

Gateways to Opportunity ECE Credential Framework

| ECE Levels | General Education Requirements | Education and Training in Early Care & Education | Work and Practical Experience in Early Care & Education | Professional Contributions in Early Care & Education |
|------------|--|---|--|--|
| Level 6 | Graduate Degree | In Development | | |
| Level 5 | Bachelor's Degree | 30 points in the ECE Content Areas <i>(of level 5 benchmarks)</i> – of which a maximum of 6 points may be from credential approved training, and 3 of those 6 points may come from assessment of prior learning | Minimum of 200 hours of ECE supervised experience or 1200 total hours of documented ECE work experience | Four professional contributions in three different areas within the last five years – one contribution must be in the area of program improvement. |
| Level 4 | Associate's Degree or 60+ semester hours (including the nine semester hours listed at level 3) | 24 points in the ECE Content Areas <i>(of level 2-4 benchmarks)</i> – of which a maximum of 3 points may be from credential approved training, and 1 of those 3 points may come from assessment of prior learning <i>(must include 20 clock hours of ECE observation)</i> | 100 total hours of ECE supervised experience or 600 total hours of documented ECE work experience | Two professional contributions in two different areas within the last five years – one contribution must be in the area of program improvement. |
| Level 3 | Three semester hours: Math Three semester hours: English Three semester hours: General Education elective (Psychology, Sociology, etc) <i>(These 9 credits must be transferable)</i> | 18 points in the ECE Content Areas <i>(of level 2-4 benchmarks)</i> – of which a maximum of 3 points may be from credential approved training, and 1 of those 3 points may come from assessment of prior learning <i>(must include 20 clock hours of ECE observation)</i> | 10 hours of ECE supervised experience or 400 total hours of documented ECE work experience | One professional contribution in any area within the last five years |
| Level 2 | High School Diploma or GED | 12 points in the ECE Content Areas <i>(of level 2-4 benchmarks)</i> – 3 points in Human Growth and Development, 3 points in Health Safety and Well-Being, and 6 points from ECE electives or 6 points in ECE electives and a CDA, CCP, or Montessori Credential through AMS* 3 points may be from credential approved training, and 1 of those 3 points may come from assessment of prior learning | 10 hours of ECE observation or 200 hours of documented ECE work experience | Membership in a related professional organization |
| Level 1 | Level 1 ECE Credential is awarded through completion of a 48 clock hour training available through local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies statewide | | | |

Guide: A point is equivalent to one semester hour of college credit.

*American Montessori Society (AMS) Early Childhood and Infant Toddler Credentials count for a maximum of 6 points of credential approved training for the ECE, Infant Toddler Credential, or Illinois Director Credential.