

Center for Conative Abilities

Evidence of Previous Success with Elements of *Project: Go Ahead*

Project: Go Ahead is a continuation of a series of programs which have proven successful over time. It will bring back to Maricopa County a program for building on natural abilities that originated here over 25 years ago. It will utilize expertise and materials honed in a wide variety of circumstances, which have been used and praised by many others around the globe. The Center is committed to focusing on the kids of this community whose natural abilities have become maligned, even inappropriately pathologized – to the detriment of those youngsters, their families, school systems, and the community.

Creative Problem-Solving Programs for Youngsters

The Center founded its programs for teaching kids to manage their own natural abilities and apply decision-making techniques for improved performance in 1975. Its highly praised SPIES program (Summer Program for Individual Explorations) originated in Maricopa County and blossomed here over five years, during which over 700 local kids were participants.

Training Parents and Educators

The Center trained the SPIES faculty in methods for individualizing activities, based upon Kolbe's emerging system for identifying natural patterns of action—which would become known as conative strengths or MOs. Parents of participating youngsters were provided with tips for helping them manage these abilities. The program led to early versions of *Perfectly Capable Kids*, a training program for parents and educators which has been honed over the years with attendees from around the country, and will be incorporated into *Project: Go Ahead*. Arizona State University has co-sponsored and provided continuing education units for this program for the last three years. Participants have consistently rated it over 97% for meeting their needs and the program's objectives.

Training Conative Coaches

The Center, in conjunction with Kolbe Corp, began in-depth training and certification of qualified individuals in techniques to reinforce conative strengths in others in 1988. It was approved as meeting the standard to provide Continuing Education Units by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training. Evaluations by participants are consistently in the 95%-98% range for meeting their needs and the program's objectives. Participants have gone on to coach leaders in business and government in 34 countries and in every state in the United States. Quantitative evaluations are available upon request.

Providing Youngsters Identified ADD/ADHD with Self-Management Techniques

In addition to working with kids through schools and family programs, The Center has provided individual coaching for kids labeled ADD and/or ADHD. This has been done in person, by phone, and over the Internet. Technology has allowed The Center to work with Kolbe Corp in providing youngsters with individualized results for Kolbe Youth Indexes online, and in written and audio formats. Thousands of kids have taken advantage of this opportunity, and their parents have often sought the additional sessions with Conative Experts. As a result of this process, youngsters have been able to improve grades, be admitted to high-level academic and talent-oriented programs, stop taking prescription drugs, become successful team members, and reduce family stress. Comments from parents regarding the benefits for these kids are available upon request.

Evaluation of *Project: Go Ahead* Predecessor Programs

Project: Go Ahead continues the specific work of The Center for Conative Abilities with youngsters labeled ADD and/or ADHD. It incorporates the best practices of previous programs sponsored by the Center that have proven effective in helping such kids manage their own natural abilities.

Evidence of the success of these programs comes from responses to an online survey by educators, parents, psychologists, and social workers who have worked with participating youngsters. Fifteen respondents rated the impact of the programs on 122 youngsters from nine states and three countries (USA, South Africa, and Canada). Using a 1-5 Likert scale, with 5 indicating the greatest impact, they reported that the positive impact on the kids averaged 4.8.

Improving behaviors and grades of all of these kids had previously been a struggle, exhausting for many of the parents and educators who had been making great efforts to help. The process offered by the forerunners of *Project: Go Ahead* resulted in an average of 74% of the youngsters' teachers noting such improvements, and an average of 62% of the kids' parents reporting improvements.

It is important to note that improvements in behavior and grades proved sustainable. All too often, other types of programs have shown that intense efforts and great attention give only short-lived results. *Project: Go Ahead's* predecessor programs rated in this study were confirmed to have provided results that lasted at least 3.5 years—a very high figure considering that many of the 134 students participated in the programs as recently as 1-2 years ago. Those who tracked students for longer periods of time reported that results were sustained for over 9 years.

Comments from the Respondents

"Almost all of our students (all of whom had dropped out or been asked to leave the regular system) loved the experience and believe that it helps them to understand why they do the things they do. Many of them ask if we can bring their parents in to explain the results because the results typically put into words and pictures what they have been feeling but been unable to express due to lack of understanding, vocabulary etc. The Kolbe result, combined with the intensive program really does make a difference in the lives of these children. Our teachers fight every time to keep the program from budget cuts because they believe it makes a real difference for our at-risk students."

- *Special Education School Administrator*

"I think the real value of sharing conative abilities with youngsters is to facilitate a sense of self and to be able to articulate a clear sense of who one is—and to know one's MO and from there build further to demonstrate how one can fit in vs. how one is so different."

- *Coach/consultant*

"My son was suffering terribly, as was the entire family. He was failing in school, and had no friends. Now he is getting outstanding grades and has been successful in school activities. It's made a very sad young person a joyful one. It is the commonsense approach that had been missing."

- *Parent*

“‘Attention-Deficit’ and ‘Hyperactivity’ are seen as a LACK of control or even a PATHOLOGY. Being, for example, a Quick Start and/or an Implementor is now seen as an ASSET that the child brings to a situation. This approach helps children see themselves as (1) quick to process or (2) to operate well in three dimensions—now these STRENGTHS can be brought to bear on problems confronted in the classroom, at home, and in life. When a child's contributions are valued and included, it automatically reduces the anxiety level the child may have felt when the child was being treated as ‘out of sync.’ When the child is less anxious, his or her contributions are easier to weave seamlessly and synergistically in with a group effort.”

- *Psychologist*

Survey Results

The survey respondents are not now and never have been employees of Kolbe Corp, nor do they earn any money from that company. They are not members of The Center for Conative Abilities. This sample represents approximately 12% of the youngsters who would qualify for this study, which is deemed a high level of response for a survey sent to busy professionals and parents via the Internet.

- Surveys were completed by 16 people who were reporting on direct experience with a combined total of 134 youngsters.
- The average level of impact an ADD/ADHD-labeled youngster experiences as a result of discovering their conative abilities has been rated at 4.8 on a scale of 1 to 5.
- Of these youngsters, 65% were reported as showing improved grades and improved behavior.
- 75% of teachers and 62% of parents reported noticeable improvements in these youngsters after they'd learned about their conative abilities.

Survey

Impact of reinforcing Conative Abilities on youngsters labeled ADD/ADHD

1. How many school-aged youngsters labeled ADD and/or ADHD have you told about their conative abilities?

2. What was the typical impact that knowing their conative strengths had on these youngsters?

(very negative) ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 (very positive)

3. On average, did the impact continue past the first couple of weeks?

___No; ___Yes, but not longer than a few months; ___Yes, as long as ___ years;
___Don't know

4. Approximately what percentage of these youngsters improved their behaviors and/or school grades after learning of their conative strengths?

___0% ___20% ___40% ___60% ___80% ___100% ___ Don't know

5. Approximately what percentage of these youngsters' parents noticed positive changes in their kids' behaviors after the kids learned of their conative strengths?

___0% ___20% ___40% ___60% ___80% ___100% ___ Don't know

If you are the parent of any of these youngsters, please include additional comments:

6. Approximately what percentage of teachers noticed such positive changes?

___0% ___20% ___40% ___60% ___80% ___100% ___ Don't know

Any comments you'd like to share about your experiences reinforcing Conative Abilities with youngsters labeled ADD/ADHD?

Survey Result Data

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
1	2	5	Don't Know	Don't Know	60%	Don't Know
2	16	5	Don't Know	80%	Don't Know	100%
3	40	5	Don't Know	70%	Don't Know	80%
4	15	5	Don't Know	60%	60%	80%
5	22.5	4	Don't Know	20%	40%	40%
6	2	4	Yes, but not longer than a few months	Don't Know	Don't Know	Don't Know
7	6.5	5	Yes, 3+ years	Don't Know	Don't Know	Don't Know
8	4	5	Don't Know	Don't Know	100%	Don't Know
9	1	5	Yes, but not longer than a few months	100%	100%	Don't Know
10	1	5	Yes, 7 years	100%	100%	100%
11	3	5	Yes, 5 years	100%	100%	60%
12	1	5	Yes, 2 years	100%	100%	Don't Know
13	6	5	Yes, 8 years	80%	80%	Don't Know
14	1	4	Yes, but not longer than a few months	40%	80%	Don't Know
15	1	5	Yes, 5+ years	0%	100%	100%
16	12	5	Yes, 9 years	80%	60%	80%

Studies of Conative Stress and Its Impact on Performance

The Center for Conative Abilities has studied the impact of conative stress on performance of people of all ages and in a large variety of situations. It has tracked the careers of high performers in sports, entertainment, science, business, and government who “lost their edge” when they were taken out of situations in which they could thrive by building on their conative abilities. It has also tracked the careers of people who have had the freedom to be themselves and found suitable outlets for their conative abilities. The differences are as great as those seen in a classroom where kids “gifted” in math and science are allowed to accelerate their efforts in those areas, while those labeled ADD/ADHD are made to sit still and repeat the same unrequited efforts “until they get it right.”

Causes of Conative Stress

1. False self-expectations – the *strain* of forcing yourself to work against your grain
2. Impossible requirements from others – the *tension* of trying to fulfill a conatively inappropriate demand
3. Having to conform to another’s method of operation – the *conflict* when one person’s way of solving problems is forced upon a person who would naturally operate very differently

Adults report that all of these forms of conative stress interfere with their ability to achieve their goals. They use the following terms to describe what happens when they have to do a job under conditions of conative stress:

Frustration	Irritation
Anger	Fatigue
Sense of failure	Feeling defeated
Tuned out	Sad

The Center has found that adults with conative stress are more than twice as likely to have high absenteeism from work than are those not identified as having conative stress. They are three times as likely to either quit their jobs or be fired as are other employees. The more forms of conative stress that are present the greater the probability that the person will not make it in the job.

Compare these factors with the situation many ADD/ADHD youngsters face when the Follow Thru/Fact Finder structure and required details of most school environments force them to work against their conative grain. If they are convinced it is they who have to change, they will put forth great effort to try to be something they are not. When that inevitably does not work, they often stop taking chances. They mentally drop out—often by third grade.

The impossible requirements of operating within the rigidity of most school systems makes youngsters who are insistent in Quick Start and/or Implementor just as angry and frustrated as their adult conative counterparts would feel if they had to sit still, day upon day, doing routine work instead of exploring other possibilities. They tune out, have a sense of failure and feel defeated and inadequate.. They do not want to go back to school, any more than an adult in that circumstance wants to get up and go to work. They often become the drop outs, as soon as the law allows, and before that try every trick in the book to be absent from school.

Workplace studies have confirmed and reconfirmed the high cost of such “turnover” (“drop out” in educational parlance) and absenteeism. Schools worry about the issues, too. *Project: Go Ahead* does something about it – especially for the youngsters who are at the highest risk of feeling unnecessary failure, those labeled by adults they trusted as having deficits and *dis-*abilities because their natural abilities differ from the current culture of most classrooms.

For documentation see *Powered by Instinct*, Kolbe, 2004, pgs 97, 204-205, 226, 241; *Pure Instinct*, Kolbe, 1993, pgs 76-93.