

Professional Development Advisor Program (PDA) Resources



Additional Funding Resources

This page of the Gateways to Opportunity website provides information and links for funding opportunities related to early care and education in the state of Illinois.

www.ilgateways.com/financial-opportunities/additional-funding-programs

Smart Start Workforce Grants – Smart Start Workforce Grants offer child care programs stable, ongoing funds that they need to cover costs and invest in quality staff without burdening families by raising tuition or Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) co-pays.

<https://www.ilgateways.com/smart-start/smart-start-workforce-grants>

Business Planning and Mentoring

Child Care Aware of America – Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA) is a national organization that supports the child care system. The resources on this page provide information about the steps to take to open a child care business.

<https://www.childcareaware.org/opening-a-child-care-program/>

Find your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (CCR&R) – This website helps individuals locate the CCR&R that serves the county in which they live. www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch

Gateways Job Board – The Gateways Job Board allows individuals to post open positions and/or search for open positions in early care and education in the state of Illinois.

www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/job-board

Women's Business Development Center – Chicago – The Women's Business Development Center offers services and support for businesses owned by women. www.wbdc.org

Career Information

Careers in Early Care & Education – This national directory provides information for those who are considering a career in Early Care & Education, including descriptions of various career options.

<https://www.teachecnationalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Career-Guide-6th-ed-2023-On-Screen.pdf>

Illinois Cares for Kids – Explore Early Education and Care careers such as Child Care Provider, Early Intervention Provider, and Home Visitor. <https://illinoiscaresforkids.careers/>

Classroom Resources

Illinois Early Learning Project – The Illinois Early Learning Project provides evidence-based, reliable information on early care and education for families, caregivers, and teachers of young children in Illinois. Many of the resources come in a short, one page, handout style format. illinoisearlylearning.org

College/University Information

Community college district maps – This website has several different community college district maps, including one that overlays each district with the counties in Illinois.

http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/IL_Community_Colleges_Map.pdf

Community college locator – This tool helps you find your local community college. You may search via zip code, or select a particular school to learn the zip codes served by that college. <http://iccbdsrv.iccb.org/zipcodes/home.cfm>

Gateways Scholarship Program participating institutions – This is a list of Illinois colleges and universities that participate in the Gateways Scholarship Program.

www.ilgateways.com/financial-opportunities/scholarship/participating-institutions

Gateways to Opportunity Higher Education Directory – This is a listing of Gateways to Opportunity Entitled colleges and universities in Illinois who offer Gateways Credential aligned coursework in Early Care and Education and other areas of study related to caring for and educating children.

www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/2016-10-21-21-43-02

Higher education institutions in Illinois – This interactive map from the Illinois Board of Higher Education allows you to search for various types of higher education institutions (public, private, and independent colleges and universities, private and business vocational schools, etc.) https://www.ibhe.org/HigherEd_Map.html

iTransfer/Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) – resource helps students, new and returning, with transfer between Illinois institutions of higher education. <https://itransfer.org/>

Transferology – Transferology is a nationwide network that helps students explore college transfer options by allowing them to search their completed coursework to see which schools in the Transferology network have matching courses that may be awarded when they transfer. <https://transferology.com/index.htm>

ExceleRate/Gateways Program Information

ExceleRate® Illinois – ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality recognition and improvement system designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. www.exceletrateillinois.com

Gateways Credentials – Gateways Credentials are symbols of professional achievement that show your knowledge, skills, and experience in caring for and educating children. www.ilgateways.com/credentials

Gateways Professional Development Advisor Program – A Professional Development Advisor (PDA) is an experienced professional who will assist you with planning and achieving your educational and career goals. www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/pda

Gateways Registry – A Gateways Registry membership offers a quick and easy way to track your training and education online, and meets Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) licensing requirements. registry.ilgateways.com

Gateways Scholarship Program – The Gateways Scholarship Program will pay a portion of tuition for eligible professionals working in early care and education or school-age programs who want to earn college credit, Credentials, or degrees. www.ilgateways.com/index.php/financial-opportunities/scholarship

Great START Wage Supplement Program – Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers) is a wage supplement program that acknowledges child care practitioners who have completed college coursework, and stay at their current place of employment. www.ilgateways.com/financial-opportunities/great-start

Financial Aid Resources

Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship – The Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship supports professionals who live and/or work in Chicago, and wish to pursue an early care and education credential, degree, or licensure. www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/chicagoearlylearning/home/scholarships.html

Federal Student Aid (Office of the US Department of Education) – This government website provides information on several different forms of financial aid, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

FinAid – This website is a free resource regarding student financial aid information and advice. www.finaid.org

Gateways Scholarship Program – The Gateways Scholarship Program may pay up to 100% of tuition for eligible professionals working in early care and education or school-age programs. www.ilgateways.com/financial-opportunities/scholarship

Hispanic Scholarship Fund – The Hispanic Scholarship Fund provides scholarships and support services to as many exceptional Hispanic American students as possible. www.hsf.net

Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) – This website houses a wide array of resources regarding going back to school, including information on various scholarships and grants, student loan information and other resources. www.isac.org

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) Licensing Standards

IDCFS (main website) – IDCFS provides various services and supports for children, families, and early care and education professionals in the state of Illinois. IDCFS is responsible for all child care program licensing in the state of Illinois. www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/Pages/default.aspx

IDCFS licensing process – This page of the IDCFS website provides basic guidance regarding the licensing process for child care centers, child care homes, and child care group homes. Links to local licensing offices are also available on this page. sunshine.dcf.illinois.gov/Content/Licensing/BecomeLicensed.aspx

IDCFS licensing standards (Day Care Centers) – This is a portion of the IDCFS licensing standards that provides information on the requirements that must be met for someone to be qualified to work in select positions within an IDCFS licensed child care center or family child care home.

<https://dcf.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dcf/documents/about-us/policy-rules-and-forms/documents/rules/rules-407.pdf>

IDCFS licensing standards (Family Child Care Homes) – This is a portion of the IDCFS licensing standards that provides information on the requirements that must be met for someone to be qualified to work in select positions within an IDCFS licensed family child care home. <https://dcf.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dcf/documents/about-us/policy-rules-and-forms/documents/rules/rules-406.pdf>

IDCFS licensing standards (Group Home Care) – This is a portion of the IDCFS licensing standards that provides information on the requirements that must be met for someone to be qualified to work in an IDCFS licensed child care group home. <https://dcf.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dcf/documents/about-us/policy-rules-and-forms/documents/rules/rules-408.pdf>

Illinois State Board of Education Licensure

Directory of Approved Programs for Educator Licensure through ISBE – This resource provides information regarding accepted Professional Development providers for ISBE licensure renewal. <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Professional-Development-for-Educators.aspx>

Renewal and Professional Development for ISBE Licensure – This directory allows you to search for Illinois colleges and universities that offer approved teacher licensure programs. www.isbe.net/Pages/IHE.aspx

Professional Certifications and Credentials

Aim 4 Excellence National Director Credential – Aim 4 Excellence is an online national director credential for early childhood administrators. mccormickcenterelearning.nl.edu/ets/store/item/?id=f714549e-4321-11e8-a98f-028f4e512bac

Child Care Professional/CCP (National Early Childhood Program Accreditation/NECPA) – The Child Care Professional (CCP) recognizes professionals who exhibit standards of excellence in child care and early childhood education. necpa.net/page/ccp

Child Development Associate/CDA (CDA Council) – The Child Development Associate (CDA) is designed to assess and credential early childhood education professionals. www.cdacouncil.org

Early Intervention (EI) Credential – Provider Connections through Western Illinois University provides information and resources about Early Intervention, including the Early Intervention Credential application required for all EI providers. www.wiu.edu/ProviderConnections

Gateways to Opportunity Credentials – Gateways Credentials are symbols of professional achievement that show knowledge, skills, and experience in caring for and educating children. www.ilgateways.com/credentials

Illinois State Board of Education Educator Licensure – Here you will find information regarding Illinois licensing requirements. www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure.aspx

Training Resources

Care Courses – The Care Courses School offers over 60 online trainings focused on early care and education, school-age care, and early care and education administration.

www.carecourses.com/PublicPages/Home.aspx

Child Care Education Institute (CCEI) – Child Care Education Institute offers online trainings and certificates for early childhood professionals. www.cceionline.com

Coursework and training resources for Gateways Credentials – The “Coursework/Training Resources” section of this page provides documents that outline various Gateways Credential approved trainings and training bundles. This portion of the website also includes a Director Tool Kit and Credential Flowchart.

www.ilgateways.com/index.php/additional-information-and-forms

Find your local CCR&R – This website helps individuals locate the CCR&R that serves the county in which they live.

www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch

Gateways iLearning website – This website houses many Registry approved online trainings, including many required for IDCFS licensing, the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), ExceleRate Illinois, and more.

courses.inccrra.org

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Virtual Training Center – This site contains many different on-demand trainings, some of which are required for those working in IDCFS licensed child care centers and child care homes.

<https://learning.dcf.illinois.gov/en/index-por>

*For the Day Care Home Licensing Orientation Training: hdl.dcfstraining.org/jsp/index.jsp

*For the IDCFS Mandated Reporter training: <https://mandatedreporter.dcf.illinois.gov/en/index-man>

Illinois Resource Center (IRC) – The Illinois Resource Center (IRC) provides assistance to teachers and administrators serving linguistically and culturally diverse students.

<https://www.thecenterweb.org/programs/irc-programs-for-the-english-language-learners/>

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Regional Offices of Education – This website contains various information about the Regional Offices of Education (ROE), including a link to search a database that will list ROEs and their Superintendents by county. www.isbe.net/roe

McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University – The McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University offers online training for leaders and administrators in early childhood programs, including the Aim 4 Excellence National Director Credential.

mccormickcenterelearning.nl.edu/ets/home

Penn State Extension Better Kid Care Program – Better Kid Care, a program administered through Penn State Extension, provides online, on demand distance education and professional development.

extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/lessons

Town Square – Town Square provides individualized support and technical assistance for family child care professionals. townsquareil.org

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