

# ***National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation Information***

## **What is NAFCC Accreditation?**

Accreditation is a process many different industries use to identify exemplary practices in that particular field. Accreditation is both a status and a process. As a status, accreditation provides public notification that an institution or program meets standards of quality set forth by an accrediting agency. As a process, accreditation reflects the fact that in achieving recognition by the accrediting agency, the institution or program is committed to self-study and external review by one's peers in seeking not only to meet standards but to continuously seek ways in which to enhance the quality of the services provided.

NAFCC sponsors the only nationally recognized accreditation system designed specifically for family child care providers. This system was designed by hundreds of providers, parents, and early care and education experts in an effort to create a quality indicator for family child care programs across the country.

NAFCC Accreditation is recognized as the highest indicator that a family child care program is a quality environment. In states where Quality Rating Systems have been implemented, NAFCC Accreditation is often the "top" level in the rating system.

NAFCC Accreditation is awarded to family child care providers who meet the eligibility requirements and the Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation. Accreditation reflects a high level of quality through a process that examines all aspects of the family child care program, i.e. relationships, the environment, developmental learning activities, safety and health, and professional and business practices. Once family child care providers become accredited, they agree to abide by the standards set forth and to be measured against those standards, with periodic integrity and compliance reviews. There are over 2100 NAFCC Accredited providers throughout the United States and in other locations worldwide where military family child care professionals operate.

## ***NAFCC Accreditation Frequently Asked Questions***

### **What happens if my accreditation application is not complete when I send it to NAFCC?**

The application must be completely filled out and include the application fee, current membership (if applicable), and all required documentation. If the application is incomplete, the application and all documentation will be returned to the candidate. The candidate has 60 days to re-submit a complete application and application re-instatement fee. If the candidate is unable to submit a complete application within that timeframe, the process starts over with a new application fee. Candidates should confirm that they have a complete application before submitting it to NAFCC.

### **When a provider moves to a new address, does his/her accreditation transfer to the new location?**

The provider must complete an updated Self-Observation and mail it to NAFCC with a copy of the new license to operate at the new address and transfer fee (see fees). An observer visit is not required. Upon review and approval, NAFCC mails a replacement Certificate of Accreditation to the provider reflecting the new business address. Accreditation dates on the certificate remain the same. If not approved, the provider is notified of necessary corrective actions. Contact NAFCC for a Self-Observation workbook at [accreditation@nafcc.org](mailto:accreditation@nafcc.org).

## **What is the difference between a co-provider, an assistant, and a substitute?**

NAFCC Accreditation allows providers to complete accreditation as co-providers. Co-providers are two providers who share equally in the decision making and responsibility. Both providers must meet all eligibility requirements and submit all provider documentation. Each co-provider must be on site and actively involved with children at least 60% of the time. Both co-providers are scored on all standards during the observation visit and both participate in the interview. Membership fees apply to both providers and a co-provider fee is due with the accreditation application.

An assistant to the provider works with and under the supervision of the provider. An assistant must be age 16 or older. The assistant is not left in charge of the children unless he or she meets all the qualifications of a substitute. NAFCC requires providers to submit documentation for assistants which includes, a copy of the health assessment form dated within the last 2 years, a copy of a TB screening dated within the last 2 years, and a copy of current First Aid and Pediatric CPR certificate. Refer to NAFCC Quality Standards 5.26-5.32 to learn more about assistants.

A substitute is a person who is left in charge of children when the provider is absent. Substitutes must be age 18 or older, hold a current certificate in First Aid and Pediatric CPR, and have an acceptable TB screening. Substitutes must have spent time with the children before. Refer to NAFCC Quality Standards 5.33-5.36 to learn more about substitutes.

## **Can accreditation be extended?**

NAFCC does not extend accreditation expiration dates. We recommend that re-accrediting providers follow the observation timeline to plan when to submit their application to avoid a lapse of accreditation.

## **What happens if I do not complete my annual renewal on time?**

Failure to complete a timely annual renewal will result in a lapse of accreditation. Providers will need to enroll in self-study to begin the re-accreditation process.

## **What are some strategies I could use to pay for accreditation or reaccreditation?**

**Break the cost of accreditation down into manageable “chunks”.**

- Did you know that the cost for re-accreditation for NAFCC members is about the same as the cost for a medium-sized specialty coffee drink a week for three years?
- Or that it's about the same cost as a candy bar a day for three years?
- In many communities, the cost of the accreditation fee is less than having a manicure or pedicure every month for three years.
- Consider opening a “Christmas Club” or holiday fund at your local bank and use it to save money for re-accreditation. About \$6.00 a week will cover the costs.

**Consider how your clients can help.**

- Some providers set a piggy bank labeled “My Re-Accreditation Fees” by the door.
- One provider used an old coffee can that the children decorated and set it where parents could see it when they arrived every day.
- Another provider asked parents to contribute the change in their pockets one day a week toward the accreditation fee.

- A third provider increased her weekly fees and told parents that the increase would be used for re-accreditation fees.

**Learn about what is available in your community.**

- In some communities the child care resource and referral agency or another agency has quality improvement funds that can help offset the costs of accreditation. If these funds only support first time accreditation, find out if they can be expanded to cover assistance with re-accreditation fees. Become an advocate and help people understand how important it is to keep providers accredited.
- Explore whether there is a local accreditation project that might help you. If necessary, educate those involved about how important it is to the provider community to include re-accreditation in the project.
- Find a “family child care champion”. It could be a business person or a politician. It might even be someone from a local newspaper. Make sure that you keep them informed about high quality child care and child care issues, and encourage them to recognize the work of you and your fellow providers.

## ***NAFCC Accreditation - What's New!***

**NAFCC Accreditation Training Policy and Procedures**    Effective date 3-1-2011

- **Accreditation Education/Training Requirements**
- Providers seeking accreditation for the first time or when accreditation has lapsed must complete at least 90 clock hours of documented family child care related education/training. The education/training must be completed within the 3 years prior to submitting an accreditation application. The training must include hours in the five accreditation content areas. A provider must complete one of the two education/training options for accreditation as follows.
  1. Training hours may be met through any combination of the following 4 options:
    - a. Workshops of two hours or less (up to 28 hours)
    - b. Classes or workshops taught by the candidate (up to 18 contact hours, limited to one time per training topic)
    - c. A Baccalaureate or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or related field from an accredited college or university may be submitted for up to 45 clock hours of training. An Associate (2 year) degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development or related field from an accredited college may be submitted for up to 37.5 hours of training. A Baccalaureate or higher degree in an unrelated field from an accredited college or university may be submitted for up to 25 clock hours of training.
    - d. Training from a recognized agency or organization proficient in child care provider education. Recognized training sources include but are not limited to child care resource and referral agencies and family child care associations, early childhood programs such as Head Start, school districts, U.S. military services, state government child care agencies, colleges, universities, vocational and technical schools (no maximum).
  2. The initial current Family Child Care CDA (Child Development Associate) Credential awarded through the Council for Professional Recognition which states “valid 3 years from the date of issue” will be accepted as documentation of the 90 clock hours of training.
- The determination that training meets accreditation criteria is made by NAFCC. Questions regarding the distribution of training hours can be sent, in writing, to NAFCC.

- **Re-accreditation Education/Training Requirements**

- A provider seeking re-accreditation must complete one of the three education/training options for re-accreditation. The training must include hours in the five accreditation content areas.
- 1. Complete at least 75 clock hours of documented family child care related education/training through any combination of the following 4 options.
  - a. A Baccalaureate or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or related field from an accredited college or university may be submitted for up to 45 clock hours of training. An Associate (2 year) degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development or related field from an accredited college may be submitted for up to 37.5 hours of training. A Baccalaureate or higher degree in an unrelated field from an accredited college or university may be submitted for up to 25 clock hours of training.
  - b. A minimum of one college course (3 credit hour/45 clock hours) from an accredited college or university dated within the current accreditation period covering family child care topics.
  - c. A minimum of 4.5 CEU's (45 clock hours) dated within the current accreditation period covering family child care related topics.
  - d. A maximum of 30 clock hours of training dated within the current accreditation period covering family child care related topics. This training must be unduplicated and may not be reflected in any other option of training used for accreditation. This training may be met through the following areas.
    - i. Workshops of two hours or less (up to 28 hours)
    - ii. Classes or workshops taught by the candidate (up to 18 contact hours, limited to one time per training topic)
    - iii. Training from a recognized agency or organization proficient in child care provider education. Recognized training sources include but are not limited to child care resource and referral agencies and family child care associations, early childhood programs such as Head Start, school districts, U.S. military services, state government child care agencies, colleges, universities, vocational and technical schools
- 2. Complete at least 90 clock hours of documented family child care related education/training dated within the 3 years prior to submitting an accreditation application. Refer to the accreditation education/training requirements.
- 3. The initial current Family Child Care CDA (Child Development Associate) Credential awarded through the Council for Professional Recognition which states "valid 3 years from the date of issue" will be accepted as documentation of the 90 clock hours of training.
- The determination that training meets accreditation criteria is made by NAFCC. Questions regarding the distribution of training hours can be sent, in writing, to NAFCC.
- Training must be recorded on the official NAFCC Training record form. All certificates and verification must be attached to the form. Verification of training must include the name of the provider, the topic of training, the date of the training, the number of hours attended, and if possible, the signature or stamp of the instructor or institution. A course description or syllabus may be requested.
- **Rationale for revised NAFCC Accreditation Training Requirements**
- Portions of this rationale are adapted from NAEYC position statements.

- Recently, the NAFCC Accreditation Council amended the training requirements policy for applicants applying after March 1, 2011. The amendments were made in response to provider requests to have specialized education in early childhood education/child development (or related field) be looked at separately from unrelated degree programs as well as to bring accreditation policies in line with national movements in child care professional development program support and recognition.
- The Accreditation Council has determined that baccalaureate degrees in or related to early childhood care and education will receive 45 of the required 90 clock hours of training for first time or lapsed applicants and 45 of the required 75 clock hours of training for repeat, on-time applicants. In addition, associate degrees in or related to early childhood care and education will receive 37.5 of the required clock hours of training. Applicants who hold baccalaureate degrees in unrelated fields will receive credit for 25 of the required clock hours of training.
- As stated in the NAEYC position statement on standards for programs to prepare early childhood professionals, "Research shows that when early childhood professionals have specialized training and education, children benefit." Providers who have completed baccalaureate degrees in unrelated fields have accomplished a task worth rewarding, and children certainly benefit from having a caregiver who has a set of skills and knowledge base outside the childcare field. However, caregivers who have specialized degrees directly relating to the profession of child care have a specialized skill set and knowledge base that needs to be looked at in a different way. The change in the NAFCC accreditation training policy brings our organization in line with current trends and current research in quality caregiving and professional development in the early care and education profession and provides recognition and credit for those applicants who have completed degree programs with an emphasis on programs in or related to early childhood care and education.

[www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)