



# INCLUSION READINESS TOOL

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## Pathways to Inclusion



# INCLUSION READINESS TOOL (IRT)

The Advocacy Network on Disabilities' All Children Together (ACT) project is The Children's Trust's Resource Network for the Special Needs of Children with Disabilities and their families. Its role is to work with The Children's Trust and the organizations it funds to increase our community's capacity to provide quality, inclusive programs to children with disabilities.

## WHAT IS THE INCLUSION READINESS TOOL?

The INCLUSION READINESS TOOL (IRT) is a self-assessment to help you determine your organization's current readiness to provide quality services to children with disabilities, and to serve as a guide for "next steps". It can be completed internally by administrative and direct care staff, as well as with the assistance of an Advocacy Network on Disabilities/ ACT Inclusion Specialist. Goals are not intended to be met immediately; but rather, accomplished over time as part of a multi-year capacity building process.

## WHAT ARE THE PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION?

The 9 evidenced-informed competencies that make up the pathways include: Orient/Train Staff; Inclusive Policies and Procedures; Safety; Alliances and Partnerships; Materials, Supplies and Equipment; Family Support; Physical Accessibility; Marketing Inclusion; and Individualized Inclusion Plans.

## SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE ALL CHILDREN TOGETHER (ACT) RESOURCE NETWORK:

- Thousands of individuals have successfully completed hundreds of trainings on dozens of topics.
- More than 100 agencies have become Individual Program Inclusion Plan (IPIP) partners – which essentially entails working with The Advocacy Network on Disabilities staff to develop and implement a plan that better equips the organization to provide quality services to ALL children.
- More children with disabilities are participating in a greater number of programs funded by The Children's Trust, and are achieving increasingly improved outcomes.
- The Children's Trust's Core Contract includes the expectation that providers comply with federal law under the Americans with Disabilities Act, including implementing reasonable accommodations to include children with disabilities and their families whenever possible.

We believe The Children's Trust as a funder, you as a provider, we as a Resource Network, and all of us as a community, have made significant progress on the Pathway to Inclusion. You may be surprised to see how many of the core program competencies your organization has already achieved.

**Questions?** Please contact an Advocacy Network on Disabilities Inclusion Specialist at 305-596-1160, or email us at [training@advocacynetwork.org](mailto:training@advocacynetwork.org)

# Pathway A: Orient/Train Staff

*Professional development is an important component to attain a high-quality inclusive program. Administrators play an essential role in preparing their staff to meet the needs of all children by planning and being proactive. It is important to take inventory of the professional development that administrators and direct care staff have received or need in regards to children with disabilities including the ADA.*

| ✓ | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS  | DATE |
|---|------|--|------|
|   | A1   | Organization provides opportunities for ongoing professional development on disability topics to prepare staff to effectively work with children with disabilities                                   |      |
|   | A2   | If serving children with disabilities, organization identifies and addresses the informal and formal training needs of staff with assistance from Inclusion Specialist                               |      |
|   | A3   | As part of staff orientation, the organization reviews its Policies and Procedures regarding inclusion   |      |
|   | A4   | The annual staff training plan includes a component on inclusion   |      |
|   | A5   | A qualified staff member becomes the organization's "go to person" for inclusion upon successfully completing AND's on-line course: "Inclusion Reimagined" (formerly known as Discovering Inclusion) |      |
|   | A6   | The designated "go to person" successfully completes an evidence-informed behavior training provided by AND (e.g. "Structure for Success") or a qualified entity (e.g. Project RISE)                 |      |
|   | A7   | Senior management staff successfully completes "An Administrator's Overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act" within the grant cycle, or sooner as indicated by the funding agency             |      |
|   | A8   | Organization's staff successfully completes "Inclusion Reimagined" online course as per The Children's Trust requirements  |      |
|   | A9   | Within 90 days of hire, new staff and volunteers successfully complete "Inclusion Reimagined" course   |      |
|   | A10  | A minimum of 50% of the organization's staff participate in one additional training offered by AND   |      |
|   | A11  | A minimum of 50% of the organization's staff completes an evidence-informed behavior management training provided by AND or a qualified entity (e.g. Project RISE)                                   |      |
|   | A12  | Other Goal   |      |

<sup>1</sup>Senior Management staff refers to individual(s) within the organization who has/have the authority to make and implement decisions for the organization and/or the individual responsible for the organization's compliance with federal, state, and local equal opportunity laws.

<sup>2</sup>A qualified staff member refers to a program manager, lead teacher, or supervisor for whom there is a reasonable expectation they will remain employed to act in this capacity.

# Pathway B: Inclusive Policies and Procedures

*A high-quality program has written policies and procedures that are necessary to guide the operation of the program and administrative decisions. It carefully examines these policies and procedures for potential discriminatory language, actions, and processes. These programs also include policies that specifically address how the program will meet the needs of children with disabilities.*

| ✓ | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS   | DATE |
|---|------|---|------|
|   | B1   | Organization has a written Non-Discrimination policy that includes “disability”   |      |
|   | B2   | Enrollment/registration documents for all participants include “Getting To Know Me” or similar form that gathers information about the child’s preferences, habits, and interests   |      |
|   | B3   | Organization has a written discipline policy based on positive behavior   |      |
|   | B4   | Organization has an inclusive admission policy and all children who meet essential eligibility requirements are enrolled  |      |
|   | B5   | Organization has established protocols and instruments to conduct an <i>Individual Assessment</i> to reach child requiring accommodations   |      |
|   | B6   | Organization develops an <i>Individual Inclusion Plan</i> to implement accommodations and/or document reasonable accommodations that cannot be made   |      |
|   | B7   | Organization has established protocols to insure implementation of reasonable accommodations, or a plan for referral when accommodations cannot be achieved   |      |
|   | B8   | Dismissal policy incorporates progressive steps including parental involvement, use of positive behavior plans, consultation with outside experts, and plan for referral to clearly indicate the process required to terminate enrollment. All steps are documented |      |
|   | B9   | Inclusive policies and procedures are part of the employee handbook that is provided to each staff member   |      |
|   | B10  | Each employee acknowledges, in writing, that they have received, read, and understand and agree with the organization’s inclusion policies  |      |
|   | B11  | Other Goal  |      |

<sup>14</sup>“Program Staff” refers to those individuals who work in the project funded by The Children’s Trust including those working directly with children, those who are involved in the registration and intake process, and their supervisors.

# Pathway C: Safety

A high-quality program ensures that all students that attend are safe while in their care. They prepare ahead of time for possible emergency situations that may arise from enrolling children with disabilities, like adjusting emergency plans and establishing procedures.

| ✓ | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS   | DATE |
|---|------|---|------|
|   | C1   | If serving a child with a disability, the child's <i>Individual Inclusion Plan</i> addresses safety issues  |      |
|   | C2   | Fire/Safety/Evacuation plan includes process to ensure <b>specialized equipment and medications</b> are taken with the child  |      |
|   | C3   | Fire/Safety/Evacuation plan includes <b>procedures</b> on evacuating children with disabilities (e.g. Which staff are assigned to a child who uses a wheelchair, sensory sensitivity, etc.) |      |
|   | C4   | Organization has a “go to person” who serves as the liaison between organization and safety agencies, when need arises  |      |
|   | C5   | Organization annually reviews, and if necessary, revises safety plan  |      |
|   | C6   | Other Goal  |      |

# Pathway D: Alliances and Partnerships

A high-quality program establishes and maintains strong community collaborations and relationships to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission. It is important for programs to be familiar with agencies and resources throughout the area that can support with inclusion of children with disabilities, assist families and provide guidance to staff.

| ✓ | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS   | DATE |
|---|------|---|------|
|   | D1   | In a location visible and accessible to both parents and staff, organization maintains and displays current information on resources for families of children with disabilities         |      |
|   | D2   | Organization is knowledgeable about other community resources that can be accessed to assist participants with special needs and their families (e.g. “Navigating Community Resources”) |      |
|   | D3   | Organization’s website contains links to other websites or resources that provide supports and services to children with disabilities and their families                                |      |
|   | D4   | Other Goal  |      |

# Pathway E: Materials, Supplies and Equipment

A high-quality program identifies materials and supplies that assist children with disabilities to participate in the program. Having materials ready and available prior to enrollment reassures families that you are flexible and prepared.

| ✓ | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS   | DATE |
|---|------|---|------|
|   | E1   | Classrooms have materials (books, posters, games, dolls/action figures) that show positive and diverse images of children with disabilities |      |
|   | E2   | Organization has appropriate adaptive materials, equipment and supplies available   |      |
|   | E3   | Organization identifies need for specialized materials and supplies and takes steps to obtain them  |      |
|   | E4   | Staff are coached on how to use adaptive materials, equipment, and supplies   |      |
|   | E5   | There are systems in place to ensure materials are maintained in safe/working order and replaced as needed                                  |      |
|   | E6   | Other Goal  |      |

# Pathway F: Family Support

A high-quality program establishes strong partnerships with the families they serve. They provide them with the opportunity to communicate the special needs of their children and provide them with supports and resources. Quality programs also provide families with opportunities to engage with other parents. Communicating to parents that you are inclusive and welcome all children allows parents to feel comfortable about enrolling their child and therefore more open to contribute to the program.

| ✓   | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS  | DATE |
|---|------|--|------|
|   | F1   | Parent Orientation includes a discussion of organization's commitment to including <b>all</b> children   |      |
|   | F2   | If the need arises, the "go to person" addresses any concerns raised about including children with disabilities  |      |
|   | F3   | Organization provides information for all families on disability awareness, inclusion, etc.  |      |
| <b>FOR ORGANIZATIONS SERVING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</b> |      |  |      |
|   | F4   | There are systems in place to ensure materials are maintained in safe/working order and replaced as needed   |      |
|   | F5   | Organization provides ongoing opportunities to review and exchange information on the child's goals, progress, and challenges with parents, therapists, and other appropriate individuals                  |      |
|   | F6   | Families are welcome to bring in teachers, therapists, and others to assist their child and/or staff and maintain a sign in/out log  |      |
|   | F7   | Families are provided supports and resources necessary for the child's successful participation in the program by collaboration with Inclusion Specialist and/or AND's Family Development Initiative staff |      |
|   | F8   | Other Goal   |      |



# Pathway G: Physical Accessibility

A high-quality program evaluates accessibility of the facility, develops, and implements a plan for improvements necessary to reduce barriers to include children with disabilities.

| ✓  | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS   | DATE |
|--|------|---|------|
|  | G1   | With the assistance of the Inclusion Specialist, organization performs initial accessibility scan of travel, hardware, restrooms, furniture, etc. |      |
|  | G2   | Organization creates an action plan (short, medium, and/or long-term goals) to address barriers   |      |
|  | G3   | Organization annually reassesses its facilities for changes needed to better serve children with physical disabilities                            |      |
| <b>IF ORGANIZATIONS IS SERVING CHILDREN REQUIRING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PHYSICAL CONDITIONS</b> |      |   |      |
|  | G4   | Adaptations are implemented such as adjusting table height, changing door handles, etc.   |      |
|  | G5   | Organization ensures that all children can fully participate in program activities, including field trips   |      |
|  | G6   | Other Goal  |      |

# Pathway H: Marketing Inclusion

A high-quality program communicates to the community that it is inclusive. It promotes inclusion through its marketing materials, website, and advocacy efforts.

| ✓ | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS   | DATE |
|---|------|---|------|
|   | H1   | Facility prominently displays signs/notices indicating that children of <b>all</b> abilities are welcome                              |      |
|   | H2   | Marketing materials, such as brochures and website, include positive and diverse images of children of all abilities                  |      |
|   | H3   | Marketing materials, such as brochures and website, include <b>statement</b> that the organization welcomes children of all abilities |      |
|   | H4   | Program information is available in accessible formats, or resources are identified to develop them, if needed.                       |      |
|   | H5   | Organization implements recruitment efforts to include families of children with disabilities   |      |
|   | H6   | Organization shares success stories about inclusion and its benefits through website, newsletter, and/or other means of communication |      |
|   | H7   | Other Goal  |      |

# Pathway I: Individualized Inclusion Plan

A high-quality program identifies and addresses concerns or needs a child may have to participate in the program. An individualized Inclusion Plan is created and implemented for each child who needs it.

| ✓ | GOAL | HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS   | DATE |
|---|------|---|------|
|   | I1   | Staff identify child’s interests, preferences, and needs through discussions with family and results of the “Getting to Know Me” or similar tool                                  |      |
|   | I2   | Staff and families communicate to develop an <i>Individual Inclusion Plan</i> that identifies how needed support services will be implemented                                     |      |
|   | I3   | Families are encouraged to invite the child's teachers, therapists, and significant others to participate in the planning and development of the <i>Individual Inclusion Plan</i> |      |
|   | I4   | <i>Individual Inclusion Plan</i> is regularly reviewed and updated, to reflect changing circumstances and needs   |      |
|   | I5   | Other Goals   |      |



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