

Comparison of Accreditation (NAEYC, NAA, NAFCC) and Credential (CDA) Systems

	NAEYC	NAA	NAFCC	CDA
General Characteristics & Organization				
Areas of Focus	Standards (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Curriculum • Teaching Assessment of Child Progress • Health • Teachers • Families • Community relationships • Physical Environment • Leadership & Management 	Categories (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Relationships • Indoor Environment • Outdoor Environment • Activities • Safety, Health & Nutrition • Administration 	Quality Standards Content Areas (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Environment • Development Learning Activities • Safety & health • Professional & Business Practices 	Competency Goals (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment • Advance physical and intellectual competence • Support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance • Establish positive and productive relationships with families • Ensure well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs • Maintain commitment to professionalism
Organizational Structure	Standards (10) Topic areas define key ideas within standard Criteria (approx. 400) Identify performance expectations. They are identified by age strand or universal.	Categories (6) Keys (36) Standards (144) Each key includes 4 Standards.	Quality Standards Content Areas (5) Each content area includes Standards related to that topic. Specific standards have been identified as mandatory for high quality care. Standards are written to be inclusive of all ages. There are a total of 289 standards.	Competency Standards are divided into Six Competency Goals – statements of a general purpose of goal for caregiver behavior. Goals are further defined into 13 Functional Areas that describe major tasks or functions that a caregiver must complete to carry out the Competency Goal.
Requirements for Achievement	Program must meet all 10 Program Standards by performing 80% of criteria related to each standard including a small number of required criteria and minimum requirements for teaching staff qualifications.	Program meets minimum rating requirements in “weighed” keys and an average of 9 or higher in all “non-weighed” keys.	Providers must meet all of the mandatory items and 90% of the rest of the standards in each area.	Candidate must show competence in all 13 functional Areas throughout entire assessment.

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The Process				
Preparation for On-Site Visit		Steps 1-3: Purchase Program Improvement materials, the first 3 steps of a seven-step process.	Application Phase: Provider submits application.	
	Step 1: Enroll in Self-Study	Begin Self Study; materials are included in Step 2 of the process.	Self Study Phase: NAFCC mails Self Study materials after receipt of application package. Provider is now referred to as an Accreditation Candidate. Candidates must be in self study at least 2 months and may remain in self study up to 2 years.	Training: Candidate completes 120 clock hours of formal ECE training based on 8 subject areas and meets eligibility and documentation criteria.
	Step 2: Becoming an Applicant Submit <i>Application and Notification of Intent</i> to submit candidacy materials	Step 4: Submit <i>Letter of Intent</i> 60 to 90 days prior to application submission.	Observation Phase: When a candidate determines that she/he has completed self study, she/he submits a <i>Request for Observation</i> to NAFCC.	Documentation Collection: Candidate selects an Advisor who observes Candidate's performance with children and families and completes the <i>Advisor Observation Instrument</i> . Candidate completes a <i>Professional Resource File</i> and collects <i>Parent Opinion Questionnaires</i> .
	Step 3: Becoming a Candidate Submit candidacy materials, including <i>program self assessment report</i>	Step 5: <i>Submit Program Application</i>	Candidate submits current license, registration or certification, verification of required training, documentation of favorable criminal background review, current first aid and CPR documentation, NAFCC TB screening form and NAFCC health assessment form with the <i>Request for Observation</i> .	Application: Candidate submits <i>Direct Assessment Application</i> or <i>Home Visitor Assessment Application</i> to Council to request <i>Verification Visit</i> , along with proof of completion of 120 clock hours.
On-Site Visit	Step 4: Meeting the Program Standards Assessor(s) assess program quality using process that includes classroom & program observations; staff & family surveys; portfolios of classroom & program evidence; review of documents.	Step 6: Endorser team (2) visits program to observe whether program meets 144 standards, which are separated into 36 keys in six categories. There are four standards per key.	Observer visits to document the program, review records & conduct an interview with provider. After completing the observation, the observer submits the self-certified standards and the parent surveys to NAFCC.	Verification Visit: Council Representative conducts Verification Visit and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administers a written exam • Reviews documentation • Conducts an Oral Interview

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The Process (continued)				
Outcome of On-Site Visit	Assessors prepare standardized report of assessment results and send it to NAEYC Academy.	Endorsers make a recommendation to NAA based on the results from the Endorsement Visit.	Accreditation staff compiles and reviews materials from observer and from candidate.	Council Representative collects all documentation from Candidate (except Professional Resource File) and sends it to the Council, along with the written exam and interview.
Decision making process	NAEYC Academy staff reviews materials to ensure procedural accuracy. Accreditation decisions finalized by the Council on NAEYC Accreditation.	NAA reviews materials to ensure procedural accuracy and makes final decision, whether to accredit or defer program.	Decision Phase: After staff review, materials are submitted to the Accreditation Commission for final review and decision.	Credentialing: Council staff reviews all presented evidence to ensure compliance, procedural accuracy and determine Candidate's competence. The Council makes the final decision.
After Accreditation or Certification				
Term Length	5 Years	4 years	3 years	3 Years first time, then renewal every 5 years
Reporting required during term	<i>Annual Report</i> submitted each year	Step 7: <i>Interim Report</i> and Statement of Continual Compliance submitted each year	Currently, there is no required reporting during the term of accreditation. The NAFCC Accreditation Council is reviewing the system and additional reporting requirements may be included as part of the process.	CDAs prepare for renewal (ex. continuing education course work, update First Aid, direct experiences with children, etc.), but no reporting to the Council is required until Renewal time.
Renewal	Reaccreditation (process same as for Initial)	Reaccreditation (process same as for initial)	Reaccreditation (process same as for initial)	Renewal process is different from original. Application must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid Certification • Recommendation Letter • Experience with children in the last 12 months (80 hours) • 3 Credits or 4.5 CEUs • Membership with a local or national ECE organization.

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On-Site Visitor Information				
Title(s)	Assessor	Endorser	Observer	Advisor Council Representative
On-Site Visitor Training	3-5 day Initial training and mandatory ongoing training focused on procedures and criteria.	2 and ½ day Initial training at a location based on sponsoring agency; Endorser must take “refresher” course every two years.	2 day training where observers demonstrate skills in observation and documentation. Must demonstrate familiarity with family child care environments. Observers are encouraged to attend Observer Refresher Training every 3 years and may be required to re-attend Observer Training depending on performance.	<p>Advisor: The Council offers non-mandatory training sessions at conferences, and on-going telephone technical assistance supported by Council staff.</p> <p>Council Representative: training has 3 phases: Pre-training; 1 day training on-site; and post training exercise. Representatives are required to attend a Refresher session every other year.</p>
Details of On-Site Visit	Determined by program size; most visits are 1-2 Assessors for 1 day, with 2 nd day for larger programs.	A team of 2 Endorsers visits each site; visit covers a 24-hour period over two days.	1 Observer spends at least 4 hours observing program, takes a 1 hours break to prepare, then interviews provider for 1-1.5 hours.	Advisor completes observation(s) in one or several visits; Council Representative conducts Verification Visit, usually in one day.