Streamlining NAEYC Accreditation:

Data-Driven Revisions for a Better System

NAEYC Annual Conference

Dallas, TX  November 6, 2014
What is NAEYC Program Accreditation?

• National system for program QI
• Recognized “gold standard” for program practice
• Comprehensive, research-based Standards & Criteria
• Rigorous expectations for program quality
• Commitment to excellence and continuous quality improvement (CQI)
Sources of Evidence:
How Standards are met during Site Visit

Family & Teaching Staff Surveys

Classroom & Program Portfolios

Observations
Where have we been?
History, Strengths & Challenges
3 Decades of Academy Accreditation

**1985 - 1990** – Launched in 1985; development years

**1991 - 2005** – Growth and accountability years
- Success outran capacity
- Comprehensive systems review resulted in 2006 “reinvention”

**2006 - 2010** – Reinvention years
- Reliable, accountable, evidence-based
- Build-out of system content, process, IT
- Data gathering for system improvement

**2010 - Now** – Review and revision years
- Feedback from users (programs, coaches, and assessors)
- Recommendations from 2010 independent review led by Walter Gilliam
- What our own data tells us
NAEYC System Improvement Goals

“The NAEYC Academy has identified long-term system improvements as a result of the 2010 Criteria Review. NAEYC is continuing to work toward a fully transparent assessment tool that reduces the specific number of criteria on which programs must prepare to be assessed. Additionally, the NAEYC Academy will develop tools that help all programs improve their practices, regardless of their participation in NAEYC Accreditation. Such tools will support a broad range of quality improvement systems, like state QRIS and other systems at the local, state, and national level.”

Strengths of our Current Items, Tools & Procedures

• **Robust**: Multiple SOEs, many data points
• **Comprehensive**: “Universe of best practice”
• **Reliable**: Inter-rater reliability about 95%
• **A well-developed system**
  • Multi-step structure
  • Quality Assurance – ongoing monitoring, appeals
  • Continuous Quality Improvement process
Challenges presented by Current Items: Ratability

Some criteria are difficult to understand:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.B.05</th>
<th>I-T-P-K</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>CP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff-developed assessment methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>are aligned with curriculum goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>provide an accurate picture of all children’s abilities and progress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>are appropriate and valid for their stated purposes, etc….</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Many criteria are too easy for site visit assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.C.03</th>
<th>T-P-K</th>
<th>Random</th>
<th>O, CP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that support fine-motor development.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Challenges presented by Current Items: Ratability

Redundancy in content across different standards and criteria

- 3.F.02: “Play is planned for each day.”
- 2.A.11.b: “The schedule...incorporates time for play.”

Relative importance/weight of large standards vs. small ones

- Standard 6: 14 criteria
- Standard 2: 88 criteria
Challenges presented by Current Items: Ratability

Criteria with a single-indicator vs. many indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.B.03</th>
<th>I-T-P-K</th>
<th>Random</th>
<th>FS, PP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Program staff inform families about community events sponsored by local organizations, such as museum exhibits, concerts, storytelling, and theater intended for children.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.A.03</th>
<th>I-T-P-K</th>
<th>Random</th>
<th>TS, PP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before working alone with children, new teaching staff are given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of program operation, including</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>program philosophy, values, and goals;</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>expectations for ethical conduct;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>health, safety, and emergency procedures;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>daily activities and routines of the program;</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>program curriculum;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>child abuse and neglect reporting procedures;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>program policies and procedures;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards; and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>regulatory requirements.</td>
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</table>

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientation.
Challenges presented by Current Items: Ratability

Multiple content components within a single indicator!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.A.11</th>
<th>I-T-P-K</th>
<th>Random</th>
<th>O, TS, PP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has (a) specific training and (b) a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. The person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above. Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Medications are labeled with the child’s first and last name, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child’s licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer’s instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.</td>
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Where are we headed?
Criteria Revision
What is “Criteria Revision”?

NAEYC Program Accreditation changes that...

• Reduce the number of items being assessed on the Accreditation Visit
• Update criteria to reflect cutting edge research and current practice knowledge
• Streamline the accreditation process to be rigorous but not burdensome
• Create a transparent accreditation report with more specific feedback
Goal 1: Accessible, Assessable Content

“Accessible”: Items used for assessment are fewer in number, more clearly written, and organized in a way that is easier to master.

“Assessable”: Items are easier to rate reliably, both for assessors on site visits and for program staff who self-assess prior to a site visit and throughout accreditation.
Goal 2: Powerful Process

Process provides better support for Program Quality Improvement

- Programs submit self-assessment classroom observations to qualify for site visit assessment
- NAEYC directly collects Family and Teaching Staff Surveys online in the Application and Candidacy/Renewal steps
- Annual Report requirements address specific program improvement plans
Goal 3: Flexible Assessment Tools

- Multiple levels of difficulty
- For use in the NAEYC accreditation system and potentially in other systems
- Screening tools for programs upon entry
- Possibly also:
  - Tools customized to reflect state QRIS content
  - Tool items cross-walked to ERS, CLASS, PAS, SF etc.
  - Core of universal content for international assessments
Criteria Revision’s Big Goal:
Maintain the Rigor -- Reduce the Burden

1. Streamline: Reduce the number of criteria that programs will be assessed on for accreditation
2. Make Transparent: Make the results more specific so programs have clear feedback about how to improve
3. Write clear, discrete assessment items
4. Create tiered, flexible self-assessment tools
5. Support and align with QRIS systems

Compendium of NAEYC Standards for High Quality Early Learning Programs

10 Standards, 417 Criteria, 1000+ Indicators
How are we getting there?
Building a better system
Use our data to streamline content

- Items difficult for many programs
- Items most discriminating of overall program quality
- Items consistent with the Standards constructs
- Items suitable for rating within constraints of site visit protocol
Make New Site Visit Rating Tools

1. Translate current “statements of best practice” into clear, simple test items
   • Specific to source of evidence
   • Define terms, give examples

2. Create and validate new rating tools
   • Fewer items on each tool
   • Tiered tools
   • Create opportunities for flexible use in many new ways
GOE Tools by Standard & Level

Only items in green will be on new observation site visit tool.
Only items in green will be on new Program Portfolio site visit tool.
Make New Tools for Self-Study / Self-Assessment

• Tools graded by difficulty
  • Start with items most programs meet
  • Finish with items on final site visit tools

• Customized tools for specific areas of improvement
  • By standard
  • By themes such as diversity practices or family engagement
Review and Update Content

• Expect to affirm most content; update research supporting it
• Decide status of current “emerging” criteria
• Identify new emerging criteria and possibly whole new topics
Possible New Best Practice Topics

• Families & Children under Stress
• Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (obesity prevention)
• Outdoor Learning Environments / Nature Play
• Engaging Families
• Continuing education of staff
• Suspension policies
Example: 2.G.06 (Curriculum: Science):

*Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that encourage them to think, question, and reason about observed and inferred phenomena.*

**New Items for Group Observation Tool**
- Teachers do science experiments with children.
- Children have chances to do activities that encourage them to think, ask questions, and make predictions about natural and physical phenomena.

**New Items for Classroom Portfolio Tool**
- Teachers can show 2 lesson plans in which they do science experiments with children.
- Teachers can show 2 lesson plans in which they encourage children to make predictions, inferences, and/or ask questions about natural and physical phenomena.
Example: 5.C.03 (Health Policies & Practices):
A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is either to be washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized, and air dried or washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

New Item for Group Observation Tool
If a child has contaminated a toy with saliva or other body secretion or excretion, staff set it aside for washing in a bin or other location created for that purpose.

New Item for Program Portfolio Tool
Your program’s health policies & procedures tells staff to wash any toy that has been contaminated by one child’s body secretion or excretion before allowing another child to use the toy.

Toys can be:
• washed with soap and water, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried, OR
• washed and dried in a dishwasher.

Examples of body secretions or excretions: blood, saliva, urine, feces, vomit, or mucous.
Example: 10.C.01 (Financial Management):
Financial policies and the procedures to implement them provide evidence of sound fiscal accountability using standard accounting practices. Financial policies and procedures are consistent with the vision, philosophy, mission, goals, and expected child outcomes. Operating budgets are prepared annually, and there is at least quarterly reconciliation of expenses to budget. A system exists to review or adjust the budget if circumstances change, and it includes a yearly audit. Budgets are reviewed and amended as needed. Fiscal records (such as revenue and expenditure statements, balance sheets, banking reconciliation, etc.) are kept as evidence of sound financial management.

New Items for Program Portfolio Tool:

- Your program can show that you employ **standard accounting practices** for financial management.
- Your program can show an **annual operating budget** for the current year.
- Your program can show a **yearly audit** conducted for the most recent fiscal year.
Other Parts of the System also can be Streamlined and Improved

- Assessment Criteria and Tools
- Content and Materials
- Process and User Experience
- Resources and Marketing
Timeline

2014: Create Items & Tools
- Write clear, simple assessment items
- Sort items into tiers by difficulty
- Create new assessment tools
- Review by expert raters
- Preliminary Field Tests

2015: Messaging; Begin Implementation
- Release of new tools
- Stakeholder feedback
- Content & resources to assist transition
- New user interface
- Phase in changes –
  - Optional assessment by old or new tools
Lingering Questions?
Thoughts about what’s coming next?
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