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Smart Grant Writing Project

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SMART Grant Writing Project

By

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Scholarly Project

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This Scholarly Project Paper, submitted by Shannon Flegel in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master's of Occupational Therapy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

"The estimated cost burden to the Minnesota K-12 system due to children entering kindergarten unprepared for school success is about $113 million annually" (Chase, Coffee-Borden, Anton, Morre, and Valorose, 2008, pg. 1). These delays in school readiness can lead to continued achievement gaps throughout a child's academic career (Gonzali-Lee and Mueller, 2010). One way to decrease that achievement gap is through offering innovative early intervention programming to increase readiness skills before kindergarten. Hand in Hand Preschool, located in Northfield, MN is a preschool that is continuously looking for ways to increase all students' readiness skills. One such program that increases student readiness skills is Stimulating Maturity Through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART). This program is a multi-sensory based curriculum designed to increase readiness skills through utilizing movement to stimulate the brain. Implementation of this program has the potential to help all children including those who have special needs and those who are typically developing.

The barrier to the implementation of SMART in Hand in Hand Preschool is funding for training of teachers in SMART and equipment needed. This problem led the author to research and develop a grant proposal for Hand in Hand Preschool teachers to attend the training and obtain equipment for the initiation of the SMART program.

The research of this scholarly project includes the background and basis of the SMART program along with the processes involved with developing a grant proposal. The activities/methodology includes the actions that were taken to write a grant proposal for the SMART program. The product of this project is a grant proposal

that was submitted for full funding of the SMART program for Hand in Hand Preschool.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When children enter preschool, the essential foundation for future academic and life success begins in earnest. “Research shows there is a critical relationship between early childhood experiences, school success, and positive life- long outcomes” (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010 p.1). However, children often enter into school without the basic readiness skills needed for learning due to many factors. (Currie, 2000; Minnesota Department of Education, 2010).

Research also demonstrates a link between early childhood programming and success in school and later in life (Marcon, 2002; United States Department of Education, 1996). Thus, the purpose of early intervention is to provide children with positive and stimulating preschool experiences to increase learning readiness skills. Readiness skills include academic, social and behavioral skills that enable a child to learn.

Hand in Hand Preschool located in Northfield, Minnesota, serves as an example of programming intended to increase children’s successful participation in the curricula and social milieu of school. Hand in Hand Preschool, serving children between ages 3-5, is an integrated preschool that serves school readiness children, children in special education and tuition paying children from the community. Readiness children are those that have qualified for preschool financial assistance due to a variety of risk factors that may impact their success in school. Priority is given to children who need group socialization opportunities, who have health concerns, who need reinforcement in specific areas for development or who do not speak English. Children in special

education are those that have qualified for special education services through testing completed by the special education team. Children qualify for early childhood special education in the categories of developmental delay, autism, other health disabilities, or physical impairments. All children that qualify for special education services have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The tuition-paying child is one whose parents or caregivers has enrolled the child into preschool and pays the full tuition amount. The Hand in Hand Preschool classrooms are taught by early childhood teachers and early childhood special education teachers.

The early childhood teachers all have bachelors degrees in early childhood education. All the special education teachers have either bachelors or masters degrees in early childhood special education. Students and faculty receive support from occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech and language therapists. Children at Hand in Hand Preschool come from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Currently, twenty-four students are English language learners, thirty-nine students are considered readiness, seventeen are tuition paying and thirty-four are special education students.

According to Sara Line, School Readiness/Early Childhood Screening Lead, (personal communication, September 28, 2010) Hand in Hand Preschool is dedicated to providing all children with experiences to enhance readiness skills so they are best equipped to enter kindergarten. Increasingly the staff from Hand in Hand Preschool have observed more children coming into preschool with the need for skills development. In addition, the number of children qualifying for special education and on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) has risen by 59% in the last 4 years (Dr. Gary Lewis, personal

communication, January 13, 2011). The staff is continuously looking toward ways to increase readiness skills for all children regardless of the diversity or socio-economic status of the population. One such program is the Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training, or SMART curriculum.

SMART is a multi-sensory-physical movement based curriculum that increases readiness skills by stimulating the brain through movement. In a current research study of SMART (Miller, 2010) in a Headstart program, children demonstrated an increase of readiness skills as indicated on the Brigance and Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI) assessment. SMART also has the potential to enhance sensory motor processing for children in special education with various diagnoses that experience difficulties in this area. Unfortunately, the training of teachers and equipment needed for the SMART curriculum does not come without a cost of time and money. Since there is limited funding available to Hand in Hand Preschool beyond the basic needs of the program, the need for alternative forms of funding for the training, equipment and implementation of this program became the impetus of this scholarly project.

An effort to address the issue culminated in seeking grant funding or foundation support for implementing the SMART curriculum at Hand in Hand. This scholarly project included researching the background and basis of SMART program along with the grant writing process needed to write a grant proposal. To guide this grant writing process, the author chose the community organization theory as a framework when developing this grant proposal. The community organization theory is described by Scaffa (2001), as a model that focuses on the methods used by communities to develop strategies and respond to various identified issues. The product of this scholarly project

includes a grant proposal that was submitted for training of early childhood teachers in the SMART curriculum along with the necessary equipment to implement the program.

The following chapters of this scholarly project focus on the process involved with writing the SMART grant proposal. Chapter two of this document includes the literature review on the background and foundation of the SMART curriculum along with a research relative to using this program with children with sensory processing issues. Chapter three includes a review of current grant writing practices and the activities/methodology utilized by this author to write the SMART grant proposal. Chapter four is the description of the product, which describes the actual grant proposal that was written. Chapter five includes the summary of this scholarly project. Following the summary, the end of the document contains the references and appendices. The appendices include documents required to support writing the grant proposal, a copy of the completed SMART grant proposal submitted and follow up documents after submission of the SMART grant proposal was completed.

Seeking out alternative funding is essential for programs to access monies for the implementation of innovative projects or ideas that serve as solutions to address areas of concern or need. The SMART curriculum is a potential solution to address the need of increasing student readiness skills in a preschool program. This scholarly project focuses on the process utilized by this author to write a grant proposal for the implementation of the SMART curriculum within Hand in Hand Preschool.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

"Every year in Minnesota, thousands of the state's children enter school unprepared for kindergarten" (Johns, 2008, para.1). These children need to develop basic school readiness skills at a young age to prepare them for the tasks of learning. Often times when children start behind, they do not catch up (Chase, Coffee-Borden, Anton, et. al, 2008). Yet, quality early childhood education programming is a precursor to optimal school readiness (Fontaine, Torre, Grafwallner, 2004).

The SMART curriculum is one program that can be utilized to assist teachers in preparing all students to learn. The SMART curriculum was developed by Bob and Kathy DeBoers and Dr. Lyelle Pallmer, Ph D. in 1984 with the original name of Boost-Up. The name was then changed to Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART). The SMART curriculum is based on acquisition of skills through utilizing movement to stimulate the brain. SMART utilizes multi-sensory activities in a systematic fashion to promote brain development. The SMART curriculum is anchored in current brain development and research. Implementing the SMART curriculum requires teachers to be trained on the background of brain development and correlated specific movement activities. Equipment and supplies are also needed to implement the SMART activities. The purpose of this literature review is to provide readers with a background of brain structure and development, review of research on movement and cognition, review of

research on use of multi-sensory activities for children with special needs, and finally review of the SMART curriculum research.

Early Brain Structure & Development

When looking at brain development it is important to first identify and describe the most important structures of the brain. The brain consists of the cerebrum (cortex), the cerebellum and the brain stem (Templeton and Jensen, 1996). The brain cortex controls conscious motor activity and higher cognitive levels of functioning (DeBoer, DeBoer, Brown, Palmer, et al., 2002; Schneider, 2001). The brain cortex consists of a right and left hemisphere. The left hemisphere is responsible for analytical, math, logic and speech development and the right hemisphere is responsible for abstract thoughts, music, colors and shapes (DeBoer, DeBoer, Brown, Palmer, et al., 2002). The two hemispheres of the brain are connected by a midline of nerve fibers named the corpus callosum. Communication across the corpus collasum requires the development of coordination among the many neurons (DeBoer, DeBoer, Brown, Palmer, etal., 2002).

The brain stem is where all automatic functions occur. The brain stem keeps the body awake and alert as well as takes in information from the body (Schneider, 2001). According to Schneider (2001), the brain stem serves as a relay station for the senses: touch, movement, and muscle/joint sense. It is in the brain stem where learning readiness skills are developed (DeBoer, DeBoer, Brown, Palmer, et al., 2002). Readiness skills in the brain that affect learning include visual and auditory processing along with information from the input from the muscles and joints of the body (DeBoer, DeBoer, Brown, Palmer, et al., 2002).

The structure of the brain consists of nerve cells called neurons, which can be thought of as messengers of the brain. The primary task of neurons is to tell us about our body and environment (Ayres, 2005). At birth a baby is born with 100 billion neurons (Schiller, 2001). These neurons consist of an axon, synapse and dendrites. The axons send messages and the dendrites receive them (Gable, 2001). The connection between two neurons is the synapse. As a child develops, the synapses become more complex and interwoven. Social and physical environments, experiences, and relationships have all been proven to have a positive impact on the connection of the neurons (Gable &Hunting, 2001; Schiller, 2001). These early stimulation experiences contribute to the connections by increasing the number of connections along with building the transmission speed of the messages within the process of myelination. Stimulation is the information coming in through the senses including, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting, muscle and joint sense. Leppo (2000) reports that without proper environmental stimuli, sensory pathways may not develop properly. This is supported by Lindsey (1998) who sites research indicating that children who don't play or are rarely touched develop brains that are 20-30% smaller; indicating fewer connections. When those connections are seldom or never used, they go through a process of "pruning" in which they simply disappear (Gabbard, 1998; Gable, 2001).

Both the brain and the spinal cord make up the central nervous system (DeBoer, DeBoer, Brown, Palmer, et. al 2002). Processing information occurs through the central nervous system. Sensory motor processing is a normal part of brain functioning that involves receiving a stimulus or INPUT information from the environment through sensory pathways and having a response or OUTPUT through the motor pathway

(Minnesota Learning Resource Center , 2005). The sensory pathways involved with receiving input are tactile, vestibular, proprioceptive, visual and auditory. The tactile system is located in the skin and mouth and involves processing touch information. The vestibular system is the sensory pathway that detects head movements relative to gravity. The proprioceptive system is located in the muscles and joints and detects how body parts are moving in space. The visual system involves taking in information from things one sees and auditory from information a person hears. These systems are developing simultaneously and interdependent on each other. When the tactile, vestibular, proprioceptive, visual and auditory systems are fully developed, the response becomes automatic. Athena Oden (2006) had stated a child is on "auto pilot" once the sensory systems are "fine tuned." The child is then ready to learn higher level cognitive skills associated with the brain cortex.

Critical Periods for Brain Development

"There are critical periods in brain development in which experience may be most effective in forging connections in wiring the brain" (Gabbard and Rodrigues, 2007, p. 1). During these "windows of opportunity," the number of neurons and synapses are increasing (Gabbard and Rodrigues, 2007; Gable, 2001). Lindsey (1998) referenced research indicating that half of a child's critical brain development is completed by the time he begins kindergarten. If a child's brain is not stimulated, the brain may not develop the circuitry to its full potential (Gabbard & Rodrigues, 2007). With this knowledge, it is essential for educators to provide the right input at the right time to stimulate brain development during the critical period of development.

Movement and Cognition

Movement is a part of all children's lives. Physical movement not only stimulates the development of motor skills and overall physical health, but also increases cognitive skills. Scientists now believe that to achieve a mature brain, stimulation through movement and sensory experiences during early years is necessary (Gabbard and Rodrigues, 2007). During physical movement, blood flow is increased to the brain, which allows for increased delivery of oxygen, water and glucose, all of which are "food for the brain." It is through movement, fundamental skills are developed. Carla Hannaford, Ph D. is quoted in the book "Sensory Secrets" by Schneider (2001) as stating this on movement, "The more closely we consider the elaborate interplay of the brain and body, the more clearly one compelling theme emerges: movement is essential to learning" (p.41).

There have been several studies linking movement and brain development. Gabbard, (1998), referenced a study by Greenough and Black (1992) that confirmed actual changes in the brain structure of rats when they were raised in environmentally "rich" settings including treadmills, toys and obstacle courses versus rats raised in confined isolation. This is supported by a study of humans in France referenced by Pica (2006). This study reported that children who spent eight hours a week in physical education demonstrated better academic performance, greater independence, and more maturity than students with only 40 minutes of physical education a week. Burns, O'Callaghan, McDonell, and Rogers, et al. (2004) conducted a study on motor development and cognition. The results support that early motor development is linked to higher cognitive index scores. Consistent results are found in a study by Murray, Veijola,

Moilanen, Miettunen, Glahn, Cannon, et. al (2006), which indicates early gross motor development is associated with better adult executive function.

Multi Sensory Programs and Children with Special Needs

In addition to multi sensory experiences stimulating brain development, many sensory- based interventions have an impact on children with various special needs. Jean Ayres (2005) defines sensory integration as " [the] process of organizing sensory inputs so that the brain produces a useful body response and also useful perceptions, emotions, and thoughts"(p. 28). If the brain is not able to process sensory information well, it is usually not directing behavior effectively (Ayres, 2005). This is called sensory integrative dysfunction or sensory processing disorder. It is estimated that 5-15% of children experience sensory processing disorder (Miller, 2006). In those with developmental disabilities, approximately 40-80% also experience sensory processing dysfunction (Baranek, et al., 2002). "Research has shown that sensory processing affects a child's ability to learn" (Brown and Dunn, 2010, p. 475). This is congruent with Schnider (2001), who states sensory processing dysfunction can have a profound influence on development because it interferes with learning, social skills, and communicating with others. Another study by Bar-Shalita, Vatine, and Parush (2008), found that children with sensory modulation disorder scored significantly lower compared to peers in the level, degree of enjoyment, and frequency of participation in functional activities. Children with sensory processing dysfunction need to experience controlled sensory input, especially input from the movement (vestibular) system, muscles and joints, and skin in such a way that the child spontaneously forms the adaptive response that integrate theses sensations (Ayres, 2005). Research has shown that children with disabilities who

participate with sensory integration have demonstrated behavioral change in various areas. A study was completed in 2003 on 15 children with preprimary impairments using a sensory integrative treatment protocol (Paul, Sinen, Johnson, Latshaw, Newton, and Nelson, 2003). The children ages 3-6 were identified by special education with a variety of categories (autism, emotionally impaired, educable mentally impaired, physical or other health impaired and speech and language impaired. The results of this study demonstrated considerable improvements in preschool performance as measured by the Miller Assessment of Preschoolers (Paul, et al., 2003).

In a study using sensory integration controlled input with children with down syndrome, teachers noted a decrease in self-stimulatory and self-injurious behaviors in the classroom (Uyanik, Bumin, and Kayihan, 2003). This was also found to be the case in a study that compared the effects of sensory integration intervention on the self-stimulating behaviors on children with severe and profound pervasive developmental disorder (Smith, Press, Koenig, and Kinnealey, 2005). " Most children with ASD [autism spectrum disorder] have sensory processing disorders" (Case-Smith and Aarbesman, 2008, p. 417). Baranek, (2002) also documented that many children with ASD demonstrate unusual sensory responses. Impairments in sensory processing can impact a child's ability to develop relationships or function within a classroom. In a review of literature of interventions for autism by Case-Smith and Aarbesman (2008), it is stated there is "moderate to strong evidence of effectiveness using sensory-based techniques" (p. 427). In a study done using sensory integration with preschool children with autism, participants made improvement in play skills and demonstrated a decrease in non-engaged (aimless, stereotypic, unfocused) behaviors (Case-Smith and Aarbesman, 2008).

The research documented above is conclusive that stimulation through the body senses and physical movement stimulates positive brain development. This assists all children including those with special needs to engage in learning tasks and enhance cognition. One program that incorporates multi-sensory activities through movement is the SMART curriculum. A program such as this has the potential to stimulate the brain development of all children, therefore increasing their ability to obtain school readiness skills needed for achieving success in the academic world. The following paragraphs highlight the SMART program and current research on this curriculum.

SMART Program and Reported Efficacy

Stimulating Maturity Through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART) curriculum is a combination of multi sensory physical and classroom activities that stimulate brain development leading to increased pre-academic and early academic skills. SMART is based on the premises that movement anchors learning. It is based on neurological development and current brain research. The program consists of completing 30 minutes daily of activities including crawling, creeping, overhead ladder, balance beam, rolling, spinning, vision exercises, auditory and fine motor activities. These multi- sensory activities can be completed in a separate SMART gym or within the classroom. The activities are to be used in conjunction with the academic curriculum the teacher is already using. Children who develop mature readiness skills through SMART activities have shown increased attention span, ability to focus and improved reading scores (Minnesota Learning Resource Center, n.d). Results in literacy have been promising according to studies based on the SMART program.

Palmer (2007) conducted a study on the SMART program for children Kindergarten through third grade in North Carolina. The study measured early literacy skills for children in grades kindergarten through third grade who participated with the SMART curriculum daily. The results compared children to the normal levels on the Brigance K & 1 Screen and on the Slosson Oral Reading Test R-3. The kindergarten results indicated "outstanding" literacy performance and high print quality. The class average for recognizing and calling aloud words was 30 compared to the national average of 10 words (Palmer, 2007). Print quality ranged from 71-84% in the SMART subgroups compared to 55% or lower for average regular kindergarten students (Palmer, 2007). First graders also demonstrated positive results as noted by 80% of females and 73% of males scoring above the national mean on the Slosson Oral Reading Test-R3 (Palmer, 2007).

Another study (Brace, 2002), sought to determine the effectiveness of the SMART program with kindergarten children at an urban elementary school in Knoxville, TN. This study looked at academic and physical development. Areas of academic ability tested included a figure drawing, timed counting, alphabet recitation, letter writing, and letter recognition. The motor skills included arm strength test, a reflex test, a flip- flop coordination test, and a test of cross-lateral ability. Two classes were chosen to participate in the study. The two classes were participating with SMART at differing levels (one class did SMART more than the other). The results indicated that both classes improved in all areas of the cognitive test. Brace (2002), indicated that the class that did less minutes of SMART showed the largest gains. On the physical tests, both classes demonstrated increases in every sub-test of the physical assessment.

Studies of SMART have been conducted at the early childhood level. Miller (2010) conducted a study on the use of SMART in two Head Start programs. This study looked at whether implementing SMART in an early childhood setting produces improvements in school readiness and early literacy skills. To assess this, the study used teacher observations, and results from the standardized tests, Brigance K & 1 Screen II and Individual Growth and Developmental Indicators (IGDI). In this study teachers believed the physical activities translated into mental improvements. They also noted a decrease in behavior problems along with helping kids to calm down and focus. This was corroborated in a study by Brace (2002), in which a teacher surveyed wrote that her class seemed more focused after doing SMART. Results from the IGDI from fall to spring indicated that students scored substantially higher than then comparison group in five of the six test results (Miller, 2010). This indicates a positive effect of the SMART program. On the Brigance K & 1 Screen II, the SMART group scores were compared with normed scores. The scores suggest that the SMART Head Start students matched or exceeded norms for 5-year old children without risk factors. This is important as all children at Head Start are considered at risk and typically demonstrate lower readiness skills.

A recent study (Myhra, 2009), was completed on Brain Gym and the SMART program and the effects on academics on children in early childhood special education. This study was on 10 children ages 3-5 in an early childhood special education classroom. The researcher used the Learning Accomplishment Profile Diagnostic (LAP-D) third edition standardized assessment to collect data. This assessment measures fine motor manipulation and writing, cognitive matching and counting, language naming and comprehension, and gross motor object movement and body movement. A pre and

posttest was given over the semester to determine student growth. According to this study, using Brain Gym and SMART indicated a positive trend (increases in percentages of improvement) in all areas measured. It should be noted that this study used two movement-based programs so results cannot be attributed to using the SMART program exclusively.

Conclusion

Increasing readiness skills is a goal of early intervention. As children's brains are developing rapidly during the first 5 years, it is necessary to implement effective, quality programming to stimulate brain development in early childhood. The SMART program is one solution to stimulate brain development and increase readiness skills in the early childhood program within Hand in Hand preschool. Unfortunately, funding to train teachers and purchase needed equipment and supplies is limited. Therefore, alternative funding needed to be sought out for this program. The community organization model guided the process of obtaining alternative funding which was writing a grant proposal. The remainder of this scholarly project focuses on the process used and grant proposal written to gain funding to train teachers and obtain equipment for the implementation of the SMART program in the Hand in Hand Preschool program.

CHAPTER III

ACTIVITIES/METHODOLGY

Introduction

The activities involved with this scholarly project included not only research on the problem of lack of readiness skills, but also research on types of funding and how to access a source of money for the SMART program. The funding source that was explored for the SMART program was a grant. Following the research on how to write a grant proposal, this author applied the applicable information and wrote an actual grant proposal for submission. This chapter includes research on how to write a grant proposal along with the process and model that was utilized by this author to write and submit a grant for Hand in Hand Preschool to obtain funding for the implementation of the SMART curriculum.

Grant Writing

According to Browning, "A grant, also known as a cooperative agreement, is a monetary award given by a grantor to a grantee" (Browning, 2009, p.10). "A grant request is an advance promise of what you or your organization (the grantee) proposes to do when the grantor fulfills your request for funding" (Browning, 2009, p.10). Grants are used to fund an infinite amount of projects or ideas. Every grant-funding source develops guidelines and lists specific type of funding they will and will not award to potential grant seekers. To pursue a grant, there needs to be an idea about developing a program or project. Once there is an idea, according to Reynolds and Lane (2010), the next step is to find out who may be willing to fund the project (Reynolds, 2010). "It is important to find

the right match between your project and skills and the funder's aims and requirements" (Reynolds, 2010, p.8). According to Reynolds and Lane (2010) there are five types of grant funders: federal agencies, foundations, professional organizations, and community organizations. Federal agencies are a large network of federally funded institutes and agencies that support research and training programs. Foundations may be independent, company sponsored, or community based. Professional organizations have an interest in supporting professional development of members who conduct projects to advance their respective professions. Community organizations focus on the development of the needs of the community and its members.

The rates of grant funding success can range anywhere from 7%-45% depending on the sources used. Success rates for federal agencies range from 15%-30% and foundation funding ranges anywhere from 17%-45% (Reynolds & Lane, 2010). Due to the many sources of grants, filtering for the best options can be difficult. Reynolds and Lane (2010), recommend the following 7-step process. Step 1: Write down the goals of your project. Step 2: Search the internet. Step 3: Examine the organization's or program's goals and the areas it funds. Step 4: Determine whether the funding level matches your budget draft. Step 5: Identify the submission requirements, deadlines and funding period. Step 6: Review other proposals that have been funded by the agency; what is of interest to them? Step 7: Contact the program officer.

Following the above steps will help in deciding what funding source to use when writing the grant. Writing the actual grant is a key part of the process, however, there are steps that should be completed before the writing process begins. Reynolds and Lane (2010) and Wiggins (2003), both outline similar steps to be taken before the actual

writing process. Involved in those steps include: formulating supports or a team involved in the project, conducting a needs assessment, searching the literature and self-reflecting on why the proposed project is important.

Once a funding source has been chosen, the next step of grant writing is the physical writing of the grant. The format of the grant will depend upon what the funders' guidelines are. "The most important thing about writing a grant proposal is to follow the instructions as outlines by the funding agency" (Reynolds & Lane, 2010, p.10). The instructions will be very specific and include things like size of font, margin, page limits, and format requirements. It is quality and content of the grantee's written proposal that convinces the funder that the issue is important and demonstrates how the organization can use funding to deal with the issue. The writing should be compelling and written in a manner that convinces the funder the funder to say "yes."

Following writing an initial grant proposal draft, the document should be presented to individuals who may not understand the project for review (Wiggins, 2003). The grant proposal will then need to be edited with the feedback from those individuals who reviewed the grant proposal. The final step involves giving the grant a professional appearance to prepare it for submission. After the grant proposal is submitted, follow up includes connecting with the team members to ensure them the grant proposal was submitted. The team members should be debriefed regarding when exactly the grant was sent and the timeline for funder decisions. Each team member should also be given a copy of the entire grant proposal. The team should also consider answering some what-if questions, "What if we're funded for less than we ask for? What if we're not funded at all? What if the needs of our constituents change before we're funded? (Browning, 2009,

p. 269). Follow up may also include contacting the funders when appropriate. This will depend on the type of funding source that the grant application is sent to. Follow up with the funder can range from a phone call to tracking the grant on a funders website. If this is unknown, it is acceptable to call the funding source to find out more information.

After a grant is submitted and the status of the grant is known, there are steps to take to ensure closure on the grant that was submitted. If the grant is approved, celebrate. Then review the proposal timeline and determine exactly what needs to be done. Make sure all core members are involved and know exactly what to do. It is important to adhere to the reporting procedures outlined by the funding agency (Reynolds and Lane, 2010). In addition, further steps may need to be taken with the institution depending on the specific policies of receiving grant funding.

If a grant is not funded, don't throw it away. Find out why the proposal was not funded. Go back and do another funding search to identify a new list of prospective funders. Gather up the team members to discuss the failed attempt and work on improving and changing the original grant proposal. Follow the step by step grant process again and resubmit the grant proposal.

Theoretical Model

Along with the recommended grant writing processes researched, this author also chose to use the community organization model as the overarching model to assist in guiding the writing of a grant proposal. The community organization model involves organizing people and engaging in a planned action to affect an area of need (Scaffa, 2001). The entire community of Hand in Hand preschool desired a solution to increase school readiness skills. The SMART program was found to be a potential solution. The

implementation of the SMART program was deemed impossible for Hand in Hand preschool without adjunctive funding. Therefore the community organization model served as framework for writing a grant proposal for funding to train teachers as well as obtain equipment for the SMART curriculum.

Scaffa (2001) defines community organization as "[T]he process by which community groups are helped to identify common problems or goals, mobilize resources, and in other ways develop and implement strategies of reaching goals they have set" (p. 76). The community organization model utilized in writing this grant proposal consisted of using a structured format by McKenzie and Smeltzer (1997) titled, "Steps of Community Organization," as found in Scaffa (2001). The "Steps of Community Organization" in conjunction with the grant writing process steps served as a basic roadmap utilized to write the grant proposal. The following steps are presented more in depth in the following paragraphs.

Recognizing the Problem

The Hand in Hand preschool staff recognized the problem of children not obtaining readiness skills before kindergarten. This was corroborated by review of datarom the Minnesota Department of Education along with professional opinions and dialogue with kindergarten teachers within the district. The Minnesota Department of Education indicates in their 2010 school readiness report that 35% of children are not proficient in physical development, 47% are not proficient in the arts and personal and social development, 49% are not proficient in language and literacy and 51% are not proficient in mathematical thinking. Through this dialogue, Sarah, a Hand in Hand preschool teacher, became aware that several kindergarten classrooms in the district were

using the SMART program as a means to increase foundational readiness skills. Sarah also was able to observe readiness students partaking in SMART activities during a summer program. In addition, there was also a presentation given to the Hand in Hand Staff in the fall of 2009 by an occupational therapist on the SMART curriculum for early childhood. This OT utilized many of the SMART activities on an individual basis for children on Individual Education Plans. The Hand in Hand teachers knew the activities were beneficial for all students, however, they did not have the full knowledge to implement this program into their classrooms.

Getting Entry into the Community

The author of this project was approached by the Hand in Hand Preschool community staff due to their awareness of this author's knowledge of the SMART program. The author of this project attended the SMART training in the summer of 2010 to support the elementary SMART programs and carry through with many of the SMART activities on an individual/small group basis for students receiving OT services. The Hand in Hand staff did not have a full understanding of program and it's potential to increase readiness skills and desired to obtain more information. This author was asked to provide more information. Through a group meeting, this author educated the Hand in Hand Preschool staff on the SMART program and the potential it had on increasing readiness skills for all students. This was how the author gained entry into this community of Hand in Hand Preschool teachers regarding the problem of increasing readiness skills for all children.

Each school year, all Northfield Public School staff are required to form or join a Professional Learning Community (PLC). "A PLC is composed of collaborative teams

whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all" (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, 2006, p.3). At a staff meeting in late August, 2010, the formation of a PLC around increasing readiness skills for all students through the use of the SMART program was explored. There were five interested early childhood staff members from Hand in Hand Preschool. The outcome of this was the formation of a SMART PLC.

The team that was formulated consisted of three early childhood teachers, one occupational therapist and one physical therapist. The SMART PLC began to meet once or twice weekly for one hour to research and explore the options of using the SMART curriculum to increase readiness skills along with how to obtain funding. This author presented information through written materials and led discussions on how to meet this goal. Through the meetings with these staff members this author utilized therapeutic use of self to educate Hand in Hand Preschool staff on knowledge of child sensory and motor development, along with providing information regarding the background of the SMART curriculum and it's potential benefits. It was through several discussions and information sharing that the team made the decision to move forward with the implementation of the SMART curriculum.

Identifying the Specific Problem and Formulating a Solution

After several PLC meetings, the Hand in Hand staff determined the specific problem with increasing readiness skills through the use of the SMART program was that there was no available funding through Hand in Hand Preschool. If this program was to be utilized and implemented other financial sources needed to be explored.

Determining the Priorities and Setting Goals

The SMART PLC team determined that increasing readiness skills through the use of the SMART program was a priority for Hand in Hand Preschool. Aware of the lack of funding issues, the PLC team set a goal of obtaining financial resources to implement the SMART program within Hand in Hand Preschool. Realizing it may take some time to gain the necessary resources, the SMART PLC decided to set a goal of obtaining funding to implement the SMART curriculum in Hand in Hand Preschool in September of 2011.

Solution and Intervention Activities

The idea of writing a grant for funding was determined by the PLC team as an appropriate avenue to obtain the needed funding for training teachers and obtaining necessary equipment for the curriculum. To write the grant proposal, intervention activities needed to be completed to prepare for writing the grant.

Researching on the idea.

The next part of the grant writing process involved researching further on the SMART curriculum. The author of this scholarly project conducted an in depth literature review. As the SMART curriculum is a multi-sensory learning approach that focuses on brain stimulation through movement, a comprehensive literature review to support the grant was conducted on brain structure and development, effects of movement on cognition, and effects of multi-sensory programs on children with special needs. Research was also completed on readiness skills of children in Minnesota along with the importance of preparing children for learning in the early intervention setting. The

information gained through the literature review was then brought back to the team from this author.

Prospecting.

The next step involved prospecting funding sources. The search consisted of online searches reviewing grants available for this type of project and guidelines required. Searches included grants available from Education Minnesota, Minnesota Foundation grants and finally grants available in the Northfield area. In addition, this author also contacted and conducted an interview with a grant coordinator with inquiries regarding the grant process for that particular foundation which was Education Minnesota. After comprehensive review of the guidelines of two foundations, and previous grants awarded, the team chose one foundation to submit a grant proposal to, which was the Northfield Area Foundation. Northfield Area Foundation was chosen by the team because of its interest in funding programs and activities to enhance the quality of life and well being in the Northfield area. This along with reviewing and discovering that several grants had been awarded to support Northfield area schools was the deciding factor in choosing Northfield Area Foundation for the grant proposal submission.

Getting support from administration.

The next step for the SMART PLC team included contacting administration and obtaining information on what was required to gain permission to write and submit the grant proposal. The lead teacher of Hand in Hand expressed verbal support and gave permission to move forward. She informed the SMART PLC that permission also needed to be granted from the Northfield school board to submit the grant proposal. The SMART PLC completed and submitted to the school board for approval to submit the grant. The

school board approved the Grant Application Approval Form (Appendix A). The SMART PLC was able to move forward with writing the grant proposal.

Implementing the plan.

The implementation of the plan included writing the actual grant proposal. The due date was reviewed and the grant writing process began. The author of this scholarly project was the key grant writer with assistance from the other SMART PLC team members. Careful consideration was given to the written requirements required of the Northfield Area Foundation. A copy of the guidelines for Northfield Area Foundation can be found in Appendix B. The document required three sections. I. Program Narrative, II. Personnel and III. Project Budget. The Program Narrative was to include; statement of purpose, project objectives, collaboration, future plans and evaluation. Section II on Personnel was to include; key staff members, additional staff required and level of volunteer involvement. The final section on Project Budget was to include a comprehensive budget listing all sources of income and details of all expenses. This section required the using a table format provided in the application. The Northfield Area Foundation required the organization's name on every page along with the original and six copies submitted. The deadline for submission was October 1, 2010. Several drafts of the grant proposal were written. The drafts were reviewed and critiqued by all SMART PLC team members along with the advisor of this author. After several revisions, the final draft (Appendix C) was completed on September 28, 2010. The SMART grant final draft proposal was placed in the mail by this author on September 29, 2010.

A phone call was received from Northfield Area Foundation on October 25, 2010, verbally indicating that the grant proposal written by the SMART PLC team was

approved. The team was to receive all funding requested to support the implementation of the SMART curriculum in Hand in Hand preschool. A check was received on December 1, 2010, for the full amount of $3595.00 (Appendix D).

Once the grant money was received, the SMART PLC took time to celebrate and then wrote a thank-you note to Northfield Area Foundation for awarding the grant (Appendix E). The team informed administration of the grant award and then designated one person to be in charge of tracking and communicating with financial staff regarding the money that was received for this program.

As this is a continuing process, the next step involves looking into training dates and determining possible dates of attendance for those teachers involved. Following the training, the SMART PLC team has plans to meet in August 2011 to begin the process of ordering equipment and planning for the implementation of the SMART curriculum in September of 2011.

Evaluating the Outcomes of the Plan of Action

At the time of the writing of this project, the SMART curriculum had not been implemented. It is impossible to evaluate the outcomes of using this program in Hand in Hand Preschool. With the implementation of this SMART program in the fall of 2011, the SMART PLC team will take data and record outcomes according to the summative assessment developed by Hand in Hand Preschool.

Managing the outcomes in the community

The data collected and interpreted following the implementation of the SMART program in Hand in Hand preschool will be presented to the members of all Hand in Hand Preschool Staff and the Northfield Area Foundation in September 2012.

CHAPTER IV

PRODUCT

The product for this scholarly project consists of a completed grant proposal written and submitted for training and equipment for the implementation for the SMART program in Hand in Hand Preschool in Northfield, Minnesota. A complete copy of the submitted SMART grant proposal is found in Appendix C.

The Northfield Area Foundation provides guidelines for the content of the grant (Appendix B). The guidelines were adhered to in writing the grant. Northfield Area Foundation provides a statement in the guidelines that indicate the form of the application is far less important than the content. The guidelines advise the grant applicants to write the grant for people who may not be familiar with the project or agency. The guidelines clearly state to be as concise and clear as possible when writing the grant proposal. There were three main sections of questions to be answered when writing the grant proposal for Northfield Area Foundation.

This grant proposal consists of the required sections that were requested by the Northfield Area Foundation (NAF). The grant proposal begins with a cover page. This includes basic general information such as the name, address, and contact information. Also included is a project summary, amount requested, and project start and end date. The first section of the grant includes a program narrative. The program narrative includes a statement of purpose, project objectives, collaboration, future plans and evaluation. Section two is titled personnel, which presents the staff as well as other

individuals that will be involved with this project. Section three of the SMART grant proposal is the project budget. This portion of the grant is presented in a specific table format requested by NAF. This table includes all sources of income and details of all expenses.

The SMART grant team chose to use a 12 -point, Times New Roman Font. The completed SMART grant proposal consists of eleven pages including the cover page and proposed budget table. The name of the organization and title of the grant is on each page of the grant as requested by NAF.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Kindergarten teachers report that one in three students are not equipped with the fundamental skills necessary for learning (Lindsey, 1998). Minnesota Department of Education (2010), reported that children entering kindergarten are not demonstrating proficiency in all developmental domains. Therefore there is an achievement gap between children entering kindergarten. "Early intervention is a critical bridge to closing the achievement gap-or preventing it from occurring" (Nelson, 2006, p.2). To prevent or narrow the achievement gap, preschools must focus on high quality early intervention programs to address increasing readiness skills in preschool aged children.

Hand in Hand Preschool in Northfield, MN sought out to solve the program of increasing readiness skills of all students through the implementation of the SMART curriculum. As with many public education systems, the money for this additional program was not readily available. Obtaining the funding for this program became the central focus for this scholarly project. Through research on the SMART curriculum and the grant writing process, a grant proposal was written, submitted and awarded to Hand in Hand Preschool for the training of teachers and purchase of equipment for the SMART program.

In a time when the economy is uncertain, occupational therapists need to seek out other areas of funding to enhance or develop programs, research or purchase equipment.

Grants are one area of funding that this scholarly project focused on. Writing a grant proposal is time intensive and requires the knowledge of the processes involved. Writing the SMART grant proposal for this scholarly project was indeed time intensive and involved following the processes. Being awarded the grant was a great reward of this scholarly project. Through writing of this SMART grant proposal, the author has gained grant-writing skills. The author intends to utilize these grant-writing skills again in the future to seek out financial resources to enhance the profession of occupational therapy or the lives of others as needs arise.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Grant Application Approval Form

Appendix B

Northfield Area Foundation Guidelines

Appendix C

Copy of SMART Grant Proposal Written

Appendix D

Copy of Check Issued

Appendix E

Copy of Thank you note written to Northfield Area Foundation

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Grant Application Approval Form

Date 9-27-10

Any proposal submitted to an external funding source that involves any entity within the Northfield Public Schools must be approved by the School Board before the proposal is submitted. This form will accompany all requests to the School Board and will be filed with the Grant Coordinator along with a copy of the completed grant proposal. All proposals must:

- **Support the District's mission and goals.**
- **Be financially feasible and supported by all affected District departments or buildings.**
- **Demonstrate collaboration and commitment from the District if required.**

Grant Proposal Information	
Project Title	Hand in Hand S.M.A.R.T. Grant
Project Period	**From:** June 2011 **To:** May 2012
Funding Source	Northfield Area Foundation
Application Deadline	October 1, 2010
List all Grant Applicants	Sarah Yantzer, Lynette Galchutt, Shawn Perlich, Shannon Flegel, Laurie Larson
School/Department	Hand in Hand Preschool
Contact Person	Sarah Yantzer **Phone No.** 507-645-1209
Project Information	
Brief Proposal Description	The purpose of this project is to train Hand in Hand teachers in the S.M.A.R.T. (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training) curriculum and obtain the basic equipment needed to implement the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum in Hand in Hand Preschool.
Project Goal (in one Sentence)	The goal of this project is to educate Hand in Hand Preschool teachers in the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum and provide them with the resources to implement the program with the goal of increasing readiness skills in the Hand in Hand Preschool population.
List All Personnel Involved in Application	Sarah Yantzer, Lynette Galchutt, Shawn Perlich, Shannon Flegel & Laurie Larson
Budget Information	
Amount Requested	$ 3595.00
Matching Funds	X **Are Required** **Not Required**
Source of Matching Funds	In-Kind Resources

Required Documents Attached: **Completed Application** **Rough Draft** **Summary of Application**

Project Initiator Signature

Building Principal or District Administrator Signature

Approved by the School Board **Not Approved by the School Board Date**

11/01

NORTHFIELD AREA FOUNDATION
GRANT GUIDELINES

The Foundation

Northfield Area Foundation (NAF) is a permanent endowment created to benefit the people of the greater Northfield area. NAF accepts and administers gifts from many sources to help meet the needs of the community. The endowment itself, along with other endowments for which NAF is responsible, continues to grow and yield earnings each year, and each is managed by Minnesota Community Foundation, a public charity that administers funds for the benefit of organizations and communities throughout Minnesota. Most of the funds do not restrict the types of projects or organizations who may receive a grant; however, we do have one fund designated for beautification projects.

Our Core Values

- We believe that resources go further through collaboration.
- We support creative and innovative solutions when addressing the needs and interests of our area.
- We are an inclusive organization that embraces the Northfield area in all of its diversity.
- We seek to empower stakeholders in building a better Northfield.

The Grants

Our long term strategy:

We will seek to build a lasting legacy by concentrating on solutions that build permanent value for NAF, donors and the Northfield area.

Our grants will pursue solutions to core problems and issues affecting our larger community, not address the consequences or the victims of such problems. We will look at proposals that represent broad and comprehensive options which are consistent with our core values.

In making grants, NAF's Grants Review Committee and Board will be guided by the following general policies and considerations:

- Grants will be made to organizations who will use the funds to benefit the citizens of the Northfield area, defined by the Northfield School District boundaries.
- Grants will be made for projects that create long-term solutions, enhance the overall well-being of our community and generate the biggest multiplier effect.
- Grants are available once a year and are made for one year, with applications received by October 1st and awards made in December.
- Grants are made only to tax-exempt institutions (501(c)(3) or agencies; no grants are made directly to individuals.
- NAF operates without discrimination as to age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, handicap, or national origin in the consideration of grant requests.

NAF is particularly interested in funding:

- Programs and activities which preserve and enhance the heritage, the quality of life and well being in the Northfield area.
- Projects which facilitate cooperation and collaboration between and among organizations in the Northfield area.
- Projects which respond to community needs or opportunities and ensure a long-term or permanent impact.
- Projects which encourage volunteerism and involve stakeholders in the implementation of the grant.
- Projects which provide leverage for generating other funds and community resources in the Northfield area, including matching or supplemental funds.
- Beautification projects with special consideration given to sustainable projects which protect and enhance the environment (no funds remain available for 2010).

Once a completed grant application is received, careful consideration is given to each request. The Grants Review Committee reviews the proposal for: demonstrated need, ethical practices, fiscal responsibility, and ability to achieve project goals. The committee forwards its recommendations to the Northfield Area Foundation Board for final approval. Each recommendation is reviewed by the Board in terms of its general eligibility and conformity to the Foundation's guidelines, the available funds, and project feasibility. We operate based on principles of integrity, trust, transparency and accountability.

No grants will be made for the following types of projects unless there are compelling reasons to do so:

- Support for general operating expenses
- Basic municipal services
- Purchasing real estate
- Endowment campaigns
- Previously incurred debt
- Sectarian religious programs
- For profit organizations
- Lobbying

By the end of each grant cycle (end of September) grant recipients will be expected to have reported back to NAF about the use of their award pursuant to NAF's reporting procedures. Unused funds are expected to be returned to NAF if not used by the end of the grant cycle, unless the grant recipient has been given an extension in writing.

Northfield Area Foundation
PO Box 802
Northfield, MN 55057
www.northfieldareafoundation.org
info@northfieldareafoundation.org

NORTHFIELD AREA FOUNDATION
GRANT APPLICATION
Cover Page

Northfield Area Foundation, PO Box 802, Northfield, MN 55057

Date Submitted _9-28-2010_____

ORGANIZATION___Northfield Public Schools/Community Services/School Readiness (Hand in Hand Preschool)

FISCAL AGENT (if different than above)_____

CONTACT PERSON _Sara Line, School Readiness Lead_____

EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN))__41-6008327_____

ORGANIZATION ADDRESS_201 Orchard St. Northfield, MN 55057_____

PHONE 507-645-1209_ **EMAIL:** Sarah.yantzer@nfld.k12.mn.us
FAX 507-645-1250___

PROJECT TITLE _Hand in Hand S.M.A.R.T. Grant_____

CONTACT PERSON __Sarah Yantzer__**TITLE** Hand in Hand Preschool Teacher_____

PROJECT STARTING DATE _June 2011_ **PROJECT ENDING DATE**__May 2012_

AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM NAF $3595.00***TOTAL PROJECT COST** $8697*__
(*Amount may be slightly lower due to qualifying for discount for early bird registration. See Budget for more information)

PROJECT SUMMARY
Describe your project briefly, including its target audience and how its success will be evaluated. Please keep your description within the space provided.

This project involves training of Hand in Hand Preschool Teachers and providing them with the essential equipment to implement a multi-sensory movement based titled S.M.A.R.T. (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training). Implementation of this curriculum will increase readiness skills of all Hand in Hand Preschool children. The success of this project will be measured through comparison of data collected on summative preschool assessments.

Has your governing board approved a policy that is non-discriminatory in nature? (YES) NO
Has your governing board specifically endorsed this project and authorized you to submit this application for funding? (YES) NO Date approved by Board 9-27-2010

CERTIFICATION:

I have read the Northfield Area Foundation Guidelines and the list of Grant Application Questions to which I may be asked to respond in writing or by submitting appropriate forms. I certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I further agree, if a grant is awarded our organization, a final written report of the project will be submitted and all unused funds will be returned to the Northfield Area Foundation.

Sarah Hanfgs - Hand in Hand Preschool Teacher

9-28-10

Signature Date

Hand in Hand Preschool S.M.A.R.T. Grant

Submitted to Northfield Area Foundation on
September 28, 2010

Submitted by:
Sarah Yantzer, Lynette Galchutt, Shawn Perlich,
Shannon Flegel & Laurie Larson

I. PROGRAM NARRATIVE

a. Background: "Research shows there is a critical relationship between early childhood experiences, school success, and positive life-long outcomes" (Minnesota Department of Education, 2004 & Schor, 2007). Thus, when children enter preschool, the essential foundation for future academic and life success begins in earnest. Many students will immediately thrive and experience opportunity in preschool, though others will face barriers to learning because of a disabling condition or disability that negatively influences participation and learning. Ultimately, continued disadvantagement in learning decreases the students' sense of self-efficacy and ability to competently enter and participate in the fullness of community life, employment, and service (Nelson, 2006).

Hand in Hand Preschool is located within Longfellow Elementary, and serves children ages 3-5 from Northfield. The children are from diverse backgrounds and the school integrates students in the categories of special education, readiness (children who are at risk for not obtaining skills in the areas of social/emotional, language/literacy, creativity/arts, cognition/general knowledge and physical health and motor development due to various factors), and tuition paying. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, a certain percentage of children entering kindergarten did not show proficiency in all of the developmental domains assessed (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010). The domains assessed included: Physical development, The Arts, Personal & Social Development, Language & Literacy & Mathematical Thinking. In addition, research indicates that at least half of the eventual educational achievement gaps among children exist at kindergarten entry (Schor, 2007). Without early intervention, these gaps widen as children move through the educational system.

The Hand in Hand Preschool staff are dedicated to providing children with positive preschool experiences that facilitate all areas of development regardless of their diverse backgrounds (i.e. cultural, racial, socio-economic, disability and gender). However, it is essential for Hand in Hand Preschool to implement creative and innovative strategies that encourage and support the development of readiness skills to prepare the children for success in kindergarten and beyond. The staff proposes the S.M.A.R.T Curriculum (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training) as a solution to the core problem of readiness skills. S.M.A.R.T. is a multi-sensory approach to learning, which is designed to develop and enhance physiological and neurological readiness skills students need to succeed in school. S.M.A.R.T. is based on the principle that movement anchors learning.

The S.M.A.R.T. curriculum works by providing children with 20 minutes a day of intense developmental activities to stimulate brain development. It incorporates music, listening to directions, performing big motor movements (jumping or hopping), fine motor activities, visual activities and other skill building games to learn and develop age appropriate skills in order to have the necessary skills for formal learning in writing, printing and mathematics (Palmer, 2002). "Children who develop readiness skills through S.M.A.R.T. activities have shown increased attention span, ability to focus, and improved reading scores" (MLRC, 2010). Lori Bouza, a principal from an early childhood program in Wagner, SD stated: "I am sold completely on the Boost Up/S.M.A.R.T. program. We have noticed that our students, even those referred for testing for Special Ed, are usually scoring within the average range, if not higher, for fine and gross motor skills" (S. Flegel, personal communication, September 13, 2010).

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to obtain the training and equipment needed to implement the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum. Implementation of the S.M.A.R.T. program will work toward improving school readiness for the children in Hand in Hand Preschool. It also will provide the necessary essential link and continuity between children in Early Childhood to the S.M.A.R.T. programs already established in Bridgewater and Greenvale Park kindergarten classrooms. By participating in the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum in Hand in Hand Preschool, children will have had the opportunity to learn and perfect many of the S.M.A.R.T. activities before entering Kindergarten. Additionally, these two schools receive the highest percentage of readiness children from Hand in Hand Preschool. Implementation of the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum will impact several individuals. The key stakeholders in this program are: preschool children, Hand in Hand Preschool teachers, parents, special education staff, elementary teachers, administration and community members. All partners and stakeholders are invested in the enhancing the development of children.

b. Goal: The goal of this project is to prepare preschool students for success in kindergarten through the use of physical and sensory activities through the use of the S.M.A.R.T. program.

Project Objectives: There are 3 Project Objectives

1) Process Objective: By the end of Summer 2011, 3 Hand in Hand Preschool teachers will be trained in the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum.

2) Impact Objective: At the end of the S.M.A.R.T. training, Hand in Hand teachers will demonstrate knowledge of the S.M.A.R.T. program

so they are equipped to implement this curriculum in the 2011-2012 school year.

3) Outcome Objective: By May 2012, Hand in Hand preschool students will demonstrate a significant increase in 4 readiness skills (e.g. letter recognition, gross motor, fine motor and counting) with the implementation of the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum.

Time Line

- Training 3 Hand in Hand Preschool teachers in the Summer of 2011.
- Meet as a S.M.A.R.T. Team in early August 2011 to collaborate exactly how in implement the curriculum into the Hand in Hand Preschool Classrooms.
- Ordering Equipment/Supplies by August 1, 2011.
- Prepare materials and set up S.M.A.R.T. activities in 3 classrooms by August 31, 2011.
- Implement the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum into 3 Hand in Hand Preschool classrooms in September 2011.

c. Collaboration: Collaboration with partners and key stakeholders will be essential to the success of the S.M.A.R.T. program. Collaboration will occur through S.M.A.R.T. team meetings with all partners involved directly with the Hand in Hand Preschool program. Partners include: Hand in Hand teachers, Early Childhood Special Education Teachers, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech Pathologist, and Educational Assistants. All partners will be educated about the general philosophy and activities within the S.M.A.R.T. programs. Meetings will include ways in which all partners will be able to support the program.

In addition, collaboration will occur with Greenvale Park and Bridgewater teachers and support staff, who have been trained and have implemented the S.M.A.R.T. program. Through this collaboration, discussions will occur regarding successes and challenges to implementing this program. Discussions will also occur regarding strategies preschool staff can utilize to enable successful transition to the S.M.A.R.T. programs at the elementary level.

Key stakeholders including parents, administrators, and community members will have the opportunity to collaborate with Hand in Hand Preschool staff through the use of written materials and informal opportunities for questions and answers regarding the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum.

d. Future Plans: Once the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum is implemented it is expected that it will be ongoing each year. Other funding that may be needed is training new teachers or to replace equipment or supplies that become damaged. Dependent upon the success of implementing of the strategies in Hand in Hand Preschool classrooms, it may be beneficial to have resources such as the NAF and other funding resources available if needed.

e. Evaluation: The SMART program will be evaluated by using the summative preschool assessments that measure essential learning's as indicated in Northfield Hand in Hand preschool curriculum guide. These essential learnings are based on Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators. Data will be taken during this preschool year (2010-2011) without using the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum. After the implementation of S.M.A.R.T., the year of 2011-2012, the same data will be taken and compared to the data from 2010-2011.

II. PERSONNEL

a. Key Staff Members:
   - 3 Hand in Hand Preschool teachers who will be implementing the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum on a daily basis in 3 separate classrooms. They are all Licensed Early Childhood Teachers.

b. Will additional Staff Members be utilized? Yes, Additional Support Staff members include:
   - Early Childhood Special Education Teachers-Licensed Special Education Teachers.
   - Occupational Therapist-Licensed through Minnesota Department of Health.
   - Physical Therapist-Licensed through Minnesota State Board of Physical Therapy.
   - Speech Pathologist-Licensed through Minnesota Department of Education

These staff members will assist to adapt the curriculum as needed for children with special needs. One Early Childhood Teacher and one Occupational Therapist have been trained in the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum with the anticipation of training for a Physical Therapist in the summer of 2011.

c. Level of Volunteer involvement-Volunteer participation with this program would be limited to preparation of materials and set-up.

III. Hand in Hand S.M.A.R.T. Project Budget

Expense Source	Hand in Hand Preschool	NAF	Other
S.M.A.R.T. Training for 3 Hand in Hand teachers @$635.00 ($610.00 with Early Bird discount) each through Minnesota Learning Resource Center with main facility located in Minneapolis		$1905.00 ($1830.00 with Early Bird Discount)	
Compensation to attend S.M.A.R.T training—3 Hand in Hand teachers @ 32 hours each= 96 hours time @22.00/hr			In-Kind—Hand in Hand teachers will donate their time to attend training in the summer 2011 ($2112.00)
S.M.A.R.T Training for Physical Therapist to support Hand in Hand Preschool Teachers $635.00			Funded through Northfield Public Schools Department of Student Services ($635.00 or $610.00 for Early Bird)
Compensation of time of 3 Hand in Hand teachers to meet in August to collaborate on implementation of S.M.A.R.T. 3 teachers @ 5 hours=15 hours @ 22.00/hour			In-Kind—Teachers will volunteer time to meet ($330.00)

6 Gym Mats		4 Gym Mats $600.00	In-Kind—2 Gym mats available ($300.00)
3 Balance Beams		2 Balance Beams $200.00	In-Kind—1 balance beam is available ($100.00)
3 Peg Arcs		$130.00	
3 Balance Boards		2 Balance Boards $170.00	In-Kind—1 Balance Board available to use ($85.00)
3 Rebounders		1 Rebounder $100.00	In-Kind-- 2 Rebounders are available for use ($200.00)
3 Timers		$30.00	
3 spinning boards		2 Spinning Boards $180.00	In-Kind-- 1 Spinning Board is available ($90.00)
3 sets of Beads/String		$60.00	
3 large Hippity Hop Balls		$60.00	
3 Sets of Domino's		$40.00	
3 Trouble Lights and Bulbs		$60.00	
Overhead Ladder			In-Kind—Use the Monkey bars on the playground as the overhead ladder ($1100.00)
3 large Bins to store S.M.A.R.T. Supplies		$60.00	
Misc supplies: pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, books, stickers, pencil toppers, pencil grips, CD players, CD's, poster board, chalkboard/chalk (approx. value $50.00 per			In-Kind-- Supplies that are in the classroom will be used ($150.00)

classroom=$150.00)			
TOTALS		$3595.00 (3520.00 with Early Bird Discount)	$5102.00 ($5077.00 with Early Bird Discount)

The total amount for S.M.A.R.T. training and equipment/supplies is $8697.00 ($8597.00 with Early Bird Discount).

The total amount requested from Northfield Area Foundation for Training, Equipment and Supplies for the S.M.A.R.T. Curriculum is $3595.00 ($3520.00 if funds received for training are available by May 15th to qualify for Early Bird Discount).

Funding for the training ($1830.00) would be needed by May 15, 2011 to qualify for Early Bird Discount ($1905.00) after May 15th, 2011.

Funding for Equipment/Supplies ($1690.00) would be needed by July 1, 2011 to ensure equipment is ordered and arrives before start of school year in September 2011.

References:

Minnesota Department of Education. (2010). Minnesota School Readiness Study: Developmental assessment at kindergarten entrance. Minneapolis, MN. Author.

Minnesota Learning Resource Center (MLRC) (2010). Get S.M.A.R.T. Stimulating maturity through accelerated readiness training. Retrieved on September 12, 2010 from http://www.themlrc.org/images/pdfs/MLRC%20press/SMART_Summary.pdf

Nelson, A. (2006). The Achievement Gap. *An information brief of the association for supervision and curriculum development.* Issue 45.

Palmer, L. (2002). Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART), in 2000-2001 *Summary Report.* Minneapolis, MN. Minnesota Learning Resource Center.

Schor EL, Abrams M, Shea K. (2007). Medicaid: health promotion and disease prevention for school readiness. *Health Aff.* 26 (2): 420-429.

MINNESOTA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

What's your vision?

55 Fifth Street East • Suite 600 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1797 (651) 224-0571

On behalf of the Marston Headley & Dorothy Stone Headley Fund - Northfield Area Foundation of the Minnesota Community Foundation, we are pleased to present a check for $3,595.00 for the Longfellow School for Hand in Hand Preschool Teachers-Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training.

By accepting this grant, your organization acknowledges that this gift is not intended to fulfill a pre-existing pledge and that no individual will receive any goods, services, or other private benefit as a result of this gift.

If your organization plans to acknowledge this gift, please identify it as a grant from the Marston Headley & Dorothy Stone Headley Fund - Northfield Area Foundation of Minnesota Community Foundation. It is not necessary to send a receipt for tax deduction purposes to Minnesota Community Foundation or the advisor. However, we encourage you to send a letter of appreciation to:

The Northfield Area Foundation
Mr. Dale Ness
Chair
P.O. Box 802
Northfield, MN 55057

Congratulations!
Good luck with the Hand in Hand preschool program.
Anne Mayer - Chair, NAF Grants

Copies to: The Northfield Area Foundation

Grant Tracking #: MN-10-001306
Check Date: November 04, 2010

MINNESOTA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
55 FIFTH STREET EAST, SUITE 600
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101

MN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Commercial Customer Service 612-973-5323
1200 Energy Park Drive
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108
17-2/910

No. 39328
Date: 11/4/2010

PAY

Three Thousand Five Hundred Ninety-Five Dollars and Zero Cents

**********$3,595.00**

TO THE ORDER OF

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #659 NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1400 DIVISION STREET SOUTH
NORTHFIELD, MN 55057-2299

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February 9, 2011

COPY

The Northfield Area Foundation
Mr. Dale Ness, Chair
PO Box 802
Northfield, MN 55057

Dear Mr. Ness,

We are writing to thank you for the grant for the Longfellow School Hand in Hand Preschool Teachers training in the Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART) program. We are beginning plans for teachers to attend SMART training next summer. These funds will not only allow teachers to attend the training, but also provide equipment needed to help implement the programming in the fall of 2011.

It is an exciting opportunity for our teachers and subsequently our students will benefit greatly! Thanks, again.

Sincerely,

Sarah Yantzer

Lynette Galchutt

Shawn Perlich

Shannon Flegel

Laurie Larson