

# **NAEYC Accreditation** of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs

**ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND  
PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**



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Early Childhood Higher Education Programs

This handbook contains policies and procedures related to the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs process. Programs in the self-study phase and accredited programs are encouraged to review the handbook regularly to support their achievement or maintenance of accreditation.

**Notice:** This Accreditation Handbook and the accreditation requirements are subject to change. It is the responsibility of programs seeking or maintain accreditation to ensure they are using the most current version of the Accreditation Handbook. Accredited early childhood degree programs are subject to the NAEYC Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards in effect at the time of accreditation. It is the responsibility of the accredited program to maintain compliance with the standards throughout the period of accreditation. Any accreditation approval or renewal provided by the Commission does not relieve the accredited program from this obligation to comply with the standards. The accreditation process is an independent appraisal of an early childhood degree program by the Commission. Being accredited means that, based on the information reviewed by the Commission, the program has been found to meet the NAEYC Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and the standards at the time of accreditation; however, it does not guarantee the efficacy of services or courses offered by the accredited program. Neither NAEYC nor its officers, directors, employees, peer reviewers, individuals serving on the Commission, or others involved in the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs will be liable for loss, damage, or injury by reason of or in connection with any decision, action, or omission related to the accreditation application; denied or revoked accreditation; or the Accreditation Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Criteria or standards.

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National Association for the Education of Young Children

1313 L Street NW, Suite 500

Washington, DC 20005-4101

202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460

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

## Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>- 4 -</b>
<b>Background and Development</b>	<b>- 5 -</b>
<b>Overview of NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs</b>	<b>- 6 -</b>
Purpose	- 6 -
Scope	- 6 -
Mission	- 6 -
Guiding Principles	- 6 -
Summary of Steps in the Accreditation Process	- 7 -
<b>Governance, Operations and Finances</b>	<b>- 8 -</b>
Delegation of Authority from the NAEYC Governing Board to the Commission	- 8 -
The Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs	- 9 -
Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Staff	- 9 -
Peer Reviewers	- 10 -
Accreditation Fees	- 10 -
<b>Policies and Procedures in the Accreditation Process</b>	<b>- 11 -</b>
Step One: Application for Accreditation Eligibility	- 11 -
Step Two: The Self-Study Phase	- 13 -
Overview of the Self-Study Report	- 14 -
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	- 16 -
The NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	- 16 -
Key Assessments	- 17 -
Definition of a Complete Self-Study Report	- 18 -
Step Three: Accreditation Candidacy Phase	- 21 -
The Site Visit	- 21 -
The Peer Review Report	- 24 -
The Written Response to the Peer Review Report	- 25 -
Step Four: The Accreditation Decision	- 26 -
Notification of Accreditation Status, Effective Date of Decisions and NAEYC Public Announcement of Decisions	- 32 -
Step Five: Maintaining Accreditation	- 32 -
Use of Accreditation Logo by Programs	- 32 -
Program Display of Accreditation Status	- 33 -

Annual Reports	- 33 -
Reporting Program Outcomes on Institutional Website	- 35 -
Reporting Substantive Changes	- 36 -
Step Six: Renewal accreditation	- 37 -
Communicating with NAEYC Higher Education Staff and the Commission	- 38 -
Administrative Probation	- 38 -
Appeals Procedures	- 39 -
Complaints Policy	- 42 -
Extension Policies	- 44 -
Adding a Program During the Accreditation Period	- 47 -
Withdrawal Policies	- 48 -
Consultant Policy	- 48 -
<b>Professional Development Resources for Programs</b>	<b>- 50 -</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>- 51 -</b>
<b>Appendix A: ASPA Code of Good Practice</b>	<b>- 61 -</b>
<b>Appendix B: Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, Code of Conduct and Intellectual Property</b>	<b>- 63 -</b>
<b>Appendix C: Summary of Accreditation Criteria</b>	<b>- 66 -</b>
<b>Appendix D: Summary of NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards</b>	<b>- 75 -</b>
<b>Appendix E: Peer Reviewer Policies</b>	<b>- 78 -</b>

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## Background and Development

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system sets a standard of excellence for programs that prepare early childhood educators at the associate, baccalaureate and master's degree levels. The NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards, found in the 2010 publication *Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation for Use by Associate, Baccalaureate, and Graduate Degree Programs*, are developed by professionals in early childhood education and higher education and approved by the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs (the "Commission").

Degree programs are crucial to the development of more diverse and highly qualified early childhood educators in early learning settings, Head Start, preschool/pre-kindergarten and primary grade settings. NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards are based on research in early childhood development and learning and describe what well prepared graduates of degree programs should know and be able to do.

ACCESS, the national association for early childhood faculty at associate degree-granting institutions, supported the accreditation system through start-up funding and encourages its members to participate through application for program accreditation and as peer reviewers. ACCESS leaders served on the initial feasibility study group and the Advisory Council, and they often serve as members of the Commission.

The accreditation process includes meeting Accreditation Eligibility Requirements, undertaking extensive self-study, submitting a Self-Study Report, undergoing a site visit conducted by a Peer Review Team, and accepting an accreditation decision made by a national commission of early childhood professionals. Sixty associate degree programs in six states--Arkansas, Illinois (the City Colleges of Chicago), Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and South Carolina--field tested the system's procedures and materials in 2005. Field testing of procedures concluded with the first peer review site visits and Commission decisions during spring 2006.

Funding for the development phase of the original associate degree accreditation system was provided by NAEYC, with contributions from ACCESS and from states involved in the start-up phase, as well as by grants from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the A.L. Mailman Family Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the Mary Black Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation. In recent years, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has provided funding to support additional programs seeking accreditation. The fully operational system is now self-sustaining, with core operations supported through accreditation fees.

The accreditation system, originally known as Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA), has continued to evolve over the years, most recently with a 2016 pilot—supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation—to expand the system to accredit programs at the baccalaureate and master's degree levels. Expanding the system gives degree programs at all three levels an opportunity to demonstrate their quality as it relates to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards. The expansion also operationalizes NAEYC's strategic priority for advancing the early childhood profession through offering a level of quality control across all degree programs.

# Overview of NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs

## Purpose

The purpose of NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs is to promote excellence in the preparation of early childhood educators and to provide a valid and objective external evaluation of these programs as a service to the profession, to prospective candidates, and to the public.

## Scope

The scope of NAEYC's higher education accreditation includes programs at the associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree levels that prepare candidates to work in the early childhood profession. The degree program must be offered at an institution of higher education that is located in a U.S. state, district, or territory and that is currently accredited by an accrediting agency that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and/or the U.S. Department of Education.

## Mission

The mission of the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system is to set a standard of excellence for early childhood education degree programs and to recognize programs that have demonstrated that they meet this standard, thereby benefiting the programs, and young children, families, and communities.

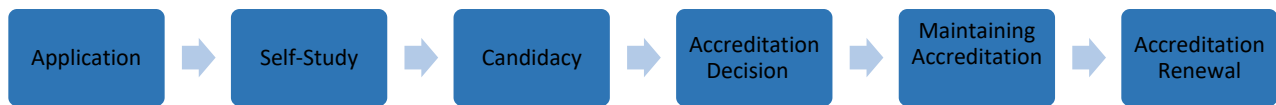
## Guiding Principles

NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs is a system that:

- Is rigorous yet not unduly burdensome for programs and institutions—supporting excellence rather than taking time away from excellence
- Improves diverse and nontraditional candidates' access to professional preparation programs
- Aligns with nationally recognized content standards
- Promotes articulation between programs at different degree levels
- Links with state efforts in setting standards for programs and licensure of early childhood professionals
- Links with national and state efforts to support and reward early childhood educators for achieving higher levels of education
- Includes or links with training and technical assistance that gives programs information needed to conduct self-study work and prepare for accreditation review
- Includes an evaluation and research component in the development and implementation of the system
- Results in benefits for programs and candidates, regardless of the outcome of the accreditation decision
- Seeks input from ACCESS (American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators) and NAECTE (National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Education) and others as the most credible and influential organizations representing early childhood educator preparation
- Functions and is governed in a way that preserves the independence of the accreditation process and protects its founding organization from even the appearance of conflict of interest

- Is guided by best practices in higher education accreditation, as outlined by organizations such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditation (ASPA) (See Appendix A for ASPA Code of Good Practice).

## Summary of Steps in the Accreditation Process



### Step One: Application

A program must submit an Application for Accreditation Eligibility. The application form and fee are posted on the NAEYC website ([www.naeyc.org/highered](http://www.naeyc.org/highered)). The Accreditation Eligibility Requirements are mandatory, objective baseline requirements the program must meet to be considered for accreditation. They are listed on the application form, along with guidance regarding documents and signatures required as evidence of compliance with the Accreditation Eligibility Requirements.

### Step Two: Self-Study

An eligible program carries out the self-study process, which culminates in the completion of the Self-Study Report. The program is encouraged to build its own timelines to include analysis and reflection, stakeholder involvement, data gathering, implementation of program improvements, collection of evidence of strengths related to Accreditation Criteria and of compliance with the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards, and writing the program Self-Study Report—a process that takes most programs at least one year.

### Step Three: Candidacy

Once a program completes the self-study process, it submits its Self-Study Report with the self-study review fee. NAEYC staff review the report for completeness. When the Self-Study Report is deemed complete, the program is recognized as being in the Candidacy phase. During this period a site visit is conducted by a team of peer reviewers. The team submits a written report of its findings (the Peer Review Report), and the program responds to the report with its Written Response to the Peer Review Report.

### Step Four: The Accreditation Decision

The program's first-time Self-Study Report (or a program's renewal Self-Study Report, in the case of an accredited program seeking to renew its accreditation), Peer Review Report, and Written Response to the Peer Review Report are forwarded to the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs for review and deliberation. The Commission issues an Accreditation Decision Report with one of six decisions: Accredited, Accredited with Conditions, Accredited with Probation, Not Accredited, Accreditation Expired, and Accreditation Revoked. In rare cases, the Commission may defer making a decision on a program; in those situations, the program will be notified regarding next steps and the timeline for a decision.



### Step Five: Maintaining Accreditation

An accredited program is required to maintain compliance with the Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and with the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards throughout its term of accreditation. The program reports annually on major developments, ongoing program improvements, program data, and steps taken to address any conditions in the Accreditation Decision Report. The accredited program also submits an annual fee with its annual reports. Decisions regarding a program's continued accreditation are made by the Commission.

### Step Six: Accreditation Renewal

In the sixth year of a program's seven-year accreditation cycle, it begins the renewal process by submitting a renewal Self-Study Report and by having a site visit. Decisions regarding a program's renewal accreditation are made by the Commission.

## Governance, Operations and Finances

### Delegation of Authority from the NAEYC Governing Board to the Commission

The NAEYC Governing Board has delegated authority to the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs to create the standards and develop and uphold the policies and procedures associated with NAEYC's higher education accreditation system. NAEYC's Bylaws state:

*Section 6.7. Accreditation. The Board has established a system through which accreditation commissions and councils or other similar accrediting bodies (a) set standards for early learning programs for young children and for early childhood professional preparation programs in higher education institutions and (b) accredit programs that meet such standards. These accrediting bodies are delegated authority by the Board to be and remain separate, independent, and autonomous with respect to standard setting and all essential accreditation decisions.*

The NAEYC Governing Board Policies state:

#### Purpose

*The NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs will ensure the equity, integrity and accountability of the accreditation system.*

#### Responsibilities

*The Board delegates to the Commission responsibility for:*

- a. Establishing the policies that govern its operations, including the appointment of new members.*
- b. Setting standards that govern the accreditation process for higher education degree programs. The standards will ensure programs are preparing candidates to meet the early childhood education profession's guidelines, including the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.*
- c. Making accreditation decisions, using the evidence submitted in the program Self-Study Report, Peer Review Team Report, and program's Written Response to the Peer Review Team Report.*
- d. Monitoring and annually reporting on the operations of the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system, using performance standards for accountability.*

- e. *Recommending to the Governing Board cooperative relationships with other systems that would advance the mission of NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation.*

#### Appointment of Commission Members

*The Commission shall appoint its members based on policies it establishes.*

#### The Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs

The principal functions of the Commission are to exercise professional judgment in making accreditation decisions and to set standards. The Commission works with staff to develop guidance documents and data-gathering instruments necessary to carry out these functions.

#### Composition

The Commission consists of not fewer than eight members, who serve staggered three-year terms. One member is elected as chairperson. Commissioners bring a demonstrated commitment to the aims of early childhood educator preparation at higher education institutions; an understanding of the nature of program accreditation systems, policy and procedures; and respect for the confidential, fair, and impartial nature of accreditation decisions. Membership must include at least one public member who is not a member of the early childhood profession. A current list of Commissioners is posted on the NAEYC website.

#### Responsibilities

The Commission meets to review the programs that have received a site visit during the preceding visit cycle, including all associated documentation, and to review reports from programs that are Accredited with Conditions or Accredited with Probation. The Commission also considers programs' requests regarding extensions; questions related to maintenance of Accreditation Eligibility Requirements; and other matters affecting programs' accreditation status. In addition to rendering accreditation decisions, the Commission develops and approves policies and standards for the accreditation system. Commission members participate in training and orientation.

#### Conduct and Confidentiality

Commission members abide by standards of personal conduct that help the Commission function effectively. They do this by thoroughly preparing for each Commission meeting; reviewing all applications, including the Self-Study Reports, Peer Review Reports, Written Responses to Peer Review Reports, and Annual Reports; assessing information critically and fairly; and conducting themselves in a professional, objective, fair manner.

During their term of service and thereafter, Commission members maintain confidentiality and refrain from conflicts of interest as outlined in the Confidentiality, Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest forms that they sign at the beginning of their terms (see Appendix B for a copy of these forms). Final accreditation decisions made by the Commission are public; however, the deliberations of the Commission in making the decisions are not public.

#### Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Staff

NAEYC staff are responsible for the daily operations of the accreditation office, including managing the execution of standards, policies, and procedures and implementing the strategic recommendations of the Commission. The senior leader of the higher education department at NAEYC serves as an ex officio member of the Commission. Staff follow NAEYC's conflict of interest and confidentiality policies and

follow practices to ensure they do not have conflicts of interest with programs in the accreditation system.

### Peer Reviewers

Peer reviewers are faculty and administrators who currently serve—or have previously served—in early childhood programs in institutions of higher education. Professionals who serve in other areas of the early childhood field and are engaged in higher education, such as through serving as a mentor teacher/supervisor to candidates, may be eligible to serve as peer reviewers. Peer reviewers submit an application that documents their educational background and professional experience in early childhood educator preparation. Applicants who meet the qualifications (as set by the Commission) for serving as a peer reviewer participate in training prior to being assigned to a Peer Review Team. Peer reviewers adhere to policies laid out in the confidentiality and conflict of interest forms they sign (see Appendix B for a copy of the forms). Peer reviewers are responsible for following accreditation policies and procedures when preparing for and conducting site visits. See Appendix E for policies related to serving as a peer reviewer.

### Accreditation Fees

The NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system is supported by program fees— application fees, self-study review fees, site visit fees, and annual fees. Fees may be increased in response to analyses of income, expenses, predicted growth, and capacity needs of the accreditation system. The current fee schedule is available on the NAEYC website.

- Application for Accreditation Eligibility Review fee – This fee accompanies the submission of the Application for Accreditation Eligibility, and it covers the administrative review of the application.
- Self-Study Review fee – This fee accompanies the submission of the Self-Study Report for a program seeking accreditation for the first time. This covers the administrative review of the Self-Study Report.
- Site Visit fee<sup>1</sup> – This fee covers all travel costs (airfare, meals, ground transportation, etc.) for the peer reviewers and the administrative coordination of the site visit.
- Annual fee – An accredited program pays an annual fee as part of its requirements for maintaining its accreditation status. These fees support the system’s professional development offerings and the operations of the system. A program that remains in the candidacy phase beyond one year not due to circumstances caused by NAEYC will be asked to pay the annual fee in order to maintain candidacy status.
- Appeal Filing fee – A program seeking to appeal an accreditation decision must pay a fee when filing the appeal. This covers the administrative costs of reviewing and processing the appeal.
- Late fee – This fee is charged to an accredited program that is late in submitting its Renewal Self-Study Report, Annual Report, annual fees and/or site visit fees.

Discounts on fees may be available for higher education systems in which the vast majority of early childhood education degree programs have NAEYC accreditation and for currently NAEYC recognized

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<sup>1</sup> A site visit fee may increase if the site visit requires a larger peer review team or lengthier visit schedule, or when geography requires substantially higher-than-usual travel costs. See p. 21 under the “Site Visits for Programs with Unique Features” for more details.

programs.<sup>2</sup> If a discount is offered, higher education systems must have early childhood education degree programs in at least eight institutions within the system, and 75% of those degree programs must be NAEYC accredited. Once the 75% threshold is achieved (and as long as it is maintained), all accredited programs in the system are eligible for a discount.

All fees are non-refundable except as described in the following sentences. In some cases, a program might need to prepay its accreditation fees due to grant funding it is using or institutional funding that needs to be spent prior to the program being able to submit a Self-Study Report, host a site visit, or submit an Annual Fee. In these cases, the program can submit the funds as a deposit to NAEYC, and NAEYC can hold the fees for up to one year. On a case-by-case basis, NAEYC will consider requests to hold funds beyond one year. Once the program submits the relevant report or schedules the site visit, NAEYC will allocate those funds. If the program is unable to complete the relevant accreditation step(s) within one year (or within the agreed-upon time period if NAEYC agreed to hold the funds beyond one year), it may request for NAEYC to refund the deposit. The request must be made within two weeks after the end of the holding period. Barring restrictions from the program's funding source (e.g. if a foundation requires that any unused funds be returned to it), if such a request is not made, the program forfeits the funds to NAEYC. The program will need to provide evidence of the funding source's restrictions.

In cases where an affiliate, foundation, state agency, or other entity is funding an accreditation cohort and needs to expend funds prior to the cohort completing the accreditation process, the entity should contact NAEYC regarding requests to hold the funds for a longer period of time.

## Policies and Procedures in the Accreditation Process

### Step One: Application for Accreditation Eligibility

*This section explains the first step in the accreditation process: Confirming each higher education program's eligibility for accreditation.*

#### Application for Accreditation Eligibility

The Application for Accreditation Eligibility form is available on the [NAEYC website](#). An institution submitting more than one program for eligibility consideration may include all programs in one application. Payment of the Application of Accreditation Eligibility review fee should be submitted at the same time as the application form. A current schedule of accreditation fees is available on the [NAEYC website](#).

The application must include the signature of a senior administrative official (dean level or above) to demonstrate institutional support for the accreditation endeavor.

Each program must have a primary contact. The primary contact will serve as the main contact for NAEYC staff and Commission communication related to the early childhood accreditation work. Most programs also name a secondary contact; this person may be either a program faculty member or an administrator who will provide support to the program's accreditation work. Either the primary or secondary contact must meet Eligibility Requirement 6 below.

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<sup>2</sup> NAEYC recognized programs are eligible for the discount for up to one year after their NAEYC recognition term expires.

### Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and Evidence of Compliance<sup>3</sup>

The Accreditation Eligibility Requirements are objective, baseline criteria that programs must meet in order to pursue accreditation. The requirements affirm that the institution in which the program is housed is in good standing, and that the program meets a threshold regarding early childhood content and faculty who have early childhood academic credentials. Each degree program submitted for review must meet the following:

1. The institution offering the degree program(s) must be located in a U.S. state, district, or territory and be currently accredited by an accrediting agency that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and/or the U.S. Department of Education. This eligibility requirement must be met at the time of the application submission.
2. The program(s) must not be designated as “low-performing” by the state, as outlined by Title II of the Higher Education Act. (Currently, this designation applies only at the baccalaureate and graduate degree levels.) This eligibility requirement must be met at the time of the application submission.
3. The program(s) must be a specialized degree in early childhood or child development with at least 18 credit hours of early childhood coursework. This may include courses from other departments, such as child psychology, sociology of the family, or children’s literature, if these courses are aligned with NAEYC accreditation standards and faculty are willing to participate in site visit interviews. This eligibility requirement must be met at the time of the Self-Study Report submission.
4. The program(s) requires field experiences. This eligibility requirement must be met at the time of the Self-Study Report submission.
5. The program(s) must have graduated at least one individual. This eligibility requirement must be met by the time of the Self-Study Report submission.
6. The faculty for each associate degree program(s) must include at least one full-time faculty member (a) whose primary responsibilities are in the early childhood program(s) submitted for review and (b) who holds a graduate degree in early childhood education, child development, child and family studies, or a related discipline, with at least 18 graduate credits in early childhood/family studies. This faculty member must serve as either the primary or secondary contact, and one person may serve in this role for multiple programs.

The faculty for each baccalaureate and master’s degree program must include at least one full-time faculty member (a) whose primary responsibilities are in the early childhood program(s) submitted for review and (b) who holds a doctoral degree in early childhood education, child development, child and family studies, or a related discipline, with at least 18 graduate credits in early childhood/family studies. This faculty member must serve as either the primary or secondary contact, and one person may serve in this role for multiple programs.

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<sup>3</sup> Programs in candidacy and accredited programs must maintain compliance with eligibility requirements.

This eligibility requirement must be met by the time of the Self-Study Report submission.

Accreditation Eligibility Requirements are mandatory components of accreditation throughout the period of candidacy and accreditation. The Commission may defer making a first-time accreditation decision for a program in candidacy that no longer meets an Accreditation Eligibility Requirement. An accredited program may be subject to probation if the program no longer meets an Accreditation Eligibility Requirement, or revocation of accreditation if it no longer meets Accreditation Eligibility Requirement #1 (See policies for “Accredited with Probation” and “Accreditation Revoked”).

### The Application Review

NAEYC staff review each application for completeness. Applications will not be considered until the application and review fee are received. The application review may include staff review of the program website and the website of the regional or national accrediting body identified by the program. Staff may also follow up with the primary contact listed on the application to clarify information or to confirm compliance with Accreditation Eligibility Requirements.

When the application review is complete and any questions about the application are clarified, NAEYC will inform the program whether it has met the application requirements to enter the self-study phase. If the institution applies for multiple programs to begin the accreditation process, each degree program will receive a notice that the application requirements have or have not been met.

In general, NAEYC will not allow programs within a multiple-institution system to apply to be accredited as a single early childhood education program, even if the system is regionally or nationally accredited as one institution. There are many factors that would preclude this: institutions are often governed by different administrative leadership; programs are overseen by different coordinators; courses across institutions do not include the same content; field experience policies and processes are managed separately; institutions serve different student populations and may have different roles and missions in the community. If the programs do want to be considered as one program, they must meet the definition of a Single Early Childhood Education Program. NAEYC retains the right to determine whether an early childhood education program is a Single Early Childhood Education Program (see the Glossary), in its sole judgement.

An institution that has multiple campuses/sites might choose to have programs at each campus accredited separately or might be eligible to have its early childhood program accredited as one program. Its program must meet the definition of a Single Early Childhood Education Program.

Programs with components across multiple campuses are encouraged to contact NAEYC staff for assistance in determining which considerations apply.

### Step Two: The Self-Study Phase

Once its application for accreditation eligibility is approved, the program enters the self-study phase of the accreditation process. During this time, the program works toward completing a Self-Study Report. Programs in self-study may not use the NAEYC accreditation logo or otherwise imply accredited status. NAEYC provides accreditation status language only for programs that are in candidacy or accredited, and provides the accreditation logo only for programs that are accredited (see policies for “Candidacy” and “Use of Accreditation Logo” and “Program Display of Accreditation Status” for more details). NAEYC

holds the trademark for the intellectual property of the NAEYC accreditation logo and accreditation brand. Misuse of the logo or brand is an infringement on this trademark.

Primary and secondary program contacts, as designated on the application, are given access to the online resource library, which includes the Self-Study Report template and additional resources. Access to the online resource library is restricted solely to the individuals explicitly granted access by NAEYC. Individual login information must not be shared with other faculty at the program so as to comply with confidentiality requirements. NAEYC will communicate about the program's progress with the designated primary contact, who is responsible for sharing information with others at the institution, as deemed appropriate by the institution.

It is sometimes possible for an institution to combine more than one program at the same degree level into one Self-Study Report. If programs at the same degree level share the same key assessments, they can be included in the same Self-Study Report. If an institution is submitting materials for programs at multiple degree levels, it will likely need to submit separate Self-Study Reports for programs at each degree level. NAEYC will work with an institution seeking accreditation for multiple degree programs to coordinate one site visit, if possible; however, multiple programs with a total of more than six key assessments<sup>4</sup> may require a longer site visit and/or larger review team. As noted in the fee schedule, these circumstances may result in an increased visit fee. An institution that includes multiple programs in its application is strongly encouraged to communicate with NAEYC early in the self-study process to determine whether multiple degree programs should be submitted together in one Self-Study Report or in separate Self-Study Reports.

A program that offers both on-campus and online courses should communicate with NAEYC to determine how to effectively present evidence related to Accreditation Criteria and standards across both on-campus and online course sections.

A program must complete its Self-Study Report within five years of being notified of its accepted Application for Accreditation Eligibility. If the program does not submit the Self-Study Report within five years, it will need to reapply. If a program seeking first-time accreditation is receiving funds for accreditation support through a state, NAEYC, a NAEYC affiliate or other sources, the program may be subject to a shorter timeline set by the funding source.

### [Overview of the Self-Study Report](#)

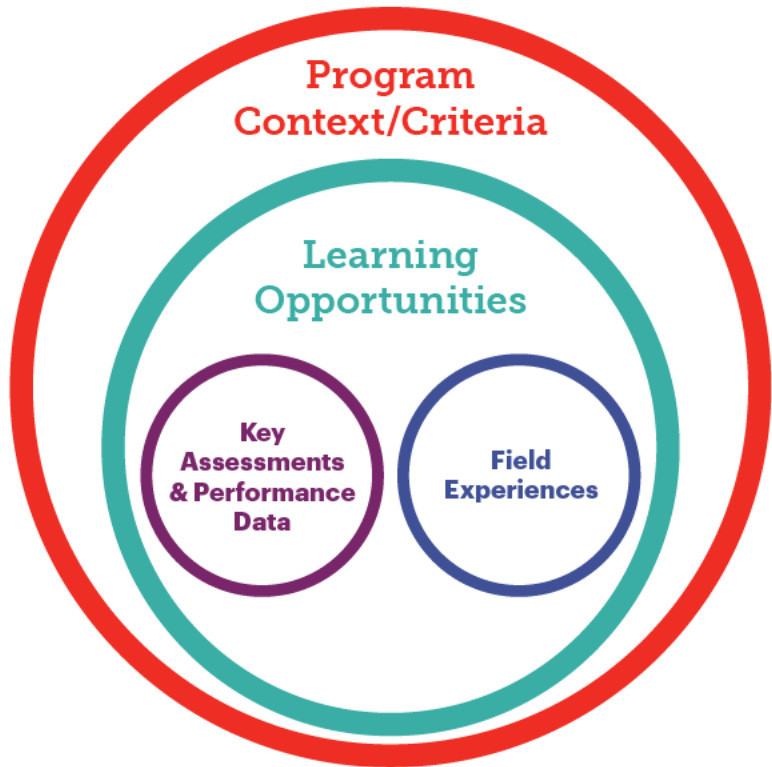
The Self-Study Report is composed of four parts. The program affirms/reaffirms its compliance with the Accreditation Eligibility Requirements in Part One. In Part Two, the program is asked to describe its context using the framework of twelve criteria. In Part Three, the program describes the Learning Opportunities it provides to candidates throughout the program, as the opportunities relate to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards. The program also describes how it assesses candidates, gathers information about their growth in relation to the standards, designs field experiences, and uses this information to plan program improvements that respond to candidate needs. Strong programs demonstrate that the Learning Opportunities and assessments presented in Part Three of the report are designed to build on the strengths and address the challenges described in Part Two. In Part Four, the program reports on program outcome data related to candidate success.

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<sup>4</sup> (e.g. a program seeking accreditation for programs at multiple degree levels that do not share Key Assessments.)



# PRESENTING EVIDENCE OF MEETING THE STANDARDS



## Program Context/Criteria

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Program Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Mission and Role in Community</li> </ul> <p><b>Program Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Conceptual Framework</li> <li>→ Program of Studies</li> <li>→ Quality of Teaching</li> <li>→ Role in the Pipeline</li> </ul> <p><b>Candidates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Characteristics of Candidates</li> <li>→ Candidate Advising and Support</li> </ul> | <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Faculty Qualifications &amp; Composition</li> <li>→ Responsibilities</li> <li>→ Professional Development</li> </ul> <p><b>Supportive Infrastructure and Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Program Organization &amp; Guidance</li> <li>→ Program Resources</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Learning Opportunities

Program Experiences Aligned with NAEYC Standards

### Key Assessments & Performance Data

**Assessment and Candidates Outcomes**  
Evidence of Candidate Performance Related to the NAEYC Standards

### Field Experiences

Evidence of varied opportunities for candidates to observe and practice



## NAEYC Accreditation Criteria

Accreditation Criteria identify elements of the program context with corresponding indicators of strength. These criteria are used to better understand the program's unique context, the institution and program mission and goals, the program's conceptual framework and design, the characteristics of candidates and faculty, and the institutional structure. In the Self-Study Report, the program reflects on strengths, challenges, and plans for improvement in relation to each criterion. The Accreditation Criteria provide insight to peer reviewers and the Commission as to the choices the program makes in integrating the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards into its curriculum and Key assessments. Peer reviewers and the Commission also look to the Accreditation Criteria to understand the program's capacity to address identified gaps in its program's alignment to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards. The twelve Accreditation Criteria are clustered into five groups: program identity, program design, candidates, faculty, and supportive infrastructure and organization. Each criterion includes a rationale, indicators of strength, and the sources of evidence used by peer reviewers and the Commission in the program review. (See Appendix C for a description of each criterion.)

## The NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards

The accreditation of a program is based on a determination by the Commission that a program meets NAEYC's core standards as published in the *NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation for Use by Associate, Baccalaureate, and Graduate Degree Programs*. The NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards describe what well prepared early childhood program graduates should know and be able to do. These standards are not meant to be a constricting, one-size-fits-all framework. They are meant to provide a shared vision for early childhood professional preparation that is developed and implemented in programs that are responsive to particular candidates, faculty, and communities.

Successful accreditation depends upon providing evidence in the Self-Study Report and during the site visit that the program meets these accreditation standards. This evidence is closely examined in the process of making the accreditation decision. Standards One through Six are evaluated separately using four indicators:

1. Learning Opportunities aligned with the standard
2. Key assessments aligned with the standard
3. Aggregate data on candidate performance related to the standard gathered from the Key assessments (two applications of data are required for renewal programs; one application of data is required for first-time programs)
4. Use of those data in ongoing program improvement planning

Each program must demonstrate that its Learning Opportunities and Key assessments are aligned with key elements of the accreditation standards. A strong program demonstrates that its Learning Opportunities and Key assessments are designed to use the strengths and address the challenges described in responses to the Accreditation Criteria.

Whereas Standards One through Six are focused on what candidates know, understand, and are able to do in relation to early childhood competencies, Standard Seven is focused on program design. As such, Standard Seven is not evaluated through the submission of Key assessments but through narrative, a

field experiences chart, and other documents that explain the design and quality of the program's field experiences.

Programs are strongly encouraged to read the full NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards [on the NAEYC website](#) as they will be expected to demonstrate how they meet the full standards. (See Appendix D for a summary of the standards.)

### Key Assessments

As part of the Self-Study Report, programs submit five or six Key assessments that collectively demonstrate alignment to Standards One through Six. Key assessments are major assessments programs give to candidates to evaluate their understanding and application of the standards. Key assessments include a set of written instructions that are given to candidates, as well as a rubric used to evaluate candidates' performance related to the standards.

Candidate performance data gathered from key assessments provides important information to programs about candidates' proficiency in the standards. The data should be used to help inform potential improvements to teaching and learning in relation to the standards. As such, it is important that programs have policies, practices and systems in place to ensure that to the most extent possible all candidates take all key assessments. If a program has transfer students who do not take some of the courses in which Key assessments are administered, or if the program awards credit for prior learning, the CDA credential, military modules, Head Start, through high school career and technical programs, etc., and credit is given for courses that house a Key Assessment, the program must ensure that those candidates take the Key assessments prior to completing the program. If these candidates took the exact same Key Assessment at the institution/school from which they transferred, they do not need to take the Key Assessment again at the institution to which they transferred; however, the accredited program should have a system for gathering candidate performance data from the already-completed assessment. As such, programs are strongly encouraged to put Key Assessments in courses that are not included in transfer agreements, credit for prior learning or CDA. The Commission recognizes that there may be institutional or college system-wide policies that make it challenging for programs to ensure that all candidates take all key assessments. In these cases, programs should describe these policies and provide evidence that they have enacted all policies, practices, and systems possible to ensure that as many candidates as possible take the key assessments. In addition, programs must describe how candidates demonstrate competency in the standards that are addressed in the key assessments they do not take.

The Commission recognizes the value of portfolios and group projects as important assessments in programs of study, but in some cases these may not meet the requirements of a key assessment. Regarding group projects, key assessments must evaluate individual candidate performance on Standards 1-6. As such, programs should not submit assessments in which candidates are being evaluated on the standards through group work without including some form of individual assessment. Regarding portfolios, they often include previously graded work and, as such, tend to provide evidence only for Standard 6d when candidates are asked to reflect on their past work. They may not be suited to evaluate candidate performance on the standards in a robust way. If a program chooses to submit a key

assessment that is a portfolio (or other large, comprehensive assignment), the program should review NAEYC's guidance (found in the online resource library) on using portfolios as key assessments.

*NAEYC recognizes that programs are engaged in continuous improvement and, as such, programs may regularly revise/replace or add new Key Assessments. The intention of the previous paragraph is not to require candidates that have already completed existing Key Assessments to take the revised/replaced/new Key Assessments prior to completing the program.*

### Program Responsibility

The program is responsible for submitting all evidence that it meets the standards. The program is responsible for preparing reports and documents following the required report templates and with a degree of thoroughness and clarity that will satisfy a detailed review by staff, the Peer Review Team, and the Commission. Questions about accessing the accreditation online resource library, conducting the self-study work, and submitting the Self-Study Report should be directed to NAEYC.

The submission of the Self-Study Report (including required signatures) and self-study review fee serves as the program's request for a site visit. NAEYC will review each Self-Study Report and may request additional information if the documents appear to be incomplete in response to one or more standards or criteria. Current deadlines for submission of completed Self-Study Reports are posted in the online resource library.

### Definition of a Complete Self-Study Report

A Self-Study Report is accepted when all components are included to the satisfaction of NAEYC staff and/or the Commission, including but not limited to the following:

- The program uses the current edition of the Self-Study Report Template (see the paragraph below the bulleted list for more details) and uses the current edition of NAEYC's Higher Education Accreditation Standards.
- The program has affirmed (or reaffirmed) that it meets all Accreditation Eligibility Requirements.
- Every criterion in Part Two of the report has been completed, and the required sources of evidence for each criterion are included in the Self-Study Report.
- The Chart of Learning Opportunities is filled out, with information provided for each key element, and with the requested narratives (commentary on the chart and description of challenges/strengths/plans) included.
- The Chart of Key Assessments is submitted, with alignment indicated for Standards One through Six and each key element associated with those standards.
- Five or six key assessments are submitted that address alignment with Standards One through Six and each key element associated with those standards.
- The program affirms that the key assessments submitted ensure that candidates are individually evaluated on Standards 1-6, not evaluated as a group.

- If a key assessment is a portfolio assignment, the program affirms that it has reviewed NAEYC's guidance on portfolios (found in the online resource library) to ensure it meets the requirements for a key assessment.
- For every key assessment in the Chart of Key Assessments, a complete (and single) evidence chart, set of instructions, and rubric are submitted.
- Key elements of the standards are clearly labeled in the key assessments and are embedded within the specific applicable tasks in the instructions and in the rubrics. Key elements are not clustered within a rubric row or with an associated task in the instructions.
- For Standard Seven, the narrative and Chart of Field Experiences are completed, and associated evidence documents are included.
- For a Self-Study Report addressing more than one degree program, the Multi-Program Alignment Chart is completed.
- For a first-time program, at least one application (but no more than two applications) of candidate performance data for each key element from each applicable key assessment is submitted for each standard. Data may reflect the key assessments included in the Self-Study Report or assessments that were used prior to the current versions if data are not yet available from the current versions due to the recency of assessment revisions. Data are disaggregated by key element and by program (if a Self-Study Report includes more than one degree program). The program has provided a narrative describing candidate performance on each standard, as well as the program's use of data related to that standard.
- For a renewal program, two applications of candidate performance data for each key element from each applicable key assessment (disaggregated by application) are submitted for each standard. Data are also disaggregated key element and by program if a Self-Study Report includes more than one degree program. Data may reflect the key assessments included in the Self-Study Report or assessments that were used prior to the current versions if data are not yet available from the current versions due to the recency of assessment revisions. The program has provided a narrative describing candidate performance on each standard, as well as the program's use of data related to that standard.
- The program has included a two- to four-page narrative that reviews strengths, challenges, and plans related to the assessment system.
- All program outcome measures are completed and the data on the measures are published on the program's website, or there is a web link on the program's website landing page that leads to the data published elsewhere on the institution's website.
- The report is formatted per the report submission instructions in the online resource library (e.g., the report has been submitted as one PDF document with all evidence embedded within the report), and the self-study review fee payment (for first-time programs) or annual fee (for renewal programs) has been received.

This list is based on the 2019 Self-Study Report Templates for First-Time and Renewal Accreditation. The list will be updated to reflect subsequent changes to the Self-Study Report template or changes to

accreditation policies; however, it is the responsibility of the program to ensure that it has fully completed a template that is eligible for consideration at the time of submission. The program must use the most current Self-Study Report template available in the online resource library at the time the report is submitted. If an updated template has been posted within 6 months of the program's submission date, it may choose to use the most recent previous template or the new template. The program may not alter the Self-Study Report template.

### Submitting the Self-Study Report

By either September 30 or March 31, a first-time program will submit a complete Self-Study Report a semester before its desired site visit. Renewal programs will submit their Self-Study Report in Year 6 of their accreditation period instead of submitting an Annual Report. In recognition that many programs continue revising learning opportunities and key assessments through the year, a program approved for candidacy will have an opportunity to submit an updated Self-Study Report (with revised content such as the Learning Opportunities Chart, Candidate Performance Data Collection and Analysis, and Key Assessments) closer to its assigned site visit season - by December 15 (if having a spring site visit) or July 31 (if having a fall site visit), or the next business day on which the NAEYC office is open. There is no grace period or extension policy for submitting updated evidence by the December 15 and July 31 dates.

### Staff Review

NAEYC staff review the Self-Study Report for completeness to confirm that peer reviewers have the evidence needed to conduct a site visit and Commissioners have the evidence needed to make an accreditation decision. The program is advised to download current report templates, use external proofreaders, and use the peer reviewer worksheets in the online resource library as quality control tools before submitting the report to NAEYC. If a report is not deemed by the staff to indicate sufficiently the program's readiness for a site visit, the program will be asked to revise the report to address missing or incorrect components. If the issues can be addressed within three weeks of receiving feedback, staff will put the program on the slate for candidacy for Commission approval (for first-time accreditation cases) and will move forward with scheduling the site visit for renewal accreditation cases. If a program seeking first-time accreditation is unable to address the missing or incorrect components within three weeks, the program can resubmit its Self-Study Report at the next reporting deadline (September 30 or March 31). If a program seeking renewal accreditation is unable to address missing or incorrect components within three weeks, the program will enter Administrative Probation up to July 31 (for a program that must have a fall site visit) or December 15 (for a program that must have a spring site visit), or the next business day on which the NAEYC office is open. If the Renewal Self-Study Report is still incomplete after resubmitting it by July 31 or December 15, the program's accreditation will expire. There is no grace period for submitting a complete Self-Study Report by the July 31 or December 15 deadline.

If staff do not deem the initial Self-Study Report submission (submitted by either March 31 or September 30) complete, and the program disagrees with this decision, the program can request that the Executive Committee of the Commission review the Self-Study Report for a determination on whether a site visit can proceed. Within the three-week time period for responding to staff feedback on completeness, the program must submit the request in writing describing its rationale for disagreeing. If the Executive Committee determines the Self-Study Report is not sufficient to hold a meaningful site

visit, a renewal program's period of Administrative Probation will begin at the point that the program is notified of the Executive Committee decision. Programs seeking first-time accreditation can resubmit their Self-Study Report at subsequent reporting deadlines (September 30 or March 31).

### Step Three: Accreditation Candidacy Phase (applies to first-time accreditation only)

Candidacy status will be granted by the Commission when the program's first-time Self-Study Report is accepted, the Self-Study Review Fee is received, and the Commission has approved the program for a site visit. The granting of candidacy status indicates that the program is progressing toward a first-time accreditation decision and is eligible for a site visit. At the time the program is notified that the Self-Study Report has qualified the program for a site visit, the program is assessed a site visit fee that covers the direct and indirect costs associated with the visit of the Peer Review Team. (A current fee schedule is posted on the NAEYC website.)

Candidacy cannot last more than two years unless a program experiences unforeseen circumstances (see p.44 Extension Policy for Site Visits) or the Commission exercises its right to extend the candidacy period beyond the two years due to unanticipated caseloads. A program that remains in the candidacy phase beyond one year not due to circumstances caused by NAEYC will be asked to pay the annual fee in order to maintain candidacy status.

A program is not required to display its candidacy status on its website or in other materials. However, if a program chooses to do so, the name of the degree program and the name and address of the accrediting body must be included in the accreditation status statement. A program should use the following language in its entirety to display its accreditation status.

*The [degree program] at [institution] has been approved as a candidate for accreditation from the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs of the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#). The candidacy period is from [month/year] to [month/year]. Candidacy status indicates that the program is progressing toward a first-time accreditation decision.*

A program in the candidacy stage may not display the NAEYC Accreditation logo. A program misusing the logo will not be eligible for accreditation until the issue is resolved.

### The Site Visit

Once a program achieves candidacy status, NAEYC will work with the program to schedule a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. The site visit is an essential component in the accreditation of higher education programs. In any professional field, accreditation relies on the professional judgment of well-trained peers—in this case, those who understand the context of early childhood degree programs as well as the standards that NAEYC has developed to make accreditation decisions.

Peer review is an important element in evaluating whether an early childhood degree program meets NAEYC's Professional Preparation Standards. Typically, a team of two to three peer reviewers will be assigned to each site visit. (Multiple programs with a total of more than six Key assessments may require a larger review team.) One person on the team is assigned the role of chair and is responsible for leading team meetings during the site visit, sending the final written report to NAEYC, and serving as the team's primary contact for communication with NAEYC and the host institution. The Peer Review Team's role is

to prepare for and conduct the site visit and produce a Peer Review Report (this template is available in the online resource library) for the program and Commission. The Peer Review Team members confirm and supplement the information in the program's Self-Study Report through interviews with faculty, candidates, administrators and community stakeholders. They will review supporting documents as well as conduct tours of campus facilities and field sites. Using the Peer Review Reviewer Worksheet and Rubric (templates available in the online resource library), the team writes a report to the accreditation Commission, using its analysis of the program's Self-Study Report and its experiences during the site visit to document strengths and challenges in relation to the program's alignment to the standards. The report represents the consensus of the team.

#### *Peer review has three steps:*

Step 1 occurs before the visit. The peer reviewers individually read the Self-Study Report and make a preliminary assessment of the program's strengths and challenges based on the program's narrative and evidence provided. However, this is only a first assessment, and the views of the team members may change when they conduct the site visit.

Step 2 is the actual site visit, when the Peer Review Team sees the program first-hand. The team has multiple opportunities to meet with program faculty, candidates, and other stakeholders. The team will review additional evidence provided by the program and may request new information. This phase provides opportunities for the team to gain knowledge from sources other than the Self-Study Report and allows the team to have a broader perspective on the program's strengths and possible challenges in each area.

Step 3 is for the team to synthesize its evaluation of the program in a summary report to the Commission. The team's preliminary key findings are orally summarized in a meeting at the end of the visit. The Peer Review Team is not a decision-making body and will only report its findings regarding the program's alignment to NAEYC's Professional Preparation Standards. It will not make a recommendation regarding an accreditation decision to the Commission.

#### *Scheduling the Visit*

Site visits are typically conducted only during the spring and fall semesters. When the program's Self-Study Report is complete (see page 17 for a definition of a complete Self-Study Report), NAEYC will determine whether the report was completed in time to be considered for a site visit the following semester. Site visit dates and peer review teams are assigned during the fall or spring semester prior to the site visit.

NAEYC will contact the program and peer reviewers for available dates. A program should select possible dates with several factors in mind: classes must be in session, and administrators and field sites must be available; fewer possible dates mean fewer available reviewers.

NAEYC and the program will mutually agree upon the visit date. NAEYC then assigns the Peer Review Team, considering dates of availability, potential conflicts of interest, geography, and areas of expertise. The program identifies any potential conflicts of interest with peer reviewers immediately after receiving the names of the assigned team.

The Commission reserves the right to postpone the site visit due to an incomplete Self-Study Report, failure to submit the report or fee by a deadline, unusually large numbers of reports from a particular



state or in a particular cycle, or other conditions that may have negative impact on the integrity of the visit or of the accreditation system. If a site visit for a renewal program is postponed under these circumstances, the program's current accreditation period is extended to accommodate this additional time.

#### *Site Visits for Programs with Unique Features (multiple, online programs, night programs)*

As stated previously (see the Self-Study Phase policies), an institution with multiple eligible programs is strongly encouraged to communicate with NAEYC early in the self-study process to determine whether multiple degree programs can be reviewed during one site visit. Similarly, an eligible program offered on more than one campus should communicate with NAEYC to determine how many campuses can effectively be addressed in one site visit.

An eligible program that offers both on-campus and online or other forms of distance learning courses should communicate with NAEYC to determine how to effectively present evidence related to criteria and standards across both on-campus and distance course sections during the site visit.

Likewise, an eligible program that offers classes only at night or on weekends may require a modified site visit schedule and should communicate with NAEYC to determine an appropriate schedule.

A site visit fee may increase under one of the following conditions: when a program is located in a geographic area that requires significantly higher travel costs or if the site visit requires an additional peer reviewer and/or a fourth site visit day. It is highly likely that an institution with multiple programs seeking accreditation may need an additional peer reviewer and/or an additional site visit day if the programs do not share most of their key assessments and/or courses.

Any modifications will be made with mutual agreement of NAEYC, the Peer Review Team chair, and the program's primary contact.

#### *Emergencies affecting a site visit*

Emergencies occur when a Peer Reviewer can no longer commit to a site visit due to a personal emergency or the host institution needs to cancel the visit due to weather or other emergencies.

If an assigned Peer Review Team member must withdraw from the team and can give sufficient notice, NAEYC will attempt to find a replacement. The program will be notified of the change and given the opportunity to identify any potential conflict of interest.

If the assigned Peer Review Team member was not able to give sufficient notice or if a replacement cannot be found, decisions for proceeding will be made on a case-by-case basis. Options include, but are not limited to, proceeding with a smaller team (but no fewer than a two-person team), arranging for the non-traveling team member to be available for consultation by telephone, extending the visit if team member arrivals are delayed, or rescheduling the visit. The team chair and the site primary contact, in consultation with NAEYC staff, have the right to postpone a visit based on their consultation and mutual agreement.

If the visit is unable to proceed as scheduled due to a reviewer cancellation or due to weather, governmental order, or other cause beyond the control of the institution, the visit will be rescheduled at a mutually acceptable future date at no additional cost to the institution. If the institution cancels the visit for any other reason than specified above, the institution will bear responsibility for any costs



associated with rescheduling or forfeit the site visit fee in cases where the program does not reschedule the site visit.

#### *Confidentiality of Teacher Candidate Information*

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of candidate education records. Generally, a school must have written permission from a parent or eligible candidate in order to release any information from a candidate's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records to accrediting organizations without consent. Although not a concern under FERPA, the types of information most relevant to the Accreditation system typically do not include individual candidate records. Of greater relevance are the program's assessments themselves and aggregated data from those assessments. In cases where it is helpful to see individual samples of candidates' work (for example, to highlight performance expectations at different levels on a rubric), programs are encouraged to remove candidates' identifying information, including names.

#### *Restrictions on Gifts and Compensation for Peer Reviewers*

Peer reviewers will not request or accept any compensation or any gifts of substance from the institution being reviewed or anyone affiliated with the institution. (Gifts of substance would include briefcases, tickets to athletic or entertainment events, etc.) If unsure as to whether something constitutes a "gift of substance," peer reviewers are advised to err on the side of declining gifts of any kind. Similarly, peer reviewers will not expect elaborate hospitality during site visits. It is appropriate for institutions to provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages for teams as they conduct their work on campus and at their hotel. Institutions must ensure that the team's workspace on campus is comfortable and conducive to their work, including basic office supplies as well as WiFi and printing capabilities. Host institutions generally provide transportation to field sites (and off-campus class sites, if applicable) during the visit and may assist with the pickup and delivery (though not the cost) of lunch, depending on the availability and location of dining options on or near campus. Programs are encouraged to review the *Self-Study and Site Visit Manual* in the Accreditation Resource Library and to contact NAEYC if any questions arise regarding an appropriate level of hospitality during the site visit.

#### *Evidence considered during the Site Visit*

The NAEYC Commission understands and appreciates that programs continuously improve their Learning Opportunities, Key assessments, data collection systems, etc. However, peer review teams will only consider the evidence submitted in the Self-Study Report and validate that evidence during the site visit

#### *The Peer Review Report*

During the site visit, the Peer Review Team begins drafting its report. The report provides feedback to the program and information to the Commission about how the program has addressed the Accreditation Criteria and NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards. Areas of strength and recommendations for consideration are noted. The essential findings in the report are shared orally with the program at an "exit report session" on the final day of the visit.

#### *The Exit Report*

The program and institution will decide who will attend the exit report session. Usually attendees include the program faculty and representatives of the senior administrative staff of the college.

Typically, all Peer Review Team members participate, and the team chair takes the lead. At the meeting, the team will summarize the preliminary key findings, note commendations and recommendations that will appear in the report, and generally describe the overall thrust of the report, which the program will receive at a later date.

Additionally, the review team will remind those at the exit session about the next steps in the accreditation process and the possible accreditation decisions. Finally, the review team will emphasize that it does not make the accreditation decision, and it cannot speak for the Commission, which will use the Peer Review Report, the program's Self-Study Report, and the program's Written Response to the Peer Review Report to reach a conclusion about accreditation.

#### *Feedback Loops for Continuous Improvement*

NAEYC believes that a quality system needs continuous feedback. As part of this process, the program will be asked to complete a survey about its experiences with the planning and implementation of the site visit, including the Peer Review Team's preparation and conduct. Peer reviewers are also asked to provide feedback on each other.

#### *Once the Peer Review Report Is Completed*

The team chair typically submits a draft Peer Review Report to NAEYC within two weeks of the site visit. This report develops the basic findings of the team as shared orally in the exit session. The report summarizes the program's alignment to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards as evidenced by the Learning Opportunities, Key assessments, candidate performance data, and program improvement work reviewed by the Peer Review Team.

The team does not make a recommendation on accreditation. It does use a rubric to assess the evidence submitted by the program for each standard as meeting expectations or as an area of significant concern. The team also identifies strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement related to each of the Accreditation Criteria.

#### *The Written Response to the Peer Review Report*

Once NAEYC has reviewed the Peer Review Report and completed technical edits in consultation with the Peer Review Team, the final report is sent to the program, typically by the end of the semester in which the visit took place. The program then has 30 days to submit a Written Response to the Peer Review Report unless an extension is granted under the following extension policy. The program should contact staff if the college will be closed on the originally assigned due date or if an extension is needed for other reasons.

In the program's Written Response to the Peer Review Report, the program may not introduce new pieces of evidence. Programs may note any factual inaccuracies in the Peer Review Report and provide updated written information related to the Accreditation Criteria and NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards in the Self-Study Report, as evidence of the program's capacity for continued growth.

The program's Self-Study Report, Peer Review Report, and Written Response to the Peer Review Report are sent to the Commission and serve as the documented evidence on which the Commission makes an accreditation decision.

## Step Four: The Accreditation Decision

Accreditation decisions are made by the Commission which exercises a high degree of professional judgment as it applies the standards and criteria in its review of programs, including the Self-Study Reports, Peer Review Reports, Written Responses, Annual Reports and/or Focused Reports (described later in this publication). The accreditation decision is not based on a numerical score. Professional judgment must be used to evaluate the extent to which a program has met each accreditation standard.

The Commission will send a Decision Report for first-time/renewal accreditation cases, or a Decision Letter for conditions cases, to the primary contacts for the programs and chief executive officers of the institutions housing the programs.

### The Role of Criteria and Standards in the Accreditation Decision

The accreditation decision is based on evidence that the program meets each of the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards. Responses to the Accreditation Criteria in Part Two of the Self-Study Report help the peer reviewers and Commission to understand how the program approaches the standards and why the program is designed in a particular way. The Commission looks to see that the program is reflective and responsive in relation to its unique community base, candidates, faculty, conceptual framework, institutional mission and goals, program resources, capacity, strengths, and challenges. The standards and criteria may all be used to identify program strengths and recommended areas for improvement.

### Possible Decisions

The Commission may choose from the following accreditation decision outcomes for programs pursuing accreditation for the first time:

- Accredited
- Accredited with Conditions
- Not Accredited

The Commission may choose from the following accreditation decision outcomes for currently accreditation programs, including those pursuing renewal accreditation:

- Accredited
- Accredited with Conditions
- Accredited with Probation
- Accreditation Revoked

The Commission may choose from the following accreditation decision outcomes for programs that have reached the end of their conditions or probation period:

- Accredited
- Accreditation Expired

In rare cases, the Commission may defer making an accreditation decision; in those cases, the Commission will communicate with the program (via NAEYC staff) regarding next steps and timelines.

### Accredited

Accredited programs typically hold accreditation for a period of seven years. Accredited indicates that the program has demonstrated the following:

- The program has met the standards by demonstrating that:
  - It provides adequate learning opportunities for candidates to understand and practice the competencies reflected in Standards 1-6.
  - Key assessments, collectively, are accurately aligned to Standards 1-6 and effectively measure candidates' performance in relation to the standards.
  - The program is collecting data that demonstrate evidence of candidate proficiency in relation to Standards 1-6, including that at least 80% of candidates are meeting or exceeding proficiency in Standards 1-6 as demonstrated through candidate performance data on the Key Assessments. (The 80% threshold can be achieved either across the two most recent applications of data or by considering just the most recent application. Programs with fewer than 10 individuals included in a data application may opt to use one of these measures as well or may include older applications of data to reflect 10 candidates.) *This policy is effective January 1, 2021.*
  - The program uses these data to improve teaching and learning related to Standards 1-6 in response to candidate needs.
  - The program meets the expectations for field experiences in Standard 7.
  - The program meets each of the Accreditation Eligibility Requirements.

### Accredited with Conditions

Accredited with Conditions indicates that the program meets each of the Accreditation Eligibility Requirements. In addition, the program provides adequate learning opportunities for candidates to understand and practice the competencies reflected in Standards 1-6, but there are concerns related to the program's ability to measure candidate proficiency in relation to and/or demonstrate that candidates are proficient in Standards 1-6; and/or or to ensure that all candidates observe and practice with the required age groups and in the required settings described in Standard 7. However, indicators of strength in the criteria section of the program's Self-Study Report, the Peer Review Report and/or in the program's Written Response show that the program can address the concerns. Commission findings indicate:

- Key Assessments may not address the depth and breadth of Standards 1-6, and/or the rubrics may not adequately describe performance expectations related to one or more of these standards. In some cases, Key Assessment(s) may not be taken by all candidates and/or used consistently by all faculty to evaluate individual candidate performance. Therefore, the Key Assessments will not generate meaningful data related to the standards. And/or
- The program may not be accurately or consistently collecting candidate performance data on Standards 1-6. And/or
- Candidate performance data from the Key Assessments may not demonstrate that at least 80% of the candidates are proficient in Standards 1-6. (*This policy is effective, January 1, 2021.*) And/or

- The program may not be adequately analyzing and/or using candidate performance data on Standards 1-6 to improve teaching and learning. And/or
- The program may not provide opportunities for all candidates to observe and practice in the early childhood age groups and settings required by Standard 7.

A program receiving this decision must submit evidence that identified conditions have been addressed in the first and/or second Annual Reports. Due to the timing of annual reporting cycle deadlines and Commission meetings, the conditions period may extend beyond two calendar years to encompass the Commission meeting that occurs immediately after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report deadline. The program is publicly listed as Accredited with Conditions during this period.

The Commission will review the evidence and determine if the program has sufficiently addressed conditions in either the first or second Annual Report. If the Commission finds that the program has met the conditions, the program is accredited for the remainder of the seven-year accreditation term that began with the Accreditation with Conditions decision. If the Commission determines that conditions have not been sufficiently addressed by the second Annual Report, the accreditation status expires, and the program receives notice that it is no longer accredited.

Once the Commission has cited conditions as part of the accreditation decision, in subsequent reviews of programs' responses to conditions, it cannot cite new conditions related to the materials submitted for the original accreditation decision. From time to time, though, in responding to conditions, programs create new concerns. In this instance, the Commission may cite these concerns as new conditions in reviewing the program's first response to conditions<sup>5</sup>. The program will have two Annual Report cycles to address these new conditions. The program must still address its original conditions within two Annual Report Cycles. If it does not, the program's accreditation may expire prior to the program being able to address the new conditions. A program can be on conditions for no more than a total of three years. The Commission cannot cite new concerns based on the program's second response to conditions. (This policy will go into effect September 1, 2020.)

#### *Accredited with Probation*

During a program's accreditation cycle or at the time of its accreditation renewal, the Commission may decide to place an accredited program on probation.

A program will receive an "accredited with probation" decision at any point during its accreditation cycle if the program is found to not meet one or more Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and/or if the program is not meeting other accreditation expectations (excluding reasons for Administrative Probation). Evidence may come to the Commission's attention in an Annual Report, substantive change

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<sup>5</sup> For example, if in a program's response to conditions it made revisions to part of a Key Assessment that was included in the original Self Study Report, the Commission can cite a new condition for the revised section of the Key Assessment; however, it cannot cite a condition if it notices concerns in the unrevised section of the Key Assessment (that the Commission may have missed in its original review of the program). In the case of the latter, the Commission can provide feedback to the program but cannot cite a new condition.

notifications, or from other documented sources, such as a filed complaint. (Consequences for not meeting Accreditation Eligibility Requirement 1 are discussed under the Accreditation Revoked policy.)

A program will also receive an “accreditation with probation” decision at the time of its accreditation renewal if there are multiple concerns related to items a-c below:

- a. If candidates in the program lack sufficient opportunities to understand and practice the professional standards and competencies, as reflected in a lack of alignment between Standards 1-6 and the program’s learning opportunities, including its Key Assessments; And
- b. if the program is not regularly and accurately collecting, analyzing, demonstrating, and using evidence of candidate proficiency in Standards 1-6 to improve teaching and learning in the program; And/or
- c. if the program does not require all candidates to observe and practice with the required age groups and settings defined in Standard Seven;

In cases where concerns “a” through “c” are identified, the Commission also finds that the program’s responses to the criteria section of the Self-Study Report, the Peer Review Report and/or the program’s Written Response identify challenges in the program’s ability to address the concerns.

The term of probation (excluding Administrative Probation) may be no more than two years. A program may not appeal a probation decision. During the probation period, the program will be publicly listed as “Accredited with Probation.” A program on probation due to an issue relating to meeting a standard may be required to complete a Focus Report(s) that addresses the specific issues in the program that led to probation, to host an additional site visit at the expense of the institution, and/or participate in a virtual meeting with the Commission to answer questions related to the Focus Report(s) and/or site visit.) The Commission reserves the right to request quarterly, biannual or annual reports from the program based on the nature of concerns that led to probation. During the probation period, the program will submit evidence that it has addressed the concerns outlined by the Commission. If the Commission determines that the program has sufficiently addressed the concerns, the program will be granted full accreditation for the remainder of the seven-year accreditation term during which it was placed on probation. If the Commission determines that the program has not sufficiently addressed the concerns within two years, the accreditation status expires, and the program receives notice that it is no longer accredited.

#### *Not Accredited*

A program seeking first-time accreditation will receive a “Not Accredited” decision:

- a. If the program is found to not meet one or more Accreditation Eligibility Requirements; AND/OR
- b. If the program is not meeting other accreditation expectations (excluding reasons for Administrative Probation; see page 30 for more information); AND/OR
- c. If the program has been found to not meet one or more accreditation standards as evidenced by
  - o candidates in the program lack sufficient opportunities to understand and practice the professional standards and competencies, as reflected in a lack of alignment between

Standards 1-6 and the program’s learning opportunities, including its Key Assessments, AND

- the program does not require candidates to observe and practice with the required age groups and settings defined in Standard Seven; AND/OR
- the program is not regularly and accurately collecting, analyzing, demonstrating, and using evidence of candidate proficiency in Standards 1-6 to improve teaching and learning in the program.

In addition, the Commission finds that the program’s responses to the criteria section of the program’s Self-Study Report, the Peer Review Report and/or the program’s Written Response identify challenges in the program’s ability to address the concerns in (c).

The program has the right to appeal a Not Accredited decision (see the Appeals Policy). The program has the right to submit a written comment on its accreditation decision within 30 days of receiving the decision. NAEYC will publish this written comment when it publishes the accreditation decision on the NAEYC website. The program may also choose to return to self-study work and repeat the Self-Study Report and site visit process. If the program chooses to return to self-study immediately after receiving the Not Accredited decision, it will not be required to pay an additional application fee but will be required to pay an additional self-study review fee and site visit fee. The program will be expected to follow all policies related to the self-study phase and candidacy phase.

#### *Accreditation Expired*

Accreditation is considered expired if the following occurs:

- If a degree program ceases operations as a functional entity such as through the merger of programs in an institutional system
- If an Accredited with Conditions program fails to meet conditions within the required time period
- If an Accredited with Probation program fails to meet its probation requirements within the required time period
- If a program on Administrative Probation fails to meet its administrative probation requirements<sup>6</sup>

The program has the right to appeal an Accreditation Expired decision (see the Appeals Policy). The program has the right to submit a written comment on its accreditation decision within 30 days of receiving the decision. NAEYC will publish this written comment when it publishes the accreditation decision on the NAEYC website. The program may also choose to return to self-study work and repeat the Self-Study Report and site visit process. If the program chooses to return to self-study immediately after receiving the Accreditation Expired decision, it will not be required to pay an additional application fee but will be required to pay an additional self-study review fee and site visit fee. The program will be expected to follow all policies related to the self-study phase and candidacy phase.

#### *Accreditation Revoked*

Accreditation will be revoked if the following occurs:

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<sup>6</sup> The Commission does not need to approve the “accreditation expired” decision in this circumstance.

- If the institution in which the program is located is no longer in compliance with Accreditation Eligibility Requirement 1
- In rare circumstances, the resolution of a complaint (see the Complaints Policy) could result in a program's accreditation being revoked.

The program has the right to appeal an Accreditation Revoked decision (see the Appeals Policy). The program has the right to submit a written comment on its accreditation decision within 30 days of receiving the decision. NAEYC will publish this written comment when it publishes the accreditation decision on the NAEYC website. The program may also choose to return to self-study work and repeat the Self-Study Report and site visit process. If the program chooses to return to self-study immediately after receiving the Accreditation Revoked decision, it will not be required to pay an additional application fee but will be required to pay an additional self-study review fee and site visit fee. The program will be expected to follow all policies related to the self-study phase and candidacy phase.

#### *Decision Deferred*

The Commission may choose to defer an accreditation decision to a subsequent meeting based on

- a) scheduling,
- b) insufficient evidence, or
- c) the need for the Commission to correct the feedback that it previously provided to a program on conditions.

In the case of insufficient evidence, the Commission will request new documentation that would clarify whether the program meets the standard(s) in question. Deferrals cannot extend beyond the 24-month candidacy limit for a program seeking accreditation for the first time, except in extreme circumstances such as a weather disaster. For a program seeking renewal accreditation that receives a deferral of decision, the Commission will extend the program's current accreditation term until it makes a final decision. If the Commission accredits the program when it reconsiders the case, the new seven-year accreditation term would begin at that point. In the rare case in which the Commission determines it needs to correct feedback to a program that has submitted a second response to conditions, it will extend the program's current accreditation term by no more than a year to allow the program to use the corrected feedback to respond to the conditions.

#### *Notification of Accreditation Status, Effective Date of Decisions and NAEYC Public Announcement of Decisions*

##### *Notification of Accreditation Decisions*

Within 45 days of the accreditation decisions made at a Commission meeting, NAEYC staff will notify the primary contact and chief executive officer of the institution of the relevant program.

##### *Decision Effective Dates*

The effective date of the Accredited, Accredited with Conditions, and Accredited with Probation decisions are the date the Commission makes its final decision. Annual Report and renewal Self-Study Report due dates as well as site visits are set according to the effective date of the most recent Accreditation Decision.



The effective date of Not Accredited, Accreditation Expired, and Accreditation Revoked decisions is 30 days after the program receives notification of the accreditation decision unless the program notifies NAEYC during that period of its intention to appeal the decision. (See the Appeals Policy.)

After a final adverse decision, a previously accredited program has an additional 60 days to notify necessary parties and to update its website and other materials to reflect that the program is no longer accredited.

#### *NAEYC Public Announcement of Accreditation Decisions*

NAEYC will publicize on its website and through its communications channels (e.g., newsletter, relevant listservs, etc.) decisions of the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs. All non-appealable decisions will be published shortly after the Commission makes the decisions. NAEYC will not publish an appealable decision (“not accredited/accreditation expired/accreditation revoked”) until after the 30-day window passes in which a program must notify NAEYC of its intent to appeal the decision. If the program chooses to appeal a decision, the final decision will not be published until after the appeals process is complete.

When NAEYC publishes an accreditation decision, it will include the decision status – Candidate for Accreditation, Accredited, Accredited with Conditions, Not Accredited, Accredited with Probation, Accreditation Expired, or Accreditation Revoked. In cases when a program receives an “Accredited with Conditions” decision, the Commission will state the reason for the condition. In cases where an adverse decision (Not Accredited, Accreditation Expired or Accreditation Revoked) was made, the Commission will state the reason for the decision, including which standards have not been met and/or in what way the program is out of compliance with the accreditation system’s policies. It will also publish comments, if any, that the program may wish to make regarding an adverse accreditation decision.

NAEYC also will maintain on its website a directory of currently accredited programs that includes the aforementioned details.

#### *Step Five: Maintaining Accreditation*

Once a program has achieved accredited status, there are several policies (outlined below) a program must follow in order to maintain its accreditation status.

#### *Use of Accreditation Logo by Programs*

The NAEYC higher education accreditation logo is the exclusive property of NAEYC. However, NAEYC allows an accredited program and its sponsoring institution to use the logo in publications and displays – electronic or print – to highlight its current accreditation status. The use of the logo is governed by the following guidelines:

- A program may not use NAEYC’s name or logo or other intellectual property in any way without prior written consent from NAEYC.
- The logo may NOT be used by a program that has applied for but not yet been notified by the Commission that it is accredited.
- Use of the logo shall be subject at all times to revocation and withdrawal by NAEYC when, in its sole judgment, NAEYC determines that continued use of the logo would not serve the best interests of NAEYC or the public.

- A program will receive further guidance on logo usage in relation to size, color, and other technical specifications, as well as the process for seeking approval of logo usage after it receives its Accreditation Decision.

### Program Display of Accreditation Status

Wherever a program's accreditation status is provided to the public (website, course catalog, etc.) the accreditation status statement must be accurate and complete. Programs that are accredited (including accredited with probation) are required to display their NAEYC accreditation status on their degree program's web page(s) and other places on the institution's website where accreditations are listed, in addition to displaying it in other widely used materials, such as course catalogs and recruitment materials. The name of the degree program and the name and address of the accrediting body must be included in the accreditation status statement. Providing inaccurate or misleading information about a program's accreditation status could lead to an Administrative Probation decision.

An accredited program must use the following language (unless waived through prior written approval by NAEYC) in its entirety to display its accreditation status.

The *[degree program]* at *[institution]* is accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs of the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#). The current accreditation term runs from *[beginning date (month/year)]* through *[end date (month/year)]*.

An accredited program on probation must use the following language (unless waived through prior written approval by NAEYC) in its entirety to display its accreditation status:

On *[date]* the *[degree program]* at *[institution]* was placed on probation by the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs of the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#). A program on probation is accredited but is not in full compliance with the accreditation standards and/or other requirements for maintaining its accreditation status. A program has up to two yearly reporting cycles to demonstrate full compliance with the standards and/or other requirements for maintaining its accreditation status. The current accreditation term runs from *[beginning date (month/year)]* through *[end date (month/year)]*.

### Annual Reports

Annual Reports are an important requirement for maintaining accreditation. The Annual Report allows the program to document substantive changes, affirm continued compliance with eligibility requirements, report program outcome data, ensure the program is collecting and analyzing candidate performance data by standard, provide updates on program context, and provide data to inform the early childhood professional preparation landscape.

The program must use the most current Annual Report template available in the online resource library at the time the report is submitted. If an updated template has been posted within three months of the program's submission date, it may choose to use the most recent previous template or the new template. The program may not alter the Annual Report template.

If the report is complete, if the program demonstrates continued compliance with standards and Eligibility Requirements, if the program pays its annual fee, and if substantive changes are approved by the Commission, accreditation continues for the following year. If the report indicates a substantive

change, staff or the Commission may request additional information. As noted, evidence that a program is out of compliance with one or more standards or Eligibility Requirements may result in a probation decision.

A program that received an Accredited with Conditions decision must also submit evidence of addressing the conditions in the first and/or second Annual Report(s) in order to maintain accreditation. (See page 26 for Accredited with Conditions decision.)

An Annual Report or annual fee is considered late at the close of business two weeks after the due date (or on the next business day that the NAEYC office is open). A program with a late Annual Report and/or annual fee will be assessed a late fee. A program with a late Annual Report and/or fee will be notified that it is placed on administrative probation and will have 30 days from the notification to submit the report and/or fee, including the late fee. If a program does not comply within 30 days or request and receive an extension, its accreditation status will be considered expired.

If a program is notified that its Annual Report is incomplete, it will have two weeks to submit the requested information, unless the program requests and receives an extension. If the program does not submit the requested information within that timeline, it will be notified that it is placed on Administrative Probation and will have 30 days from the notification to submit the information. If a program does not comply within 30 days or request and receive an extension, its accreditation status will be considered expired.

#### *Annual Report Components*

An Annual Report is accepted when all components are included to the satisfaction of NAEYC staff and/or the Commission, in their sole discretion, including but not limited to the following:

- COVER PAGE: Must be complete including the check box for the appropriate year of the Annual Report.
- SECTION A: Contact information. If new contacts are listed, the program must provide the graduate degrees (and subject areas) that they hold.
- SECTION B: Compliance with eligibility requirements. Program must provide a narrative explanation in cases where it is not compliant.
- SECTION C: Updates to program context.
- SECTION D: Program outcome data on three measures, including a web link on the institution's website where the data are published.
- SECTION E: Program must indicate whether there has been a substantive change(s) to the program(s) and provide an explanation if so.
- SECTION E: Program must indicate continued compliance with Standard 7 (Field Experiences).
- SECTION F: Key Assessment Title Chart and Chart of Key Assessments Aligned with Standards and Key Elements (for all accredited programs).
- SECTION F: Candidate performance data for one standard, including a data chart(s) that includes data from all key assessments that measure the selected standard, and answers to the data analysis questions. (Data should be disaggregated by program if the Annual Report includes multiple programs. Data chart should be clearly labeled to indicate which key assessments are included and the dates for each application of data.)

- SECTION G: Must submit evidence of addressing conditions if the program is accredited with conditions. (If the response to conditions includes revised key assessments, the key assessments meet the requirements for completeness as outlined for Self-Study Reports.)
- CONCLUDING PAGE: Must be complete.

This list is based on the 2019 Annual Report Template. It will be updated to reflect subsequent changes to the Annual Report template; however, it is the responsibility of the program to ensure that it has fully completed a template that is eligible for consideration at the time of submission as found in the Online Resource Library.

If NAEYC staff deem the Annual Report incomplete, the program must provide an updated report within two weeks of receiving NAEYC's written request. If staff identify a concern related to the Response to Conditions (for programs on conditions) and the program does not provide a revised Response to Conditions in time for the Commission to conduct a timely review of it (at least three weeks) prior to a meeting, the Commission reserves the right to postpone the review of that program until its next scheduled meeting.

- For a program submitting its first response to conditions report, this will not extend that program's time on conditions. Rather this will reduce the amount of time between when the program receives Commission feedback on its response to conditions and when the program must submit its second response to conditions (if the Commission finds the program did not meet conditions in its first response).
- For a program submitting its second response to conditions, if the Commission's next meeting falls after the program's accreditation term ends, the program will be placed on administrative probation (with expiration date extended) until the Commission can meet to review whether the program met conditions.

## Reporting Student Learning Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes, and Program

### Outcomes on Institutional Website

NAEYC is committed to strengthening pathways into the early childhood profession and facilitating transparency of early childhood higher education degree programs' effectiveness and quality. As part of this commitment, NAEYC requires its accredited higher education degree programs to make easily available on their program websites clear information about the effectiveness and quality of their accredited early childhood degree programs, as evidenced through degree candidate achievement measures. In addition, as an accrediting body seeking recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system is required to ensure that its accredited programs' candidate achievement data are transparent, consistent, and accessible to the public on programs' websites. **NAEYC strongly encourages programs to work with their institutional research offices to gather these data.**

A program that has a small number of candidates graduating in a given year, a small number of candidates enrolled in the program (e.g. 5 or less) and/or experiences a significant drop for one of the program outcome measures in a given year, may ask to be exempted from reporting data that year. Only one exemption will be granted during the program's accreditation period. The Self-Study Report Template and Annual Report Template do provide space for programs to describe important context for their program outcome measures.

A program must report on its program/department websites the following measures for each accredited program:

- The number of program completers for each of the three\* most recently completed academic years
- For a fall semester cohort of entering full-time students, the number and percentage of candidates in a cohort of full-time students completing the program within 150% (and one of the following: 100%, 200% or 300%) of the program's published time frame for three sequential academic years;

AND at least one of the following measures

- The fall-to-fall retention rate of candidates in the program for each of the three\* most recently completed academic years
- The number and percentage of program graduates employed in the early childhood profession and/or pursuing further education in the profession within one year of graduation for each of the three\* most recently completed academic years
- An institutionally designed measure that speaks to candidate outcomes in the program for each of the three\* most recently completed academic years. Such measures might include the average GPA of the graduating class, the number and percentage of candidates who completed their courses with a grade of "C" or above, the pass rates on national performance assessments such as edTPA, etc.

In addition, programs are expected to publish their program's student learning objectives and to publish data on how the program is meeting those objectives. (This policy is effective January 1, 2021)

Programs will report on their objectives and outcomes in their Annual Reports and Self-Study Reports.

\*Or, if the program has been operating for fewer than three years, for the years since the program's inception.

### Reporting Substantive Changes

NAEYC understands and appreciates that programmatic changes are a routine and healthy part of the continuous improvement process. Most of these changes will not impact the accreditation of the program (as described and captured in the Self-Study Report and site visit). However, substantive changes should be reported to NAEYC staff within 30 days of the change or in the program's Annual Report, whichever occurs first. The Commission will review the changes to determine whether they impact the accreditation status of the program. Substantive changes include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in the management, oversight, and/or administrative home of the program
- Changes in the primary or secondary contact for the program
- Changes in geographic setting, including moving the program to a new location, or establishing a branch campus or a new off-campus cohort program
- Adding, eliminating or modifying courses that represent a significant departure in terms of either the content or the method of delivery from those offered at the most recent site visit, such as new online courses (here a substantive change is operationally defined as 25% or more of the credit hours of the accredited curriculum)

- Changes in the institution’s accreditation status—e.g., loss of accreditation or a change to probationary status.
- Other changes that affect compliance with Accreditation Eligibility Requirements

Programs are encouraged to contact NAEYC staff with any questions about whether a recent or anticipated change is considered a “substantive change.”

### Step Six: Renewing Accreditation

A program seeking to renew its accreditation will submit a Self-Study Report instead of an Annual Report in Year Six of its accreditation term. Once the Self-Study Report is deemed complete and the program is current with regard to the annual fee and site visit fee, the program will host a site visit and the Commission will determine the program’s accreditation status.

A Renewal Self-Study Report is considered late at the close of business two weeks after the due date (or on the next business day that the NAEYC office is open). A program with a late Renewal Self-Study Report will be assessed a late fee, will be notified that it is placed on administrative probation, and will have 30 days from the notification to submit the report, including the late fee. If a program does not comply within 30 days or request and receive an extension, its accreditation status will be considered expired. See the Administrative Probation policy for more information.

## Communicating with NAEYC Higher Education Staff and the Commission

Programs and the public can contact the accreditation system and the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs by emailing [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org) or mailing correspondence to:

Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
1313 L Street NW, Suite 500  
Washington, D.C. 20005

## Administrative Probation

An accredited program will be placed on Administrative Probation in the following circumstances:

- If the program does not submit a complete Annual Report or renewal Self-Study Report by the appropriate deadline and has not requested and been granted an extension
- If the program does not submit its annual fee by the appropriate deadline and has not requested and been granted an extension
- If the program fails to comply with accreditation policies not related to standards or Accreditation Eligibility Requirements
- If the program does not submit a revised Second Response to Conditions in time for Commissioners to review it at a scheduled meeting prior to the program's accreditation term ending.

In any of these circumstances, NAEYC will notify the program in writing as soon as possible after the concern is identified. At the conclusion of the two-week grace period, the program will be considered to be on Administrative Probation. At that point, the program has 30 days to provide the necessary information and/or fee payment, or to request an extension from the Commission. The Commission will consider extension requests due to extenuating circumstances such as acts of nature or other disasters, faculty strikes, faculty illness or death, the illness or death of a primary or secondary contact's immediate family member, or due to a primary or secondary contact's sudden/unanticipated departure from the program.

In the case of renewal programs that are not able to respond to incomplete Self-Study Reports within the three-week time period of receiving staff feedback the program will enter a period of Administrative Probation until either July 31 (for programs with a March submission deadline) or December 15 (for programs with a September submission deadline). See the "Definition of a Complete Self-Study Report" policy for more details. If the program is unable to provide a complete Self-Study Report by these dates, the program's accreditation will expire.

## Appeals Procedures

*This section outlines the procedures for appealing a Not Accredited or Accreditation Expired/Revoked decision.*

NAEYC is committed to providing a mechanism whereby appeals can be raised and dealt with promptly, impartially, and confidentially.

Only a program that received a Not Accredited, Accreditation Expired or Accreditation Revoked decision may appeal the decision. The program must submit its intention to appeal within 30 days of receipt of the Commission's accreditation decision. During the appeal process, there is no change in the program's public accreditation status. The Appellant's original accreditation decision remains unannounced during this period.

### Filing an Appeal

The appeal process is initiated by submitting to the Commission a Letter of Intent to Appeal. The Letter of Intent to Appeal must:

- Be submitted in writing (electronic or hard copy) within 30 days of receipt of the Accreditation Decision Report or letter notifying the program of the adverse decision. If the program does not submit a Letter of Intent to Appeal within this time period, the adverse accreditation decision will become final
- Be addressed to the senior leader of the NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation System
- Be signed by a senior administrative official (at the vice president/provost level or above) of the host institution (the Appellant)
- State whether the appeal is based on a procedural violation (e.g., the Commission failed to follow proper procedure in reviewing the Appellant's program) or substantive error (i.e., the Commission misapplied the program's evidence for meeting the standards, criteria, and/or Accreditation Eligibility Requirements) by the Commission
- NAEYC will acknowledge receipt of the Letter of Intent to Appeal. The program has 45 business days after receipt of the Commission's accreditation decision to submit the formal appeal, which must:
  - Be addressed to the senior leader of the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs System
  - Be signed by a senior administrative official (at the vice president/provost level or above) of the host institution (the Appellant)
  - State whether the appeal is based on a procedural violation (i.e., the Commission failed to follow proper procedure in reviewing the Appellant's program) or substantive error (i.e., the Commission misapplied the program's evidence for meeting the accreditation standards, criteria and/or Accreditation Eligibility Requirements) by the Commission
  - Specify the grounds on which the appeal is made, including the specific facts and circumstances supporting the appeal
  - And include complete and accurate supporting documents. (Note: The Appeals Panel will consider as evidence only the record that was before the Commission at the time of its decision, which might be documented in the Self-Study Report, the Peer Review Report, the Appellant's Written Response to the Peer Review Report and/or the Annual



Report, or other documents pertaining to Accreditation Eligibility Requirements. The Appeals Panel will not consider new revisions to the reports, additions to the reports, or subsequent changes made by the Appellant program.)

- Once the formal appeal is received, NAEYC will acknowledge receipt of the documents. NAEYC will verify the documents for completeness and may ask for additional documentary support, if necessary.

### The Appeals Panel

When the documents are complete, the Commission chair will initiate the appeal process by appointing an Appeals Panel within 30 days of receipt of the completed appeals materials but shall not take part in the deliberation. Should the Commission chair have a conflict of interest with the Appellant the chair will appoint the chair-elect or past chair to oversee the appeals process.

Members of the Appeals Panel may include former Commissioners, current and former peer reviewers, and other early childhood professionals who are knowledgeable about the accreditation standards and process. Members of the Appeals Panel cannot include current members of the Commission, members of the Appellant's Peer Review Team, members of NAEYC's Governing Board, or current NAEYC staff. Members of the Appeals Panel will follow NAEYC's conflict of interest and confidentiality policies.

### The Scope and Conduct of the Appeal Review

The Appeals Panel will conduct its review as follows:

The members of the Appeals Panel shall judge in all fairness. The burden of persuading the appeals body rests with the Appellant program. The members are bound by the rules in this procedure and the terms of NAEYC's confidentiality policy.

The issues addressed by the Appeals Panel are limited to those identified in the program's formal appeal.

The role of the Appeals Panel is to determine whether or not there is evidence that procedures were violated or errors were made by the Commission that would affect the decision outcome and to either affirm the decision being appealed or direct the Commission to reconsider the original decision. The Appeals Panel reviews the Commission's application of its professional judgment to the evidence in compliance with the procedures for determining the accreditation decision, not the underlying merits of the Appellant program.

- As the first step, the Appeals Panel will review the appeal to ensure that it addresses a procedural or substantive error by the Commission. The Appeals Panel has the right to disallow the appeal if it does not fall into either of these categories. In this case, staff will advise the program on other avenues it can use to pursue its concern(s).
- The Appeals Panel will consider as evidence only the record that was before the Commission at the time of its decision, which might be documented in the Self-Study Report, the Peer Review Report, the Appellant's Written Response to the Peer Review Report and/or the Annual Report, or other documents pertaining to Accreditation Eligibility Requirements. The Appeals Panel will not consider new revisions to the reports, additions to the reports, or subsequent changes made by the Appellant program. In addition, the Appeals Panel will be provided the program's

Accreditation Decision Report and letter as applicable and have access to the minutes from the relevant Commission meetings.

When assessing the evidence substantiating the appeal, the Appeals Panel may request additional information and hear from the Appellant, the Peer Review Team that conducted the Appellant's site visit, and the Commission. The decision to hear from the Appellant, whether in person or by telephone conference, or only in writing, shall be at sole discretion of the Appeals Panel. No formal rules of evidence, judicial procedure, or other trial-type proceedings shall apply.

The Appeals Panel will report its evaluation and final decision to the Commission no later than 90 days after the Appeals Panel has been appointed. The Appeals Panel may vote to grant an extension of time for any deadline under these policies, but such extension of time shall be no longer than 60 days. NAEYC shall inform the Appellant accordingly.

The Appeals Panel's decision is final.

#### The Appeals Panel Decision and Report

No later than 90 days after the Appeals Panel has been appointed, it will submit a decision report addressed to the senior leader of the NAEYC's Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs System. Copies will be forwarded to the Appellant program, the chief executive officer of NAEYC, and the Commission Chair.

If the Appeals Panel upholds the Commission decision, the original decision stands. If the decision of the Commission is not upheld, the case will be remanded to the Commission for reconsideration at its next scheduled meeting with specific instructions to review the case in a manner consistent with the findings of the Appeals Panel. The Commission can determine if additional information from the program is needed in order to reconsider the accreditation decision. This might come in the form of a request for a Focus Report or Focus Visit. The Commission's subsequent decision is final and not appealable.

#### Costs of the Appeal

The program must submit an appeals filing fee when it submits its formal appeal. During the appeals process, each party is responsible for its own expenses that are incurred, including expenses for its representatives and any legal fees. Costs associated with Appeals Panel (such as travel for the Appeals Panel members) will be shared equally between both parties. If, at the conclusion of the appeals process, the accreditation decision is reversed, the Appellant will be reimbursed the cost of the appeals filing fee, but no other costs incurred due to the appeal process.

#### Withdrawing an Appeal

A program may withdraw its appeal of an accreditation decision in writing at any time until the decision of the Appeals Panel is rendered. The signature of a senior administrative official (at the vice president/provost level or above) is required on the withdrawal notification letter. The appellant institution or program foregoes the right to reassert the appeal at a later date. The Commission decision becomes final upon receipt of the written request to withdraw the appeal.

## Complaints Policy<sup>7</sup>

This Complaints Policy covers complaints against accredited programs or programs in candidacy for accreditation, complaints against staff, complaints against peer reviewers, and complaints against Commission members. Filing a complaint will not influence a program's accreditation decision (if one is pending) or its accreditation/candidacy status. The complaint policy should be used primarily to address concerns about the professional conduct of commissioners, staff, and peer reviewers and implementation of Accreditation Eligibility Requirements, standards, Accreditation Criteria, policies and procedures. Complaints must fall within the purview of the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs System – including its standards, policies and procedures, Accreditation Eligibility Requirements, and representatives (staff, Commission, peer reviewers).

### Complaints about the Operations of an Accredited Program or Program in Candidacy

Any member of the public can file a complaint about the operations of an accredited program or program in candidacy. To be considered by the Commission, the complaint must:

- Be written and signed
- Identify the individual, group, or legal entity represented by the complainant
- Present substantial evidence that the program is not in compliance with one or more of the standards, Accreditation Eligibility Requirements or accreditation policies in use at the time referred to by the complainant
- Demonstrate, when reasonably possible, that serious effort has been made to pursue the complaint procedures within the institution in which the program is located
- Grant permission to send the complaint, in its entirety, to the institution

Complaints must be submitted to the NAEYC senior leader of Higher Education. Within 15 business days, the Executive Committee of the Commission will determine whether the complaint meets the above criteria and notify the complainant of the determination. If the complaint meets the criteria, the complaint will be sent to the program for comment. The program will have 30 calendar days to respond to the complaint in writing. Staff will then forward the complaint and the program's comment to the Executive Committee of the Commission. Within 60 calendar days of receiving the complaint and the program's comment, the Executive Committee will notify the complainant and the program of the action it will take regarding the complaint. These actions may include the following:

- Dismissing the complaint
- Recommending changes to the program to be implemented within a certain time frame
- Pursuing the matter further, requesting more information
- Making a recommendation to the full Commission for the program to be placed on probation or to have its accreditation revoked

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<sup>7</sup> A program seeking to overturn an adverse accreditation decision should use the accreditation system's appeals process rather than the complaints process. A program that disagrees with the preliminary findings of its Peer Review Report from a recent site visit should address those concerns in its Written Response to the Peer Review Report rather than using the complaints process. If a program is unsure whether to address concerns through its Written Response to the Peer Review Report, the complaints process, the appeals process, or the feedback survey submitted after a site visit, please contact staff.

If the Executive Committee decides to dismiss the complaint or recommend changes to the program, the disposition of the complaint will be considered final at that point. If the Executive Committee decides to pursue the complaint further or to make a recommendation to the full Commission regarding a change in the accreditation status of the program, the disposition of the complaint must be finalized within 90 calendar days after the Executive Committee notifies the complainant and the program of its decision.

### Complaints Against a Peer Reviewer

For complaints related to a peer reviewer, the complainant should notify the NAEYC senior leader of Higher Education of the intent to file a complaint within 30 days of completion of the site visit, if the critical incident(s) in question occurred during a site visit.

To be considered by the Commission, the complaint must:

- Be written and signed
- Provide a clear description of the critical incident(s) in question, including identifying the individual, peer reviewer(s) represented by the complainant
- If possible, be sent before the host institution has received the Peer Review Report and within 30 days after the completion of the site visit
- Grant permission to send the complaint, in its entirety, to the peer reviewer(s) cited in the complaint and the other members of the Peer Review Team

NAEYC will acknowledge receipt of a complaint and forward the complaint to the Executive Committee of the Commission. Should the chair of the Commission (who is a member of the Executive Committee) have a conflict of interest with either or both of the parties involved with the complaint, the chair will follow the Conflict of Interest Policy and may recuse him/herself, and another member of the Executive Committee will manage the complaint process. If any Executive Committee member has a conflict of interest and must recuse him/herself, the chair may appoint another member of the Commission to be included in the consideration of the complaint. If the complaint is related to a site visit, the complaint will first be sent to the relevant members of the Peer Review Team with request for comment within 30 days. Typically, during this same period, the Peer Review Report will be sent to the program so that it can prepare its Written Response.

Executive Committee members are asked to 1) review the complaint and peer reviewer comments; and 2) review the Peer Review Report and the program's Written Response to the Peer Review Report.

Upon the Executive Committee's receipt of the complaint, the committee will reach one of the following decisions by a majority vote:

- Dismiss the complaint
- Sustain the complaint and make a recommendation to the full Commission on subsequent actions needed to address the complaint. The Commission will consider these recommendations at its next meeting and convey its final response to the complainant within 15 days of the Commission meeting.
- Vote to pursue the matter further, either through correspondence or through a special fact-finding group, to secure the additional information necessary to reach a decision

If the committee votes to sustain the complaint, it must then determine whether the critical incident(s) influenced the content of the Peer Review Report. If the incident is determined to have influenced the

Peer Review Report, the committee voids the site visit. Another site visit will be conducted at the expense of the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system. If it is determined that the incident did not influence the Peer Review Report, the Commission proceeds with its decision on program compliance with accreditation standards. The Commission may not move to an accreditation decision until it has reached a disposition on the complaint. The disposition of the complaint is communicated in writing to the primary contact of the host institution and to all members of the Peer Review Team that conducted the site visit.

### Complaints Against a Commissioner(s)

Complaints concerning the conduct of a Commissioner may be made and transmitted in any manner by any person to the NAEYC Governing Board President or the NAEYC Chief Executive Officer and the General Counsel. The Governing Board President and Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the General Counsel, will address all reported concerns or complaints regarding illegal and inappropriate conduct pertaining to policy violations. The Senior Leader of Human Resources will immediately notify the CEO of any such complaint, and the CEO will work with the General Counsel until the matter is resolved. The General Counsel will notify the Audit Committee of the Governing Board of any such matters.

Under the Governing Board Policies, for each complaint involving an alleged violation of the NAEYC Code of Ethics that the Audit Committee determines is potentially actionable, such determination will be brought to the Governing Board to determine whether the Commission member should be removed from his or her position.

The Complainant will be notified when a resolution of the complaint has been determined.

### Complaints Against Staff

Complaints against staff should be sent to the NAEYC Senior Leader of Human Resources. This person will notify the complainant within 30 days of the intention to:

- Dismiss the complaint
- Sustain the complaint. In this case complaints against NAEYC employees that are found to have merit will be handled in accordance with the relevant policies contained in the NAEYC Employee Handbook.
- Pursue the matter further, either through correspondence or through a special fact-finding group, to secure the additional information necessary to reach a decision

The Complainant will be notified when a resolution of the complaint has been determined.

### Extension Policies

Following are extension policies for various components of the accreditation process. Extensions requested due to acts of nature or other disasters, faculty strikes, faculty illness or death, or the illness or death of a primary or secondary contact's immediate family member will be automatically granted by staff. All other reasons for extension requests will be reviewed by the Commission's Executive Committee. In cases where a program has been granted the maximum number of extensions, the Commission may consider an additional extension request due to an extenuating circumstance as described earlier in this paragraph.

If the Commission denies an extension request for a report or site visit, the program must submit the required Self-Study Report/Annual Report or hold the site visit within the currently scheduled timeframe. If the program is unable to submit the report or host the visit as required, a 30-day administrative probation period would begin at the end of the grace period for submitting reports (i.e., two weeks after the published due date) or at the end of the site visit schedule (i.e., April 30 for spring visits or November 30 for fall visits). See the Administrative Probation policy for pathways to remove administrative probation or next steps if administrative probation cannot be removed.

Extensions may be requested no more than six months prior to the scheduled report/fee deadline and no less than three months prior to the deadline (unless extenuating circumstances are involved). Programs must submit extension requests in writing using the Extension Request Form. The Executive Committee will review and vote on the extension request generally within two weeks of receiving the completed form.

#### For a Site Visit

When a program has submitted its Self-Study Report and accompanying fee, it will receive confirmation from NAEYC staff that the report is accepted and NAEYC is ready to schedule a site visit. At that time, if the program requires a delay in hosting the visit due to extenuating circumstances, the program can submit a written request to NAEYC staff (via an Extension Request Form) to delay its site visit to the semester after the date proposed by NAEYC; the request should clearly state the reason for the extension and explain how the extension will enable the program to address the underlying circumstance. Extenuating circumstances may include acts of nature or other disasters, faculty strikes, faculty illness or death, the illness or death of a primary or secondary contact's immediate family member, or due to a primary or secondary contact's sudden/unanticipated departure from the program. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis—by staff, in the case of a program preparing for its first accreditation site visit, or by the Executive Committee of the Commission, in the case of renewal site visits. In either case, a program may be required to submit an updated Self-Study Report closer to the time of the visit depending on the time elapsed between submission of the Self-Study Report and the site visit. If an accredited program receives an extension on hosting a renewal site visit, its current accreditation period is extended to accommodate this additional time. Programs can only request one extension for their site visit.

#### For an Annual Report

An accredited program submits Annual Reports each year of its accreditation term as part of the requirements for maintaining accreditation. Should a program require an extension for submitting an Annual Report, it must submit a written request to NAEYC staff, via an Extension Request Form (at least three months prior to the report due date, unless there are extenuating circumstances), and clearly state the reason for the extension and explain how the extension will enable the program to address the underlying circumstance. The Executive Committee of the Commission will review the request and decide whether to grant the extension. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with primary consideration for extenuating circumstances. Only six-month extension terms will be granted. Should a program not meet the extended deadline, it will be placed on Administrative Probation. A program may receive an extension for submitting its Annual Report only twice during its accreditation period.

### For an Annual Fee

An accredited program submits an annual fee each year of its accreditation term as part of the requirements for maintaining accreditation. Should a program require an extension in submitting an annual fee, it must submit a written request to NAEYC staff, via an Extension Request Form (at least three months prior to the report due date, unless there are extenuating circumstances), and clearly state the reason for the extension and explain how the extension will enable the program to address the underlying circumstance. The Executive Committee of the Commission will review the request and decide whether to grant the extension. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with primary consideration for extenuating circumstances. Only six-month extension terms will be granted. Should a program not meet the extended deadline, it will be placed on Administrative Probation. A program may receive an extension for paying its annual fee only twice during its accreditation period.

### For a Focused Report

A program that is Accredited with Probation submits a Focused Report at various points during its probation period. Should a program require an extension for submitting a Focused Report, it must submit a written request to NAEYC staff, via an Extension Request Form (at least three months prior to the report due date, unless there are extenuating circumstances), and clearly state the reason for the extension and explain how the extension will enable the program to address the underlying circumstance. The Executive Committee of the Commission will review the request and decide whether to grant the extension. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with primary consideration for extenuating circumstances. Only one six-month extension term will be granted. Should a program not meet the extended deadline, it may also be placed on Administrative Probation. A program may receive an extension for submitting its Focused Report only once during its probation period. The extension may not extend beyond the two-year probation period except in extenuating circumstances.

### For a Renewal Self-Study Report

Should a program require an extension for its renewal Self-Study Report, it must submit a written request to NAEYC staff, via an Extension Request Form (at least three months prior to the report due date, unless there are extenuating circumstances), and clearly state the reason for the extension and explain how the extension will enable the program to address the underlying circumstance. The Executive Committee of the Commission will review the request and decide whether to grant the extension. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with primary consideration for extenuating circumstances. Extensions may only be granted for six-month terms.

If a program should need additional time, it must submit another extension request accompanied by an Annual Report. This will serve as an interim reporting measure to ensure the program is still in compliance with accreditation eligibility requirements and provide routine updates related to contact information and program context. The program shall submit its Annual Fee on time even if an extension on the Renewal Self-Study Report is granted. A maximum of two extension requests will be considered before a program is placed on probation. If a program receives an extension for submitting a Renewal Self-Study Report, its current accreditation period will be extended to accommodate this additional time.

In rare circumstances, NAEYC may initiate changes to a renewal Self-Study Report deadline due to unanticipated caseloads for site visits in a given semester or similar balancing needs within the accreditation system. In these circumstances, NAEYC has the flexibility to grant a full-year delay.



### For a Program in Self-Study

Should a program require an extension for remaining in Self-Study (for first-time accreditation), it must submit a written request to NAEYC staff, via an Extension Request Form (at least three months prior to the end of the program's five-year self-study period, unless there are extenuating circumstances), and clearly state the reason for the extension and explain how the extension will enable the program to address the underlying circumstance. The Executive Committee of the Commission will review the request and decide whether to grant the extension. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with primary consideration for extenuating circumstances. Only one one-year extension may be granted.

### Adding a Program During the Accreditation Period

An institution with one or more accredited programs may choose to seek accreditation for additional programs during the accreditation period and prior to the next scheduled renewal Self-Study Report submission. The additional programs must meet the following requirements:

- Each additional program submitted for review meets the Accreditation Eligibility Requirements
- Each additional program submitted for review is at the same degree level as the currently accredited program(s) at the institution
- Each additional program shares the same set of Key assessments as the already accredited program(s)
- Each additional program's field experiences meet the requirements of Standard 7

The application for adding an additional program can be found in the online resource library. Requests to add a program must come within the first three years of the accredited program's current accreditation cycle. Only programs that are accredited without conditions or probation are eligible to add a new program via this pathway. In the application, the program must respond to a subset of the Accreditation Criteria, and if the program has indicated, through Annual Reports, that it has revised or created new Key assessments, those Key assessments must be submitted with the application. Candidate performance data on all standards must be submitted for each program included in the application. The Commission will consider requests to add a program at its meetings. In some cases, the Commission may request a virtual site visit with the program to better understand the context of the program. Should the new program be granted accreditation, it will follow the already accredited program's accreditation cycle. If the Commission approves the accreditation of the additional program, the institution will pay the annual fee at the multiple programs rate, if it was not already doing so.

An institution seeking to add a program after the first three years of its accreditation period, or a new program at a different degree level and/or with different Key assessments as compared with the already accredited program, should submit the additional program in its renewal Self-Study Report. Programs should contact staff if they wish to submit a renewal Self-Study Report one or more semesters prior to the deadline in order to pursue accreditation for an additional program.



## Withdrawal Policies

### Withdrawing from the First-Time Accreditation Process

A program seeking accreditation may voluntarily withdraw from the accreditation process at any time when it requests withdrawal in a letter to NAEYC. The program may reapply for accreditation at a later time without prejudice by submitting a new Application for Accreditation Eligibility and an application fee.

### Accredited Programs Withdrawing from Accreditation

An accredited program may voluntarily withdraw from accreditation at any time when it requests withdrawal in a letter to NAEYC signed by a senior-level administrator (dean or above) of the program. An accredited program that voluntarily withdraws will be removed from the public list of accredited programs.

Programs that withdraw from accreditation may remain with the system and retain their access to resources, etc., by returning to self-study. Programs, regardless of their previous accreditation status, may remain in self-study for up to five (consecutive) years. Those programs are eligible to submit a Self-Study Report and pursue candidacy without submitting a new Application for Accreditation Eligibility or an application fee.

A program should notify NAEYC as part of its withdrawal letter whether it intends to withdraw completely from the accreditation system or return to Self-Study. Programs that wish to return to Self-Study must return the Notice of Intent Form provided by NAEYC in response to the program's withdrawal letter. If a program does not return the Notice of Intent Form or letter signed by senior administration indicating a desire to completely withdraw from the system within the requested deadline, the program's accreditation will expire two weeks after the next report and/or fee deadline is missed.

Programs that opt to withdraw completely from the system, as well as programs that are no longer eligible to remain in self-study due to the amount of time elapsed, may reapply for accreditation at a later time without prejudice by submitting a new Application for Accreditation Eligibility and an application fee.

Programs that withdraw (whether completely or with a return to Self-Study) must remove the NAEYC accreditation logo and any other information identifying the program as accredited from its website and materials within 60 days of receiving written confirmation of withdrawal from NAEYC.

### Consultant Policy

The NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system does not offer direct consulting services to a program seeking or maintaining accreditation. There are multiple training opportunities for a program, though, offered through the system (see Professional Development Resources for Programs) that provide guidance on the policies, processes, and expectations regarding program alignment with the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.

A program seeking direct consulting services to achieve or maintain accreditation or an individual serving as a consultant should abide by the following:

- Individuals serving on the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs or the NAEYC Governing Board may not serve as a consultant to programs during their term of office.
- Any individual serving as a consultant to a program may not serve on the Peer Review Team for that program or serve in any accreditation decision-making role for that program.
- Individuals may not serve as a consultant to a program for which they have served on the Peer Review Team until that program has received the accreditation decision associated with that site visit.
- Consultants draw upon their professional knowledge and experiences to provide guidance to programs they consult for; their guidance does not represent NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs official policies.
- Consultants should obtain all relevant accreditation documents (such as Self-Study Reports, Annual Reports, Response to Conditions, etc.) from the program with which they are consulting. NAEYC will not provide these documents to consultants.
- Consultants and programs may access publicly available content on the NAEYC website, materials available in the accreditation online resource library (if the consultant and the program have log-in privileges) and materials used in NAEYC trainings that the program attended.
- Use of a consultant does not guarantee achievement of accreditation.
- Any arrangements regarding consultant fees and travel are between the consultant and the program.

## Professional Development Resources for Programs

Programs are encouraged to take advantage of the many resources available to support them in the accreditation process.

### Staff Contacts

Contact NAEYC Staff with questions via email at [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org)

### NAEYC Website

Visit <http://www.naeyc.org/higheredaccred> to access resources on higher education accreditation. This site is updated periodically as resources are revised and new resources made available.

### NAEYC Webinars

Periodically, NAEYC offers free webinars to support programs in self-study, preparing Annual Reports, and responding to conditions.

### Online Resource Library for Programs

This online community contains additional resources for programs that have been deemed eligible to begin self-study or are maintaining accreditation. The instructions for accessing this community are sent via email to the primary and secondary contacts designated by the program.

### NAEYC Conference Workshops

Full-day self-study workshops on the accreditation process are typically offered twice a year, as pre-conference sessions prior to the NAEYC Annual Conference (generally held in November) and the NAEYC Professional Learning Institute (generally held in June). Registration information will be available on the NAEYC website.

### Individualized Trainings

NAEYC offers half-day and day-long trainings for a fee to programs seeking or renewing accreditation. These trainings are usually presented to state cohorts of programs. Shorter customized trainings may be available via technology. Contact NAEYC at [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org) to inquire about hosting a training.

## Glossary

### *Accreditation terms used throughout the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system*

AACC	American Association of Community Colleges, founded in 1920 and representing the approximately 1200 community colleges in the United States. <a href="http://www.aacc.nche.edu/">http://www.aacc.nche.edu/</a>
ACCESS	Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators, founded in the early 1980s and representing the faculty in early childhood associate degree programs in the United States. <a href="http://www.accesscece.org/">http://www.accesscece.org/</a>
Accreditation	A voluntary, non-governmental system of evaluation used to protect the public interest and to verify the quality of service provided by academic programs and institutions.
Accreditation Action	Any decision made by an accreditation agency affecting the accreditation (or determination of accreditation) of a program. In this accreditation system possible actions include: 1) approving eligibility after program application, 2) granting candidacy after submission of Self-Study Report, and 3) making an accreditation decision
Accreditation Criteria	Accreditation Criteria identify elements of the program context and are used to better understand the program's unique state and community context, the institution and program mission and goals, the program's conceptual framework and design, the characteristics of candidates and faculty, and the institutional structure. The Accreditation Criteria provide insight to peer reviewers and the Commission as to the choices the program makes in integrating the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards into its curriculum and Key assessments. Peer reviewers and the Commission also look to the Accreditation Criteria to understand the program's capacity to address identified gaps in its program's alignment to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.
Accreditation Decision	Accreditation decisions are made by the Commission related to the accreditation status of a program. The Commission typically makes these decisions following the submission of materials related to a program's site visit; the submission of the Annual Report; or the submission of evidence that an accredited program no longer meets Accreditation Eligibility Requirements, NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards, or NAEYC accreditation policies.
Accreditation Decision Report	The official document sent to the program's primary contact and its chief officer as identified in writing by the institution, conveying the accreditation agency's accreditation decision following a comprehensive or focused review of a program seeking first-time or renewal accreditation. This report from the Commission describes the accreditation decision, based on a review of

	the program Self-Study Report, Peer Review Report, and Written Response to the Peer Review Report and followed by deliberation. It may include conditions (improvements required to maintain accreditation) and recommendations (suggestions that confirm or add to the program’s ongoing improvement plans).
Adverse Decision	The three adverse accreditation decisions include Not Accredited, Accreditation Expired and Accreditation Revoked.
Accreditation Eligibility Requirements	Accreditation Eligibility Requirements are objective, baseline criteria that programs must meet in order to pursue accreditation. These requirements affirm that the institution in which the program is housed is in good standing, that the program meets a threshold regarding early childhood content, and that faculty have early childhood academic credentials.
Annual Report	A report submitted every year by an already accredited program for the duration of its accreditation term for the purpose of demonstrating continued compliance with accreditation standards, Accreditation Eligibility Requirements, and accreditation policies. The program also shares major developments and illustrates ongoing program improvements. If a program is Accredited with Conditions, then this report must address the conditions in the timeframe specified in the Accreditation Decision Report in order to maintain accreditation.
Appeal	The right and process for reconsideration available to a program after an adverse accreditation decision.
Application of Candidate Performance Data	Because some assessments may be given annually while others are given each semester or on a different time schedule, the accreditation system refers to an "application" of data from a key assessment to mean data from a single time that the assessment was given. First-time programs submitting a single application of data may find that data for some key elements requires looking back farther in time, depending how frequently each key assessment was administered. For accredited programs providing two applications of data in an Annual Report or renewal Self-Study Report, the data should reflect two different time periods for which the key element was measured. (Data from two key assessments measuring the same key element during the same semester would not meet the requirement for two applications of data.)
Articulation	Efforts to design degree programs at different levels so that they fit together, or articulate, to facilitate candidate transfer with minimal loss of credits.
Assessment	In the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards the term “assessment” refers primarily to the methods through which early childhood professionals gain understanding of children’s development and learning. Systematic observations and other informal and formal assessments enable candidates to appreciate children’s unique qualities, to develop appropriate goals, and

	<p>to plan, implement, and evaluate effective curriculum (See Standard 3). Secondly, assessment here refers to the formal and informal assessments of adult candidates required for degree completion. In NAEYC’s higher education accreditation system, certain assessments are identified as Key assessments and provide evidence that the degree program and its graduates meet the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.</p>
Associate Degree	<p>The associate degree is a widely recognized college diploma. It consists of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, defined outcomes, and evaluations of candidate performance on assignments related to the degree outcomes. It includes foundational general education courses in the arts, humanities, mathematics, sciences and social sciences. If designed for specialized career/workforce entry, it will also include courses in a specialized discipline.</p> <p>Guidance in the <i>AACC Board Statement on the Associate Degree</i> suggests that an associate in arts (AA) be three fourths general education; an Associate in Science (AS) be one half general education; and associate in applied science (AAS) include one third general education coursework. Although the AAS is designed to lead directly to employment in a specific career, it should be “designed to recognize the dual possibility” of career entry and continued higher education. In many states these titles are used differently, and new titles are being developed.</p> <p>In this accreditation system, the phrase “associate degree program” refers to a specific associate degree plan, program or course of study with a specific title, course list and other graduation requirements.</p>
ASPA	<p>Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors, a national, nonprofit organization providing a collaborative forum and a collective voice for U.S. accreditation agencies that assess the quality of specialized and professional higher education programs and schools. ASPA represents its members on issues of educational quality facing institutions of higher education, governments, candidates, and the public. ASPA also advances the knowledge, skills, good practices, and ethical commitments of accreditors, and communicates the value of accreditation as a means of enhancing educational quality. <a href="http://www.aspa-usa.org/">http://www.aspa-usa.org/</a></p>
Baccalaureate Degree	<p>The baccalaureate degree is a widely recognized college diploma. It consists of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, defined outcomes, and evaluations of candidate performance on assignments related to the degree outcomes. It includes foundational general education courses in the arts, humanities, mathematics, sciences and social sciences. If designed for specialized career/workforce entry, it will also include courses in a specialized discipline.</p>

	In this accreditation system, the phrase baccalaureate degree program refers to a specific baccalaureate degree plan, program or course of study with a specific title, course list and other graduation requirements.
Candidacy (Programs)	The status granted to a program that has been approved as eligible for accreditation and has submitted a first-time Self-Study Report. A program in candidacy may move forward to a site visit.
Candidates (Students)	Refers to college students who are candidates for completion in early childhood professional preparation programs. In some cases, these candidates are also candidates for professional licensure or certification.
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), a private, nonprofit national organization that coordinates accreditation activity and recognizes regional, institutional, and professional accrediting agencies in the United States. NAEYC is currently seeking CHEA recognition. <a href="http://www.chea.org/">http://www.chea.org/</a>
Clinical Practice	See "Field Experiences"
Commission	Refers to the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs. This body sets the standards and policies for the accreditation system and makes decisions regarding the accreditation of early childhood degree programs.
Compliance	The extent to which a program or institution conforms and adheres to accreditation standards and policies.
Conflict of Interest	Any personal, financial, or professional interest that might create a conflict with an external evaluator, reviewer, or member of a decision-making body's ability to fairly and objectively carry out accreditation responsibilities.
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), formed from the merger of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. CAEP accredits schools, colleges, and departments of education (known as education preparation providers) that offer baccalaureate and graduate degree programs leading to initial or advanced teacher licensure. <a href="http://www.caepnet.org/">http://www.caepnet.org/</a>
Culture	Includes ethnicity, racial identity, economic class, family structure, language, and religious and political beliefs that profoundly influence each child's development and relationship to the world.
Depth and Breadth	The "depth" of a standard refers to the cognitive demands and skill requirements (i.e., the "know-understand-do" continuum) within each component of the standard. "Breadth" refers to the different components that come together to make up the content of a standard--e.g., in Standard 2 there is a focus on families as well as communities; in Standard 5 various

	content areas are included; in Standard 6, advocacy is part of identifying as a profession. Professionals who demonstrate the breadth of a standard go beyond demonstrating individual components in isolation; instead, there are sufficient opportunities in their preparation and/or practice to provide assurance about their proficiency related to the full continuum of the standard.
Developmentally Appropriate Practice	Refers to the NAEYC position statement first developed in 1985 and subsequently revised. The term developmentally appropriate practice, or DAP, refers to a framework of principles and guidelines for practice that promotes young children's optimal learning and development. DAP is a way of framing an educator's intentional decision-making. It begins with three core considerations: 1) what is known about age-related characteristics of child development and learning, 2) what is known about the child as an individual; and 3) what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which the child lives. DAP is a way of framing differentiation for educators of young children from birth through age 8.
Early Childhood	The period in human development that begins at birth and ends at approximately 8 years old.
ECADA	Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA) is the original name of NAEYC's higher education accreditation system (now called NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs).
Evidence	Documents submitted with program reports or available to peer review teams, notes from site visit interviews, examples that substantiate a claim. Both the program and the Peer Review Team should be able to substantiate narratives with evidence.
Extenuating Circumstance	Situations such as a primary/secondary contact's sudden illness or injury or sudden departure or hiring, acts of nature, or other events beyond the control of the program which would prevent it from asking for an extension on a report or fee at least three months prior to the due date or submitting a required report or fee by the required due date.
Faculty	Each reference to faculty includes full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty.
Field Experiences	Includes informal and formal opportunities for field observations, fieldwork, practica, student teaching and other clinical practice experiences such as home visiting. A planned sequence of these experiences supports candidate development of understanding, competence and dispositions in a specialized area of practice.
First-time Accreditation	Accreditation that has been granted to a program or institution being accredited for the first time (or for the first time following a lapse in accreditation).



Focus Report	A program Accredited with Probation may be asked to complete a Focus Report to address specific areas of concern as outlined in a decision document.
Higher Education Act (HEA)	This federal legislation outlines requirements for institutions of higher education and higher education accrediting agencies. <a href="http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html">http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html</a>
Inclusion and Diversity	Not a separate standard but is integrated into each standard. The phrase “each child” or “all children” is used to emphasize that every standard is meant to include all children: children with developmental delays or disabilities; children who are gifted and talented; children whose families are culturally and linguistically diverse; children from diverse socioeconomic groups; and other children with individual learning preferences, strengths and needs. Family and child diversity includes race, ethnicity, language, culture, socioeconomic status, immigrant status, family structure, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, special needs, and learner characteristics. These are highlighted in NAEYC’s core considerations for making decisions about Developmentally Appropriate Practice and in NAEYC’s 2019 position statement “Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education.”
Institutional Accreditation	The evaluation and accreditation of an institution as a whole (e.g., a school, college or university), by a regional or national accreditor.
Key Assessment	Key Assessments are comprehensive assessments that programs use to measure candidate proficiency on Standards 1-6. Programs select 5-6 Key Assessments that, collectively, measure all parts of Standards 1-6. Key Assessments must be offered in core courses that all candidates in the degree program are required to take. Each key assessment includes one set of instructions to candidates and one accompanying rubric, and is used consistently by all faculty across all course sections in which it is offered.
Learning Opportunities	Learning Opportunities address the many ways in which the program helps candidates know, understand, and apply the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards throughout the program of study. Learning Opportunities are more than the Key assessments that a program uses. They include classroom discussions, guest speakers, group projects, textbook/journal/periodical readings, reflections, etc.
NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	This refers to the NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation for Use by Associate, Baccalaureate, and Graduate Degree Programs. The standards describe what well prepared early childhood program graduates should know and be able to do. These are the standards by which programs are evaluated in the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system. The standards are created through a consensus process that calls for input from educators, candidates, practitioners, regulators and the general public (also see “Standards”).

NACCTEP	National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) is dedicated to supporting the community college role in recruiting, preparing and retaining Pre-K-12 teachers. <a href="http://www.nacctep.org/">http://www.nacctep.org/</a>
Peer Review	A process for external evaluation of the quality of a program or institution using one's equals from the same profession to ensure that it meets accreditation Standards. The team conducting the review is called the Peer Review Team.
Peer Review Team	Conducts site visits to programs undergoing first-time and renewal accreditation. The Peer Review Team is typically comprised of two to three individuals who have expertise in the preparation of early childhood educators.
Probation	Status granted by an accreditation agency to an accredited program or institution that is determined to be in non-compliance with one or more standards, Accreditation Eligibility Requirements or accreditation policies. Probation is not an adverse accreditation action; however, adverse accreditation action (expiration of accreditation status) will be taken if a program or institution fails to come into compliance within the period specified by the agency.
Program	<p>A degree that has a cohesive and distinct set of degree completion requirements, with the full degree name (e.g. Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education, Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education, etc.) shown consistently on the transcripts of its graduates, and the institution's electronic and print publications. A program may choose to have an option, track, concentration, or similar designation implying specialization within the program (e.g. Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education – Infant Toddler option, etc.) reviewed as a separate program. [Institutions that do not list concentrations/tracks or similar designations on transcripts should contact NAEYC staff to ensure the concentration/track within the program is eligible for accreditation.]</p> <p>Determination of whether an early childhood education program is a single early childhood education program offered at different sites or multiple early childhood education programs depends on several factors. NAEYC retains the right, in its sole judgment, to determine whether an early childhood education program is a single early childhood education program or must be accredited as separate programs. Factors used by NAEYC to determine a program's status as a single entity are described below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The early childhood education program is within a single governing institution that is accredited through a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by CHEA and/or the U.S. Department of Education.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is a single Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code for the early childhood education program offered by the governing institution.</li> <li>● There is one early childhood education program of study for each early childhood education program option offered by the governing institution.</li> <li>● There is a single set of policies governing all early childhood education candidates enrolled in the early childhood education program across all program sites.</li> <li>● All sites of the program are administered by a single early childhood administrator (Administrator) with the responsibility and authority for all early childhood education programs.</li> <li>● The Administrator has continuous, active, and personal responsibility and authority at all sites for the early childhood education program. The Administrator continually has adequate time and resources on a regular basis at all sites to administer the early childhood education program. The Administrator oversees early childhood education program matters such as, but not limited to, personnel matters, student matters, curricular matters, and resource matters.</li> <li>● All early childhood education program personnel at all sites report to the early childhood education administrator.</li> <li>● There is one group of faculty members for the early childhood education program who continually function as a faculty of the whole on a regular basis within a set of established faculty policies through their institution and decision-making processes and continually have input into the curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation.</li> <li>● All required early childhood courses offered in each early childhood program are the same in terms of the name and number of the course as well as the content within the courses.</li> <li>● There is a consistent set of learning opportunities aligned to the NAEYC standards (included in the Learning Opportunities Chart of the Self-Study Report) across the core courses in the program, regardless of the sections of a course, the sites where the courses are taught and the program delivery mode (e.g. face-to-face, online, etc.). However, the sections of courses and different sites may offer learning opportunities in addition to these.</li> <li>● All sites of the program use the same five to six Key assessments that are being submitted as evidence for meeting NAEYC’s Professional Preparation Standards. Any alterations by the program to the Key assessments cannot be related to sections of the candidate instructions or rubrics that address alignment to the Standards.</li> <li>● All sites of the program share the same field experience requirements in terms of the number of hours and types of field</li> </ul>
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	<p>experiences offered across programs. Field experiences across all sites are tracked in a single system and follow the same policies regarding expectations for candidates during the field experiences, expectations and training for supervising mentors/teachers, and all other relevant orientation materials for candidates and the field settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A single degree is awarded from the same governing institution to candidates who successfully complete the early childhood education program.</li> <li>● There is one set of end-of program candidate learning outcomes and program outcomes utilized for the early childhood education program offered by the governing institution.</li> <li>● There is a systematic plan of evaluation in place that addresses the end-of program candidate learning outcomes and program outcomes for the early childhood education program offered by the governing institution.</li> </ul>
Public Member	A member of an accreditation agency who is appointed from the public at large to represent the public interest. This person is not employed in the early childhood education profession.
Recommendations	Suggested improvements included in the Accreditation Decision Report to be considered in the program’s ongoing improvement plans.
Rubric	A rubric is an evaluation tool used to assess student learning. A rubric identifies distinct levels of candidate performance and describes specific qualities that can be observed at each of those performance levels. For purposes of NAEYC accreditation, the rubric is part of each Key Assessment that a program submits in its Self-Study Report.
Second Response to Conditions	A program accredited with conditions has two Annual Report cycles to respond to meeting the conditions. The First Response to Conditions is included at the end of the program’s first Annual Report. If the program does not successfully meet conditions through its First Response to Conditions, it will submit a Second (and final) Response to Conditions which is included at the end of the program’s Second Annual Report.
Self-Study Report	A document prepared by a program as part of the comprehensive review process. This document describes the program; discusses how it meets the standards; analyzes its strengths, weaknesses, and challenges; and sets forth the program’s plans and goals for future development and continued compliance with the standards.
Specialized Accreditor	An agency that accredits post-secondary professional and occupational-education programs or schools, such as medical schools, engineering schools, educator preparation programs and health-profession programs.

Standards	Accreditation standards establish minimum levels of program quality on which evaluations and accreditation decisions must be based.
Students	See “candidates.”
Substantive Change	Significant modification, expansion or contraction in the nature or scope of an accredited program or institution, including mission, organization, curricular delivery, enrollment, leadership, etc.
Technology	This is not a separate standard, but is woven throughout the standards. Early childhood professionals understand technology and media as important influences on children’s development. They use technology as one way to communicate with families and share children’s work, while recognizing the importance of using other communication methods for families with limited internet access. Similarly, they use technology in child assessment and as a professional resource with colleagues and for their own professional development.
Young Children	Refers to children in the developmental period known as early childhood. Although developmental periods do not rigidly correspond to chronological age, early childhood is generally defined as including all children from birth through age 8.

## Appendix A: ASPA Code of Good Practice

### **ASPA Code of Good Practice**

The ASPA Code of Good Practice provides guiding principles for members in conducting the accreditation process.

#### ***An accrediting organization holding membership in the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors:***

##### ***1. Promotes quality in education through accreditation processes that:***

- a. Focus on student learning as defined by institutional and programmatic missions and goals.
- b. Evaluate educational quality in an unbiased manner.
- c. Encourage institutions and programs to provide pertinent, clear and accessible public information about student achievement.

##### ***2. Conducts accreditation processes with integrity and professionalism that:***

- a. Maintain autonomy and integrity in governance and operations through appropriate relationships, practices and avoidance of conflict of interest.
- b. Create, document and implement policies and procedures to ensure fair and consistent application of standards and decision making that includes due process, confidentiality, and expedient response to appeals and complaints.
- c. Develop, review and revise standards and accreditation procedures on a regular basis with the participation of communities of interest.
- d. Maintain sufficient financial, personnel, and other resources for effective operations, while ensuring efficient and cost-effective accreditation processes for institutions and programs.
- e. Cooperate with other accrediting organizations wherever possible to avoid conflicting standards and to minimize duplication of effort by institutions and programs.
- f. Provide evaluations to assist institutions and programs in developing their own approaches and solutions, making a clear distinction between accreditation requirements and recommendations for improvement.
- g. Provide accurate, clear, accessible, and timely information to communities of interest about accreditation: standards, procedures and status of institutions and programs.
- h. Maintain an effective training and professional development program for all accreditation staff and volunteers.
- i. Ensure that site teams have the appropriate expertise and experience for each specific review.
- j. Include periodic evaluations of the accreditation process that incorporate input from accredited institutions and programs.

##### ***3. Respects institutional independence and academic freedom through accrediting activities that:***

- a. Encourage institutional freedom to make academic decisions while fulfilling the commitment to the accreditation requirements of the profession.

- b. Promote the rights of institutions and programs to determine and implement missions and goals.
- c. Encourage experimentation, innovation, and thoughtful change that meets the needs of the profession, students and the communities served.

Original March 1995, revised April 2013, April 2017, March 2020

## Appendix B: Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, Code of Conduct and Intellectual Property

### NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation System Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Code of Conduct Agreement

The integrity of the NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation system depends in part upon the conduct of the peer reviewers who conduct site visits and the Commissioners who make accreditation decisions. In signing this agreement, peer reviewers and Commissioners agree to avoid conflicts of interest and preserve confidentiality as part of our responsibility to the colleges and public that we serve. Peer reviewers and Commissioners are expected to read, understand, and agree to adhere to all the policies set forth in this document.

#### A. Conflicts of Interest

Peer reviewers and Commissioners agree to conduct themselves in a manner which seeks to avoid a conflict of interest or any appearance of a conflict of interest. Peer reviewer and Commissioner conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to: residing or working in the same state as the institution under review; being a current or pending employee, student or consultant to the institution under review; being a former employee, student or consultant to the institution under review (within the past 10 years); having family members at the institution under review; having a personal relationship with the faculty at the program under review; or having applied for a position at the program under review. Commissioner conflicts of interest may also include serving on the review team for the program under review.

If a Peer Reviewer or Commissioner is uncertain about whether a conflict of interest exists, the individual will describe in the situation in writing to staff. Staff, on behalf of the Commission, will review the written statement, and issue a ruling as to whether the matter in question creates a real or perceived conflict of interest.

#### B. Confidentiality

Peer reviewers and Commissioners agree to keep confidential any and all information from or about the program they are asked to review. They will not share information obtained through documents, interviews, or discussions related to the peer review site visit or accreditation decision. All the content of discussions, interpretations and analyses will be kept confidential. Peer reviewers and Commissioners will not discuss specific information about the program reviewed or the institution visited with anyone other than team members and staff. They will not keep or share documents obtained during the review process. Notes made about the program before, during or after the visit will only be kept for the purpose of clarifying the Peer Review Report or the Commission Decision Report. All hardcopy or electronic notes and correspondence must be destroyed/deleted after the report is complete.

#### C. Code of Conduct

NAEYC Commission on Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation policy incorporates best practices as described by the U.S. Department of Education Recognition Criteria, the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the Association of Specialized & Professional Accreditors (ASPA). Peer reviewers and Commissioners agree to abide by standards of personal conduct that help the team



conduct a well informed and competent review. Peer Reviewers and Commissioners do this by participating in training, preparing for site visits or Commission meetings, reviewing all report materials, assessing information critically and fairly, and conducting themselves in a professional, objective, fair manner at all times.

Peer reviewers and Commissioners may not:

- solicit consultation arrangements with institutions preparing for accreditation visits;
- advertise their status as Commissioners or Peer Reviewers for the purpose of building a consulting clientele;
- accept a consulting arrangement at an institution for which the member served as a Peer Reviewer or on the Commission for at least two years following the accreditation decision;
- claim or imply representation of NAEYC or the Commission on Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation in any private consulting or training business. All accreditation consultation and training is arranged through the national office. Any fees or honoraria are paid to NAEYC. Any accreditation consultants or trainers are trained and assigned by the national office.

Peer Reviewers and Commissioners agree to keep their focus within the scope of published Accreditation Criteria, standards and indicators of strength.

Peer Reviewers and Commissioners will not allow any personal preferences or biases to impact the program review. Each program will be considered in its own context.

Peer Reviewers will not request or accept any compensation whatsoever or any gifts of substance from the institution being reviewed or anyone affiliated with the institution. (Gifts of substance would include briefcases, tickets to athletic or entertainment events. . .)

- If the giving of small tokens is important to an institution's culture, Peer Reviewers may accept these tokens from the institution. (Tokens might include, for example, coffee mugs, key chains, tee shirts, etc.)
- If unsure, the Peer Reviewer should err on the side of declining gifts of any kind.

Peer Reviewers will not expect elaborate hospitality during site visits. Institutions are not expected to arrange for dinner for teams, except for the Sunday night dinner with institutional representatives. It is appropriate for institutions to provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages for teams as they conduct their work on campus and at their hotel. Where options for meals are limited, the peer reviewer team chair shall make arrangements in advance with the institution for team meals. Peer Reviewers shall abide by the guidelines set forth in the Travel Reimbursement Policy.

Peer Reviewers will not state any opinion or make any prediction concerning action by the Commission that may result from the site visit to the institution.

#### D. Violations of the Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Code of Conduct Agreement

Alleged violations of the Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Code of Conduct Agreement shall immediately be brought to the attention of the Commission, which shall investigate the alleged violation and accept a written or verbal statement from the peer reviewer or Commissioner involved. If the Commission determines that the individual has violated the Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Code

of Conduct Agreement, it may sanction the offending individual through a verbal or written reprimand or prohibit that individual from being a member of any Peer Review Team or Commission in the future.

## Appendix C: Accreditation Criteria

Accreditation Criteria identify elements of the program context and are used to better understand the program's unique state and community context, the institution and program mission and goals, the program's conceptual framework and design, the characteristics of candidates and faculty, and the institutional structure. The Accreditation Criteria provide insight to Peer reviewers and the Commission as to the choices the program makes in integrating the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards into its curriculum and Key assessments. Peer reviewers and the Commission also look to the Accreditation Criteria to understand the program's capacity to address identified gaps in its program's alignment to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.

### Criterion 1: Mission and Role

The early childhood degree program has established a clear identity and role in its community, as community is defined by the institution or program, and is responsive to stakeholders.

Rationale: Strong early childhood degree programs are closely connected with the community as they have defined it, and they respond to the growing need to prepare a workforce (educators, administrators, specialists, etc.) to serve young children and families. Stakeholders see the program as providing an important service.

#### Indicators of strength:

- The program has a clear sense of its mission and identity in meeting the needs of the community with which it identifies.
- The program is able to clearly identify the roles, settings, and age groups for which each degree program is preparing early childhood professionals along with the degree level of each program.
- Others outside the institution or program recognize and value the program's role.

#### Sources of evidence:

1. Report: a one- to two-page description of mission and program identity in relation to the community as it has been identified by the program.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with stakeholders as identified by the program.

### Criterion 2: Conceptual framework

The early childhood degree program is based on a conceptual framework that is linked to the program's mission and values.

Rationale: Strong early childhood degree programs are more than a collection of courses. Strong programs gain coherence by developing, sharing, and implementing a clear, overarching mission and set of values.

#### Indicators of strength:

- The conceptual framework is linked to the degree program's unique mission and goals (Criterion 1) and to the NAEYC standards. [Note: The program's conceptual framework may be adapted from the conceptual framework of the larger educator preparation program (if applicable)]

- The conceptual framework is a living document: developed collaboratively; clearly written and presented; and recognized and used by program faculty, candidates, field placement supervisors, and other stakeholders.
- The conceptual framework supports the program’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and to preparing candidates to work in diverse, inclusive settings.

Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of the program’s conceptual framework and how it has been developed and used.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with faculty, candidates, and other stakeholders.

Criterion 3: Program(s) of Study

The program of study is a coherent series of courses and field and clinical experiences that promote candidate learning in relation to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.

Rationale: Strong early childhood programs are more than a collection of courses. The program of study has a logical, developmental progression and has sufficient depth and breadth of content to prepare candidates adequately to enter the field as professionals.

Indicators of strength:

- The program has a combination of courses and field and clinical experiences that prepares candidates to have a positive impact on the lives of young children and families.
- Program requirements and the sequence of courses reflect the program’s mission, role and conceptual framework.
- The program’s design is clearly influenced by the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards
- If applicable, the program is designed to meet the needs of transfer and online candidates and satellite sites.

Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of the program(s) of study and how it has been developed and used.
  - b. the program(s) of study as published in the course catalog, including admission and graduation requirements, and concentrations or other degree program options. [Baccalaureate and graduate programs that have achieved national recognition through NAEYC’s partnership with the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) may attach the document they provided in answer to Question 3 in Section I of the CAEP program report.]
  - c. a catalog course list with brief course descriptions.
  - d. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with administrators and faculty

## Criterion 4: Quality of Teaching

The teaching strategies used by program faculty reflect the characteristics, instructional methods, and evaluation strategies that are likely to promote candidate learning in relation to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards. They reflect the current professional knowledge base and are responsive to the characteristics of the program's candidates.

Rationale: Today, we know a great deal about how to promote the learning of candidates in early childhood degree programs. Teaching-learning experiences in strong programs reflect that knowledge base and are responsive to the characteristics of the program's candidates.

### Indicators of strength:

NOTE: Indicators should be evident whether faculty are full-time or part-time, and whether courses are offered in day or evening, in distance or other formats, on- or off-campus.

- The teaching-learning experiences offered in the degree program are consistent with the program's mission, role and conceptual framework and the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.
- The content of the program's teaching-learning processes reflects the early childhood field's current knowledge base derived from research on early development and education and other professional sources.
- Teaching reflects current research about the role of faculty as facilitators of candidate learning and about learner-centered education that uses a variety of methods and strategies.
- Candidate participation is frequently fostered and monitored, as appropriate, to the delivery (face-to-face, online, hybrid) of the program.
- Teaching reflects knowledge about and experiences with diverse populations of adults and is based on knowledge of cultural and individual adult approaches to learning.
- The program continuously evaluates the quality of its teaching-learning processes such as through peer review, self-reflection, reflective supervision, course evaluations, and other candidate feedback and uses the results, including candidate performance data from the program's assessments (not just Key assessments), to improve the program and to promote all candidates' learning in relation to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.

### Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of the program's quality of teaching.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with faculty and candidates; observations of classes that illustrate indicators of strength.

## Criterion 5: Role in Supporting the Education Career Pathway

The program of study allows early childhood professionals to build on prior credentials and prepares them for future professional education opportunities in order to advance early childhood education and improve student learning.

Rationale: The professional preparation standards are relevant throughout an early childhood professional's educational studies, as individuals pursue education opportunities to advance their knowledge, serve young children in their learning environments, meet professional performance standards in the degree program, and achieve career aspirations. Successful programs consider ways to build on candidates' prior credentials and position them for seamless advancement in their educational studies through supporting transfer, articulation and collaboration across programs and institutions to sequence and reduce redundancy in content and requirements.

#### Indicators of strength:

- The program(s) reflects on the credentials with which candidates commonly enter the program and considers opportunities to avoid duplication and/or deepen coursework at a more advanced level of study.
- The program(s) identifies common educational steps its graduates take prior to entering and after completing the program and proactively addresses opportunities to streamline requirements, reduce redundancy, align coursework, etc. to create a seamless higher education pipeline for early childhood candidates and professionals
- The program(s) actively participates in partnerships with relevant high schools, community colleges, and/or four-year colleges and universities and graduate programs to support the recruitment and development of early childhood candidates through higher education pathways. (Examples might include dual enrollment agreements or articulation agreements).

#### Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of the program's participation in the professional pipeline. (Programs located within institutions that offer early childhood education degrees at multiple levels should consider how they address this criterion within their own institution as well as with institutions in or near their service area)
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with faculty; candidates; administrators; P-12 partners, and other educational partners when relevant. Review of articulation agreements, letters of support, and other documents that reflect partnerships and cross-institutional initiatives to provide a seamless early childhood higher education pipeline.

#### Criterion 6: Qualifications and Characteristics of Candidates

The program encourages enrollment of a diverse group of candidates who have potential to succeed as early childhood educators.

Rationale: Strong degree programs actively seek out and encourage candidates who will contribute to a future work force of diverse, well prepared early childhood professionals, as well as welcome candidates with many kinds of prior experiences.

#### Indicators of strength:

- The program actively encourages enrollment of candidates who demonstrate potential for success in the early childhood field as defined by faculty.

- The program actively encourages attention to recruitment, retention, and graduation of a diverse candidate population to meet its mission, goals, and community context.
- The program engages in efforts to ensure that candidates graduating are well qualified and prepared for the roles and settings described in Criterion 1.

Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of qualifications and characteristics of candidates.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with faculty, stakeholders, and candidates as appropriate.

### Criterion 7: Advising and Supporting Candidates

The program ensures that candidates are adequately advised and supported.

Rationale: Candidates need many kinds of assistance if they are to gain the competencies reflected in the NAEYC standards. Strong programs ensure that comprehensive services are available to all candidates, and that candidates' career goals are being met.

Indicators of strength:

- Advising and supports are designed around the needs and characteristics of the candidate population.
- The program ensures that all candidates have equitable access to a comprehensive support system including appropriate academic advisement, career counseling, financial aid information, academic support services, and other resources from admission to the completion of their education.
- On a regular basis, program faculty review the performance of candidates in relation to learning outcomes (including NAEYC standards) and provide candidates with advice and counseling regarding their progress and potential in the program and early childhood profession.
- The program has protocols in place for identifying and advising candidates whose behaviors, actions and/or performance related to the standards are not appropriate for working with young children.
- The program makes every effort to ensure that candidates complete their course of study in a way that recognizes and supports each candidate's goals and characteristics.

Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of how the program advises and supports candidates.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with candidates, faculty, administrators and other campus staff as appropriate.

## Criterion 8: Qualifications and Composition of Faculty

The program ensures that faculty members demonstrate the qualifications and characteristics needed to promote candidates' learning in relation to the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards.

Rationale: Strong programs ensure that both full- and part-time faculty have the academic and practical expertise to guide candidates toward mastery of the competencies reflected in NAEYC's Professional Preparation Standards, and to serve as models and mentors for candidates.

### Indicators of Strength

NOTE: Indicators apply to all faculty, whether temporary, part-time, or full-time.

- Faculty have experience in early childhood education or a closely related field. In addition, faculty teaching at the associate's and/or baccalaureate level have a graduate degree in early childhood education or a closely related field; faculty teaching at the graduate level have a doctoral degree in early childhood education or a closely related field;
- Faculty have academic qualifications appropriate to the courses they are assigned to teach.
- Faculty know about and implement the principles in NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct, including its Supplement for Early Childhood Adult Educators.
- The program uses a variety of strategies to recruit, hire, mentor, and retain a diverse faculty.
- The institution regularly evaluates faculty on their teaching, scholarship, and service.

### Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page description of strategies for recruitment, hiring, mentoring and retention of a diverse and qualified faculty.
  - b. a chart listing program faculty with brief description of qualifications (see example below). Baccalaureate and master's degree programs that have achieved national recognition through NAEYC's partnership with the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation may use the chart submitted with their most recent program report.
  - c. a one-page description of how program is planning to address challenges and build on its current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with program coordinator and faculty.

## Criterion 9: Professional Responsibilities

Faculty responsibilities allow them to promote candidates' learning in relation to the NAEYC standards.

Rationale: Strong early childhood degree programs make sure that faculty assignments balance teaching, institutional and community service, and/or research and scholarly work (in whatever combination is consistent with the mission of the institution and program) in order to fulfill their job responsibilities and support the program in meeting its goals.

### Indicators of Strength:

NOTE: Indicators apply to all faculty, whether hired on a temporary, part-time, or full-time basis.

- Work assignments accommodate faculty involvement in activities appropriate to their role in the program and important to their ability to support candidate learning. In addition to teaching



and supervision, these may include curriculum development and evaluation; advising and mentoring; collaboration with families and other professionals; scholarly activities; and service to the institution, profession, and community.

- Faculty teaching responsibilities, including overloads and off-campus teaching, are mutually agreed upon and designed to allow faculty to engage effectively in activities appropriate to their role in the program and to their ability to promote candidate learning.
- The program regularly compares the full-time to part-time faculty ratio and faculty to candidate ratio with other programs in the institution to identify whether the program needs additional allocations for faculty.

#### Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of how the program makes sure faculty assignments balance teaching, institutional and community service, and/or research and scholarly work.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area
2. Site Visit: Interviews with faculty and administrators as needed.

#### Criterion 10: Professional Development

Faculty are provided with professional development that strengthens their ability to promote candidates' learning in relation to NAEYC standards.

Rationale: Early childhood education is a rapidly developing and changing field. Strong programs help faculty keep current and engaged in their profession, and they continuously assess faculty effectiveness, so that ultimately candidates may benefit.

#### Indicators of strength:

Note: Indicators apply to all faculty, whether hired on a temporary, part-time, or full-time basis.

- Faculty members stay current and engaged in the field. Depending on the institutional and program mission and the faculty member's individual role in the program, this may occur through a combination of active participation in professional organizations, conferences, scholarly activity, and/or service to the profession.
- Faculty members have opportunities to develop knowledge and collaborative relationships with professionals in other disciplines, such as health, speech and language, or special education.
- Opportunities are provided for faculty development, such as travel support, leave, in-service training, education visits, exchanges, and fellowships.
- Faculty members' performance is periodically reviewed and evaluated; the review uses multiple methods of evaluation, such as self-assessment and reflection, candidate evaluations, professional early childhood peer evaluations, and assessment by other individuals.
- Faculty supervisors support/recommend professional development opportunities for faculty based on program needs, faculty interests, the results of performance reviews (or professional growth plans) and evaluations, and faculty responsibilities (such as teaching online).

#### Sources of evidence:

1. Report:

- a. a one- to two-page summary of how program provides professional development and how it conducts and uses faculty evaluations.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with administrators and faculty

### Criterion 11: Program Organization and Guidance

The program's organization and guidance are aligned to the mission and are participatory, placing the needs of candidates as its first priority.

Rationale: Strong programs function out of a clear sense of mission, seek the involvement of all stakeholders, and place the needs of candidates at the center of their operations.

#### Indicators of strength:

- The program sets goals and plans in conjunction with the college and program mission and in response to stakeholder and community needs.
- Faculty, including part-time faculty, are informed about and regularly participate in program decision-making.
- As appropriate to their role, faculty have opportunities to participate in college-wide decision-making.
- Candidates participate in evaluation of courses, faculty, field experiences, and the program.
- The program (including full- and part-time faculty and program administrators) regularly evaluates its impact on candidate learning and candidate and program outcomes such as year-to-year retention in the program, graduation rates, graduates' employment and education outcomes, graduates' and employers' satisfaction with the program, etc.
- With advisory council, faculty, and other stakeholder involvement, the program establishes strategic objectives to address candidate and stakeholder needs; incorporate new knowledge about the education of children and families, and enhance its performance.

#### Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page summary of key features of program organization and governance; strategies to engage faculty in program and institution-wide decision-making; and strategies to engage faculty, candidates and other stakeholders in program development.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with stakeholders. Program should have available a summary of current strategic objectives and how they were developed.

### Criterion 12: Program Resources

The program has sufficient resources to support its efforts to promote candidates' learning in relation to NAEYC standards.

Rationale: Appropriate learning materials, support staff, and budget resources are essential if strong programs are to meet candidates' learning needs.

Indicators of strength:

- Faculty and candidates have access to and use of appropriate instructional materials and technology to support candidates' success in relation to NAEYC standards, such as early childhood classroom materials, consumable supplies, digital resources, and other media equipment, and computers.
- The institution's library/information technology center reflects a commitment to child development and early childhood education as reflected in the NAEYC standards. A sufficient number of current books, journals, periodicals, media, and other materials that reflect the diversity of philosophy in the field are available. Adequate library/information technology center resources may include study space for candidates; instructional and curriculum laboratories; media and data processing and technological equipment; and cooperative educational and research relationships with early childhood settings and practitioners.
- The program's budget reflects a level of support comparable to other programs at the institution or to similar early childhood programs elsewhere, and is adequate to allow the program to support candidates' learning in relation to the standards.
- Faculty have access to adequate institutional resources (such as institutional research offices, marketing communications offices, etc.), to allow them to meet their responsibilities in the program.

Sources of evidence:

1. Report:
  - a. a one- to two-page description of the program's budget and other resources. The program may include a chart comparing the support for the early childhood education program with support for comparable programs at the institution.
  - b. a one-page description of plans to address challenges and build on current strengths in this area.
2. Site Visit: Interviews with faculty and administrators. Review of additional materials related to program resources. Tours of relevant sites such as media center or curriculum lab, as needed and as suggested by the program.

## Appendix D: Summary of NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards

### Initial Standards

#### STANDARD ONE: PROMOTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understandings of young children’s characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children’s development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.

1a: Knowing and understanding young children’s characteristics and needs

1b: Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning

1c: Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments

#### STANDARD TWO: BUILDING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children’s families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children’s families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children’s development and learning.

2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics

2b: Supporting and empowering families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships

2c: Involving families and communities in their children’s development and learning

#### STANDARD THREE: OBSERVING, DOCUMENTING, AND ASSESSING TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child.

3a: Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment

3b: Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches

3c: Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child

3d: Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with other professionals

#### STANDARD FOUR: USING DEVELOPMENTALLY EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO CONNECT WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation for their work with young children and families. Candidates know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child's development and learning.

4a: Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with children

4b: Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education

4c: Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning practices

4d: Reflecting on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child.

#### STANDARD FIVE: USING CONTENT KNOWLEDGE TO BUILD MEANINGFUL CURRICULUM

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child. Candidates understand the importance of developmental domains and academic (or content) disciplines in early childhood curriculum. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas, including academic subjects, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding. Candidates use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful challenging curriculum that promotes comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child.

5a: Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines

5b: Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines

5c: Using their own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula for each child.

#### STANDARD SIX: BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

6a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

6b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

6c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice

6d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education

6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

#### STANDARD SEVEN: EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD EXPERIENCES

Field experiences and clinical practice are planned and sequenced so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children across the entire developmental period of early childhood – in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth – age 3, 3-5, 5-8) and in a variety of settings that offer early education (early school grades, early learning and care centers and homes, Head Start programs).

7a: Opportunities to observe and practice in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth-age 3, 3-5, 5-8)

7b: Opportunities to observe and practice in at least two of three main types of early education settings (early school grades, early learning and care centers and homes, Head Start programs)

## Appendix E: Peer Reviewer Policies

### Eligibility to Serve as a Peer Reviewer

Peer reviewers are faculty and administrators who currently serve - or have previously served- in early childhood programs in institutions of higher education. Professionals who serve in other areas of the early childhood profession and are engaged in higher education, such as through serving as a mentor teacher/supervisor to candidates, may be eligible to serve as peer reviewers. All peer reviewers must have at least a master's degree in early childhood education or a related field.

### Application to Serve as a Peer Reviewer

Peer reviewers submit an application that documents their educational background and professional experience in early childhood educator preparation. A reference check is conducted as part of the application. A copy of the application can be found on the NAEYC website.

### Peer Reviewer Training

Applicants who meet the qualifications (as set by the Commission) for serving as a peer reviewer participate in a three-part training. The first part of the training takes place virtually. It provides an overview to the site visit process and training modules simulate various aspects of the site visit from making travel preparations to reviewing Self-Study Reports and identifying alignment of programs' key assessments to the standards. Those who successfully complete the virtual training are then assigned to be a virtual observer of a site visit when one becomes available. They will be assigned to a space in the online platform to observe how a site visit team prepares for a site visit and watch the team's deliberations during and after the site visit. After observing a site visit, the final part of the training will be conducting a first site visit as part of a peer review team. Through peer reviewers' self-evaluations, team members' evaluations and program coordinators' evaluations, staff will identify if there are areas of development that need to be addressed prior to the new peer reviewer serving on another team. This may require the peer reviewer to participate in virtual training activities. In cases where the peer reviewer does not address the areas for development, he/she is no longer eligible to be part of the peer reviewer pool.

All peer reviewers assigned to a site visit are expected to participate in NAEYC's virtual peer reviewer training activities that semester to ensure they are current on accreditation policies and Commission expectations.

Peer reviewers adhere to policies laid out in the confidentiality and conflict of interest forms they sign (see Appendix B for a copy of the forms). Peer reviewers are responsible for following accreditation policies and procedures when preparing for and conducting site visits.