ASU Funds New Program to Build on Kids' Natural Abilities

(Tempe, Arizona—February 23, 2005) Local educators, child advocates and parents will have the opportunity next month to learn more about kids’ natural abilities and to participate in a groundbreaking research study funded by the Arizona State University College of Public Programs’ School of Social Work. The 6-month study will kick off at the Perfectly Capable Kids™ conference on March 12, 2005 which is open to the public.

Participants will be introduced to this vanguard program’s methods of teaching, guiding and coaching kids and then be asked to implement the model in their work. The impact on children in the Phoenix area will be analyzed by Professor Karen Gerdes of the School of Social Work.

According to the program’s founder, world-renowned theorist and performance expert, Kathy Kolbe, able kids are being termed disabled. Their natural abilities are being misunderstood and misinterpreted as learning problems, often ADD, ADHD, or other conditions that affect school performance. Perfectly Capable Kids shows how to build upon youngsters’ equal but differing strengths and help close the gap between potential and performance.

Using the same breakthrough models she has developed for use by top-ranked schools and corporations, Kolbe and the nonprofit Center for Conative Research will offer conference attendees a theoretical model that explains how kids solve problems in different ways.

"Kolbe's highly innovative models are based upon decades of research and discovery on human instincts," says Gerdes. "The Perfectly Capable Kids conference will clarify how to identify and nurture the innate pattern of abilities in 2-16 year olds."

One goal of the conference is to urge educators to move beyond one manner of instruction. Today, many K-12 school programs focus primarily on methods that favor students whose instinctive approach is to gather detailed facts and organize them sequentially. Such programs can penalize—and frustrate—the sizable group of students who learn while multi-tasking and through trial-and-error experiments.
"Children's instinctive MOs determine the diverse but equally positive ways they learn," Kolbe says. "It's alarming that five of 12 innate abilities are often viewed negatively, both in the classroom and in parenting courses. “Pity the children and their parents," Kolbe says, "when perfectly capable kids are told they have to change who they are."

Kolbe's acclaimed techniques will help teachers and parents turn that around. Educators in 34 states, including top-ranked Kansas, which has made it a part of the Department of Education’s leadership program, have already been trained in the Kolbe method.

Kansas Director of School Improvement and Accreditation, Dr. Diane De Becker considers her training in the Kolbe System as “the best professional research-based training I have ever received.” She foresees "the enormous potential of its use" by the Kansas State Department of Education, and describes the work as "revitalizing."

The collaboration between the Center for Conative Research and the ASU School of Social Work will bring fresh thinking to the discussion on how kids process and act on information. The Perfectly Capable Kids conference will change the way participants view students and themselves.

The conference is open to the public and will be held March 12, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Farmer Education Building at ASU and is appropriate for educators, parents and child advocates. For details, fees, and registration information see www.kolbe.com/pck or call 602-840-9770, ext. 102.