

Guide to Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment is an ongoing project your program works on throughout the NAEYC Accreditation process. During Self-Assessment, you and your colleagues collect evidence to show how your program meets the accreditation criteria that make up the 10 NAEYC Early Learning Program Standards and Criteria.

The written, photographic, and observational evidence your program collects during Self-Assessment is arranged into five different sources of evidence.

Sources of Evidence

1. Observable Criteria
2. Program Portfolio
3. Classroom Portfolios
4. Family Surveys
5. Teaching Staff Surveys

This guide explains each of the five sources of evidence, directs you to the Tools for Self-Assessment, and provides you with additional resources that will help you complete your program's Self-Assessment and keep it up-to-date. It will also direct you to the Sources of Evidence Checklist to help you track your program's progress in Self-Assessment.

Have more questions about Self-Assessment? Find answers in *Appendix 1. Frequently Asked Questions* at the end of this guide.

Observable Criteria

The Observable Criteria source of evidence helps your program prepare to show an NAEYC Assessor how it meets specific accreditation criteria. Your program will do practice observations of each group to complete the Observable Criteria source of evidence.

The following chart includes all the tools and resources your program needs to complete the Observable Criteria source of evidence:

Resource/Tool	Recommended Use
Guide to Observable Criteria Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to find the right Observable Criteria Tool for each of your program's groups
Observable Criteria Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct observations for each of your program's groups • Record whether or not accreditation criteria are met

Program Portfolio

The Program Portfolio source of evidence is a collection of written and photographic evidence that shows how your program meets specific accreditation criteria. The Program Portfolio will include evidence of policies and practices that apply to the entire program.

The following chart includes all the tools and resources your program needs to complete the Program Portfolio:

Resource/Tool	Recommended Use
Program Portfolio Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about the Program Portfolio, including tips for organization
Program Portfolio Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the criteria that are assessed in the Program Portfolio, along with helpful guidance Rate whether or not evidence in the Program Portfolio meets accreditation criteria
Program Portfolio Labels (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download labels for your Program Portfolio
Portfolio Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get tips on how to create excellent portfolios
Electronic Portfolio Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of creating an electronic Program Portfolio

Classroom Portfolio

The Classroom Portfolio source of evidence is a collection of written and photographic evidence that shows how specific accreditation criteria are met in individual groups, or classrooms.

The following chart includes all the tools and resources your program needs to complete Classroom Portfolios:

Resource/Tool	Recommended Use
Classroom Portfolio Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about Classroom Portfolios, including tips for organization
Guide to Classroom Portfolio Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to find the right Classroom Portfolio Tool for each of your program's groups
Classroom Portfolio Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the criteria that are assessed in the Classroom Portfolio, along with helpful guidance Rate whether or not evidence in the Classroom Portfolio meets accreditation criteria
Streamlining Classroom Portfolio Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to be complete Classroom Portfolios more quickly and easily Determine how many Classroom Portfolios are needed
Classroom Portfolio Labels (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download labels for your Classroom Portfolios
Portfolio Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get tips on how to create excellent portfolios
Electronic Portfolio Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of creating an electronic Program Portfolio

Programs may choose a variety of ways to organize their Classroom Portfolios. Regardless of the overall organizational scheme, portfolio evidence must be clearly labeled with applicable criterion number(s).

Family Surveys

The Family Survey source of evidence requires your program survey the families it serves. The results of these surveys are used as evidence to show if specific accreditation criteria are met.

The following chart includes all the tools and resources your program needs to complete Classroom Portfolios:

Resource/Tool	Recommended Use
Self-Assessment Family Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute this survey to all families your program serves and collect their responses
Self-Assessment Family Survey en Espanol (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute this survey to all Spanish-speaking families your program serves and collect their responses
Family Survey Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter survey results data into this spreadsheet to determine if accreditation criteria are met

Teaching Staff Surveys

The Teaching Staff Survey source of evidence requires your program to survey its teaching staff. The results of these surveys are used as evidence to show if specific accreditation criteria are met.

The following chart includes all the tools and resources your program needs to complete Classroom Portfolios:

Resource/Tool	Recommended Use
Self-Assessment Teaching Staff Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute this survey to all of your program's teaching staff and collect their responses
Teaching Staff Survey Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter survey results data into this spreadsheet to determine if accreditation criteria are met

Appendix 1. Frequently Asked Questions about Self-Assessment

1. Why do programs need to do Self-Assessment and keep it up-to-date?

The Candidacy Materials (Step 3) include questions about the evidence collected during Self-Assessment. During the site visit (Step 4), an NAEYC Assessor will review the written and photographic evidence from your program's Self-Assessment.

Keeping the evidence in Self-Assessment up-to-date will help your program to complete annual reports and be ready for the site visits that happen when accreditation is renewed at the end of the five-year term.

2. When should a program complete its Self-Assessment?

Programs working on NAEYC Accreditation for the first time should complete Self-Assessment to be ready for the Candidacy due date (Step 3) it chose in the Application (Step 2). A program that is currently NAEYC-Accredited should make sure that its Self-Assessment is up-to-date to be ready for the site visit for renewal, which happens in the last year of each five-year term of accreditation.

3. What Is the Difference between Self-Study and Self-Assessment?

Self-Study and Self-Assessment are two different tasks exist for different reasons. The chart below talks about the differences between Self-Study and Self-Assessment:

Self-Study	Self-Assessment
Done after a program completes Step 1: Enrollment	Done in preparation for Step 3: Candidacy and kept up-to-date while a program is NAEYC-Accredited
Purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the accreditation criteria • check to see if you your program meets the accreditation criteria • make any changes needed to meet the accreditation criteria 	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collect formal evidence that shows how your program meets the accreditation criteria
Self-paced with <i>no deadlines</i> to meet, giving programs the time to make changes needed to meet the 10 Standards	<i>Must be finished by the Candidacy due date</i> the program chose in Step 2: Application and kept up-to-date while a program is NAEYC-Accredited
Work completed is <i>informal</i> and will not be looked at by the NAEYC Academy	Work completed is <i>formal</i> and will be looked at by an NAEYC Assessor during the site visit to earn accreditation (Step 4) and site visits to renew accreditation
Programs may use a set of <i>optional</i> tools from TORCH. Programs may also make up their own tools or use published instruments. Many programs choose to practice using the Self-Assessment tools during Self-Study.	Programs use the formal tools for Self-Assessment available in TORCH to create the five sources of evidence: Observable Criteria, Program Portfolio, Classroom Portfolios, Family Surveys, and Teaching Staff Surveys.