System-Wide Evidence Process Information for Large System Users

The System-Wide Evidence Process is designed to reduce preparation time for NAEYC Early Learning Quality Assessment and Accreditation among large system users (LSUs) that have shared policies and procedures. When a system addresses eligible assessment items at the organization level, those items can be reviewed and rated once by NAEYC and applied across all participating programs in that system. LSUs must renew their System-Wide Evidence application each year. Participation includes an annual cost.

Based on structure, governance and application of policies, some LSUs may not be able to meet all system-wide eligible assessment items.

LSUs are not required to submit evidence for all system-wide eligible assessment items. If evidence is not submitted for any eligible item, or the final score is "unmet" for any item, affiliated programs will have an opportunity to respond to the item within the application(s) they complete.

For LSUs using the System-Wide Evidence Process, the goal is to both reduce duplication and maintain rigor by ensuring that policies and procedures, whether in the main handbook or supplemental documents, are not only documented but actively communicated, understood, and practiced at the program level.

Benefits for Large System Users

Reduced Local Program Burden	Streamlined Application Experience	Annual Reporting
Submit evidence at the organization level for: - 22 of 40 Recognition items - 54 of 200 Accreditation items	Local programs no longer have to upload system-wide evidence items in their own application journey.	Receive a system-wide evidence report summarizing ratings for submitted items.

Responsibilities for Participating Programs

Even with system-wide ratings applied, each program remains responsible for:

- Maintaining program-specific evidence for items not covered by the system-wide submission.

Guidance for Family & Staff Handbook Evidence

When responding to assessment items related to family and staff handbooks:

- If the policy or procedure is included in the main handbook:

Upload the handbook section(s) that directly addresses the requirement.

- If the policy or procedure lives outside the main handbook:

  - You may upload supplemental files (e.g., standalone policies, onboarding checklists, or orientation guides).

  - The uploaded evidence must include context that explains:

    - How staff or families are introduced to the information (e.g., during orientation, through annual training, onboarding packets).

    - How staff or families are held accountable for following it.

    - How staff or families can hold the program accountable if the policy is not followed (e.g. how a family knows what the program's protocols and expectations are around diaper changing policy, so they can follow up if they suspect it is not being followed).

  - E.g. A.6.05: The staff handbook includes a diapering policy which includes instructions for staff to check for and change wet or soiled diapers when children wake up from naps.

    - This may not live in the staff handbook but consider what is available that provides staff with the expectations they should be following on a daily basis around handwashing and diaper change policies.

- If the evidence is part of a larger file or system that the program prefers not to upload in full:

  - It is acceptable to submit only the relevant excerpt—as long as it includes sufficient context to demonstrate its source and use.

Example Context Statement:

"This policy is included in the New Hire Orientation Packet for all teaching staff and reviewed during the first week of employment. Families receive the policy during enrollment and sign an acknowledgment form confirming receipt. Annual reminders are issued via email and family newsletters."

Rationale & Intent of the Context Requirement

Providing context is critical because:

1. **Demonstrates Implementation, Not Just Existence:**

   A written policy alone does not confirm that it is actively used in daily practice.

2. **Ensures Accountability:**

   When staff and families are informed and understand expectations, they can be held accountable for following them—and can also hold the program accountable.

3. **Supports Quality & Consistency Across the System:**

   Consistent onboarding and communication across programs strengthen alignment with NAEYC standards.

4. **Enhances Assessor Confidence:**

   Clear explanation of how policies are introduced, reinforced, and monitored helps assessors verify full implementation during evidence review.

Guidance for Evidence When Programs Use Different Local Systems

In some assessment items, particularly those related to communication with families or staff, local programs within a large system may have autonomy to choose the tools or platforms they use.

When preparing evidence for these items:

- Focus on the Process, Not the Product

  - Describe how the communication occurs, and the type of system used (e.g., "a secure, password-protected family communication app" or "a CRM system that allows direct messaging and document sharing").

  - Do not name the specific product or vendor unless it is essential to the policy requirement.

- Include How Families Are Oriented to the Communication Method

  - Explain when and how families learn about the communication system (e.g., "introduced during enrollment orientation" or "included in the family handbook section on communication expectations").

  - Include accountability steps—how the program ensures families have access, know how to use the system, and receive important updates.

Example Evidence Statement (Generic):

"The program uses a secure family communication platform to share daily updates, photos, and important announcements. Families are introduced to this platform during enrollment, receive written instructions on how to access it, and are offered assistance as needed to ensure they are able to participate fully in ongoing communication."

Example Evidence Statement (Not Recommended):

"The program uses Brightwheel to share daily updates with families."

Rationale for Generic Descriptions:

1. Keeps Evidence Evergreen: Avoids needing to resubmit if a program changes vendors.

2. Ensures Flexibility Across Programs: Accommodates different tools while meeting the same standard.

3. Focuses on Implementation: Keeps the emphasis on how the process meets NAEYC's intent, not on brand names.