

Section 1 - Required Training

An on-site Program Administrator and/or teaching staff must complete the following trainings (as specified below) before applying for the Gold Circle of Quality. A Program Administrator may be any person listed in Section 4 of the main application as a Director, Assistant Director, or Director/Teacher. Completion of trainings will be verified by the Gateways Registry.

- 1. Has an on-site Program Administrator completed the *ExceleRate Illinois Orientation* ?** YES NO

- 2. Has the on-site program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff completed ExceleRate approved ERS training?** YES NO
This could include Introduction to ERS (2007-June 2025) or How ERS Works (2025)
2a. Staff should complete training on the Scale used within their classroom (ITERS-3, ECERS-3 or SACERS-U).

- 3. Have all classroom teaching staff completed an ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays?** YES NO

- 4. Has an on-site Program Administrator completed the *Getting Ready for the Program Administration Scale (PAS) 2nd Edition* training?** YES NO

Section 2 - Standards and Evidence

For each question below, check either 'Yes' or 'No' to indicate whether your program meets the standard as listed.

If answering 'Yes', additional information may be required. Completion of required trainings and credentials will be verified by the Gateways Registry.

1A (LEARNING ENVIRONMENT) AND 1C (INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY)

1. In preparation for on-site assessment, the program has completed classroom self-assessment using the applicable ERS for the ages in care. YES NO

Please note:

ITERS-3 is used to assess classrooms with children birth to 36 months at time of assessment.

ECERS-3 is used to assess classrooms with children 36 months to 5 years old at time of assessment.

SACERS-U is used to assess classrooms with children 5 years of age and older.

**If a program has a combined classroom of 2 and 3 year old children, the ITERS-3 will be used to assess classrooms when 75% of the children are under 36 months of age at the time of assessment.*

The ECERS-3 will be used if 75% of the children are 36 months or older at the time of assessment.

1B – CURRICULUM

2. Do you utilize a curriculum in your program that is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines/Standards? YES NO

2a. If Yes, what is the name of the curriculum? _____

- 2b. If Yes, is this curriculum on the list of aligned curricula found on the ExceleRate Illinois website? YES NO

If No, include a narrative description of how the curriculum is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines/Standards.

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3A – PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

3. Please select the four Program Administration Scale (PAS) 2nd Edition subscales below that you wish to be verified on.

- CENTER OPERATIONS
- FISCAL MANAGEMENT
- HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
- PERSONNEL COST AND ALLOCATION
- PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION
- TECHNOLOGY

3B – RATIOS

4. Are you meeting ratios listed below*? YES NO

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)		

**Ratios and group size will be verified on site at the time of the verification visit.*

3C – CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

5. Has your program completed a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan using self-assessment results? YES NO

- If Yes, please enclose a copy of the program’s Continuous Quality Improvement Plan addressing 1A, 1C, 3A at a minimum. Progress on CQIP implementation will be verified on-site by state approved assessor.

4A/4B – DIRECTOR AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

6. Director holds Illinois Director Credential II or higher. YES NO
7. 20% of Teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 4 and 20% of Teaching staff have a minimum of Gateways ECE Level 5. YES NO
8. 40% of Teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 3. YES NO

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.**

Please refer to the ExceleRate/Credentials FAQ for additional details <https://www.exceleRateillinoisproviders.com/docman/resources/61-09-26-14-exceleRate-credential-faq/file>.

4C – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

9. Do all classroom teaching staff in your program have written individualized professional development plans? YES NO
10. Do all classroom teaching staff in your program complete at least 20 hours of professional development per year including a minimum of 5 Gateways Registry-approved training? YES NO

PROGRAM PORTFOLIO

As part of the Gold verification process, a state-approved assessor will be on-site at your program to review several pieces of documentation. Please refer to the Standards Overview for Licensed Child Care Centers and the Getting Ready for the Gold Circle of Quality checklist.

11. Has your program completed an organized program portfolio including all necessary documentation? YES NO
 If No, your program will not meet verification requirements.
12. Have you worked with your IDCFS licensing representative to clear all pending and substantiated violations (from the last 12 months)? YES NO
 To check if your program has violations please visit <https://sunshine.dcf.illinois.gov>

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