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## Principal Cecilia Barry Marks 30<sup>th</sup> Year at ACDS

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Plainview, NY – Cecilia Barry, M.S., P.D., SBL/SDL has been at ACDS for three decades. Since 1984, she’s been a School Psychologist, Director of Intake and Evaluation, and is now Principal of ACDS’s preschool in Plainview. ACDS provides Early Intervention programs for children from birth to age three. They also provide preschool special education or integrated classroom instruction and related therapy services to children ages three to five years who are classified with special needs.

Principal Barry’s background is impressive. She received her Master of Science Degree and Professional Diploma in School Psychology from St. John’s University and earned her Certificate in Educational Leadership from St. Rose College. Her professional training and experience have concentrated on early intervention and preschool special education. She also serves as a consultant to various school districts on Long Island providing curriculum, behavioral, resource and inclusionary modifications for children with special needs. Barry is a member of professional organizations and panels that advocate for children with developmental disabilities and their families.

Barry also helped start what is now known as “Kids Connection,” a New York State Licensed, DSS approved daycare that provides an enriched Early Childhood Program for children ages six weeks to five years at the Plainview preschool. This visionary daycare program first launched in Bellmore with the young mothers, their six children and a handful of licensed professionals in a small room with toys and equipment brought from their homes.

What began as a way to bring children to work quickly expanded and the daycare program was subsequently opened to relatives of staff members, siblings of students at ACDS and then to the community in 1999. The curriculum includes enriched academics, mommy and me classes, music classes, movement classes, sensory activities, sign language, computer instruction, art education, socialization and attending skills. It now has a long waiting list.

At the ACDS preschool, Barry oversees a bevy of licensed professionals, such as social workers, speech therapists, psychologists and certified teachers, making sure that every student reaches their full potential necessary for successful transition from preschool to public school. The staff works as a team to set up each child for success in the appropriate educational setting, whether they struggle with Down syndrome, autism or other developmental disabilities.

Barry commented, “It’s been an amazing journey over the past 30 years. Having started out as a psychologist and now assuming the role of Principal, being able to work with children with special needs and their families has had a profound impact on me, my family and established friendships. The joy I’ve experienced in watching these children grow and reach their full potential is unsurpassed. Words cannot describe the emotion that I feel when I witness the productivity, community membership, and social connectedness across peer groups of an adult

with a developmental disability that I held in my arms as a baby! It's been a blessing to have been associated with this agency for so long and to be a part of the unfolding of children's lives and the lives of their families."

Walk into the bright, happy school and there's a strong sense of community and hope under Principal Cecilia Barry's direction. And since ACDS is a lifelong agency that offers services from pre-natal to adult, children and their families are always well taken care of either within the caring supportive walls of the ACDS preschool and beyond. ACDS looks forward to many more years with pioneer Principal, Cecilia Barry.

### **About ACDS**

ACDS, located in Plainview, NY 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. ACDS has been providing programs and services in and around Long Island since 1966. ACDS currently serves more over 1000 children and adults, providing services that include Early Intervention and preschool special education programs, respite and recreation programs for children, teens and adults, adult Medicaid service coordination and eight supervised group homes in Nassau County. For more information, please visit [acds.org](http://acds.org) or call 516-933-4700.

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