

# Bright Spot Award Nomination Form

In an effort to help define what meaningful PPI is, and to better recognize the tremendous initiatives taking place across our state, we are creating a new Bright Spots Awards program. This will be a great way to create a little “friendly competition” among the local health departments while helping to define what is meaningful PPI. Here are the steps to the process of nominating your initiative:

- 1.) All PPI Bright Spot Award Nominations must be submitted by July 1, 2017. One nomination form must be completed per initiative nominated. Email completed nomination to Matt Coleman.
- 2.) Nominations will be reviewed by a committee, comprised of individuals from local and regional health departments, as well as Central Office. Each submission will be redacted, so individual identity will not be known to the committee. They will subjectively review each submission, discuss, and award the point totals to the nominations. An average of the section reviews will be used to determine the award level earned.
- 3.) Awardees will be announced in the fall, 2017.
- 4.) Each nomination will be presented with feedback from the committee.

Award Levels:            185-200 pts: Platinum Level Award  
                                 159-184 pts: Gold Level Award  
                                 138-158 pts: Silver Level Award  
                                 117-137 pts: Bronze Level Award  
                                 116 pts or less: Honorable Mention Award

**County:**                    **Giles**

**Initiative Name:**        **Readiness Initiative for Success in Education (RISE)**

**PPI Topic Area(s):**      **Other (Child Health)**

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## **Bright Spot Awards Questions**

**Please explain why you think this initiative should be considered for the TDH Bright Spot Awards?**

(150 words max);(10 points available)

Readiness Initiative for Success in Education or RISE, focuses on school readiness for children ages three to five years old, in the rural areas of Giles County. Tennessee's school readiness model emphasizes that the state's children will be ready to succeed in school only when families, communities and schools work together on their behalf throughout the early childhood years. RISE engages families as partners in their child's development and education. Parent partnerships and involvement builds long-lasting collaboration among schools, families and communities and promotes resilience. RISE helps the parent know what school readiness skills are and how to teach them to their child. The program builds positive parent/child and peer relationships, confidence, school readiness skills, preparation for school structure, transition skills and social, emotional, and developmental skills. Because the Bright Spots criteria involve highlighting projects that are innovative, successful and replicable, RISE is a likely candidate for recognition.

**What is the public health problem being addressed and why is it important?**

(300 words max); (10 points available)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), childhood development is an important determinant of health over the life of an individual. A child's academic success, health, and general well-being are directly impacted by early developmental opportunities. Preschool-aged children experience significant biological brain development and achieve ninety percent of their adult brain volume by age six. This physiological growth allows children to develop functional skills related to information processing, comprehension, language and motor skills.

In keeping with the goals of the school system, RISE is geared toward specific learning targets that coincide with the Department of Education standards. Such standards include reading foundational skills, fine motor skills and counting and cardinality. The program activities correlate with the Ages and Stages questionnaire used by the Tennessee Department of Health's HUGS program. To grow and thrive, young children need strong families, good health, and positive early learning opportunities. Parent involvement is a critical component to the RISE program and supports healthy development for children. By actively involving parents in learning opportunities with their children the parents are empowered to use the skills they learn and practice them in the home setting.

One of the most important things a parent can do is spend time with their child and let the child know they are loved, has a purpose in life, and people to go to if bad things happen. Resiliency happens when the child has these 'protective factors' like a shield to protect them from Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs. These protective factors or ACEs include parents who are strong, loving, supportive, and resilient and parents who read, rhyme, sing, and talk to their children according to the CDC's website about ACEs.

**What are the SMART objective goals and major purposes of this initiative? (SMART objectives are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound. (300 words max) (10 points available)**

- By May 30, 2017, members of the RISE team will deliver at least one ninety-minute educational session per month for participating youth and parents. Participation assists in creating relationships and experiences with caring adults and offers opportunities for every day challenges such as learning to get along with others, sharing and being in new environments.
- By May 30, 2017, a minimum of 45% of the program participants will demonstrate increased knowledge of key school readiness skills as measured by comparing outcomes on the pre-post content assessments. The more knowledge and skills a child has upon entering school, the more prepared they will be for kindergarten. RISE also allows for increased opportunities for social interaction.
- By May 30, 2017, books will be provided at each session in order to increase parent opportunities to read to their child. Reading together provides parents a chance to bond with their child.
- By May 30, 2017, enroll a minimum of ten students in the RISE program at Minor Hill School. The local Pre-K program is limited and can only accept twenty students each year. With no local head start program serving Minor Hill, RISE provides an opportunity for these children who otherwise would not be given the chance to participate. By attending a program within the walls of the school they will eventually attend, children are able to become more familiar with the facility and school personnel.
- By May 30, 2017, provide a minimum of five read-a-loud activities for children and their parents. A copy of each book read during the RISE session is given to each family. This allows parents to read at home and reinforce the story from the session.

**What is the annual budget and funding source for this initiative? If no funding is available, how have you sustained the initiative? (150 words max) (5 points available)**

Program supplies were purchased through the local Giles County Health Department budget earmarked for primary prevention initiative programs. For this project, PPI funds were utilized to purchase supplies such as crayons, scissors, pencils and glue. These items were distributed to students in backpacks designed specifically for the program. Minor Hill School has been instrumental in the success of the program by providing a space to deliver the sessions in addition to other supplies such as paper, pencils and books. Through a successful and continued partnership between the health department and the local school board, participating schools in Giles County have access to resources such as books and other supplies that can be used with the program.

**Have community partners been brought to the table to help with the initiative? What are these partners bringing to the table for the initiative? (300 words max) (20 points available)**

The Giles County Health Department has a long history of partnering with Giles County Schools. Representatives from the school system have consistently promoted health department activities and

programs. In particular, Minor Hill School has been involved with various health department initiatives. Since May 2012, the school system has been a recipient of Project Diabetes funding from the Tennessee Department of Health. School personnel, including the Coordinated School Health Director, provided oversight on the standards and appropriate activities for the target age group and served as a key partner in planning the RISE program. School representatives took a hands-on approach by actively recruiting youth to participate in the program. A program flyer was created to share with other local agencies serving youth. A contact with the school system's central office served as a liaison with the school board and during the month of February, a school board member attended a RISE session in order to learn more about the program.

Also a vital partner in helping deliver health related programs in the community, the Giles County Public Library was instrumental in the success of RISE. As part of their service to the public, the library provided information for parents about gaining access to the online library. The local library has provided guidance in regard to appropriate reading materials for the RISE students.

This project has received attention from local leaders and continues to gain interest from other agencies outside of Giles County. Most recently, the South Central Regional Health Office in nearby Columbia, TN, contacted staff about implementing the project at a school in Maury County. Minor Hill School was recently contacted by the State of Tennessee Department of Education, regarding the possibility of sharing information about the project with statewide leadership.

**What is the timing of the initiative? When does planning occur? When is/was the initiative implemented? When is the initiative evaluated?** (250 words max) (5 points available)

Initially, project planning began in November 2016, as a result of an effort to expand an existing community partnership with the local school system. Members of the early literacy PPI team at the health department were instrumental in taking the initial steps leading to the creation of a plan with Minor Hill School to deliver the program. Meetings were arranged between health department staff and representatives from the school during the months of December 2016 and January 2017. Beginning in February 2017, the first session of the program was held. Two ninety-minute sessions were offered each month thereafter through the month of May.

The program will be offered again in 2017-2018 at the Minor Hill School, and will coincide with the school calendar. During the month of September, participants will begin the program and once again conclude with post testing during the month of May. At the last session, school personnel take participants and their parents on a tour of the school. During the tour, parents have the opportunity to meet school personnel and become familiar with school administration. Teachers discuss what a typical day is like and briefly cover classroom expectations for children and their parents.

**In what way is this initiative especially innovative? How is this initiative different from programs with a similar intent? Is there a specific idea tested with this approach? Does this work reference relevant literature or relevant studies? Does the initiative achieve its stated goals?**(400 words max) (50 points available)

RISE provides a service that fulfills a need in rural communities where resources are limited. For communities in which head start programs are not available, RISE meets the needs of these children by filling the educational gap. Most services that pertain to development end at age three. Likewise, schools typically only offer a limited number of pre-k slots that are primarily based on income guidelines. Because RISE is not based on income guidelines, the program is able to meet the need for children who otherwise would not be eligible. At this time, RISE is the only program of its kind serving youth in this age group in the Giles County community.

Knowing they can have a positive influence on their child's development, members of the RISE team intentionally involve parents at each of the learning sessions. Parents remain alongside their children and staff purposefully involves them in activities. Developing parental commitment to help their children learn is also a program goal. Through this community of parents who share in the responsibility of helping their children learn, youth benefit from the increased interaction during the program.

According to a parent satisfaction survey, 87.5% of parents agreed that the program assisted in teaching them how to better prepare their child for school. Likewise, 100% of those surveyed indicated parents found participation beneficial for themselves, as well as their child. Parents were asked if they would recommend the program to other parents with 100% agreeing that they would. This demonstrates possible sustainability of the program. When asked what they liked most about the program, one parent commented, "Each part played an important role in what he has learned. It was all beneficial." Another stated, "Allowing the child in the school to see what it's like, teaching upper and lower case letters, numbers, and shapes and working one on one with each child is a crucial part in learning."

**Are the measures clearly listed describing what makes the program effective? Is data provided or referenced that supports the conclusion? What makes this program effective? How is the program evaluated? (350 words max) (20 points available)**

At the beginning of the program, all children were asked to take a pre-test which measures academic, cognitive, physical, and language development. The average pre-score for all participants was 61.4%. At the conclusion of the program, this test was repeated with an average score of 73.7%. The results demonstrate a 12.3% increase in score with 100% of participants demonstrating some level of improvement. These results demonstrate that the program is effective and supports data previously discussed relating to school readiness and overall health outcomes.

The RISE program pre-post test results correlate with Brigance testing results used in Giles County for children entering kindergarten. Brigance testing provides a screening of skills that are critical predictors of school success, including physical development, language, academic/cognitive, self-help, and social-emotional skills. The RISE pre-post assessments indicated the child's ability to recognize their name, count to ten, recite the alphabet, and identification of letters, basic colors, shapes, as well as proper use of scissors.

Another measure of success would be the availability of a program like RISE for children that otherwise would not be exposed to the activities of the program at such an early age. Children in this area are several miles from the county seat of Pulaski. While Pulaski offers various opportunities for children, the availability of such resources in Minor Hill is limited. The RISE program has met the educational and social needs for the participating children and their parents.

**How can this initiative be replicated in other counties? What are some limitations or obstacles that can be expected, with replication of the initiative?** (300 words max) (50 points available)

Through the use of staff time designated toward the implementation of primary prevention activities, there are increased opportunities for local health departments to replicate the RISE program. Staff is involved with community partners in the development of outreach activities therefore providing a means for replication. County health departments with strong community ties will be at the greatest advantage when it comes to the delivery of a successful program. Partnerships with agencies such as school systems and libraries are vital components.

With the assistance of volunteers such as local health council members, a community might also initiate a successful program. Most, if not all, local health councils are composed of the most influential, active and vested members of any particular county. Since the inception of health councils, these groups are accustomed to lending support and assistance to a variety of projects. Many times, these projects are geared toward improving health outcomes for youth. With over twenty years of experience in carrying out health related activities, health councils are likely an important partner. Retired teachers might also serve as volunteers.

If targeting families in the more rural areas of a county, lack of transportation could be a barrier when it comes to participation. Counties should likely explore any transportation barriers prior to participation and discuss with school personnel in the early planning stages.

Adequate space to hold this type of program could be limited at some schools depending on current enrollment and the school schedule. Leaders with the Minor Hill project developed a plan to utilize the cafeteria area following the conclusion of lunches. The option of organizing various learning stations was possible in the cafeteria due to the arrangement of tables and general layout of the room making this an ideal location at Minor Hill School.

**Is this initiative sustainable without the resources of the local health department being involved?** (250 words max) (20 points available)

Sustainability in a community choosing to offer the RISE program is dependent on the willingness and ability of local partners to put forth time and resources. Should a school system or other partner initiate such a program, an inventory of resources would need to be conducted. Health departments bring tremendous assets to the table, however; the ultimate success of any local project is dependent on the level of commitment and participation by partners outside of the health department. Partnerships are effective in rural communities for sharing scarce human and capital resources. Increasing involvement among community agencies would be beneficial and provide additional adults

to assist in program delivery. This might also increase the availability of local resources which could be used to help with the program. According to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, in cases where community health promotion activities are initiated by a health department or organization, organizers have a responsibility to engage the community. Realizing the vision of healthy people in healthy communities is possible only if the community, in its full cultural, social, and economic diversity, is an authentic partner in changing the conditions for health.