

CONNECTICUT STATE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
Administered State-Funded Program General Policy
15-06

- Child Day Care Contractors (replaces GP 14-06)
- Priority School Readiness Districts (replaces GP 14-06)
- Competitive School Readiness Municipalities (replaces GP 14-06)

TO: Mayors, Superintendents, School Readiness Council Chairs/Co-Chairs and Liaisons, Child Day Care Contractors

FROM: Harriet Feldlaufer, Director
Division of Early Care and Education
Office of Early Childhood (OEC)



SUBJECT: Program Approval Systems

Background

The Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) section 10-16p, section 5 requires that programs receiving funds for School Readiness spaces must be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), designated by U.S. Health and Human Services to be a Head Start grantee or delegate, or other standards established by the Commissioner. The School Readiness program requires that all sites must achieve NAEYC accreditation within three years of the date when children funded through the School Readiness program begin.

The Child Day Care Program Contracts require the contractor to warrant and agree that each of the child care facilities at which services are provided under this contract or any subcontracts meet one of the following requirements:

- Are currently accredited by NAEYC, designated by U.S. Health and Human Services to be a Head Start grantee or delegate, or approved by the National After School Association (NAA);
- Are a new subcontractor, currently pursuing NAEYC or accreditation or approval by the National After School Association (NAA) or such other after school accreditation as the Commissioner may approve; and on track to achieve accreditation within a three year window from the date upon which they first became a subcontractor. Programs in this category must have an annual OEC approved environmental rating scale completed at their own expense, utilizing a OEC approved rater; or
- Have had their NAEYC Accreditation revoked, are receiving reduced reimbursement rates, and are participating in the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance process.

For Child Day Care, “**Accredited**” or “**Accreditation**” is defined as:

- (a) For facilities that serve infants, toddlers or preschoolers, is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or is designated by U.S. Health and Human Services to be a Head Start grantee or delegate, and
- (b) For facilities that serve children of school age, is recognition by the National After School Association (NAA) or such other accreditation entity as may be approved by the Commissioner, or
- (c) For facilities that service children of school age, fulfilling the published requirements of the department with respect to accreditation by the National After School Association (NAA) or such other accreditation entity as may be approved by the Commissioner.

School Age Programs

For school-age programs funded through the Child Day Care Contracts, there is currently not a clear viable model for achieving accreditation or approval. In lieu of a clear, viable accreditation entity, contractors operating or subcontracting for school-age programs must complete an *OEC School Age Continuous Improvement Plan* to be submitted and approved by the OEC, to be effective for the term of the contract. This plan should involve comparing the school-age program against some set of external criteria. Examples include the School-Age Environmental Rating Scales (SACERS), participating or using criteria from the NAEYC school-age pilot, or use of *After-School Quality: The Process of Program Improvement*.

Reporting Requirements

Providers of infant/toddler and/or preschool services must submit evidence that they will meet the accreditation standard through one of the following processes:

1. Accredited by NAEYC.
2. Approved through the Head Start Review Instrument with resolution of compliance issues through the action plan.

For school-age programs, providers must complete and gain approval of the *OEC School Age Continuous Improvement Plan*. The plan must include a process and timeline for submitting documentation of completion of the planned continuous improvement process.

Sometimes a program will be able to document extenuating circumstances that occur which interfere with the timely completion of the accreditation process (see GP-14-07 for general guidance).

In addition, the following program specific requirements are:

School Readiness programs will submit documentation to the School Readiness Liaison.

Child Day Care Contract programs will submit documentation to the Contractor, if the program is a subcontractor. Contractors will submit accreditation or approval information for programs that they operate, as well as for any subcontractors, directly to the Office of Early Childhood.

Reports to the appropriate entity must include the following:

NAEYC Programs

- A written timeline for the Self-Study process that is being implemented.
- Documentation of an orientation process for administrators, staff and families to build understanding, support and buy-in for the process.

- Documentation of the Self Study activities completed (such as classroom observations, teacher and parent questionnaires and the administrator's report), the date of completion, the information/data gathered, what issues were identified and what steps taken to resolve them.
- A date that the program will submit the materials and request the validation visit.
- Other pertinent information (correspondence and reports) related to maintaining accreditation status.

Head Start Programs

- The required action plan for outstanding issues with a status update and the date of the next scheduled visit for review of the resolution of outstanding issues.
- Other pertinent information (correspondence and reports) related to Head Start program approval and/or grantee status.

For further information on this GENERAL POLICY please contact:

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