

ADDPC Request for Information

Clarification of Funding Needs

May 29, 2018

The original Request for Information Form that was submitted from our organization on 12/20/2017 requested \$92,800 for Year 1 of the "Rural Arizona Autism Project". Funding was requested to train three members of our team to implement an evidence-based intervention on the Navajo Nation called the PLAY (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters) Project. Since the original request, we have made progress in moving this project forward.

1. **The Institute for Human Development (IHD) at Northern Arizona University (NAU) funded three team members (two Speech-Language Pathologists, one Occupational Therapist) to complete the second phase of the certification process to become certified PLAY Project Consultants.** These costs included the fee for the certification coursework, the facility licensing fee, and staff time to complete this second phase. The cost of this second phase was \$45,717.
2. **The three team members have completed the second phase or online portion of the coursework.** They are now preparing for the third and final phase of the certification process. In this phase, they are required to provide the PLAY Project intervention to 3 home-based clients each or 9 total, and 2 school-based clients each or 6 total, over a period of 9 to 12 months. While providing this intervention, the team members will receive supervision and mentoring from the PLAY Project organization. The 9 children for the home-based intervention will be 15 months to 3 years old and enrolled in the Navajo Nation Growing in Beauty Program. Their PLAY intervention will be funded through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP).
3. **Two school districts, Tuba City Unified School District (TCUSD) and Chinle Unified School District (CUSD) are interested in having children with autism receive the PLAY Project at their Preschool sites from the three team members.**

Because of IHD's commitment and funding of the second phase of this project, we are revising our original request for funding from ADDPC. **Our current funding need for Year 1 is \$47,082. and includes the following:**

1. **Staff and travel costs to provide the PLAY Project to 6 children diagnosed with autism who are enrolled in preschool.** Although TCUSD and CUSD are both interested in having this service provided to children with autism in their districts, there is currently no mechanism available for the schools to reimburse IHD for this service.
2. **Staff and travel costs for a community liaison.** The community liaison will be a member of the Navajo Nation who is familiar with the resources and culture of the Navajo communities. The liaison will be available to our team to assist families of children who receive the PLAY intervention, and will provide support for families in obtaining necessary health, social, and educational services that will contribute to family stability and quality of life. To assist with the long-term sustainability of this project, the community liaison will assist in obtaining referrals from physicians, teachers, and social service professionals on the Navajo Nation.

Cost Breakdown Year 1	CUSD Preschool Erika Palm, SLP	TCUSD Preschool Yolanda Ramos-Edgerly, SLP	TCUSD Preschool Maureen Russell, OTR/L	Community Liaison
Hourly Rate with ERE	\$55.12	\$55.12	\$55.12	\$28.84
# of Hours for PLAY Project Implementation in Preschools	191	143	143	
# of Hours to provide family support				120
# of Hours for community outreach				120
Personnel Costs	\$10,527.92	\$7,882.16	\$7,882.16	\$6,921.60
Total Personnel	\$33,213.84			
Travel-Mileage	Flagstaff to Chinle = 350 miles for 16 roundtrips	Flagstaff to Tuba City = 160 miles for 16 roundtrips	Flagstaff to Tuba City = 160 miles for 16 roundtrips	Various locations on the Navajo Nation
Total Miles @ .545. per mile	5600 miles X .545 = \$3,052.	2560 miles X .545 = \$1,395.20	2560 miles X .545 = \$1,395.20	2400 miles X .545 = \$1,308.
Meal Reimbursement @ \$13. per day	16 days X \$13. = \$208.	16 days X \$13. = \$208.	16 days X \$13. = \$208.	24 days X \$13. = \$312.
Travel Costs	\$3,260.00	\$1,603.20	\$1,603.20	\$1,620.00
Total Travel Costs	\$8,086.40			
Subtotal	\$41,300.24			
Indirect Costs 14%	\$5,782.03			
TOTAL	\$47,082.27			

Years 2 and 3 will focus on sustainability of this project. **Sustainability will be supported by the following:**

1. **Outreach by the community liaison** in Years 1, 2 and 3 to generate referrals from healthcare centers and schools on the Navajo Nation. Information will be provided about autism signs and symptoms and the benefits of the PLAY Project as an effective and feasible intervention.
2. **Implementation of a fee-for-service clinic at IHD** using the PLAY Project intervention. This will be offered to families throughout Northern Arizona.

3. **Development of fee-for-service contracts between school districts** throughout the Navajo Nation and IHD to provide the PLAY Project to preschoolers and kindergarteners with autism.
4. **Data collection using pre- and post-intervention measures** in Year 1,2, and 3 to support the PLAY Project as an effective intervention in home and school settings. The PLAY Project organization has recommended measures of child social functioning, maternal interactive behavior, and classroom functioning that have been used in previous research studies.
5. **Pursue other sources of funding** including grants to be able to offer this intervention to families in need, to fund research of PLAY Project efficacy, and to train additional professionals on the Navajo Nation in the PLAY Project method.

Thank you for your interest in the Rural Arizona Autism Project. We believe that this project would not only benefit children with autism living on the Navajo Nation but would be a model for other Arizona communities located in rural areas with culturally diverse populations.

ADDPC Request for Information Form

1. **Date submitted:** December 21, 2017
2. **Name of Organization:** Growing in Beauty Partnership Program, Institute for Human Development,
Northern Arizona University
3. **Contact name, phone number and e-mail:**
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4. **Which ADDPC goal category are you submitting an RFI for?** Our goal category is inclusion.
5. **Provide a brief description of the proposed project in #4 and barriers you'd like to address:** The title of our proposed project is the "Rural Arizona Autism Project". We are requesting funding to train our team to implement an evidence-based intervention called the PLAY (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters) Project for children on the Navajo Nation. The proposed project will extend our involvement with families who have children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We can improve the functioning of children with ASD and enhance their families' quality of life by training parents and school personnel to implement the PLAY Project.

Health and educational services are often absent or scarce in rural communities of Native Americans on reservations throughout the United States. Rural communities may lack trained professionals to provide diagnostic and intervention services for children who have special needs, such as children with ASD. As a result, these children are more likely to not receive needed services (Vohra, Suresh, Sambamoorthi, & St. Peter, 2013). In addition, parents who are members of minority groups, such as Native Americans, are more likely to have difficulty accessing specialized services for their children with disabilities (Liptak et al., 2008). This project will target Navajo children ages 15 months to 6 years old living on the Navajo Nation in Arizona with a diagnosis of ASD or at-risk for ASD. The Navajo Nation spans Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah and is approximately 27,000 square miles with a population of approximately 153,000 individuals who identify as Navajo. It is considered a rural area with a population density of 6.33 people per square mile compared to the average population density in the US of 345 people per square mile (Navajo Nation, 2013). The median household income on the Navajo Nation is \$24,354 with 37% living below the poverty level (Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, 2010).

Efforts by early intervention programs, local healthcare providers, and the Institute for Human Development's (IHD's) Developmental Clinic have resulted in earlier

identification of children with ASD. However, once diagnosed, the options for available evidence-based treatments for native families are lacking. Providers of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), a well-documented evidence-based intervention for children with ASD, are located 175 miles from the larger population centers on the Navajo Nation in Arizona. Additionally, the demands of ABA intervention (20-30 hours per week of direct treatment hours) are not practical for providers traveling to remote areas or traveling more than 2 hours without a critical mass of children to serve. The PLAY Project is an evidence-based, parent and teacher-mediated model of intervention for children diagnosed with ASD, rather than a direct treatment model. It requires much less time on behalf of the professionals (3-4 hours direct coaching per month), and that time is used to train and empower families and teachers to learn how to help children in terms that correlate with their situation and culture. The Teaching PLAY component is a classroom-based application of the PLAY Project and may be implemented in early education environments with specific training targeting preschool and kindergarten staff. Teaching PLAY improves the teachers' capacity to facilitate the development of children with ASD and teaches them how to use a naturalistic approach to interacting, learning, and communicating that is both rewarding and meaningful (playproject.org, 2017).

Our early intervention interdisciplinary team of two speech-language pathologists and one occupational therapist recently completed PLAY Project's two-day intensive workshop in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This was the first step in the certification process to become PLAY Project consultants. To complete the certification process, our team must complete an online certification training to learn to implement PLAY methods and techniques and to document child developmental progress. We will then receive supervision and mentoring for one year as we begin to implement the PLAY Project in home settings and Teaching PLAY in school settings.

Our experiences as service providers on the Navajo Nation have given us an understanding of the significant unmet needs of families who have children with ASD. As a result, we have added a community liaison to our team to work closely with families who participate in this project. The community liaison will be a member of the Navajo Nation and familiar with the culture and resources that are available in the reservation communities. The community liaison will assist families of children receiving this intervention in obtaining other health, social, and educational services that support their family and contribute to family stability and quality of life.

- 6. Method of Service Delivery:** The community liaison will work closely with the physicians from Indian Health Services, special education teachers from preschools and elementary schools, and service coordinators from the Division of Developmental Disabilities to obtain referrals for children diagnosed with ASD who would benefit from this intervention. Families with children diagnosed with ASD will be invited to participate in 10-12 months of the home-based PLAY intervention while the team members receive ongoing supervision and mentoring for PLAY project certification. Each member of our team would implement PLAY with three children ages 15 months to 3 years old in a home setting, and two children 3 to 5 years old in a preschool or kindergarten setting. Families and school staff would receive 3-4 hours of direct coaching

/ per month by a team member for 10-12 months. The community liaison will support the family, as needed, in obtaining housing, food, and health services.

7. Who are the anticipated partnerships in the project?

Partners in this project would include the following:

Pediatricians at the Indian Health Services Hospitals in Chinle, Kayenta, and Tuba City
Growing in Beauty-Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation
Services

Chinle Unified School District - Preschool & Elementary Program

Kayenta Unified School District - Preschool & Elementary Program

Tuba City Unified School District - Preschool & Elementary Program

The Division of Developmental Disabilities

The Institute for Human Development's Developmental Clinic

8. Anticipated contract period: Multiyear-May 2018 to April 2021

9. Anticipated cost (one year only): \$92,800.

10. Anticipated cost if over one year: \$167,000 - total for years 2 and 3

11. Target group and anticipated target number: The targeted group will be children living on the Arizona Navajo Nation who have a diagnosis of ASD and are ages 15 months to 6 years old. Fifteen children will participate in the PLAY intervention each year or a total of 45 children in 3 years.

12. Expected results after one year: After one year, the 3 professionals will have completed the consultant certification in the PLAY Project method. Additionally, 15 families (9 home-based and 6 school-based) will have participated in one year of coaching for the PLAY Project.

13. Recommended method for evaluating the project: The PLAY Project recommends the Functional Emotional Assessment Scale (Greenspan, DeGangi & Wieder, 2001) pre- and post-intervention to assess the child's interactional social functioning. The Maternal Behavior Rating Scale (Mahoney, 2008) would also be administered to assess the impact of the program on maternal interactive behavior. Satisfaction surveys will also be completed by the families and school personnel who receive the PLAY Project coaching.

14. What are the other ways to meet this need without ADDPC funding (braided funding or leveraging funding from other sources)? The Institute for Human Development (IHD) provides office space, vehicles for travel, and administrative support to the three team members. IHD also funded the initial PLAY Project training for the 3 team members in May, 2017. Funding through Part C Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) will be leveraged to provide PLAY Project coaching for the families of children diagnosed with ASD ages 15 months to 3 years. The Growing in Beauty Partnership Program will cover the costs of travel and the salaries of staff for PLAY Project home-based coaching for nine children per year who will be enrolled in AzEIP.

ADDPC funding is requested to complete the consultant certification for the three team members and a salary for the community liaison. Also, ADDPC funds will cover the personnel and travel costs for 6 children per year who are 3 to 6 years old, diagnosed with ASD, and who will receive the Teaching PLAY component at their preschool or Kindergarten.

15. **Is there anyone else doing this now? (Describe the research done to determine this):** Research with families who have children diagnosed with ASD in a randomized controlled trial indicated that parent participation in the PLAY Project over a 10-12 month period resulted in significant improvements in caregiver/parent and child interaction, social interaction of children with autism, social-emotional development of children with autism, and autism symptomatology. Secondary positive outcomes include decreased parent stress and depression (Solomon, Van Egeren, Mahoney, Quon, & Zimmerman, 2014).

The PLAY Project has been successfully implemented in several counties in Ohio in their early intervention programs. Similar to Arizona, Ohio also uses the primary service provider model based on Rush and Shelden's work, "Coaching in Early Childhood" (<http://www.coachinginearlychildhood.org/cccoaching.php>). In the Ohio PLAY Project approximately three-fourths of the families who had received this intervention reported that the coaching that was done through video and the PLAY Project consultant's report consistently gave them a better understanding of their child with ASD. Of the participating families, 66% stated that the PLAY strategies were very easy to implement and 69% reported using these strategies every day. Although 39% of the parents reported feeling stressed "almost always" due to the demands of their child's disability, 89% of the parents reported that the PLAY intervention rarely added more stress to their already stressful lives. Joint recommendations were made for the PLAY Project and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. It was agreed that the PLAY Project model as tested in research should "fit" into the statewide early intervention system and that components of this intervention may need adaptation based on local needs and systems (Espe-Sherwint, Gothard, Buletlp, Stoner & McCauley, 2015). Our proposed project considers this need for "fit" with the reservation community that struggles with poverty and lack of services. Our community liaison will address the basic needs of families involved in the PLAY Project. The PLAY Project fits with our AzEIP coaching model of service delivery with a focus on parent training and empowerment.

16. **What are the potential means for sustaining the project?** The PLAY Project model is very cost effective when compared to other methods of treatment for ASD. For example, Applied Behavioral Analysis is estimated to cost \$30,000 to \$60,000 per year per child. In contrast, the PLAY Project model is estimated to cost \$3,500 to \$4,500 per year per child. Insuring that this intervention is sustained and available in rural Northern Arizona in the future is the focus of the third phase and third year of this project. NAU will begin to implement a fee-for-service clinic using the PLAY Project intervention. Currently, public and private health insurance will reimburse for the PLAY Project intervention when implemented by SLPs and OTRs. Following the completion of this project, NAU

will be available to contract with school districts in Northern Arizona to provide the Teaching Play component. During the 2nd and 3rd year of this project, the community liaison will assist the team in identifying potential professionals on the Navajo Nation who would be interested in training to become PLAY Project consultants. Additionally, NAU personnel/therapists will seek funding from federal, state, and local sources to train these additional professionals to become certified consultants in the PLAY Project.

17. **Why is this important for the ADDPC to do?** Individuals who are diagnosed with ASD are often excluded from opportunities to participate in family, school, and community activities. The core symptoms of ASD that include difficulty with social interaction and communication are addressed through this intervention in a manner that respects the Navajo culture and compliments the cultural emphasis on relationships within the family and community. Furthermore, there is a need for interventions in rural Arizona that can support the inclusion of individuals with ASD in a cost-effective and efficient manner. This project can be a model for other Arizona communities located in rural areas with culturally diverse populations.

References:

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