



## Early Learning Program Accreditation

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## ELP Accreditation Updates

### A Stronger, More Accessible Approach to Accreditation

NAEYC has redesigned its accreditation system to better support early learning programs on their path to high-quality early education. The Early Learning Program Quality Assessment and Accreditation System offers a more inclusive, flexible, and streamlined model that reflects the realities of today's early learning landscape. Grounded in Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) and aligned with NAEYC's Early Learning Program Standards, this new system makes it easier for programs of all types to demonstrate and sustain quality.

This revamp builds on years of feedback from early learning programs, state education agencies, and research institutions, as well as insights from pilot participants. The result is an accreditation model that reduces complexity, improves accessibility, and provides multiple pathways for programs to engage in continuous quality improvement.

**Visit our new Quality Assessment and Accreditation webpage for more information on the new tiered system, including FAQs.**

**Read More about the New Accreditation System**

## **New System | FAQ Highlights**

**Do we need to upload our staff qualifications like we did in the previous system/portal?**

**No.** Programs are NO LONGER required to upload documentation related to each staff's education/qualification and instead will just ensure that each educator within the program is listed, with their current role and education reflected in the field options on each staff's record.

**What does ECE I, II and III mean in the new assessment items related to staff education?**

The ECE designations are from the Unifying Framework released in 2020, which are defined as:

- **ECE I** - holds a CDA or other state-recognized early entry ECE credential
- **ECE II** - holds an ECE (or related field) associate degree
- **ECE III** - holds an ECE (or related field) baccalaureate or initial master's degree

"Related field" is considered "early childhood education, early childhood special education, elementary education, or child development" or anything that includes at least 36 "early childhood related credits".

"CDA equivalency" is 12 college credits in early childhood education, child development, elementary education, and/or early childhood special education. For hours that count towards a CDA equivalency, select "Child Development Associate (CDA)" in the "Other Credentials" field within the ELP Hub Staff record.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### New System | Resource Highlight

#### Self-Assessment Tools

To support early learning programs awareness and understanding of the new system assessment items, the new **Self-Assessment Tools** include the guidance that is available within the electronic application to provide clarity on what the item language means and scoring guidance to ensure the appropriate evidence is provided to fully meet the item requirements. These files are available in Word format and can also support programs in preparing for the electronic application submission by capturing the narrative descriptions that programs will submit for each document-based assessment item.

**Check Out our Self Assessment Tools**

**Access New System Resources**

### 72-Hour Incident Reports

72-Hour Notifications are required to maintain compliance with NAEYC's few but important required practices such as lapses in supervision, child abuse or injury, or license suspensions. Within 72 hours of occurrence, Recognized and Accredited programs must report any occurrences to the NAEYC Quality Assurance Team.

Use one of the following options to submit your report:

1. Email the 72-Hour Form to [qualityassurance@naeyc.org](mailto:qualityassurance@naeyc.org). The Quality Assurance team will respond via email with the required next steps.
2. Log in to the [Early Learning Hub](#) and select Incident Report from the left hand menu. Follow the guidance at the top of the page and submit the form. The Quality Assurance team will respond via email with the required next steps, which may include submission of the 72-hour form.

**72-Hour Notification/Incident Report Form**

## Previously Accredited or Waiting on a Candidacy Site Visit?

### Accredited Before March 2025 (Legacy Accreditation System)

If your program is accredited under the previous system, here's what you need to know:

- **Programs with Valid Until through February 1, 2026** will renew under legacy system and standards.
  - For legacy system information (2022 version), the link below includes the details for programs that are waiting on a Candidate or Renewal Site Visit. The page includes links to key resources that used to be available in Torch: [Legacy System Site Visit Information](#)
- **Programs with Valid Until March 1, 2026 or later** will transition to the new system and standards at renewal.
  - For new system information, programs can use the link below to review the new Policy Handbook and Assessment Items, including other key resources available to assist with the transition: [New Quality Assessment and Accreditation System Resources & FAQs](#)

### Accredited After March 2025 (New System)

All new applications after this date will fall under the new system and the Recognition, Accreditation and Accreditation+ tiers. Visit the new [Quality Assessment and Accreditation System](#) webpage for more information on how to get started.

## Do you have feedback?

We are excited about this new system, and we look forward to your feedback on how we can make it even stronger. As we move forward, we are continuously challenging ourselves to think innovatively and to hold ourselves accountable to our own stated values around accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We thank you for all the support you have given NAEYC early learning program accreditation over the years, and for your support and engagement on the journey to launch the system into the future! To share your feedback with us, **please complete our survey.**

[Share Your Feedback](#)



## For Families

We've moved! You can now find great articles and resources for families on NAEYC.org. **Check it out!**



## Stay in touch!

Connect with us on social media, and NAEYC members can **share ideas on Hello.**

### We Love to Hear From you!

Additional questions? Feedback? Contact NAEYC ELP Accreditation staff today by emailing [accreditation.information@naeyc.org](mailto:accreditation.information@naeyc.org). You may also reach us by telephone at **800-424-2460** option 3, for Accreditation of Early Learning Programs.



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