

ADD-ONS AVAILABLE FOR ILLINOIS FAMILY CHILD CARE/GROUP HOME PROVIDERS

December 2025

QUALITY ADD-ONS

Quality add-ons are available through two statewide systems in Illinois.

ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality recognition and improvement system available for licensed family child care home providers and group home providers, as well as licensed child care centers, Head Start and Preschool for All programs. ExceleRate Illinois for family child care providers includes Circles of Quality as outlined below.

- Licensed Circle of Quality reflects compliance with Illinois Child Care Licensing standards. All licensed providers are automatically included at the Licensed Circle of Quality.
**There is no quality add-on for programs at the Licensed Circle of Quality.*
- Bronze Circle of Quality includes completion of a robust series of trainings for the family child care provider and assistant, as well as recognition of qualifications and professional development. The provider must complete training and other requirements and submit application to the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). Family child care providers can hold a Bronze Circle of Quality for three, 3-year periods. The Bronze trainings provide foundational knowledge to help the provider continue to make quality improvements within their program with the goal to transition to application at the Silver or Gold Circle of Quality by the end of the nine-year eligibility period. If a provider does not prepare and apply to advance to the Silver or Gold Circle of Quality by the end of the nine-year eligibility period, they will be moved to the Licensed Circle of Quality.
**There is no quality add-on for programs that achieve a Bronze Circle of Quality.*
- Silver Circle of Quality recognizes the completion of training, program self-assessment and implementation of a continuous quality improvement plan in coordination with a CCR&R Specialist. On-site verification by a state approved assessor also occurs. The provider must complete training and other requirements and submit the application and additional documentation to INCCRRA.
**Licensed programs who apply for and are awarded the Silver Circle of Quality may receive a 10% quality add-on for each child eligible for the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) each month. The add-on is automatically applied through CCAP payments the month following ExceleRate Illinois eligibility.*
- Gold Circle of Quality recognizes programs which have demonstrated quality on all seventeen standards, as verified on-site by a state approved assessor. The provider must complete training and other requirements and submit the application and additional documentation to INCCRRA.
**Licensed programs who apply for and are awarded the Gold Circle of Quality may receive a 15% quality add-on for each child eligible for the IDEC CCAP each month. The add-on is automatically applied through CCAP payments the month following ExceleRate Illinois eligibility.*

Eligibility criteria, applications, and resources are available on the ExceleRate Illinois website at www.excelebrateillinois.com.

ExceleRate Illinois is administered through INCCRRA under the direction of the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC).

Gateways Training Tiers is the statewide quality improvement system for Illinois license-exempt family child care providers. Training is categorized in three Training Tiers. Each Tier includes modules from the Illinois Gateways to Opportunity ECE Credential Level 1 and covers health, safety, nutrition, child development, and much more. License-exempt family child care providers that complete the specified training are eligible to receive additional compensation if caring for children eligible for the IDEC CCAP. A license exempt family child care provider must complete at minimum, the Gateways Training Tier Orientation and the Gateways Training Tier 1 trainings prior to submitting an application for a Training Tier certificate and applicable add-ons below.

Training Tier 1- 10% quality add-on per CCAP child
Training Tier 2- 15% quality add-on per CCAP child
Training Tier 3- 20% quality add-on per CCAP child

It is important to note that while any Illinois child care practitioner, teacher, assistant, etc., can complete the Gateways to Opportunity ECE Credential Level 1 modules, Gateways Training Tiers (and applicable quality add-ons) represent a quality improvement system for Illinois license-exempt family child care providers specifically. Additional information on Gateways Training Tiers, including the application is available at www.ilgateways.com/credentials/gateways-training-tiers

The Gateways Training Tiers are administered by INCCRRA on behalf of Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC).

SENIORITY/LONGEVITY ADD-ONS

Seniority/longevity add-ons were negotiated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) on behalf of family child care provider union members and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) in the 2023-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement. These seniority add-ons are based on a providers' years of service in conjunction with the provider attaining a quality rating (specified Circle of Quality through ExceleRate Illinois or Gateways Training Tier). Eligibility is determined annually based on provider status in June. Seniority add-ons are issued quarterly from the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC), the Agency who oversees the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) as of July 1, 2026.

Seniority/longevity add-ons are separate from any quality add-ons for either ExceleRate Illinois or Gateways Training Tiers. Eligibility for seniority/longevity add-ons is listed below.

Licensed Homes and Group Homes

Upon achieving 60 months of providing services in the CCAP program, licensed providers with a Bronze, Silver or Gold quality rating shall receive an additional 3.0% seniority/longevity add on.

Upon achieving 120 months of providing services in the CCAP program, licensed providers with a Bronze, Silver or Gold quality rating shall receive an additional 5% seniority/longevity add on.

License-exempt Homes

Upon achieving 60 months of providing services in the CCAP program, licensed exempt providers with a Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 quality rating shall receive an additional 3.0% seniority /longevity add on.

Upon achieving 120 months of providing services in the CCAP program, licensed exempt providers with a Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 quality rating shall receive an additional 5% seniority/longevity add on.

Questions specific to Seniority/longevity add-ons should be directed to DEC.ChildCare@illinois.gov.

Please include the following information in your email:

Family child care provider name/program name

Illinois Child Care License Number (if applicable)

IDEC Provider Number

Circle of Quality achieved– Bronze, Silver or Gold (if licensed)

Gateways Training Tier achieved- 1, 2, 3 (if license exempt)