm

Physical Activity Guidelines for Children

www.nrckids.org/default/index.cfm/parentsguardians/

Illness Policy

If your child will be absent, please call the school office. A note from your child's health provider is required upon returning to school if your child has been hospitalized or seen in the emergency room.

Children with the following conditions should stay home until the symptoms/condition resolve or until evaluation by their health provider determines that they are well enough to return to school. Children with symptoms of diarrhea, fever or vomiting may return to school after the **symptoms are resolved for 24 hours. Children who are prescribed antibiotics for any reason may return 24 hours after receiving their first dose** of medication.

The following is a list of symptoms which meet the criteria for keeping your child home from school:

1. Fever over 100.2 degrees or higher via ear thermometer.
2. Diarrhea: runny, watery, or bloody stools.
3. Vomiting more than twice in a 24-hour period.
4. Mouth sores or ulcers if child cannot control his/her saliva.
5. Sore throat with fever &/or swollen glands.
6. Severe coughing: child gets red or blue in the face or makes a high-pitched whooping sound after coughing.
7. Eye discharge: thick mucus or pus draining from eye or watery discharge with redness.
8. Yellowish skin or eyes.
9. Evidence of severe illness: lethargy, unusual sleepiness, irritability, prolonged inconsolable crying, labored breathing, or wheezing.

If your child has been diagnosed with the flu or has flu symptoms (fever of more than 100F accompanied by aches, cough, sore throat, etc.) your child should be kept home until they are fever free without medications for 24 hours and other symptoms of coughing, sore throat, body aches, tiredness, etc. have resolved.

If your child cannot go out to the playground because of illness or requires more intense care and attention than the staff can provide, then he/she should stay at home.

On occasion, a child may become ill while in school. Alcott's policy is to notify the parent and request that they arrange for their child to be picked up at school as soon as possible. Young children who are ill in school are a health risk to their classmates, the teaching staff, and are uncomfortable. We appreciate your efforts to pick up your sick child in a timely manner.

If you have a caregiver who makes the decision on whether to send your child to school, please discuss our policy with them. We understand how difficult it is for all parents when their child is ill! The staff appreciates your cooperation.

School Absences:

If your child will not be attending school for any reason:

- Call the school at 914-693-4443 and leave a voice message.
- Call the Bus Company so that a bus is not sent to your home

If the bus arrives at school and your child is not on it, and no "absence message" has been received, Alcott is required by Westchester County Department of Health to call you to ascertain your child's whereabouts. To be proactive, a quick voice message from you will avoid any further investigation. An absence note explaining your child's absence is required.

If your child is placed on temporary medication after illness, please inform your child's teacher so they can be alerted to any medication side effects or changes in your child's behavior. Please time the dosage of any medication so that they can be given at home during non-school hours (See "Medications" section in this booklet).

In the event of a medical emergency, children at the Dobbs Ferry site are transported to **St. John's Riverside Hospital Dobbs Ferry Pavillion**. Parent Alerts regarding school illnesses will be emailed to you and posted on the Alcott School's website. The purpose of this information is to alert parents as to any contagious illness or condition (such as "pink eye") which may be occurring at school. This will help parents to be alerted for similar symptoms in their child so that necessary precautions can be taken. Any questions or concerns regarding a particular illness or health concern should be referred to the Director of Health Services.

Daily Health Checks

As per OCFS regulations, teachers perform daily health checks for each child in our program. If your child comes in with a scratch/ bruise/ abrasion that was not

there the previous day, we will need to know the source of the mark. Please write in the notebook how your child became injured. If there is not a written explanation in the notebook, a staff member will call home to inquire about it.

Medications

Alcott does not routinely administer medication in school except for life threatening emergencies.

The following conditions must be met before medication can be dispensed:

- The parent must provide the student's medication and must deliver the student's medication to the school in a properly labeled original container. Students should never carry medication in their backpack.
- All prescription medication must be labeled by a pharmacist including:
 - Child's name
 - Name of medication
 - Dosage, timing, and route of administration of medication
 - Prescriber's name, title, signature, and telephone number
- A "Written Medication Consent Form" must be completed. Part A is completed by your child's health care provider and Part B is completed by the parent.

If the parent anticipates that a child may require medication which is not for a life-threatening emergency, please see the site director as to the specific procedure to follow in this situation.

Hearing and Vision Screening

If you suspect that your child has a hearing or vision problem, please inform your child's teacher so that an appropriate referral can be made. The earlier a problem is identified, the more favorable the outlook for correction which will impact on your child's education and development. Do not hesitate to utilize the school resources or your child's health care provider for assistance.

Snow/Emergency Closings

Inclement weather may sometimes necessitate closing school. School closings will be announced via a variety of methods, including Alcott's website at <http://www.alcottschool.org>. Please return the Communication form promptly to receive a text, email or voicemail message in case of emergency closings.

School closings will be posted on Cable Channel 12 in Westchester, and on Fios News 1. If you are in doubt call school and listen for our message on the voice mail at 914-693-4443. You may also call the bus company.

Please understand that delaying and/or closing school is not something done without a great deal of thought. Our primary concern is the safety of your children.

Personal Belongings

Toys, jewelry, toy guns, candy, gum are best left at home. Such items are most often lost and present a problem with other children. However, a child may bring in a book to share with the class. Special items such as shells, bird's nests, or items from a family trip are also welcome. After school is well under way, the teacher will introduce a structured "News" or "Show & Tell" time, which is primarily a language activity. They will notify you of this activity via the notebooks.

Therapy

Speech and Occupational Therapy

Speech and Occupational Therapy are provided using a "push-in" model. This means that individual and group therapy is provided in the classroom to facilitate a child's use of language and fine motor skills among peers and teachers. "Pull-out" services are also provided as needed to meet each child's individual needs.

Children who require a sensory integration approach for occupational therapy may receive "pull-out" services. This means they will be taken out of the class for all or part of the session.

Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is provided in our gym, playground and/or classrooms. Physical therapy focuses on improving gross motor skills which include balance coordination, strengthening and age-appropriate motor skills.

Counseling

Counseling is a mandated related service which some children receive as part of their school program. Play therapy, behavioral support and improving peer interactions are the focus of this service. Counseling services are provided in the therapist's office (pull-out) or in the classroom (push-in) based on the child's clinical needs.

TEACCH

(Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children) TEACCH is an approach to help children learn the beginning and end of an activity and to help them organize and structure their

time. The children are assisted to follow "a schedule" which is set up for them to check to find out what activity comes next. In this model, visual cues such as real objects or photographs are used to assist with transitions.

Notebooks

Each child will be given a notebook, marked with his/her name. Several times weekly, the teacher or a therapist will write in the book about activities done at school. This is to let parents whose children cannot explain what goes on at school "in" on what is happening that week.

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 important things, "Grandma is coming for the weekend." The speech therapist also may write in this book to share with the parents some of the language remediation activities she is doing with their child. Sometimes the therapist may make suggestions for things parents and child can do together at home.

Observations

Parents may observe at any time. To schedule an observation, simply call the school number and speak with your child's teacher or the site administrative assistant.

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.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice a year (Fall & Spring). An updated calendar will be sent home with exact conference dates once the school year begins. At these conferences, IEP (Individualized Education Plan) updates and reports, written by the child's teacher, are presented to parents. Parental input is requested. Issues/concerns about the child are discussed. Both parents are strongly encouraged to attend. More specific information as to the content of parent conferences is furnished closer to the date of the first scheduled meeting.

If questions arise in between conference times, please feel free to call the Little Class Coordinator or the teacher at (914) 693-7677. Additional conferences may

be scheduled if needed at the request of a parent or an Alcott staff member.

Class Placement

Although it is unlikely that your child will change classes, class placements are considered temporary until October 30th. The staff forms class groupings based on Alcott's evaluations of children new to the program and our knowledge of the continuing children. Such information is limited, and sometimes a child is asked to change groups if staff feels that his or her needs would be better served in another group. At that time, a child may be asked to change classes.

Birthdays Observance in Class

Children will be recognized in class on their birthdays. If parents wish to send refreshments, please discuss with your child's teacher. Teachers will advise parents if there are any dietary problems among members of their child's class.

Please note that Alcott maintains a nut-restricted environment.

Alcott's Birthday Book Program is a fun and easy way to celebrate your child's special day. Ask your child to pick a favorite book. Then choose someone special in your child's life to visit us and read it to the class.

Confidentiality of Records

Confidentiality of your child's records is guaranteed by law (the Buckley Amendment or Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) and by Alcott policy. No records may be released without parental written permission, except to funding sources such as County of Westchester and the State Education Department. Parents of three- and four-year-old children being placed at Alcott via their school district Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) have signed a CPSE consent form. No other permission is required to allow Alcott to forward your child's records to your school district in these cases.

Further information on this subject is available from the Director of Special Education. A parent has the right, by making an appointment with the Director of Special Education, the Little Class Coordinator or SCIS Supervisor, to review records in his/her child's file at any time, and to obtain a copy of the records. A full copy of Alcott's policy on record access and confidentiality is available upon request.

Insurance / Medicaid Information

At some point, parents may be asked information about their insurance coverage by Alcott staff. This is done to comply with County or State policy. Both the County and the State are investigating alternate means to fund some services to preschoolers with special needs. Bureaucratic systems for utilizing private insurance are not yet in place. When they do become operative,

parents will be informed as to all the particulars. Please note that services will continue to be available to children at no cost to parents.

Similarly, if a child is a Medicaid recipient, information as to accessing this coverage for some services will be requested to comply with State and County policies.

Child Abuse – Mandated Reporters

Employees of the Alcott School are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and / or neglect according to New York State law. If any school employee has a reasonable basis to suspect that a child may be the subject of child abuse, maltreatment or neglect, the school employee **MUST** make a phone call to the Child Protective Services Hotline and provide them with enough information that the government may conduct an investigation to determine if the child is being neglected, abused or maltreated. A written report must also be submitted. It is not within the authority of Alcott employees to investigate suspected situations of abuse, but it is an illegal act to fail to report the suspicion.

Bus Information

The bus company will be contacting you directly to arrange your child's pick-up and drop-off time. Alcott has no direct responsibility in arranging pick-up or drop-off. The bus companies and the school which service your child are two **independent** organizations. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the bus company, please call them directly.

If your **child does not require transportation on any given day, please call the bus company** and report this fact to them so that they do not send out a bus unnecessarily. If your child's transportation plans are changed for any given day, please:

- Call the bus company and alert them to the change.
- Please call or email your child's teacher or leave a message with the administrative assistant to inform them of any change in transportation. It is helpful to know what the changed plans are (e.g., Do not put Johnny on the bus at noon, I will pick him up myself) so that the teacher knows what to expect.

Please have your child ready and waiting when the bus arrives. If your child delays the bus, often the whole school program for that day is delayed.

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 contacts are current.

Parent/Guardian/Foster Parent Involvement

In addition to serving the children's needs, the staff is also concerned about their parents. We try to meet their needs in "formal" and "informal" ways.

The following is an outline of parent involvement activities offered during the school year.

Parent Support Groups

- Parent Support groups are held throughout the year. Emotional implications of rearing a child with special needs and productive ways of dealing with children are the focus of these discussions.

Educational/Information Workshops

These workshops are held throughout the year. They provide an opportunity for Alcott staff or outside speakers to offer parents workshops and/or discussion groups on topics of interest. For example, once a year, we have a "*Transition from CPSE to CSE*" meeting with parents to discuss the process for students entering kindergarten.

Class Parents

The Little Class program needs two parents from each classroom to serve as "*Class Parents*" during the coming school year. Your main responsibility will be as a link between the classroom teacher and the other parents in your child's class. Duties will include helping to organize monthly meetings and workshops, planning and developing a calendar, special activities, fund-raisers, making phone calls and special classroom projects. The parents who volunteer would share each of these responsibilities so that no one parent is overwhelmed by them. Class Parents would meet with the Program Coordinator throughout the year as a core parent group. Class parents would then share this information with the other parents, keeping everyone informed of the school activities.

Finally, on rare occasions, the Alcott administrators may need your help in calling parents in your child's class regarding any emergency school closing, some legislative action affecting Little Class and/ or SCIS programs, or some other unforeseen circumstances.

Class parents are a valued resource, so we hope you will consider volunteering.

Informal Observations

Parents are invited to visit their child's classroom at any time and to join their child's class on the playground. A call to the school prior to your visit, to let them know you are coming, is appreciated.

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

Summer Program

As a continuation of the school year in the Little Class program, Alcott offers a six-week summer school experience. This program begins approximately July 1st and continues for six weeks. State and County funds pay tuition and transportation expenses. For three- and four-year-old children, there are specific criteria for summer program eligibility which some Alcott students will not meet. Students who do not meet summer eligibility criteria will need to find alternative summer programs.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a summer program, a child must meet the "substantial regression" criteria.

This means that his or her skills will substantially regress over the summer without continuous schooling. Regression & eligibility for summer services will be discussed at your child's spring parent teacher conference.

State Education Department (the department which approves summer school placements) policy is that only those children who will attend the **full six weeks** of summer school are eligible although exceptions are made in rare instances.

Rationale for this policy is that children whose parents wish to send the children for only a portion of the six weeks because of family vacation or similar plans do not consider their child truly at risk for "substantial regression."

The summer program follows that of the school year. Similar IEP goals are worked on in both the school year and the summer sessions. Similar services (educational, speech, motor, and counseling) are maintained as per IEP mandates.

However, the summer program is different in that it offers additional gross motor and outdoor activities. Teachers set up sprinklers on the playground. There is

much emphasis on dressing skills, as the children must dress and undress to use sprinklers.

Summer program hours

Little Class: 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)

Annual Reviews

If your child attends Alcott, you have already had an initial CPSE (school district) meeting and are familiar with the procedures and personnel involved.

If your child will graduate from Alcott this year, please skip to the next section entitled **Kindergarten Placement**. If your child will not graduate from Alcott this year, and is eligible to return next September, please be aware that to re-enroll your child in Alcott, the following procedure will be necessary in the spring semester.

School districts will hold an "annual review," which is a meeting similar to your initial CPSE. However, at this meeting, no formal evaluations other than your child's updated IEP and progress reports are required. The exception to this is the child who has had updated formal testing, e.g., a new psychological evaluation done since the initial CPSE. In this case, new information would be presented.

The CPSE has three choices at Annual Reviews:

- The child is benefitting from their current program, and it should be continued for the coming school year.
- The child should continue in his or her present program, but the program should be modified in some way (e.g., the number of therapy sessions should be increased or decreased).
- The child's educational plan requires some modifications. He or she may need a more intensive (e.g., full day) special education program or may be ready for a less intensive approach (e.g., a mainstream preschool program with special education or therapy services delivered in that setting).

The annual review's purpose is to review the child's placement and progress to ensure they are benefitting from their program. Decisions about programs and services for the new school year are made by the CPSE, and a new IEP is written with parental input. The parent/guardian must agree to the new IEP and the program, services, goals and objectives it lists.

If parents/guardians do not agree with decisions made at the annual review, due process is available. Details as to what due process is and how it works are available from your school district.

Alcott personnel will assist in preparing reports for your child's annual review to ensure that service plans for the coming year, as agreed to by parents and CPSE members, proceed smoothly. As the spring semester begins, parents will receive notices and information regarding annual reviews from both their school districts and Alcott. Personnel from both organizations will be available to answer any questions or assist in any way, Parents are notified of the date and time of their CPSE meeting and are expected to attend. Any reports sent by Alcott to school districts are discussed with parents so that parents can participate meaningfully in the annual review meeting.

Kindergarten Placement CSE (Committee on Special Education) Procedures

The CSE places children with special needs aged 5-21 (i.e., from kindergarten through high school), in appropriate classes.

A child graduates from the Little Class program the June before she or he is ready to enter kindergarten.

The Alcott staff helps parents/guardians to find a suitable kindergarten placement in the following ways:

- Alcott, working with the school district, informs parents of procedures for having children placed in public school general or special education classes. (These procedures are described briefly on the next page.)
- Alcott staff writes reports as required by your child's school district. ALL reports sent to the Committee on Special Education are also discussed with parents.

It is important to understand that Alcott's role in the CSE process is that of a resource person to the parents and Committee. In the CPSE process, the Alcott representative is a member of the Committee. In the CSE process, however, they are not committee members and therefore, their role in the CSE decision-making process is limited.

Of course, if our staff can be of assistance in ways other than those being described, they are always available to parents.

In January, a "Transition from CPSE to CSE" informational workshop is held for parents, advising them of the formal procedures and legal rights involved in placing children with special needs.

Procedures for Accessing Special Education Classes and/or Services in your Public School

1. The Committee (usually consisting of a chairperson, a psychologist, a special education teacher, a general education teacher, and possibly some other professionals) meet with you to discuss the reports they have received. Some members of the Committee **may** have seen or evaluated your child prior to this meeting. Some **may** have visited Alcott to observe him or her in class. After discussing the reports and their own impressions on seeing or evaluating your child, the Committee decides whether your child continues to qualify for special education services and is therefore eligible for services in kindergarten. If your child no longer qualifies, he or she is "declassified," and will be placed in a mainstream kindergarten class. If your child continues to be eligible for services, the CSE must decide which handicapping condition best describes your child's difficulties. Although preschool children are designated with the general term "preschool child with a disability," CSE Committees are mandated to describe the child more specifically. They choose from 13 classifications, such as, speech impaired, other health impaired, etc.

For eligible children, the Committee on Special Education outlines placements for the coming year. Placement options include special classes or mainstream classes with special services. The parent is expected to be an active participant in discussions about choice of handicapping condition, placement and services as parental input must be factored into these decisions. A new IEP, with goals and objectives for the coming year, is written.

2. After the meeting (sometimes before), parents are allowed to visit the potential placement sites.
3. After the meeting, and after parents/guardians have agreed to the IEP, formal papers are signed stating what your child's placement will be and what special services (e.g., speech therapy) she or he will receive.
4. If there is any disagreement between the CSE and the parent/guardians, "due process" procedures are available. Copies of due process rights are furnished to parents by their school district.

Note

If Alcott or your school district suggest that your child is ready for a general education kindergarten class, and you agree, it may not be necessary to go through the above-described procedures. However, some parents whose children are scheduled for general education kindergarten choose to make use of the CSE process to alert their school system to the fact that their child has had educational services in the past, and request that his or her progress be monitored or special support services (e.g., speech therapy) be given on a regular basis.