**Section 50.720 Gateways to Opportunity Credentials**

Credentialing, as set forth by this Part, is only for the purpose of validating an individual's qualifications. Credentials are awarded based on a variety of professional achievements in field experience, knowledge and skills, educational attainment and/or training accomplishments.

a) Gateways to Opportunity Early Care and Education (ECE) Credential

The ECE Credential is designed to identify and validate skills necessary to work in high quality early care and education programs. It is awarded based on educational and professional achievement in services for young children ages birth to eight years. The ECE Credential shall have six levels and each will be awarded for increasing acquisition of education and skills, including college coursework specifically related to the early development and learning of children ages birth to eight years.

b) Gateways to Opportunity Illinois Director Credential

The Illinois Director Credential is designed to identify and validate the skills necessary to administer high quality early childhood and/or school age care programs. It is awarded based on educational and professional achievement in the administration of early childhood and school age programs. The Illinois Director Credential shall have three levels and each will be awarded for increasing complexity of education and skills, including college coursework specifically related to the development of children ages birth to 12 years and program management.

c) Gateways to Opportunity Infant/Toddler Credential

The Infant/Toddler Credential is designed to identify and validate the skills necessary to work in high quality programs serving infants and toddlers ages birth to three years. It is awarded based on educational and professional achievement in infant/toddler services. The Infant/Toddler Credential shall have five levels and each will be awarded for increasing acquisition of education and skills, including college coursework specifically related to the care and development of children ages birth to three years.

d) Gateways to Opportunity School-Age/Youth Development Credentials

The School-Age/Youth Development Credentials are designed to identify and validate the skills necessary to work in high quality programs serving school-age children and youth ages five to 20 years. It is awarded based on educational and professional achievement in services for school-age children and youth. The School-Age/Youth Development Credentials shall have at least three levels, each being awarded for increasing acquisition of education and skill, including college coursework specifically related to the development of children and youth ages five to 20 years.

e) Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential

The Family Specialist Credential is designed to identify and validate the skills necessary to work in high quality family support service programs. It is awarded based on educational and professional achievement in services for families. The Family Specialist Credential shall have at least three levels, each being awarded for increasing acquisition of education and skill, including college coursework specifically related to services for families.

f) Gateways to Opportunity Family Child Care Credential

The Family Child Care Credential is designed to identify and validate the skills necessary to work in high quality family child care homes. The credential is awarded based on educational and professional achievement in family child care. The Family Child Care Credential shall have at least three levels, each being awarded for increasing acquisition of education and skill, including college coursework specifically related to family child care.

(Source: Added at 36 Ill. Reg. 16085, effective October 29, 2012)