

## 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 Silver 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 an on-site Program Administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff completed the *Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS)* training?  YES  NO
3. Has an on-site Program Administrator and at least 50% preschool teaching staff completed *ECERS-3* training?  YES  NO
4. Has an on-site Program Administrator and at least 50% preschool teaching staff completed *CLASS* training?  
*(Note: CLASS can only be chosen for classrooms caring for children 3–5)*  YES  NO  
 N/A - (PROGRAM DOESN'T USE CLASS)
5. Has at least 50% of teaching staff completed an ExceleRate-approved training on aligned curriculum?  
*(as specified under 1B)*  YES  NO
6. Has an on-site Program Administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff completed an ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with special needs?  YES  NO
7. Has an on-site Program Administrator completed the *Getting Ready for the Program Administration Scale (PAS)* training?  YES  NO

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## 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 AND 1C – ASSESSMENT TOOLS

1. Which tool was used for program self-assessment (and will be used for on-site verification)?

ERS

CLASS  
(AGES 3-5 ONLY)

Submit the Assessment Profile Sheet(s)—ITERS-R, ECERS-3, SACERS-U or CLASS Scoring Summary Sheet depending on tool chosen.

**Please Note:**

ITERS-R is used to assess classrooms with children birth thru 35 months.

ECERS-3 is used to assess classrooms with children 36 months to 5 years (unless you have chosen CLASS).

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

If a program has a combined classroom of 2 and 3 year old children, ECERS-3 will be used if 75% or more of the children are age 3 or older at the time of verification. Otherwise ITERS-R will be used to assess the classroom.

### 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? \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 1E – CHILD ASSESSMENT

3. Does your program use an assessment tool that is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards?

YES

NO

3a. If Yes, what is the assessment tool? \_\_\_\_\_

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1F – INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

4. Does your program have policies and procedures that support inclusion of children with special needs?  YES  NO

2B – TRANSITIONS

5. Does your program implement policies and practices to provide general information about transitions and engage parents in discussions and/or activities addressing child and family transitions?  YES  NO

3A – PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

6. Has your program completed a PAS self-assessment?  YES  NO

If Yes, include a copy of the PAS Profile sheet.

7. Please select the three Program Administration Scale (PAS) subscales below that you wish to be verified on.

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

3C – CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

8. 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. (At a minimum, CQIP must address as needed, 1A, 1C, 3A, and 3D)

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3D – LINGUISTICALLY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

9. Has your program completed a self-assessment of the linguistic and cultural appropriateness of your policies and practices, AND created a continuous improvement plan based on the results?  YES  NO

10. In your program, are children encouraged to use their home language in play and learning experiences and, wherever possible, does your program communicate with families in their home language?  YES  NO

4A/4B – DIRECTOR AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Currently, the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B is delayed while we analyze programs’ CQIP plans and progress. Programs not in full compliance are required to include concrete, achievable goals and action steps in their CQIP and also to describe their progress in the annual report. Please make every effort to support your staff and your own efforts to attain the required credentials as quickly as possible. Further information will be announced when the analysis of CQIP plans is complete.

4C – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

11. Do all classroom teaching staff in your program have written individualized professional development plans?  YES  NO

12. Do all classroom teaching staff in your program complete at least 20 hours of professional development per year?  YES  NO

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## PROGRAM PORTFOLIO

The Silver Circle of Quality application requires a two-part verification process (both parts include an on-site visit).

Part one consists of a state approved assessor reviewing several pieces of documentation on site at your program. To make sure you have all required documentation available, please review the *Getting Ready for the Silver Circle of Quality* checklist. All pieces listed must be included in the portfolio in order for your application to move forward to part two. This portfolio includes detailed policies (as required by some standards), self-assessment, CQIP, PAS documentation, etc.

13. Have you completed an organized portfolio inclusive of all required documentation to address ExceleRate standards?

YES

NO

By choosing YES above, you are acknowledging that you have gathered all required documentation for review and you will have these documents available during your part one verification visit. If a complete portfolio is unavailable for review, your program will be ineligible for Silver (and any applicable CCAP add-on will end).

If NO, your program is not ready to apply (should you submit your application and mark NO, your application will be deemed ineligible). Please visit the website for resources and contact your local CCR&R for assistance in getting prepared.

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# Getting Ready for the Silver Circle of Quality–Child Care Center

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 Silver Circle of Quality Standards - to help track the progress. While all areas are important, the following three areas are highlighted due to the amount of time needed to accomplish the domain/standard.

Please refer to the following documents/resources as you use the checklist:

- 1 **Silver Circle of Quality Standards**  
<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/docman/resources/3-silver-excelerate-illinois-chart/file>
- 2 **Training Grid–Required Training for Licensed Child Care Centers**  
<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/docman/resources/24-training-requirement-grid/file>
- 3 **Provider Resources–includes additional resources by standard**  
<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-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 state wide training calendar for availability. For complete details refer to the Training Grid & the Silver Circle of Quality Standards. 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
1A	Administrator 50% of teaching staff	An Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales
1A	Administrator 50% of preschool teaching staff	ECERS-3 Training
1B	50% of teaching staff	Training on a specific curriculum <b>or</b> Off the Shelf and Into Practice: Using Your Curriculum Every Day
1F	Administrator 50% of teaching staff	Welcoming Each & Every Child <b>or</b> Special Care
3A	Administrator	Getting Ready for the Program Administration Scale (PAS)

## Credentials

Domain/Standard	Director Qualifications	Staff Qualifications
4A	Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher <b>or</b> Illinois Principal Endorsement	
4B		At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 3 <b>and</b> 30% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 2

**Recommendation Only:** it is suggested that programs encourage all teaching staff apply for credentials. This is beneficial to programs if/when staff turnover occurs.

## Policies & Procedures

Review the following domain/standard for complete information on what is required.

Domain/Standard	Topic
1D	Child Screening
1F	Inclusion of Children with special needs
2B	Transitions
4C	Staff development

Teaching and Learning				
1A. Learning Environment	Evidence—please note: Portfolio is reviewed on-site during Part 1 of Verification visit	Submit w/ Application	Include in Portfolio	Completed
Program completes self-assessment using ITERS-R, ECERS-3 & SACERS-U	Self-assessment for each classroom	✓	✓	
Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) developed to address any subscale below 4.5 and/or any classroom score below 4.0	Documentation of CQIP	✓	✓	
Program overall score is between 3.25-4.5	Verified on-site by state approved assessor – Part 2 of on-site verification visit	NA	NA	NA
No classroom score below 3.0	Verified on-site by state approved assessor – Part 2 of on-site verification visit	NA	NA	NA
1B. Curriculum				
Program implements a curriculum that is aligned with the IELG/ IELDS <a href="http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-standard">http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-standard</a>	Aligned curriculum chosen and available on-site for use <i>Narrative is accepted at application if not currently using an aligned curriculum.</i>		✓	
1C. Instructional Quality				
Program completes self-assessment using ITERS-R, ECERS-3 & SACERS-U	Self-assessment for each classroom	✓	✓	
CQIP developed to address any classroom with less than 3.0 on the following subscales: Interactions (ECERS-3 28-32; ITERS 25-28) Language Reasoning (ECERS-3 12-16) Listening and Talking (ITERS 12-14)	Documentation of CQIP	✓	✓	
ERS Average score of at least 4.0 on the three subscales above.	Verified on-site by state approved assessor – Part 2 of on-site verification visit	NA	NA	NA
1D. Child Screening				
Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all children (birth-5 years) are screened at least annually for the purpose of identifying special needs</li> <li>• All parents are provided screening results</li> <li>• Parents in need of additional information are provided resources on additional evaluation and services</li> </ul>	Review of policies and procedures		✓	
1E. Child Assessment				
Program chooses child assessment tool that aligns with IELG/IELDS <a href="http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-standard">http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-standard</a>	Aligned child assessment tool chosen and available on-site for use		✓	
1F. Inclusion of Children with Special Needs				
Program has policies and procedures in place for supporting inclusion of children with special needs	Review of policies and procedures		✓	

Family and Community Engagement				
2A. Family & Community engagement	Evidence—please note: Portfolio is reviewed on-site during Part 1 of Verification visit	Submit w/ Application	Include in Portfolio	Completed
Program implements at least five family supports (refer to PAS Item #17, p 42 for examples)	Documentation of family supports offered		✓	
Program implements two parent-staff conferences per year	Review of policies and practices. Documentation that a minimum of two conferences were recently offered.		✓	
2B. Transitions	Evidence			Completed
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—please note: Portfolio is reviewed on-site during Part 1 of Verification visit	Submit w/ Application	Include in Portfolio	Completed
Administrator completes PAS self-assessment	PAS Self-Assessment	✓	✓	
Administrator completes a CQIP to address any subscale score below 4.5	Documentation of CQIP completion	✓	✓	
Administrator chooses three (3) PAS subscales for verification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resource Development</li> <li>• Personnel Cost and Allocation</li> <li>• Center Operations</li> <li>• Fiscal Management</li> <li>• Program Planning &amp; Evaluation</li> <li>• Marketing &amp; Public Relations</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate three (3) subscales on application</li> <li>• Director interview – approximately 30 minutes - Part 1 of on-site verification visit</li> <li>• Review documentation as needed for PAS - Part 1 of on-site verification visit</li> </ul>		✓	
3B. Group Size and Staff/Child Ratios				
Program meets State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing standards on group size & staff/child ratios	Copy of current license	✓		
3C. Continuous Quality Improvement				
Program develops & submits CQIP based on self-assessment results	Documentation of CQIP completion in other standards 1A, 1C, 3A and/or 3D	✓		
3D. Linguistically & Culturally Appropriate Practice				
Program completes self-assessment of linguistically and culturally appropriate policies and practices. Program may use ITERS-R #24, ECERS-3 #26, SACERS-U #26 or other tools as listed on the website	Review self-assessment <i>If using ERS, self-assessment per classroom should be included in portfolio</i>		✓	
Program creates CQIP based on self-assessment	Review CQIP completion		✓	



Qualifications & Continuing Education				
4A. Director Qualifications	Evidence—please note: Portfolio is reviewed on-site during Part 1 of Verification visit	Submit w/ Application	Include in Portfolio	Completed
Director has Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B is delayed while we analyze programs' CQIP plans and progress. Programs not in full compliance are required to include concrete, achievable goals and action steps in their CQIP and also to describe their progress in the annual report. Please make every effort to support your staff and your own efforts to attain the required credentials as quickly as possible. Further information will be announced when the analysis of CQIP plans is complete.</li> <li>Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry</li> </ul>	*		
4B. Staff Qualifications				
At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B is delayed while we analyze programs' CQIP plans and progress. Programs not in full compliance are required to include concrete, achievable goals and action steps in their CQIP and also to describe their progress in the annual report. Please make every effort to support your staff and your own efforts to attain the required credentials as quickly as possible. Further information will be announced when the analysis of CQIP plans is complete.</li> <li>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry</li> </ul>	*		
At least 30% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, the enforcement of Standards 4A and 4B is delayed while we analyze programs' CQIP plans and progress. Programs not in full compliance are required to include concrete, achievable goals and action steps in their CQIP and also to describe their progress in the annual report. Please make every effort to support your staff and your own efforts to attain the required credentials as quickly as possible. Further information will be announced when the analysis of CQIP plans is complete.</li> <li>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry</li> </ul>	*		
4C. Staff Development				
Program has written, individualized professional development plans for all classroom teaching staff	Individualized professional development plans (IPDP)		✓	
Program has proof of 20 hours of professional development for all classroom teaching staff	Review of policy and procedures for teaching staff to attain 20 hours of professional development, including how program tracks each teacher's hours		✓	

**\*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.**

*To check if your program has violations please visit <https://sunshine.dcf.illinois.gov/>*

Yes

No

**Provider has an organized Program Portfolio inclusive of information above (all information in the “Include in Portfolio” column)**

*If no, your program is not yet ready to apply for the Silver Circle of Quality.*

Please contact your CCR&R Specialist for technical assistance to complete your portfolio.

Yes

No

