



**GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY**  
Illinois Professional Development System

## **Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) New Member Orientation Acronym and Definition List**

The Access and Outreach Committee of PDAC assembled the following list of acronyms and definitions in the early care and education and school-age and youth development fields in Illinois to acquaint new PDAC members with some commonly used terms. The following list explains acronyms that are frequently referenced in PDAC discussions. This list is not comprehensive, nor does it provide complete definitions of terms. For a more complete listing of acronyms and definitions, see <http://www.ilgateways.com/Glossary/a.aspx>.

### **A**

- AA** Associates in Arts degree (AA) A degree offered by community colleges requires a total of not less than 60 semester credit hours nor more than 64 semester credit hours.
- AAS** Associates in Applied Science (AAS) AAS degrees were designed as terminal vocational degrees to prepare students to work in child care settings.
- AAT-ECE** Associates of Arts in Teaching–Early Childhood Education: This two-year degree specific to the early childhood field transfers all credits earned to a four-year college or university. Students with the AAT-ECE enter a bachelor’s program as a junior.

### **B**

- BAS** Business Administration Scale: The Business Administration Scale measures leadership and management practices in family child care.

### **C**

- Career Lattice** The Gateways to Opportunity Early Childhood Educator Career Lattice incorporates the Gateways Credentials, credential levels, and education levels for the early childhood practitioner.
- CCAP** Child Care Assistance Program: This program assists low-income families in paying for child care. It is funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services and administered by the local child care resource and referral agencies.
- CCDBG** Child Care Development Block Grant: The Child Care Development Block Grant is designed to support families by increasing the availability, affordability, and quality of child care in the United States.

CDA	Child Development Associate Credential: This entry-level early childhood development credential is awarded by the National Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition.
CCR&R	Child Care Resource and Referral: These community organizations track child care supply and demand; provide training, technical assistance, grants, and resources to early childhood practitioners; recruit new providers; and administer the Child Care Assistance Program.
Credential	A credential is evidence or certification of attainment and/or demonstration of defined knowledge, skills, and other professional requirements.
CEU	Continuing Education Unit: This nationally recognized measurement quantifies the time spent in the classroom during professional development and training activities. Ten hours of instruction = 1.0 CEU. One hour of instruction = 0.1 CEU.
CFC	Child and Family Connections: These privately contracted agencies work as a part of a statewide system responsible for ensuring that all referrals of children under the age of 3 to the Early Intervention Services System receive a timely response.
CPDU	Continuing Professional Development Unit: This measurement quantifies the time spent in the classroom during professional development and training for education practitioners. One hour of instruction = 1.0 CPDU.
CPL	Credit for prior learning is used by most higher education institutions for granting credit for learning acquired through life and/or work experiences.
<b>D</b>	
DMH	Division of Mental Health: This division of the Illinois Department of Human Services provides a wide variety of services at all levels for adults and children throughout the state.
<b>E</b>	
ECACE	Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity: ECACE is a scholarship program that provides financial assistance to individuals interested in earning a degree or credentials in the early childhood field.
ECBG	Early Childhood Block Grant: ECBG provides funding for establishing early childhood education programs including preschool education for at-risk children ages 3 years old to kindergarten and prevention initiatives for at-risk children from birth to age 3 and their families.

ECE	Early childhood education or early care and education: ECE usually refers to the care and education of children from ages birth to age 8.
ECERS	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale: This tool was designed to assess group programs for children of preschool through kindergarten age, 2½ through 5.
EI	Early Intervention: The Illinois Early Intervention Service System serves children less than 36 months of age with disabilities or developmental delays, or who are at risk of substantial delays.
ELC	Early Learning Council: The Early Learning Council is committed to developing a high-quality early learning system that will be available to all children birth to age 5 throughout the state by enhancing, coordinating, and expanding programs and services for young children—including prekindergarten, child care, Head Start, health care, and parental support programs.
ELI	Early Learning Illinois: The goal of this statewide effort is to improve and expand early learning opportunities in Illinois. Three agencies lead the policy and advocacy efforts—Ounce of Prevention, Voices for Illinois Children, and Illinois Action for Children.
ELS	Early Learning Standards: These standards, developed by the Illinois State Board of Education with the assistance of hundreds of educators, were first introduced in draft form in June 2000. The goal of the standards is to provide teachers and caregivers useful information that is directly needed as part of their daily classroom work.
ESL & Bilingual	ESL & Bilingual Credential: A voluntary credential awarded at multiple levels that identifies what individuals working with ESL & Bilingual children should know and be able to demonstrate at various levels of training, education and experience.
<b>F</b>	
FCC	Family Child Care: Family Child Care refers to child care provided in a person’s residence, either licensed or license-exempt, with children ages birth–12 years.
FCC Credential	Family Child Care: A voluntary credential awarded at multiple levels that identifies what individuals working as a family child care provider should know and be able to demonstrate at various levels of training, education and experience.
FCCERS	Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale: This tool was designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider's home for children from infancy through school-age.

FSC Credential      Family Specialist Credential: A voluntary credential awarded at multiple levels that identifies what individuals working with families in a strength-based model should know and be able to demonstrate at various levels of training, education, and experience.

## G

Great START      Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers): This wage supplement program rewards eligible early care and education practitioners in DCFS-licensed child care centers and family/group family child care providers for receiving higher education and for remaining at their current place of employment

Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program      This individual-based scholarship opportunity is for practitioners working in the field of early care and education. This program is administered through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies.

## H

HCCI      Healthy Child Care Illinois: This network of registered nurses helps child care workers provide high-quality care for the well-being of Illinois children.

HFI      Healthy Families Illinois: This voluntary home visitation program works with expectant and new parents who may be at risk for problems in parenting, including child abuse/neglect.

HS/EHS      Head Start/Early Head Start: This comprehensive, federally funded, community-based program provides developmental and educational services to pregnant mothers, babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families who live in poverty and struggle to meet the basic needs of life.

HSCO      Head Start Collaboration Offices: HSCO facilitates partnership between Head Start agencies and other state, territorial, or tribal entities that provide services to benefit children from families with low incomes.

## I

IAECTE      Illinois Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators: Illinois affiliate of the National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Education, a national organization of early childhood faculty from four-year higher education institutions.

IAEYC      Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children: This statewide nonprofit affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children supports early childhood practitioners.

IAI	Illinois Articulation Initiative: Early Childhood Panel of IAI is comprised of representatives from 2 and 4- year institutions to promote articulation between associate and baccalaureate programs.
IAN	Illinois Afterschool Network: IAN promotes excellence in leadership and provides professional development and advocacy opportunities for providers of after-school programs for children and youth.
IBHE	Illinois Board of Higher Education: IBHE analyzes the aims, needs, and requirements of Illinois higher education to guide development of the state’s system of public and private colleges and universities.
ICCB	Illinois Community College Board: ICCB’s mission is to administer the Public Community College Act in a manner that maximizes the ability of the community college districts to serve their communities.
IDC	Illinois Director Credential: The IDC is a voluntary administrative credential for center-based early childhood directors. The IDC validates the achievement of competencies necessary for effective leadership and management of center-based early care and education programs.
IDEC	The Division of Early Childhood was established as a standalone division in 2021 to help strengthen and centralize the state’s existing child care, home visiting, and early intervention programs as well as operationalize and create administrative capacity to establish sustainable infrastructure needs to streamline services.
IDCFS	Illinois Department of Children and Family Services: This state agency oversees the regulation of child care programs as required by the Child Care Act of 1969, as revised.
IDHS	Illinois Department of Human Services: This state agency administers a range of early childhood and school-age and youth programs, including the Child Care Assistance Program, the statewide child care resource and referral system, the Early Intervention System, and Teen Reach.
IHSA	Illinois Head Start Association: IHSA is a nonprofit membership organization committed to enhancing the development of children, empowering families, and strengthening communities.
INCCRRA	Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies: INCCRRA, in partnership with 16 child care resource and referral agencies, is a recognized leader, catalyst, and resource for making high-quality, affordable early care and education options available for children and families in Illinois.
ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education: This state agency administers prekindergarten programs and professional development and certification for PreK teachers. ISBE

administers the Preschool for All program, early childhood special education programs, Teen Reach, and others.

IRC	Illinois Resource Center: IRC is funded by ISBE to provide a broad range of professional development services and instructional resources for school communities throughout the state.
ITC	Infant Toddler Credential: This credential defines the core competencies for Illinois professionals and paraprofessionals who work with infants and toddlers and serves as a symbol of professional recognition.
ITERS	Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale: This tool was designed to assess group programs for children from birth to age 2½.
ITN	Illinois Trainers Network: Trainers throughout the state focus on enhancing professional development and providing high-quality training and materials for center and family child care providers. This program is administered through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
<b>J</b>	
<b>K</b>	
Kith and Kin	Kith and kin are individuals who routinely care for children but who do not consider early care and education as a professional calling. Kith and kin arrangements are usually informal and license-exempt and involve relatives, family friends, and neighbors.
<b>L</b>	
LIC	Local Interagency Council: The LICs were mandated by the Early Intervention System for the provision of local services to increase public awareness, perform community assessments, and identify service gaps for young children.
<b>M</b>	
MHC	Mental Health Consultant: Full-time mental health consultants are employed and housed in a local mental health or social service agency and work in partnership with local CCR&R staff. Mental health consultants conduct training, provide consultations, and supply referrals for child care providers and the families they serve.
MIECHV	Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. MIECHV helps pregnant people and parent of young children improve health and well-being for themselves and

their families. The program does this by partnering trained home visitors with families to set and achieve goals.

## **N**

- NACCRRA** National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies: This organization promotes national policies and partnerships to advance the development and learning of all children and to provide vision, leadership, and support to community child care resource and referral agencies.
- NAEYC** National Association for the Education of Young Children: The National Association for the Education of Young Children is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8.
- NAFCC** National Association for Family Child Care: The National Association for Family Child Care is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting high-quality child care by strengthening the profession of family child care.
- NHSA** National Head Start Association: The National Head Start Association is a private not-for-profit membership organization dedicated exclusively to meeting the needs of Head Start children and their families.

## **O**

## **P**

- PAS** Program Administration Scale: The Program Administration Scale measures leadership and management practices in center settings.
- PDAC** Professional Development Advisory Council: The strategy of this collaboration of professional organizations is to improve the quality and stability of the early care and education, school-age and youth development, and family support workforce through increased professional development and improved opportunities for career advancement.
- PDF** Professional Development Funds: Administered through the child care resource and referral system, these funds are awarded to early childhood practitioners for tuition, training, and on-site consultations.
- PFAE** PFA Expansion programs provide a full day of preschool with more comprehensive services provided to children and their families.

PDG B5	Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five: PDG B5 is a federal grant designed to improve states' early childhood systems.
PFA	Preschool for All: Preschool for All is a free program of the Illinois State Board of Education committed to serving at-risk children and families in Illinois, with the goal of serving all 3- to 5-year-old children whose families choose to participate, and to provide child development and family support to the most at-risk infants and toddlers.
PDR	Professional Development Record: A PDR documents a Registry member's professional development activities and achievements in the following areas: formal college education, current valid credentials and certificates, and trainings attended. Registry-approved trainings are automatically added to an individual's PDR upon submission by the trainer.
PLA	Prior Learning Assessment: PLA is the evaluation and assessment of an individual's learning and knowledge for college credit, certification or advanced standing toward further education or training.
<b>Q</b>	
QRIS	ExceleRate Illinois is the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for our state. ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide system designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. The program establishes standards for helping infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children develop intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. It provides a framework for early learning professionals to identify opportunities for improvement, increase their skills, and take steps to make positive changes.
<b>R</b>	
Registry	The Registry is a central tracking system that lists professional development opportunities and maintains records of practitioners' professional development.
<b>S</b>	
SACERS	School Age Care Environment Rating Scale: This tool was designed to assess group-care programs for children of school age, 5 to 12 years.
SAM	Statewide Accreditation Mentoring: Administered through the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children, SAM is designed to support programs through the process of accreditation. Services include technical assistance, co-horts, training, and scholarships.

SAYD Credential	School-Age and Youth Development (SAYD) Credential: A voluntary credential awarded at multiple levels that identifies what individuals working directly with school-age and youth, ages 5 through 16 should know and be able to demonstrate at various levels of training, education and experience.
SDA	Service Delivery Area: An SDA is a region served by a child care resource and referral agency.
SEIU	Service Employees International Union: SEIU is an organization of 2 million members united by the belief in the dignity and worth of workers and the services they provide and dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families and creating a more just and humane society.
Smart Start	Smart Start Illinois is a multi-year plan to provide every child with access to preschool, increase funding to child care providers to raise wages and quality and reach more vulnerable families with early support.
STARNET	Support and Technical Assistance Network: Funded by ISBE, STARNET provides training, consultation, and resources to the early childhood community statewide.
<b>T</b>	
TA	Technical Assistance: TA refers to advice, assistance, and training on a particular topic.
TA Credential	Technical Assistance Credential: A voluntary credential awarded at multiple levels that identifies what individuals working as a relationship-based coach, mentor, or technical assistance provider in the field of ECE/School-Age should know and be able to demonstrate at various levels of training, education and experience.
Teen REACH	The Teen REACH program (Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring, and Hope) provides positive youth activities during nonschool hours. Through prevention-focused activities, Teen REACH programs seek to expand the range of choices and opportunities that enable, empower, and encourage youth from ages 6 through 17 to achieve positive growth and development, improve expectations and capacities for future success, and avoid and/or reduce risk-taking behavior.
Tiered Reimbursement	Increased payment rates based on quality in a state's child care subsidy system are referred to as tiered reimbursement.
21st CCLC	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers is a federally funded after-school program of the U.S. Department of Education that supports the creation of community learning

centers to provide academic enrichment opportunities during nonschool hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

**U**

**V**

**W**

**X**

**Y**

**Z**

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