

ExceleRate® Illinois – Steps to Apply Licensed Child Care Centers Gold Assessment Path

1. Attend an ExceleRate Illinois Orientation
2. Review the ExceleRate Illinois Quality Standards Overview
<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/docman/resources/13-overview-of-charts/file>
3. Review the Circle of Quality charts for details of evidence needed <http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com>
select: *How it Works / Licensed Child Care* and then select the specific circle
4. Select the Circle of Quality your program will work towards and apply for
5. Complete required training
<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com> select: *How it Works / Licensed Child Care*
6. Follow these steps for chosen Circle of Quality
 - Sign Consultant Agreement (if Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Specialist is providing consultation).
 - Complete classroom and program self-assessments using ECERS-R, ITERS-R, SACERS-U, and PAS 2nd Edition and other program standards as needed.
 - Complete the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) Worksheet/Summary, as necessary.
 - Apply for Gateways Credentials as needed.
 - Create portfolio inclusive of all ExceleRate Illinois documentation for on-site review.
7. Work with your Illinois Department of Children & Family Services licensing representative to clear program violations.
To check if your program has violations, please visit: <https://sunshine.dcf.illinois.gov/>
8. Submit completed application packet to INCCRRA. An application packet consists of:
 - Complete Application
 - A supplemental application for specific Circle of Quality
 - Any required documentation as specified by the Circle of Quality chart
9. INCCRRA will review the initial application packet and within 15 business days will communicate with the program.
When the program is ready to receive their on-site assessment visit, National Louis University McCormick Center will be in contact within 2 weeks to schedule the assessment window.
10. Program is to have a complete, organized PROGRAM PORTFOLIO with all necessary information included at the time of the assessment visit. The McCormick Center assessor will review this portfolio as part of the assessment visit to determine if ExceleRate Illinois standard(s) are being met. **All documentation must be provided by the conclusion of the assessment visit.**

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For the Gold Circle of Quality, the portfolio must include:

- 1B.** Documentation of use of a research based curriculum that aligns with Illinois Early Learning Guide/Illinois Early Learning Development Standards (IELG/IELDS), as well as proof of connection with lesson plans. **NOTE: if the program is not currently using a curriculum that aligns with IELG/IELDS, program may submit a narrative on how the curriculum in use aligns as part of the ExceleRate application. Program must submit a crosswalk to the Governors Office of Early Childhood Development demonstrating alignment for your chosen curriculum.**
- 1D.** Policy and procedures to ensure all children (birth-5) are screened at least annually and no later than 60 days after entry into program; parents are provided screening results; if a developmental concern is identified, children are referred to CFC/school district (verified on-site using Program Administration Scale (PAS) item #10).
- 1E.** Documentation of use of a child assessment tool that aligns with the curriculum to document children’s progress over time with measurable outcomes. Results are used to inform instruction of individual children (verified on-site using PAS item #11).
- 1F.** Documentation that program has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local Child and Family Connections (CFC) office (if serving children birth 0–3); Policy and procedures detailing how the program supports children who have IEPs or IFSPs (verified on-site using PAS item #10, indicator 7.3). **NOTE: MOU requirement is waived until a statewide MOU format is approved.**
- 2A.** Policies and procedures that program implements practices to ensure strong partnerships with families and within their community (verified on-site using PAS items #16, 17 & 19).
- 2B.** Policy and procedures related to transition, including transition of children/families into or out of classrooms, early learning environments, community services and school setting including transition to kindergarten. Policy must include how this information is shared with parents and community/school stakeholders.
- 3A.** Program chooses 4 PAS subscales to be assessed on. Documentation varies based on which 4 subscales are chosen. **NOTE: Child Assessment, Family Partnerships, and Marketing & Public Relations are covered in other ExceleRate standards and cannot be chosen for 3A.**
- 3B.** Ratios and group size to be verified on site. (Programs may be exempt from this standard. Refer to Gold Circle of Quality Chart.)
- 3C.** Documentation of recent self-assessment/CQIP showing progress has been made on meeting objectives as developed in the CQIP. CQIP should include analysis of child and classroom level data.
- 3D.** Documentation of evidence-based policies, practices, curriculum and assessments that support the development of culturally/racially/linguistically diverse children and families (verified on-site using ERS “Promoting Acceptance of Diversity” subscale); Documentation that program communicates with families in their home language.
- 4C.** Policy and procedures for classroom teaching staff to attain 20 hours of professional development annually (including 5 Gateways Registry approved hours). Policy should include how the program tracks each teacher’s training hours. Individual Staff Development Plans for all classroom teaching staff. **NOTE: INCCRRA will verify 5 Gateways Registry-Approved hours for all classroom teaching staff. College coursework in Early Childhood Education/Child Development completed within the last 12 months may be accepted. A grade of “C” or better is required. College transcript must be provided.**