

Commission Culture Commitments

The Commission and Accreditation Handbooks provide significant guidance on the accreditation process as well as the policies and practices that undergird the system and the Commission's work.¹ In addition, we recognize that as an organization we have a distinct culture that is sometimes visible and sometimes invisible. In the spirit of transparency, following is an attempt to make visible key cultural values and practices of the Commission.

- We value maintaining unity and trust in our work. This means:
 - We trust that each of us operates with good intentions and in the best interest of our purpose as a Commission.
 - We value honest, open and respectful communication with each other.
 - We respect that each of us brings significant professional experiences that can inform and advance our shared understanding of the accreditation standards, early childhood programs, and the accreditation system.
 - We value the diversity of our group, which includes but is not limited to past and current personal and professional experiences, institutions which members are serving, and the variety of opinions of each Commissioner.
 - We promote diversity as an asset by including opportunities to engage in deliberation, naming cultural and geographic norms, and disrupting systemic inequities that our review process reveals.
 - We appreciate and actively solicit differing perspectives on issues and cases that come before the Commission and recognize that there may be times when we disagree on a decision.
 - To the extent possible, though, we work toward reaching consensus in making accreditation decisions.

- We expect that each of us will come prepared to the Commission meeting. This means:
 - We recognize the value of our work together in panels to review cases. Working in panels allows each case to have multiple individuals reviewing it and contributes to Commissioners having manageable caseloads. Panels' work together is grounded in trust (as articulated in the section above), and panel members support each other in their reviews.
 - We fulfill our responsibilities and meet deadlines related to our work. If we are unable to meet a deadline, we are up front with our colleagues and work to fulfill our assignments as soon as possible after the deadline.
 - Out of respect for the time our colleagues' block off to review cases and to ensure there is adequate time for all cases to be thoroughly reviewed, we submit our draft recommendations for accreditation cases in Basecamp by the published deadline
 - We review and provide feedback on our panel's cases in Basecamp by the published deadline
 - We proactively seek help from our panels and other Commissioners if we have questions about our cases, need others to weigh in on issues related to the case, or need additional assistance or support.

¹ The Commission abides by the policies in the Accreditation and Commission Handbooks. In particular, the Code of Ethics (Commission Handbook) describes the behaviors and expectations for how Commissioners will conduct themselves individually and collectively while conducting the business of the Commission. If needed, the complaints policy (Accreditation Handbook) provides the process for managing concerns that may arise while Commissioners conduct business.

- For our panel’s assigned cases, we identify the questions, concerns or other issues that we need to address when our panel meets prior to and/or during the Commission meeting.
- We are familiar with all of the cases on the Commission agenda.
 - Before we vote on a case we have read its Discussion and Decision Guide (including cases on the consent agenda). For cases where there are significant questions/concerns (such as for potential adverse cases), we review their Self-Study Reports, Peer Review Reports and Written Responses as needed.
- We bring a laptop to the in-person meetings or printed copies of all materials related to accreditation cases so that we have access to all documents that can inform accreditation decisions.
- We foster a collegial atmosphere to facilitate our work. This means:
 - We build relationships with each other and value opportunities to socialize outside of the meeting, including the Commission Dinner at the in-person meeting, if at all possible.
 - We recognize that being engaged at meetings is critical to our work and to building relationships with each other.
 - We commit to attend every Commission meeting, both online and in person.
 - We participate fully while we are at the meetings.
 - We focus on the case that is under discussion
 - We manage our email and phone calls during the breaks in the meeting
 - We offer and receive feedback from colleagues (whether on documents such as DDGs as well as in Basecamp and meeting deliberations) in a constructive and supportive manner.
 - The Commission and staff work in partnership to support each other.
- We commit to upholding the *Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement* in our work with each other and in leading the accreditation system.
 - We regularly reflect on our individual culture, personal beliefs, values, and biases and how they influence our interactions with each other and decision-making with regard to our role as a Commissioner.
 - We regularly reflect on our Commission culture, beliefs, values, and biases and how they influence our decision-making as an accrediting body.
 - We take responsibility for biased actions, even if unintended, and actively work to repair the harm.
 - We seek to identify and address ways in which the accreditation system and our work as a Commission may be in conflict with the tenets of the *Advancing Equity Position Statement*.
 - We are committed to disrupting systemic inequities that our review process reveals.