

# ILLINOIS' RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE GRANT 2015



## VISION

Every child in Illinois begins kindergarten healthy, safe, eager to learn, and ready to succeed.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Raise the quality of early learning and development programs and reach children and families with the highest needs.

**\$52,498,043** Investment over four years (2013-2016)

## EXCELERATE<sup>®</sup>

## GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

### BUILDING PROGRAM QUALITY

[www.excelerateillinois.com](http://www.excelerateillinois.com)

#### WHAT IS IT?

Excelerate<sup>®</sup> Illinois uses a consistent set of standards to recognize program quality in a variety of settings.



### BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

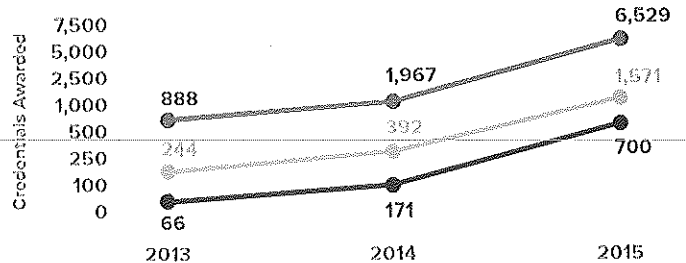
[www.ilgateways.com](http://www.ilgateways.com)

*"The quality of any early care and learning setting is directly related to the quality of the staff, their education and training and understanding of child development and the ability to translate that understanding through effective practice."*

— Linda Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

#### INCREASE IN CREDENTIALLED WORKFORCE OVER TIME

Credentials provide stackable pathways of training and higher education from entry level through Master's degree.



**387,329**

Children in Illinois with high needs\*



**2,329**

Programs achieving a rating BEYOND the licensed level



**77,017**

Children with high needs served in Gold-rated programs (↑6,371 since 2014)



**12**  
AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

**1,306**  
GOLD

**948**  
SILVER

**63**  
BRONZE

**915**  
ARE CHILD CARE CENTERS

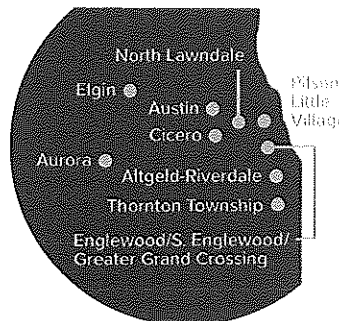
\*Children with high need are defined as those in families earning less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

ILLINOIS DIRECTOR CREDENTIAL  
ECE CREDENTIAL  
INFANT TODDLER CREDENTIAL

#### INNOVATION ZONES

### REACHING CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS

[www.partnerplanact.org](http://www.partnerplanact.org)



**11** Innovation Zones are piloting collaborative cross-sector strategies for engaging children and families with high needs in high-quality early childhood programs.

