

Getting Ready for the Silver Circle of Quality– Licensed Child Care Center 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 Silver 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	Required Attendees (minimum)	Topic/Title
NA	Administrator	ExceleRate Illinois Orientation - <i>Revised 12/21</i>
1A	Administrator 50% of teaching staff	An Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales or How ERS Works*
1B	50% of teaching staff	Training on a specific curriculum or Off the Shelf and Into Practice: Using Your Curriculum Every Day
1F	Administrator 50% of teaching staff	Welcoming Each & Every Child or Special Care
3A	Administrator	Getting Ready for the Program Administration Scale (PAS) - 2nd Edition
3A	Administrator (recommended, not required)	Taking your Program to a Higher Level with PAS- 2nd Edition

*Staff should complete training applicable to the ERS used in their classroom

Credentials

Domain/Standard	Director Qualifications	Staff Qualifications
4A	Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher or Illinois Principal Endorsement	
4B		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

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.**

Self-assessment and CQIP (Standards 1A, 1C, 3A, & 3C)

Programs must work with a CCR&R specialist prior to submitting an application to ExceleRate (including renewal applications). A signed Consultation Agreement must be in place, and coordinated work on Standards 1A, 1C, and 3A (at a minimum) must occur prior to application (see Standard 3C). Programs should plan accordingly and contact their CCR&R specialist as availability may be limited.

Teaching and Learning			
1A. Learning Environment	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
Program, in coordination with CCR&R specialist, completes self-assessment using ITERS-3, ECERS-3, SACERS-U & CQIP (see 3C)	Self-assessment for each classroom (must be completed within the last 6 months)	✓	
Program average overall ERS score at least 3.25 <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 is aligned with the IELG/ IELDS https://www.excelerateillinois.com/licensed-child-care-centers/resources/resources-by-standard	Program provides the name of the aligned curriculum in use on their application <i>Narrative is accepted at application if not currently using an aligned curriculum.</i>	NA <i>(unless providing narrative)</i>	
1C. Instructional Quality			
Program completes self-assessment using ITERS-3, ECERS-3, SACERS-U & CQIP (see 3C)	Self-assessment for each classroom	✓	
ERS average of at least 4.0 on “Language and Literacy (ECERS-3)/Language and Books (ITERS-3)” and 4.0 on “Interactions” (ITERS-3/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			
Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children (birth-5 years) are screened at least annually for the purpose of identifying special needs • All parents are provided screening results • All parents are provided resources on additional evaluation and services 	Verified on-site by state approved assessor via documentation review and director interview, as needed. For credit to be given, all three points as listed in the column to the left (and in ExceleRate Standard 1D) must be addressed in program policy and in practice within the program. <i>NOTE: If screenings are conducted by Child & Family Connections or consultant, policy must address how it occurs and address all three points in the Standard.</i>	NA	
1E. Child Assessment			
Program chooses child assessment tool that aligns with IELG/IELDS https://www.excelerateillinois.com/licensed-child-care-centers/resources/resources-by-standard	Program provides the name of aligned assessment tool in use on their application	NA <i>(unless providing narrative)</i>	
1F. Inclusion of Children with Disabilities or Developmental Delays			
Program has policies and procedures in place for supporting inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays	Review policy and procedures	✓	

Family and Community Engagement			
2A. Family & Community Engagement	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
Program implements at least five family supports (refer to PAS Item #17, p 42 for examples)	Verified on-site by state-approved assessor	NA	NA
Program offers two parent-staff conferences per year	Verified on-site by state-approved assessor via documentation review and director interview/follow-up, as needed. For credit to be given, assessor is looking for a policy in the parent/program handbook that the program offers at least 2 formal conferences to all families annually. In addition, the assessor is also looking for documentation showing that at least 2 conferences have been offered in the previous 12 months to all families (ie. completed & dated sign-up sheets, newsletter or email blast to parents announcing conference sign up, etc).	NA	NA
2B. Transitions			
Program implements policies and practices to provide general information about transitions and engages families in discussions and/or activities addressing child and family transitions	Review policies and practices	✓	
Leadership & Management			
3A. Program Administration	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
Administrator completes PAS self-assessment and CQIP (see 3C)	PAS Self-Assessment (must be completed within the last 6 months)	✓	
Administrator chooses three (3) PAS subscales for verification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Development • Personnel Cost and Allocation • Center Operations • Fiscal Management • Program Planning & Evaluation • Marketing & Public Relations • Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate three (3) subscales on application • Director interview – approximately 30 minutes • Review documentation as needed for PAS based on subscales chosen <p>*PAS Assessment is for CQI purposes only. Verified on-site by state approved assessor</p>	NA	NA
3B. Group Size and Staff/Child Ratios			
Program meets State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) licensing standards on group size & staff/child ratios	Copy of current license	✓	
3C. Continuous Quality Improvement			
Program has a recent signed Consultation Agreement with a CCR&R Specialist (Quality or Infant Toddler Specialist) to review ERS & PAS self-assessment and CQIP development.	Recent signed Consultation Agreement.	✓	
Program develops & submits CQIP based on self-assessment results	Documentation of CQIP completion in other 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). Progress on CQIP must be shown yearly.	✓	

3D. Linguistically & Culturally Appropriate Practice			
Program average ERS score of at least 4.0 on “Promoting Acceptance of Diversity”/”Cultural Awareness” items <i>*Review applicable Scale Tip Sheets at: Preparing for Assessments</i>	Verified on-site by state-approved assessor	NA	NA
Communication in the child’s home language is used whenever possible	Verified on-site by state-approved assessor	NA	NA

Qualifications & Continuing Education

4A. Director Qualifications	Evidence	Submit w/ Application	Completed
Director has Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher	<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. 	*	
4B. Staff Qualifications			
At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 3		*	
At least 30% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 2		*	
4C. Staff Development			
Program has written, individualized professional development plans for all classroom teaching staff; Program has proof of 20 hours of professional development for all classroom teaching staff	Policy and procedures for teaching staff to attain 20 hours of professional development, including how program tracks each teacher’s hours annually	✓	

***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.**

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>	Yes No
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 Silver 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>	Yes No