



Community Inclusion Team (CIT) Interest Guide/Toolkit Advancing Inclusion in Community-Based Early Childhood Education Settings

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This project aims to build the capacity of communities to equitably serve preschool children with disabilities in inclusive learning environments. The mixed service delivery model in Illinois creates more opportunities for children with disabilities to attend and receive services in community based early childhood education settings (CBOs). This model does not replace existing inclusive models that are established in many public preschool programs but expands using an itinerant model to reach beyond the public school district programs.

Key questions for everyone to consider:

Each community is unique and has individual factors that will support them in implementing an inclusive itinerant model. What factors are inspiring your community to investigate how an itinerant model might be used to support children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in CBOs?

Does your community have one or more school district(s) who are participating and are interested in learning more?

Does your community have one or more CBO(s) who are participating and are interested in learning more?

For the local school districts:

What models of high quality inclusion are you are already implementing within your district?

Are you at capacity within your current buildings and staff? What has your district already done to expand inclusive options for preschoolers?

Has your district had families decline services because they did not want to change their existing childcare or preschool arrangements to accommodate attending the public school program?

Do you have support in the district from the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and other key leaders in your district to expand inclusive options for preschoolers?

What kinds of outreach and collaboration have you already established with local CBOs?

What immediate barriers do you see to implementing any of the A, B & C options laid out in [Advancing Preschool Inclusion in Community Based Early Childhood Settings \(2022\)](#).

- Option A: Itinerant Services Across District/CBOs
- Option B: Itinerant Services Across District with MOUs for Out-of-District Children in CBOs
- Option C: Itinerant Services Provided within a Regional coop arrangement provide services to children enrolled in out-of-district child care or other early learning program.

For Community-Based Organizations:

Are you currently including children within your program that are 3-5 with IEPs?

What has your program already done to build an understanding of inclusion of preschoolers?

What kinds of outreach and collaboration have you already established with local school districts?

Do you have support from administrators, owners, or other key leaders to expand inclusive options for preschoolers?

What immediate barriers do you see to implementing any of the A, B & C options laid out in [*Advancing Preschool Inclusion in Community Based Early Childhood Settings \(2022\)*](#).

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Community Inclusion Teams (CITs) can build effective inclusion in CBOs. A CIT is a team comprised of school district administrators, CBO administrators, implementation program staff, family members, and others as appropriate. The CIT will work to create a plan to deliver itinerant services to children in CBOs. The CIT implements action plans based on the [*Community Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion*](#) that guide and support the availability of high-quality inclusive early care and education environments throughout the community.

CITs can apply for a stipend to support the implementation planning. To be eligible to apply, the Community must have commitments from at least one Local Education Agency and at least one CBO that serve the same geographic area. Applications will be available May 12. You can learn more about building a CIT and about the stipend opportunity at Early CHOICES website: <https://www.eclre.org/planning-tools/implementation-of-inclusion-project/>

Many resources are available through Early CHOICES regarding preschool inclusion. If you do not see what you need, contact Early CHOICES at inclusion@eclre.org

- [*Understanding Inclusion*](#)- Online, on demand modules with accompanying topic guides in both English and Spanish.
- [*What Makes Inclusion Work in Early Childhood?*](#) -Graphic and written explanation of key points in implementing inclusion in early childhood supported through research and resources which are organized by each element.
- [*Funding Inclusive Education*](#) ISBE Funding Considerations webinar and tools to better understanding funding sources and braiding of funds.