

1. Teaching & Learning

Daily activities and interactions within early learning and development programs are indicators that a program is providing an environment and experiences that are safe, healthy and stimulating for children. This includes offering both indoor and outdoor activities to support varied learning experiences. To ensure that young children’s experiences are developmentally appropriate, applicants are expected to incorporate a comprehensive curriculum and child assessment system that are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to Three and Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Age Three to Five. Providing necessary adaptations to a child’s experience and environment allows all children, including those with special needs, to learn, grow and develop.

1A. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Program demonstrates high quality of classroom environment

| LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER | PRESCHOOL FOR ALL | HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START |
|---|---|---|
| <p>ERS¹ average overall score: At least 4.5 with no classroom below 4.0, verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor <i>OR</i> _____</p> <p>CLASS² Emotional Support and Classroom Organization: average scores above 5.0 with no classroom below 4.0 as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor³ <i>OR</i> _____</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p> | <p>ERS¹ average overall score: At least 4.5 with no classroom below a 4.0, verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor <i>OR</i> _____</p> <p>CLASS² 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</p> | <p>ERS¹ average overall score: At least 4.5 with no classroom below a 4.0, verified by on-site assessment by Head Start approved assessor <i>OR</i> _____</p> <p>CLASS² Emotional Support and Classroom Organization: average scores above 5.0 with no classroom below 4.0 verified by on-site assessment by Head Start approved assessor <i>AND</i> _____</p> <p>Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program Teaching and the Learning Environment: 1302.31 (a), 1302.31 (b) (1), 1302.31 (b) (2), 1302.31 (C) (1), 1302.31 (C) (2), 1302.31 (d), 1302.31 (e) (1), 1302.31 (e) (2), 1302.31 (e) (3), 1302.31 (e) (4); Child mental health and social and emotional well-being 1302.45 (a) (1) – (4)</p> |

¹ Environment Rating Scale

² Classroom Assessment Scoring System (for ages 3–5 only)

³ To be prepared for ERS or CLASS 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

Program implements a research-based curriculum that aligns with IELG³/IELDS⁴ and lesson plans that are connected with IELG¹/IELDS²

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Identification of selected curriculum that is research-based and is aligned with IELG⁴/IELDS⁵

AND

On-site verification of connection with lesson plans by state-approved assessor

OR

Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #10

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program Curricula: 1302.32 (a) (1), 1302.32 (a) (2), 1302.31 (b)

⁴ IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years

⁵ IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age

1. Teaching & Learning

1C. INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY

Program demonstrates high quality, developmentally appropriate instructional practices are connected with IELGS

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

ERS¹ average score: At least 4.75 on “Interactions” and “Language Reasoning/Listening and Talking” subscales with no classroom below a 4.0 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor

OR

CLASS² Instructional Support: average scores above 3.0 with no classroom below 2.5 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor

OR

Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

ERS¹ average score: At least 4.75 on “Interactions” and “Language Reasoning/ Listening and Talking” subscales with no classroom below a 4.0 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor

OR

CLASS² Instructional Support: average scores above 3.0 with no classroom below 2.5 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor

HEAD START/
EARLY HEAD START

ERS¹ score: at least 4.75 average on “Interactions” and “Language Reasoning/Listening and Talking” subscales (with no classroom below a 4.0) as verified by on-site assessment by Head Start approved assessor

OR

CLASS² Instructional Support: average scores above 3.00 (with no classroom below 2.5) as verified by on-site assessment by Head Start approved assessor

AND

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program Teaching and the Learning Environment: 1302.31 (a), 1302.31 (b) (1), 1302.31 (b) (2)

¹ Environment Rating Scale

² Classroom Assessment Scoring System (for ages 3–5 only)

1. Teaching & Learning

1D. CHILD SCREENING

Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure all children (birth-5 years) are screened annually no later than 60 days after entry into the program; parents are provided information on screening results; and children for whom the screening identifies a developmental concern are referred for further evaluation by CFC⁶ or school district

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Implement screening with score of 5.0 or higher on PAS⁷ item #10 as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
OR
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring items are in compliance: Checklist item #4 and #5

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program Child screenings and assessments: 1302.33 (a) (1), 1302.33 (a) (2), 1302.33 (a) (3), 1302.33 (c) (1), 1302.33 (d)

⁶Child and Family Connections

⁷Program Administration Scale

1. Teaching & Learning

1E. CHILD ASSESSMENT

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

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Implementation of assessment tool with a score of 5.0 or higher on PAS⁷ item #11 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
OR _____
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education
Preschool for All item is in compliance: Checklist item #12

HEAD START/
EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program
Purpose: 1302.30; Child screenings and assessments: 1302.33 (b) (1), 1302.33 (b) (2), 1302.33 (b) (3), 1302.33 (c) (1), 1302.33 (c) (2), 1302.33 (c) (3), 1302.33 (c) (4), 1302.33 (d)



1. Teaching & Learning

1F. INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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 MOU⁶ with CFC⁶ (if serving children ages birth to 3)* and implements written policies and procedures detailing how the program supports children who have IEP⁹s or IFSP¹⁰s; program must also have a written MOU with at least one Local Education Agency concerning services to children with special needs

| LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER | PRESCHOOL FOR ALL | HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Implementation verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor <i>OR</i> _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p> | <p>Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #15 <i>AND</i> _____ Student Information System (SIS) for data on children</p> | <p>Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program Child screenings and assessments: 1302.33 (a) (4) 1302.33 (a) (5) 1302 Subpart F – Additional Services for Children with Disabilities Full participation in program services and activities: 1302.60 Additional services for children: 1302.61 (a), 1302.61 (b), 1302.61 (c) (1), 1302.61 (c) (2). Coordination and collaboration with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA: 1302.63 (a), 1302.63 (b), 1302.63 (c) (1), 1302.63 (c) (2), 1302.63 (d) 1302 Subpart J Program Management and Quality Improvement Management system: 1302.101 (b) (3)</p> |

⁶ Memorandum of Understanding
⁸ Child and Family Connections
⁹ IEP Individual Education Plan
¹⁰ 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

Engaging and building strong partnerships with families fosters a child’s learning, growth and development both in and out of the child’s home. That’s why it is critical to involve families in authentic opportunities to promote quality experiences and environments for children. There are four hallmarks for effective family and community engagement: regular, effective two-way communications; opportunities for families to get to know one another; education about child growth and development; and making connections to available community resources. Helping families navigate transitions also provides meaningful support to children so that they can continue to succeed as they progress in their learning, growth and development.

2A. FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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 PAS⁷ item #17 list and offers two family-staff conferences annually

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Average score of 5.0 or higher on PAS⁷ items #16, #17 and #19 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
OR
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring items are in compliance: Checklist items #14 and #16

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart E – Family and Community Engagement Services Family engagement: 1302.50 (a), 1302.50 (b) (1), 1302.50 (b) (2), 1302.50 (b) (3), 1302.50 (b) (4), 1302.50 (b) (5), 1302.50 (b) (6) Parent activities to promote child learning and development: 1302.51 (a) (1), 1302.51 (a) (2), 1302.51 (a) (3), 1302.51 (b). Family partnership services: 1302.52 (a), 1302.52 (b), 1302.52 (c) (1), 1302.52 (c) (2), 1302.52 (c) (3), 1302.52 (c) (4), 1302.52 (d) Community partnerships and coordination with other early childhood and education programs: 1302.53 (a) (1), 1302.53 (a) (2), 1302.53 (b) (1), 1302.53 (b) (2), 1302.53 (b) (3), 1302.53 (b) (4)

2. Family & Community Engagement

2B. TRANSITIONS

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 setting (including transition to kindergarten)

AND

Program shares the transition plan with parents and community/school stakeholders

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Implementation and communication of transition plan verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
OR
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #13

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance:
1302 Subpart G – Transition Services Transitions from Early Head Start: 1302.70 (a), 1302.70 (b) (1), 1302.70 (b) (2), 1302.70 (c), 1302.70 (d), 1302.70 (e)
Transitions from Head Start to kindergarten: 1302.71 (a), 1302.71 (b) (1), 1302.71 (b) (2), 1302.71 (c) (1), 1302.71 (c) (2), 1302.71 (c) (3), 1302.71 (d), 1302.71 (e). Transitions between programs: 1302.72 (a), 1302.72 (b), 1302.72 (c)



3. Leadership & Management

Research has demonstrated that strong leadership and management practices make a tangible difference in the quality of care and education provided. This is accomplished by incorporating high-quality administrative practices, regularly assessing overall program operations and establishing program goals to continually improve the quality of the program. Careful attention to staff-to-child ratios and the size of the groups within classrooms are additional critical factors to ensure the program maintains a high quality environment where all children can balance individual attention with group activities and social development. The program also recognizes the diversity of all families and children by ensuring that all policies and practices are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

3A. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Program demonstrates high quality program administration practices

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

PAS⁷ 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

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring items are in compliance: Checklist items #15 and #19

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance:
1301 – Program Governance
Purpose: 1301.1; Governing body: 1301.2 (a), 1301.2 (b) (1), 1301.2 (b) (2), 1301.2 (c) (1), 1301.2 (c) (2); Policy council and policy committee: 1301.3 (a), 1301.3 (b) (1), 1301.3 (b) (2), 1301.3 (c) (1), 1301.3 (c) (2). **1302 Subpart I – Human Resources Management**
Personnel policies: 1302.90 (a), 1302.90 (b) (1), 1302.90 (b) (2), 1302.90 (b) (3), 1302.90 (b) (4), 1302.90 (b) (5), 1302.90 (c) (1), 1302.90 (c) (2); Volunteers: 1302.94 (a), 1302.94 (b)
1302 Subpart J – Program Management and Quality Improvement
Management system: 1302.101 (a) (1), 1302.101 (a) (2), 1302.101 (a) (3), 1302.101 (a) (4), 1302.101 (b) (1), 1302.101 (b) (2), 1302.101 (b) (3), 1302.101 (b) (4) **1303 Subpart I – Financial and Administrative Requirements**
Overview: 1303.1

⁷ Program Administration Scale

¹¹ To be prepared for PAS 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 RATIOS¹²

| AGE OF CHILD | STAFF/CHILD RATIO | MAX GROUP SIZE |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Infants (6w-14m) | 1 to 4 | 8 |
| Toddlers (15m-23m) | 1 to 4 | 12 |
| 2 Year Olds: | 1 to 6 | 12 |
| 3-5 Year Olds | 1 to 10 | 20 |
| Five years | 1 to 20 | 20 |
| Kindergartners & up (School-age) | 1 to 20 | 30 |

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Ratios and group size verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
OR _____
 Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #1
AND _____
 Student Information System (SIS) Data

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance:
1302 Subpart B – Program Structure Center-based option:
 1302.21 (a), 1302.21 (b) (1), 1302.21 (b) (2), 1302.21 (b) (3), 1302.21 (b) (4)

¹² 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

3. Leadership & Management

3C. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Program demonstrates progress towards meeting the 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 level data

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

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

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #19

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart J - Program Management and Quality Improvement Achieving program goals: 1302.102 (a) (1), 1302.102 (a) (2), 1302.102 (a) (3), 1302.102 (a) (4), 1302.102 (b) (1), 1302.102 (b) (2), 1302.102 (c) (1), 1302.102 (c) (2), 1302.102 (d) (1), 1302.102 (d) (2)



3. Leadership & Management

3D. LINGUISTICALLY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

Program implements evidence-based policies, practices, curriculum and assessments that support development of culturally/racially/linguistically diverse children and families

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

ERS¹ score: at least 4.5 on “Promoting Acceptance of Diversity” verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
AND —————
 Evidence of communication with families in home language verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
OR —————
 Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

ERS¹ score: at least 4.5 on “Promoting Acceptance of Diversity” item verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
AND —————
 Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring items are in compliance: Checklist items #17 and #18

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance:
1302 Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program Services Teaching and the learning environment:
 1302.31 (b) (2) (i-iii) Child screenings and assessments: 1302.33 (c) (1), 1302.33 (c) (2), 1302.33 (c) (3), 1302.33 (c) (4);
 Tribal language preservation and revitalization: 1302.36;
 Family engagement: 1302.50 (b) (5)
1302 Subpart I – Human Resources Management Personnel policies: 1302.90 (d) (1), 1302.90 (d) (2)
1302 Subpart J – Program Management and Quality Improvement Management system: 1302.101 (b) (1), 1302.101 (b) (2)



¹ Environment Rating Scale

4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

High-quality programs are directed by administrators who have the formal education and professional preparedness to manage the program and lead all staff in providing the most up-to-date practices for educational development. Staff that work with children are also expected to have appropriate education and professional training to work with children and families in their assigned age groups.

4A. DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS*

Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level II or higher
OR _____
Illinois Principal Endorsement

| LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER | PRESCHOOL FOR ALL | HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START |
|---|--|--|
| Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry | Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #15 | Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart I – Human Resources Management Staff qualifications and competency requirements: 1302.91 (a), 1302.91 (b) <i>AND</i> _____ Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry |

*ExceleRate system administrators recognize that achieving the required Credentials in some cases is a major leap in an environment where programs are struggling to maintain DCFS qualified teachers, managing staff turnover, and more. For this reason, we have continued to delay the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B. Programs must continue completing a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) including concrete, achievable goals and action steps the program is making towards meeting the Credential requirements.

4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

4B. STAFF QUALIFICATIONS*

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 with 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)

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry
OR
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #15

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance: 1302 Subpart I – Human Resources Management
Staff qualifications and competency requirements: 1302.91 (a), 1302.91 (e) (1), 1302.91 (e) (2), 1302.91 (e) (3)
AND
Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry

*ExceleRate system administrators recognize that achieving the required Credentials in some cases is a major leap in an environment where programs are struggling to maintain DCFS qualified teachers, managing staff turnover, and more. For this reason, we have continued to delay the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B. Programs must continue completing a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) including concrete, achievable goals and action steps the program is making towards meeting the Credential requirements.

4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

4C. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Individualized, written staff development plans implemented for all classroom staff

AND

Minimum of 20 hours of professional development per year, including minimum of 5 hours of Gateways Registry-approved training yearly

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Staff development plans and hours of professional development verified by state-approved assessor and Gateways Registry
OR
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All monitoring item is in compliance: Checklist item #15
AND
Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS)

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

Head Start Program Performance Standards are in compliance:
1302 Subpart I – Human Resources Management
Training and professional development: 1302.92 (a), 1302.92 (b) (1), 1302.92 (b) (2), 1302.92 (b) (3), 1302.92 (b) (4), 1302.92 (b) (5), 1302.92 (c) (1), 1302.92 (c) (2), 1302.92 (c) (3), 1302.92 (c) (4), 1302.92 (c) (5), 1302.92 (d)

