



**International Accreditation & Certification
of Childhood
Educators, Programs and Trainers**
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APPLICATION

CENTER ACCREDITATION

TEACHING BEST PRACTICE

International Accreditation and Certification of Childhood Educators, Programs, and Trainers

INTRODUCTION TO ACCREDITATION

IACCEPT is an organization committed to providing:

- 1) early childhood program accreditation,
- 2) certification of childhood educators through the Early Learning Specialist programs,
- 3) certification of validators who assist in the accreditation review, and
- 4) certification of trainers who provide training for childhood professionals.

Separate applications are available for the four areas of services.

Who can apply for program accreditation?

In order to participate in the *IACCEPT* accreditation process, the center/program's philosophy and *IACCEPT*'s philosophy must be compatible. Program accreditation is a voluntary system and is open to licensed child day care programs, private preschools, and church-operated preschools and legally exempt centers who meet *IACCEPT* criteria and quality standards.

Why should our center consider IACCEPT's Accreditation?

IACCEPT's founders have developed a voluntary system for accrediting early childhood centers and preschools. Designed by early childhood and social service professionals to promote quality care and education, the accreditation process purposefully respects diversity of program philosophy and autonomy. Rather than creating an accreditation system that narrowly defines "quality", this process is open to centers licensed, exempt or certified as licensed and which meet additional requirements of *IACCEPT*'s quality standards.

What is the process?

The *IACCEPT* accreditation is a formal process setting criteria for quality child care through reasonable standards including an understanding of child development, age and stage appropriate activities, and experience achieved through professional practice.

Accreditation is a five step process: 1) self-study, 2) parent survey, 3) staff evaluation, 4) on-site validation visit, and 5) accreditation decision by the Council. To become accredited, the center is sent a packet of self-evaluation materials.

IACCEPT's accreditation process is self-paced. The center evaluates itself in terms of the Criteria. A report is filed with the Council, who reviews the report and assigns it to an on-site validation visit. Validators verify the information of the self-study. Validator findings are reviewed by a Council, a panel of three experienced experts in the field of early childhood education. The Council makes the final decision regarding accreditation. A center must be in substantial compliance. Multi-site facilities have to apply separately for accreditation.

Revised 9/08

IACCEPT

International Accreditation and Certification of Childhood Educators, Programs, and Trainers APPLICATION FORM FOR PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

Legal Name of Program _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone () _____ Fax () _____ E-mail _____

Federal Tax Identification Number _____

Legal Structure: Corporation Sole Proprietorship Partnership LLC For Profit
 Not-for profit Non profit Other: _____

Administrator/Director _____

If Administrator oversees more than one location, list Administrator's phone: _____

Type of program seeking accreditation: child care center preschool Other _____

Licensed Capacity _____ Days/Hours of Operation _____

Number of Staff _____ Number of Classrooms _____

I understand that, In order to participate in the **IACCEPT** accreditation process, the center/program's philosophy and **IACCEPT's** philosophy must be compatible. **IACCEPT's** accreditation process is self-paced. The application fee is non-refundable and the validation fee is due when the Center/Program requests a validation visit.

Date _____ Signature _____

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Licensed Capacity | 50 or less | 51-75 | 76-125 | 126-200 | 200+ |
| Application Fee | \$50.00 | \$75.00 | \$125.00 | \$175.00 | \$250.00 |
| Validation Fee | \$150.00 | \$300.00 | \$400.00 | \$500.00 | \$750.00 |

Mail this application, appropriate fee and copy of the center's philosophy statement to:

IACCEPT
2025 Woodbrook Court
Charlottesville, VA 22901
434-249-8488

PREREQUISITES

To be eligible for accreditation, the following prerequisites must be met:

1. The child care center or preschool must be licensed or certified according to its state and local requirements. If the center or preschool is exempt from licensure, the applicant must be willing to meet accreditation standards. In locations where there are no regulations, programs operating legally are eligible to make application.
2. The program must have been in operation at least one year when accreditation is granted. New programs may make immediate application, so that they may receive their accreditation soon after the completion of their first year.
3. A center operating a preschool program must provide a definition of the term "preschool".
4. The early childhood program must serve at least ten children.
5. The program must be nondiscriminatory in regard to race, color, gender, or national origin.
6. When there is a change in ownership, administrative staff, or other major changes, accreditation will be terminated. New application must be made to re-establish accreditation.

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

The accreditation system includes instrument-based assessments and surveys to monitor the process. Parents, staff and the program director assess the overall value and merit of their program. Criteria are based on research, accepted practice, and minimum state licensing standards.

IACCEPT administers its own accrediting process for centers in the association. The following areas are examined:

- general operations
- professional development
- curriculum requirements
- physical environment
- parent/center relations
- community involvement
- administration
- child-to-staff ratios
- food service
- health and safety
- transportation

and an optional module

- moral, spiritual values

THE PROCESS

STEP ONE: Self-Study

Self-study materials are provided to the program by *IACCEPT*. The self-study is a major portion of the *IACCEPT* accreditation program. It includes both a narrative and a written assessment. The document contains the standards required by the Accreditation Advisory Council and the forms used by the program administrators/directors to perform the self-study process. This document aids in assessing areas of compliance and noncompliance early in the accreditation process. The length of time needed for the self-study will vary from program to program. There is no specified time limit.

The center or preschool evaluates itself and files a report with the Accreditation Advisory Council. The administrator or director is responsible for completing the program's self-study. The director will oversee the distribution of survey materials to parents and staff. During the process, components should be evaluated and improvements made to prepare for an on-site visit.

Program staff determines when they are ready for an on-site visit. The completed self-study is sent to the Accreditation Advisory Council. The Accreditation Advisory Council will then review the self-evaluation report and assign the program a validator for an on-site confirmation visit. The self-study should be completed before proceeding with staff and parent surveys. The self-study can be modified at any time prior to final submission to *IACCEPT*. The validator submits the findings to the Accreditation Advisory Council. The Accreditation Advisory Council makes the final decision regarding accreditation. A program must demonstrate significant compliance to state and local licensing requirements and provide necessary documentary evidence to the validator as needed for standard verification. The validator's report is required to verify compliance with *IACCEPT* standards.

STEP TWO: Parent Survey

This instrument provides an opportunity to gather distinctive information from the parent's perspective. The survey includes areas of customer service, curriculum, staff, and professionalism. At least 50% parent participation is required.

STEP THREE: Staff or Faculty Survey

An essential component of the accreditation program is the **Staff or Faculty Survey**. Each member of the staff will be requested to complete a survey to evaluate both themselves and the work environment.

The purpose of the survey is to provide center/preschool administrators feedback from staff and encourage staff to contemplate and evaluate their professionalism and other facets of the facility where they are employed. The desired result of this survey is to identify areas which may need improvement. At least seventy-five percent (75%) of the staff/faculty must participate in the survey.

STEP FOUR: On-site Confirmation

Once center personnel determine it is time for the on-site visit, the center or program will pay an additional fee to cover the cost of the validation and evaluation. An authorized administrator, program director, or officer of the program will complete the release document stating that the applicant understands the accreditation process and will hold *IACCEPT* harmless for its procedures and decisions.

The Accreditation Advisory Council will assign a certified validator to affirm the information of the self-study. The validator's responsibility is to review all documents relevant to the accreditation process. This may include corporate or legal documents, appropriate licenses, staff and children's records, curriculum and teaching materials. The validator may seek help to clarify information with administrators, staff or parents. The certified validator will then submit the findings to the Accreditation Advisory Council .

STEP FIVE: Accreditation Decision by Accreditation Advisory Council

Members of the Accreditation Advisory Council serve by appointment of the Board of Directors. It is their task to assign a validator to do the on-site review and then to examine the materials submitted by the validator. In order to serve as a validator, the candidate must either meet the following three qualifications: 1) a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a child-related field, 2) experience working in early childhood groups, and 3) experience in administration of an early childhood program. Or, *IACCEPT* validator certification may be granted to an individual who meets the following qualifications: 1) completion of a minimum of two years of college, 2) has a minimum of seven years of supervisory experience in an early childhood program, and 3) has served as a validator for another state or nationally-recognized accreditation organization or completes the *IACCEPT* training program for validator certification.

The Accreditation Advisory Council will make the final decision regarding accreditation. The Accreditation Advisory Council's decision is based on professional judgment and demonstrated compliance by the program to meet *IACCEPT* Accreditation Standards. Accreditation is granted on a site-by-site basis, even when one entity owns or operates at multiple sites.

When a program does not meet standards, the director may provide reasons for the non-compliance or explain alternative methods for meeting the intent of the standard. An appeal process is available to the applicant if the accreditation is denied. Renewal or reaccreditation is subject to the program or preschool remaining in substantial compliance with applicable state licensing requirements. Evidence of substantial compliance is demonstrated by the submission of the Annual Report.