

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

[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

ERS¹ average overall score:
At least 4.5 with no classroom below a 4.0, verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor
OR
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

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

¹ Environment Rating Scale

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

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

[See Overview of Standards
for Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

1. Teaching & Learning

1C. INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY

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

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

[See Overview of Standards
for Child Care Centers](#)

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

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards
for Child Care Centers](#)

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

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards
for Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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 MOU⁸ 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

[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Illinois State Board of Education
Preschool for All monitoring item
is in compliance: Checklist item
#15
AND _____
Student Information System
(SIS) for data on children

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

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

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards
for Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

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[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

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

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

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**

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

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

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

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[See Overview of Standards for
Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards for Child Care Centers](#)

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)

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

[See Overview of Standards for
Child Care Centers](#)

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

[See Head Start Gold Standards](#)