Accreditation

Accreditation is a process used to identify programs providing exemplary care for children. Centers, family child care homes, and school-aged programs can all become accredited. When a program becomes accredited, the program is required to meet and maintain standards set by the accrediting agency. High quality standards in child care have been shown to be an important indicator in school readiness.

What is the difference between regulations and accreditation?
Our state has licensing regulations in place for initial approval and monitoring of every child care center, family child care home, or family group home through the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, Bureau of Services for Child Care. Washoe and Clark Counties have additional child care licensing regulations that supplement the state’s requirements. A license must be obtained in order to operate legally. The licensing regulations include health and safety, program requirements, and child-to-adult ratios. Accredited child care programs are held to a higher standard than what the state or county regulatory agency may require.

What is the accreditation process?
The child care program undergoes an extensive screening process including self-study and observations. Based on the outcomes from these steps the program can significantly improve and demonstrates a commitment to excellence. A program can become accredited by several different agencies. Depending on the agency chosen, accreditation can last up to five years. Becoming accredited is a lot of work and a commitment to high standards, but nothing can guarantee that a program is quality. It takes an ongoing commitment to maintain accreditation standards.

What are the benefits to becoming accredited?
Professional achievement is an important reason to become accredited, but the true significance in having high quality program standards is for the children we serve.

★ National recognition that your program exceeds the minimum state licensing standards.
★ It is a great marketing tool.
★ The process shows you have taken the time to meet the rigorous standards of the accreditation agency.
★ The Office of Early Care and Education offers increased reimbursement (15%) to accredited programs providing care to families receiving subsidized child care.

How do I become an accredited program?
There are several different agencies that provide accreditation programs. Every agency has its own application process. The following lists the six accreditation agencies that are recognized by the Office of Early Care and Education.

★ The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) www.naeyc.org
★ The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) www.nafcc.org
★ The National Accreditation of Child Care Professionals (NAC) www.naccp.org
★ The National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) www.necpa.net
★ The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) www.acsi.org
★ The National After-School Association (NAA) www.naaweb.org

Who can help?
The State of Nevada Office of Early Care and Education offers assistance to programs with accreditation technical assistance including support navigating the process of accreditation, classroom or home observation, and staff training. The Office of Early Care and Education covers all costs for all accreditation materials and fees, provides quality improvement grants, and a one-time accreditation bonus. Grants and bonus are based on the number of children served. Visit www.dwss.nv.gov for more information on accreditation grants.

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