

LOCAL NEWS

SOMERSET COUNTY

Arc receives grant for Sensory Playground

The Ronald McDonald House Charities New York Tri-State Area recently awarded a grant of \$3,182 to The Arc of Somerset County's Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families daycare and preschool for a variety of sensory play materials for both indoor and outdoor classroom use.

The Arc of Somerset County used the funds to purchase "The Kodo Kids" line of children's playthings because they felt these items addressed the needs of the students they regularly teach. Kodo's products are made of natural products and simple materials, not adorned with typical bright and busy kid-friendly colors and patterns. "We find that equipment that is simple and less distracting, allow children with special needs to focus on tasks," stated Jill Glassman, assistant director of Early Intervention Programs for The Jerry Davis Center for Children and

Families.

The sensory playground classroom was unveiled March 26 as the preschool children emerged into the classroom, smiles miles wide filled the room and all hands were on deck to see what was new to their dedicated play room.

"The use of appropriate sensory play materials is beneficial to the continued development of children with special needs," said Christopher Perry, Ronald McDonald House Charities New York Tri-State Area's Executive Director. "In keeping with our organization's Mission of supporting programs that directly improve the well-being of children, we are proud to support The Arc of Somerset County's Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families and the children it serves."

The "Kodo Kids" line of products comes with a curriculum that merges sensory integration issues,

difficulties in mobility, social emotional delays, and motor planning issues, with a child's desire to play. "The idea for placement of "Kodo Kids" products provide the means for children to learn, problem solve and practice various skills within the six areas of development," stated Jennifer Orlick, director of The Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families. The sensory play classroom curriculum is aligned with the Creative Curriculum objectives for Development and Learning and the "Let's Move!" initiative.

"Our children will now have opportunities to make choices, experiment, and interact more actively with others. Each space will look similar in organization so that each child can be proactive in his or her learning. With a positive learning environment, children will broaden their development and grow through experience," explained Lauren Panarella, executive director for The Arc of Somerset County.

For more information about The Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families and The Arc of Somerset County, visit thearcofsomerset.org or call 908-725-8544.

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