



Provisional Accreditation FAQ

What does provisional mean?

A program granted “Provisional Accreditation” has met the requirements of NAEYC’s portfolio assessment (program portfolio, class portfolios), and is awaiting a site visit to complete classroom and program observations to complete full accreditation. If you achieve provisional accreditation based on the assessment of your portfolios, that accreditation will remain valid for up to 5 years, until we are able to conduct an observation visit to complete the assessment.

Where do I put this in the portal?

Your portfolio evidence will not go into the portal. You will receive information about a separate system called ShareFile where you will upload your digital portfolio evidence. NAEYC staff will provide you with resources to assist your access to ShareFile, and will be available by phone to answer questions. For renewal programs, you will need to access the portal to ensure that your 5th Annual Accreditation fee is completed in the portal prior to receiving a decision.

What’s the cost for provisional?

The cost for provisional accreditation is the same as for standard accreditation. Programs in the renewal process will need to complete the 5th Annual Accreditation fee before receiving a decision.

How do I upload evidence?

Once you have had a discussion with an NAEYC, if you choose the provisional accreditation option, you will receive a notification inviting your program to our secure file sharing site. You will only need to access the site when you are ready to upload your completed portfolios.

After my digital portfolio is reviewed/assessed, when will I know if I achieved provisional accreditation? (How long do I wait to hear my result/decision?)

Programs will be notified of their accreditation decision within 3 months of submitting their portfolios.

If I already have a digital portfolio, do I need to upload the documents on ShareFile? Or can I just give you access to where my digital portfolio currently lives?

In order for our assessors to view your portfolio evidence, it will need to be uploaded to ShareFile. If you need additional support accessing ShareFile, you will find resources on our website.

Will my program need to submit every classroom portfolio?

If you chose provisional accreditation, we will ask you to submit a program portfolio, plus “shared” class portfolios for each age category served in your program. For example, if you have 3 infant classes, you will submit one Classroom Portfolio representing those 3 classes.

How long does provisional accreditation last?

If you achieve provisional accreditation, you will be awarded a standard 5-year term of accreditation. However, a NAEYC assessor will visit to conduct the observational part of the accreditation assessment later, generally within a year. If your program passes that assessment, your 5-year term continues. If your program receives a Defer decision from the observation, you will no longer be accredited.

Should I use evidence for the assessment items from when we had standard operating procedures? Or should it be my most recent procedures adapted to COVID regulations?

NAEYC will accept either evidence from your pre-covid practices, or evidence from recent times. We understand programs are operating under necessary adaptations in these times, and may have had to suspend some practices.

What if I fail? Can I appeal?

NAEYC’s appeal process is available for both steps of the provisional accreditation decision process: Step 1, the decision to grant provisional accreditation based on your portfolio evidence; and Step 2, the decision to convert to full accreditation based on an observation site visit.

Can I edit after I submit?

You can begin adding evidence to your folder in our file-sharing site, and while adding evidence you can also edit or replace document files. When you have completed uploading your portfolios, you will also be asked to complete and upload a “Portfolio



Completion Checklist” confirming that your documentation is complete and it is ready for review. At that point you cannot further edit your evidence.

Will I have to redo my portfolios when it does come time for my in person visit?

No. Your portfolio ratings occur prior to the site visit. The assessor will not ask to see portfolios when they come to do the observational part of provisional.