

Alcott School Little Class Parent Booklet 2021-2022

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www.alcottschool.org

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Mission Statement

The Alcott School's 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 important 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 voluntarily registered with the New York State Department of Education. Alcott is a not-for-profit corporation chartered under the New York State Board of Regents. Both our Crane Road and Dobbs Ferry sites are licensed as day care centers with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The Alcott School 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 lobbies of our locations.

Our licenser, Andrea Shako (Dobbs Ferry) - Tel: 845-708-2433

Our licenser, Monika Torres (Crane Road) –Tel: 845-708-2400

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:

Co-Presidents – Melinda Trovini and Barbara Klein

Secretary – Laurette Olson

Simrun Gialleonardo

Debra Dalal

Debbie Mumford

Arlene Donegan

School Policy Information

Arrival & Dismissal

Dobbs Ferry Site:

Little Class hours: Half Day

AM: 9:30 AM-12:00 PM

PM: 1:00 PM-3:30 PM

Little Class hours: Full Day

9:30 AM-2:30 PM

The bus companies will notify parents as to pick up and delivery times. All transportation arrangements **must** be made with the bus companies **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, Doctors and Professionals Form, Prescriptions, Emergency Release, Photo Policy Form, Communication Form, Transportation Release Form, Dental Form, Vision Form, Individual Health Care Plan.

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 School 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 K12 Emergency Alert system will be utilized in the event of 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.

Dobbs Ferry Location:

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:

At all of our locations, 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 each location's 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:** 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

In the event that 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).

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. No sandals or flip flops as these may not be safe for running and playing outdoors.

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. Label it with the child's name. When the teacher runs out, she will let you know. Please send a backpack each day with your child.

You will receive labels for your child's first few days of school. Please write your child's name on the label, and place on back of their shirt. This will insure 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 full day and half day classes.

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 several times a day, including before school begins and after lunch.
- We do not permit the sharing of food.
- We post lists of children's allergies in every classroom. The teachers and assistants are required to be familiar with every child's allergies.
- 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 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 of 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 course of 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. You will be asked to come to Alcott and pick up your child immediately if he/she shows symptoms of illness while at school
- Be sure to notify the school if your child has a contagious illness 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.
- Our staff sits with the children at meal times 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. Children who are absent **3 or more days** must have a doctor's note before returning to school. 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.

General Sickness Guidelines

Please assess your child for signs and symptoms of illness before the start of the school day. If your child presents with any symptoms of illness, please keep them at home.

As per new guidelines children will have their temperatures taken and given a health check before they are allowed to enter the building. Children will be screened for any signs of fever 100.0 or higher, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, nasal congestion, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, lethargy, irritability, eye irritation, rash or skin color changes, headache, new loss of taste or smell. Any indication that your child is exhibiting any of these symptoms will exempt your child from attending the program, and a doctor's note will be required upon their return to school. New policy is that if a child has any of the above symptoms, the child may not return to school until they are symptom free without medication for 72 hours. If your child was diagnosed with COVID-19, the child may not return until all symptoms have resolved and any further directives from The Office of Children and Family Services, The Westchester Department of Health and the CDC will be followed. If your child has been exposed to COVID-19, a 14 day quarantine is required. If your child is exhibiting symptoms of an allergy or a chronic medical condition, it is not our place to diagnose the child's symptoms. Your child may not attend the program without written documentation from your healthcare provider that these symptoms are specific to the child's underlying condition.

Should your child develop symptoms of illness throughout the course of the school day, PLEASE provide CURRENT EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS so the child may be picked up from school as soon as possible. We advise you to have a support system in place to pick up your child IMMEDIATELY. We will do our best to isolate the child in the interim in order to monitor the child more closely. This is done in an effort to protect your child from a worsening condition as no over the counter medications will be administered to mitigate symptoms. It is also intended to protect other students and staff from a contagious and communicable situation.

If a child's symptoms become severe and we cannot reach the parent or designated emergency contact, we will call 911.

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 location where your child attends and leave a voice message at 914-693-7677
- Call the Bus Company so that a bus is not sent to your home unnecessarily: Astra Transportation at 914-965-9006

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. In order 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 you do not alert the school office as to the reason prior to his/her return.

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.

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 back pack.
- All prescription medication must be labeled by a pharmacist including:
 - Child's name
 - Name of medication
 - Dosage, timing and route of administration of medication
 - Length of time order is in effect
 - 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 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 in order to receive a text, email or voicemail message via One Call Now in the event of any emergency closing. Closings will also be posted on Cable Channel 12 in Westchester. If you are in doubt, call the school listen for our message on the answering machine:

Dobbs Ferry: 914-693-7677

You may also call the Bus Company:

Astra Transportation at 914-965-9006

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. After school is well under way, the teacher will most likely introduce a structured "News" or "Show & Tell" time, which is primarily a language activity. She will notify you of this activity.

Therapy

Speech and Occupational Therapy

Speech and Occupational Therapy may be 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's happening that week.

We encourage parents 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 therapists also may write in this book to share with the parents some of the remediation activities she is doing with the child. Sometimes the therapist may make suggestions for things parent and child can do together at home.

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. During 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 provided 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, Silvana Dias, 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. Alcott's social worker and therapy staff are also available to conference with parents upon request at any time during the year.

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.

Birthday 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.** Sharing a story is a fun and easy way to celebrate your child's special day. Ask your child to pick a favorite book to be read at school as part of the birthday celebration.

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 who are 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 or the Little Class Coordinator 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. If and 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 – Mandatory Reporters

Employees of the Alcott School are mandatory 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

If your child's location is Dobbs Ferry: **Astra Transportation 914-965-9006**

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 **independent** organizations. So, 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.
- 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 (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 needs of the children, the staff is also concerned about the parents of

our children. 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 as well as productive ways of dealing with children are the focus of these discussions. Your participation is encouraged. More information will follow.

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.

Summer Program

As a continuation of the school year 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.”

Essentially, 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 youngsters have to dress and undress to use the sprinklers. Student teachers or junior counselors may join our staff for the summer which is helpful with so many children to help dress and undress in a short time.

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 in order 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, the new information would be presented.

The CPSE has three choices at Annual Reviews:

- The child is benefitting from his or her 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 purpose of the annual review is to "review" the child's placement and progress to make sure he or she is benefitting from his or her 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 papers for your child's annual review to ensure that service plans for the coming year as agreed to by parent 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, she is not a Committee member. Her role, therefore, 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 or not 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 possible placements for the following 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.