

Implementing, Sustaining and Scaling-Up High-Quality Inclusion

co-led by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI).

This work is guided by the Illinois State Board of Education's Illinois Early Childhood Inclusion Vision Statement.

Project Goals

Enhance Illinois' capacity to implement, sustain, and scale-up high quality inclusive preschool policies and practices for children ages 3 to 5 years participating in early childhood programs and receiving special education services.

Receive technical assistance and training in Illinois to result in the sustainable implementation of the ECTA and NCPMI Indicators of High Quality Inclusion at the State, district, and demonstration site levels.

Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion

The indicators support state and local program leaders to examine and implement strategies that strengthen their capacity to provide high quality inclusive options in their communities. The goal of the initiative is to improve and increase inclusive opportunities for young children with disabilities and their families, through system and practice refinements. There are four sets of indicators:

- State
- Community
- Local Program
- Early Care and Education



ILLINOIS STATE LEADERSHIP TEAM COORDINATORS

Kristy Doan, ISBE
kdoan@isbe.net
Ann Kremer, Early
CHOICES
ann.kremer@eclre.org

DISTRICT SITES

Collinsville CUSD 10
Mannheim SD 83
Springfield SD 186

Additional information
available here

[https://www.eclre.org/
planning-
tools/implementation-
of-inclusion-project/](https://www.eclre.org/planning-tools/implementation-of-inclusion-project/)



Illinois is working with the national technical assistance projects to support the work with a Statewide Leadership Team (SLT) that looks at statewide policies and supports. The SLT has members representing school districts, state agencies, professional development projects, higher education, parents, and advocacy. The work centers on using the [State Indicators of High Quality Inclusion](#) in order to guide planning and measure progress with the goal to develop written sustainability/scale-up plans and budgets, including a scale-up plan for Program Coaches and sites.

State Leadership Team

Community Inclusion Teams



Community inclusion teams (CIT), with the support of a program coach from Early CHOICES, bring service providers and families together to build community-wide awareness and vision of the importance of early childhood inclusion. The CIT is a group of early childhood program personnel, family members and others in a community that is devoted to high-quality inclusive early care and education settings where children with disabilities participate as full members.

The CIT helps guide programs in adopting the evidence-based practices that ensure that all children succeed. In this model, no one program is expected to "do it alone." rather, they have the sustained and planful support of state agencies, program coaches and the CIT to help them obtain the skills, knowledge, personnel and other resources needed for high-quality inclusion.

The community inclusion team helps all the early care and education programs within the community "swim in the same direction." The CIT helps with the sharing of information and resources among programs and agencies, facilitates agreements between the local education agency/school district, early intervention and other community programs for the provision of early intervention, special education and related services in natural environments, and provides guidance and information to programs on policies and procedures that support and promote high-quality inclusion.

The CIT collects information on successes and challenges and shares that information with the State Leadership Team so that the state team can better support their efforts. The [CIT indicators](#) are intended to enhance program policies, procedures, and guidance on high-quality inclusive practices to early care and education environments.

Program Leadership Teams are based in each program implementing high-quality inclusive practices for children ages 3-5 within a community. An implementation program can be a small program with just a few classrooms or larger programs with multiple buildings and classrooms operated by a single program or district. Program leadership teams can be based in community childcare programs, Head Start, school or center, and school districts. The Program Leadership team meets monthly and includes key program stakeholders. The program leadership team collaborates with the program coach from Early CHOICES to develop an inclusion implementation plan and ensure that the implementation moves forward.

The program leadership team will identify practitioner coach(es) (individuals who coach teachers and other practitioners on the evidence-based inclusion practices) to participate in practitioner coach training that is provided through on-line meetings and provide ongoing classroom coaching to staff. The team creates an ongoing plan for the practitioner coach to support teachers throughout implementation.

ECTA and NCPMI along with Early CHOICES supports the Program Leadership Team and practitioner coaches with initial and ongoing training to implement inclusion within the program. The [Local Program Indicators](#) detail the key elements that necessary for promoting high quality inclusive policies, procedures and practices and guide this work.

Program Leadership Teams



Implementation Science: The science behind our efforts

Our state is responsible for critical functions that promote effective practice at the local level such as establishing personnel requirements, planning for a financially-sound system, providing policy and procedural guidance, and delivering technical assistance to support local programs and personnel. The local programs are responsible for the implementation of high-quality, individualized services as required under IDEA. A high-quality state system paired with the implementation of effective practices at the local level is aimed at achieving positive outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families.

Changing policies or guidelines, providing information and training alone are not adequate to bring about sustainable changes in practice. To adopt inclusive practices, the implementation process must also address the organizational supports which are necessary to initiate and sustain inclusive practices. Through carefully planned implementation, the adoption of any new practices builds the system's capacity for change locally, regionally and statewide.

Implementation science describes stages of implementation. While the stages and activities suggest a linear sequence of events, in actual implementation there is often a more dynamic flow to the work. Some stages or steps may be occurring simultaneously, and the work often circles back to revisit earlier stages.