



## ~Accreditation and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems~

How states recognize accreditation varies greatly from state to state. To date, eighteen states recognize accreditation standards in some form within their QRIS standards and are more widely utilized than Head Start Performance standards or state early childhood/K-12 performance standards. For some states accreditation acts as an indicator for the highest level within the standards and in other states points are earned toward the overall rating. The most commonly accepted accrediting bodies accepted include: NAEYC, NAFCC, NECPA, NAA and COA.

Some state examples of how accreditation is recognized include:

### *Indiana:*

National accreditation has a long history of support in Indiana. With the support of family foundations, United Way organizations, and State Child Care and Development Funds, national accreditation is regarded as the highest standard of quality to strive for and is one of the standards at the top level of Paths to Quality (Indiana's QRIS). As a result of all the support for accreditation, after 18 months of QRIS implementation Indiana saw a 20% increase in the number of programs pursuing accreditation. The accrediting bodies that are recognized in Indiana include: NAEYC, NAFCC, Association of Christian Schools International, NECPA, NAA, and COA.

### *Vermont:*

Before the advent of the QRIS, Vermont's Child Development Division supported national accreditation (NAEYC, NAFCC, and NAA) mainly through facilitation projects. When developing their QRIS, Vermont carefully examined NAEYC accreditation criteria with STARS criteria and determined that with a strong compliance history, a program would meet the four-star level. For those programs that were accredited, they could fill out a streamlined application that would assure them a certain number of points in some arenas of the QRIS standards or programs could apply for additional point to achieve five stars (the highest level). However, after the 2006 NAEYC accreditation standards were introduced it was determined that any program accredited by NAEYC would receive a 5-star designation.

### *Colorado:*

The Colorado QRIS is based on designated points with provisional=0-9 points; star 1=10-17 points; star 2=18-25 points; star 3=26-33 points; and star 4=34-42 points. A total of two points can be earned for accreditation from the following accrediting bodies: NAEYC, NAFCC, the Council on Quality and Leadership for People with Disabilities, and the Association of Christian Schools International.

The table below shows how all states currently with a fully-implemented QRIS recognize accreditation standards.

<b>State</b>	<b>Levels</b> How many levels in QRS? At what level is accreditation recognized?	<b>Accreditation Systems</b> What types of accreditation are recognized? How is accreditation recognized?	<b>Accreditation Plus</b> Are there standards beyond accreditation in existing QRS?
<b>Arkansas</b>	-3 levels -Accreditation not recognized	-Accreditation not recognized at any level. -ERS visits and scores are considered at all levels.	-N/A. Accreditation not recognized.
<b>Colorado</b>	-Maximum of 2 points are given to programs who are accredited (34-42 points considered four star)	-NAEYC, NAFCC, Association of Christian Schools International, and the Council on Quality and Leadership for People with Disabilities -Accreditation is one of the standards out of five and 0-2 points are given for accreditation	-Yes, accreditation is only one standard out of five to receive points in.
<b>Delaware</b>	-5 levels (one star-five stars) -Accreditation not recognized	-Accreditation not recognized at any level. -ERS visits and scores are considered at all levels.	-N/A. Accreditation not recognized.
<b>District of Columbia</b>	-3 levels (bronze, silver, gold) -Accreditation recognized at “gold” level.	-Programs that are accredited meet the top-level designation and are reimbursed at a higher rate.	-No, accreditation considered the gold (top) standard.
<b>Idaho</b>	-5 levels (tier 1- tier 5) -Accreditation not recognized	-Accreditation not recognized at any level. -ERS visits and scores are considered at all levels.	-N/A. Accreditation not recognized.
<b>Illinois</b>	-4 levels (one star-four stars) -Accreditation recognized at level 3 & 4	-NAEYC, NECPA, NAC, COA -At level 3 a choice is given to programs. They either have to meet the ERS rating of 4.25 or Accreditation Performance Standards -At level 4 they must meet the ERS rating of 5.0 and Accreditation Performance Standards	-No, accreditation considered a top standard in level 3 or 4
<b>Indiana</b>	4 levels (level 1-4) -Accreditation recognized at level 4	-Accreditation by a Bureau of Child Care approved, nationally recognized accrediting body is achieved and maintained at Level 4	-No accreditation the top standard
<b>Iowa</b>	-5 levels (level 1-5) -Accreditation recognized at all levels	-Accreditation is recognized at all levels, in addition to their ERS rating score;	-Yes, all the Level 1 and Level 2 criteria must be met, and then the program must earn a minimum of one point in each of the Level 3-5 categories. For levels 3-5, the level is determined by the total number of points earned.

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<b>Kentucky</b>	-4 levels (level 1,2,3,4) -Accreditation is recognized at level 4 only in two of the five standards (curriculum and ratios).	-NAEYC, NAA, National Early Childhood Professional Accreditation (NECPA), Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (NAFCC is NOT recognized) -Accreditation is recognized in relationship to standards on ratios (NAEYC) and curriculum to meet a level 4 designation	-Yes, top levels require different standards, not necessarily related to accreditation. Use ERS scores at all levels. NAFCC accreditation standards are not even considered.
<b>Louisiana</b>	-5 levels (one star-five stars) -Accreditation not recognized	-Accreditation not recognized at any level. -ERS visits and scores are considered at all levels.	-N/A. Accreditation not recognized.
<b>Maine</b>	4 levels (Step 1-4) -Accreditation is recognized at Step 4	-Accreditation by NAEYC, NAFCC, NSEYC, or American Montessori Society at Step 4.	-Yes, accreditation must be current at Step 4 and/or the center is a Head Start Program with a Gold or Blue designation, or is accredited by the American Montessori Society.
<b>Maryland</b>	-4 levels (Level 1,2-bronze, 3-silver, 4-gold) -Accreditation recognized at level 4	-NAEYC, NAFCC, NAA, NECPA, Maryland State Dept. of Education -A program has to be accredited to be a level 4. In levels 2 a program must have begun the self-study process. In level 3 a program must have their self-study completed. Accreditation is one out of seven of the standards.	-Yes, in addition to being accredited a program must consider staff credentialing, continued training, learning environment, staff compensation, parent involvement and program evaluation that are beyond accreditation standards.
<b>Massachusetts</b>	4 levels (level 1-4) -Accreditation is recognized at levels 2, 3, 4	-Accreditation is recognized at levels 2, 3 and 4 by NAEYC	-Yes, they must meet all requirements for each level to move to the next and additional requirements are needed.
<b>Mississippi</b>	-5 levels (Step 1-5) -Accreditation not recognized	-Accreditation not recognized at any level. -ERS visits and scores are considered at all levels.	-N/A. Accreditation not recognized.
<b>Montana</b>	-3 levels (licensed/registered, 1-star child care, 2-star child care) -Accreditation is recognized at the top level	-NAEYC, NAFCC and NAA -In order to be a “2-Star Child Care” (top level designation), a program has to be accredited.	-Yes, all staff have to be at a certain level on the state registry and turnover has to be monitored.

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<b>New Hampshire</b>	-3 levels (licensed, licensed plus, accredited) -Accreditation is recognized at the top level	-NAEYC, NAFCC, NAA -In order to be at the top level (“accredited” designation) a program has to meet accreditation standards.	-No, accreditation is the main component at the top level. Other components along with accreditation are a license that is in full compliance and staff who have attended workshops on the NH Early Learning Standards.
<b>New Mexico</b>	-5 levels (Levels 1,2,3,4,5) -Accreditation is recognized at level 5	-NAEYC, NAA, NAFCC, NECPA, Council on Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International -Accreditation is a separate standard and doesn’t come into affect until level 5. In order to be at the top designation, a program has to be accredited.	-Yes, since accreditation is one of five elements (standards) all other standards have to be met in addition to being accredited to be a level 5.
<b>North Carolina</b>	-Points are not awarded for accreditation	-No points for accreditation but rather for ERS scores	-N/A-no points awarded for accreditation
<b>Ohio</b>	-3 Levels ( Steps 1-3) -Accreditation recognized at Steps 2, 3	-Accreditation serves as an Alternatie Pathway for reaching the Ratio, Group Size Indicator at Steps 2 and 3	-Yes, must meet an overll ERS score of 5
<b>Oklahoma</b>	-4 levels (one star, one star plus, two star, three star) -Accreditation recognized at top level	-An approved national accrediting body (centers, school-age), NAFCC (FCC) -When accreditation is reached, a program must meet all requirements in other levels and have accreditation verification to be considered a three star (top level).	-No, once a program is accredited they have reached the top level.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	-4 levels (one star-four stars) -Accreditation recognized at level 4	-NAEYC, NAA, NAFCC, NECPA, DPW Regulated, Fully Integrated Head Start -At level 4 a choice is given to programs. They either have to meet the QRS performance standards, Accreditation Performance Standards or DPW Regulated, Fully Integrated Head Start Standards for this designation.	-No, not if they chose Accreditation standards as their option for level 4.
<b>Rhode Island</b>	5 levels ( Level 1-5, with respective six BrightStars quality domains) -Accerditation recognized at Level 3, 4, 5	-Accreditation by NAEYC is recognized at Level 3, 4, 5 and can in addition to- or in place of that level’s requirements.	-NAEYC accreditation can be in addition to or replace each level’s criteria

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<b>Tennessee</b>	-4 levels (complies with licensing, one star, two star, three star) -Accreditation not recognized	-Accreditation not recognized at any level. -ERS visits and scores are considered at all levels.	-N/A. Accreditation not recognized.
<b>Vermont</b>	-4 levels -2 points awarded in Administration and Qualifications/Training arena and 1 point awarded in Families/Communities arena	-NAEYC, Head Start programs with a “Program of Quality” or “Program of Excellence”, NAFCC, NAA, NECPA -Points are awarded in three out of the five standards if a program is accredited and a program does not submit any documentation beyond the accreditation certificate, unless an area of need was noted.	-Yes, compliance and program evaluation
<b>Wisconsin</b>	-5 levels	-Accreditation is recognized at the top level (5) -Types of entities recognized as accrediting bodies at top level are: NAEYC, NAC, City of Madison, Head Start Performance Standards	-No, if a program is accredited then they automatically receive a 5-star rating

Information on accreditation was obtained from:

National Child Care Information Center (2011). QRIS quality standards. *Quality Rating and Improvement System Resource Guide: Standards and Criteria*. Retrieved from NCCIC’s web site at:  
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/qrs-criteria-websites.html>.

National Child Care Information Center (n.d.). How will existing state and national program and content Standards be incorporated into the QRIS? *Quality Rating and Improvement System Resource Guide: Standards and Criteria*. Retrieved from NCCIC’s web site at:  
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/qrisresourceguide/index.cfm?do=question&sid=3&qid=252>.

National Child Care Information Center (n.d.). Which programs will be included, e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, preschools, state-funded prekindergarten programs, school-age programs, preschool special education or early intervention programs, license-exempt providers? *Quality Rating and Improvement System Resource Guide: Initial Design Process*. Retrieved from NCCIC’s web site at:  
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/qrisresourceguide/index.cfm?do=question&sid=1&qid=152>.

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