

Sue, a program administrator, employs 48 staff in three separate buildings. For the past several months she has urged the staff to provide their college transcripts and training documentation.

Tonight, Sue assembles all the information to place in her program's candidacy materials for NAEYC Accreditation. The deadline to mail the materials is tomorrow, the 30th of the month. It is well after the end of the program day, and Sue still stands at the copier, photocopying documents to attach to the NAEYC Accreditation Teaching Staff Qualifications worksheets. When finally complete, the candidacy materials are 288 pages in length.

# Streamlining NAEYC Candidacy Reports through a Registry

## Accreditation Made Easier for All

Attaining NAEYC Accreditation for programs that serve young children is a rigorous, demanding process. It calls for diligence and attention to detail. One of the most critical details is documentation of staff's education qualifications (as specified in *Standard 6: Teachers* [NAEYC 2008]) to demonstrate a program's compliance with NAEYC's candidacy requirements. Collectively, the staff must meet the entry-level education qualifications or a program cannot achieve NAEYC Accreditation. In the scenario described, it is crucial for Sue, and all administrators, to carefully attend to the details of assembling staff credentials documentation.

Working in concert with NAEYC, the Connecticut Charts-A-Course/Accreditation Facilitation Project (CCAC/AFP) staff are devising an easier way for program administrators to verify information about their staff's education qualifications in the NAEYC Accreditation process. Through a pilot project in Connecticut initiated in October 2010 (to conclude in January 2012), NAEYC and CCAC/AFP have used the CCAC Early Childhood Professional Registry to efficiently, securely, and confidentially manage staff qualifications data and report it to NAEYC.

Using the Registry allowed us to ensure that all the appropriate staff documentation was intact. It made the completion of the staffing and professional development part of the reaccreditation process much simpler.

—Kathy Lopes, Director and Program Administrator, Playland Nursery School, New Canaan, Connecticut

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Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC) has developed the Early Childhood Professional Registry (the Registry) as a statewide, secure, online database that tracks education, credentials, training, and employment experience of its members. It applies the data of staff education qualifications to NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy requirements. Currently in the pilot phase, this partnership serves as a model for linking NAEYC Accreditation staff qualification requirements to state registries.

The Registry is funded by the Department of Social Services and operated by Connecticut Charts-A-Course, the state's professional development and program improvement system. In the past it has received additional funding from the Connecticut Early Childhood Cabinet, Head Start Collaboration Office, and Office of Workforce Competitiveness Career Ladder Initiative.

### The Registry

The CCAC Early Childhood Professional Registry, powered by RegistryOne® software, is a statewide, secure, online database that tracks the education, credentials, training, and employment experience of its members. The Registry captures and reports the career ladder level and qualifications of the early care and education workforce by

occupation, role, program, and funding sources of fees collected. This Registry is a valuable resource for individuals and for authorized programs, state agencies, policy makers, and researchers to access. The CCAC Registry is open to anyone working in the early care and education field in Connecticut.

Using the CCAC Registry data in support of NAEYC Accreditation is a natural partnership. Career counselors who staff the Registry are charged with maintaining accurate, up-to-date information on qualifications for all staff in publicly funded programs in Connecticut. Programs that do not receive public funds may voluntarily use the Registry to house their staff qualifications. With this wealth of data available, and with the number of programs in Connecticut achieving NAEYC Accreditation at 424 and growing (Connecticut has the third largest number of NAEYC-accredited programs serving young children in the United States), an opportunity to deliver a direct benefit from the Registry to early childhood programs emerges.

The Registry directly benefits early childhood programs. Program administrators and staff enter the data about themselves into the system. Each individual's profile includes data fields for

- personal information (name, address, phone, e-mail address);
- current employment information (experience, program name—so individuals can be confirmed by the administrator and then associated with the program and age group they work with);
- student status; and
- demographics.

West Hartford now has three NAEYC-accredited programs in our public school system. The first accredited was without the CCAC Registry—all the paperwork (transcripts, teaching certificates, and so forth) had to be sent to NAEYC with the candidacy materials. Participating in the pilot, two other programs experienced less paperwork to send in with candidacy materials. During the NAEYC site visit, NAEYC's candidacy report (one sheet!) had all the information that was needed.

— *Jeanne Warner, Early Childhood Curriculum Specialist and Program Administrator, West Hartford, Connecticut*

## Program Participant Data at a Glance— Pilot 1

Data	Total
Programs participating	12
Number meeting candidacy	12
Largest staff size	43
Smallest staff size	5
<b>Program types</b>	
State funded	6
Public school	3
Tribal Nation school	1
Traditional nursery school	1
Head Start	1
Accreditation Facilitation Projects	4
With staff not meeting candidacy	9
<b>Administrators</b>	
Administrators choosing Opt. A	4
Administrators choosing Opt. B	0
Administrators choosing Opt. C	8
<b>Teaching staff*</b>	
Average number per program	15.8
Meeting candidacy requirements	149
Not meeting candidacy	29
Staff choosing Opt. F	49
Staff choosing other options	100
	(36 C, H, J, K; 31 D; 19 E; 14 A, B)

\* **Option F**—Associate degree or baccalaureate or higher degree in early childhood education, child development, early childhood special education, or elementary education

**Options C**—CDA certificate; **H**—Equivalent of AA degree; **J**—AA or higher in non-Early Childhood Education field, plus 3 years experience in NAEYC-Accredited program; **K**—AA degree or higher in non-Early Childhood Education field, plus 3 years experience in a nonaccredited program and 30 contact hours of training in the last 3 years.

**Options D**—CDA credential equivalent; **E**—Working on an AA degree or higher; **A, B**—Working on a CDA credential or on the equivalent of the CDA

Documentation of an individual's education qualifications is submitted in paper format to CCAC, attached via scanning, and saved to the individual's profile. The individual is then assigned a CCAC Career Ladder Level.

## The pilot project

As the CCAC Registry initiated its pilot study, many of the 12 participating programs seeking NAEYC Accreditation were already using the Registry to track and update educational staff qualifications and to report those qualifications to the Connecticut Department of Education and Department of Social Services (the public funders). The first step for the program administrator is to ensure that updated education qualifications documentation is submitted to the secure Registry. The administrator then uses Registry tools to assign staff to classrooms/groups, to indicate leadership or teaching roles, and to complete an education worksheet to estimate how the staff meet NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy requirements ([www.naeyc.org/academy/pursuing/edquals/overview](http://www.naeyc.org/academy/pursuing/edquals/overview)).

Once the qualifications information is fully verified by CCAC, the CCAC/AFP candidacy calculator applies a set of rules (the NAEYC candidacy requirements) to the data stored in the Registry, then generates a report of the results of this process. The report itemizes each staff member's qualifications and identifies whether the individual meets the threshold specified for NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy. The report also summarizes the data to indicate whether the program as a whole meets NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy requirements.

This summary report takes the place of the individual Teaching Staff Qualifications pages and Program Administrator Qualifications pages in the Accreditation Candidacy or Candidacy Renewal materials provided by NAEYC. Rather than having to copy each staff member's transcripts, résumé, or other documentation and submit them to NAEYC, the CCAC report documents and verifies the evidence of qualifications according to NAEYC's rules for verification. *Voilà!* A one- or two-page report of the program's staff qualifications and candidacy status is

I had little experience with the Connecticut Charts-A-Course Registry when I began. Using it assisted us in affirming the need for all our teacher assistants to complete their CDA, and it influenced the hiring of staff and making staff assignments. The report became part of my annual report to NAEYC and our program portfolio. The challenging part was collecting the data from the staff, but it was worth the effort, giving us the ability to retrieve staff qualifications and information quickly.

— *Braulio Santiago,*  
*Executive Director of Education/*  
*HPD and Program Administrator,*  
*Mashantucket Pequot Tribal*  
*Nation Child Development Center,*  
*Mashantucket, Connecticut*

ready to be submitted to NAEYC along with Candidacy or Candidacy Renewal materials (see “Modified Sample NAEYC Candidacy Staff Report”).

### Benefits and lessons learned

The following key points provide an overview of the pilot project with CCAC and how the Registry can benefit programs and educators.

**Stakeholders.** Each partner in the pilot project benefits from participation. State agencies, CCAC, and the Registry benefit because participants have a reason to update their data, thereby making all reports more accurate. NAEYC benefits by receiving a streamlined, verified report of staff qualifications. The early childhood programs applying for candidacy also reap the benefit of streamlining, simplifying paperwork and accessing support for the paperwork portion of the NAEYC Accreditation process.

**Programs must own the process.** Connecticut Accreditation Facilitation Project coordinators live by this motto. They support each early childhood program in fully understanding the steps of the NAEYC Accreditation process, requirements for candidacy, and staff qualifications criteria. The AFP, following the framework for program quality improvement (see *Best Practices of Accreditation Facilitation Projects* [Means & Pepper 2010]), works closely with program staff to create systems that meet NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria or that achieve and sustain improvements. In support of the pilot, CCAC staff’s role is to assist the program administrator, but ultimately the responsibility rests with the administrator.

**Voluntary and visionary.** Administrators’ involvement in the pilot was voluntary but potentially took more time

than simply making copies of staff documentation for NAEYC. However, program leaders saw the value of archiving documents in the Registry and having electronic access to the data from that point forward and for applications other than NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy.

**Deadlines.** Staying on schedule was a challenge for participants in the pilot study, because 2010 was the snowiest winter in the Northeast in recent history! The large number of snow days in Connecticut required a fair amount of flexibility in collecting documents from programs. E-mail became more of a necessity than ever, allowing the registry staff to stay on target with the pilot and enabling the programs to communicate changes.

In much the same way that project staff needed to hold programs to deadlines, there quickly emerged a realization that the data-entry side of this pilot required significant effort. One clear need is to allow sufficient time between the close of the registry’s acceptance of new documents and the due date of official reports. CCAC’s goal was to secure a one-month window between these two points.

**Possibilities and limitations.** A registry (in nontechnical terms) is comprised of programming that searches for data and stops when it finds the information. Teaching staff discovered that they could meet more than just one can-

## Modified Sample NAEYC Candidacy Staff Report

Program Name: ABC Early Education Center – Connecticut Charts-A-Course Registry (CACC) ID: 1914

NAEYC Program ID: 000000 – Report as of 12/21/2010

NAEYC Role	Participant Name	Room or Group	Current Pediatric First Aid	Current Pediatric CPR	NAEYC Candidacy Option	Meets NAEYC Candidacy for Role	Participant CCAC Registry ID	CCAC Ladder Level Description
Program Director/ Administrator of a single site	Doody, Howdy	NA	12/01/2012	12/01/2012	Program Administrator—Option A: BA degree + 9 credits leadership + 24 credits ECE	Yes	10001021>	CDA including 12 credits
Classroom Assistant Teacher or Teacher Aide	Snowflake, Suzy	Green	12/01/2012	12/01/2012	NA—High school diploma	No	10001021*	CCAC membership
Classroom Teacher	Fletcher, Ferb	Blue	12/01/2012	12/01/2012	F—BA ECE	Yes	10001021!	Bachelor degree in ECE

*Note:* In an actual Registry report, a data summary is included to indicate whether or not the program meets candidacy. This sample accurately represents the information each Registry participant would submit and CCAC would enter, up to the noted date.

States interested in creating a pilot project with the NAEYC Academy, please contact **Jennifer Strong** at [jstrong@naeyc.org](mailto:jstrong@naeyc.org).

didacy option. The registry searches first for baccalaureate degrees in the applicable fields, then applicable associate degrees, and works its way down a logic model, looking for any early childhood education (ECE) credits as it goes. Then it screens for non-ECE degrees and so on.

One thing learned was that participants may place a higher value on an option than the value the Registry chose. For example, a teacher may have a BS in criminal justice and 12 early childhood education credits. The teacher chose option J (AA degree or higher in a non-ECE-related field) because she also had more than three years of experience at an NAEYC-accredited program. The Registry, however, looked first for ECE credits and placed the teacher at option D (CDA credential equivalent). Both are correct.

Confusion also resulted from individuals trying to assign specific career ladder numbers to the NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy options. Learning this led to greater emphasis that the two systems are separate. There is no need to create equivalencies between career ladder numbers and the NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy options in order to analyze the data and create the report.

**Details help.** One outstanding feature of the Registry is a document viewer. Registry participants can look at the transcripts and other documents that have been scanned to their record. This helps participants own the process of updating their information when checking their documents. It allows registry staffers to reassess documents at anytime if requirements (NAEYC, state, or others) change.

**Networking value.** Pilot participant programs did not leave with only a streamlined document to send to NAEYC. Programs became connected to other programs and to other state supports. In opening the pilot to any program with a January 31, 2011, candidacy deadline, there was a diverse group,

including some programs that had never heard of the Registry. Programs received individualized assistance from CCAC, including on-site support, technical assistance by phone, and so on. They also learned about other opportunities available in their communities, such as free workshops and study groups offered by the AFP, director support groups, scholarship funds, and the application to Connecticut's statewide AFP for individualized assistance in working toward NAEYC Accreditation.

**The data.** Summary data (see "Program Participant Data at a Glance—Pilot 1," p. 77) portray a varied pilot group of programs from across the state of Connecticut: tribal nation, Head Start, public school, state funded, and nursery school. Two distinct points in the summary data for this small sample help illustrate a story:

- 67 percent of program administrators met Option C: Alternate Pathway
- 33 percent of teaching staff met option F: An associate's degree or higher in early childhood education or a related field

These numbers show that the options created by NAEYC reflect the varied ways that professionals can gain experience and demonstrate their qualifications in the ECE field. Without a variety of options, staff and programs would not

be able to see themselves in this accreditation system.

## Next steps

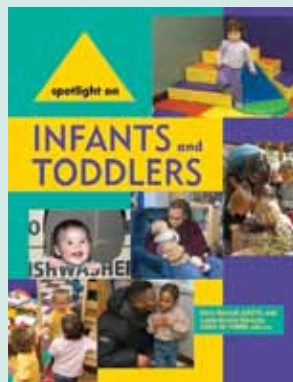
The pilot project continues with a second group (10 programs) having submitted candidacy or renewal materials in September 2011. A third and final pilot group of 57 eligible sites has been invited for the January 2012 submission deadline. All stakeholders remain committed to offering this benefit to programs and to integrating components of the Connecticut support system, the Accreditation Facilitation Project, career counseling, the CCAC Early Childhood Professional Registry, and NAEYC Accreditation. This effort works toward the development and eventual release of a planning tool that will allow all Connecticut programs for young children to use the CCAC/AFP candidacy calculator to measure their progress toward NAEYC Accreditation Candidacy as well as NAEYC's criteria for staff qualifications (6.A.05 and 6.A.06 [NAEYC 2008, 33]).

## References

- Means, K.M., & A. Pepper. 2010. *Best Practices of Accreditation Facilitation Projects: A Framework for Program Quality Improvement Using NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- NAEYC. 2008. *Standard 6: Teachers—A Guide to the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standard and Related Accreditation Criteria*. Updated ed. Washington, DC: Author.

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## Coming this November from NAEYC!



### Spotlight on Infants and Toddlers

Derry Koralek, NAEYC, and  
Linda Groves Gillespie, ZERO TO THREE, eds.

Quality child development programs for infants and toddlers tailor their care to meet the particular characteristics and developmental needs of these age groups. This book offers engaging articles from *Young Children* for those who work with or in support of infants and toddlers and their families. It includes study guides for many of the articles plus a comprehensive resource list.