

# Bronze Circle of Quality

Developed for Licensed Child Care Centers

## 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 administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on the use of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) for program design and continuous improvement**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on ERS verified by Gateways Registry

### 1B. CURRICULUM

**Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on:**

**Illinois Early Learning Guidelines (IELG)<sup>1</sup> / Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS)<sup>2</sup> verified by Gateways Registry**

*AND* \_\_\_\_\_

**Either overview of aligned curricula**

*OR* \_\_\_\_\_

**Training on a specific curriculum that is aligned to the IELG/IELDS**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on IELG<sup>1</sup>/IELDS<sup>2</sup> and either aligned curricula or specific curriculum verified by Gateways Registry

<sup>1</sup> IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years

<sup>2</sup> IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age

## 1. Teaching & Learning

### 1C. INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY

**Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on:**

Illinois Early Learning Guidelines (IELG)<sup>1</sup> / Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS)<sup>2</sup>  
*AND* \_\_\_\_\_

Either overview of aligned curricula

*OR* \_\_\_\_\_

Training on a specific curriculum that is aligned to the IELG<sup>1</sup>/IELDS<sup>2</sup>

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on IELG<sup>1</sup>/IELDS<sup>2</sup> and either aligned curricula or specific curriculum verified by Gateways Registry

### 1D. CHILD SCREENING

**Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools verified by Gateways Registry

<sup>1</sup> IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years

<sup>2</sup> IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age

## 1. Teaching & Learning

### 1E. CHILD ASSESSMENT

**Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on assessment tools**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on assessment tools verified by Gateways Registry

### 1F. INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs verified by Gateways Registry

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## 2. Family & Community Engagement

Engaging and building strong partnerships with families fosters a child's learning 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 administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies verified by Gateways Registry

### 2B. TRANSITIONS

**Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies verified by Gateways Registry

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## 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 families and children by ensuring that all policies and practices are linguistically and culturally appropriate.

### 3A. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

**Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on the Program Administration Scale (PAS)**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on PAS verified by Gateways Registry

### 3B. GROUP SIZE AND STAFF/CHILD RATIOS

**State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing standards on group size and staff/child ratio**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Meets State of Illinois DCFS licensing standards on ratios and group size

## 3. Leadership & Management

### 3C. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

**Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning verified by Gateways Registry

### 3D. LINGUISTICALLY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

**Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on diversity that addresses the relationship between culture, race, and language development and usage**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on linguistic/cultural/racial diversity verified by Gateways Registry

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## 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 (in their assigned age groups) to engage with children and families.

### 4A. DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

**Program meets State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing standards on director qualifications**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Meets State of Illinois DCFS licensing standards on director qualifications

### 4B. STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

**At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of Gateways ECE Credential Level 2\***

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry

\*Initial ExceleRate Illinois applications receive an extension related to staff qualifications. Program staff are required to apply for the Gateways Credentials. Program staff must achieve the Gateways Credentials within the first year of the program's eligibility.

## 4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

### 4C. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

**Program administrator or the staff member responsible for professional development planning has completed ExceleRate-approved training on developing Individualized Professional Development Plans**

#### LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on individualized professional development planning verified by Gateways Registry