



## Fact Sheet

2010

### **What is the history of Project CHILD®?**

Project CHILD began in 1988 as a research project at Florida State University with funding from the Florida Legislature. Dr. Sarah (Sally) Butzin, a researcher at the university and former classroom teacher, wanted to create a better instructional system that would incorporate computers and hands-on active learning while maintaining high academic standards. She wanted to create joyful classrooms where students and teachers could look forward to coming to school each day. Her book **Joyful Classrooms**<sup>1</sup> provides a history of the research and in-depth overview of the CHILD instructional delivery system.

### **How many schools and students are involved with Project CHILD?**

During the 2009-2010 school year there are 495 CHILD classrooms at 50 schools serving approximately 10,000 students in grades K-5. The schools are located throughout Florida, along with several schools in Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, and New York. Project CHILD is being implemented schoolwide in a growing network of Imagine charter schools in Florida and Georgia.

### **How is Project CHILD different from regular classrooms?**

In regular classrooms, over 90% of a student's time is spent listening to the teacher and working alone<sup>2</sup>. Most of the work is written work using textbooks and worksheets. Students stay at a desk and may not get up without permission from the teacher. In Project CHILD, students still listen to the teacher, but they also work in small groups at learning stations, use computers every day, and get individual help from the teacher more frequently. They learn to move from station to station without having to ask the teacher.

In regular classrooms, there is one teacher for each grade who covers all the basic subjects. Students spend one year (180 school days) with that one teacher, and move to another grade and start over with another teacher each year. Project CHILD is set up with clusters of three classrooms. A Primary Cluster consists of a kindergarten class, a first grade class, and a second grade class. An Intermediate Cluster consists of three classrooms for grades 3-5. One classroom in the cluster is for reading, one for writing, and one for math. One of the cluster classrooms serves as the homeroom depending upon the student's grade level. The students start in their home room for instruction in that subject for 60-90 minutes, and then rotate to the other two classrooms for 60-90 minutes of instruction in the other subjects. Science and Social Studies are covered by the homeroom teacher, or integrated into the other subjects. Children

<sup>1</sup> **Joyful Classrooms in an Age of Accountability: The Project CHILD Recipe for Success.** By Sarah M. Butzin. Phi Delta Kappa, 2005. ISBN 0-87367-542-8

<sup>2</sup> *Opportunities to Learn in America's Elementary Classrooms.* The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, **Science** magazine, March 30, 2007. (Vol. 315, No. 5820, pp. 1795-1796.)

also continue to participate in the school's full curriculum if additional subjects are offered such as Physical Education, Music, and Art.

### **How is Project CHILD better than regular classrooms?**

Numerous research studies for nearly 20 years have shown that Project CHILD students get higher test scores, have fewer discipline referrals, and do better in middle school. CHILD students enjoy coming to school because they can be active as well as successful.

In addition to learning basic academic skills, CHILD students learn other important skills 21st century skills needed throughout life. For example, CHILD students learn to set goals, to manage their time, to think and solve problems, to work collaboratively with peers, to be part of a team, to meet deadlines, to accept responsibility, and to follow through.

### **How is Project CHILD innovative given that it has been around for some time?**

Just as the space agency NASA has been around for years and continues to be innovative, Project CHILD continues to evolve. The Institute for School Innovation updates the program materials annually based upon new research and technologies. For example, new innovations such as personalized technology-based assessment tracking tools with school-to-home technology components have recently been introduced into new CHILD classrooms.

### **What is the Institute for School Innovation (ISI)?**

ISI is a private, 501-c-3 non-profit organization founded in 1995 whose mission is to enhance classroom instruction through technology and active learning. Its vision is to inspire joyful learning by changing how instruction for learning is delivered. ISI engages in research and development, along with teacher training, to enable today's schools to better meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century students. ISI receives funding from grants and contracts, as well as fees for services.

ISI is governed by a volunteer board of directors, including faculty members from Florida State University and Florida A&M University, as well as business and community leaders. Dr. Sarah (Sally) Butzin is the founder and serves as President & Executive Director. ISI supports educators through an annual conference, regional workshops, an interactive web site ([www.ifs.org](http://www.ifs.org)), awards & recognitions, and various publications that help CHILD teachers connect and share ideas. ISI also provides opportunities for CHILD teachers to enhance their professional status and earn supplemental income by becoming ISI consultants. Consultants become the coaches and mentors for new CHILD teachers.



[www.ifs.org](http://www.ifs.org)

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