



## Myths of NAEYC Accreditation

**MYTH #1:** The cost is so high that my program will never be able to afford it.

**FACT:** NAEYC Accreditation fees are spread out to allow programs to plan and budget for fees accordingly. Additionally, financial assistance is available to support programs that want to pursue NAEYC Accreditation. NAEYC Accreditation Scholarships offered by NAEYC and Accreditation Facilitation Projects in Georgia both provide financial assistance with NAEYC Accreditation fees. Currently, there is more funding available for NAEYC Scholarships than number of applications. For an application, visit <http://www.naeyc.org/academy/primary/scholarships>. Many programs also host fundraising events to raise money, and these events can serve a dual purpose of facilitating parental leadership and collaborative involvement in the accreditation process.

**MYTH #2:** Our program will never be able to meet 100% of the criteria; therefore we won't be able to achieve NAEYC Accreditation.

**FACT:** Programs are required to achieve a minimum of 80% of the criteria for each of the ten standards and at least 70% for each classroom observed. 100% compliance with all criteria is very rare and is not required.

**MYTH #3:** Educational qualifications for teachers will prevent my program from being able to earn NAEYC Accreditation.

**FACT:** If you are unable to meet the educational qualifications found in the criteria, those criteria would simply fall within the 20% you are allowed not to meet and still earn accreditation. However, programs that do not meet those criteria need to be aware that they "have little leeway for missing other criteria in the standard" because the educational qualifications will take up a significant portion of the allowed 20%, as NAEYC reminded in the Fall 2009 Accreditation Update. The only required educational qualifications are those for Candidacy, and Candidacy requirements are assessed at a lower threshold than criteria. Most programs find the Candidacy requirements easier to achieve. To view candidacy requirements for educational qualifications, visit: <http://www.naeyc.org/academy/pursuing/edquals/candidacy>.

**MYTH #4:** Our program cannot meet all the NAEYC ratios; therefore we cannot earn NAEYC Accreditation.

**FACT:** If you are unable to meet the ratio and/or group size requirements found in the criteria, those criteria would simply fall within the 20% you are allowed not to meet and still earn accreditation. However, as stated on the NAEYC website, "experience suggests that programs that exceed the recommended number of children for each teaching staff member and total group sizes will find it more difficult to meet each standard and achieve NAEYC Accreditation. The more these numbers are exceeded, the more difficult it will be to meet each standard."

**MYTH #5:** Programs must buy all new materials for classrooms.

**FACT:** Classrooms do not have to be full of new materials. NAEYC Accreditation looks at how the materials are used within the classroom and whether they are clean and in good condition. Homemade materials in good condition will meet the criteria just as readily as purchased materials.

**MYTH #6:** Programs must buy a new curriculum and/or assessment materials.

**FACT:** Although some programs choose to buy a new curriculum or new assessment materials, it is not required. The focus of NAEYC Accreditation is on ensuring what you are currently using meets the standards and criteria. If the current curriculum/assessment tool meets Program Standards and criteria or can be improved upon to be able to meet criteria, there is no need to purchase something new.

**MYTH #7:** The NAEYC Accreditation timelines are unreasonable and too quick for programs to meet.

**FACT:** As quoted on the NAEYC website, "Every program moves through the four-step NAEYC Accreditation process on a different timeline, depending on the program's current accreditation status and the amount of time needed to successfully complete the tasks associated with each of the four steps." Each program takes as long as they need to prepare in Step 1: Enrollment/Self Study. When submitting their application in Step 2, the program selects a candidacy due date from three provided options spaced out over the next year. Each program will submit their candidacy materials (Step 3) by the due date they selected. The site visit (Step 4) will then occur within the following 6 months after candidacy materials are submitted. It is a self-directed pace for completing the four step process. Many programs take 1 ½ - 3 years to complete all four steps for an initial accreditation. Earning NAEYC Accreditation is a process, not a single action.

**MYTH #8:** There are so many standards and criteria that have to be met that our program will never be able to sort through all of them.

**FACT:** There are 10 Program Standards. Each program standard is further explained and explored by the criteria listed for each standard. Though the process can be overwhelming if taken in all at once, it is realistic to achieve if you take it one standard at a time and work your way through the process. NAEYC also has excellent resources to assist programs in understanding Program Standards and Criteria. For a complete list of NAEYC Accreditation Program Support Resources, visit the NAEYC website at <http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/APSResourcesFlyer.pdf>.

**MYTH #9:** Portfolios are difficult to complete.

**FACT:** Portfolios are simply capturing what is already occurring in classrooms and programs by labeling examples of NAEYC standards and criteria being met. Although it takes time to complete the initial portfolios, they are not difficult to organize and they take increasingly less time after they are established and are just being updated. Each piece of evidence simply needs to be labeled with the criteria number(s) to which it relates. Brief captions help explain how the documentation meets the criteria. Evidence is individual to each program and classroom, but examples of some frequently used sources of evidence include photographs, forms, curriculum webs, observation notes, material lists, and lesson plans.

**MYTH #10:** There is no local support to help programs pursue NAEYC Accreditation.

**FACT:** There are many local resources to assist programs as they work towards NAEYC Accreditation. There are Accreditation Facilitation Projects throughout the state of GA. These projects provide technical assistance, financial aid, and assistance implementing and training staff to utilize developmentally appropriate practices. GAYC has a Statewide Accreditation Facilitation project, if your program is ready to commit now. For a list of additional Accreditation Facilitation Projects in your area, visit <http://www.naeyc.org/academy/afp/finder> or contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency via [www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org).

Other local resources can be utilized to assist programs and staff as they work towards NAEYC Accreditation as well. Here are a few useful resources available.

**FIRST Program:** Earn a \$1200 incentive for eligible early care and education professionals who earn their first early care and education credential between September 1, 2009 and July 1, 2011. <http://dec.al.gov/ChildCareServices/FirstProgram.aspx>

**Scholarships & Incentives:** Financial scholarships and incentives from Bright from the Start are available to early care and education professionals who are going back to school or have recently earned a new credential and meet specific eligibility requirements. For more information, <http://www.caresolutions.com/content/page.cfm/183/>.

**GAYC Accreditation Institute:** This institute, offered twice a year, provides a comprehensive overview of the NAEYC Accreditation Process. Partial scholarships may be available.

**GAYC Annual Together for Children Conference.** This 2 day professional development event, held in October every year, showcases over 160 state approved workshops, and Accreditation is highlighted as an available track. A NAEYC Accreditation booth is also available for onsite questions and perusal of sample program and classroom portfolios. For more info, [www.gayconline.org](http://www.gayconline.org).

**GAYC Professional Development Opportunities:** Early childhood care and education training and professional development events are held throughout the year in a variety of locations. Diverse topics and training levels are offered. To view the training calendar, <http://www.gayconline.org/>.

**Early Education Substitute Teachers Program:** One goal of this program is to provide qualified early care and learning substitute teachers to licensed and registered Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning (BFTS) child care facilities. For more information, <http://www.ecegasubs.org/>.

*GAYC is the State Affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA). Contact us at 368 Moreland Ave. NE Suite 240, Atlanta, GA, 30307-1927, 404-222-0014, [gayc@algxmail.com](mailto:gayc@algxmail.com), [www.gayconline.org](http://www.gayconline.org)*

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