



2008 Evaluation Report

*Project CHILD's Impact on Academic
Achievement at 18 Florida Schools*

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www.ifs.org



Institute for School Innovation
Tallahassee, FL

Executive Summary

The 2008 Project CHILD® Evaluation Report compares Project CHILD students' achievement in reading and mathematics with the achievement of students not in Project CHILD as measured by the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). This report continues the commitment of the Institute for School Innovation (ISI) to track and document Project CHILD student achievement across multiple sites.

Project CHILD is a unique triangulated instructional system that substantially changes the traditional elementary school teaching paradigm. The traditional approach is noted for single grade and single teacher textbook-driven instruction with predominantly paper/pencil practice. CHILD has a more robust design with three teachers working as a cross-grade team of subject specialists who work with students for three years. CHILD also moves beyond textbook teaching to incorporate technology and hands-on active learning at differentiated learning stations within each cluster classroom.

This report examines FCAT scores for 18 Florida elementary schools for students in grades 3-5. CHILD classes were compared with non-CHILD classrooms within their own schools, using a quasi-experimental approach. Overall 82% of the comparisons for reading were favorable toward Project CHILD, while 70% of the comparisons for mathematics favored CHILD students.

A sub-analysis of Title One students showed that the CHILD students not only outperformed their Title One peers across the state by wide margins, but they also outperformed the state average for all students, regardless of whether they were from Title One schools. This finding is especially important in light of the need to close achievement gaps between students living in poverty and those more affluent.

These positive outcomes for CHILD students in 2008 add to the historical record of more favorable academic performance for the hundreds of thousands of CHILD students tested since 1989. The CHILD model continues to pass the test of time as an effective teaching and learning system for the 21st century.



2008 Project CHILD Evaluation Report

The 2008 Project CHILD® Evaluation Report compares Project CHILD students' achievement in reading and mathematics with the achievement of students not in Project CHILD as measured by the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). The FCAT is given annually in March to all Florida elementary students in grades 3-5. It is graded on a scale from Levels 1-5, with Level 3 considered scoring on grade level.

The FCAT is a high stakes test, in that school grades (A-F) that result in monetary awards or sanctions are tied to FCAT results. Furthermore, third grade students who score Level 1 on the reading portion of the test may not be promoted to fourth grade, and must be given intensive remediation to try to catch up.

This report continues the commitment of the Institute for School Innovation (ISI) to track and document Project CHILD student achievement across multiple sites. For a summary of research since 1989, visit the ISI website at www.ifsi.org, or contact ISI to request a printed report.

Population

During the 2007-2008 school year there were 41 schools in Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania with Project CHILD classrooms. Within those schools there were 69 primary CHILD clusters (grades K-2) and 55 intermediate CHILD clusters (grades 3-5) for a total of 372 CHILD classrooms. Assuming an average class size of 22 students each, this represents approximately 8,184 students.

In late spring 2008 the Institute sent a data request to all Florida schools with Project CHILD. 27 schools responded to some degree, with most supplying all the data requested. The schools in Osceola County, however, only provided third grade data.

Of the 27 schools responding, 18 were chosen for inclusion in the mathematics portion of this study where reasonable comparisons could be made between CHILD and non-CHILD classrooms. The 18 chosen had classrooms in grades 3-5 that did not participate in Project CHILD, as well as classroom clusters with Project CHILD. Those schools not included either had schoolwide CHILD implementations and thus no comparison group, or they only had primary clusters and no intermediate.

For the reading portion of the study, five schools were eliminated where valid comparisons could not be made. In four Osceola County schools, the comparison classrooms were doing a modified version of Project CHILD called CHILD First Steps-Reading, so a valid comparison could not be made between CHILD and non-CHILD. Bluewater Elementary in Okaloosa County was also eliminated for the reading comparison since that school had chosen to deviate from the true CHILD model by eliminating Reading from the cluster rotations. Thus the final number of reading comparisons was 13.

Since most of the CHILD schools selected students randomly using the same criteria as for the non-CHILD classrooms, this evaluation entails a semi-experimental design. There is a control group (non-CHILD classrooms) and experimental group (CHILD classrooms). However, a few schools do allow parent request, so that precludes a purely experimental design with randomized subjects.

Table 1: Number of Students

FCAT Comparisons Grades 3-5	CHILD	Non-CHILD
(N) Number of Students Included in this Study	2,050	4,100

This report includes approximately 2,050 CHILD students across six Florida school districts. This number was derived by multiplying the number of cluster classrooms by 22, which is the average class size in Florida for grades 3-5.

The exact number of non-CHILD classrooms at some schools could not be determined because the data were reported by average scores rather than by individual classrooms. Therefore the total population of non-CHILD students was derived by extrapolating an average of two times more non-CHILD classrooms across the schools, or approximately 4,100 non-CHILD students.



Table 2
Schools Included in the Study

*Denotes Title One School

District	School	Began	# Int. Clusters	2008 School Grade
Indian River	Citrus	2005	2	A
Indian River	Dodgertown*	2005	1	A
Indian River	Sebastian	2006	1	A
Indian River	Vero Beach*	2005	2	A
Indian River	Glendale	1999	2	A
Indian River	Pelican Island	2005	2	B
Indian River	Treasure Coast	2006	2	B
Marion	Ft. McCoy*	2003	2	B
Okaloosa	Bluewater	1988	1	A
Okaloosa	Walker*	2002	1	A
Osceola	Canoe Creek Charter*	2002	1	C
Osceola	Deerwood*	2002	1	A
Osceola	Partin Settlement	2002	4	A
Osceola	Reedy Creek*	1999	2	A
Palm Beach	Cypress Trails	2004	1	A
Palm Beach	Grassy Waters*	2005	1	A
Palm Beach	Panther Run	1999	3	A
Sumter	Webster	2004	2	A
			31 clusters =	93 classrooms

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

School data were compiled by class for CHILD and non-CHILD classes. Teacher names and student names were specifically not requested so as to maintain anonymity. State and district FCAT data were obtained from the Florida Department of Education website.

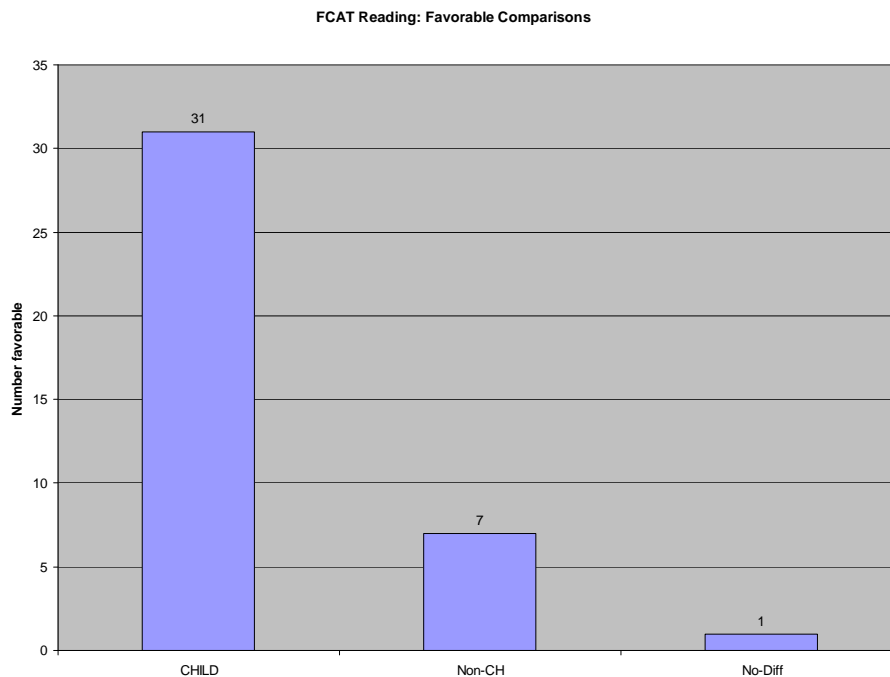
Classes identified as being special needs classes such as ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages), ESE (Exceptional Student Education) and inclusion classes were not included for the comparison classes, although many of the CHILD classes include students with special needs. The CHILD and non-CHILD classroom data were then averaged and rounded to the nearest whole number.

A sub-analysis of Title One scores was completed to determine results for students living in poverty. Many education reports have identified “achievement gaps” for students at high poverty schools when compared with their more affluent peers. A sub-analysis would help shed light on this phenomenon within CHILD settings.

Results

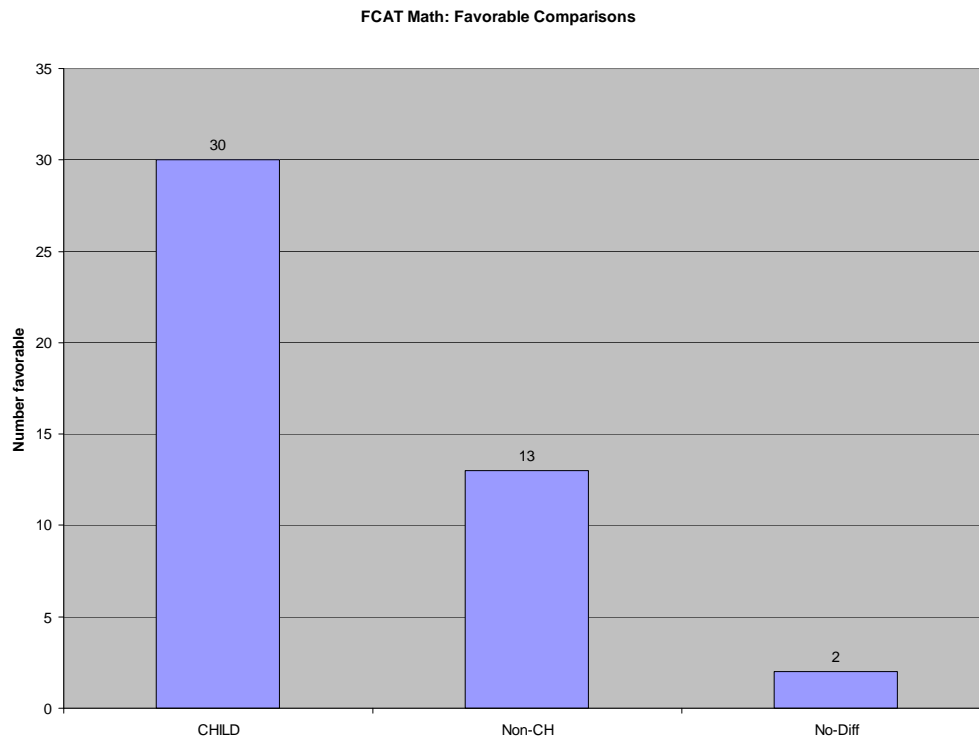
Greater numbers of CHILD students scored at or above grade level in both reading and mathematics than their peers within the same schools. In reading there were 31 favorable comparisons for the CHILD students, compared to 7 for the non-CHILD students. In one case there was no difference. In other words, CHILD students compared favorably 82% of the time.

Chart 1: FCAT Reading Favorable Comparisons



In mathematics, there were 30 favorable comparisons for the CHILD students, compared to 13 for the non-CHILD students. There was no difference in two cases. In other words, CHILD students compared favorably 70% of the time.

Chart 2: FCAT Mathematics Favorable Comparisons



The next charts show the average percent of students scoring at or above grade level by grade. The CHILD students' average percent scoring at or above grade level is compared to the averages for the non-CHILD students, as well as for the average of all students across the state.

The CHILD students surpassed their peers within the school and across the state in every grade in both reading and mathematics.

Chart 3: FCAT Reading Percent at Grade Level or Above

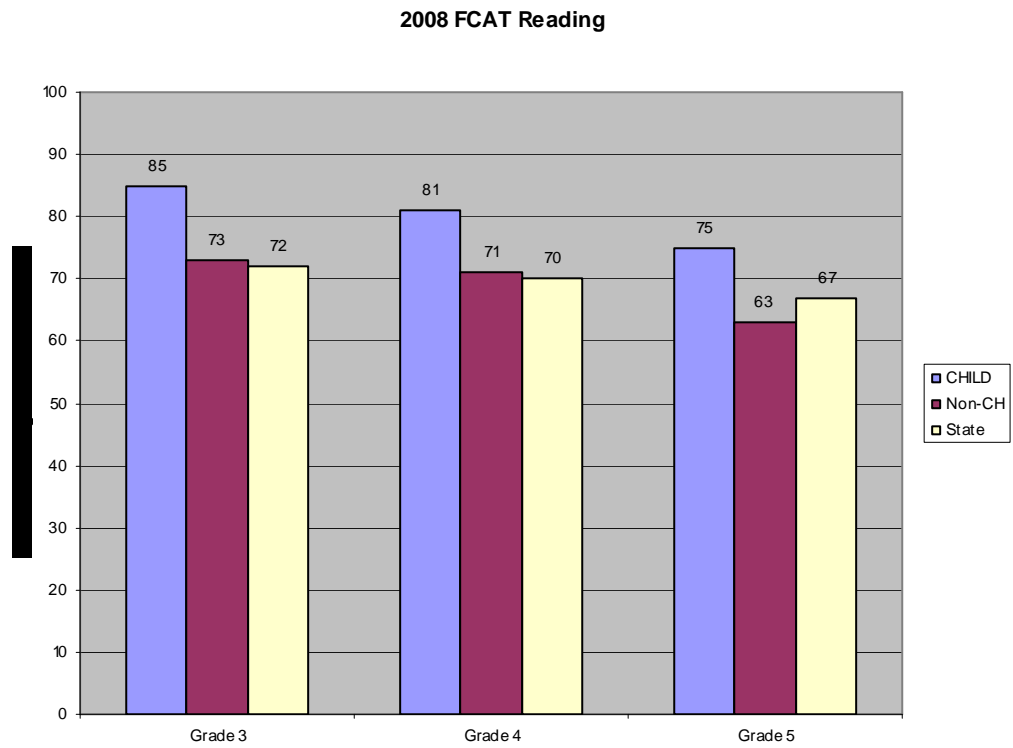
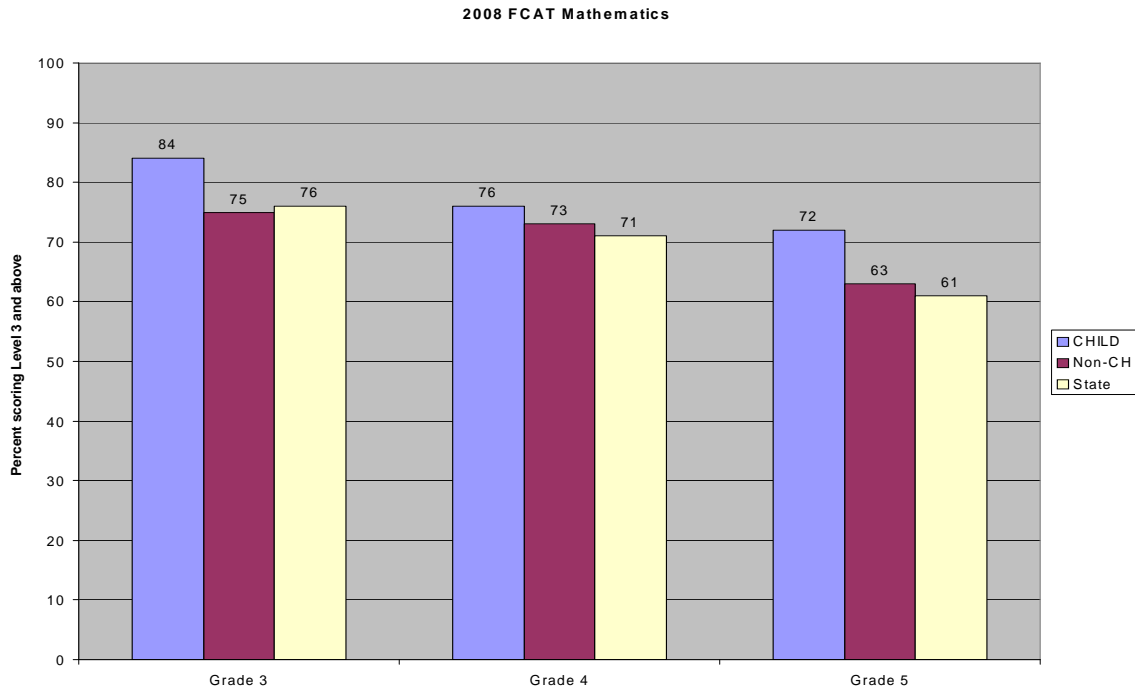


Chart 4: FCAT Mathematics at Grade Level or Above

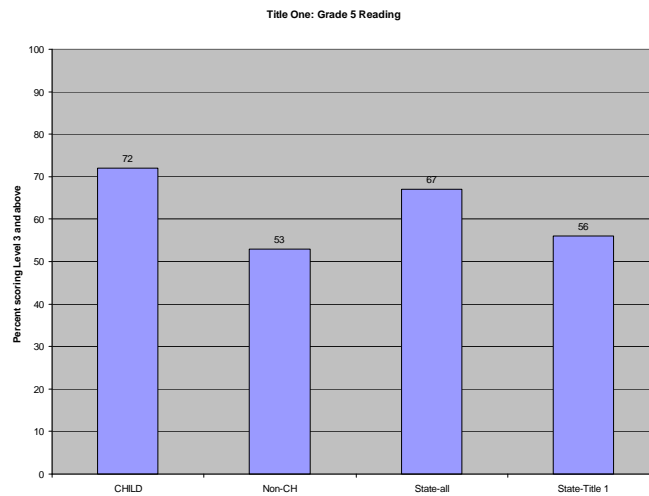
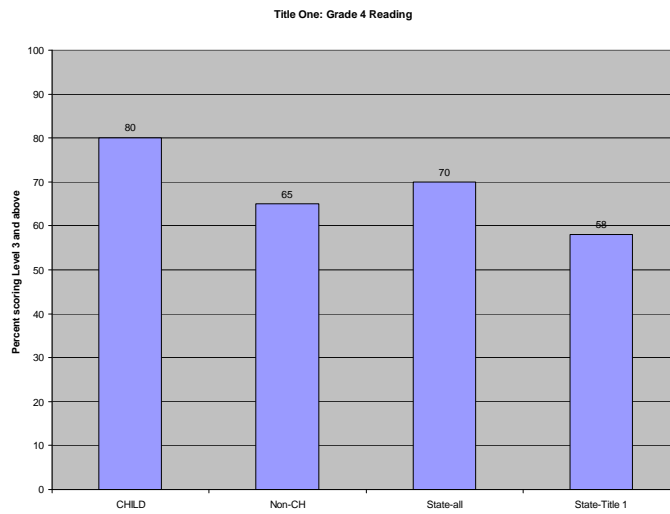
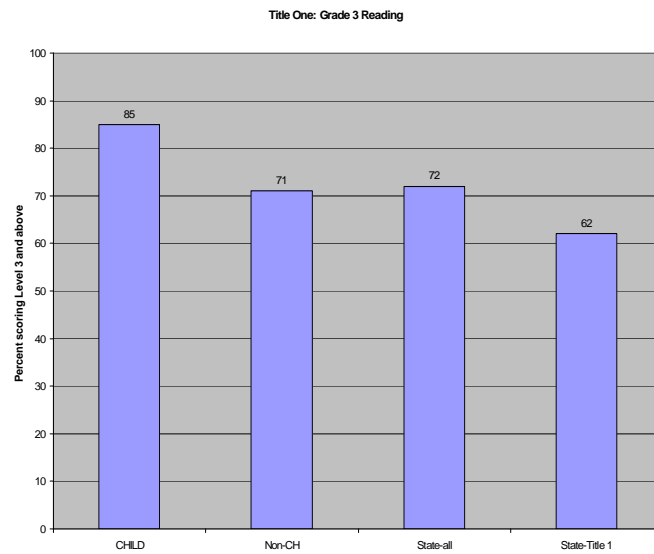


Title One Analysis

Nine of the schools, or 50% were Title One schools, meaning that large numbers of the students met Federal guidelines for receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunches. A sub-analysis of the data compared the average percent of the Title One CHILD classrooms overall with the Title One non-CHILD average. They also compare the state average for all students, as well as the state average for Title One students.

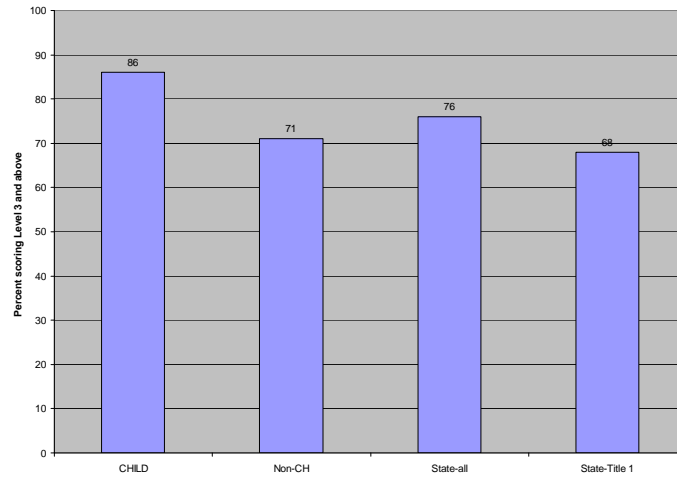
Not only did the CHILD Title One students outperform their school peers, they also exceeded the state averages as well. It is interesting to note that the CHILD Title One students even surpassed the average for all students in the state, as well as their Title One peers. This bodes well for using CHILD strategies for closing achievement gaps for students in poverty.

Charts 5-7: Title One Reading Percent at Grade Level or Above

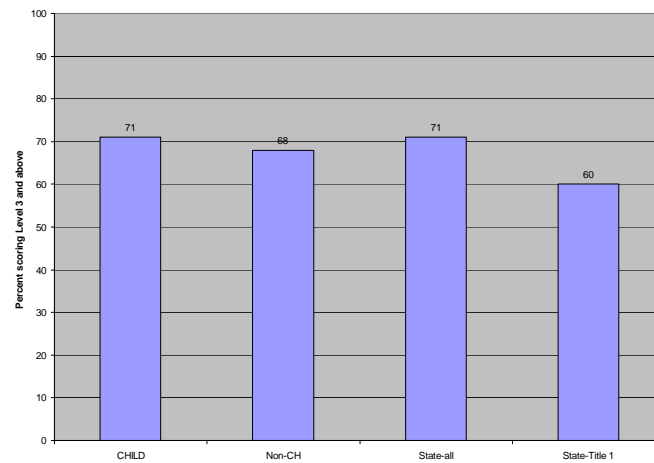


Charts 8-10: Title One Mathematics Percent at Grade Level or Above

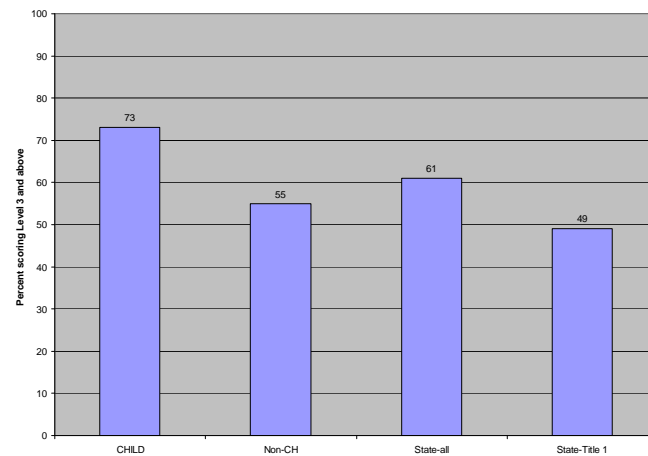
Title One: Grade 3 Mathematics



Title One: Grade 4 Mathematics



Title One: Grade 5 Mathematics



Conclusion

The Project CHILD model continues to stand the test of time as an effective instructional system that improves student performance compared to traditional standard teaching practices. CHILD students continue to outperform their peers within their own schools and across the state on the FCAT tests for reading and mathematics. The overwhelming trend from school to school, and grade to grade favored the CHILD classrooms.

The sub-analysis of scores for Title One schools also contain encouraging news that Project CHILD may help close achievement gaps for students living in poverty. The CHILD students at the nine Title One schools not only outperformed the state Title One overall scores by a wide margin, but even outperformed the entire state averages for all students.

About the Institute for School Innovation

The Institute for School Innovation (ISI) is a private non-profit organization based in Tallahassee, Florida. Founded in 1995, the Institute engages in research and development to increase teacher effectiveness through technology and active learning. The Institute's programs are used in public and private schools across the United States.

ISI provides professional development along with a teacher certification system and school recognition program for Project CHILD educators. ISI also provides grants and scholarships to assist qualified schools in adopting its programs and to establish CHILD coordinators within a district. ISI has distributed over \$5 million in state and private funding to promote innovation in education.

The Institute hosts a national conference for CHILD educators, as well as district and regional support events for teachers. ISI also conducts leadership training events for principals and administrators.

ISI recognizes teachers committed to change and innovation through its "Innovation Sustainer" and "Classroom Champion for Change" awards. ISI also recognizes innovative school and district leaders through various "Innovative Leader of the Year" awards. These awards are presented at the annual CHILD conference.

ISI is governed by a board of directors consisting of K-12 educators, faculty in higher education, as well as business and community leaders committed to education and children's issues. ISI is funded through donations, grants and contracts, and fees charged for its programs and services.

Vision Statement: To inspire joyful learning by changing how instruction for learning is delivered.

Mission Statement: To redefine classroom instruction through technology and active learning.