

The information below applies to any center that currently has an ExceleRate Illinois Bronze, Silver or Gold Circle of Quality through the Licensed Child Care Center Assessment Path.

The program site contact received email communication on December 10, 2024 announcing the ExceleRate transition to using ITERS-3 in classrooms with children birth to 36 months. Please see additional information below related to this transition and make sure to save for future reference.

To learn more about ITERS-3, please visit:

**[Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale®, Third Edition \(ITERS-3™\) | Environment Rating Scales®](#)**

### 1. When will ExceleRate begin using ITERS-3?

Assessment in classrooms with children birth to 36 months scheduled for JANUARY 1, 2026 and beyond will include **ITERS-3**. ITERS-3 training requirement and ITERS-3 self-assessment will also be required.

However, please be aware of the timeframes included in the following questions.

### 2. How does this affect a center that holds an ExceleRate Bronze, Silver or Gold Circle of Quality?

ExceleRate Illinois will transition to using **ITERS-3** instead of ITERS-R over the course of several months. Programs with renewal months of JANUARY 2025 - SEPTEMBER 2025 will continue using ITERS-R, ECERS-3, SACERS-U for classroom self-assessment, as well as on-site assessment.

Beginning with OCTOBER 2025 renewals (and beyond), **ITERS-3** requirements will start.

*\*See detail below in #3 & #4 for programs starting with October, November, & December 2025 renewal months.*

As a reminder, a Circle of Quality is granted for a 3-year eligibility period. The month the center was initially found eligible for ExceleRate is the center's renewal month. Each year, the center must submit an ExceleRate annual report with specific information required to maintain the Circle of Quality. At the end of the 3-year eligibility period, the center must meet all ExceleRate requirements including training, self-assessment, as well as on-site assessment scores and verification of additional ExceleRate standards.

### 3. When will ITERS-3 requirements be implemented for the Licensed Child Care Center Assessment Path?

Centers with a reporting month of October, November or December 2025 should pay particular attention to the details below:

- Annual Report (October, November, December 2025) - Centers should be learning about ITERS-3, attending ITERS-3 training as available, and completing self-assessment using the ITERS-3 assessment tool in preparation for future on-site assessment. *At your next 3-year renewal, you will need to meet the 3-year requirements listed below.*
- Three-year Renewal (October, November, December 2025) - Centers at the end of the 3-year eligibility period will need to:
  - Have the on-site program administrator and 50% of teaching staff (who care for children birth to 36 months) complete ExceleRate approved ITERS-3 training.
  - Complete classroom self-assessment using ITERS-3.
  - Complete on-site assessment requirement, inclusive of the ITERS-3.

### 4. My center holds a Bronze Circle of Quality, does this affect us?

A center can hold a Bronze Circle of Quality for two, 3-year periods. If a center has reached the threshold for maintaining Bronze, they must apply to Silver or Gold (and meet requirements) in order to remain in ExceleRate Illinois (above the Licensed Circle of Quality).

- If the center's renewal month is October, November or December 2025 (or after), in order to move up, **ITERS-3** requirements apply, including:
  - The on-site program administrator and 50% of teaching staff (who care for children birth to 36 months) must complete ExceleRate approved ITERS-3 training.
  - Classroom self-assessment using ITERS-3.
  - On-site assessment inclusive of the ITERS-3.

## 5. Why do programs with an October, November and December 2025 renewal include ITERS-3?

*(If ITERS-3 assessments will not begin until after January 1, 2026)*

When a program submits their ExceleRate renewal application to INCCRRA, there is potential for the application to be incomplete. To allow the center time to complete needed requirements, ExceleRate policy and procedure allows for a pending timeframe for the center to complete the requirements. Due to this, it is likely that a center renewing in October, November and December 2025 would have an assessment window after January 1, 2026.

## 6. What is the wait time from when a center submits their 3-year renewal paperwork to when the on-site assessment may occur?

The McCormick Institute for Early Childhood, Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University (NLU) schedules on-site assessment windows for Silver and Gold licensed child care centers, licensed family child care providers, and Head Start programs after each application is processed and information is provided by INCCRRA.

As the application process is on-going, no definite timeframe can be provided for how many weeks out the assessment window will be. As mentioned above in #5, there is also a pending application timeframe that may be granted for programs missing documentation. Generally, a program should anticipate the assessment window will be scheduled at least 6-8 weeks from the notice received from INCCRRA (sometimes less, sometimes more). Scheduling depends on several factors, including number of programs in the queue for assessment, number of classrooms within each center, etc.

## 7. When will the ITERS-3 provider training be available?

The current Introduction to ERS training will be revised to include information on the ITERS-3. We anticipate provider training will be available in Summer 2025. We are also investigating the possibility of a stand-alone ITERS-3 training.

Centers with a renewal month of October 2025- December 2026 will be prioritized for the initial ITERS-3 training offered (if the center is up for 3-year renewal/receiving on-site assessment). *We are making the assumption that ExceleRate eligibility will be maintained at the program's 2025 annual report.*

The ITERS-3 training will be required for the on-site center administrator and 50% of teaching staff who care for children birth to age 36 months so that centers can successfully implement the tool in their classrooms.

When the ITERS-3 training options (discussed above) are finalized, we will be able to share more details.

## 8. When can my local CCR&R Quality Specialist and Infant Toddler Specialist start providing technical assistance on ITERS-3?

The NLU assessment team will be trained to reliability on ITERS-3 starting in late Spring 2025 and into Summer 2025.

CCR&R Quality Specialists and Infant Toddler Specialists will receive training on the ITERS-3 in Summer 2025. Once center staff have completed the ITERS-3 training, specialists will be available to assist with implementing the ITERS-3 assessment tool in classrooms. Specialists will not be doing one-on-one ITERS-3 training to individual centers, as we do not have the capacity to support that. Staff should attend training to learn about the Scale, complete an ITERS-3 self-assessment of infant and toddler classrooms and then schedule time with a specialist.

## 9. Who should I contact if I have questions around the ITERS-3 implementation?

As details and specific timeframes around provider training are finalized, communication will be sent through email to the ExceleRate site contact. The ExceleRate Illinois website, [www.excelerateillinois.com](http://www.excelerateillinois.com), will also have limited information under "Upcoming Changes".

If you have questions on renewal timeframes or specifics related to your center's ExceleRate eligibility, please contact INCCRRA at 866-697-8278 to speak with an ExceleRate Counselor or you can submit email at [info@excelerateillinois.com](mailto:info@excelerateillinois.com).



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ExceleRate® Illinois is administered through INCCRRA under the joint direction of the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois State Board of Education.