

NAEYC Program Standards and Accreditation Assessment Items

Standard 1: Relationships

Definition of Standard 1

The program promotes positive relationships between all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community and to foster each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member.

Rationale

Positive relationships between adults and children are essential for the development of children's sense of personal responsibility and for fostering their capacity for self-regulation, their constructive interactions with others, and their academic functioning and mastery. Warm, sensitive, and responsive interactions with adults help children develop a secure, positive sense of self and encourage them to respect and cooperate with others. Positive relationships with adults help children gain the benefits of instructional experiences and resources. Children who see themselves as highly valued are more likely to feel secure, thrive physically, get along with others, learn well, and feel part of a community.

The Relationships Standard includes six topic areas (1.A, 1.B, 1.C, 1.D, 1.E, and 1.F).

Topic Areas

- ❖ 1.A—Building Positive Relationships Between Teachers and Families
- ❖ 1.B—Building Positive Relationships Between Teachers and Children
- ❖ 1.C—Helping Children Make Friends
- ❖ 1.D—Creating a Predictable, Consistent, and Harmonious Classroom
- ❖ 1.E—Addressing Challenging Behaviors
- ❖ 1.F—Promoting Self-Regulation

1.A—Building Positive Relationships Between Teachers and Families

Topic 1.A addresses the development and maintenance of positive, reciprocal relationships between teachers and families, emphasizing the need for ongoing communication and sensitivity to family diversity.

Recommended Best Practices

We cannot overstate the importance of the relationship between teacher and family. At the start, teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that some families are uneasy about having their children in child care. Trust building takes time and attention, but is essential. Parents need to feel trust in their child's teachers, and teachers need to know and understand the family in order to fully understand the child. Teachers should solicit input from families about their child's needs and how the family defines their race, culture, religion, home language, and family structure. Regular two-way communication is an essential element for maintaining positive relationships with families. Teachers keep families informed about their child's progress at the program, and parents share information about what's going on in the child's home life. Teachers also give families practical information about classroom routines, rules, and expectations. Nurturing a strong partnership with families helps to ensure that children's needs are met, families' concerns are addressed, and transitions between program and home are smooth.

Criteria in
Topic 1.A

1.A.04
1.A.02
1.A.01
1.A.05
1.A.01
1.A.03

1.B—Building Positive Relationships Between Teachers and Children.

Topic 1.B addresses the development of positive, individualized relationships between teachers and children, emphasizing the need for consistent, predictable care; frequent social interactions; acceptance of a wide range of emotions; and support and acknowledgement of all children as capable and resourceful.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 1.B	
1.B.01	<p>Children learn best when they feel respected and valued. Teachers can create a positive emotional climate in their classroom through their warm, affectionate verbal and physical interactions and consistent, predictable care. All teaching staff must also demonstrate the ability to interact appropriately with young children: communicate at their level, protect them from harm, provide activities, encourage socialization, and manage them gently. Smiles, eye contact, and calm tones of voice all contribute to positive relationships. It is important that teachers appreciate each child’s unique personality, abilities, activity level, and pace of development and that they respond to children’s individual needs. For toddlers and older children, teachers show respect for children by listening to them, answering their questions, and engaging them in meaningful conversations. Children feel more secure when teachers encourage children’s self-reliance in the classroom and acknowledge their accomplishments.</p> <p>As children learn to express and manage their emotions, teachers are important as guides and models. They provide comfort and support when children experience hurt, fear, and anger, and they encourage children to express both positive and negative emotions in appropriate ways. Teachers must themselves model good emotional expression and management. To avoid creating a negative emotional climate, teachers do not verbally abuse children, threaten them, make harsh remarks, laugh at them, or stand by when other adults or children do these things.</p> <p>With infants and young toddlers, relationship building begins when teachers learn to read a baby’s nonverbal signals and to sense mood and level of attention, and adjust their interactions accordingly. Social interactions include singing, narrating, and responding to a baby’s coos and sounds. Making eye contact and giving one-on-one attention during caregiving routines also help teachers create a positive, individual relationship with each little one.</p>
1.B.03	
6.A.02	
1.B.07	
1.B.15	
1.B.04	
1.B.05	
1.B.06	
1.B.09	
1.B.10	
1.C.04	
1.C.05	
1.C.06	
1.D.01	
1.B.13	
1.B.11	
1.B.12	

1.C—Helping Children Make Friends

Topic 1.C addresses the role teachers play in the development of friendships between children: they design opportunities that promote peer engagement, help children sustain and enhance play, and help children resolve conflict.

Recommended Best Practices

Children need help navigating the complexities of forming positive social relationships with peers. For infants, this begins with creating opportunities to interact with other babies. As children grow, teachers have to supervise children’s interactions and engage with them during play to help them build friendships. While allowing children to take the lead, teachers’ participation in children’s play can help make it more complex and cooperative. Teaching staff should encourage children to resolve their own conflicts and support them in identifying their feelings and working together to develop and try a variety of solutions. To help all children feel

Criteria in Topic 1.C
1.C.01
1.C.02
1.C.03
1.C.04
1.C.03
1.C.06
1.C.05

included, teachers may need to ensure that socially reserved children are invited into other children’s play, and that children who hurt or bully others are helped to follow classroom rules.

1.D—Creating a Predictable, Consistent, and Harmonious Classroom

Topic 1.D addresses the creation of classroom environments in which limits are clear, bias is countered, and prosocial behavior is promoted.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 1.D
1.D.01
1.D.05
1.D.03
1.D.04
1.D.05

Teachers create harmonious classrooms when they model consideration and respect for all the children, intentionally address issues of bias, and value differences. For example, children’s environments should display images of children and their families and include materials that reflect the cultures of the children in the class. Staff should review and remove older books, posters, music, and other materials that might promote stereotypes. To support prosocial behaviors in children, teachers model sharing and caring by encouraging children to listen to each other and by helping them negotiate their interactions as they play. Teachers identify and label children’s prosocial behaviors when they see them. Teacher also intentionally teach social skills, and they follow up with guidance and prompts to help children learn to take turns and listen to others. To encourage a sense of community, teachers have children participate often in decision making about classroom rules, plans, and activities and expect children to help care for their classroom. To proactively maintain a harmonious environment, teachers learn to anticipate potential behavior problems and take steps to prevent them.

Teachers promote emotional competence by helping children talk about emotions in themselves and others. They help children identify different feelings and the way feelings can be expressed. Children are encouraged to comfort their friends who are sad or distressed.

1.E—Addressing Challenging Behaviors

Topic 1.E addresses the skills teachers need to protect children from harm and the support teachers must provide to help children develop new and more adaptable ways to relate to peers and adults. Sharing information between staff and families, helping families advocate for their children, and linking families and the program with community resources help ensure that children and families receive necessary support. Proactive ways to address challenging behaviors include carefully designing the learning environment.

Recommended Best Practices

Staff understand and recognize that challenging behaviors are children’s attempts to communicate a message, such as, “I am scared,” “I am hurt,” or “I want to play with you.” To that end, they use multiple strategies to prevent and address these behaviors and to build children’s positive social and emotional regulation and their communication skills.

To help minimize challenging behaviors, teachers should routinely observe their group in action to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that may be predictive of challenging behavior. When they identify environmental factors that might be contributing to behavior problems, they make environmental modifications and implement targeted teaching strategies designed to support appropriate behaviors.

When responding to challenging behaviors, teachers avoid using negative responses. They are respectful and calm, and they ensure the emotional and physical safety of the child and others in the classroom. Teachers

Criteria in Topic 1.E
1.E.03
1.E.02
1.E.03
1.E.04
1.E.01

provide support and guidance to help children develop alternative behaviors. These include setting realistic and age-appropriate expectations for behavior, establishing clear and consistent routines, and engaging children in cooperative activities and group projects.

For children with persistent or serious challenging behaviors, individualized plans designed to support inclusion and success are developed jointly with families and other support service staff.

1.F—Promoting Self-Regulation

Topic 1.F addresses the teacher’s role in determining and providing necessary support for children to regulate their emotions and manage their own behavior.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 1.F
1.F.01
1.F.02

When children learn to manage their behavior, thoughts, and feelings, they are developing self-regulation. Children need self-regulation to successfully and actively participate in learning. To develop self-regulation, children need many opportunities to experience and practice skills with adults and peers. With toddlers and older children, teachers actively teach social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. They continually look for opportunities to provide supports and guidance to help children build these skills. Further, they support self-regulation by helping children to problem solve and persist when they are frustrated or challenged, take turns and play cooperatively with others, control physical impulses, use language to communicate needs, express emotions in ways that do not harm others, and use problem-solving techniques.

Standard 1 Site Visit Assessment Items

Item count summary: Total items = 26; infant items = 13; toddler items = 23; preschool items = 22; kindergarten items = 22; school-age = 22

Source of evidence key: CP = Class Portfolio; CO = Class Observation; PP = Program Portfolio; PV = previsit evaluation of documentary evidence

Assessment category key: (R) = required criterion/item; (E) = emerging practice criterion/item

Topic area Criterion of origin	Item ID	Assessment item Definitions, examples, guidance	Source of evidence	Age categories
1.B 1.B.05	22	Teachers respond to children’s negative emotions (hurt, fear, anger) by offering developmentally appropriate comfort, support, and assistance. <i>Rate as No Opp if no negative emotions are observed. Developmentally appropriate: Based on what we know about the development and learning of children in a given age range, while also considering each child’s individual abilities and needs and his or her cultural background.</i>	CO	ITPKS
1.B 1.B.07	26	Teachers take into account children’s differing temperaments when relating to each child. <i>Watch for teaching staff’s sensitivity to individual children (versus treating all children basically the same way).</i>	CO	ITPKS
1.B 1.B.07	27	Teachers take into account children’s differing activity levels when relating to each child. <i>Watch for teaching staff’s sensitivity to individual children (versus treating all children basically the same way).</i>	CO	PKS
1.B 1.B.09 (R)	31 (R)	Staff never use physical punishment and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. <i>Rate No if any person employed by or volunteering for the program physically punishes, psychologically abuses, or coerces a child. This is a required assessment item. If a child is in immediate danger, assessors must immediately notify the program administrator and contact NAEYC Accreditation of Early Learning Programs. Examples of physical punishment: shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time. Examples of psychological abuse: shaming, name-calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats; frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection. Examples of coercion: rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping of any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).</i>	CO	ITPKS

1.B 1.B.09 (R)	32 (R)	<p>Show that your guidance/discipline policy states that staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. The policy must include examples of prohibited staff practices.</p> <p><i>Examples of physical punishment: shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.</i></p> <p><i>Examples of psychological abuse: shaming, name-calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats; frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection.</i></p> <p><i>Examples of coercion: rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping of any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).</i></p>	PP	ITPKS
1.B 1.B.09 (R)	33 (E)	Show how your guidance/discipline policy is communicated to all staff.	PP	ITPKS
1.B 1.B.11	37	Infant teachers frequently talk, coo, and sing to infants and repeat infants' sounds.	CO	I
1.B 1.B.13	40	Teachers are aware of infants', toddlers', and twos' individual levels of arousal and moderate their own voice level and physical interaction accordingly.	CO	IT
1.B 1.B.14	42	Teachers can distinguish the meaning of infants', toddlers', and two's various cries and other signs of distress. <i>Rate No Opp if no cries or other signs of distress are observed.</i>	CO	IT
1.C 1.C.01	46	Teachers facilitate infants' interest in looking at, touching, or vocalizing to other people.	CO	I
1.C 1.C.03	54	Show or describe two examples of how you help make children's play more complex. <i>Play: Children's active engagement and enjoyment in an activity and their ability to determine how the activity is carried out.</i>	CP	ITPKS
1.C 1.C.04	55 (E)	Teachers give children a chance to resolve their own conflicts without immediate teacher intervention. <i>Rate No Opp if no evidence of conflicts is observed.</i>	CO	TPKS
1.C 1.C.04	56	When children are in conflict, teachers help them identify their feelings. <i>Rate No Opp if no evidence of conflicts is observed.</i>	CO	TPKS
1.C 1.C.04	57	When children are in conflict, teachers help them identify and describe the problem. <i>Rate No Opp if no evidence of conflicts is observed.</i>	CO	TPKS
1.C 1.C.04	58	When children are in conflict, teachers help them think of alternative solutions. <i>Rate as No Opp if no evidence of conflicts is observed.</i>	CO	TPKS

1.D 1.D.01	66	Classroom materials show persons with differing abilities engaged in activities that counteract stereotypical limitations. <i>Counteracting stereotypical limitations: The selection and use of materials that represent people in ways that depict a diversity of experiences, values, abilities, dress, and customs rather than singular representations of an entire group or selection of people.</i>	CO	ITPKS
1.D 1.D.01	67	Classroom materials show persons of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds engaged in activities that counteract stereotypical limitations. <i>Counteracting stereotypical limitations: The selection and use of materials that represent people in ways that depict a diversity of experiences, values, abilities, dress and customs rather than singular representations of an entire group or selection of people.</i>	CO	ITPKS
1.D 1.D.01	71	Show two models or visual images in your classroom that depict men and women in work, family, and personal roles.	CP	ITPKS
1.D 1.D.02	75	Teachers offer children the chance to choose activities, materials, and areas in which to play. <i>Play: Children's active engagement and enjoyment in an activity and their ability to determine how the activity is carried out.</i>	CO	TPKS
1.D 1.D.02	76	Show or describe one example of how children have opportunities to participate in decision making about class plans.	CP	TPKS
1.D 1.D.03	77	Teachers anticipate problematic behavior and take steps to prevent it. <i>Rate Yes if no problematic behavior is observed.</i> <i>Examples of problematic behavior: Temper tantrums, not following directions, persistent whining, conflicts with other children and adults.</i>	CO	TPKS
1.D 1.D.03	78	Show or describe one example of how you have anticipated problematic behavior and taken steps to prevent it. <i>Examples of problematic behavior: Temper tantrums, not following directions, persistent whining, conflicts with other children and adults.</i>	CP	TPKS
1.D 1.D.05	89	Teachers use narration and description of ongoing interactions to identify prosocial behaviors.	CO	TPKS
1.F 1.F.01	102	Teachers help children learn emotional regulation skills. <i>Examples of emotional regulation skills: Persisting when frustrated, gaining control of physical impulses, expressing emotions in nonharmful ways, learning about self and others.</i>	CO	TPKS
1.F 1.F.02	108	Teachers guide and support children to use language to communicate needs.	CO	TPKS
1.F 1.F.02	110	Teachers guide and support children to gain control of physical impulses.	CO	TPKS