

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.

¹ Environment Rating Scale

² Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

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

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

1A. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Program demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of classroom environment by completing a self-assessment of classroom quality

AND

Verification of classroom quality by state-approved assessor

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

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

OR

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

OR

Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

ERS¹ average overall score: 3.25-4.5 with no classroom below 3.0; CQIP² developed to address any subscale below 4.5 and/or any classroom overall score below 4.0; verified by scores submitted from state approved assessor

OR

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 on-site assessment by state-approved assessor

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

In compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards

1. Teaching & Learning

1B. CURRICULUM

Program implements a curriculum that is aligned with the IELG⁵/IELDS⁶ with at least 50% of teaching staff receiving training on the identified curriculum

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Identification of selected curriculum that aligns with IELG⁵/IELDS⁶
AND _____
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
OR _____
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

In compliance with Preschool for All grant requirements at the Gold Circle of Quality

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

In compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards

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

1C. INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY

Program demonstrates developmentally appropriate instructional practices as verified by state approved assessor

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Documentation of ERS¹ self-assessment and CQIP² to address any classroom with less than 3.0 on “Interactions and Language Reasoning/Listening and Talking” subscales. ERS¹ average score of 4.0 on these subscales; verified by state-approved assessor⁴

OR

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

OR

Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

ERS¹ average score: 4.0 on “Interactions” and “Language Reasoning/ Listening and Talking” subscales; CQIP² developed to address any classroom with less than 3.0 on these subscales; verified by scores submitted from state-approved assessor

OR

CLASS³ Instructional Support average score: above a 2.5 with a CQIP² developed for classrooms with less than a 2.0 score on this subscale; verified by on-site assessment by state-approved assessor

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

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¹ Environment Rating Scale

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

1. Teaching & Learning

1D. CHILD SCREENING

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

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Self-assessment of screening policies and practices
AND _____
Verification by state-approved assessor
OR _____
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

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1. Teaching & Learning

1E. CHILD ASSESSMENT

Program chooses aligned child assessment tool

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

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

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

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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

1F. INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Program has policies and procedures in place for supporting inclusion of children with special needs

AND _____

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

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

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

In compliance with Preschool for All grant requirements at the Gold Circle of Quality

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

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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 implements at least five family supports (see list in PAS⁷ item #17) and two parent-staff conferences per year

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER	PRESCHOOL FOR ALL	HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START
Self-assessment of family engagement practices <i>AND</i> _____ Verification by state-approved assessor <i>OR</i> _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body	In compliance with Preschool for All grant requirements at the Gold Circle of Quality	In compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards

2. Family & Community Engagement

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

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Self-assessment of transition activities
AND _____
Verification by state-approved assessor
OR _____
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

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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 demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of administrative practices

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER	PRESCHOOL FOR ALL	HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START
<p>Documentation of PAS⁷ self-assessment with a CQIP² to address any subscales below 4.5⁸</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>Verification of three program selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment, Family Partnerships and Staff Qualifications) by state-approved assessor</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>In compliance with Preschool for All grant requirements at the Gold Circle of Quality</p>	<p>In compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards</p>

² Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

⁷ Program Administration Scale

⁸ To be prepared for PAS self assessment 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

Program meets State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing standards

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER	PRESCHOOL FOR ALL	HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START
<p>Meets State of Illinois DCFS licensing standards on ratios and group size</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>In compliance with Preschool for All grant requirements at the Gold Circle of Quality</p>	<p>In compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards</p>

3C. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Program develops and implements Continuous Quality Improvement Plan using self-assessment results

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER	PRESCHOOL FOR ALL	HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START
<p>Submit Continuous Quality Improvement Plan and annual report</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>In compliance with Preschool for All grant requirements at the Gold Circle of Quality</p>	<p>In compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards</p>

3. Leadership & Management

3D. LINGUISTICALLY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

Program completes a self-assessment of its Linguistically and Culturally appropriate policies and practices, using a recommended tool

AND

Creates a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on assessment results

AND

Children are encouraged to use their home language in play and learning experiences and, wherever possible, program communicates with families in their home language

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Self-assessment results of support for linguistic/cultural diversity verified by state-approved assessor

AND

Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

OR

Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

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

4A. DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher (Beginning July 2018)

OR

Illinois Principal Endorsement (Beginning July 2018)

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry
OR
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

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4B. STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

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 (Beginning July 2018)

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry
OR
Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body

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*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 has individualized, written staff development plans developed for all classroom staff

AND _____

Minimum of 20 hours of professional development per year

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER

Staff development plans
and hours of professional
development verified by
state-approved assessor

OR _____

Accredited sites: Evidence from
state-approved accrediting body

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

In compliance with Preschool
for All grant requirements at
the Gold Circle of Quality

HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START

In compliance with the
Head Start Program
Performance Standards