



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ACDS FORMALLY APPROVED TO OPEN PRESCHOOL IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY**

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**YONKERS, N.Y. (Sept. 29, 2016)** - ACDS has received official approval from the New York State Education Department to open a new preschool in Westchester County this month.

The education department gave ACDS - a lifetime services agency that serves people with a wide range of disabilities and their families - the green light to begin teaching two 12-student classes this month. State approval is pending for four additional classes, which would increase enrollment to 70 students.

“While this is a great day for ACDS, it’s an even greater moment for children with special needs and their families in Scarsdale, Yonkers, New Rochelle and many other communities in Westchester County,” ACDS Executive Director Michael M. Smith said. “Through our contact with 23 school districts in Westchester, we know that there are many children who can benefit from the unique services that ACDS offers.

“Bolstered by our 50 years of experience serving children and adults with disabilities, ACDS will be an asset to families across southern Westchester County,” Mr. Smith added.

Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer of Yonkers agreed. “There is tremendous need for preschool special education services throughout the county,” said Ms. Mayer, who chairs the state Assembly’s Subcommittee on Students with Special Needs. “This instruction will be a tremendous asset to Yonkers families and those throughout Westchester.”

Ms. Mayer will attend a special ribbon cutting ceremony Tuesday, Oct. 25, at the new ACDS preschool, located at 963 Scarsdale Road in Yonkers. The 3 p.m. ceremony will be followed by a 4 p.m. cocktail reception at the Westchester Manor, 140 Saw Mill River Road in Hastings-on-Hudson.

ACDS educates and works with more than 1,000 children and adults with Down syndrome, autism and other developmental disabilities. Services provided by ACDS include early intervention and preschool special education programs.

The ACDS Westchester preschool, the only state approved evaluation site for preschool students in southern Westchester County, will be capable of serving up to 160 children by the end of 2017, Mr. Smith said.

Richard Scotti, ACDS Westchester’s site director, and Nadia Hernandez, principal of the preschool, said ACDS will be a valuable resource to families in southern Westchester County.

“The State Education Department has given us the opportunity to educate and improve the quality of life for dozens of preschool children in Westchester County,” Mr. Scotti said.

Ms. Hernandez added: “The work we do at ACDS in helping individuals with developmental disabilities is invaluable. Knowing that we are filling a void in southern Westchester for children with special needs and their families extremely rewarding.”

### **ABOUT ACDS**

Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, ACDS, located in Plainview, N.Y., is dedicated to providing lifetime resources of exceptional quality, innovation and inclusion for individuals with Down syndrome, autism and other developmental disabilities and their families. A provider of programs and services in and around Long Island since 1966, ACDS currently serves over 1,000 children and adults, delivering services that include early intervention and preschool special education programs, respite and recreation programs for children, teens and adults, adult Medicaid service coordination, day habilitation and eight supervised group homes. For more information, please visit [acds.org](http://acds.org) or call 516-933-4700.