

Appendix E

ABC Project Planning Principles

1. Pursue purpose-based planning
2. Focus on the future
3. Remember the uniqueness principle
4. Limit data collection and analysis
5. Design an ideal system
6. Plan for regularities first
7. Identify and explore real alternatives
8. Seek multiple solutions

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Regardless of what planning tools or techniques are being used, the following principles should be practiced:

1. Pursue purpose-based planning

The purpose of an ABC Project System is: *To have a community system that ensures that all young children have all of the foundational health, family and learning experiences they need to enter school healthy and ready to succeed.*

Purpose-based planning is not the same as problem-based planning, program-based planning, or strategic planning. The ABC Project purpose is the starting point and ultimate test for all planning. Ideas are generated to achieve this purpose, and to achieve included smaller purposes. All solutions must be part of achieving this purpose. Aim learning activities toward becoming experts on the solution, and not experts on past or current problems.

2. Focus on the future

Don't look for answers to yesterday's problems. Focus instead on understanding future needs, purposes, and solutions. Develop "solutions-after-next" to meet future needs and conditions. The main effort should be directed at "What do we want to have in place in five years?"

3. Remember the uniqueness principle

Every situation is unique. Don't think that because something works well somewhere else that it will work well here. Seek solutions that are tailored to unique local purposes, needs, desires, and characteristics.

4. Limit data collection and analysis

Avoid unnecessary wasting of time and resources and "analysis paralysis." Limit data collection and analysis to information that will help develop ideal systems. Avoid collecting information that will not be used or is not relevant to ideas being developed.

5. Design an ideal system

Concentrate efforts on developing a system that does the best possible job of achieving the purpose. In the initial implementation try to get as close to this ideal as possible (the recommended system), then focus on ways to move closer and closer to the desired ideal over time.

6. Plan for regularities first

Plan for the usual, expectable, or most significant eventualities first to preserve maximum system effectiveness and efficiency. After the ideal system is designed, find the most effective ways of including or otherwise meeting the special needs and requirements of unusual, unexpected, and less frequently-occurring conditions.

7. Identify and explore real alternatives

Identify and evaluate real alternative ways to accomplish purposes. Don't accept the first idea that looks as if it will work. There may be more effective and workable ways that could be implemented. Try each alternative on to see how well it "fits" your purpose, values, needs, desires, etc. Try hard to make each alternative work.

8. Seek multiple solutions

Solutions often fail because they are too simple to deal with complex situations. Design systems that incorporate an appropriate mix of ideas to completely achieve the desired purpose. Seek a "package" of solutions that work well together and provide a complete result.