

STANDARDS FOR IMPLEMENTING QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. If an organization has more than one program, are all programs required to go through the validation process?**

No. The validation process is voluntary except for programs receiving funds from the State under the Judith P. Hoyer Child Care and Education Enhancement Grant. The validation process refers to an individual program site, not an entire organization.

- 2. If an organization has child care for infants and toddlers as well as preschool age children will both program components have to participate in the validation process?**

Yes. All programs operating in the same location, must participate in the validation process simultaneously.

- 3. Can public prekindergarten and kindergarten programs located in the same facility go through the validation separately?**

Yes. It is highly recommended that the total early childhood program pursue accreditation simultaneously, but individual programs may go through the process at separate times.

- 4. Are self-contained and inclusive classrooms included in the validation process?**

Yes. The validation process may be used for all early childhood programs birth to six years.

- 5. Will a validator automatically be sent on the projected date for validation indicated on the application form?**

No. Programs must request a validation date in writing when submitting the validation request packet. The date will be confirmed by MSDE.

- 6. If there is a change in the Director and/or School Administrator of a program during the validation process, will the process continue?**

Yes. The program should immediately notify MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation -Validation Project of the change. The self-appraisal process may continue. The new Director and/or School Administrator should become familiar with the validation process.

- 7. How long is the Certificate of Accreditation/ Validation valid?**

Once the accreditation/validation is awarded, it is valid for 3 years from the date of the Decision Committee's decision.

- 8. Can a program be granted a time extension to satisfactorily meet all accreditation/ validation Standards?**

Yes. Programs that do not initially receive accreditation/validation may receive it later pending the implementation of the program improvement within one year. This extension is only granted after a validation visit and Decision Committee's decision.

- 9. Can a program be granted a time extension beyond the 2 years of completion?**

No. The program has 2 years to complete program accreditation/validation.

10. Is the accreditation/validation process mandatory?

No. The accreditation/validation process is voluntary except for those programs receiving funds from the State under the Judith P. Hoyer Child Care and Education Enhancement Grant. These programs must complete or become State or Nationally accredited prior to the end of their grant period.

11. Do programs have to pay a fee for the State's accreditation/validation process?

No. The MSDE validation process is free. However, National accreditation programs charge fees for their accreditation process.

12. What are the benefits of a program going through the accreditation/validation process?

Among the benefits are eligibility for specific State funds, program improvement, improved customer satisfaction, professional growth among staff, and public recognition as a quality program. Public school, child care and Head Start teachers, who hold a Maryland certificate, may receive one (1) Continuing Professional Development credit for participating in the validation process. CPD credits may only be awarded once for participating in this process.

13. Can validator(s)' ratings be appealed?

No. The director/school administrator of programs will have the opportunity to comment on the validator's ratings during the exit conference of the validation day.

14. Can the required documentation be organized by indicator number?

No. The required documents must be organized in binders by document. Programs should use the required documentation checklist and the dividers provided by MSDE. Dividers may be downloaded from the MSDE website.

15. Should all representative examples listed in the instrument be observed or documented?

All representative examples noted with a bolded icon (☐ and ○) are required. Representative examples are the examples that validate the corresponding indicator and meet the best practice criteria.

16. Who can conduct an orientation?

Regional orientations are conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education. Participants from local school systems and early childhood programs who attend the orientation will receive information about the validation/accreditation process. Representatives from programs should share the received information with all staff members and parents who will be involved in the self-appraisal and validation process.

17. When should a current validated/accredited program begin the process if they wish to continue their status as a validated/accredited program?

To continue the status as a validated/accredited program, a program should conduct the self-appraisal rating, make program improvements, have a validation visit and receive a validation/accreditation decision prior to the end of the effective validation/accreditation date.

18. How should a small group be accredited?

Small group programs are accredited using the same procedure and documents as center-based programs.