

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation:

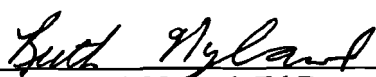
Early Childhood Initiative Grant

by

Sally Dannenberg

A Grant  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree  
With a Major in  
Education

Approved: 2 Semester Credits

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ruth Nyland", is written over a horizontal line.

Ruth Nyland, Ed.D.  
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The Graduate School  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
May, 2006

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### ABSTRACT

The quality of life for a child and the contributions the child makes to society as an adult can be traced back to the first few years of life. From birth until about 5 years old a child undergoes tremendous growth and change. If this period of life includes support for growth in cognition, language, motor skills, adaptive skills and social-emotional functioning, the child is more likely to succeed in school and later contribute to society (Erickson & Kurz-Reimer, 1999). Brown County, Minnesota offers a variety of assets for families with young children which may assist them to become involved with their community as well as the education of their children. These assets include Public Libraries in many of the communities, Community Park and Recreation Departments, Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) and Teen MOPS as well as Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Brown County Family Service and Public Health. There are a wealth

of resources in our county; however, in many cases, families do not know how to access these resources or are unable to access them.

The coalition of the agencies listed above sees a real need to engage the community as a whole in understanding the importance of early childhood care and education. By understanding the needs of young children and families we will be able to improve their lives. We also see the need to leverage all the assets listed previously to improve the quality of the care and education of our young children. We see this coalition as an opportunity to change young lives through information gathering from families regarding their needs, educating the community and advocating for all families with young children. Our goals also include maintaining and strengthening current programs as well as increasing collaboration with law enforcement and the business community.

It is the thought of the members of the coalition that our community has many strengths, programs and opportunities for families. This is supported by the 2005 United Way of New Ulm Community Assessment, stating that families felt safe in New Ulm and that there were a variety of opportunities available to them (Isch & Makepeace, 2005). However, if the families lack information or are prevented access to these opportunities, the families will never benefit. Through the formation of the Brown County Early Childhood Initiative, we not only hope to build bridges for families, but also between agencies so that families with young children may reach their greatest potential.

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## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

As I began this process of writing a grant, I looked around the community and saw that there were needs in all areas; however with recent cuts in state funding to programs such as Head Start and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), I realized there was a gap that was widening with each passing day. As stated in the Position Statement on Child Care/Early Childhood Education of the Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations (2001, p. 2), "Quality child care and early childhood education go hand in hand and are inextricably linked together. Since every experience in childhood is learning experience it is essential that this be of high quality in a rich, stimulating environment that is safe, loving and nurturing." The communities of New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, Springfield and Comfrey and well as the smaller townships make up Brown County, Minnesota. The current population of Brown County is 26,832, with a total of 10, 463 households (Brown County, 2006). Many of these households include families with young children; however the population of Brown County is aging with more emphasis placed on services for our senior citizens and less for our youngest population who are our future.

Through this literature review I have explored the issues of the need for early childhood care and education in order to help prepare children to be ready to learn in all areas of the curriculum as they reach kindergarten age. I have also explored how quality care and education affect not only those children who are a part of the middle and upper class, but especially those living below the Federal Poverty Guideline.

As more children enter child care and education settings because both parents are working the need for available quality care increases. In this literature review, we have

explored the issues of availability and quality of child care as a nationwide problem as well as how it affects the children of Minnesota.

Lastly we have addressed the process which has been laid out to define the needs of the community by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund. This process will not only bring the community together to discuss these needs, but also build on the strengths already present in the community to act on behalf of all citizens.

According to American Association for the Advancement of Science "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn" (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989, p. 5). According to Bredekamp and Rosengrant (1992, p. 1), "We believe that from the time of birth, all children are ready to learn. However, what we do or don't do as individuals, educators, and collectively as society can impede a child's success in learning." "Every day, nearly half (45%) of Minnesota children under the age of 5 are in child care" (Wilder Research Center, 2001, p. 4). According to Art Rolnick, Federal Reserve Economist, "50 % of Minnesota children are not prepared to enter kindergarten" (2005, p. 1). Brown County, Minnesota offers a wealth of opportunities for families with young children to help children learn and grow, however many residents do not yet understand the importance of the early childhood years and do not know how to or are unable to access these are opportunities; therefore they can not receive the benefits of these services. By educating the communities within Brown County we are letting them know that "the earliest years of a child's life are key to predicting ultimate success in school and life. Recent research findings pointing to the importance of the first three years in brain development have

serious implications for education” (Center for Public Policy Priorities, 1999, p. 1).

Brown County consists of five rural towns with many smaller townships surrounding them. The population of Brown County has pockets of culturally diverse populations with many residents living below the Federal poverty guidelines. It has been shown that “Children from low-income families are at greater risk of hunger, abuse and neglect, and of being exposed to little or no quality child care and early education programs” (Center for Public Policy Priorities, 1999, p. 1). By providing the research about the needs for quality early childhood and education to not only families, but social support networks and businesses, the coalition formed to write this grant hope to better the future of all children, but especially those living in poverty.

Seventy-seven percent of the mothers in Minnesota with preschoolers are in the labor force (Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women, 2004, p. 3 ). There are more and more women entering the workforce yearly and in rural communities such as ours, women not only work outside the home, but also as an integral part of the family farm. Their children therefore either spend many hours in day care each day, or working alongside their parents on the farm to help provide the necessities of life. These children then miss out on the quality experiences provided by early education or care.

The important message we need to get out to all the residents of Brown County in regards to early childhood care and education and its impact on the development of young children are many. They include that young “children who attend preschool or other early education programs have enhanced cognitive, verbal, and social development,

which is maintained into the first years of school”. They also have significantly higher IQs” (Barnett, 1995, p. 5). As we look at the future of the children in our county with quality early care and education, they are “less likely to exhibit later delinquency and antisocial behavior” (Yoshikawa, 1995, p. 3). These same children will “tend to demonstrate higher levels of school achievement and better social adjustment as well as be less likely to have to repeat a grade or be placed in special education classes and are more likely to graduate from high school”(Barnett, 1995, p. 4). In addition, “early childhood education yields up to a 16 percent return to taxpayers. This return comes in the form of fewer special education costs, increased taxes paid by the children when they become adults, and the avoided costs of welfare, police, prison and social services”(Grunewald & Rolnick, 2005, p. 14)

As stated previously, there are many opportunities for early childhood care and education in Brown County, however many children may not be participating because they are unavailable or too costly. “Nationally, over half (52%) of 3 and 4 year olds in high-income families were enrolled in preschool in 1993, compared to one-fourth (24%) of 3 and 4 year olds in low-income families (Center for Public Policy Priorities, 1999, p. 3). Also because of the rural nature of Brown County, there are many more family child care homes than child care centers. “According to a study of the University of Colorado, only one in seven child care centers and one in ten family child care homes nationwide possess the quality needed to enhance children’s development”(1995, p. 3). In Minnesota, only 1.9% of early childhood providers meet nation national accreditation standards developed by the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) with none of



these programs located in Brown County.

There are many reasons that the children in Brown County as well as around the nation are not receiving the quality of child care that they deserve. The first is low pay for child care workers and early childhood teaching assistants. "1998 research reported in the National Child Care Staffing study found the highest paid teaching assistants in child care centers earned an average of \$12,250, which today is under the poverty level for a family of three" (Milwaukee Jewish Council, 2001, p. 3). For the state of Minnesota, these wages begin at \$5.43 an hour (Wilder Research Center, 2001, p. 62) Because of the low rate of pay, there is a high turnover rate in child care centers and early education settings. "The Center for the Child Care Workforce reported in 1998 that 31 percent of all teaching staff at child care centers leave their jobs every year" (Milwaukee Jewish Council, 2001, p. 3) For Minnesota, the rate of turnover is 23% (Wilder Research Center, 2001, p. 86). In addition many child care providers are not well trained with as of "1999, 41 states did not require providers to have any child development training" (Milwaukee Jewish Council, 2001, p. 3).

According to the United Way of New Ulm Community Assessment completed in 2005 (Isch & Makepeace, p. 4), which focused on the strengths of New Ulm and its surrounding communities, there were five strengths that directly affected young children and their families:

- Active support networks and strong connections within the community
- People and groups come together and help each other and work on common goals

- Excellent quality of life and good family environment
- Strong community institutions (church, school and medical community)
- Feelings of safety

There were also challenges identified by the survey. These included underemployment which was defined as “working at a job or jobs that do not adequately support basic needs or working at a level of job below that for which a person is qualified (Isch & Makepeace, 2005, p. 4).” The other challenge was identified as single parent family issues which included “poverty related challenges facing them, a lack of good jobs, lack of good medical care and affordable housing”(Isch & Makepeace, 2005, p. 4) According to this same study, “two-thirds (65.6%) of the community leaders and nearly half (46.8%) of the household respondents said mental health issues were a moderate or major health issue in New Ulm”(Isch & Makepeace, 2005, p. 31). As the work of the Brown County Early Childhood Initiative continues all of these issues will need to be addressed.

In addition to the many resources in Brown County, there are still many needs. In September of 2005, the Brown County Families First Collaborative met to fund grant proposals from throughout the county with the single mission of “strengthening and empowering families with children” (Families First Grant Manual, 2005, p. 1) These included such programs as Families and Schools Together (FAST) which enhances family functioning, reduces family stress and promotes child success in school, Intensive Intervention Program which works to bring together innovative services to reduce chronic criminal and drug behaviors, Teen Age Parent/Pregnancy Program (TAPP) which

provides positive role models, education, and learning experiences to develop appropriate skills and opportunities to seek out community resources as a young parent, Teen Court as well as the Follow Along program which will be cited later in the grant (Families First of Brown County, 2005, p. 3). Because of continuing funding cuts within the state, not all of these grants could be funded, with many funded at only a minimal rate. The correlation between the needs in our county and the effects of early childhood care and education on our youngest citizens led the coalition of education, social services and public health to search for additional resources.

The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation was chosen as the granting agency for this project because of its history of providing community asset building as well as its emphasis on early childhood care and education. This model of bringing together many facets of the community to better the lives of young children is seen by many around the country such as the Piton Foundation of Denver (2005, p. 1) which “seeks to create partnerships between schools, child care providers, child advocates and parents so that a seamless system of early childhood development is in place for children and families. They also work at “building public will around the importance of early childhood education.” By performing these functions they are able to “provide critical information to voters, policy makers, local and national funders, educators, city and county staff, and elected officials for decision-making.

The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation also relies on the process of community decision making much like that of the Center for the Study of Social Policy (2006, p. 1):

“Community Decisionmaking is a decision-making process whereby the takes responsibility for implementing strategies to achieve better results for children, families and communities. Community decision-making is usually conducted through a partnership that brings together state government, private sector, local government officials, and community members. Community Decisionmaking is a process that capitalizes on and mobilizes the community’s resources, and informal supports to improve the quality of life in the community.”

Through the process of community decisionmaking, “community members are learning that they can change conditions for their families, relatives, friends and neighbors by working together, remaining consistently involved, and by creating places and opportunities for people who care about these same issues to work collaboratively, and to creatively change the circumstance and make things better for themselves.”

The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation Town Meeting Initiative (2005, p. 7) relies on Asset Based Community Development instead of focusing on a community’s needs, deficiencies and problems. This includes the focus on “talents of local individuals and groups and on the interconnections of issues and people in the community. This approach also “reduces dependency” on outside resources. It “facilitates leadership development” within the community, as well as increasing civic engagement.

In conclusion, from the review of the literature, I have found that all children can benefit from quality early childhood care and education. While many of those already

involved in the care and education of young children already understand the needs associated with the early years, this information can now be substantiated with the research cited within this review. Because Brown County has now been chosen as a site for the Southern Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative, the process may begin of educating the citizens of Brown County as to the needs of young children and their families. As a part of the process the community is able to look within itself for strengths as well as leaders to make this an effort to assist in making the future bright for our youngest citizens.

**Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation**  
**Early Childhood Initiative**

**Date of application: November 28, 2005**

**ORGANIZATION INFORMATION**

United Way of New Ulm  
 (fiscal agent)

622 ½ Center Street      New Ulm, MN 56073      41-6033115  
 Address      City, State, Zip      (EIN)

(507) 354-6512      (507)354-9712      www.unitedwaynewulm.com  
 Phone      Fax      Web site

Betty Uehling    ECFE Coordinator    (507) 359-8417    buehling@newulm.k12.mn.us  
 Name of top paid staff    Title      Phone      E-mail

Denise Schumacher    Region 9 Child Care Resource and Referral    (507) 389-1716    denise@hickorytech.net  
 Name of contact person      Title      Phone      E-mail

**Is your organization an IRS 501(c)3 not for profit?**    X Yes    \_\_\_ No  
*If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government?*    \_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_ No

**PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

**BROWN COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE COALITION**

**Geographic area served: Brown County, Minnesota**

**AUTHORIZATION**

Name and title of board chair: Betty Uehling, ECFE Coordinator

Signature of top paid staff or board chair \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION – Please describe the current status of early childhood care and education in your community. Make sure to answer the following questions in your response.**

1. What community assets (individual talents, organizations, associations, programs, resources, etc.) are currently leveraged to support early childhood care and education in your community? Why is your community interested in applying to be an Early Childhood Initiative Community?

Brown County is located in south central Minnesota. The current population of Brown County is 26,832, with a total of 10,463 households. Brown County offers a variety of assets for families with young children which may assist them to become involved with their community as well as the education of their children. These assets include Public Libraries in many of the communities. Community Park and Recreation Departments, Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) and Teen MOPS provide opportunities for young children and their families to come together and learn new skills. In-home Child Cares, Child Care Centers and Preschools offer a variety of programs for children of all ages to learn and develop in all areas. Faith Based groups provide religious education as well as house many of the child care and preschool opportunities for young children. PRO Kinship for Kids provides mentorship to children. Martin Luther College offers a variety of resources to the community including the time and talent of their students. The Interagency Early Intervention Committee (IEIC) and Interagency Referral Team (IRT) brings together Public Health (including \*Universal Contact and the \*\*Follow Along Program), County Commissioners, School Board Members, representatives from Early

Childhood Family Education (ECFE), School Readiness, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Head Start, Family Services and Children's Mental Health. Next year a bilingual preschool will be opening in Sleepy Eye to serve the needs of children of all ethnicities in that community. Corporations such as 3M, Kraft, Target and Norwood as well as many other businesses support the young children of this community through their donation of products as well as their time to the young children. There are many service organizations in Brown County that assist young children such as Kiwanis, Rotary and the Lions Club.

The quality of life for a child and the contributions the child makes to society as an adult can be traced back to the first few years of life. From birth until about 5 years old a child undergoes tremendous growth and change. If this period of life includes support for growth in cognition, language, motor skills, adaptive skills and social-emotional functioning, the child is more likely to succeed in school and later contribute to society (Erickson & Kurz-Reimer, 1999). Early childhood education not only has an impact upon every single young child, it also impacts the community and our economy.

According to Arthur Rolnick, Senior Vice President of Research at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank, "The researchers found that for every dollar invested in the program (High Scope Preschool in Ypsilanti, Michigan) during the early 1960s, over \$8 in benefits were returned to the program participants and society as a whole" (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003).

There are a wealth of resources in our county; however, in many cases, families do not know how to access these resources or are unable to access them. This is due to a



variety of barriers such as language and transportation. According to the results of the United Way of New Ulm 2005 Community Assessment, the residents of Brown County are very concerned about mental health issues such as anxiety and stress related to financial issues (Isch & Makepeace, 2005).

According to Mike Travers, Brown County Family Services, the population of Brown County has decreased; however the number of families and children needing assistance has grown (personal communication, November 2, 2005). Many of Brown County's residents are underemployed which makes them unable to afford all the things that young children need, including safe housing, food and clothing. This is especially true for single parent households (Isch & Makepeace, 2005). Many middle class children in Brown County are unable to access mental health services because their parents are unable to afford the cost. There is also a lack of inpatient crisis beds in this area. Some areas of our community are ethnically diverse, whereas in other areas only one ethnicity is represented. The coalition would like to increase the community's awareness of how our youngest children may benefit from learning about all cultures and interacting with a variety of people. Because much of the employment in Brown County involves manufacturing, parents are required to work a variety of shifts. This can be disruptive to a child's schedule. By opening a dialog with business, we could help decrease the stress on young children of these schedules.

This coalition sees a real need to engage the community as a whole in understanding the importance of early childhood care and education. By understanding the needs of young children and families we will be able to improve their lives. We also

see the need to leverage all the assets listed previously to improve the quality of the care and education of our young children. We have seen the changes brought about by the Early Childhood Initiative in other communities and feel that the young children of Brown County could benefit from these changes. We see this coalition as an opportunity to change young lives through information gathering from families regarding their needs, educating the community and advocating for all families with young children. Our goals also include maintaining and strengthening current programs as well as increasing collaboration with law enforcement and the business community.

*\*Universal Contact is a program in which all newborn children in the county receive a home visit from a Public Health Nurse (PHN). This nurse provides the family with a book, a quilt and most importantly, information about the development of their child. The family is also offered the opportunity to enroll their child in the follow along program (Mathiowetz, 2005).*

*\*The Follow Along Program is a well recognized, highly accurate and widely used developmental screening tool in which parents can help track the development of their infants and toddlers, thus detecting children at risk for developmental delays as early as possible (Mathiowetz, 2005).*

2. Who is involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of early childhood care and education programs in your community (list institutions/members of the community that have already committed to working on this effort)?

At the present time representatives from education include Sleepy Eye ECFE, New Ulm ECFE, New Ulm Public Schools, Sleepy Eye Public Schools and River Bend

Special Education District. Brown County Family Services and Minnesota Valley Action Council are active members of the coalition working in the social service area. Brown County Public Health serves the health needs of the entire county and is an important part of this coalition in meeting the health and developmental needs of Brown County's youngest residents. Brown County's Family Service Collaborative is represented by the Coordinator. Law Enforcement is represented by the New Ulm Police Chief. New Ulm United Way is represented by the Executive Director. Region 9 Childcare Resource and Referral as well as the Kids X-Cel Center director are active participants in the coalition and will assist the coalition in reaching out to child care providers and early childhood educators. A local pastor will serve not only as a resource to the faith based community, but also as a liaison to the Ministerial Association. The New Ulm Public Library serves as a resource for families and professionals. Brown County itself is also represented by one of the County Commissioners. An important component of this coalition is parents with young children. The members of this coalition already understand the importance of early childhood care and education in our community and wish to share more information with the community at large. We will expand the coalition by adding business representatives, day care providers, and a student from Martin Luther College as well as people of color who are not presently represented. It also is our goal to encourage families and businesses from Springfield and Comfrey to become more active participants in our coalition.

3. How have various sectors (local government, business, schools, churches, etc) of the community been involved in early childhood care and education?

Local government provides a variety of opportunities to families with young children throughout the year through the Public Libraries and Park and Recreation Departments. Many of their programs are geared especially for young children or these young children can participate as a part of a family event. Local businesses contribute through sponsorship of various family events such as children's concerts. They also contribute funds as well as products to support local families. Schools in Brown County are well represented by their ECFE programs which provide a wide variety of programming for both parents and children such as weekly classes and special events which offer a variety of activities not normally available in this area. The schools in collaboration with Brown County also provide Family Facilitators to help not only children but their families deal with a variety of concerns. These Family Facilitators are an integral part of early childhood by attending IEIC, IRT (Interagency Referral Team) meetings as well as assisting at Early Childhood Screening by performing a screener that deals with the social and emotional development of children. Churches in Brown County not only provide education in faith to their congregations, but also house many of the preschool programs in our communities including Kids X-Cel center and Treehouse Preschool. In Brown County, there are strong parochial school systems providing not only K-12 education, but also preschool experiences for young children.

4. Brief description of community's current programs and activities, any service statistics and strengths, goals or accomplishments.

As a part of Universal Contact in Brown County all families with newborns are offered a home visit. Last year 318 new families were served by this program. At that time, parents are offered the option to enroll in the Follow Along program which served 1764 children last year

(Mathiowetz, 2005). As of September, 2005 97 Infants and Toddlers in Brown County had been identified through the Follow Along program as failing one or more components of the screening tool. With early recognition of developmental delays, children are more likely to receive early intervention services. In addition to these statistics 8.4% of babies in Brown County were born prematurely which can put them at even greater risk for developmental delays (Mathiowetz, 2005).

The total Early Childhood Census (ages birth – 4) for the New Ulm and Sleepy Eye School Districts is 1384. The total number of children served by these two programs is 829 or 60% of the eligible population. In addition, the ECFE programs of Springfield and Comfrey served 216 children combined. The total number of parents served by these four programs was 1295. The programs share resources to help these parents now as well as in the future (Minnesota Department of Education, 2005). Head Start serves over 80 children and families in Brown County. Both of these programs serve as excellent resources to families, however because of state and federal budget cuts, there is not enough funding to serve all families who qualify. Another asset to our community is TriValley Migrant Head Start, which served 63 children last year at their site in the Sleepy Eye Elementary School according to Lynette Schacherer, Center Director (personal communication, November 17, 2005). The families of these children are currently migrants, but many have found that with the education their children receive in Minnesota, they choose to remain in this area.

It is the thought of the members of the coalition that our community has many strengths, programs and opportunities for families. This is supported by the 2005 United

Way of New Ulm Community Assessment, stating that families felt safe in New Ulm and that there were a variety of opportunities available to them (Isch and Makepeace, 2005). However, if the families lack information or are prevented access to these opportunities, the families will never benefit. Through the formation of the Brown County Early Childhood Initiative, we not only hope to build bridges for families, but also between agencies so that families with young children may reach their greatest potential.

**COALITION – The Early Childhood Initiative process is built around an active coalition of people working together. Please describe how your community will involve a variety of people in the Coalition activities? Make sure to address the following questions in your response.**

1. How will you involve members of the community in the early childhood coalition?

The coalition plans to involve members of the community in a Community Forum. We will use the current United Way of New Ulm Community Assessment as a basis for future study with focus on families with young children. By expanding the Community Assessment to everyone in the county, we are gathering more information about a more diverse group of people while narrowing the focus to early childhood. By making personal contact with business leaders, community leaders and most importantly families with young children we can involve everyone to network regarding early childhood care and education.

We also plan to engage members of service clubs through speaking engagements. Bridging Brown County is an informal group of Brown County citizens that meets to discuss ideas to develop greater awareness of community throughout our county. This group would be an excellent resource to our coalition as well as a place to advocate for the needs of our youngest children. At the present time the Rural Education Association is focusing on early childhood care and education. This group could not only serve as a resource, but an opportunity to share the information we gather.

2. How will you engage all sectors of the community (law enforcement, faith community, schools, business, nonprofits, people of color, youth, parents, etc.)?

The coalition members will gather more information from the families themselves through Community Profiles and Speak Outs. By gathering and bringing all of the information from families with young children to the community we can find a true sense of what is needed. From there we believe the first step in engaging all sectors of the community is to educate professionals in the community about all available resources so that they may share this information with young families and therefore reduce service gaps. From there we would like to educate the business leaders about the importance of early childhood and how it not only affects their current but future work force. We also hope to reach out to the senior citizens of this community by providing more intergenerational activities with the focus being the importance of the early childhood years.

1. Does your community have any examples of a success in bringing a variety of people to a community issue?

Brown County has a history of successes in bringing together people for the good of the community. This County has an active Family Service Collaborative (Families First) which recently funded several programs to benefit young children and their families including Families and Schools Together (FAST), Pro Kinship for Kids, Teen-Age Parent/Pregnancy Program (TAPP), the Follow Along Program and Universal Identification of Children at Risk Programs. Both Head Start and ECFE have active Parent Advisory Boards which assist in the decision making process for those programs. The United Way of New Ulm has recently completed a Community Assessment and annually sponsors such events as Day of Caring. The community has come together to support our youth through Asset Building and Healthy Community Healthy Youth Groups. The Universal Contact program is supported by quilters who make a blanket for each new baby that is born in the county. Sleepy Eye has formed a coalition to provide a cultural center which is used by residents of Brown as well as other counties to bring people of many cultures together. New Ulm with assistance from many resources now has the Putting Green, which serves as an educational resource throughout the Southern Minnesota area. This coalition feels that identifying the concerns we have in this county is easy, we want to look for the solutions and strengths within our county and assist our youngest residents to become happy and productive citizens.



## **DISSEMINATION PLAN**

The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) supports a variety of Early Childhood Initiatives throughout 9 counties in Southern Minnesota. These coalitions have been willing to share their resources and expertise with our coalition and we feel that through continuing collaboration with these groups we can improve the care and education of young children. It is also important to build our coalition from within. All information gathered concerning the needs of young families will be shared internally with information about current resources of each coalition member also being shared. One of our goals is to include more business persons in our coalition. We will disseminate our plan to these business persons through personal contacts from within the coalition as well as speaking to service organizations such as Rotary. Our outreach to families will include one on one as well as group encounters such as speaking at Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classes, Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) and any other opportunity that may present itself. Because members of our coalition represent agencies such as Social Services, Public Health, Education, United Way, etc. this information will be shared with the local agencies as well as being presented at regional and state-wide conferences. Publication of results from the family surveys will occur in all newspapers serving Brown County residents. All groups requesting further information will be personally contacted by a member of the coalition. Bridging Brown County is a group of leaders from each of the communities within Brown County. We will share all results with this group in

the hopes that they will also become active participants in the Brown County  
Early Childhood Initiative.

**BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE****Budget for Fiscal Year 1 (January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006)  
Brown County Early Childhood Initiative**

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
<b>Coalition Coordination (per grant specifications)</b>	<b>5000.00</b>
<b>Printing of Family and Community Surveys</b>	<b>1000.00</b>
<b>Creation of Community Profile</b>	<b>600.00</b>
<b>Community Forum</b>	<b>1600.00</b>
<b>Coalition Support</b>	<b>1000.00</b>
<b>Family Activities</b>	<b>5000.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>

## **Budget Narrative**

**Coalition Coordination** – Leadership of local coalition. Reimbursement determined by Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

### **Printing of Family and Community Surveys**

10,000 surveys @ 10 cents per survey = \$1000.00

### **Community Profiles**

Tallying results

5 students @ 10 dollars/hour x 2 hours = \$100.00

Publication and Delivery of survey results to local businesses and service organizations.

Publication 1500 brochures @ 20 cents/brochure = \$300.00

Delivery 4 people @ 10 dollars/hour x 2 hours = \$80.00

Mileage 300 miles @ 40 cents/mile = \$120.00

Total for Publication = \$500.00

### **Community Forum**

Publicity

Printing of flyers 1000 flyers @ 20 cents/flyer = \$200.00

Newspaper ads in each community paper = \$250.00

Total for Publicity = \$450.00

Rental of meeting room for 2 hours @ \$50/hour = \$100.00

Food - Catering by local restaurant 50 meals @\$7.00/plate = \$350.00

Incentives to encourage attendance

Books for each child in attendance 50 books @ \$5.00/book = \$250.00

Promotional Brown County Early Childhood Initiative items = \$250.00

Including purchase of billboard space and printing of magnets to distribute to families and businesses

Child care for families attending

Food for children Catering by local restaurant 50 meals @ \$3.50/ meal = \$175.00

Salaries for child care providers – 15 child care providers @ \$15/hour x 3 hours = \$675.00

Creative supplies for children during community forum = \$150.00

Total for Child Care = \$1000.00

**Coalition Support**

(Approximate Cost at present time)

Postage for meeting minutes and agendas = \$600.00

Copying costs for meeting minutes and agendas = \$400.00

Total for Coalition Support = \$1000.00

**Family Activities**

Publicity Printing of flyers and brochures 5000 copies @ 10 cents/copy = \$500.00

Rental of local venues (ice arena, movie theater, etc.) \$2250.00

Admission for family events (children's concerts, sporting events) \$2250.00

Total for Family Activities = \$5000.00

## **TIMELINE**

November 2, 2005 Formation of Coalition to look at needs of families with young children in Brown County

November 22, 2005 Submission of grant to Brown County Coalition for approval.

November 30, 2005 Submission of grant to Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF).

December 15, 2005 Announcement and press release of grant recipients

January 1, 2006 Funds received from SMIF

January 12, 2006 Meeting of Brown County Coalition (BCC) to begin planning for community events. Delegate responsibilities and design surveys of family needs.

February 2006 Meeting of BCC. Finish Surveys. Plan for dissemination of surveys.

March 2006 Community Speak Out regarding the needs of families with young children. At this event each family will be given a survey to fill out. Surveys will also be given to families which attend Early Childhood Family Education, Head Start, Mothers of Preschoolers and community preschools. Attend the Day of the Young Child at Minnesota State Capital to speak with public policy makers

April 2006 Tally results of surveys in order to share them with community and policy makers. Speak with Superintendents of Schools, Head Start officials, MOPS and Children's Mental Health regarding the need for services, accessibility and how to increase availability.

May 2006 Speak to housing authorities and local landlords regarding the availability of safe and affordable housing. Gather statistics as needed for 6 months report.

June through August, 2006 Continue gathering information from local resources in order to be able to share these resources with families. Continue BCC committee meetings regarding the different grant goals.

September, 2006 Share mentoring information with community through PSAs, handouts at community events, and personal contacts made through coalition members.

October, 2006 Continue gathering information and acting upon the needs assessment.

November, 2006 Finish gathering data for annual report

December, 2006 Finish and submit annual report.

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Appendix A  
Request for Proposal



**Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  
Early Childhood Initiative**

You may reproduce this form on your computer

Date of application: \_\_\_\_\_

**ORGANIZATION INFORMATION**

Name of applicant/sponsoring organization  
(fiscal agent)

Legal name, if different

Address

City, State, Zip

Employer Identification Number  
(EIN)

Phone

Fax

Web site

Name of top paid staff

Title

Phone

E-mail

Name of contact person

Title

Phone

E-mail

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)3 not-for-profit?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If you answered NO to both of these questions, you are not eligible for funding from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

**PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE COALITION**

(name of community)

Geographic area served:

**AUTHORIZATION**

Name and title of board chair:

Signature of top paid staff or board chair:  
(must be original)

**PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

## Appendix A Request for Proposal

### COMMUNITIES PLEASE SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR YOUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN!

As a community leader with an interest in early childhood development, you understand the importance of a positive and healthy start for all children. Recently, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation staff has talked with you regarding the Foundation's Early Childhood Initiative, undertaken in partnership with the other five Minnesota Initiative Foundations and The McKnight Foundation. The long-term objective of this statewide initiative is to change practices and policies around early childhood care and education, ensuring that all children are ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

This letter requests proposals from communities interested in strategic action around early childhood issues facing their communities. Please use the attached cover sheet and guidelines to complete your request.

#### PURPOSE:

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation believes that communities need to support parents and families in order to give children the very highest quality care and education during their earliest years so they can succeed in life. Communities choosing to dedicate significant time, energy and resources to the care and education of their youngest children will be communities that thrive. The Early Childhood Initiative is designed to support the people of Southern Minnesota in bringing early care and education to the forefront of effective and sustainable community planning and action.

#### PRINCIPLES:

This Early Childhood Initiative is based on the fundamental beliefs that:

- \* Every child should have the opportunity to learn, be safe and be loved.
- \* Families need the support of the broader community, to be successful.
- \* All children must enter school ready to learn and succeed. Currently half of Minnesota's children enter kindergarten without the skills needed to succeed in school.
- \* An investment of time and resources in children at a very early age creates valuable economic impacts for communities, including a stable, educated future workforce.
- \* Quality, accessible and affordable early childhood opportunities need to be a top priority of local leaders and decision-makers at all levels.

#### PROCESS:

The Early Childhood Initiative is a partnership between the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and a broad base of members from each selected community, who will form an Early Childhood Coalition. The coalition, made up of a committed group of people, representing many sectors of the community, will work alongside Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation staff to evaluate the assets and resources around early childhood care and education and carry out the completion of a project to address identified opportunities.

Two communities will be selected from across Southern Minnesota over the next two months to participate in a six-month guided planning process, followed by project implementation. The Initiative is expected to take place over a two-year time frame, with information that is gathered during and after the process, used to raise awareness and support of the effectiveness and importance of early childhood care and education. The approximate timetable is: two communities will begin the planning process in January 2006, with two more communities to begin work in September 2006.

## Appendix A Request for Proposal

- **COMMUNITY INFORMATION-** Please describe the current status of early childhood care and education in your community. **Make sure to answer the following questions in your response.**
  1. What community assets (individual talents, organizations, associations, programs, resources, etc.) are currently leveraged to support early childhood care and education in your community? Why is your community interested in applying to be an Early Childhood Initiative community?
  2. Who is involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of early childhood care and education programs in your community (list institutions/members of the community that have already committed to working on this effort)?
  3. How have various sectors (local government, business, schools, churches, etc) of the community been involved in early childhood care and education?
  4. Brief description of community's current programs and activities, any service statistics and strengths, goals or accomplishments.
- **COALITION -**The Early Childhood Initiative process is built around an active coalition of people working together. Please describe how your community will involve a variety of people in the Coalition activities? **Make sure to address the following questions in your response.**
  1. How will you involve members of the community in the early childhood coalition?
  2. How will you engage all sectors of the community (law enforcement, faith community, schools, business, nonprofits, people of color, youth, parents, etc.)
  3. Does your community have any examples of a success in bringing in a variety of people to a community issue?

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### PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

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- ☐ Cover sheet (attached)
- ☐ Proposal Narrative (see above- **5 page maximum**)
- ☐ IRS Determination 501(c)3 Letter (not applicable for local government or schools).
- ☐ Three letters of support, including one from the sponsoring organization.
- ☐ An original and one copy of grant proposal (unbound).

**Return Request by November 30, 2005 to:**

Janet Lundstrom  
 Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  
 Early Childhood Initiative  
 525 Florence Avenue  
 PO Box 695  
 Owatonna, MN 55060  
[janetl@smifoundation.org](mailto:janetl@smifoundation.org)  
 (Electronic submissions welcome)

## Appendix A Request for Proposal

**Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation will provide:**

- Staff assistance during the two year coalition process.
- Links to statewide networks and resources.
- Leadership training in the areas of:
  - Coalition development and team building
  - Asset Based Community Development
  - Early Childhood issue specific visioning and planning
  - Project implementation and coalition sustainability.
- Coalition meeting expenses (room fee and food), up to the budgeted amount per community.
- A \$5,000 stipend to the sponsoring organization to support the coalition coordinator.
- A grant of up to \$15,000 to be used to implement a community project as determined by the coalition.

**Expectations of selected communities:**

- Develop an early childhood coalition, made up of individuals representing many sectors, including: early childhood care and development, school districts, business, government, law enforcement, healthcare and others, as identified by the community
- Select or appoint a part-time coalition coordinator through a local organization.
- Identify local resources to support the coalition's efforts in addition to the Foundation.
- Conduct a Community Profile to gather information on Early Childhood issues specific to each community.
- Host a "Speak Out" for Early Childhood
- Conduct a local visioning session.
- Develop an action plan to address identified gaps in early childhood care and education.
- Implement the action plan during the two year time frame.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of local efforts.
- Communicate coalition progress with Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation staff.

Please complete the Request for Proposal and return by **November 30, 2005**. Contact either Rae Jean Hansen (raejeanh@smifoundation.org) or myself for more information.

Sincerely,

Anni O'Neill  
Community Success Coordinator  
Email: annio@smifoundation.org  
Phone: 507.455.3215, ext 121

**United Way  
of New Ulm****Appendix B  
Letter of Support**

622 1/2 Center Street  
PO Box 476  
New Ulm MN 56073  
tel. 507.354.6512  
www.unitedwaynewulm.com



November 28, 2005

Janet Lundstrom  
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  
Early Childhood Initiative  
525 Florence Avenue  
PO Box 695  
Owatonna, MN 55060

Dear Janet:

This letter is in support of Brown County's application for a grant through the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's Early Childhood Initiative. In my position as the Executive Director of the United Way of New Ulm, I have had the pleasure of attending all of the meetings held by the budding coalition working on this grant application. I think that regardless of the outcome of this grant, the formation of this group has already led to more communication and sharing of ideas within the arena of early childhood.

The United Way of New Ulm is particularly interested in supporting this effort since meeting the needs of families and children at this age is fundamental for development of the child and, in a broader way, for the development of our community. The just completed United Way of New Ulm Community Assessment does reveal some major support needs of parents and families with children, particularly single parent families. While we don't have the data on the ages of the children in all of these families, we are sure that a proportion of these families have pre-K children.

Also, an item of note is that in Brown County, 27.1% of families headed by a female householder fall below the federal poverty level. This is significantly higher than the state rate of 19.3% for this same group.

I think this county has a great start because of the many partners at the table, the long history of solid early childhood programming and data that is already available which can be expanded upon and deepened. The United Way would be an engaged partner in an early childhood initiative such as this and we are very willing to act as the fiscal agent for this grant.

If you need any further information from the United Way, please contact us at 507-354-6512.

Sincerely,

Anne G. Makepeace  
Executive Director

what matters.™

Appendix B  
Letter of Support



**EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION**  
**Lisabeth Uehling, Coordinator**  
 New Ulm Public Schools  
 400 South Payne Street, New Ulm, MN 56073-3296  
 (507) 359-8417  
 buehling@newulm.k12.mn.us



November 22, 2005

To Whom it May Concern:

The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation has a solid history of raising awareness of early childhood issues in their initiative sites. I have seen in other communities, parties pulled around the table who may not otherwise be there, I've seen community presentations on the critical years in early childhood and I've seen the effect this knowledge has had on the business community and in the legislative arena. I want raised awareness for Brown County!

While Brown County has strong programs that serve preschool children and their parents, I feel we could be doing better...better communication, better collaboration.

I strongly support the application by the Brown County Early Childhood Initiative to be one of SMIF's Early Childhood Initiative sites. I feel the SMIF process will help us build a stronger community for our youngest citizens.

I have been greatly impressed by who has come to the table for the grant writing process. We are gaining input from all aspects of the community, from government to child care, from clergy to social service.

I feel Brown County will be a strong site for SMIF to work with. The lines of communication are open between agencies, I just feel we don't have everyone around the table i.e. business.

Thank you for considering Brown County for one of the Early Childhood Initiative sites.

Sincerely,

  
 Lisabeth Uehling, Coordinator  
 Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness



Appendix B  
Letter of Support



*Brown County Family Services*

1117 CENTER STREET  
P.O. BOX 788  
NEW ULM, MN 56073-0788  
PHONE 507-354-8246  
FAX 507-359-6542  
TDD 507-359-6505

November 22, 2005

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  
525 Florence Avenue  
PO Box 695  
Owatonna, MN 55060-0695

RE: Brown County IEIC Grant Application Support Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this as a letter of support from Brown County Family Services for a grant to allow the IEIC group for Brown County and their expanded membership to do an Asset Based Community Development Project in Brown County.

Brown County has developed a lot of services for young children over the years. We are very proud of all our resources. However, at the same time, we realize that there is overlap and gaps with these services. We have not done a study of what we actually have in place. This grant would allow us to do a good job of figuring out the effectiveness and results of what we have going and point us toward a better system for our future of Brown County's children.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Henderson".

Tom Henderson, MSW  
Director, Brown County Family Services

TH:cj

## Appendix C Community Profile Survey

Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Community Profile Survey Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative

This Community Profile Survey is a way to generate discussion and action regarding young children (birth to age 6) in your community. Your responses, along with those of other people knowledgeable about your community, will help us create a community snapshot or profile. We hope to identify assets already in place for your early childhood coalition to build upon and gaps that must be filled to help your youngest children succeed.

The survey is a series of statements about early care and education for young children (up to age 6). The term early care and education includes child care and education; health and well-being; parenting and family support; and work and family life – all aspects that impact the life of a young child. For each statement, how much does it describe your community? Is the statement:

1. True
2. False
3. If you don't really know about a statement, it's okay to indicate that.

#### Your community overall

	True	False	Don't know
1. Your community is a great place for young children to grow up and thrive.	T	F	DK
2. Your community planning, policies, and spending show that you value and care about young children.	T	F	DK
3. Child-friendly environments and family-oriented activities are abundant within your community (at play areas, businesses, churches, retail stores, schools).	T	F	DK
4. The business community works with the broader community to support families with young children.	T	F	DK
5. When it comes to your youngest children, volunteerism is strong in your community.	T	F	DK

#### Health and well-being

	True	False	Don't know
6. Families with young children have easy access to medical care.	T	F	DK
7. Families with young children have easy access to mental health services.	T	F	DK
8. Families with young children have easy access to dental care.	T	F	DK
9. Families have easy access to prenatal care.	T	F	DK
10. All children are provided health and development screening and are referred to appropriate resources if problems are identified.	T	F	DK
11. Children and families have proper nutrition and enough food to eat.	T	F	DK
12. Young children with special needs and their families have easy access to appropriate services and supports.	T	F	DK

Over Please

## Appendix C Community Profile Survey

### Child care and education

Think of child care and education from birth to age 6 broadly. It includes licensed center-based care; licensed family child care; preschool; ECFE; Head Start; and informal care by relatives, friends or neighbors.

	True	False	Don't know
13. Parents in your community feel their children are in safe child care and education settings.	T	F	DK
14. Children and families from all racial and ethnic communities have access to early childhood and family support services that are respectful of and responsive to cultural diversity.	T	F	DK
15. High quality, affordable child care and early education experiences are available and accessible to families of young children.	T	F	DK
16. Your youngest children have access to services that support their development.	T	F	DK
17. Early childhood professionals work well together with early elementary school professionals to support the transition into kindergarten.	T	F	DK
18. You have enough highly trained and skilled early childhood providers and educators in your community.	T	F	DK
19. The child care and education of your youngest children are not disrupted by high turnover in providers.	T	F	DK

### Parenting and family support

	True	False	Don't know
20. In your community, families receive information and support to help raise their young children.	T	F	DK
21. Teen parents in your community are adequately supported.	T	F	DK
22. Your community supports fathers, and encourages and facilitates their involvement.	T	F	DK
23. Single parents with young children feel valued and supported.	T	F	DK
24. Parents of young children in your community have access to reliable transportation.	T	F	DK
25. Services are available to protect children when families are in crisis.	T	F	DK
26. Faith communities support families with young children within the broader community.	T	F	DK

### Work and family life

	True	False	Don't know
27. The housing in your community is decent, safe, and affordable for families with young children.	T	F	DK
28. Your community offers recreational facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and a community center for families with young children.	T	F	DK
29. Your community has a public library or other services that promote reading with young children.	T	F	DK
30. Jobs in your community pay wages and provide benefits adequate to support a family.	T	F	DK

Appendix C  
Community Profile Survey

**Other ideas to support your youngest children**

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31. What activities/programs are already in place in your community to support families with young children?

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32. What individuals and groups (businesses, civic organizations, educators, faith communities, nonprofits) are already involved in activities supporting families with young children in your community?

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33. Who else should be involved?

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34. What can be done to make your community the best it can be for families with young children?

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35. Other comments:

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**Thank You**

Appendix D  
Notification of Grant Approval



March 2, 2006

United Way of New Ulm  
Attn: Anne Makepeace  
622 ½ Center Street  
New Ulm, MN 56073

Dear Ms Makepeace,

On behalf of The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation Board of Directors, I am happy to notify you that your request as the fiscal agent representing the Brown County Early Childhood Initiative has been approved. Enclosed with this letter is the Memorandum of Agreement which must be signed by an officer of the fiscal agent and returned before our work may begin.

Initially the local leadership team will participate in a six-month guided planning process. This will lead to three to four town meetings to gather information which will be used to identify programs, projects, partnerships and policy changes in your community.

Anni O'Neill, Community Success Program Coordinator, will continue to be your primary contact at the Foundation. Anni may be contacted at 507-455-3215 x121, or at [annio@smifoundation.org](mailto:annio@smifoundation.org).

Best regards,

Rae Jean Hansen  
Community Success Program Officer  
[raejeanh@smifoundation.org](mailto:raejeanh@smifoundation.org)

Enclosures