



**The Institute for School Innovation (ISI)** [www.ifs.org](http://www.ifs.org) has become an affiliate of the **International Alliance for Invitational Education® (IAIE)** based upon our shared core values of trust, respect, optimism, care, and intentionality, as well as our mutual aspirations to bring forth human potential. ISI is a private, non-profit organization based in Tallahassee, Florida that disseminates the Project CHILD® instructional delivery system for elementary schools. ISI provides professional development for teachers, along with extensive classroom materials to effectively implement the CHILD transformational teaching model, aligned with invitational theory and practice (ITP). See [A Brief Description of Project CHILD](#) in the Appendix for more details.

ISI will collaborate with IAIE to connect the CHILD National Conference with the 2011 IAIE World Conference, October 26-29 in Richmond, Kentucky. ISI will be a major financial sponsor, and will coordinate Project CHILD breakout sessions for the CHILD educators in attendance. These sessions will be open to all conference participants, and CHILD attendees may also choose to attend the IAIE breakouts. All attendees will join together for the general sessions, social events, and meal functions. ISI is excited about this opportunity to introduce Project CHILD educators to invitational education.

Project CHILD seeks to create democratic classrooms where students share power with the teacher. The classroom ambiance is designed to assure that every student's experiences lead them to perceive that they are valued and respected. The classroom routines and procedures build self-concept by allowing children to set goals, make decisions, and take responsibility for putting forth effort to achieve their goals. The basic assumptions of self direction and collaboration are embedded into the CHILD design, systematically requiring collaboration among teachers as well as among students. The basic assumption of untapped potential is nurtured through the differentiated station work that enables students to use multiple learning styles to uncover their best ways of learning. The routines and procedures for visiting the learning stations reinforce the intentionality of helping students uncover their untapped potential.

The Project CHILD 20 Essential Components intentionally reinforce the ITP values of trust, respect, optimism, and care through daily practice at the collaborative learning stations. Project CHILD classrooms trust that children will engage in positive behavior when out from under the teacher's thumb. CHILD teachers learn to share power with the students and trust their ability to work independently with their peers while the teacher works with small groups at the Teacher Station.

Building this trust begins with a ten-day student orientation to intentionally teach students how to work independently and follow the CHILD procedures. Teachers encourage students to assume leadership roles by becoming the "Station Patrol," with all students trusted with access to supplies and technology. CHILD classrooms exude an optimistic attitude that everyone can learn when given enough time and

appropriate work that motivates and challenges. Project CHILD creates a caring community by allowing teachers three years to build relationships with their students and families.

The CHILD implementation practices and procedures lead to classrooms that are intentionally inviting for students, teachers, and parents. Teachers engage in self-reflection by observing students in each other's classrooms to uncover practices that may be disinviting, whether intentional or unintentional. They also use a structured meeting form to discuss successes and problems and grow together as a cluster team to engage in intentionally inviting practices. CHILD teachers and principals also refrain from engaging in practices that are unintentionally disinviting such as interrupting class time with intercom announcements, using a pull-out model for students with special needs, and interrupting class with unannounced visitors selling raffle tickets, etc. CHILD also invites parents to participate in their child's education by providing a parent orientation video, as well as procedures for reviewing their child's Passports every six weeks and providing feedback to the teachers.

The Project CHILD system encourages teachers to be professionally inviting with others and with self. The CHILD triad cluster design intentionally fosters being professionally inviting with others, as teachers work every day as a collaborative team. CHILD teachers are encouraged to continue their professional development by becoming certified CHILD consultants who have the opportunity to train and mentor new CHILD teachers each year. ISI hosts a Consultant Training Workshop each year at no charge and invites all certified CHILD teachers to apply.

Having teachers specialize in one of the core subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics also encourages being professionally inviting with self, as each teacher can focus their continuing professional development in their area of expertise. They do not get stretched so thin trying to keep up with multiple subjects. As one CHILD teacher said, "I no longer feel like a jack of all trades and master of none."

All 20 of the CHILD Essential Components relate to the five P's of invitational education. The people (students/teachers/parents) and the places (classrooms) have been mentioned earlier with their connections to ITP. The CHILD model includes a program of intensive professional development for teachers, including a three-day implementation workshop, a one-day follow up workshop, three classroom coaching visits, and online resources updated monthly by ISI. Project CHILD also includes carefully designed lesson planning resources and classroom management materials to successfully implement a thoughtfully designed program. In addition, the school leadership must establish policies and processes to support full and faithful implementation of Project CHILD. When all five P's are routinely practiced within the CHILD 20 Essential Components, a Project CHILD school truly becomes an inviting school.

## **Appendix**

### **Brief Description of Project CHILD**

See <http://www.ifs.org/projectchild/> for more information, research findings, and classroom videos.

Project CHILD is an elementary school instructional model that provides specific strategies to enhance classroom instruction through technology and active learning. It offers a unique pedagogical framework to differentiate learning for all students. It integrates best practices thoughtfully. The model has identified *20 Essential Components* that make it highly replicable.

The CHILD model is framed from the research literature on time-on-task that postulates that students

learn best when they are highly engaged in interesting work and motivated to take on challenging learning tasks (Butzin, *Joyful Classrooms in an Age of Accountability: The Project CHILD Recipe for Success*, 2005). The CHILD instructional model grew out of the realization that the traditional grade school model<sup>1</sup> has severe limitations for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is difficult to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century children, raised in a multi-media world, using a one-dimensional instructional model. The added demands for higher standards and a more rigorous curriculum make it difficult for a single teacher to provide instructional depth across every subject.

Project CHILD takes a three-dimensional approach to teaching and learning. It uses a triangulated team-teaching design. Teachers form triad cluster teams that span three grade levels, K-2 for primary and 3-5 for intermediate. This triangulated design promotes high academic achievement across all subjects by transforming the traditional one-dimensional grade school model into a three-dimensional design: 3 subject-focused teachers (reading, writing, mathematics); 3 years to work with students; 3 learning modes (technology, hands-on, paper/pencil).

Students rotate through the three cluster classrooms for instruction in the core subjects. Science and social studies are incorporated throughout. Each CHILD classroom is set up with six differentiated learning stations: a Computer Station for learning with instructional software and web-based applications; a Teacher Station for small group instruction; a Textbook Station for written work; a Challenge Station for learning in a game-like format; an Exploration Station for hands-on activities and projects; a Construction Station for creative expression.

After a brief teacher-directed lesson, students work at the stations to practice and apply the lesson content. The teacher assigns students to their beginning stations; then students move independently at their own pace as they finish the assigned task. They set individualized goals and keep track of their station work using a logbook called a Passport. Students spend 60-90 minutes in each of the cluster classrooms.

CHILD classrooms are student-centered learning environments. CHILD provides challenging work for all students. The model has been used for gifted students, as well as an inclusion model for students with special needs. Students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities also thrive in CHILD classrooms. A majority of the CHILD sites are Title I schools.

The CHILD model includes intensive and on-going self-examination processes. Cluster teachers meet weekly to share successes and concerns, using a structured agenda format. They review and analyze student work, and use student data to plan and coordinate instruction. They also conduct structured observations in each other's classrooms, and do a self-appraisal of their adherence to the CHILD Essential Components on a regular basis.

The CHILD model provides consistency and continuity across the curriculum and across grade levels. By working with students for three years across three grade levels, CHILD teachers learn to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of each individual child, rather than be constrained by arbitrary grade level restrictions. The three cluster teachers use the CHILD curriculum resource materials to coordinate instruction between subject areas, and to incorporate standards and benchmarks into daily station work. Busy work is not an option.

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<sup>1</sup> The traditional grade school model consists of one teacher teaching every subject to one grade level for one school year.

Students in CHILD classrooms are highly engaged, and learn to set goals, monitor their own station work, and move independently to the next learning station. Disrupted time, wasted time and waiting time are unacceptable. Behavior problems become minimized when the focus is on work and productivity. CHILD students follow daily routines that they have learned during a 10-day student orientation to prepare them for the added responsibilities required in a CHILD classroom. The children rise to the challenge, creating more time for the teacher to work at the Teacher Station with small groups and individual students.