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## Acting to Build Our Children's Future (ABC), Oconto Falls School District Success Story 2006 Year 3 of Project

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By: Donna Doll-Yogerst, FLA and Dale Mohr, CNRED, Oconto County UW-Extension

**Situation:** The purpose of the ABC Project has been to have a community system (an "Ideal System") that ensures that all young children within it have all the formational, health, family, and early learning experiences that they need to enter school healthy and ready to succeed in the Oconto Falls School District. 2006 was the third year of this programming effort - which has been reported as success stories in 2004 and 2005. In 2004, Donna Doll-Yogerst FLA teamed with Dale Mohr CNRED to determine overall community needs and readiness. Donna, focused on child development research while Dale focused on identifying community needs and economic indicators. Both worked towards a Transformational Educational environment within the community using their combined organizational development expertise and a shared leadership approach. In 2005, the program focused on developing the "Ideal System" along with recommendations in achieving it. Donna and Dale were asked to help with the implementation of the chosen Ideal System in 2006.

**Response:** In 2006, Donna and Dale continued their partnership with the ABC Sponsors, the Planning Team members and the Local members of the Component Work Groups to promote awareness of the program's findings and recommendations, and to implement the steps identified within the system plan. The shared leadership approach between the community and UW-Extension was to be discontinued and all leadership was to take place locally while UW-Extension provided as needed organizational expertise, strategic thinking expertise, and research support. This approach was to help build ownership and a better, more locally accepted plan in order for the recommendations to be implemented.

**Results:** A new local "ABC Action Team" developed as a result, comprised of former Sponsors, Planning Team members and Component Workgroup members. The "Action Team" met quarterly throughout 2006 in order to design an action plan for 2006 & 2007. UW-Extension co-facilitated early action steps but handed the responsibility over to the Action Team for their completion. A fall informational outreach effort was designed and presented involving "face-to-face" marketing by the team's members and residents. A fall workshop was designed and held in order to reach an audience that was seen as being underserved. Some 150 participants attended the workshop planned and executed entirely by the Action Team members.

**Evidence:** A goal identified for the ABC project was that it would belong to the community at the end of the process and be taken by the community as a valued resource. Transformational Education was achieved as witnessed by the actions of the community to take the full responsibility of implementing the plan, as seen in the designing of workshops and engaging the local residents on their purpose and roles. Donna and Dale worked themselves into an entirely new position within this project, from one of facilitation and co-leaders to one as strictly been participants/and informational resources. The Action Team has stated a desire to continue their projects started in 2006 throughout 2007 and beyond and to make them a main effort within the community. The Deputy Director of Health and Human Services wrote that: the fall workshop was "great"... and feedback he received was that the "event was awesome." The UW-Extension Parenting Resource Center Educator - who participated in the event noted: "the kids and parents seemed to enjoy it, and of course those of us there had fun meeting and seeing all of the new people. It was a good chance to meet with many new families; my playgroup may get more participants from this local effort!" She went on to note that "families... really stopped and talked to each and every presenter--it was good..." The Oconto Falls School District Super Attendant wrote about their workshop efforts as: "This will be a first time event for the school district and perhaps for Northeastern Wisconsin."