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NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs Recognized for Quality by Key Council

WASHINGTON (May 12, 2021)—The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs is pleased to announce that it has been granted recognition by the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#) (CHEA). Recognition conveys that an accreditor has demonstrated evidence of meeting the standards of quality developed by CHEA and serves as a mechanism for assuring the public that the accreditor is adequately qualified to conduct reviews of higher education program quality.

Over the course of several years, the NAEYC Commission engaged in a self-study process to determine the extent to which the accreditation system already was meeting the level of quality described in CHEA standards and the ways in which the system needed to make adjustments and improvements. This self-study process resulted in accreditation policy changes, led to the creation of additional resources for programs, and culminated in a narrative report presented to CHEA for evaluation and in a virtual visit by a CHEA-appointed observer.

"As an accrediting body, the Commission has long recognized the value of self-study and external evaluation," said Commission Chair Bridget Murray. "Just as higher education programs that pursue accreditation are committed to continuous growth and improvement, so too is the accreditation system. We are thrilled and honored to be recognized by CHEA for our ongoing efforts to operate a high-quality accreditation system for early childhood degree programs across the country."

Early childhood professional preparation programs that seek and achieve NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation serve a wide range of students and prepare early childhood educators for a variety of early learning settings. Achieving CHEA recognition ensures that the Commission is meeting its obligation to the field to provide a reliable and transparent quality assurance system while simultaneously taking programs' unique and varying missions into account.

"Connecticut is proud that 14 of our institutions of higher education have NAEYC-accredited early childhood degree programs. This contributes to ECE employers' and the public's confidence that graduates of these programs are prepared with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively support the young children in our state," said Deb Adams, education consultant in the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. "CHEA's recognition of NAEYC's higher education accreditation system validates our confidence, as members of the early childhood field, that NAEYC accreditation is meaningful and supports quality preparation of early childhood educators."



To ensure the quality of early childhood education professional preparation programs and to align with other professions, the [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#) calls for professional preparation programs to be accredited by professional early childhood accreditation bodies. “With this meaningful, objective mark of quality, NAEYC’s higher education accreditation system is well-positioned to serve in this role,” said Rhian Evans Allvin, NAEYC’s CEO, “and to partner with states and institutions of higher education to support program reviews of early childhood education degree programs.”

“Alabama is committed to advancing a high-quality ECE workforce. As part of this commitment we are making significant investments in the early childhood higher education programs in our state,” said Dr. Barbara Cooper, Secretary of Early Childhood Education of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. “This includes supporting programs in pursuing and maintaining NAEYC accreditation as we believe the accreditation standards and the process of accreditation strengthen our programs and demonstrate that our programs are aligned to the ECE profession’s guidelines. CHEA’s recognition of NAEYC’s accreditation system confirms our belief that NAEYC accreditation is a critical lever for ensuring that early childhood educators in our state are equipped to meet the needs of each and every young child. Investing in the ECE workforce is an economic plan that has lifelong implications for our youngest citizens.”

The Commission’s term of recognition is seven years, during which an interim report will be submitted to CHEA at the midpoint of the term to provide organizational updates and evidence of continued compliance with CHEA standards.

About NAEYC’s Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation System: The [NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs](#) awards accreditation to early childhood associate, baccalaureate, and master’s degree programs that demonstrate evidence of excellence by meeting the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards. The accreditation process provides a framework for self-study, external evaluation, and improvement in the quality of early childhood preparation programs. The NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation system is committed to continuous improvement and is guided by the [Code of Good Practice](#) set forth by the [Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors \(ASPA\)](#), of which NAEYC is a member. There are currently 187 institutions in 40 states with NAEYC-accredited programs.

For more information on the NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation system, visit the [NAEYC website](#). For more information on CHEA recognition, please visit the [CHEA website](#).

Founded in 1926, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. Together with our nearly 60,000 members and 52 Affiliates, we advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

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