

The Appeals Process: Things to Know

The Council for NAEYC Accreditation of Early Learning Programs provides a formal appeal process for programs that receive an accreditation deferred decision. Here are a few things to know if you decide to submit an appeal for your program.

- › The Decision Appeals Policy governs the appeal process.
- › Appealing a decision does not prevent a program from achieving accreditation in the future if an appeal has been denied.
- › Appeals go through a screening process before being scheduled for review by the Quality Assurance Committee.

The Quality Assurance Committee . . .

- › Is made up by three members of the Council for NAEYC Accreditation of Early Learning Programs.
- › Is given relevant documentation may include the site visit schedule; completed forms, worksheets, and tools; evaluations completed by the assessor and/or program.¹
- › May request additional documentation from the program and/or request an administrative review of all site visit materials by the Director of Quality Assessment & Assurance or their designee.

Possible Outcomes

- › The appeal is screened out.
- › The appeal is denied.
- › The appeal is granted without exception.
- › The appeal is granted with a re-visit ordered.

¹ This may include the final visit schedule; completed forms, worksheets, and tools completed by the assessor during the visit; the assessor's evaluation of the visit, the program's evaluation of the visit.

Appeal Process Timeline

Candidate Programs

Program has **30 days** from the date of the Accreditation Decision Report to submit an appeal.

Day 0

Renewing Programs

Program has **30 days** from the date they access the Accreditation Decision Report to submit an appeal.

Day 30

- › Within **5 days** the program will be told whether the appeal has been accepted or screened out including the next steps in the process.

Day 95

Final decisions on accepted appeals are issued within **60 days** of the due date.

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- › If the appeal is successful a 5-year term of accreditation is provided to the program.
- › If the appeal results in an order to conduct another visit at NAEYC cost, the program will be provided with information to begin scheduling a new visit.
- › If the appeal is denied, the program will be informed of the next steps the program can take to pursue accreditation.

Appeal Requirements

The Appeal Must:

- › Be received within 30-days*.
- › Address the specific scoring requirements that the program did not meet.
- › Address the specific Site Visit Protocol, policy, or procedures that NAEYC or the assigned assessor(s) did not follow and/or the specific factual errors on the part of NAEYC or the assigned assessor(s) which resulted in the deferred accreditation decision.

Appeal Must Not:

- › Be more than five single-sided page in total length.
 - Licensing and legal documentation is not counted toward this limit.
 - The Quality Assurance Committee reserves the right to request additional documentation when deemed necessary.
- › Include new information related to the assessment that was not present or given to the assessor during the site visit.

If these requirements are not met, the appeal will not be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Committee for consideration.

*For renewing programs the due date is 30-days from the time the accreditation decision report is accessed in the accreditation portal. For candidate programs and program receiving a verification visit or random visit, the due date is 30-day from the date the letter was issued.

Sample Rubric for Accreditation Decision Appeals

| Criteria | Adequate | Unsatisfactory |
|--|--|--|
| Timeliness <i>Date of ADR:</i> <i>Date of Submission:</i> | The appeal was received by the 30-day due date. | The appeal was not received by the 30-day due date. |
| Length <i>Total pages:</i> | The appeal totals five single-sided pages or less | The appeal is more than five single-sided pages in length. |
| Relevance | The appeal addresses the reason(s) the program failed the scoring (the failed required item(s), standard(s), classroom(s), and/or overall score) in the Accreditation Decision Report. | The appeal addresses assessment items, standards, classes, or sources of evidence that are unrelated to the specific reason(s) the program failed the scoring in the Accreditation Decision Report |
| Policies and/or Procedures | <p>The appeal identifies at least one aspect of the Site Visit Protocol or Early Learning Program Accreditation Policy which was not followed by NAEYC or the assessor(s).</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>The appeal provides a detailed description of at least one factual error or mistake in how the Site Visit Protocol or Early Learning Program Accreditation Policy was followed by NAEYC or the assigned assessor(s).</p> | <p>The appeal does not identify at least one aspect of the Site Visit Protocol or Early Learning Program Accreditation Policy which was not followed by NAEYC or the assessor(s).</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The appeal does not provide a detailed description of at least one factual error or mistake in how the Site Visit Protocol or Early Learning Program Accreditation Policy was followed by NAEYC or the assigned assessor(s).</p> |
| Documentation Integrity | The appeal asserts that any documentation (e.g., written policies, photographs, lesson plans) submitted for consideration appears exactly as it was presented to the assessor(s) at the time of the site visit. | <p>The appeal includes documentation which was not available to the assessor at the time of the the site visit.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>The appeal includes documentation which has been changed since the site visit.</p> |

Accreditation Decision Appeal Sample Letter

January 15, 2023

NAEYC Appeals Committee,

I am appealing my program's deferred accreditation decision (received January 3, 2023) on the grounds that the NAEYC assessor failed to follow NAEYC Early Learning Program Accreditation's established policies and/or procedures.

According to page 7 of the site visit protocol, an assessor has a conflict of interest that prevents them from accepting a particular visit assignment if they conducted a visit at the same program within the past year. The assessor who conducted our visit on 12/20/2022 was the same assessor who conducted our visit back in March of 2022 when we were previously deferred.

Attached are the visit schedules left with our program following each visit clearly indicating the assessor's name and the date the visits were conducted. These have not been altered and are presented exactly as they were provided to us in the Visit Completion Packet email received at the end of both visits.

Therefore, the NAEYC assessor failed to follow established policies and/or procedures and this has affected our outcome of accreditation due to perceived and/or real bias against our program causing our program to fail multiple standards (5 and 9) and the overall pass rate required to renew our accreditation.



Timeliness: The appeal submission date is less than 30 days from the deferred accreditation decision date.



Policies/Procedures: The specific policy/procedure relevant to the appeal is identified and connected to a specific action by NAEYC in how the visit was conducted.



Documentation Integrity: Document supports the claim and is unaltered.



Relevance: The specific areas the program has failed are addressed in clearly connected to the reason for the appeal.



Length: The appeal letter including the two attached documents is less than the 5-page maximum.



Accreditation Decision Appeal Sample Letter

November 15, 2022

Dear Appeals Committee,

We are appealing our program's deferred accreditation decision report which was received on October 19th, 2022 based on the following from the site visit protocol.

On page 12, it states that at least one class is observed at each site in multi-site programs. We are a multi-site program with three locations at Beaver Creek, Hawthorne, and Pinkney Way. Our assessor did not visit our Hawthorne location. Therefore, NAEYC failed to follow its established policies and/or procedures and affected the outcome of our accreditation.

On the attached schedule (as left with us by the assessor), you can see that the assessor conducted 4 Observations. We have also attached a screenshot of our class profile in the portal (unchanged since before the visit) which indicates the location of each classroom. Per the protocol, at least one of these should have taken place at the Hawthorne location. These observations all took place at the Beaver Creek and Pinkney Way locations.

It is our belief that had one of the observations taken lace at Hawthorne, rather than the other two locations, which had already been sampled, we would have met the minimum overall pass rate of 80%, rather than falling just below at 77%.



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