

# We Listened! Major Improvements to NAEYC's Accreditation System for Early Learning Programs Are Under Way

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As an accreditation system, we are committed to continuous quality improvement and the use of feedback from stakeholders to enhance our practice. We have compiled data from program records, early childhood educators, program administrators, coaches, assessors, state administrators, and other stakeholders to identify and prioritize enhancements that build on our 30-year experience and streamline the accreditation process.

You spoke, we listened, and now we are prepared to act. Here are five widespread challenges we will be addressing in the system in the upcoming months:

**1. Challenge:** Programs often prepare to be assessed on more than 800 indicators, because the smaller subset of indicators measured during site visits are not easily identified.

**Solution:** Transparency! While no significant changes are being made to the program standards, we are improving transparency so programs can readily access the subset of key indicators that will likely be assessed during the site visit.

**2. Challenge:** Some programs need more support and resources than others to meet standards and to advance through the process.

**Solution:** We've got your back! We are expanding our suite of resources to include regional support teams, targeted webinars, supported accreditation facilitation projects, an improved website, on-site trainings, and program samples.

**3. Challenge:** Some indicators are duplicated across standards. As a result, some programs present the same evidence multiple times.

**Solution:** Reduction! We are reducing redundancies so that indicators are measured in a single standard and not across multiple standards.

**4. Challenge:** Indicators for staff qualifications can be confusing and are narrowly focused on degrees and credentials. As a result, some high-quality programs do not pursue accreditation because they assume they do not meet the staffing criteria.

**Solution:** The big picture! We are providing explicit staff qualification requirements in Standard 6 (currently "Teachers"), because research confirms that competencies gained through high-quality degree and credentialing programs are impactful and strengthen the case for improved compensation. However, we also know that recruiting and retaining qualified staff is a universal challenge and that there are other indicators that influence professional effectiveness, such as working conditions and ongoing support. As a result, we will broaden our focus and collectively assess staff qualifications, working conditions, staff support, and professional development.

**5. Challenge:** Manual, paper-based steps can be inefficient.

**Solution:** Technology! NAEYC is launching a new online Accreditation Information System to electronically process payments, forms, requests, and site visits. This improvement will allow programs to focus on what matters most—providing high-quality early learning experiences.

Visit [NAEYC.org/academy](https://naeyc.org/academy) to learn more about these improvements and the value of Accreditation!