



Why Get Credentialed?

Gateways to Opportunity credentials recognize and validate educational accomplishments of early care and education, school-age, and youth development professionals. Credentials help improve the quality of care for the future of Illinois. Governor Patrick Quinn signed Gateways to Opportunity credentials into law effective July 1, 2009. Gateways credentials are awarded and recognized by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Bureau of Child Care and Development.

Individuals Benefit

- Credentials increase professional recognition for individuals and serve to professionalize our field.
- Credentials may lead to higher wages through employer recognition or salary supplement programs.
- Credentials provide portable evidence of professional development for use when applying for college, seeking employment, and demonstrating knowledge and skill sets to others.
- Credentials encourage and empower individuals to be professional—planning, pursuing, and documenting their own professional development activities on an ongoing basis.
- Credential applicants may be given preference for job opportunities.
- Credentials are increasingly being required for positions in the field of Early Care and Education.

Children Benefit

- Children benefit from high quality early childhood settings.
- High quality programs have a positive impact on children's growth and development.
- Research has found that preparation and ongoing professional development of child care providers allows them to relate more effectively with children in their care.

Programs Benefit

- Credentials provide a workforce recruitment tool for new hires.
- Supporting credentials provides a retention strategy for current staff.
- Credentials provide encouragement for staff to achieve higher levels of education.

Do you attend a Gateways to Opportunity Entitled Higher Education Institution? If so, here are more benefits!

- Your school or university has already done most of the work for you by embedding the requirements of the credentials into your coursework.
- The cost of a credential through your college or university is significantly lower than applying on your own.
- You can earn a degree and credential simultaneously.



1226 Towanda Plaza | Bloomington, Illinois 61701 | (866) 697-8278 | www.ilgateways.com

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