

# EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

## CERTIFICACIÓN DE PROGRAMAS PARA LA PRIMERA INFANCIA

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### What is accreditation for early childhood programs?

Accreditation is a process for examining the quality of program and services that child care centers, pre-schools, nursery schools, and family child care homes offer children and families. Accredited Programs have made a commitment to quality early care and education by voluntarily exceeding minimum state licensing requirements.

### How does a program become accredited?

Staff voluntarily agree to commit to a self-study that examines the total early childhood program. Validators from national child care organizations visit the program to observe and verify the results of the self-study. A commission composed of experts in early care and education review both the validator and program studies before making a recommendation to grant accreditation. The accreditation process generally takes between 9 months and 1 year and once accreditation is granted, is generally valid for 3-5 years.

### What types of accreditation are there?

While accreditation of early childhood programs is offered through different child care organizations, the process and measures are very similar. Programs choose to become accredited through the association that they feel best represents their program and philosophy. Here are a few of the most common associations that grant accreditation for early care and education programs.

- National Academy of Early Childhood Programs is an independent accrediting system sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals.
- National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) The focus of NAFCC is to provide technical assistance to family child care associations. This assistance is provided through developing leadership and professionalism, addressing issues of diversity, and by promoting quality and professionalism through NAFCC's Family Child Care Accreditation.
- The Montessori School Accreditation Commission (MSAC) is a branch of the National Center for

Montessori Education (NCME) and is governed by its Board of Directors. The mission of the Montessori School Accreditation Commission is to provide a professional, nationally recognized accrediting agency through which quality Montessori schools may receive recognition based on standards rather than affiliation.

### Why choose an accredited program?

Accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality program for young children and their families. Group size and adult-to-child ratios are lower than state licensing requirements. Learning materials and teaching styles are developmentally appropriate. Staff in accredited programs take part in on-going child development training, are generally paid higher salaries and offered benefits so turn-over is reduced. Research proves that children who attend high-quality programs demonstrate greater social skills, have higher self-esteem, and are better prepared for school. Ask Community Resources for Children staff for more information about the benefits of high quality care.

### What if a program is not accredited?

Ask if and when it plans to apply for accreditation. Some programs may be thinking about applying or are in the process of the self-study. Others may not have considered applying for accreditation. The cost for accreditation to a program varies by the number of children served but ranges from \$425.00 to \$1,000.00 and is a consideration for programs already struggling to make ends meet. The number of families that ask about accreditation will have a direct impact on the number of programs that become accredited.

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*"The mission of Community Resources for Children is to provide resources for the early care and education of children in Napa County"*