This chart provides an overview of the standards at each Circle of Quality. Refer to the specific Circle of Quality Charts for detailed evidence needed at each level.

## 1. Teaching & Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>LICENSLED</th>
<th>BRONZE</th>
<th>SILVER</th>
<th>GOLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on the use of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) for program design and continuous improvement</td>
<td>Program demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of classroom environment by completing self-assessment of classroom quality AND Verification of classroom quality by state-approved assessor</td>
<td>Program demonstrates high quality of classroom environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVIDENCE:**
- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on ERS verified by Gateways Registry
- Documentation of ERS’ self-assessment and CQIP to address any subscales below 4.5 and/or any classroom score below 4.0; ERS’ average overall score of 3.25-4.5 with no classroom below 3.0; verified by state-approved assessor
- CLASS3 Emotional Support and Classroom Organization: average scores above 5.0 with no classroom below 4.0 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
- Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body

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1. Teaching & Learning

1. **Environment Rating Scale**
2. **Continuous Quality Improvement Plan**
3. **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (for ages 3-5 only)**
4. To be prepared for ERS or CLASS assessment/validation the program administrator and 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on the use of the scales verified by Gateways Registry
1. Teaching & Learning

### 1B. CURRICULUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED</th>
<th>BRONZE</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on: IELG⁵/IELD⁶ AND Either an overview of aligned curricula OR Training on a specific curriculum that is aligned to the IELG⁵/IELD⁶</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program implements a curriculum that is aligned with the IELG⁵/IELD⁶ with at least 50% of teaching staff receiving training on the identified curriculum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program implements a research-based curriculum that aligns with IELG⁵/IELD⁶ and lesson plans that are connected with IELG⁵/IELD⁶</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVIDENCE:**
- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Identification of selected curriculum that aligns with IELG⁵/IELD⁶ AND Evidence that at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training or other ISBE-approved training or other ISBE-approved training in that curriculum verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body

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IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years
IELD Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age
### 1C. Teaching & Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LICENSED</strong></td>
<td>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **BRONZE** | Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on: IELG⁵/IIELDS⁶  
**EVIDENCE:**  
Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on IELG⁵/IIELDS⁶ and either aligned curricula or specific curriculum verified by Gateways Registry |
| **SILVER** | Program demonstrates developmentally appropriate instructional practices as verified by state-approved assessor  
**EVIDENCE:**  
Documentation of ERS¹ self-assessment and CQIP² to address any classroom with less than 3.0 on “Interactions” and “Language and Literacy/Listening and Talking” subscales. ERS¹ average score of 4.0 on these subscales; verified by state-approved assessor  
**OR**  
CLASS³ Instructional Support average score: above 2.5 with a CQIP² developed for classrooms with less than 2.0 score on this subscale; verified by scores submitted from state-approved assessor  
**OR**  
Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body |
| **GOLD** | Program demonstrates high quality, developmentally appropriate instructional practices  
**EVIDENCE:**  
ERS¹ score: at least 4.75 average on “Interactions” and “Language and Literacy/Listening and Talking” subscales (with no classroom below a 4.0) as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor  
**OR**  
CLASS³ Instructional Support: average scores above 3.00 (with no classroom below 2.5) as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor  
**OR**  
Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body |

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1. Environment Rating Scale  
2. Continuous Quality Improvement Plan  
3. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (for ages 3-5 only)  
4. IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years  
5. IIELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1D.</th>
<th>LICENSED</th>
<th>BRONZE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHILD SCREENING</td>
<td>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools</td>
<td>Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all children (birth-5 years) are screened at least annually for the purpose of identifying special needs and parents are provided screening results and information on where they can go for additional evaluation and services</td>
<td>Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all children (birth-5 years) are screened annually no later than 60 days after entry into program; parents are provided information on screening results; and children for whom the screening identifies a developmental concern are referred for further evaluation by Child &amp; Family Connections (CFC) or school district</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVIDENCE:**
- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools verified by Gateways Registry
- Self-assessment of screening policies and practices AND Verification by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body
- Implement screening with score of 5.0 or higher on PAS item #10 as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body

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1. Teaching & Learning

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7 Child and Family Connections
8 Program Administration Scale
### 1. Teaching & Learning

#### 1E. Child Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on assessment tools.</td>
<td>Program chooses aligned child assessment tool</td>
<td>The program utilizes an appropriate assessment tool that aligns with the curriculum to document children’s progress over time with measurable outcomes; assessment results are used to inform instruction for individual children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVIDENCE:**

- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on assessment tools verified by Gateways Registry
- Identification of selected assessment tool(s) that aligns with IELG\(^5\)/IELDS\(^6\) AND Verification by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body
- Implementation of assessment tool with a score of 5.0 or higher on PAS\(^8\) item #11 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

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\(^5\) IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years
\(^6\) IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age
\(^8\) Program Administration Scale
### 1. Teaching & Learning

#### 1F. Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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<th>GOLD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS</strong></td>
<td><strong>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program has policies and procedures in place for supporting inclusion of children with special needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>All classroom teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved or ISBE-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs; program submits annual data on number of children with special needs served; program has a MOU(^9) with CFC(^7) (if serving children ages birth to 3)(^*) and implements written policies and procedures detailing how the program supports children who have IEP(^10)s or IFSP(^11)s; program must also have a written MOU with at least one Local Education Agency concerning services to children with special needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</strong></td>
<td><strong>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs verified by Gateways Registry</strong></td>
<td><strong>AND</strong> <strong>Program administrator and 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implementation verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong> <strong>Self-assessment of policies and procedures</strong> <strong>AND</strong> <strong>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs verified by Gateways Registry</strong></td>
<td><strong>OR</strong> <strong>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</strong></td>
<td><strong>OR</strong> <strong>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</strong></td>
<td><strong>OR</strong> <strong>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{9}\) Memorandum of Understanding  
\(^{7}\) Child and Family Connections  
\(^{10}\) IEP Individual Education Plan  
\(^{11}\) IFSP Individual Family Service Plan  

\(^*\) A statewide MOU is in development for CFC’s to use with programs. Until a statewide MOU is available, this requirement is waived.
## 2. Family & Community Engagement

### 2A. Family & Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>LICENSING</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILY &amp; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies</td>
<td>Program implements at least five family supports (see list in PAS(^8) item #17) and two parent-staff conferences per year</td>
<td>Program has policy and procedures to ensure strong partnerships with families and within their community AND Program implements at least five family supports from the PAS(^8) item #17 list and offers two family-staff conferences annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVIDENCE:**
- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies
- Self-assessment of family engagement practices AND Verification by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

\(^8\) Program Administration Scale
## 2. Family & Community Engagement

### 2B. Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program implements policies and practices to provide general information about transitions and engages families in discussions and/or activities addressing child and family transitions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program implements a written plan of activities and strategies that facilitate the transition of children and families into and out of classrooms, early learning environments, community services, and school settings (including transition to kindergarten)</strong> AND <strong>Program shares this plan with parents and community/school stakeholders</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence:**
- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies verified by Gateways Registry
- Self-assessment of transition activities AND Verification by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body
- Implementation and communication of transition plan verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body
### 3. Leadership & Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3A.</th>
<th>LICENSED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on the Program Administration Scale (PAS)(^8)</td>
<td>Program demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of administrative practices</td>
<td>Program demonstrates high quality program administration practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on PAS(^8) verified by Gateways Registry</td>
<td>Documentation of PAS(^8) self-assessment with a CQIP(^2) to address any subscales below 4.5(^12) AND Verification of three program selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment and Family Partnerships) by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</td>
<td>PAS(^8) average overall score: 5.0 or higher verified by on-site assessment, this includes verification of four program selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment, Family Partnerships, or Marketing and Public Relations) by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) Continuous Quality Improvement Plan  
\(^8\) Program Administration Scale  
\(^12\) To be prepared for PAS self-assessment/validation the program administrator completes ExceleRate-approved training on the use of the scale verified by Gateways Registry
# 3. Leadership & Management

## 3B. Group Size and Staff/Child Ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body |

### Programs may be exempted from the ratio and group size requirements at Gold Circle of Quality if they have an average score on the ITERS of 5.0 with no classroom below 4.5

**AND**

Every Infant-Toddler and Two-Year Old classroom has at least one staff person with an Infant-Toddler Level 3 Credential

**AND**

The program receives an overall Program Administration Scale score of at least 4.5

### State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards

- **INFANTS**  
  6w-14m, Ratio 1:4, Max Group = 8

- **TODDLERS**  
  15m-23m, Ratio 1:4, Max Group = 12

- **TWO YR OLDS**  
  Ratio 1:6, Max Group = 12

- **AGES THREE TO FIVE**  
  Ratio 1:10, Max Group = 20

- **AGES FIVE**  
  Ratio 1:20, Max Group = 20

- **SCHOOL AGE** (INCLUDES KINDERGARTEN)  
  Ratio 1:20, Max Group = 30

### Ratios and group size verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor

**OR**

Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body
## 3. Leadership & Management

### 3C. Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning</td>
<td>Program develops and implements Continuous Quality Improvement Plan using self-assessment results</td>
<td>Program demonstrates progress towards meeting objectives of its Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on self-assessment results AND Program implements a continuous quality improvement process that includes analysis of child and classroom data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVIDENCE:**
- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning verified by Gateways Registry
- Submit Continuous Quality Improvement Plan and annual report OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body
- Progress made on implementation of self-assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement Plan verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body
### 3. Leadership & Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSSED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LINGUISTICALLY &amp; CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE</strong></td>
<td>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on diversity that addresses the relationship between culture, race, and language development and usage</td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td>Program implements evidence-based policies, practices, curriculum and assessments that support the development of linguistically/racially/culturally diverse children and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td>Documentation of ExceleRate-approved training on linguistic/cultural/racial diversity verified by Gateways Registry</td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td>ERS(^1) score: at least 4.5 on “Promoting Acceptance of Diversity” verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td>Evidence of communication with families in home language verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong></td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Environment Rating Scale
ExceleRate Illinois
Quality Standards Overview

This chart provides an overview of the standards at each Circle of Quality. Refer to the specific Circle of Quality Charts for detailed evidence needed at each level.

## 4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

### 4A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS*</th>
<th>LICENSED</th>
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</thead>
</table>

*Currently, the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B is delayed while we analyze programs’ CQIP plans and progress. Programs not in full compliance are required to include concrete, achievable goals and action steps in their CQIP and also to describe their progress in the annual report. Please make every effort to support your staff and your own efforts to attain the required credentials as quickly as possible. Further information will be announced when the analysis of CQIP plans is complete.
### 4B. Staff Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards** | **At least 30% of teaching staff with a minimum of Gateways ECE Credential Level 2** | **At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 3**
**AND**
30% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 2 | **At least 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 5 (or equivalent)**
**AND**
An additional 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 4 (or equivalent)
**AND**
40% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 3 (or equivalent) |

**Evidence:**
- Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards
- Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry
- Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry
**OR**
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body
- Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

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*Currently, the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B is delayed while we analyze programs’ CQIP plans and progress. Programs not in full compliance are required to include concrete, achievable goals and action steps in their CQIP and also to describe their progress in the annual report. Please make every effort to support your staff and your own efforts to attain the required credentials as quickly as possible. Further information will be announced when the analysis of CQIP plans is complete.*
This chart provides an overview of the standards at each Circle of Quality. Refer to the specific Circle of Quality Charts for detailed evidence needed at each level.

### 4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

#### 4C. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LICENSSED</strong></td>
<td>Program administrator or the staff member responsible for professional development planning has completed ExceleRate-approved training on developing Individualized Professional Development Plans</td>
<td>Program has individualized, written staff development plans developed for all classroom staff <strong>AND</strong> Minimum of 20 hours Professional Development per year</td>
<td>Individualized, written staff development plans implemented for all classroom staff <strong>AND</strong> Minimum of 20 hours Professional Development per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE:</strong> Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</td>
<td>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on individualized professional development planning verified by Gateways Registry</td>
<td>Staff development plans and hours of professional development verified by state-approved assessor <strong>OR</strong> Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</td>
<td>Staff development plans and hours of professional development verified by state-approved assessor and Gateways Registry <strong>OR</strong> Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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EX0213 REV 11.01.18