

## Call for Applications – NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs

NAEYC's Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs serves as an important lever for supporting programs in and holding programs accountable for preparing effective early childhood educators. Almost 250 early childhood degree programs at the associate, baccalaureate and master's degree levels are accredited.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs is currently seeking an additional member. The Commission has four primary responsibilities: 1) to render accreditation decisions regarding early childhood degree programs at institutions of higher education; 2) to set the standards for the accreditation system; 3) to set the accreditation policies and processes that govern the accreditation system; and 4) to maintain the integrity and quality of the accreditation system. The Commission is a self-managing group, with a clear structure, policies, and procedures that support the accreditation decision-making process. Commission members primarily represent early childhood leaders from early childhood degree programs, and other sectors of the early childhood field. The Commission is guided by its own founding principles as well as the guidelines for strong higher education accreditation practices as defined by Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the U.S. Department of Education.

The composition of the Commission reflects NAEYC's commitment to being a high-performing, inclusive organization. The Commission is committed to assuring that its composition (1) includes individuals with a range of experience that support the mission and responsibilities of the Commission and the accreditation process; and (2) reflects the diversity of its constituency with specific attention to culture and ethnicity, language, geographic location, and gender.

The Commission is a volunteer entity, and, as such, Commissioners do not receive compensation for their service. Travel and other direct costs related to attending regular, special or committee meetings, workshops or site visits are paid by NAEYC.

**Commissioner Responsibilities:** Commissioners serve for three years and are limited to two consecutive terms. Commission members commit to attend two 3-day meetings a year at NAEYC Headquarters (typically February and June)<sup>1</sup> and to participate in online meetings (typically May and November); to actively serve as a member of at least one Commission standing committee; and to participate in accreditation orientation sessions.

The majority of a Commissioner's time is focused on reviewing accreditation cases. Preparation for Commission meetings includes review and critical assessment of programs' Self-Study Reports, Peer Review Team Reports, Written Responses to the team report, and Annual Reports. Preparing for an in-person Commission meeting may take approximately 25 hours (this includes reviewing program cases, writing draft decisions, and reviewing materials for other topics on the agenda). Post-Commission meeting work may take approximately five hours to finalize decision

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission is meeting monthly remotely through May 31, 2021 to facilitate its work in a remote environment during the pandemic and will reevaluate in the spring if meeting in-person in June 2021 is safe and viable.

reports for assigned cases. In addition, Commissioners are expected to conduct business between meetings related to their standing committee work.

Prior to Commission meetings, each Commissioner is assigned to a panel of 2-3 individuals. Each person is assigned to be the lead reviewer for 1-3 cases (approx. 4-6 prep hours per case), depending on the caseload and posts preliminary findings and recommendations prior to the start of the meeting. Panelists are expected to respond to the lead reviewer's findings and recommendations. Commissioners utilize an online platform to conduct business, including posting and responding to preliminary findings and recommendations for assigned accreditation cases. On average, it might take ~30 hours to prepare for a 3-day Commission meeting and ~15 hours to prepare for a one-day meeting.

Other responsibilities include contributing to the review and revision of accreditation policies and procedures to support the continuous improvement of the accreditation system. In addition, currently, the Commission is revising the accreditation standards to align with the recommendations in the *Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession* and the *Professional Standards and Competencies* as well as to address feedback from programs on strengths and challenges associated with the current accreditation standards.

Commissioners must have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to make high-stakes accreditation decisions and should meet the following criteria:

**Professional Criteria:** The ideal candidate has: a demonstrated commitment to the aims of early childhood teacher education at higher education institutions; an understanding of the nature of program accreditation systems, policies and procedures; a respect for the confidential, fair, and impartial nature of accreditation decisions; prior or current professional experience related to early childhood professional preparation; and knowledge of NAEYC Standards for Professional Preparation

**Personal Criteria:** Demonstrated ability to: work and make decisions in a close collegial relationship; strive for consensus within a group but take responsibility for actions based on a vote by the majority; express individual questions and concerns and hear the perspectives and opinions of others; consider information and data impartially and make rational and timely decisions; communicate decisions effectively in written decision reports; have the flexibility to leave work and focus on the Commission work for three days (for the in-person meetings); and concentrate on issues which are complex, challenging and sometimes tedious. In addition, the individual must have the capacity to read large volumes of accreditation reports in a condensed period of time. Typically, Commissioners have approximately 3-4 weeks to review their assigned lead and panel cases and create draft accreditation decisions prior to Commission meetings. Cases involving initial or renewal accreditation can run 150-200 pages a case (Self-Study Report, Peer Review Report and the program's Written Response), and cases involving programs on conditions can run 30-60 pages a case (Annual Report and sometimes the program's previous Commission Feedback Letters and Accreditation Decision Reports). Additionally, Commissioners are expected to be familiar with every case on the meeting agenda prior to meetings.

**Additional Areas of Consideration:** Given this pivotal moment in the accreditation system as it revises its accreditation standards and navigates the pandemic, the Commission is prioritizing applicants who are current or former peer reviewers in the accreditation system. In addition, in keeping with the Commission's commitment to maintaining a diverse composition that is representative of the programs it serves, it is particularly seeking individuals who represent at least one of the following areas:

- Has a research-oriented professional background
- Serves in an institution in the western or southern region of the U.S.
- Is a person of non-Caucasian background
- Is male

**Commission Term:** January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023

**Upcoming Commission Meeting Dates:**

- January 29, 2021, 3:00-5:00 p.m. EST (virtual)
- February 24-26, 2021, 1:00-5:30 p.m. (virtual)
- March 26, 2021, 2:00-5:00 p.m. EST (virtual)
- April 20, 2021, 2:00-5:00 p.m. EST (virtual)
- May 18, 2021, 2:00-5:00 p.m. (virtual)
- June 23-25, 2021 (Washington, DC)

**How to Apply:** Interested individuals should submit their resume and a brief statement describing their interest and qualifications (no more than 500 words) to [mharrill@naeyc.org](mailto:mharrill@naeyc.org) by **Oct 1, 2020**. Applicants are encouraged to review the [Accreditation Handbook](#) for the system and particularly Appendix B: Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality, and Code of Conduct Policies. Applicants should also review the attached Commission Code of Ethics and Commission Culture Commitments.

For questions, please contact Mary Harrill at [mharrill@naeyc.org](mailto:mharrill@naeyc.org) or (202) 350-8834.

## NAEYC Commission Code of Ethics

Trust is the foundation of effective Commission work. As an organization, NAEYC seeks to develop a culture of trust, which is essential for our work to have lasting value. Trustworthiness means that we do what we say we will do, that we are honest, and that we strive for accuracy in the information we share.

Trustworthiness is based on *character*, the positive qualities that we possess, and on *competence*, what we can do. To be effective, Commission members must have both *character and competence*.

With trust at the foundation of our work, we have established this code of ethics to guide our work as Commissioners.

As a Commission member I will:

- (a) Fully and enthusiastically support the NAEYC vision, mission, core values and beliefs, strategic priorities and all other Board-adopted policies and fully and enthusiastically support the Higher Education for Early Childhood Accreditation Commission's vision, mission, core values, beliefs and strategic priorities
- (b) Actively participate in, and contribute to, an open, professional culture by respecting and seeking to understand diverse points of view.
- (c) Work to assure that the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system continues to grow as a high-performing, inclusive organization of groups and individuals and using this framework in my Commission deliberations by:
  - i. considering the evidence that diverse points of view are embedded in the process and results of any initiative
  - ii. and considering the impact of any decision on multiple dimensions of diversity, including but not limited to race/ethnicity, culture/language, class, gender, sexual orientation, differing abilities/special needs professional role, program type, education level, age, and geography, and
  - iii. Considering the impact on current staff and leadership.
- (d) Promote the work of the NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system to the field and to the public at large, and take ownership of the work we do together.
- (e) Embrace and respect ideas, insights, and concerns that evolve out of the values of diverse cultures and belief systems.
- (f) Represent and serve the needs of NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs system, *not* a particular geographic region, organization, or constituency.

In my work on the Commission I will:

- (g) adhere to all Commission policies, including but not limited to policies on confidentiality, conflict of interest and inurement prohibition, and anti-corruption.
- (h) Respect and support all decisions of the Commission.
- (i) Work with the other Commission members and members of the staff in the spirit of harmony and cooperation.
- (j) Participate actively in Commission meetings, Commission activities and on committees, and follow through on my Commission commitments, tasks, and responsibilities.
- (k) Make the necessary commitment of time and diligence to fulfill my Commission responsibilities.
- (l) Encourage and participate in open, inclusive, and respectful dialogue regarding all Commission issues, concerns, and discussions.
- (m) Recognize that since the Commission consists of individuals with differing perspectives, debate is necessary and encouraged.
- (n) Be well informed about developments and issues that may come before the Commission.
- (o) Work to learn more about my responsibilities and to improve my effectiveness.
- (p) Keep confidential any proceedings of the Commission that are not yet ready for public dissemination, except where disclosure is required by law.
- (q) Have the courage to offer a minority opinion when necessary and be willing always to listen to, respect, and consider opinions offered by others.
- (r) Speak directly to individuals involved about issues of concern regarding those individuals
- (s) Handle concerns or complaints in a professional manner – directing operational concerns to NAEYC; and directing concerns about policy to the Chair of the Commission.
- (t) Call to the attention of the Commission any issues that may have an adverse impact on NAEYC, the accreditation system or those the Commission serves.
- (u) Act impartially and not seek preferential treatment from or for any organization or individual inside or outside NAEYC.
- (v) During Commission discussions, disclose any potential conflict of interest related to the issue under discussion and exclude oneself from Commission decisions where involved in a conflict of interest.
- (w) Not use Commission position for personal advantage or the advantage of friends or relatives.

Finally, I understand that I must bring any violations of this Code of Ethics, my own or those of another Commission member, to the attention of NAEYC and the Chair of the Commission and that in doing so I am helping to assure the strength and integrity of NAEYC and safeguard the field of early childhood education.

## Commission Culture Commitments

The Commission and Accreditation Handbooks provide significant guidance on the accreditation process as well as the policies and practices that undergird the system and the Commission's work. In addition, we recognize that as an organization we have a distinct culture that is sometimes visible and sometimes invisible. In the spirit of transparency, following is an attempt to make visible key cultural values and practices of the Commission.

- We value maintaining unity and trust in our work. This means:
  - We respect that each of us brings significant professional experiences that can inform and advance our shared understanding of the accreditation standards, early childhood programs, and the accreditation system.
  - We welcome and actively solicit each member's perspectives
  - We fulfill our responsibilities and meet deadlines related to our work.
    - If we are unable to meet a deadline, we are up front with our colleagues and work to fulfill our assignments as soon as possible after the deadline
  - We appreciate differing perspectives on issues and cases that come before the Commission and recognize that there may be times when we disagree on a decision
  - To the extent possible, though, we work toward reaching consensus in making accreditation decisions
- We expect that each of us will come prepared to the Commission meeting. This means:
  - We have submitted our draft recommendations for accreditation cases in Basecamp by the deadline set by the Chair
  - We have reviewed and provided feedback on our panel's cases in Basecamp by the deadline set by the Chair
  - For our panel's assigned cases, we have identified the questions, concerns or other issues that we need to address when our panel meets in-person at the Commission meeting.
  - For virtual meetings, prior to the Commission meeting, our panel has resolved any questions, concerns or issues with our assigned cases or identified issues that need the full Commission's consideration
  - We are familiar with all of the cases on the Commission agenda
    - We have read the Decision Guides for each case
    - For cases where there are significant questions/concerns, as indicated in their Basecamp spaces, we have reviewed their Self-Study Reports, Peer Review Reports and Written Responses as needed.
  - We bring a laptop to the meeting or printed copies of all materials related to accreditation cases so that we have access to all documents that can inform accreditation decisions.
- We foster a collegial atmosphere to facilitate our work. This means:
  - We build relationships with each other and value opportunities to socialize outside of the meeting
    - The Commission Dinner at the in-person meeting is an important opportunity to build our relationships. We make all attempts to attend the dinner.
  - We recognize that being present at meetings is critical to our work and to building relationships with each other.

- We commit to attend all of every Commission meeting, both online and in person.
- We identify when virtual participation at an in-person meeting can be conducive to or challenging to conducting Commission business
- We participate fully while we are at the meetings.
  - We manage our email and phone calls during the breaks in the meeting
  - We focus on the case that is under discussion
- The Commission and staff work in partnership to support each other