

January 2022

Getting Ready for the Gold Circle of Quality– Licensed Child Care Centers Assessment Path

Working towards and/or maintaining an ExceleRate® Illinois Circle of Quality is a process with many parts. To assist programs in achieving their goal, this checklist is provided to be used as a working document- along with the ExceleRate Illinois Overview chart for Child Care Centers - to help track progress. While all areas are important, the following areas are highlighted due to the amount of time needed to accomplish the domain/standard.

Required Training

For the Gold Circle of Quality the following training is required. Please check your local CCR&R’s training calendar or the statewide training calendar for availability. For complete details refer to the Overview chart for Child Care Centers. Completion of required training is verified by INCCRRA and must appear on Section 3, 4, or 5 of the staff members Professional Development Record (PDR).

Domain/Standard	Topic/Title	Required Attendees (minimum)
NA	ExceleRate Illinois Orientation - <i>required for NEW applicants. Revised 12/21</i>	Administrator
1A	An Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales (<i>Note: Admin and Preschool teachers must have ERS training inclusive of ECERS-3, offered after July 2017</i>)	Administrator 50% of teaching staff
1A	Class training (required only if choosing CLASS for ages 3-5)	Administrator 50% of preschool teaching staff
1F	Welcoming Each and Every Child or Special Care	All classroom staff
3A	Getting Ready for the Program Administration Scale (PAS)	Administrator
3A	Taking Your Program to a Higher Level with PAS	Administrator (recommended, not required)

Credentials

Domain/Standard	Director Qualifications	Staff Qualifications
4A	Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level II or higher or Illinois Principal Endorsement	
4B		At least 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 5, additional 20% teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 4 and 40% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 3

Administrator and Teaching staff must hold the applicable Gateways Credential, or have a pending application on file. If not meeting the applicable Credential, the program administrator/staff may write a CQIP to outline goals, action steps, specific coursework/training the individual can accomplish over the year to work towards the applicable Credential. The program administrator/staff should use the letter each individual received from the Credential Department to guide CQIP development in what coursework/training is needed. **Updated CQIP of accomplishments will be required at annual report and progress must be shown towards Standards 4A and 4B Credential attainment.**

Teaching and Learning

1A. Learning Environment	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
Program average overall ERS score of at least 4.5 <i>*Review applicable Scale Tip Sheets at: Preparing for Assessments</i>	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
1B. Curriculum			
Program implements a curriculum that aligns with IELG/IELDS.	Aligned curriculum chosen for using Narrative is accepted at application if not currently using an aligned curriculum	✓	
Lesson Plans are aligned with chosen curriculum	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
1C. Instructional Quality			
ERS average of at least 4.75 on “Language and Literacy (ECERS-3)/ Listening and Talking (ITERS-R)” and 4.75 on “Interactions” (ITERS-R/ECERS-3/SACERS-U) <i>*Review applicable Scale Tip Sheets at: Preparing for Assessments</i>	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
1D. Child Screening			
PAS score of at least 5.0 on item #10	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
1E. Child Assessment			
PAS score of at least 5.0 on item #11	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
1F. Inclusion of Children with Disabilities or Developmental Delays			
Program has policies and procedures detailing how the program supports inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays.	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
Program has a MOU with local CFC and at least one LEA	Currently waived if MOU is not in place	NA	NA

Family and Community Engagement

2A. Family & Community Engagement	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
PAS average score of at least 5.0 on items #16, #17, and #19	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
2B. Transitions			
Program implements a plan of activities and strategies to assist in the transition of children/families into and out of classrooms, early learning environments, community services, and school settings. Plan is shared with parents.	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA

Leadership & Management

3A. Program Administration	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
PAS average overall score of 5.0 on four program selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment, Family Partnerships and Marketing/Public Relations)	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA
3B. Group Size and Staff/Child Ratios			
Program meets State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing standards on group size & staff/child ratios	Copy of current license Evidence and group size as specified on the Standards Overview for Licensed Child Care Centers chart verified on-site by state approved assessor.	✓	
3C. Continuous Quality Improvement			
Progress made on CQIP addressing Standards 1A, 1C and 3A (at a minimum)	CQIP should include documentation of specific changes designed to improve the quality of classroom environments (Standard 1A); instructional practices (Standard 1C), including the quality of language/reasoning interactions used by teachers to promote learning; and program administration practices (Standard 3A). Verified on-site by state approved assessor.	✓	
3D. Linguistically & Culturally Appropriate Practice			
ERS score of at least 4.5 on “Promoting Acceptance of Diversity”/”Cultural Awareness”; communication in the child’s home language is used wherever possible <i>*Review applicable Scale Tip Sheets at: Preparing for Assessments</i>	Verified on-site by state approved assessor	NA	NA

Qualifications & Continuing Education

4A Director Qualifications and 4B Staff Qualifications	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
<p>Director has Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level 2 or higher</p> <hr/> <p>At least 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 5</p> <hr/> <p>An additional 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 4</p> <hr/> <p>At least 40% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and Teaching staff must hold the applicable Gateways IDC, ECE or IT Credential, or have a pending application on file. If not meeting the applicable Credential, the program administrator/teaching staff may write a CQIP to outline goals, action steps, specific coursework/training the individual can accomplish over the year to work towards the applicable Credential. The program administrator/staff should use the letter each individual received from the Credential Department to guide CQIP development in what coursework/training is needed. Updated CQIP of accomplishments will be required at annual report and progress must be shown towards Standards 4A and 4B Credential attainment. 	*	
4C. Staff Development			
<p>Individualized, written staff development plans implemented for all classroom staff and minimum of 20 hours of professional development per year, including at least 5 hours Gateways Registry training</p>	<p>Staff professional development plans verified on-site by state approved assessor. Note: INCCRRA will verify Registry-Approved hours via the Gateways Registry</p>	NA	NA

***Programs can have staff submit credential applications to INCCRRA at any time. Once a program’s ExceleRate application is submitted, INCCRRA will verify staff within the Gateways Registry, based on the staff/classroom listings on the Center application.**

<p>Provider has worked with the IDCFS licensing representative to clear all violations prior to submitting the application. <i>To check if your program has violations please visit https://sunshine.dcf.illinois.gov/</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
<p>Provider has an organized Program Portfolio inclusive of information for the assessor to review (all information noted above as “verified on site by state approved assessor” in Evidence column, including PAS documentation) <i>If no, your program is not yet ready to apply for the Gold Circle of Quality. All pieces of documentation must be available for review during the time of on-site verification. Please contact your CCR&R Specialist for technical assistance to complete your portfolio.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>