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NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs Granted to the First Baccalaureate Degree Programs in the System

WASHINGTON — The National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs is pleased to announce that it has granted first-time accreditation to associate- and baccalaureate-level early childhood degree programs at 15 institutions of higher education. In addition, the Commission voted to renew accreditation for programs at five institutions. This brings the total number of institutions with accredited programs to 195, with nearly 70 additional degree programs currently engaged in the self-study process. Early childhood preparation programs serve a wide-range of students and prepare early childhood educators for a variety of early learning settings. Accreditation serves as a mechanism for ensuring a consistent and high level of program quality and alignment to NAEYC's Professional Preparation Standards while respecting the unique mission and context of each degree program.

"NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs is a hallmark of quality assurance for the early childhood preparation profession," said Mary Harrill, Senior Director of Higher Education at NAEYC. "We congratulate all of the programs that have recently achieved accreditation. Their dedication, through the accreditation process, to program improvement, to the students they serve, and to the early learning settings in which their graduates will work is to be commended. Their commitment to program quality and continuous improvement will ultimately result in stronger early learning opportunities for our nation's young children."

With a recent expansion in the accreditation system to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in addition to associate degree programs, NAEYC has seen a steady increase in the number and geographical spread of programs expressing interest in pursuing this mark of high quality. In this cycle of accreditation decisions, Mississippi College became both the first institution with an accredited program in its state, as well as one of the first two institutions with an accredited baccalaureate degree program, along with the University of Alabama. In addition to these decisions, the first accredited programs in Delaware, New Mexico, and Wyoming joined the list, bringing the total number of states with accredited programs to 39.

"Mississippi College chose to participate in the rigorous NAEYC accreditation process in order to ensure that its newly developed program was of the highest quality," said Rachel Peeples, Director of Field Experiences and coordinator of the institution's Early Childhood Care and Development Program. "This process allowed us the opportunity to closely examine our program, its role in the community, and the many varied opportunities we have to positively impact the lives of young children. It has resulted in a high-quality program, which produces effective, well-trained early childhood professionals."



Shannon Rivera, Executive Director of Early Childhood Programs at Western New Mexico University, explained why accreditation matters to her program. "The WNMU Early Childhood Education Program continues to be a leader in the field of early learning in the southwest by being the first in the state of New Mexico to receive NAEYC accreditation for our Early Childhood Education and Family Support Associate of Arts degree. Going through the continuous quality improvement process provided us with the structure for reviewing the scope and sequence, rigor, and evaluation of the pedagogy and theory throughout the program. "

To earn and retain accreditation, professional preparation programs must demonstrate that they:

- Align to NAEYC's Professional Preparation Standards;
- Respond to the unique needs of their degree candidates and communities;
- Provide intentional learning experiences for their degree candidates to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to be effective early childhood educators; and,
- Continuously assess and reflect on their degree candidates' performance.

The newly-accredited degree programs are:

Bates Technical College, Washington

A.A.S.T. Early Childhood Education

Casper College, Wyoming

A.A. Early Childhood Education

Delaware Technical Community College, Delaware

A.A.S. Early Childhood Development

A.A.T. Early Care and Education: Birth to Second Grade

Florida Gateway College, Florida

A.S. Early Childhood Education

Gaston College, North Carolina

A.A.S. Early Childhood Education

Luzerne County Community College, Pennsylvania

A.A.S. Early Childhood Education

Mississippi College, Mississippi

B.S. Early Childhood Care and Development

Muskegon Community College, Michigan

A.S.A. Early Childhood Education

A.A.S. Child Development Associate

Santa Monica College, California

A.S. Early Childhood Education—Career

A.S.T. Early Childhood Education

Siena Heights University, Michigan

A.A. Child Development

University of Alabama, Alabama

B.S. Human Environmental Sciences, Early Childhood Education Major

West Kentucky Community and Technical College, Kentucky

A.A.S. Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education

West Shore Community College, Michigan

A.A.A.S. Early Childhood Education

Western Kentucky University, Kentucky

A.A. Early Childhood Education

Western New Mexico University, New Mexico

A.A. Early Childhood Education & Family Support (Early Childhood Teacher – Birth-Grade 3 Concentration)

The following programs have renewed accreditation:

Central Ohio Technical College, Ohio

A.A.S. Early Childhood Education Technology

Gateway Community College, Connecticut

A.S. Early Childhood

Idaho State University, Idaho

A.A.S. Early Childhood Care and Education

Indian Hills Community College, Iowa

A.A.S. Early Childhood Associate

Ivy Tech Community College—Columbus, Indiana

A.S. Early Childhood Education

A.A.S. Early Childhood Education

For more information, visit the NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation system [website](#).

Founded in 1926, the National Association for the Education of Young Children is the largest and most influential advocate for high-quality early care and education in the United States.

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