



**Early Childhood Higher  
Education Programs**

## **An Update on the NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards**

*[The message below was drafted for the April newsletter prior to the President's **Executive Order** on Higher Education Accreditation on April 23, 2025, and is in response to inquiries from programs in the accreditation community seeking clarity about how recent federal/state actions might impact the NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards. Notably, the Executive Order issued is focused on accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. NAEYC's Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs does not have a connection to federal financial aid or other sources of federal funding for institutions; for this reason, our accreditation system has historically been (and remains) outside the scope of the Department of Education's recognition of accrediting bodies. Nonetheless, we are closely monitoring federal actions impacting higher education and accreditation and engaging with the higher education community.]*

The NAEYC higher education accreditation standards remain—and in their forthcoming minor updates will remain—committed to the evidence-based guidelines of the early childhood education (ECE) profession as articulated in NAEYC’s position statements. These foundational guidelines are drawn from a deep research base and represent the ECE profession’s consensus on the essential knowledge, practice, and ethical responsibilities of early childhood educators. NAEYC stands with **many other professions** in elevating professional and cultural competence as essential for effective practice<sup>1</sup>.

The NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs recognizes that recent federal and state actions related to how higher education can address diversity, equity, and inclusion may be impacting ECE higher education programs. The accreditation standards have always served as a way for ECE programs to show how, in their unique contexts, they are preparing ECE professionals who can effectively support the development and learning of each and every young child. This remains the focus, not how programs use specific words/phrases that may be under federal/state scrutiny. Programs can and should describe in their Self-Study Reports and Interim Reports how the current federal/state policy landscape informs how they are implementing the accreditation standards. The accreditation standards are intended to be responsive to a multitude of institutional, community, and policy contexts. Peer reviewers and Commissioners take all of this into consideration when reviewing programs.

As shared in previous communications, the Commission is making minor updates to the accreditation standards to streamline some of the indicators within the standards and provide further clarification about the standards in the guidance that accompanies each standard. These revisions are drawn from feedback from programs, peer reviewers, and the Commission’s review of programs over multiple years as programs have implemented the 2021 accreditation standards. Draft revised standards were shared with the accreditation community in 2024 for public comment. We look forward to sharing the updated standards with you later this spring. To learn more about the standards and revisions, **[click here](#)**. If you have questions or have information you want to share about how your institution is navigating federal/state actions impacting higher education, including accreditation, or if you have suggestions for how we can be supportive, please email Mary Harrill (Senior Director, Higher Education) at **[mharrill@naeyc.org](mailto:mharrill@naeyc.org)**.

<sup>1</sup> The Commission is a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors which crafted the statement on professional and cultural competence that is linked in this sentence. ASPA is an association of organizations that evaluate the quality of programs in colleges and universities for more than 100 different professions and specialized disciplines – from nursing to architecture, and physical therapy to engineering.

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## Accreditation Report and Annual Fee Due Date Reminders

Programs preparing to submit a renewal Self-Study Report this spring, please note that the submission deadline is **May 31**. Programs are encouraged to schedule a completeness review call with our Director of Accreditation Services, Pamela Ehrenberg, as early as the report is ready to review and at least two weeks prior to their submission deadline. To schedule a call, please email [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org) with your top 3 preferences for a date/time, and we will reach out to confirm your scheduled time. Please note that the purpose of this call is to ensure all required components are included and the report is ready to be submitted, as well as to review program questions and past Commission feedback if applicable; however, staff are unable to review Key Assessments for alignment to standards or other assessment quality indicators.

Annual fee invoices for all accredited programs were sent out in March and April. If your program has not yet submitted payment and/or has not received an invoice, please email us at [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org).

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## Spring 2025 Accreditation Decisions

The Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs is pleased to announce that renewed accreditation has been granted to programs at ten institutions during the Spring 2025 Commission meeting. For more information and to see a list of these programs, please [see our latest press release](#).

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# Higher Ed Accreditation Commission Welcomes New Members

The NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Commission is responsible for setting the standards and policies that guide the accreditation system and for making accreditation decisions. The Commission is pleased to announce that four new Commissioners have been appointed with terms that began January 1.

- **Michael Abel**, University of Missouri-Kansas City, MO
- **Cindy Shackelford**, Jefferson State Community College, AL
- **Lisa Stooksberry**, Public Member
- **R. Taylor**, Chemeketa Community College, OR

The Commission thanks outgoing Commissioners Nancy Beaver, Benita Flores-Muñoz, Donna Gollnick, and Bweikia Steen for their invaluable service. You can find a list of all of the current Commission members [here](#).

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## Webinar: Introduction to NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation

Do you have faculty friends at another institution that may be interested in pursuing NAEYC higher ed accreditation? Are you new to your role within an already-accredited program? Please consider registering for and/or sharing with a friend our upcoming overview webinar on **May 20 at 2:00 - 3:00 PM EST**. [Sign up to join us here](#).

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## Meet a Commissioner: Dr. Wei Qiu, Chair-Elect



Dr. Wei Qiu is a professor in the Child and Family Studies Department and Director of the Graduate Studies in Education Program at Weber State University. She teaches in the A.A.S. Early Childhood, B.S. Early Childhood, and B.S. Early Childhood Education programs, all of which are accredited by the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs. Dr. Qiu has over 20 years of teaching experience in higher education. Her current research interests focus on the impact of early parent-child interactions on the development of young children in different social and cultural contexts. She and her husband live in Ogden, Utah with their two boys. They enjoy traveling and exploring the local foods, cultures, and histories. Dr. Qiu will take on the role of Commission Chair beginning in January 2026.

We asked Dr. Qiu what advice she would give to programs pursuing NAEYC higher ed accreditation for the first time. Her response: “You are not alone with your challenges and obstacles. The accreditation process provides you an opportunity to come up with a plan to address these issues and to highlight and build on the many strengths in your program.”

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## Accreditation Resources

As a reminder, the [Accreditation Resource Library](#) has been revamped and relocated. We encourage programs to regularly utilize this library to access resources such as report templates, extension request forms, on-demand training, guidance documents, webinar recordings and more. Primary and secondary contacts of accredited programs and those in self-study were sent access to the new resource library last fall. Please reach out to [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org) if you did not receive this information or have

misplaced it. The previous version of the resource library housed in Basecamp will be deactivated in June (although Peer Reviewers and Commissioners will continue to utilize Basecamp for their review work, so if this is you, don't delete your account!).

Another helpful resource to bookmark is [our directory of accredited programs](#), where program contacts can look up their next expected report submission and due date as well as current accreditation term dates. Notice something in your program's directory record that doesn't match your records or recollection? Please reach out to us at [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org).

Want more frequent updates that are relevant to early childhood higher education faculty engaged in accreditation? Check out [our blog-like feed of updates we call The Latest](#).

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## Professional Standards and Competencies Resource Library Now Available

We are excited to share with our higher ed accreditation community that NAEYC has now launched the [Professional Standards and Competencies Online Resource Library](#), a searchable database that curates a variety of free, accessible, quality resources (e.g., articles, videos, blog posts, books, book chapters, modules, trainings) that are related to and align with the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*. It is designed to support higher education faculty teaching early childhood education related coursework and those in the field providing training, mentoring and other professional development and technical assistance to early childhood educators serving our profession.

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## Accreditation Policy Update Reminder

Beginning with the Spring 2025 report cycle, programs preparing Response-to-Conditions reports (Year 1, 2, or 3) for conditions cited under the 2010 standards must now align key assessments to the [2020 Professional Standards and Competencies](#) rather than the 2010 standards, submit six

key assessments rather than five (for key assessment conditions), and submit an updated learning opportunities chart (for programs that have key assessment alignment conditions). Please reach out to staff at [highered@naeyc.org](mailto:highered@naeyc.org) with any questions.

To obtain the most benefit from the Commission review of *Year 4 Interim Reports*, programs submitting these reports are now also required to align learning opportunities and key assessments with one of the *Professional Standards and Competencies* (it is OK if candidate performance data were collected from versions of assessments previously aligned with the 2010 standards).

All programs submitting first-time or renewal Self-Study Reports must use the [2021 Higher Education Accreditation standards](#), including alignment of key assessments and learning opportunities to the *Professional Standards and Competencies*.

Programs anticipating challenges submitting reports by their scheduled deadline may submit an extension request form in accordance with the extension policies found on pp.41-44 of the [Accreditation Handbook](#).

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## Contact Updates and Substantive Changes

Has your program undergone recent changes that would qualify as a substantive change as defined in the Accreditation Handbook? Has the primary, secondary, or leadership contact in your program changed since your last report submission? As a reminder, these changes should be reported via the [Substantive Change](#) and/or [Contact Update](#) forms found in the Accreditation Resource Library. Thank you for helping to ensure that our records are kept up to date and that all stakeholders are able to receive relevant communications.

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## Public Transparency Requirements

As part of the NAEYC higher education accreditation system's recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), we are required to ensure accredited programs are meeting requirements around public transparency. As a reminder, all accredited programs must publish on their website (in an easily located place) the following information:

- An accurate and complete accreditation statement, as found in the Accreditation Handbook, including the full program name and accreditation term
- Current and accurate program outcome data as reported in Interim and Self-Study Report templates (program completion rates, etc.)
- Current and accurate performance data on candidate learning objectives (typically programs use the *Professional Standards and Competencies* as their objectives, and use data from Key Assessments reported by standard and disaggregated by program if multiple programs are accredited)

For additional support on meeting this requirement, accredited programs may access the new *On-Demand Training Module: Accreditation Requirements for Program Websites* available in the Accreditation Online Resource Library.



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