

# 100 Years of NAEYC

## Championing Young Children and Early Childhood Educators Since 1926

In 1926, a small group of educators came together believing that young children deserved better—and that the people who care for them deserved recognition, standards, and a collective voice. That belief became NAEYC. A century later, the National Association for the Education of Young Children is the nation’s largest early childhood education association—creating the field’s first professional standards, first accreditation system, and first code of ethics. Today, NAEYC includes 50 affiliates in nearly every state, accredits more than 6,500 early learning programs serving approximately 500,000 children and nearly 180 higher education programs, and reaches hundreds of thousands of educators.

## A Century of Milestones

- 1926** : Founded as National Association for Nursery Education (NANE)
- 1929** : Published “Minimum Essentials for Nursery Education”—first professional standards for the field
- 1930s-40s** : Helped shape the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) nursery schools and Lanham Act childcare—the only period of near-universal federal childcare in U.S. history
- 1945** : Flagship journal launched (originally *Bulletin of NANE; Young Children* since 1964)
- 1964** : Renamed NAEYC to reflect broader focus on children birth through age 8
- 1965** : Head Start launched; NAEYC involved from the start
- 1971** : Took Week of the Young Child national, building on affiliate events in California and Chicago—now in its 55th year
- 1970s** : Collaborated to develop Child Development Associate (CDA) credential—more than 1 million credentials issued since inception
- 1985** : Launched accreditation—first voluntary national quality system for early learning programs
- 1987** : Published “Developmentally Appropriate Practice” (DAP)—widely recognized as the standard for quality practice in early childhood education
- 1989** : Adopted “Code of Ethical Conduct”—the field’s first professional code of ethics
- 2006** : Launched higher education accreditation to improve programs shaping the next generation of the ECE workforce
- 2017** : Launched Power to the Profession—a multi-year initiative with 15 national organizations and 11,000+ educators that resulted in the *Unifying Framework for Early Childhood Education Profession*
- 2019** : Published “Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education”—a foundational commitment to confronting bias and ensuring equitable learning opportunities
- 2020** : Published the “Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators”—defining for the first time what all early childhood educators should know and be able to do, regardless of state or setting
- 2026** : Centennial—100 years of championing early childhood education