

Nebraska Early Childhood Care and Education Accreditation Project

What is the Accreditation Project?

The Accreditation Project provides center-, home-, and school-based early childhood care and education programs in Nebraska the opportunity to apply for funds to help with the costs of national accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will pay above the maximum rate for child care programs that have achieved nation accreditation, who are willing to serve children whose care is supported through DHHS Child Care Assistance, and who meet all other qualifications.

Funds for this project come from the federal Child Care and Development Fund and may be used for initial or re-accreditation. However, requests for funding initial accreditation will receive priority.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Office of Early Childhood administers this project.

Why do programs seek accreditation?

Achieving accreditation allows early childhood care and education programs to show parents and the community that their setting offers children greater opportunity to grow and develop to their highest capacity. Research on early childhood programs consistently shows that high quality programs have greater benefits for children.

Programs which demonstrate quality by operating at a level which substantially exceeds the minimum licensing requirements may be interested in seeking accreditation.

Who is eligible to apply for funds?

To be eligible for funding, programs must:

- have been in operation and licensed, if applicable, for a minimum of 1 year with no non-compliances,
- participate, if eligible, in the Child and Adult Care Food Program or the School Lunch Program,
- demonstrate a willingness to enroll children whose care is supported through DHHS,
- demonstrate a willingness to enroll children with verified disabilities, and
- operate in compliance with Nebraska Statute 79-1104 R.R.S., and any other state and/or federal requirements related to the funding source(s), if a school-based program

What costs are covered?

The Accreditation Project covers fees associated with achieving accreditation as follows:

NAFCC – one half the cost for self-study materials and the annual review, and the total cost for application fees at the member rate. Membership dues are the responsibility of the program.

NAEYC – one half the cost for self-study materials and the annual report, and the total cost for applicant and candidate fees.

NECPA – one half the cost for application materials and the annual report, and the total cost for verification fees.

Any additional fees are the responsibility of the early childhood care and education program.

What other support is available?

The Nebraska Department of Education works with state professional organizations to offer support toward achieving accreditation through:

Group Support – a series of facilitate group meetings, specific to NAEYC, NAFCC or NECPA, to help programs work through the process of accreditation.

Individual Support – a trained mentor can work directly with individual programs to help meet the accreditation requirements.

How do programs apply for funds?

The NDE Office of Early Childhood accepts applications on a year round basis. Each application will be reviewed by NDE staff. For more information and to obtain application materials contact:

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