



Overview of Steps to Achieve NAEYC Accreditation

Steps

1. Enrollment

Tasks for Programs

- Complete enrollment form and submit enrollment fee
- Engage in self-study:
 - Create shared understandings of key concepts about accreditation, the standards, the criteria, and implications for the program
 - Gather information using the self-study and self assessment tools
 - Determine strengths and weaknesses
 - Develop improvement plans as needed
 - Make improvements and document progress
 - Evaluate results and determine next steps
- Prepare to meet eligibility requirements

2. Application

- Complete application, selecting a due date for submission of candidacy materials, and pay application fee
- Meet eligibility requirements
- Engage in formal self-assessment – Must complete all Self-Assessment Tools in the Guide to Self-Assessment:
 - Plan formal self-assessment, involving families, teaching staff, and program administration
 - Document evidence that all standards are met, building on results of self-study
 - “Fine tune” program performance, making improvements as needed to make sure that at least 80 percent of criteria within each standard are met by the program overall and that every classroom consistently performs at least 70 percent of all criteria within each standard
- Prepare to meet all candidacy requirements
- Complete Candidacy Materials, including documentation of performance on selected criteria as requested by the NAEYC Academy

3. Candidacy

- Submit candidacy materials and candidacy fee by chosen due date
- Meet candidacy requirements
- Prepare for on-site assessment by NAEYC Assessors
- Continue to gather evidence of performance and make improvements

4. Accreditation Decision

- Accredited programs: Sustain quality over the five-year term—as documented through annual reports, reports of program changes, and results of unannounced visits if randomly selected—and pay applicable fees
- Deferred programs: Follow up on NAEYC Academy recommendations for reconsideration (typically requires resubmission of candidacy materials and verification fee)
- Denied programs: May choose to return to Step 2-Application



Program Requirements for Each Step of NAEYC Accreditation

1. Enrollment Requirements

- None
- Open to any program interested in using the Self Study Kit for program improvement

2. Application Requirements (including Eligibility)

- Any center- or school-based program serving children birth through kindergarten is eligible if the program
- Serves a minimum of 10 children
- Has operated for at least one year before submitting materials for candidacy (Step 3)
- Is regulated by the appropriate licensing or regulatory body (or alternative if ineligible for regulation)
- Is located in the United States or its territories, unless affiliated with U.S. government schools and child development centers or programs
- Is willing to meet each of NAEYC's 10 Early Childhood Program Standards
- Leaders demonstrate knowledge of the NAEYC Accreditation process
- Program completes the a formal, comprehensive self-assessment using the Guide to Self-Assessment within one year with an on-site assessment visit 6 months after

3. Candidacy Requirements

- Submit completed candidacy materials including program-assessment report and applicable fees
- Maintain good standing in licensing/regulatory status
- Demonstrate necessary early childhood and management and leadership expertise among its teaching and leadership staff (see Candidacy Requirements for Staff Qualifications)
- Document collaborative process for self-assessment
- Can document fully meeting at least 80% of the NAEYC Accreditation criteria for each program standard

4. Requirements for Accreditation

- Meet all applicable **Required** criteria and continue to meet all Candidacy and Eligibility requirements
- Meet each of the 10 Early Childhood Program Standards by fully meeting at least 80% of each standard's associated accreditation criteria assessed during the on-site visit with no individual classroom scoring below 70% on its assessed criteria.

Requirements to Maintain Accreditation

- Maintain level of quality expected of NAEYC-Accredited programs
- Submit to verification visits if randomly selected or in response to program changes or complaints
- Submit annual reports on each anniversary with applicable fees