



Serving children and adults with Down syndrome,
autism and other developmental disabilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Early Intervention Class Has Groundbreaking Potential to Improve Educational Outcomes

PLAINVIEW, NEW YORK, October 27, 2015—The 2015-2016 school year has started on an exciting note for ACDS. For the first time in its 50-year history, the agency’s half-day Early Intervention (EI) class will provide Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) to two-year-old students with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

ACDS has successfully used ABA techniques to teach children with autism since 2011. By applying the same method in its EI class, ACDS is striving to enhance educational outcomes for children with genetic disorders. The innovative class (with a student/teacher/assistant teacher ratio of 8:1:8) teaches communication, cognitive and socialization skills, while music and sensory-motor activities further improve children’s physical and cognitive development. Paraprofessionals assigned to each student provide individualized, 1:1 instruction, one of the primary components of ABA methodology. Parent training workshops will be held to reinforce ABA techniques at home.

The EI class has further significance for ACDS: it’s the agency’s first research project. ACDS Educational Coordinator Jane Shimkin explains, “The Nassau County Department of Health were wonderful in helping me to create the program which will measure children’s language, socialization and cognitive skills every three months for the entire school year, which runs till August.” Classes will also be videotaped to assess students’ progress and successful utilization of ABA techniques.

Shimkin credits ACDS Principal Cecilia Barry, Executive Director Michael M. Smith and the ACDS Board for supporting the project and allowing the agency to “think outside the box” to ensure students reach their full potential. ACDS plans to publish the research at the end of the school year. “By sharing our data, we hope to expand our scope of services and inspire continued innovation across Long Island,” Barry says.

ABOUT ACDS

ACDS, located in Plainview, New York, 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 for 45 years. ACDS currently serves

more than 900 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 seven supervised group homes in Nassau County. For more information, please visit acds.org or call 516-933-4700.

###