

1. Teaching & Learning

1A.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Program demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of classroom environment by completing self-assessment of classroom quality</p>	<p>Program demonstrates high quality of classroom environment</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on ERS verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of ERS¹ self-assessment and CQIP² to address any subscales below 4.5 and/or any classroom score below 4.0; ERS¹ average overall score of 3.25-4.5 with no classroom below 3.0; verified by state-approved assessor⁴</p> <p>OR</p> <p>CLASS³ Emotional Support and Classroom Organization average score: 4.0-5.0 with no classroom below 3.0; CQIP² developed to address scores below 4.0; verified by scores submitted from state-approved assessor⁴</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>ERS¹ average overall score: At least 4.5 with no classroom below a 4.0, verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor⁴</p> <p>OR</p> <p>CLASS³ Emotional Support and Classroom Organization: average scores above 5.0 with no classroom below 4.0 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor⁴</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

1

¹ Environment Rating Scale

² Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

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

⁴ To be prepared for ERS or CLASS assessment/validation the program administrator and 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on the use of the scales verified by Gateways Registry

1. Teaching & Learning

1B.

CURRICULUM

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on: IELG⁵/IELDS⁶</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Either an overview of aligned curricula</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Training on a specific curriculum that is aligned to the IELG⁵/IELDS⁶</p>	<p>Program implements a curriculum that is aligned with the IELG⁵/IELDS⁶ with at least 50% of teaching staff receiving training on the identified curriculum</p>	<p>Program implements a research-based curriculum that aligns with IELG⁵/IELDS⁶ and lesson plans that are connected with IELG⁵/IELDS⁶</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on IELG⁵/IELDS⁶ and either aligned curricula or specific curriculum verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Identification of selected curriculum that aligns with IELG⁵/IELDS⁶</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Evidence that at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training or other ISBE-approved training in that curriculum verified by Gateways Registry</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Identification of selected curriculum that is research-based and is aligned with IELG⁵/IELDS⁶</p> <p>AND</p> <p>On-site verification of connection with lesson plans by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

⁵IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years

⁶IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age

1. Teaching & Learning

1C.

INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on: IELG⁵/IELDS⁶</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Either an overview of aligned curricula</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Training on a specific curriculum that is aligned to the IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on IELG⁵/IELDS⁶ and either aligned curricula or specific curriculum verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>Program demonstrates developmentally appropriate instructional practices as verified by state-approved assessor</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of ERS¹ self-assessment and CQIP² to address any classroom with less than 3.0 on “Interactions” and “Language and Literacy/Listening and Talking” subscales. ERS¹ average score of 4.0 on these subscales; verified by state-approved assessor⁴</p> <p>OR</p> <p>CLASS³ Instructional Support average score: above 2.5 with a CQIP² developed for classrooms with less than 2.0 score on this subscale; verified by scores submitted from state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>Program demonstrates high quality, developmentally appropriate instructional practices</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>ERS¹ score: at least 4.75 average on “Interactions” and “Language and Literacy/Listening and Talking” subscales (with no classroom below a 4.0) as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>CLASS² Instructional Support: average scores above 3.00 (with no classroom below 2.5) as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

3

¹ Environment Rating Scale
² Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

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

⁵ IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years

⁶ IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age

1. Teaching & Learning

1D.

CHILD SCREENING

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all children (birth-5 years) are screened at least annually for the purpose of identifying special needs and parents are provided screening results and information on where they can go for additional evaluation and services</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Self-assessment of screening policies and practices AND _____ Verification by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>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 program; parents are provided information on screening results; and children for whom the screening identifies a developmental concern are referred for further evaluation by Child & Family Connections (CFC)⁷ or school district</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Implement screening with score of 5.0 or higher on PAS⁸ item #10 as verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

⁷ Child and Family Connections

⁸ Program Administration Scale

1. Teaching & Learning

1E.

CHILD ASSESSMENT

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on assessment tools.</p>	<p>Program chooses aligned child assessment tool</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on assessment tools verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Identification of selected assessment tool(s) that aligns with IELG⁵/IELDS⁶ AND _____ Verification by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Implementation of assessment tool with a score of 5.0 or higher on PAS⁸ item #11 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

⁵ IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years

⁶ IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age

⁸ Program Administration Scale

1. Teaching & Learning

1F.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs</p>	<p>Program has policies and procedures in place for supporting inclusion of children with special needs AND Program administrator and 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs</p>	<p>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 MOU⁹ with CFC⁷ (if serving children ages birth to 3)* and implements written policies and procedures detailing how the program supports children who have IEP¹⁰s or IFSP¹¹s; program must also have a written MOU with at least one Local Education Agency concerning services to children with special needs</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Self-assessment of policies and procedures AND Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Implementation verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

⁹ Memorandum of Understanding
⁷ Child and Family Connections

¹⁰ IEP Individual Education Plan
¹¹ IFSP Individual Family Service Plan

* A statewide MOU is in development for CFC's to use with programs. Until a statewide MOU is available, this requirement is waived.

2. Family & Community Engagement

2A.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies</p>	<p>Program implements at least five family supports (see list in PAS⁸ item #17) and two parent-staff conferences per year</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Self-assessment of family engagement practices AND Verification by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>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 PAS⁸ item #17 list and offers two family-staff conferences annually</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Average score of 5.0 or higher on PAS⁸ items #16, #17 and #19 verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

2. Family & Community Engagement

2B.

TRANSITIONS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies</p>	<p>Program implements policies and practices to provide general information about transitions and engages families in discussions and/or activities addressing child and family transitions</p>	<p>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 settings (including transition to kindergarten)</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Self-assessment of transition activities AND _____ Verification by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>AND _____ Program shares this plan with parents and community/school stakeholders</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Implementation and communication of transition plan verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

3. Leadership & Management

3A.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on the Program Administration Scale (PAS)⁸</p>	<p>Program demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of administrative practices</p>	<p>Program demonstrates high quality program administration practices</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on PAS⁸ verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of PAS⁸ self-assessment with a CQIP² to address any subscales below 4.5¹²</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Verification of three program selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment and Family Partnerships) by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>PAS⁸ average overall score: 5.0 or higher verified by on-site assessment, this includes verification of four program selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment, Family Partnerships, or Marketing and Public Relations) by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

²Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

⁸Program Administration Scale

¹²To be prepared for PAS self-assessment/validation the program administrator completes ExceleRate-approved training on the use of the scale verified by Gateways Registry

3. Leadership & Management

3B.

GROUP SIZE AND
STAFF/CHILD RATIOS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p>	<p>INFANTS 6w-14m, Ratio 1:4, Max Group = 8</p> <p>TODDLERS 15m-23m, Ratio 1:4, Max Group = 12</p> <p>TWO YR OLDS Ratio 1:6, Max Group = 12</p> <p>AGES THREE TO FIVE Ratio 1:10, Max Group = 20</p> <p>AGES FIVE Ratio 1:20, Max Group = 20</p> <p>SCHOOL AGE (INCLUDES KINDERGARTEN) Ratio 1:20, Max Group = 30</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Ratios and group size verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

Programs may be exempted from the ratio and group size requirements at Gold Circle of Quality if they have an average score on the ITERS of 5.0 with no classroom below 4.5

AND

Every Infant-Toddler and Two-Year Old classroom has at least one staff person with an Infant-Toddler Level 3 Credential

AND

The program receives an overall Program Administration Scale score of at least 4.5

3. Leadership & Management

3C.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning</p>	<p>Program develops and implements Continuous Quality Improvement Plan using self-assessment results</p>	<p>Program demonstrates progress towards meeting objectives of its Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on self-assessment results</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Program implements a continuous quality improvement process that includes analysis of child and classroom data</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Submit Continuous Quality Improvement Plan and annual report</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Progress made on implementation of self-assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement Plan verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

3. Leadership & Management

3D.

LINGUISTICALLY & CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>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</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of ExceleRate-approved training on linguistic/cultural/racial diversity verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>Program completes a self-assessment of its Linguistically and Culturally appropriate policies and practices, using a recommended tool</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Creates a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on the results</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Children are encouraged to use their home language in play and learning experiences and, wherever possible, program communicates with families in their home language</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Self-assessment results of support for linguistic/cultural diversity verified by state-approved assessor</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Continuous Quality Improvement Plan</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>Program implements evidence-based policies, practices, curriculum and assessments that support the development of linguistically /racially/culturally diverse children and families</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>ERS¹ score: at least 4.5 on “Promoting Acceptance of Diversity” verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Evidence of communication with families in home language verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

4A.

DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards on director qualifications</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards; Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher (Beginning July 2018) OR Illinois Principal Endorsement (Beginning July 2018)</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards; Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level II or higher (Beginning July 2018) OR Illinois Principal Endorsement (Beginning July 2018)</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>
<p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards on director qualifications</p>	<p>Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

4B.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>At least 30% of teaching staff with a minimum of Gateways ECE Credential Level 2</p>	<p>At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 3*</p> <p>AND —————</p> <p>30% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 2 (Beginning July 2018)</p>	<p>At least 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 5* (or equivalent)</p> <p>AND —————</p> <p>An additional 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 4* (or equivalent)</p> <p>AND —————</p> <p>Beginning July 2018, 40% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 3 (or equivalent)</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry</p> <p>OR —————</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry</p> <p>OR —————</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

*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

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator or the staff member responsible for professional development planning has completed ExceleRate-approved training on developing Individualized Professional Development Plans</p>	<p>Program has individualized, written staff development plans developed for all classroom staff AND _____ Minimum of 20 hours Professional Development per year</p>	<p>Individualized, written staff development plans implemented for all classroom staff AND _____ Minimum of 20 hours Professional Development per year including minimum of 5 hours Gateways Registry-approved training per year</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on individualized professional development planning verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff development plans and hours of professional development verified by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff development plans and hours of professional development verified by state-approved assessor and Gateways Registry OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>