



## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

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### **How will Project CHILD® fit with our curriculum?**

Project CHILD is an instructional delivery system designed to fit with any curriculum. You use your own software, textbooks and learning resources within the Project CHILD station format. The resources and materials provided by Project CHILD will enhance and supplement your own materials.

### **Is Project CHILD standards-based?**

Yes, the Project CHILD materials are fully correlated with state and national standards. The *Project CHILD Station Task Cards* are correlated with specific skills and benchmarks, and are differentiated to provide challenge activities for the more able students.

### **Is Project CHILD research-based?**

Absolutely! The Project CHILD triangulated design is based upon established theories of child development, learning styles, brain development, and engaged time-on-task. Since 1988, there have been numerous research studies at multiple sites, including longitudinal evaluations. Research summaries can be found on the ISI web site ([www.ifs.org](http://www.ifs.org)). The research reports are available from ISI upon request.

### **Is Project CHILD departmentalized?**

No. Departmentalization is grade level teaching, marked by fragmentation, with the added difficulty of building emotional bonds between students and teachers. To the contrary, Project CHILD's coordinated instructional units, along with a multi-grade, multi-year format, enable Project CHILD cluster teachers and students to build long-term relationships.

### **Can Project CHILD be implemented in self-contained classrooms or other configurations such as two-person teams?**

No. These configurations do not conform to the Project CHILD research and do not contain the essential components that make Project CHILD a powerful learning system. ISI does offer modified applications of Project CHILD called CHILD Traditional and CHILD Transitional Classrooms. However, the goal is for teachers to move to the transformational phase of the full CHILD model as soon as possible.

### **Can teachers use thematic teaching in Project CHILD?**

Yes, the *CHILD Planning Guides* are organized with coordinated unit topics. Many Project CHILD clusters also have a common science or social studies theme. The *CHILD Science Learning Guides* offer six coordinated thematic science topics for both primary and intermediate clusters.

### **What about structure and discipline in Project CHILD classrooms?**

The Project CHILD system provides a "transparent" structure that encourages self-discipline. The systematic classroom management procedures create an underlying structure for self-regulated on-task behavior. Research data have confirmed that Project CHILD students exhibit very little disruptive behavior. Project CHILD students are rarely sent to the office for discipline problems.

**Are there some children who can't handle the movement?**

All Project children do well in Project CHILD classrooms that use consistent and appropriate discipline strategies. Some children may require more time and patience as they learn to make wise and responsible choices. Even the most difficult children usually adjust to Project CHILD's high expectations after consistent training and modeling.

**Is Project CHILD appropriate for kindergarten students? Don't they need the security of one teacher?**

Many veteran kindergarten teachers, while skeptical at first, have been amazed at the success of the Project CHILD kindergarten students. We have heard absolutely no cases where kindergarten students did not thrive with Project CHILD. They are ready and eager to learn with a team of caring teachers.

**What about special education students and ESOL students? Should they be placed in Project CHILD?**

Absolutely! Students with special needs have been very successful in Project CHILD; either as inclusion students in a regular cluster or in a separate special needs cluster. A *Project CHILD Special Needs Inclusion Guide* is available to help Project CHILD teachers adapt activities and procedures for these students.

Students who speak limited English or who speak other languages also thrive in Project CHILD classrooms. The peer interaction and conversation at the learning stations enables them to acquire English very naturally at an accelerated pace.

**What about gifted and accelerated students? Will Project CHILD work for them?**

Project CHILD is a perfect model for these students. It is challenging, self-paced, and adapts well to project-based learning. ISI has developed and piloted a program for gifted and accelerated students called *Team Quest*. Contact ISI for more information.

**Are there any schools that have implemented Project CHILD school wide?**

Yes, many visionary principals have used Project CHILD as a catalyst to involve the entire faculty in long-term school improvement. A growing number of charter schools are using Project CHILD as the "hook" to attract more students.

**Can Project CHILD be used as a co-teaching model?**

Yes, Project CHILD is very effective for co-teaching if class size numbers and budget constraints call for this. Co-teachers can specialize in planning and monitoring specific stations, and can more easily coordinate instruction to serve larger class sizes.

**Can we implement Project CHILD in just a few classrooms if the whole school isn't behind it? How do we avoid division within the faculty?**

With bold leadership, you can begin to slowly bring the entire faculty along over time. Set a goal of a three-year transformation process. Start implementation with the teachers who are ready and willing to change. Don't wait for everyone. Getting started with Project CHILD sooner than later puts your school that much further ahead of the pack.

Information and open discussion help avoid faculty problems. Provide time for the non-Project CHILD teachers to learn more about the CHILD model by visiting the Project CHILD classrooms or nearby schools. Encourage the hesitant teachers to get involved, even if on a modified basis. Make changes as necessary until you have a unified faculty fully implementing the model.

**We can only afford a limited number of computers. Should we put them in a Project CHILD cluster, or divide them equally among the faculty so that every teacher gets one?**

One-computer classrooms are not going to be effective, especially when computers are only used peripherally as expensive toys. It is far better to begin a long-range strategy for success with Project CHILD than continue to spend money on technology with limited chance to justify its expense and continued purchase.

**Our school is already doing an excellent job, with the highest test scores in the district. Why do we need Project CHILD?**

Under No Child Left Behind, schools must now demonstrate that all students are continually improving and making adequate yearly progress. It is difficult to improve by doing the same thing year after year. Project CHILD will enable your school to provide more challenging, self-paced learning opportunities to move even your top students to new heights.

**How can we afford Project CHILD?**

Compared to similar comprehensive programs, Project CHILD is very affordable. Project CHILD qualifies for state and federal funding for approved research-based programs, as well as technology initiatives. Project CHILD can also be fully funded as a professional development program under the umbrella of MAT21® (Mastering the Art of Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). ISI may also be able to offer your school an implementation grant, or direct you toward other resources. Check the web site for details.

**Our teacher union contract does not permit extra planning time. Will this be a problem?**

There is no doubt that the first year of implementing Project CHILD requires time and effort. Teachers should be able to volunteer to implement Project CHILD with the understanding that there may be extra planning and preparation beyond the school day the first year. Our experience has been that teacher unions are usually willing to bend on contract regulations as long as the service is voluntary.

**Our district budget cuts have eliminated classroom assistants. Will that be a problem?**

Most schools implement Project CHILD without classroom assistants. However, to get the maximum benefit from the computers, kindergarten and first grade students need assistance to navigate their way through the software programs. Many Project CHILD schools use parent volunteers, senior citizen volunteers, and older students as helpers.

**Our school does not have a K-5 configuration. How can we implement Project CHILD?**

Although the Project CHILD materials are designed for primary grades K-2 and intermediate grades 3-5, they are broadly based and flexible. The range of objectives includes minimum skills as well as standards of excellence. The primary materials can be used from K-3 and the intermediate materials from grades 3-6. For example, a primary cluster could consist of grades 1-3 and an intermediate cluster of grades 4-6.

**Is Project CHILD available for middle school?**

The Institute for School Innovation has developed a model for middle school called Project TEAMS (Technology Enhancing Achievement in Middle School) based upon the CHILD instructional model. Training and materials for Project TEAMS are available for grades 6 & 7. See the website for details.

**Have there been any schools where Project CHILD has not worked, and why?**

Over the years, some schools have discontinued Project CHILD. The main reasons have been leadership turnover, staff turnover, or conflicting programs and schedules mandated by the state and/or district. It is important to continually upgrade and train new staff, or like any innovation, teachers will regress to the status quo.

Likewise, over the years, there have been a few instances where ISI has severed its relationship with implementing schools due to poor implementation of the Project CHILD essential components.

Teachers who do not “buy in” to the Project CHILD philosophy and remain committed to teacher-directed, whole group textbook instruction can sabotage the innovation.

**What happens if my child gets a bad teacher for three years, or if a substitute replaces a teacher on extended leave?**

It is always unfortunate for children to be with an ineffective teacher or a substitute for an entire year in a traditional self-contained class. The Project CHILD model, however, has two advantages over traditional self-contained classrooms.

First, a weak teacher becomes much more visible as part of a cluster team, and assistance or removal can happen more quickly. Second, a weak teacher or substitute will be supported by their cluster teammates, who will not let any of their cluster students fall behind. Through the triangulated cluster approach, no Project CHILD student will be with a weak teacher for an entire day or all day for an entire year.

**What happens if I get a student troublemaker? How can I handle this for three years?**

Teachers have reported that the troublemakers are easier to tolerate within a cluster because all three teachers are sharing the load. Teachers also find that troublemakers respond differently to different teacher personalities, and often change their behavior dramatically from year to year as they mature and learn to follow the CHILD practices and procedures.

**Our school has a very mobile student population. How can we accommodate students making the transition in and out of Project CHILD?**

Students have adapted well moving in and out of Project CHILD. New students are assigned a "buddy" and quickly catch on to the Project CHILD routines. Departing students are well prepared to enter new schools with a solid academic foundation and the self-confidence of an independent learner. Most reports we receive indicate that Project CHILD students who transfer to a new school are far ahead of their classmates.

**With education changing so rapidly, how does Project CHILD stay up-to-date? How can Project CHILD be innovative, given that it has been around since 1988?**

Project CHILD is a dynamic model that serves as a framework for integrating state-of-the-art technology and innovative teaching strategies as they emerge. Project CHILD schools never stay static. They just keep getting better and better.



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