Community
Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion

https://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/indicators.asp

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INDICATOR C1: Community Inclusion Team (CIT)

The Community Inclusion Team (CIT) is composed of administrators from child care, Head Start, and Part B, Section 619 programs, program staff, family members and adults with disabilities representative of the community, and community partners. This team develops and implements action plans that guide, support, and ensure the availability of inclusive settings and the implementation of inclusive practices. The CIT also ensures materials and communication are accessible through various modes and languages.

The CIT:

1. Has a coordinator who serves as lead contact and organizes team meetings.

2. Has members who represent urban and rural programs, child care, school district (for example, State PK), early intervention, Head Start, and families. Membership is limited to no more than 15 members.

3. Empowers members to participate in implementing all CIT activities and responsibilities. Develops a written action plan with goals and objectives aligned with its purpose statement and these indicators.

4. Is aware of early childhood programs and service delivery systems in the community, including program activities and purposes, population served (for example, Dual Language Learners [DLLs]), program eligibility, or operating calendar or hours

5. Develops, implements, and widely shares a purpose statement for inclusion of children with disabilities.

6. Communicates the benefits and legal requirements of inclusion to early childhood programs, service delivery systems, and families in the community.

7. Shares and assists in the use of the Local Program Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion and the Early Care and Education Environment Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion with all families, community members, and service delivery providers.

8. Reviews the purpose statement at the start of meetings and uses it to guide action planning.

9. Facilitates formal agreements among community partners that promote community inclusion: by arranging staff to provide services within community early care and education settings; for example, through shared professional development opportunities and resources; and by sharing transportation resources.

10. Meets regularly to address progress toward the goals on the inclusion action plan.

11. Reports annually on accomplishments and progress in the number and quality of inclusive environments and other activities associated with its action plans to State Leadership Team or Program Inclusion Leadership Team, media, policy makers, families and the community at large.

12. Provides community opportunities to celebrate progress.

13. Partners with school district staff to increase inclusive learning and participation opportunities during and after school for early elementary age students.

14. Communicates the need to address barriers to inclusion related to policies, procedures, and funding identified by programs within their community to state agencies or the State Leadership Team, Local Program, and Inclusion Leadership Team.

INDICATOR C2: Family Partnerships

The CIT establishes relationships with families of children with disabilities, and is involved in the co-development of all policies and initiatives. These strong and reciprocal relationships with families are established to promote their engagement in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives related to inclusion. Families are seen as a source for valuable ideas and their voices are included in the planning and decision-making process of policies, activities, and materials.

The CIT:

1. Supports the active participation of families in its activities.

2. Engage families who are part of the CIT using two-way communication and by creating an environment where their voices are heard with the same respect and value as other CIT members.

3. Provides guidance and information to programs on effective family partnerships.

4. Provides training to ensure that families' funds of knowledge and their cultural perspectives on disability and inclusion are validated.

5. Ensures that families review and give feedback on all documents, particularly those developed for families.

6. Offers language interpretation as needed.

INDICATOR C3: Awareness and Commitment

The CIT intentionally promotes an awareness of and commitment to inclusion among programs, providers, families and the community.

The CIT:

1. Solicits information and feedback from community-specific programs, families, community, and relevant parties about their knowledge of inclusion.

2. Develops and implements a community-wide inclusion public awareness plan using the research benefits of inclusion and the legal foundations and components for inclusion. The public awareness strategies include written information, social media, and hosting visits to programs.

3. Adapts the public awareness plan for audiences such as families, local early intervention providers, public school administrators at all levels, school board officials, child care directors, state administrators of ECE programs and other policy makers such as legislators and governors.

4. Identifies, in partnership with Program Coaches, centers, schools or programs to highlight as local demonstration sites for inclusion.

5. Develops an awareness presentation to recruit programs.

6. Establishes recruitment and acceptance criteria for programs participating in the initiative.

7. Recruits programs across all program types, geographic regions, and tribal areas annually.

8. Ensures that public awareness initiatives and recruitment efforts for inclusion represent the culture, languages, and modalities (for example, in writing or in videos) that match the communities' needs.

9. Evaluates the effectiveness of the public awareness plan, particularly as it relates to equity.

INDICATOR C4: Policies and Procedures

The CIT promotes inclusion policies and procedures reflective of its purpose statement and supports the use of inclusive practices.

The CIT:

1. Provides opportunities for programs to jointly review policies and procedures to identify any that conflict with or act as a barrier to inclusion.

2. Provides guidance and information to programs on policies and procedures that support and promote inclusion.

3. Establishes procedures that effectively support resource sharing and coordinated service delivery among programs.

INDICATOR C5: Fiscal Resources

The CIT understands the available funding streams and resources and helps programs reallocate, coordinate, and braid funds to design and implement inclusive practices.

The CIT:

1. Facilitates agency and program discussions that encourage resource sharing and aligning funding requirements.

2. Provides guidance and information to programs on available fiscal resources and legal considerations for using funding streams including how to cost share, braid, layer and coordinate resources.

3. Helps programs identify funding sources to support inclusion activities for at least three years.

INDICATOR C6: Staff Policies and Structure

The CIT promotes staff policies and structures that support the delivery of early intervention, special education, and other specialized services within daily routines and activities enabling program staff to collaboratively learn and implement evidence-based practices.

The CIT:

1. Facilitates agency and program discussions that compare staff policies and structures to ensure there is alignment among them.

2. Provides guidance and information to programs on staff policies and structures that support embedding the delivery of early intervention, special education and related services within the daily routines of community program settings.

INDICATOR C7: Collaborative Teaming

The CIT promotes collaborative teaming to maximize the learning and development of children with disabilities within inclusive settings.

The CIT:

1. Provides strategies for effective collaborative teaming and guidance on who should be part of the collaborative team.

2. Offers guidance on the purpose, composition and ways to effectively evaluate collaborative teams among staff across all community settings and programs.

3. Provides guidance on how to assess dual language learners (DLL) with suspected disabilities in their home language and English and use interpreters or bilingual providers. This guidance incorporates inclusive learning opportunities that foster children's bilingualism and general development, even when providers do not speak children's home language.

INDICATOR C8: Specialized Technical Assistance and Consultative Services

The CIT identifies and accesses specialized technical assistance (TA) and consultative services to support the implementation of inclusive practices and communicates to the state any additional supports that are needed.

The CIT:

1. Guides and informs programs in how to access available state and local specialized TA and consultative service in languages and ways that best meet the programs' needs.

2. Collects information from programs about additional supports needed from the state, for example, by conducting informal and formal assessments, including focus groups, or surveys.

3. Identifies and secures TA on the intersections of race, language, disability, and the effective evaluation and service provision to DLL with suspected or identified disabilities.

4. Collaborates with local agencies to identify members in the communities served who offer needed consultative services, whenever feasible.

5. Develops a strategic TA plan for programs with less access to TA, such as rural, family child care, and private early childhood programs.

INDICATOR C9: Program Supports for Professional Development

The CIT supports programs to build staff knowledge, confidence, and competence in implementing inclusive practices and support ongoing engagement in accessible professional development opportunities.

The CIT:

1. Guides and informs programs on available professional development opportunities that are accessible (*i.e.*, free or low cost, during flexible hours or during professional development days, in various formats and languages) and meets program needs.

2. Identifies trainers and coaches to build and sustain program-wide adoption of inclusive practices.

3. Guides and informs programs on evidence-based professional development approaches such as training, coaching, mentoring, and reflective practice (*i.e.*, supervisor-facilitated opportunities to reflect on one's experiences and biases as it relates to working with children and families).

4. Guides and informs programs on inclusive practices including role release, technology use, and embedded specialized services and instruction.

5. Helps programs collect data on the effectiveness of professional development on providers' implementation of inclusive practices and children's outcomes.

6. Collects data on community professional development needs to develop opportunities for shared training, coaching, and so on.

7. Evaluates the impact of shared professional development opportunities on programs' capacities to offer inclusion.

8. Guides programs in using child-outcome data to shape their professional development plans.

INDICATOR C10: Curriculum

The CIT guides and informs programs on research-based curricula that are adaptable to each child's individual strengths and needs and facilitate the meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities. "Meaningful inclusion" means that children with disabilities are not only given access to programs, but given opportunities to access curricula and engage in peer interactions.

The CIT:

1. Provides examples of research-based curricula to local programs specifically on how to identify research-based curricula available in multiple languages or how to adapt appropriate and relevant English curricula.

2. Shares resources with programs on how to adapt curricular materials or use supplemental programs to facilitate the learning and participation of children with disabilities.

3. Shares resources and guidance on how to embed or supplement curricular materials, for example, toys or books with representations of children and families that honors the intersecting diversity of their racial, cultural, linguistic, and ability identities, (for example, Black child with disabilities who is bilingual).

4. Guides programs on how to embed individualized learning opportunities within existing curricula for children with disabilities.

INDICATOR C11: Data Collection and Use

The CIT collects, summarizes and uses data from programs and the community to track progress toward increasing equitable, inclusion opportunities for children with disabilities and families across race and ethnicity, language, ability status, income, and geographic region.

The CIT:

1. Guides and informs programs on measures, procedures, and data use focused on the intersections of LRE, race and ethnicity, gender, language, and disability category to ensure inclusion.

2. Collects data annually to track programs' progress on their action plans and co-develops action steps to address lack of progress.

3. Collects data annually on programs' number of inclusion slots available and co-develops action steps to increase this number, as needed.

4. Collects data annually on programs' number of inclusion slots filled and co-develops action steps to increase this number, as needed.

5. Collects data annually on each program's number of inclusion slots needed and co-develops action steps to ensure slots are available.

6. Collects progress data annually from each program on the Local Program Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion and the Early Care and Education Environment Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion and co-develops action steps to address progress.

7. Collects information from families and programs on gaps and needs in the community and co-develops action steps to address gaps.

8. Shares summary and progress data with the State Cross-Sector Leadership Team and the Program Inclusion Leadership Team.

IDEAs that Work

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