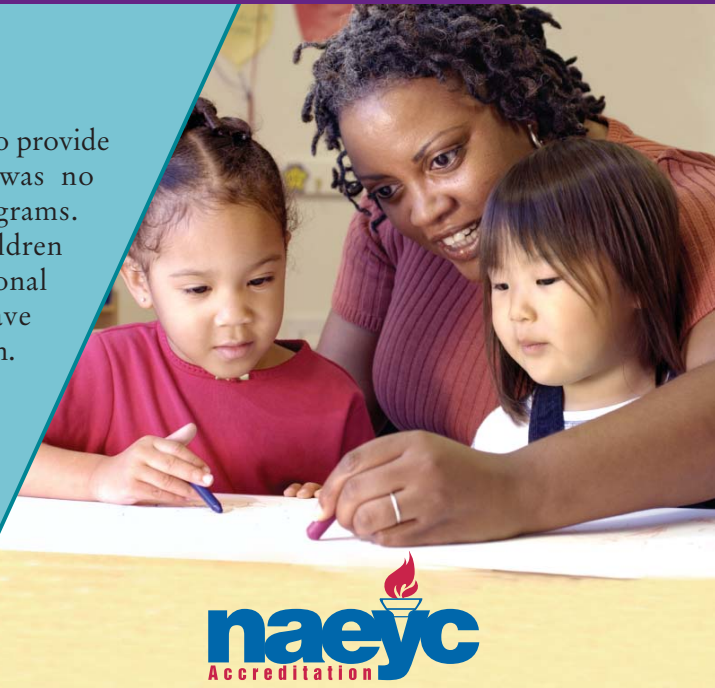


## NAEYC Accreditation: Then and Now

In 1985, child care centers, preschools, and kindergartens wanted to provide the best education and care for young children, but there was no national system to measure the quality of early childhood programs. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) changed all that. It established a voluntary, national accreditation system that outlined stringent criteria and gave programs tools to build and maintain high-quality care and education.

A lot has changed in early childhood education and so has NAEYC Accreditation. Highly professional programs are demanding highly professional service and value from accreditation. Today's accreditation system is more reliable, more credible, and more accountable than ever before.

Check out some of the improvements:



### Then

Programs submitted accreditation applications without prior notice to NAEYC, causing delays in program reviews and on-site visits.

There was no time limit for programs completing the accreditation process.

The terms “standards” and “criteria” were used interchangeably to define characteristics of a high-quality program.

Programs were evaluated by volunteer validators.

Programs submitted annual reports only after the first year.

Accreditation lasted three years.

Verification visits were conducted when programs experienced change.

### Now

NAEYC provides improved service to programs through a four-step process.

#### Steps include:

**Enrollment**—Self-study before applying for accreditation.

**Application**—Submitting an application and determining a time frame for submitting a formal self-assessment report.

**Candidacy**—Meeting fundamental licensing, staffing, health, and safety requirements.

**On-Site Visit**—Observation of the program by NAEYC assessors to determine if the program meets all 10 NAEYC standards.

Standards define the characteristics of a high-quality program. Criteria demonstrate a program is achieving NAEYC standards.

Programs must meet each of the 10 NAEYC program standards by demonstrating satisfactory performance on 80% of the criteria within each standard.

Programs are evaluated by highly trained assessors.

Programs submit annual reports and self-administered program audits each year.

Accreditation lasts five years.

In addition to verification visits, unannounced visits ensure programs are meeting NAEYC standards.