OUTSTANDING PRACTICES IN INCLUSION RECOGNITION

- **Ann Kremer** Ann.Kremer@eclre.org [she/her]
- **Kristy Doan** Kdoan@isbe.net [she/her]

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Agenda

- Overview of OPI
- Eligibility to Apply
- Illinois Inclusion Guidelines
- Inclusive Classroom Profile
- Resources to support your planning

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What do outstanding practices in inclusion look like to you?

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Outstanding Practices in Inclusion Exemplify:

- ❑Sustainable culture of inclusion
- ❑Consistent and exemplary practices in inclusion
- ❑Practices that are integral to the program, part of the overall system

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Who administers OPI?

- Early CHOICES, the Illinois State Board of Education Inclusion Initiative
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Early Childhood LRE Stakeholders Consortium

Recognition

Sharing A Vision Biennial Conference

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Overview

- *Outstanding Practices in Inclusion* recognition celebration: Sharing A Vision Conference in 2027.
- Recognition needs to be reapplied for each new designation year (Circle of Quality, NAEYC accreditation) OR every 4 years.
  - Reapplication includes a review of data and if it meets requirements, ICP assessments will be completed in classrooms

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Key question to consider:

- Does your program demonstrate commitment to achieving:
  - the principles of full inclusion,
  - natural proportions, and
  - full participation of children with disabilities and their families in the Least Restrictive Environment?

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Eligibility to apply

- Highly rated program
- Educational Environments Data- evidence that children with disabilities are included
  (For School District programs only)
- Professional Learning specific to practices that support inclusion

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Educational Environment Data for school-based programs

Percent of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attending a:

6A: Regular early childhood program* and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program;

- 6A District data must be greater than 75%

6B: Separate special education class, separate school or residential. facility

- 6B District data must be less than 10%
- Identify the source of your data
  - District Report Card https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/
  - EE data from Early CHOICES (email inclusion@eclre.org)
  - Local data report- we may ask to verify by reviewing I-STAR report

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Must be able to answer yes to all questions:

- Do at least 10% but not more than 30% of your enrolled children in each inclusive classroom have disabilities?
- Are children with IEPs enrolled in the majority of classrooms (more than 50% of total classrooms)?
- PFA/E funded classrooms can be considered inclusive *only* if children have needs in addition to speech.
- Does each inclusive classroom include a majority of children (over 50%) who do not have disabilities?

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Professional Learning

Program administrator and staff have at least 6 clock hours of PD within the past 3 years from more than one of the following topics:

- assessment of young children with disabilities;
- enhancing learning for young children with disabilities (inclusive practices);
- collaborating with families in providing education and care to young children with disabilities;

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Timeline 2026-2027

- December 15, 2026 Commit to Apply
- March 2027 Present to review panel
- Inclusive Classroom Profiles (ICP) completed in program (April 2027)
- SAV 2027 Recognition

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How do you apply

- Commit to apply by sending in the eligibility criteria- due **December 15, 2026**
- Complete Google Form https://forms.gle/UDdAYB9TxXoLxufKA and upload relevant documents directly into form

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Stock School

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Young children with disabilities can experience low quality in classes that are otherwise rated as being of high quality

- Wolery, et al., 2000

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Illinois Inclusion Guidelines- Let's dig in!

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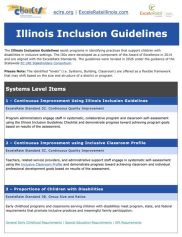
Illinois Inclusion Guidelines Presentation



- Demonstrate clearly how practices are in place and used universally in program
- Align to the standards on the IIG
- Highlight program policies, procedures, and practices

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Self Assessment and Continuous Improvement

- Items 1 & 2 are self-assessment process completed by the program
- ☐ Your presentation should indicate how you utilize these tools to look at quality

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Illinois Inclusion Guidelines (IIG)

- Create a presentation demonstrating how you implement the items
- Presentation: 45 minutes with 15 minutes for panel to ask further questions (total 60 minutes)
- The panel will score the presentation based on the IIG: to move to next step at least 80% of items should be scored as fully established

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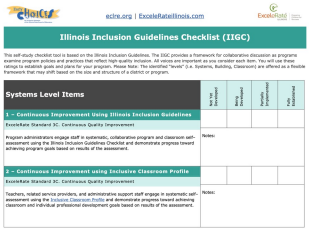
Use the checklist as your outline for developing your presentation



Illinois Inclusion Guidelines Checklist (IIGC)

This self-study checklist tool is based on the Illinois Inclusion Guidelines. The IIGC provides a framework for collaborative discussion as programs examine program policies and practices that reflect high-quality inclusion. All voices are important as you consider each item. You will use these ratings to establish goals and plans for your program. Please Note: The identified "levels" (i.e. Systems, Building, Classroom) are offered as a flexible framework that may shift based on the size and structure of a district or program.

Systems Level Items	Not Yet Established	Partially Established	Fully Established
1 – Continuous Improvement Using Illinois Inclusion Guidelines			
ExcelleRate Standard 3C. Continuous Quality Improvement			
Program administrators engage staff in systematic, collaborative program and classroom self-assessment using the Illinois Inclusion Guidelines Checklist and demonstrate progress toward achieving program goals based on results of the assessment.	Notes:		
2 – Continuous Improvement using Inclusive Classroom Profile			
ExcelleRate Standard 3C. Continuous Quality Improvement			
Teachers, related service providers, and administrative support staff engage in systematic self-assessment using the Inclusive Classroom Profile and demonstrate progress toward achieving classroom and individual professional development goals based on results of the assessment.	Notes:		

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- Designed to compliment existing classroom quality measures and standards
- Focus on classroom level practices that support the individual needs of children with disabilities and the team

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Outcome of using ICP for self-reflection

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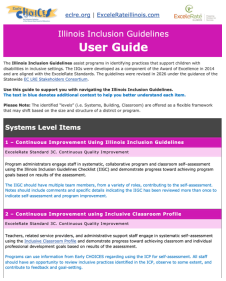
Presentation Tips

- ❑ The IIG User's Guide is helpful to assure you are addressing the essential components
- ❑ Share how your program supports practices outlined in the *Illinois Inclusion Guidelines* at the classroom and systems levels
- ❑ Consider how your program has a sustainable culture of inclusion upheld through practices, procedures, and program design.



Illinois Inclusion Guidelines

User Guide

Systems Level Items

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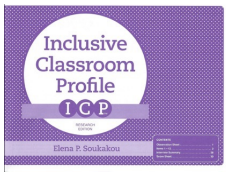
Inclusive Classroom Practices ICP

- If recommended by panel, a qualified ICP assessor will visit to assess a random selection of rooms with the ICP (Spring 2027)
- A programmatic average score on the ICP of 5 is needed to receive the recognition



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Want to learn more about the ICP?

- **Visit https://www.eclre.org/about/inclusive-classroom-profile-in-illinois/**

Watch for upcoming Inclusive Practices Webinars

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Inclusive Classroom Profile Helpful Links

Brookes Publishing Resource Alignment
http://archive.brookespublishing.com/documents/Improve-ICP-Scores-with-these-Brookes-Resources.pdf

Brookes Publishing
http://products.brookespublishing.com/The-Inclusive-Classroom-Profile-ICP-Set-Research-Edition-P969.aspx

LiveBinder: https://www.livebinders.com/b/1937670

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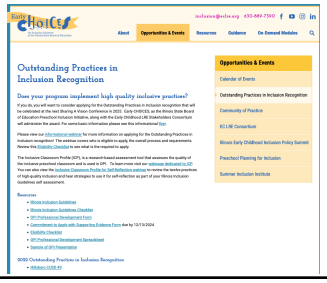
Where to find everything?

https://www.eclre.org/opportunities-events/outstanding-practices-in-inclusion-recognition-2/

Apply by 12/15/2026



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Inclusive Practices Resources

- Early CHOICES
  www.eclre.org
- STAR NET regions
  www.starnet.org

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THANK YOU!

Looking for more early childhood inclusion resources?
Visit www.eclre.org or follow us @earlychoicesorg

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