

ExceleRate® Illinois and Gateways to Opportunity® Credentials

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Licensed Child Care Centers

ExceleRate Illinois has set standards for staff and director qualifications at each Circle of Quality that require staff to have Gateways to Opportunity Credentials. Use the FAQ below to navigate and understand the use of Gateways Credentials throughout ExceleRate.

Director and Staff Qualifications for ExceleRate Illinois

1. How are staff defined by ExceleRate Illinois?

For ExceleRate Illinois Standards and Applications the below staff definitions can be used.

- Program Administrator- Director, Assistant Director, Director/Teacher (when spending 50% or more time in administration role)
- Teaching Staff- Teacher, Assistant Teacher, School-Age Worker or School-Age Assistant

2. Do program staff have to attain a Gateways Credential for ExceleRate eligibility (Standard 4A and 4B)?

All staff should continue to apply for and work towards applicable Gateways Credentials. Once his/her application & documentation is reviewed, he/she will receive an eligibility letter from the Credential Department. If not meeting the Credential requirement for Standard 4A and 4B, the program must submit a detailed Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP), including achievable goals and action steps the staff are making towards meeting the Credential requirements. This includes actual coursework or applicable training for the Credential required that the staff person will complete over the next 12 months (prior to next ExceleRate renewal).

Staff should use the eligibility letter they receive from the Credential Department to select coursework from their chosen college/university. Coursework should be selected based on the content areas still needed towards the credential, as listed in their eligibility letter. If staff have already chosen a college/university, Gateways Credential staff may be able to offer suggestions of coursework that will progress them forward to Credential attainment. If specific training is needed, the eligibility letter will list the training needed.

As additional training/coursework is completed, staff should notify and submit documentation to the Credential program to update their individual Credential file. This will generate an updated eligibility letter from the Gateways Credential program or the award of a Credential. Either the updated eligibility letter or the earned Credential may be used to show evidence of progress as required for ExceleRate eligibility (see #4 below).

Individuals can contact the Gateways Credential Program directly to check on their progress toward a Credential by emailing credentials@ilgateways.com.

3. Are new staff members required to have attained a Credential?

New staff members, those hired within 90 days of the program's application to ExceleRate Illinois, are required to have a Credential application, for the applicable credential in process with Gateways Credential Department. No CQIP is required for these staff members to meet the requirement.

Please Note: It would be good practice for programs to include application to Credentials as part of a new staff Orientation. In the event that turnover within the program occurs, the director/staff will already know where other staff stand in terms of meeting the applicable Credential.

4. How is progress toward a Credential determined?

Standard 4A evidence at Silver and Gold:

- Administrator must hold the applicable Gateways Illinois Director Credential (IDC) or have a pending IDC application on file. If the applicable Credential has not been earned, the program must write a CQIP, using the eligibility letter received from the Gateways Credential Program, to outline goals and action steps needed to earn the applicable Credential. Updated CQIP of detailed accomplishments towards the needed Credential will be required yearly and progress must be shown. Evidence of progress will include either an updated letter from the Gateways Credential Program outlining what items still need to be met or an earned Credential.

Standard 4B evidence at Bronze, Silver and Gold:

- Teaching staff must hold the applicable Gateways ECE Credential or Infant Toddler Credential (ITC) or have a pending Credential application on file. If the applicable Credential has not been earned, the program administrator must write a CQIP to outline goals and action steps, including specific coursework/training, the individual can accomplish over the year to work towards the applicable Credential. The program administrator/staff should use the individualized eligibility letter(s) received from the Gateways Credential Program to guide CQIP development in what coursework/training must be completed. Updated CQIP detailing accomplishments towards Credential attainment will be required yearly and progress must be shown. Evidence of progress will include either an updated letter from the Gateways Credential Program outlining what items still need to be met or an earned credential.

5. What are the qualifications for staff and directors at each ExceleRate Illinois Circle of Quality?

Bronze Circle of Quality

Staff Qualifications

At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of Gateways ECE Credential Level 2 (the ECE Credential at Level 2 does not require an Associate's degree).

For example:

- If the center has 10 teaching staff, at least 3 teachers would need to have a minimum ECE Credential Level 2;
- If the center has 30 teaching staff, at least 9 teachers would need to have a minimum ECE Credential Level 2;
- If the center has 50 teaching staff, at least 15 teachers would need to have a minimum ECE Credential Level 2.

Silver Circle of Quality

Staff Qualifications

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 (Birth up to 23 months) have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 2.

For example:

- If the Center has 10 teaching staff, at least 3 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 3.
 - If the center has 3 infant-toddler teaching staff, at least 1 teacher would need to have a minimum of the Infant Toddler Credential Level 2.
- If the Center has 30 teaching staff, at least 9 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 3
 - If the center has 10 infant-toddler teaching staff, at least 3 teachers would need to have a minimum of the Infant Toddler Credential Level 2.
- If the center has 50 teaching staff, at least 15 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 3.
 - If the center has 15 infant-toddler teaching staff, at least 4 teachers would need to have a minimum of the Infant Toddler Credential Level 2.

Directors Qualifications

Directors will need a Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher.

Gold Circle of Quality

Staff Qualifications

At least 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of Gateways ECE Credential Level 5 and an additional 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 4. 40% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms (Birth up to 23 months) must have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 3.

For example:

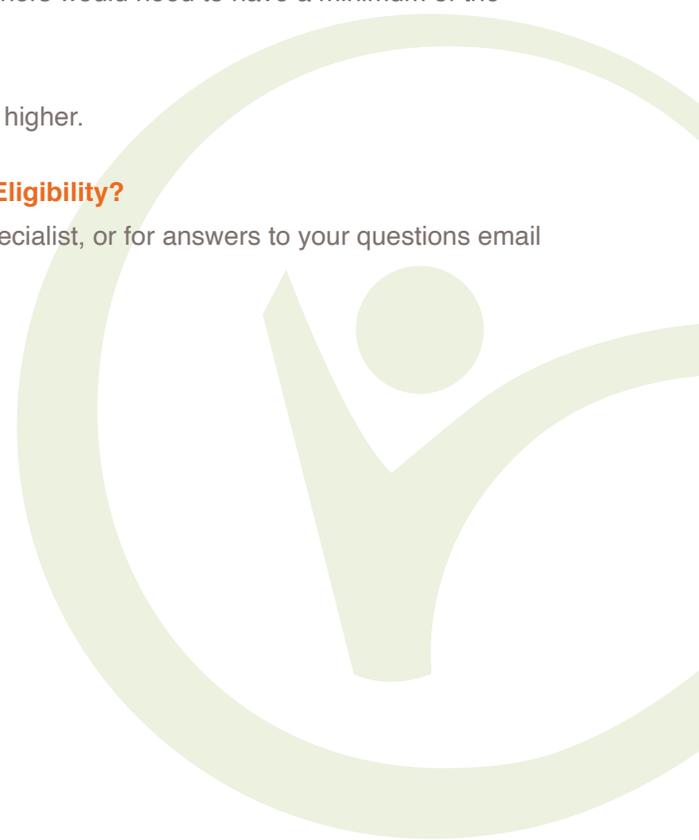
- If the center has 10 teaching staff, at least 2 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 5 AND 2 additional teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 4.
 - If the center has 5 infant-toddler teaching staff, at least 2 teachers would need to have a minimum of the Infant Toddler Credential Level 3.
- If the center has 30 teaching staff, at least 6 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 5 AND 6 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 4.
 - If the center has 10 infant-toddler teaching staff, at least 4 teachers would need to have a minimum of the Infant Toddler Credential Level 3
- If the center has 50 teaching staff, at least 10 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 5 AND 10 teachers would need to have a minimum of the ECE Credential Level 4.
 - If the center has 15 infant-toddler teaching staff, at least 6 teachers would need to have a minimum of the Infant Toddler Credential Level 3.

Director Qualifications

Directors will need a Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level II or higher.

6. How can I learn more, or get further assistance for ExceleRate Eligibility?

Call toll-free (866) 697-8278 and ask to speak with a ExceleRate Specialist, or for answers to your questions email info@exceletrateillinois.com.



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