

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	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 Mastery in at least 3 of the 7 ECE Level 6 Skill Areas	6,000 hours of documented ECE related experience	Six professional contributions in three different areas within the last five years
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 A Professional Educator License with endorsement in Early Childhood Education meets these requirements	Minimum of 200 hours of ECE supervised experience or 1200 total hours of documented ECE work experience	↓ Renewal Only ↓ Verification of current membership in a professional organization Two additional professional contribution in any area, completed within the last 5 years
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	Verification of current membership in a professional organization Two additional professional contribution in any area, completed within the last 5 years
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 credit bearing)</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	Verification of current membership in a professional organization One additional professional contribution in any area, completed within the last 5 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	Verification of current membership in a 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.