



NAEYC Required Criteria Policy

Programs will maintain compliance with the Required Criteria. When the NAEYC Academy gains information to suggest that a violation of a Required Criterion may have occurred in a program in candidacy or maintaining NAEYC Accreditation, the NAEYC Academy will conduct a review in accordance with the policies and procedures of the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation.

Procedures Related to Required Criteria Policy

In addition to conducting site visits for decision and verification purposes, NAEYC implements the following procedures to determine that programs maintain compliance with Required Criteria.

- 1. Gather information from programs that may signal a potential violation of a Required Criterion. This includes:**
 - A. Requiring all programs seeking or maintaining NAEYC Accreditation to regularly provide information regarding their licensing or regulatory status (at application, candidacy, site visit, and the Annual Report) and
 - B. Requiring all NAEYC-Accredited programs and programs that have submitted an Application (step 2) for Candidacy to notify the Academy within 72 hours¹ when the program's license to operate is revoked or suspended OR when the program experiences any incident that threatens or compromises the essential health or safety of any child. NAEYC will acknowledge receipt of all such notifications within 72 hours. Programs are expected to notify NAEYC of any incident that involves:
 - the death of any child from any cause;
 - a critical² injury to any child that results in the child being admitted to a hospital Emergency Room for treatment (whether transported by the Emergency Medical Response team, program, parent, or other individual);
 - any unusual incident involving a lack of supervision (such as but not limited to a child being left unattended or leaving the facility alone or in the care of an unauthorized individual); and/or
 - any suspected physical or psychological abuse of a child at the program or by an individual that the child met through the program.



Required Criteria Policy and Related Procedures

2. Apply the Scope and Severity Screen.

When the NAEYC Academy receives information that suggests that a violation of a required criterion may have occurred in a program seeking or maintaining NAEYC Accreditation, the Scope and Severity Screen will be applied. Within 10 business days of receipt of information suggesting a possible violation of a required criterion, NAEYC asks programs to provide the information needed to apply the Scope and Severity Screen. Triggers for the use of the Scope and Severity Screen may include, but are not limited to, events requiring 72-hour notification, information included in a regular reporting mechanism (application, Candidacy Materials, site visit documentation, Self Report, or Annual Report), or complaint.

The Scope and Severity Screen will consider:

- the specific **nature** of the incident(s), including the age of child(ren) involved and its duration;
- the **context** in which the incident(s) occurred, including the program's relevant written policies and procedures and their actual implementation at the time of the incident(s);
- the program's **response** to the incident(s), including its analysis of the root causes of the incident(s) and subsequent actions (such as personnel actions or implementation of new policies or procedures), and its ongoing plan for follow-up and prevention;
- the status and results of any **investigations** by licensing, regulatory, medical examiner, police or other authorities regarding the incident(s);
- the process and timeframe by which the **notification** of the incident(s) was received by NAEYC; and
- the nature and frequency of other such incident(s) that may indicate a **pattern of failure** to meet required criteria over time.

The Scope and Severity Screen is applied by the Scope and Severity Committee (Committee) which is comprised of leadership team staff responsible for NAEYC's programs supporting the accreditation of programs for young children. The decisions of the Committee are tracked and monitored for consistency. This Committee is governed, along with the work of the entire NAEYC Academy, by the NAEYC Council for Accreditation.

In the event that NAEYC is notified of an incident but investigations by licensing or other authorities are not complete, the Committee will consider the available information to determine whether a decision can be rendered. If not, the case shall be considered pending and will be reviewed after adequate additional information has been received at which time a decision will be rendered.



Required Criteria Policy and Related Procedures

3. Determine the results of the Scope and Severity Screen.

Based on the information provided, the Committee determines:

- whether a violation of a required criterion occurred and if so,
- whether the violation is reasonably attributable to the program and
- whether the program demonstrates the capacity to meet all Required Criteria over time.

One of three possible outcomes is then assigned to the program:

- accreditation (or the process of seeking accreditation) is maintained,
- a verification visit is required before a decision regarding a change in accreditation status can be rendered, or
- accreditation is revoked or denied.

Accreditation (or the process of seeking accreditation) is Maintained

When it is determined that the alleged incident is untrue, did not result in a violation of a required criterion, or is not reasonably attributable to the program, a currently NAEYC-Accredited program maintains its accreditation status. If a program is seeking accreditation, its process is maintained.

Accreditation (or the process of seeking accreditation) is also maintained when it is determined that, given the nature and context of the incident and the program's response to it, the program demonstrates the capacity to meet all required criteria over time.

Verification Visit is Required

When some question remains as to the program's demonstrated capacity to meet all required criteria over time, the program will be subject to an unannounced verification visit, at the program's expense, to maintain its current accreditation status.

Accreditation is Revoked or Denied

Accreditation is revoked or denied (or the process for seeking accreditation is terminated) when a program is determined to have failed to demonstrate the capacity to meet all required criteria over time, because:

- the incident(s) are determined to include valid and serious violation(s) of one or more required criteria;
- the violation(s) are reasonably attributable to the program; and
- the program
 - (a) did not have in place clear written policies and procedures designed to prevent the violation(s) from occurring;
 - (b) failed to adequately investigate the incident(s) and review its current policies and procedures to determine the cause of the violation(s); and/or
 - (c) did not take appropriate actions to minimize the risk of future violation(s) occurring.



Required Criteria Policy and Related Procedures

¹ When the NAEYC Academy learns that such incident(s) occurred but the program did not notify NAEYC within 72 hours, additional steps will be taken, which may include a verification visit at the program's expense. If the nature of the incident(s) and the fact that NAEYC was not notified is determined to harm the integrity of the NAEYC Accreditation system, accreditation may be immediately revoked.

² Critical injury is defined as an injury that:

- places life in jeopardy,
- produces unconsciousness,
- results in substantial loss of blood,
- involves the fracture of an arm or a leg,
- involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot,
- consists of burns to a major portion of the body,
- or causes the loss of sight in an eye.

Definition of critical injury adapted from the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, Regulation 834.