



JB Pritzker, Governor

Dulce M. Quintero, Secretary

100 South Grand Avenue, East • Springfield, Illinois 62762
401 South Clinton Street • Chicago, Illinois 60607

DATE: June 10, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Don Harmon, Senate President
The Honorable John F. Curran, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Emanuel "Chris" Welch, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Tony McCombie, House Minority Leader

FROM: Dulce Quintero *Dulce M. Quintero*
Secretary Designate *by Steves*
Illinois Department of Human Services

SUBJECT: FY2024 Illinois Annual Child Care Report 2024

The Illinois Department of Human Services respectfully submits the FY2024 Illinois Annual Child Care Report 2024 on behalf of the Division of Early Childhood in order to fulfill the requirements set forth in State Statute 20 ILCS 505/5.15

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Hollie Hoole, Program Development and Quality Improvement Unit Manager, at 217-685-9518.

cc: The Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor
John W. Hollman, Clerk of the House
Tim Anderson, Secretary of the Illinois Senate
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center



State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Human Services

FY24

Illinois Child Care Program Report



DIVISION OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD

Vision for the Division of Early Childhood in Illinois

Illinois' pregnant persons, young children, and families have the supports they need to achieve their full potential.

Introduction

As required by State Statute 20 ILCS 505/5.15, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) submits an annual report to the Governor and Illinois General Assembly about the status of its child care program. The program is administered by the IDHS Division of Early Childhood (DEC). The 2024 Illinois Child Care Report includes information for the Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024), FY23 and FY22. The data in this report are from: a) the Child Care Management System (CCMS), b) the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies' (INCCRRA) aggregate database of the local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) parent customers, child care providers, and professional development activities; and c) the Gateways to Opportunity Registry. IDHS thanks the thousands of center-based staff, family child care providers, and CCR&R staff for their support in the care and education of Illinois children. The Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) is the agency responsible for licensing child care providers.

Stabilizing and Strengthening Child Care in Illinois

In 2020, the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood began administering a series of business grants to help child care providers across Illinois sustain their businesses as a result of pandemic-related impacts. These grants began with Child Care Restoration Grants and continued through Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grant programs. From early 2020 through July 2022, IDHS invested over \$980 million in federal relief funds in ensuring the recovery and sustainability of Illinois' child care field. These funds reached over 12,000 child care providers across the state, including child care centers and family child care homes, as well as bonuses for early childhood professionals.

Building on the success of these grant programs at both stabilizing child care in Illinois against continued enrollment challenges, as well as to meet the needs of providers in the face of a nationwide workforce crisis, Smart Start Illinois was launched in 2023. As a part of Smart Start Illinois, Smart Start Transition Grants were developed to provide a predictable, stable funding stream for licensed providers to help raise wages and staff benefits, as well as provide additional classroom resources.



Child Care Stabilization Grants

In FY24, IDHS invested over \$312,164,463

In FY23, IDHS invested over \$347,728,754 in CRRSA and the ARPA.

In FY22, over \$512,879,967 in CRRSA and ARPA funds were invested to support the sustainability of the child care field.

Child Care Program Funding Streams and Expenditures

Funding for the Child Care Program in Illinois consists of several funding streams: State General Revenue Fund (GRF), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).

The CCDF regulations establish allowable uses of CCDF funds related to the provision of child care services, activities to improve the quality of child care, and administrative costs. In addition, the rules establish matching fund requirements, restrictions on the use of funds, and cost allocations.

The following chart shows the Child Care Expenditures for FY24, FY23, and FY22

	FY24	%	FY23	%	FY22	%
State GRF	\$556,802,659	40%	\$355,597,920	29%	\$ 220,000,000	22%
TANF	\$444,000,000	32%	\$444,000,000	36%	\$444,000,000	45%
CCDF	\$389,695,048	28%	\$428,037,536	35%	\$320,827,222	33%
TOTAL	\$1,390,497,707	100%	\$1,227,635,456	100%	\$984,827,222	100%

Note: This chart does not include federal child care relief funds received through CRRSA or ARPA.

Quality Expenses (figures included in Expenditure chart above)

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Quality Expenses	\$71,992,296	\$70,979,545	\$63,536,552



Federal Priorities

The IDHS Division of Early Childhood (DEC) sets policy and develops programs consistent with the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Child Care's philosophy and vision. ACF's overall goal is "to promote healthy, happy and successful children." Its philosophy includes a focus on the continuum of high-quality care for children up to age 13 and partnerships across child care, education, Head Start and health for a broader delivery system that expands family choices.

In November 2014, Congress reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). This was a historic re-envisioning of child care. The four major topic areas of the law are:

- Protect the health and safety of children in child care.
- Help parents make informed consumer choices and access information to support child development.
- Provide equal access to stable, high quality child care for low-income children.
- Enhance the quality of child care and the early childhood workforce.

Part 98 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule was updated in February of 2024. The intent of the regulation revision was "to help working families afford child care and broadly support child care quality and access in communities." Policies included in this final rule were designed to:

- Lower child care costs for families;
- Improve payments to child care providers;
- Increase child care options for families;
- Make enrollment easier and faster for families; and
- Increase clarity in CCDF requirements.

During FY24, DEC, in collaboration with internal and external partners, continued to address the provisions of the CCDBG Act of 2014 while administering the CCAP programs under the previous federal priorities.

IDHS-DEC Approved Waivers

IDHS-DEC has submitted and received approvals on the following waivers relative to the updated final rule:

From the -Code of Federal Regulation Title 45 Subtitle A Subchapter A-Part 98-CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

- § 98.45(b)(5) and § 98.45(l)(3) — Co-payments Capped at 7% of Family Income
- 98.45(m)(1) - Pay Providers Prospectively
- § 98.45(m)(2) - Use Enrollment-based Payments
- § 98.33(a)(4)(ii) — Consumer education requirement to post full monitoring reports which must include compliances and non-compliances and cannot be a blank checklist.



Child Care Assistance Program

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps pay the child care for income-eligible families while the parents/guardians go to work or school. This assistance helps families to access multiple affordable options for child care, early education, and after school programs that offer children the opportunity to learn and be cared for in safe, nurturing settings that are culturally and developmentally appropriate. The Child Care Assistance Program serves children under age 13; and children under age 19 who are under court supervision or have physical or mental incapacities as documented by a statement from a local health provider or other health professional.

By providing CCAP services through a certificate/voucher program coordinated by regional Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, as well as through contracts directly with child care centers and home networks, families have a wide-range of care settings to choose from, including licensed centers, homes and group homes, certified license-exempt centers, and qualified license-exempt home provider (friends, neighbors, family members, etc.).

Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Services

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies are comprised of 16 community-based organizations funded to provide services and supports to families, providers, and communities. The CCR&R system serves as a hub for coordination of diverse child care activities in all 102 counties across Illinois.

CCR&R agencies are established, local and organizations responsive to the needs of families, providers, and communities. Working together the CCR&R system enhances access, quality, and the availability of affordable early childhood education and care. CCR&R agencies serve all parents and families seeking services within the defined Service Delivery Area (SDA). In addition, CCR&R agencies work with child care providers, their communities and policy makers.

Services provided by the CCR&Rs include but are not limited to the following:

- Manages the CCAP certificate program for families living in their Service Delivery Area (SDA) by determining family and provider eligibility, maintain cases and provider information and process payments.
- Engage families with consumer education on child care options and quality as well as information about child care financial assistance (CCAP subsidy).
- Engage child care providers to identify the availability of child care.
- Provide families seeking a child care provider a list of referrals that meet the families' needs.
- Provide training and technical assistance for child care providers.
- Promote and assist child care providers to meet higher quality.
- Referral to other IDHS programs and community services.

Later in this report, more details about CCAP services conducted by the CCR&R will be outlined.



Site Administered Child Care

- The portion of the CCAP managed by licensed child care providers and/or home networks who have a contract with the Department.
- These providers determine CCAP eligibility and bill IDHS directly for child care services that they provide to a contracted number of children enrolled in CCAP.

CCAP Enrollment

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Children Served	198,095	199,724	158,607
Families Served	116,042	117,805	59,295
Monthly Average of children	130,872	114,274	96,829
Monthly Average of families	77,413	66,327	55,246

Profile of Children Participating in CCAP

- 72% are in licensed care in FY24, 73% are in licensed care in FY23, and 75.9% in FY22.
- 16% are in the care of relatives
- 12% are in the care of license-exempt centers, non-relative in child's home and provider's home

Number of Children by Age Participating in CCAP in March 2023

Child's Age	FY24		FY23		FY22	
	Enrolled in CCAP	%	Enrolled in CCAP	%	Enrolled in CCAP	%
0-14 Months	7,832	6%	7,133	6%	5,955	5.8%
15-23 Months	9,758	7%	8,660	7%	7,047	6.9%
2 Years	14,536	11%	12,712	11%	11,711	11.4%
3-4 Years	31,889	24%	28,183	24%	25,738	25.0%
5 Years	11,826	10%	11,120	10%	10,506	10.2%
6-12 Years	51,724	40%	46,074	40%	40,051	38.9%
13 Years +	2,652	2%	2,547	2%	1,864	1.8%
Total	130,217	100%	116,429	100%	102,884	100%



Profile of families participating in the CCAP in March 2024

- 93.4% of families received subsidies because of employment.
- 0% of families had TANF as a source of income.

Profile of families participating in the CCAP in March 2023

- 94% of families received subsidies because of employment.
- 1.5% of families had TANF as a source of income.

Profile of families participating in the CCAP in March 2022

- 93.6% of families received subsidies because of employment.
- 2.6% of families had TANF as a source of income.

Annual Income Guidelines by Family Size

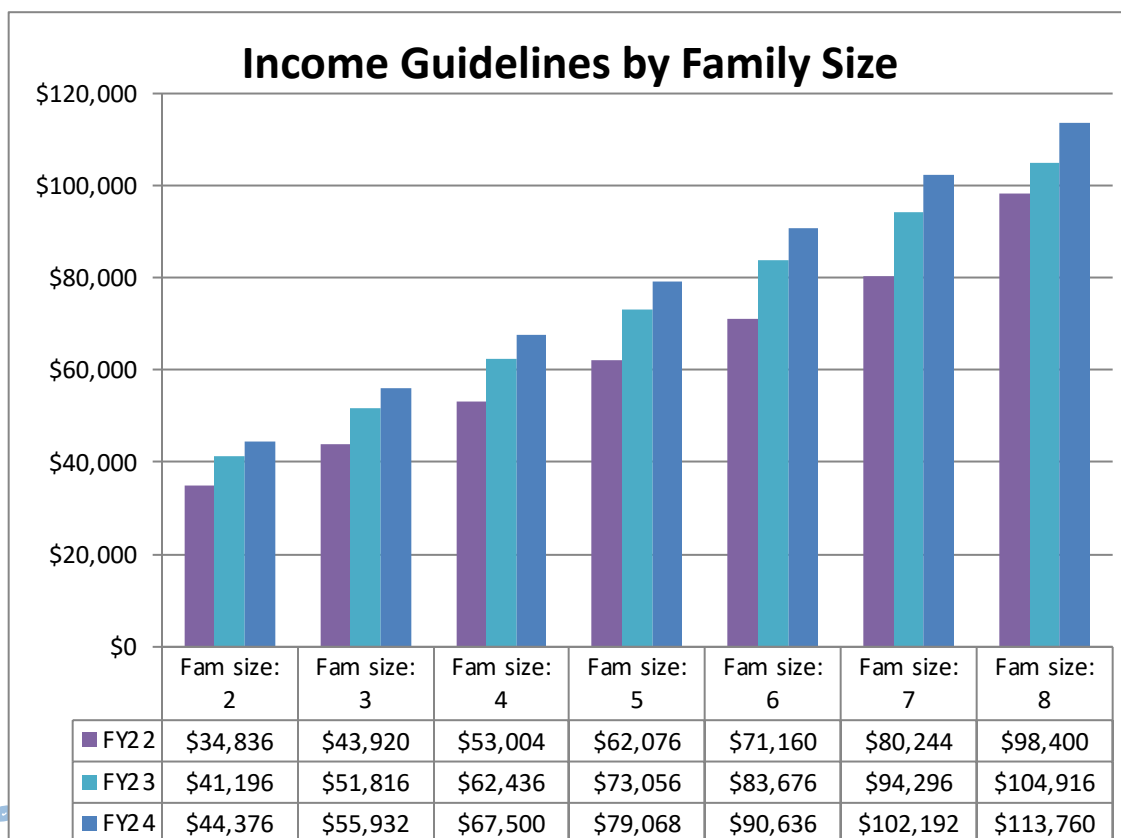
A family is considered income eligible when the combined gross non-exempt monthly base income (earned and unearned) of all family members is at or below the amounts listed below for the corresponding family size. In two-parent families both incomes must be combined to determine eligibility. Two-parent families include those with two or more adults living in the home, such as the applicant and spouse or parents of a common child in the home.

Income for a new application must be at 225% or below of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the family to be income eligible for CCAP.

Family income must be at or below 275% FPL for a family to receive another 12-month eligibility period at redetermination.

Existing case being redetermined will be eligible for a 3-month Graduated Phase-out period with family income above 275% FPL and below 85% State Median Income (SMI).

The family is no longer eligible for CCAP any time income exceeds 85% SMI.



Number of CCAP families by Monthly Co-Payment Amount (FY24)

Parents who have been approved for child care benefits are required to help pay for the cost of their child care with a co-payment. Copayments are waived for Protective Service families (homeless, participation in certain DCFS programs, military deployment.), for families with income below 100% of the federal poverty level, or for families where a parent/guardian is working in a child care setting.

If the co-payment is more than the total cost for care, the parent pays the lesser amount to the provider and no payment is made by the state. The amount of the parent co-payment is based on gross monthly income and family size. Parent co-payments will be reduced by half during the months of September through May when all the children in care are school age (age 5 or older as of the month of September of each school year) and are approved for less than five hours of care.

FY24 Number of Families by Monthly Co-Payment Amount

Co-Pay Amount	Number of Families	Percent of Families
\$0	2,724	2.35%
\$1 to \$25	45,747	39.42%
\$26 to \$50	7,701	6.64%
\$51 to \$100	13,639	11.75%
\$101 to \$200	22,398	19.30%
Greater than \$200	23,833	20.54%
	116,042	100.0%

Types of Child Care settings

Child Care Centers & Programs - Provide care for groups of children outside of a residential setting. Children are usually grouped by age. Types of centers include: child care, Early Head Start/Head Start, State pre-kindergarten, preschools, school age programs, and summer programs.

- Licensed Child Care Centers - must meet DCFS standards for health and safety including child to staff ratios and required space per child.
- Licensed-Exempt Child Care Centers - are also recognized by Illinois, such as those serving children three years of age and older and operated by public or private elementary or secondary schools, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education or other accredited schools registered with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Since these settings are not licensed by DCFS, they are not held to standards for staff to child ratios or maximum group size set by DCFS. Centers claiming exemption from licensing must submit a Confirmation of Exemption letter from the DCFS to be approved for payment from CCAP.

Family Child Care - Child care is offered in a homelike setting.

- Licensed Family Child Care - may care for up to eight children (including their own), or up to 12 children with an assistant.
- License-Exempt Family Child Care - (such as family, friend, and neighbor) may care for three or fewer children (including their own), or children from one family. This care can be offered in the caregiver's home or in the child's home.



Profile of Child Care Providers Participating in CCAP in FY24

- 59% of the license-exempt child care providers cared for relative children.
- 74% of all CCAP providers were license exempt.

CCR&R Agency Services for Child Care Providers Participating in CCAP

- Administration of parent applications.
- Determination of provider eligibility for CCAP.
- Processing of Monthly Child Care Certificates.
- Technical assistance to providers regarding CCAP.
- Assist with ensuring that license-exempt providers are notified and complete background check and training requirements.
- Provide CCAP required health, safety and child development training.

Number of Providers Receiving CCAP Payments

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Licensed Providers			
Child Care Centers	2,263	2,241	1,850
Family Child Care Homes	4,186	4,180	3,671
Group Child Care Homes	530	481	388
Total	6,979	6,902	5,909
License Exempt Providers			
LE Centers	956	904	550
Family Child Care Homes:			
Non-relative in provider's home	1,945	2,139	1,105
Relative in provider's home	10,167	9,151	4,402
Non-relative in child's home	1,181	1,263	615
Relative in child's home	5,687	5,213	2,456
Total	18,980	18,670	9,128
Total for all providers	26,915	25,572	15,037



Child Care Supply

The CCR&Rs Agencies support child care providers by referring families to their child care programs. The referral services are available at no cost to licensed centers, family child care homes, and group child care homes listed in the provider database as well as to license-exempt centers and homes that choose to be included in the provider database. The provider database information is shown in the next table.

Statewide Child Care Database

	FY24		FY23		FY22	
	# of providers	Child Capacity	# of providers	Child Capacity	# of providers	Child Capacity
Licensed Family Homes	5,528	54,512	5,701	56,034	5,872	57,977
LE Family Homes	473	1,518	509	1,654	642	1,850
Total	6,001	56,030	6,210	57,688	6,514	59,827
Licensed Centers	2,762	237,055	2,787	239,143	2,789	239,131
LE Centers	2,619	188,732	2,631	190,319	2,577	187,997
Total	5,381	425,487	5,418	429,462	5,366	427,128

Child Care Demand

There are two dimensions of the “demand” for child care in any community.

1. The number of children needing child care compared to the child care capacity available to meet the needs.
2. The unique requirements of families for their specific child’s needs, such as the child’s age, type of care desired, parent’s work/school schedule, location, special needs of the child and cost.



Snapshot of Families Receiving Child Care Referrals in FY24

- 7,026 families received child care referrals by phone or online
- 76% of families required care due to employment

Snapshot of Families Receiving Child Care Referrals in FY23

- 7,357 families received child care referrals by phone*
- 79% of families required care due to employment

*With the ExceleRate site for the provider search (online referrals), parents no longer must register for an account in order to search, therefore families served online is no longer tracked.

Snapshot of Families Receiving Child Care Referrals in FY22

- 6,790 families received child care referrals by phone or online
- 82% of families required care due to employment

Statewide Child Care Database

Schedule	Requested for Children	Offered: Family Child Care Homes	Offered: Child Care Centers	Offered: Providers Total
Standard Hours*	10,957	4,785	4,903	9,688
Evening	631	1,765	2,353	4,118
Weekend	623	581	36	617
Overnight	232	239	13	252
Rotating	165	1,317	519	1,836
Temp/Emergency	63	1,540	509	2,049
Drop In	96	1,572	651	2,223

*A standard schedule is full-time care offered during traditional day time work hours.

Number of Children for Whom Child Care was requested by Age

	FY24		FY23		FY22	
Age of Child	Requests		Requests		Requests	
Birth to 2 years	4,119	34.2%	4,502	35.1%	4,153	35.1%
2-year-old	1,771	14.7%	1,868	14.6%	1,679	14.2%
3-4-year-old	2,645	22.0%	2,857	22.3%	2,655	22.4%
5-year-old	823	6.8%	855	6.7%	805	7%
School Age	2,689	22.3%	2,739	21.3%	2,523	21.3%
Total	12,047	100%	12,821	100%	11,815	100%



Child Care Request by Type of Care

Type of Care	FY24		FY23		FY22	
	Requests		Requests		Requests	
Child Care Center	11,048	55%	11,665	55%	10,714	53%
Family Homes	8,878	45%	9,421	45%	9,486	47%
Total	19,926	100%	21,086	100%	20,200	100%

Data Context

Much of the Child Care Demand data are from the parent customer and child care databases compiled by the local CCR&Rs. Therefore, the data presented does not include all families and children requiring child care services in Illinois. Most families do not receive child care assistance and many families find child care services through friends, families, advertisements and other means. Additionally, many license-exempt child care programs are not listed in the provider database. **Because of these factors, it is important to note that this report is only one way of examining the larger child care supply and demand picture in Illinois.**



Quality Improvement Programs

During FY24, the federal CCDF required at least nine percent of federal funds be allocated for the improvement of child care quality, plus an additional three percent for quality for infants and toddlers. These funds were used to support the IDHS' Division of Early Childhood Quality Improvement Initiatives. The program's overall goal is to increase the quality of child care available to all Illinois families. In all child care settings, this goal is addressed with a multi-faceted, systematic approach that works to meet the individual needs of children, families, child care providers and communities. In FY24, IDHS contracted with 16 local CCR&R agencies and the INCCRRA to implement the quality services described on the following pages.

Pathways to Excellence for Child Care Programs

Maintaining a Quality Recognition and Improvement System

ExceleRate Illinois is a state-wide, cross sector, quality recognition and improvement 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. ExceleRate includes licensed child care centers and licensed family child care homes, Head Start and State Preschool for All (PFA) programs.

ExceleRate Illinois recognizes early learning providers for their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of their care by awarding Circle of Quality designations:

- The **Licensed Circle of Quality** tells you that the program meets state licensing standards for quality. It is the foundation for quality.
- The **Bronze Circle of Quality** recognizes the qualifications of program staff. It tells you that the program has completed ExceleRate Illinois trainings, has met or is working towards qualifications and is engaged in continuous quality improvement.
- The **Silver Circle of Quality** recognizes that the program has met quality goals. Silver Circle programs meet or go beyond quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and training & education. Programs are actively engaged in continuous quality improvement.
- The **Gold Circle of Quality** recognizes programs that meet or go beyond the highest quality goals. Gold Circle programs have met the highest quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and training & education. Programs are actively engaged in continuous quality improvement.



The following table shows data for licensed centers and licensed homes, number of CCAP children enrolled by Circles of Quality.

	FY24				FY23				FY22			
	Centers	Children Enrolled	Homes	Children Enrolled	Centers	Children Enrolled	Homes	Children Enrolled	Centers	Children Enrolled	Homes	Children enrolled
Bronze	53	1,928	180	1,348	55	1,749	169	1,211	109	2,514	187	1,267
Silver	258	8,158	79	878	299	7,824	97	1,013	317	7,111	111	1,065
Gold	233	10,290	18	137	279	11,959	17	150	353	13,506	15	125
Total	544	20,376	277	2,363	633	21,532	283	2,374	779	23,131	313	2,457
non-CCAP		22,456		600		27,122		663		32,562		767
Total	544	42,832	277	2,963	633	48,654	283	3,037	779	55,693	313	3,224

*Enrollment /CCAP numbers are reported at time of initial application and updated annually.

Illinois is one of only a handful of states that has implemented a quality improvement program for License-Exempt Family Child Care providers (LEFCC). LEFCC providers can participate by completing Training Tiers consisting of 16, 3-hour modules. The Training Tiers are described below:

	FY24		FY23		FY22	
	LE Family Homes	CCAP Children enrolled	LE Family Homes	CCAP Children enrolled	LE Family Homes	CCAP Children enrolled
Tier 1	572	1,131	565	1,120	561	1,112
Tier 2	191	382	191	384	185	372
Tier 3	1,297	2,957	1,206	2,728	1,132	2,566
Total	2,060	4,470	1,962	4,232	1,878	4,050

* CCAP numbers reported at time of initial application.



- Training Tier 1 modules include: Overview of Child Development; Health Issues in Group Care; Nutrition Issues in Group Care; and Safety Issues in Group Care.
- Training Tier 2 modules include: Observation and Guidance; Learning Happens in Relationships; Family & Community Relationships; and Personal & Professional Development.
- Training Tier 3 modules include: Child Growth and Development for Birth to 8 Months; Child Growth and Development for 8 - 18 Months; Child Growth and Development for 18 - 36 Months; Preschool Child - Social/Emotional Development; Preschool Child - Physical Development; Preschool Child - Language Development; Preschool Child - Cognitive Development; and School Age Development.
- The Gateways ECE Credential Level 1 is achieved upon completion of all three tiers.

Pathways to Excellence for Child Care Providers

Maintaining Strong Professional Development and Supportive Workforce Initiatives

Responsive, well-qualified practitioners are one of the most important factors in child care settings. IDHS provides professional development opportunities to child care providers. These services are available to child care providers listed on the statewide database, including licensed and license-exempt practitioners. The following pages give some data on these programs for FY23.

The Illinois Trainers Network (ITN) provides training to individual trainers and facilitators as well as child care providers on topics such as ECE Credential Level 1, developmentally appropriate practices, Program Infant Toddler Care series (PITC), School Age and Youth Development Level 1, Early Childhood Developmental Screening, and others. Child care providers can access these trainings through their local CCR&Rs.

Training Activity

ExceleRate Illinois™ Training

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Number of participants	2,429	1,828	1,370

**Some of the ExceleRate Illinois-approved topics are multi-session trainings.*

**ExceleRate Illinois Training are part of the Illinois Trainer's Network*

Illinois Trainers Network (ITN) Training

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Number of ITN curricula offered	5	5	5
Number of participants	1,887	2,683	2,719

**Some of the ITN curricula are multi-session trainings.*

**Number of ITN Curricula does not include ExceleRate training curricula.*



CCR&R Training Offered

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Number of training sessions held	1,507	1,514	1,388
Number of training participants	18,510	17,223	17,269
Number of training hours achieved	45,498	43,099	41,067

Online Training

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Number of training sessions held	204	192	94
Number of training participants	314,015	289,093	209,721
Number of training hours achieved	631,985	575,534	441,581

Strengthening Families, Providers, and Communities



Child Care Resource and Referral System



Gateways to Opportunity Professional Development System

The Gateways to Opportunity Professional Development System provides supports for professionals working with children, youth and families. These supports include Credentials; the Gateways Scholarship Program; the Great START Wage Supplement program; Professional Development Advisors; and the Gateways to Opportunity Registry.

Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers)

Great START is a wage supplement program available to the lowest wage earners employed by licensed child care centers and family child care homes; it recognizes those who have achieved an educational level higher than the one required by DCFS Licensing Standards, and recipients must have been employed by the same program for at least one continuous year or by a program that holds a current ExceleRate Illinois Silver or Gold Circle of Quality for at least six months and work an average of 15 hours a week. Participants renew their eligibility every six months.

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Total Participants	3,451	3,842	3,118



Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program

The Gateways Scholarship Program is available to individuals employed by licensed child care centers and licensed family child care homes. The scholarship enables practitioners to earn degrees, certificates or credentials in early care and education and school age child care.

	FY24	FY23	FY22
Family Child Care Practitioners	80	73	82
Child Care Center Staff	431	422	470
Credits Taken	4,824	4,504	5,915
Degrees Completed	183	145	134

Gateways to Opportunity Registry

The Gateways to Opportunity Registry (Registry), administered by INCCRRA, is a resource and a tool to drive the quality and accountability of the professional development that is available to early learning, school-age and youth practitioners. It is also used to track the CCAP provider training completion. Anyone who works with or on behalf of children, youth and families in Illinois can become a member of the Gateways Registry. As of June 30, 2023, the Registry membership was 111,388 an increase of 4,769 members over FY22. The Registry membership includes licensed and license exempt Day Care Centers, Family Day Care Homes, and Group Day Care Homes. Registry membership is required by DCFS Licensing Standards for licensed programs.

Type of Program and Position (Where Registry Members are Working)

Based on employment data for the 112,254 current Registry members:

- 3% work in Indirect Service, such as child care resource and referral and higher education.
- 97% work in Direct Services
 - 72% work in Licensed Child Care Centers.
 - 12% work in Licensed Family/Group Child Care Homes.
 - 16% work in License-exempt child care settings.



Gateways to Opportunity Credentials

The Gateways Credentials validate an individual's educational attainment and professional experience. The credentials are recognized by the State of Illinois in the DCFS Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers and in the IDHS Great START program. ExceleRate Illinois™ has credential requirements for the Bronze, Silver and Gold Circles of Quality. A variety of credentials are available for practitioners who work with, or on behalf of, children, youth and families.



- ❖ Illinois Director Credentials (IDC): The IDC is appropriate for directors and program coordinators of early childhood and school-age child care settings. It is awarded at three (3) levels: Associate, Bachelor, and Graduate. The credential has requirements in: General Education; Education specific to Early Childhood Education/Child Development; Education specific to Management and Administration; and Work Experience and Professional Contributions to the field.
- ❖ ECE Credential: is appropriate for professionals working in early childhood settings. It is awarded at six (6) levels ranging from Level 1 (an entry level credential earned by completing a 48 clock-hour training covering many topics related to leading programs for this age group, birth to 8 years of age, including but not limited to human development) to Level 6, which is the Graduate Level Credential. ECE Credential Levels 2-6 have requirements in General Education, Early Childhood Education, Work/Practicum Experience and Professional Contributions to the field.
- ❖ Infant Toddler Credential (ITC): is a specialization for the ECE Credential and is appropriate for professionals working with children younger than three years of age. It is awarded at five levels from Level 1 (12 ECE credits and 3 Infant Toddler credits) to Level 6 (Graduate Degree). Levels 2-6 have requirements in General Education, Early Childhood Education specific to Infants/Toddlers, Work/Practicum Experience specific to Infants/Toddlers, and Professional Contributions specific to Infants/Toddlers.
- ❖ School-Age/Youth Development (SAYD) Credential Level : is an entry level/48 clock-hour training covering many topics related to leading programs for this age group (8 – 18 years of age), including but not limited to human development; health and safety; program development; community relations; communication with parents, and others. SAYD Credential Levels 2-5 have requirements in General Education, Early Childhood Education, Work/Practicum Experience and Professional Contributions for the field.
- ❖ Family Child Care Credential (FCC): is for professionals working as a family child care provider with children ages birth through 12 years. It is awarded at four levels from Level 2 (6 credits in ECE/SA plus 3 credits in FCC) to Level 5 (Baccalaureate Degree). Levels 2-5 have requirements in General Education, Early Childhood Education, Family Child Care (FCC), Work/Practicum Experience and Professional Contribution specific to ECE and FCC.
- ❖ Family Specialist Credential (FSC): is for direct service professionals who work with families using a strength-based model to promote optimal child care family outcomes. It is awarded at four levels from Level 2 (6 credits of FSC content) to level 5 (Baccalaureate Degree). Level 2-5 have requirements in General Education, Education specific to Family Specialists, Work/Practicum Experience and Professional Contribution specific to FSC.
- ❖ Technical Assistance Credential (TA): is designed for professionals working in a variety of roles that relate to relationship-based professional development, such as technical assistance providers, coaches, mentors, and professional development advisors. It is awarded at three (3) levels: Associate, Bachelor, and Graduate. This credential has requirements in: General Education; Education specific to Early Childhood/School Age (EC/SA), and EC/SA coaching, mentoring or technical assistance, Work Experience specific to Early Childhood/School Age (EC/SA), EC/SA coaching or technical assistance, and Professional Contributions to the field.
- ❖ ESL & Bilingual Credential - The Gateways ESL & Bilingual Credential is an add-on to the ECE Credential. It is for early care and education professionals who have formal college education, training, and experience with multilingual/multicultural children and families, either in the form of supervised observation/experience or direct work experience.



Credential	First Awarded In	FY22	FY23	FY24	Total Awarded
ECE Credential - Level 1	FY06	5,332	5,222	5,495	65,029
ECE Credential – Levels 2-6	FY08	1,960	1,889	1,449	21,342
Infant Toddler Credential	FY09	778	937	750	9,729
Illinois Director Credential	FY00	399	483	399	5,206
SAYD Credential - Level 1	FY11	57	212	59	947
School-Age Credential-Levels 2-6	FY16	39	84	59	626
Youth Development Credential	FY16	**	**	**	49
Family Child Care Credential	FY16	69	59	44	728
Family Specialist Credential	FY16	398	109	154	1,751
Technical Assistance Credential		14	6	3	111
ESL & Bilingual Credential	FY21	2	19	12	41
Total		9,048	9,020	8,582	105,559



**DIVISION OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD**

For more detailed information about any of the programs contained in this report, visit:

www.dhs.state.il.us

www.ilgateways.com

www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com

www.inccrra.org

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