NAEYC Accreditation of Early Learning Programs
NAEYC.org/academy

NAEYC Accreditation Site Visit Protocol

Early Learning Programs

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Contents

Introduction

For all programs to receive a fair and equitable site visit assessment, NAEYC assessors must plan and execute site visits consistently. This protocol applies to NAEYC's accreditation assessment Version 2022, for programs with 6-month visit windows beginning on or after January 1, 2022.

This document describes procedures relevant to all types of site visits NAEYC currently conducts –

- Accreditation Visits (AV, the most common type of site visit)
- Reliability Visits (a subtype of AV)
- Verification Visits (VV)
- Random Visits (RV)

Accreditation Visit (AV) protocols are described in detail. Later sections describe how protocols for other visit types diverge from the standard AV protocol.

Hardware, Applications, and NAEYC Systems

Hardware and Software

All assessors are required to have a tablet or other hand-held computer capable of displaying, storing, and transmitting NAEYC site visit materials. A cell phone is not sufficient as the viewing screen is too small. The assessment device needs to be loaded with:

- software capable of running Adobe Acrobat writable files
- a scanner application (recommended) or camera
- a connection to cloud storage through Microsoft OneDrive and SharePoint

Transmission capability can be via Wi-Fi only, but a cellular data connection is desirable. See "Post Visit Protocol and Procedures" below for more information about data transmission.

NAEYC Accreditation Information System (AIS), also known as "Accreditation Portal"

NAEYC's data management system for Early Learning Program Accreditation is referred to by NAEYC staff as the Accreditation Portal (the portal).

Program User Interface: Programs are responsible for entering all information related to NAEYC accreditation into the portal. Programs should access the portal at least annually to ensure it is up to date. The portal contains all the information submitted during enrollment, application, candidacy/renewal, and accreditation maintenance steps. The portal also manages communications to programs about steps in their accreditation process, receives payments, records accreditation decisions, and receives appeals. The TORCH section of the portal connects programs to accreditation materials and resources.

Assessor User Interface: The portal is where assessors receive and accept visit assignments, view program descriptive information, and schedule site visits. Assessors must log into the portal to record their planning and completion of a visit. The portal is referred to throughout this protocol to inform programs and assessors when specific data needs to be entered at various stages of the visit process.

Files used in NAEYC Site Visits

There are several documents and files that are used throughout the course of a visit. These include the rating tools, worksheets, forms, and various other documents that support the completion of the visit. The completed tools, worksheets, and supporting documents are proprietary and confidential. The forms and blank copies of the tools are publicly available.

Assessors access these materials through internal procedures and create a set of visit materials that are tailored to each program. Programs have access to copies of the tools and forms through the NAEYC website and TORCH.

Personal Protective Equipment may be needed for Site Visits

Assessors conducting visits may need to be equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE) as local COVID vaccination and infection rates fluctuate across the country. PPE needed at individual programs will vary. NAEYC suggests assessors acquire the following:

- well-fitted, comfortable face masks
- hand sanitizer
- personal thermometer (for ongoing self-monitoring of your temperature)
- at-home COVID tests

Per updated guidance and NAEYC policies dated September 29, 2022, assessors are no longer required to wear face masks when conducting visits. However, assessors may choose to wear a face mask at their discretion and in accordance with current guidelines from the CDC regarding known and/or potential exposures. Assessors must wear a face mask when the program's policies require it.

Pre-Visit Protocol and Procedures

There are 4 steps in the pre-visit scheduling process:

- The program receives notice of visit scheduling and completes the Visit Scheduling Form.
- The assessor receives and accepts the visit assignment.
- The assessor sends and the program receives a courtesy email with notice of a 15-day window during which the visit will occur.
- The assessor calls the program on the business day before the visit.

Notice of Visit Scheduling

Programs receive an email from ELP Operations once ELP accreditation systems indicate the program is at a point in the process where a visit needs to be scheduled. For candidate programs (those not currently in an existing term of accreditation) this will be when the program's candidacy is approved in the portal. For renewing programs (those currently in an existing term of accreditation) this email will sent after the 4th year annual report has been submitted through the portal.

The e-mail that programs receive includes the six-month window during which the visit will be completed along with links to the Visit Scheduling Form, Frequently Asked Questions about the visit scheduling process, the Administrator Information Packet, and this protocol. Programs must complete the Visit Scheduling Form and confirm that information in the portal is correct and up to date. Assessors use the information provided by programs in this form and the portal to schedule and plan the visit.

The Visit Scheduling Form asks programs to provide and confirm information that is critical to the planning process. This includes the following elements:

- Review and confirm program information in the portal is correct and up to date.
- Verifying the assessment version to be used in conducting the visit.
- Determining the type (electronic or physical) of portfolios the program has created.
- Whether Class Portfolios have been prepared for each class or for each age category.
- Whether the Program Portfolio is part of an approved system-wide assessment.
- Program closure dates and exclusion date selections during the six-month visit window.
- Information that will assist the assessor in arriving to the program such as security restrictions, street navigation, parking instructions, and/or public health screening requirements.
- Whether the program can offer Wi-Fi connections and private workspace for assessor use during the visit.
- **If the program requires a bilingual (English-Spanish) assessor to successfully complete the portfolio review and/or classroom observations**

If the program is not prepared to receive the visit, a one-time extension can be requested for a fee. This will extend the program’s accreditation term by an additional six-months to allow the program time to prepare for the visit. Programs should verify with their parent organization, funding partners, and state agencies to verify whether an extension is permitted prior to requesting an extension.

Programs always have the option to withdraw from the accreditation process at any time by submitting a Withdrawal Form.

Visit Assignment

Assessors review their assignments in the portal to ensure they are aware of all assigned visits.
Assessors must accept or decline each assignment within 5 days of receipt. For more detailed instructions on how to receive and accept visit assignments in AIS, see Appendix 3.

Assessors must consider whether there is a perceived or actual conflict of interest when visits are assigned. If there is a known conflict of interest, assessors indicate this in the portal and the program is reassigned. This will permanently prevent the program from being assigned to any assessor with a conflict of interest in the future. If there ceases to be a conflict of interest in the future, ELP Operations staff can remove the conflict of interest in the portal.

Conflict of Interest

There **is** a conflict of interest if:

- The assessor conducted a visit at the program within the past year.
- The assessor has any fiduciary (financial or oversight) connection to the program.

There **may** be a conflict of interest if:

- The assessor previously worked for or consulted with the program, or with a parent organization of the program.
- The assessor has a direct personal relationship with the program administrator or other key staff at the program or the program's parent organization.
- The assessor knows the program and/or staff members and has a concern about their ability to conduct an impartial assessment.

These are not the only reasons for a conflict of interest. If there is any doubt whether there is a conflict of interest, ELP senior assessment staff are available to assist in deciding.

There may be additional circumstances (such as overall work volume or personal scheduling issues) that prevent an assessor from being able to accept a visit**.** In this circumstance, the portal will not prevent the program from being assigned to the assessor in the future.

Accepted assignments will appear in the assessor's assigned visit queue in the portal.

Returning a Visit. There may be a time when an assessor is unable to follow through with conducting a visit after it was accepted, and the pre-visit process was started. In this circumstance, the assessor must email their supervisor as soon as they realize they will be unable to complete the assignment.

Once the program is formally returned, it will be removed from the assessor's assigned visit queue. The visit will be reassigned to another assessor and the visit scheduling process will continue.

Six-Month Window Extension

The assessor is responsible for managing their calendar and scheduling visits within the 6-month window provided to the program. If there are concerns about meeting a 6-month window, this must be communicated with their supervisor within 2 months of the window closing (EX. If a programs window is 4/1-10/1, any issues with scheduling the visit must be discussed with the supervisor by 8/1). The supervisor will support the assessor with finding time within their calendar to schedule the visit, if possible. The expectation is that 6-month windows will be met and not extended unless there is an extenuating circumstance, or the program submits for an extension.

If the assessor and their supervisor are unable to find time for the program to be scheduled, a request will be put out to the assessor team to see if another assessor has time to conduct the site visit within the 6-month window. If this is still not possible, the supervisor will make a request to the Manager of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation for approval of an extension along with any information as to why the window was missed. If the program is extended, they will be scheduled as soon as possible within the new window provided. A second extension will not be approved.

Length of Visit

The size of the program, and therefore the number of observations required, determines the number of days and assessors needed for a site visit. Site visits are typically completed in one day or two consecutive weekdays.

Visit length can also be influenced by the program's hours of operation, the schedules of individual classes, and the possibility that assessors are conducting reliability checks or collecting research data in addition to basic visit tasks. Standard accreditation visits have a maximum of 10 observations. The number of assessors and/or days are as follows:

A single assessor should not conduct more than 4 observations in a single day. Up to five observations per day are allowable on VV visits so long as adequate breaks are scheduled. In some instances (e.g., remoteness of the site), it may make more sense for a single assessor to conduct an extremely large program (9-10 observation) over 3 days rather than bring a co-assessor. This requires approval from senior ELP accreditation staff.

There may also be times when it makes sense to change an accreditation visit from a two-day to a one-day visit mid-way through the visit. This may occur for a variety of reasons, such as shared Class Portfolios, a well-organized Program Portfolio, or an unexpected decrease in the number of observations. If it seems logical and fits with the travel schedule, assessors may change the number of visit days after receiving appropriate approval.

Length of Visit Guidelines[1] for Accreditation Site Visits		
This many observation(s) in the visit…	***… will require …***	
1, 2, 3 or 4 observations	1 Assessor for	1 Visit Day
4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 observations	1 Assessor for	2 Visit Days
	OR	
	2 Assessors for	1 Visit Day
9 or 10 observations	2 Assessors for	2 Visit Days

Overseas Visits

Due to the global health pandemic and restrictions on international travel, accreditation site visits overseas may continue to be difficult to conduct. These visits are likely to require additional planning and consideration with relation to travel restrictions, housing options, and the amount of COVID community spread in the specific location.

Multiple Related Visit Assignments

When assessors are assigned two or more program assignments in the same geographic area attempts are made to coordinate visit scheduling to save travel time and expense.

15-Day Window and Visit Planning

The 15-Day Window notification is a courtesy to program staff to aid in planning and final preparations for the site visit. Failure to receive this e-mail does not mean the visit cannot happen or that the data collected during the visit is invalid. Accredited programs and those pursuing accreditation are expected to always provide high quality learning environments and practices.

Determine Visit Date and 15-Day Window

Assessors review the non-operational and exclusion dates provided by the program in the Visit Scheduling Form. This information is used to determine the date(s) of the visit based on their availability, and in coordination with other visits in the same area. After planning the visit date(s), the assessor creates a 15-business-day (Monday through Friday) “window” within which the visit will occur.

The 15-business day window does not include weekend days; therefore, it may span a 3- or 4-week period. The 15 days include all Mondays through Fridays from the first date through the last date of the window. There may be federal holidays, non-operational dates, or exclusion dates within the window. These dates do not lengthen the 15-day business day window; it is understood that the visit will not occur on these dates.

The exact visit date is not communicated to the program until one business day before the visit occurs.

15-Day Window notification email: The assessor sends the program an e-mail which includes the 15-day window in which the visit will occur, the length of the visit, and other pertinent information. This confirmation also includes a link to the Administrator Information Packet (AIP) and the public site visit protocol. Assessors enable “read receipts” when sending this email. The 15-day window email template asks programs to confirm receipt. If the assessor does not receive email confirmation, they will call the program to ensure they have received it. This is documented on their pre-visit worksheet. Assessors retain all sent mail as they may be asked to provide documentation of the 15-day window notification in the event of a dispute or appeal.

Create the Visit Schedule

The schedule always includes certain standard elements but must be customized to reflect unique elements of each program and visit. Some tasks must be done in a specified sequence, or at a specific time with respect to the beginning or end of the visit. Other tasks may be ordered in whatever way best suits the program's schedule, as provided in the Visit Scheduling Form and portal, as well as the assessor's needs. Factors affecting scheduling and order of tasks include:

- Time of day the program opens and closes
  - Arrive no earlier than 7 AM and no later than 8 AM, unless the program opening time is later.
  - Arrival time may be prior to 7 AM when agreed to with the program administrator and doing so is advantageous to completing the visit in a timely manner.
  - Generally, visit days should end prior to 5 PM.
  - Associated travel costs (e.g., rental car, hotel, airline bookings) are always considered when planning the visit schedule.
- Whether classes to be observed meet full days, part days, and/or not every day
- Whether classes have nap times
- Whether the program has satellite locations
- Whether the program created shared portfolios or one portfolio per classroom

Resources have been developed for assessors to aid in the creation of the Visit Schedule. Assessors can review and use these resources when creating a schedule, until they are thoroughly familiar with the tasks and times.

Random Selection of Classes

Random selection of classes for assessment is necessary to maintain the validity of the NAEYC Early Learning Program Accreditation system. Random selection is a research-based practice that allows for confidence in the assessment system by assuring that no human bias factors potentially contribute to the decision as to which classes are assessed.

Determining which classes and how many classes are assessed during the visit depends upon the following guidelines:

- Assess at least 50% of the total number of classes in the program**,** to a maximum of 10; For purposes of determining how many classes to assess, part-day and part-week classes that have the same lead teacher in the same classroom space are a single class.
- Assess at least one class from each eligible age category (infant, toddler/two, preschool, kindergarten, and school age as applicable);
- In multi-site programs, assess at least one class from each site.
- Within each age category, use a random selection process to determine the specific classes to be assessed.

Visit Scheduling – some Common-Sense Considerations

- Nap times are considered when scheduling class observations. However, infant class observations generally may be scheduled in the afternoon when other classes are napping.
- Don't schedule class observations too early in the day. Technically we can, but programs find it stressful.
- Make sure the schedule indicates the age categories of each class to be observed, and which assessor is doing each task.

Other Preparations for the Visit

Make travel plans. Assessors must refer to the NAEYC Staff Handbook when booking air travel, trains, hotels and rental cars. Air travel must be booked at least 21 days in advance; shorter time frames require approval. If there are any questions about allowable travel expenses, assessor should contact their assigned supervisor. Assessors who are conducting visits jointly must attempt coordinate plans (hotels, use of rental cars) as much as possible.

Assessors continually monitor their health when scheduling and conducting visits. It may be necessary to postpone the visit if any one of the following occur:

- Body temperature is above 100.4 degrees
- There are symptoms of respiratory illness such as fever, chills, coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell
- A health department or health care provider has advised the assessor to quarantine
- The assessor has tested positive for COVID-19 based on a self- or medically administered test.

If any of these conditions occur, assessors can resume conducting site visits in accordance with the current recommendations of local health authorities, the CDC, and their primary care physician.

Prepare assessment tools and forms. Prior to any visit, assessors ensure that they have downloaded up-to-date versions of all the files (assessment tools, forms, worksheets, schedule) required for each visit. Assessors may choose to print the Visit Schedule and the Required Item Diagram Form if their preference is to complete these forms on paper. Assessors who choose to print these documents will not be reimbursed for the associated costs.

Site visit disruptions. If at any time there are site visit operational disruptions, including pandemic-related changes in program accessibility that may impact the site visit, assessors can contact their assigned supervisor. They, along with Quality Assessment & Assurance staff, can help determine whether an operational disruption would prevent an accurate and valid assessment. If so, the manager will discuss and approve a revised visit protocol and/or postpone the visit.

Prior Day Notice Call

The *Pre-Visit Worksheet* contains a section titled “Prior Day Notice”. Assessors complete this section by calling the primary contact person on the *business day prior* to the visit. If possible, assessors make the call as early in the day as possible as a courtesy to the program; these calls should be completed no later than 2 PM local time at the program.

“Business day prior” means:

- If the visit is to start on a Wednesday, then the call will take place on Tuesday.
- If the visit is to start on a Monday, then the call will take place on Friday.
- If the program is not open on Fridays and the visit is to start on Monday, then the call will take place on Thursday.
- If the visit is to start on the day after a federal holiday, or an exclusion date, then the call will take place on the on the last fully operational day before the visit.

If the assessor is unable to reach the primary or secondary contact by telephone, they will leave visit information on voicemail or with the staff person who answered the phone. Program administrators are encouraged to reach out to their assessor by phone or email to confirm receipt of the Business-Day Prior Notification, but failure to do so does not mean the visit cannot happen. If *(and only if)* the assessor has not been able to speak to someone at the program *or* leave a voicemail, they may provide prior day notice by email. Texting is not an approved method of communication with programs.

Assessors document when they called and with whom they spoke on the Pre-Visit Worksheet. In the event there was difficulty reaching program staff, all attempted contacts are documented on the Pre-Visit Worksheet.

These calls are generally very brief but are also very important. Therefore, assessors must make every attempt to contact the program on the business-day prior through careful planning around travel and other visits they may be conducting. There may be rare circumstances in which assessors cannot make a Prior Day Notice phone call on the actual business day prior to the visit because of travel (e.g., in flight for an overseas visit during the program's local business hours). In this case, the assessor may contact the program one day before. If this early notice in necessary, this is also documented on the Pre-Visit Worksheet.

Last-Minute Program Closure. If during the Prior Day Notice call with the program, or at any point before the assessor's arrival, the program experiences an unplanned or emergency closure (i.e., weather, building problems, COVID case in the center, etc.), NAEYC will attempt to reschedule the visit within the existing 15-day window. If it is not possible to reschedule the visit within the existing 15-day window, NAEYC Operations team and the Manager of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation work to determine the next steps which may involve setting a new six-month window and/or reassignment to another assessor.

On the morning of the visit, the assessor provides a copy of the visit schedule to the program (emailed or printed). The assessor reviews the schedule with the program during the Orientation Meeting.

Site Visit Protocol and Procedures

Visit Considerations

NAEYC Digital Visit Documents

NAEYC visit documents are of 3 types: *forms, worksheets,* and *tools*.

Forms capture important processes showing how the visit was conducted. Programs have access to blank versions before the visit, and as completed versions after the visit.

Worksheets are used by the assessor to document visit planning and compile data used to rate items on tools. Worksheets are proprietary to NAEYC and are NOT shared with program administrators or staff.

Rating tools are the documents on which the specific assessment items are made. They are available to programs on our website. However, assessors never share any part of completed rating tools with the program. During a standard accreditation visit, programs are evaluated on four sources of evidence, each with a corresponding rating tool. During Verification Visits and Random Visits, the only program documentary evidence assessed is two required items; for these visits there is a Required Item Rating tool.

Source of Evidence	Rating Tool
Observed Class Practices	Class Observation (CO)
Observed Program Practices	Program Observation (PO)
Class Documentary Evidence	Class Portfolio (CP)
Program Documentary Evidence	Program Portfolio (PP)
Verification Visits & Random Visits ONLY:	Required Item Rating tool

Converting Digital Documents to Paper. The visit documents have been formatted and optimized for use on tablet computers. If there is a catastrophic failure of the device, the forms, tools, and worksheets may be printed and completed on paper.

Procedural Details of the Site Visit

Visit Schedule. Assessors annotate their copy of the *Visit Schedule* throughout the visit, showing the actual time each scheduled task was performed, and by which assessor if there is more than one conducting the visit. Assessors record actual task start and finish times for each task, even if those times are identical to the scheduled times already on the schedule. This annotated schedule becomes part of the accreditation visit record and must be submitted to NAEYC after visit completion.

ID. Assessors must have their driver's license or state issued identification in case the program requests it. Assessors may choose to provide the administrator with their business card.

Refusal of the Visit

If at the assessor's arrival, or at any time throughout the course of the site visit, the program administrator chooses to refuse the site visit, the assessor will provide the program administrator an opportunity to carefully read and complete a digital copy of the Acknowledgement of Refusal of NAEYC Visit form. Upon completion of this form the assessor will depart from the program and the visit will not be completed.

The program will receive a modified Visit Completion Packet within 48 hours.

Accepting program resources. Assessors are prepared to carry food, drinks, and office supplies they may need to the site. Assessors may accept program resources under the following conditions:

- Food and beverage: Assessors may always accept water. Coffee or tea may be accepted if the program normally provides these beverages on site. Assessors may NOT accept food or beverages purchased for them off-site. Assessors may accept other light refreshments offered on site if failing to do so would offend the cultural norms of the program. If needed, assessors will ask permission to use a microwave if one is available.
- Seating: Assessors may request seating be provided during class observations if this is a needed accommodation.

Dress. Assessors are instructed to wear functional "business casual" clothing for visits. Assessor should expect to go outside, go on walks, sit in tiny chairs or on the floor, and spend long hours at programs. Assessors are encouraged to wear layers. Assessors should refrain from wearing bold colors and/or prints and heavy fragrances to remain as unobtrusive as possible.

Your belongings. Assessors should limit belongings to only those that are required to complete the visit. The program administrator should assist the assessor in finding a safe location to store their belongings during the visit. The program should also inform the assessor of any food restrictions that might be in effect program-wide (e.g., no nut products) so that assessors can appropriately plan their food and beverage needs.

Lunch break. Lunch breaks are recommended, but it is left up to the individual assessor to decide whether to work through lunch.

Confidentiality. All information and evidence that is observed and assessed during the visit is to remain confidential. No video recording, audio recording, or photographing of evidence is permitted. Discussing evidence with assessors who are not present for rating purposes is not permitted. Questions regarding the assessment and evaluation of specific evidence should be directed to the assessor's assigned supervisor or other member of the assessor management team only.

At no time is it permissible to share details of information (written, observed, verbal, or other form) obtained throughout the course of a site visit on social media platforms or with individuals not directly involved in the accreditation site visit process, except as required by law (mandated reporter).

Early Learning Program staff members may request pertinent information pertaining to the site visit as it relates to quality assessment and assurance processes. Additionally, the Council for NAEYC Accreditation of Early Learning Programs will be provided information about the site visit when considering appeals to adverse decisions.

Orientation Meeting with the Program Administrator

(Allow about 30 minutes)

The accreditation visit begins with an orientation meeting with the program administrator. The Orientation Meeting Checklist in the *Process Verification Form* is used to assure that all the required elements of the meeting are addressed.

Introductions. Assessors identify themselves to the program administrator and any others attending the orientation meeting. If the visit is scheduled for more than a single day, the program is given the assessor's phone number in case a problem arises after hours, between days at the program.

Schedule. The visit Schedule is reviewed with the Program Administrator. The scheduled time for each task is provided on the schedule along with space for the assessor to note the actual time tasks are completed throughout the visit.

The assessor and program administrator review and confirm details of the classes that have been selected for assessment. Together, they verify that the scheduled times for class observations are times when those classes are in session and not napping. Any time when a class is in session with one or more awake child is a valid time to observe. The program administrator also confirms whether children with identified disabilities are enrolled in the classes selected for observation and whether the assessor can expect to see accommodating features in the classroom environment.

<u>Schedule problems</u>. Class observation times should NOT be moved or rescheduled around 'specials' such as art, music, or walks. Observation times may be moved or changed if a class is going on a field trip, will be transported off-site, or is not in session for some other reason. If the schedule needs to change for unseen circumstances, assessors must note the reason for the adjustment on the schedule.

If there are no children present for a selected class on the scheduled day and if it is a two-day visit, the assessor must rearrange the visit schedule to conduct the observation on the second day. If the visit is for one day only, or no children are expected for either visit day, then the next class in that age category is selected according to the randomization results. If there is no other class of children within the age category (infant, toddler/two, preschool, kindergarten, school-age), the assessor will not be able to conduct an observation for the age category. The visit may continue if this is limited to a single age category. If there are two or more missing age-categories, the visit cannot be completed and will need to be rescheduled. Assessors should contact their supervisor or other assessment managers if assistance is needed in determining whether a visit can proceed or not.

<u>Portfolios.</u> The program should show the assessor where they can privately review the portfolios. If the portfolios are not immediately available, the administrator must bring all selected portfolios to the reviewing space immediately after the orientation meeting is completed.

<u>E-portfolios.</u> If the program has created electronic class or program portfolios, program staff need to orient the assessor to the portfolio software, computer, and logistics. This is not a time in which evidence is being assessed, but rather an opportunity to understand the mechanics and navigation of the electronic portfolio(s). This may include the password(s) and login information necessary to complete the review of the portfolio on the computer, and other such information. All passwords and login information will remain confidential.

Infant Safe Sleep Exceptions. If there are any infants younger than 12 months old that have a physician's note permitting them to be placed to sleep in positions other than their back and/or with sleep positioners, the program administrator must provide the name of the child and the specific class they are enrolled in. This information is relevant to assessing required item 5A.10 on the Class Observation tool.

Review *Forms* Document. The forms bundled into the Forms Document are available to the program administrator in the Administrator Information Packet. The Forms Document (Safety Concerns Report Form, Process Verification Form, and Visit Signature Form) is reviewed with the program administrator on the assessor's device.

Access to materials. Assessors ask for permission to open closets, cabinets, and drawers while in classrooms, to best make ratings of which items are met, when necessary. If necessary, the assessor clarifies with the administrator which spaces in each classroom may or may not be accessed. Assessors will be cautious when looking through books, CDs, and other materials in the classrooms during observations. If the program declines this permission, only those materials visible at the time of the observation will be assessed.

Tamper-resistant outlets. The program administrator should inform the assessor if the program has any tamper resistant outlets in the center. If only some classes utilize tamper resistant outlets these will be noted on the *Process Verification Form*.

Mandated Reporter. It is the responsibility of the NAEYC Assessor to make program leaders aware of the mandated reporter policy and the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct during the orientation meeting as part of the Orientation Checklist.

Data collection physical tools. The assessor uses their tablet device to complete the rating tools, forms, and worksheets. A small object choke tester is also used in infant and toddler/two class observations.

Facility Orientation. The program administrator will be asked to provide a short, guided walk through the facility. This is not the official Program Observation data collection time, but just an orientation. It is helpful for program administrators Identify:

- the assessor workspace
- adult bathrooms
- outdoor learning environment access; how to re-enter.
- location(s) of selected class observations
- where staff store personal belongings
- area for nursing mothers (only rated for programs serving infants)
- where the program's space begins and ends if part of a larger, shared facility.

Accreditation Visit Tools

This section describes the rating tools used during the visit. Each of the visit tools includes two pages for assessors to write notes following the item rating pages.

The first notes page is for *internal* use only and includes a series of brief global rating scales and a space for open-ended narrative notes. The global rating scales must be completed on all tools. Item-specific notes can be made anywhere on any tool (right margins preferred); however general notes should be included on the Notes Page. General notes might convey a consistent aspect of the evidence, either good or bad. Item-specific notes are very helpful during the detailed administrative review process and if the program appeals their accreditation decision.

Item-specific notes are required for items rated NO. Exception: If several items on the same tool are rated NO for a common reason (e.g., no evidence provided, not a lesson plan), assessors may abbreviate this in item-specific notes and explain in the end note.

The second notes page has been added to the tools as of October 2022 and will be used to provide assessor feedback to the program. Assessors select at least two comments to reflect the assessment of that tool and write a brief 2-4 sentence note to the program to highlight more specific feedback. These notes will be provided to programs in their Accreditation Decision Report beginning with visit dates January 1, 2023, and later.

Portfolios.

Portfolios must be reviewed in private and without interaction with program staff. All the evidence intended to be viewed by the assessor as part of the portfolio reviews must be provided by the conclusion of the orientation meeting. Assessors will not ask for any additional documents **(see exceptions to this under the missing or incomplete evidence section)** after the conclusion of the orientation meeting and will not rely on any observed practices to rate assessment items in the portfolios. Only the Class Portfolios for the selected classrooms will be reviewed**.**

Evidence may be organized and presented in a variety of ways (e.g., crates, manila folders, **and**/or binders of information, a digitized portfolio on a computer). Evidence may be arranged by standards, topics, and items, or by some other organizational scheme (such as indexing). All these methods are acceptable. Programs must clearly highlight and/or label each piece of evidence with the item(s) they believe it meets; however, it is possible this may not have been done. If the evidence provided is not well organized or labeled, assessors will review the information given and do their best to rate each item on the *relevant* tool. Assessors should never comment to program staff about the quality of portfolios.

Assessors complete the rating scales on the Notes Page following the completion of the tool. End notes are optional but very helpful if several items were rated No for the same reason (e.g., no evidence provided; no labels or highlighting). It is recommended that assessors plug their device into an outlet or portable battery charger during the review of portfolios to preserve battery life for observations.

A note on shared evidence.

Programs are expected to provide evidence that is authentic, and representative of the policies, procedures, and practices employed by that specific program and in the specific classrooms in that specific program.

Approved System-wide Program Portfolios are an option for organizations or entities that have 5 or more programs in the Early Learning Program Accreditation system. This process allows such organizations and entities to submit evidence for specified assessment items which is rated and approved for all programs under the organization or entity.

Programs wishing to share Program Portfolio evidence outside of the approved System-wise Program Portfolio process may do so only for the same items specified for use in the approved System-wide Program Portfolio process, and it is not guaranteed by NAEYC Early Learning Program Accreditation that ratings will be consistently applied across programs given potential differences in how the evidence is presented.

It is permissible for programs to create shared Class Portfolios in the circumstance where the classes serve the same age category of children, utilize the same curriculum and teaching practices, and have access to the same or similar materials and equipment. Assessors always evaluate the provided evidence in context of what is Developmentally Appropriate Practice for the age categories represented in any particular Class Portfolio. Class Portfolios are intended to be a meaningful reflective and professional practice for educators within a specific classroom or program. It is not permissible for class portfolios to be shared amongst multiple programs.

If it becomes apparent to an assessor during a portfolio review that the documentation is not a true and accurate reflection of the specific program at which the visit is being conducted, the assessor will rate the applicable assessment item(s) as unmet and provide detailed notes for quality assessment and assurance staff members.

Missing or incomplete evidence.

Programs are expected to provide the assessor with complete portfolios at the time of the site visit. It is the program's responsibility to ensure that all evidence is accounted for and present in the portfolios. Only in the follow circumstances will an assessor pause assessment of the Program Portfolio or a Class Portfolio to inquire about missing evidence:

- **Entire standard(s) missing.**
- **Entire topic area(s) missing.**
- **More than 15 Program Portfolio items across standards and topic areas missing.**
- **More than 10 Class Portfolio items across standards and topic areas missing.**
- **More than 5 broken or inaccessible links within an electronic portfolio.**

In these circumstances only, the program administrator is provided no more than 10 minutes to locate and provide the missing documentation or address the broken/inaccessible links. Assessors will make a note on the visit schedule to account for the time provided to the program. Assessors will not provide a detailed list of items missing evidence but can point the administrator to the issues identified (e.g., "All of standard 4 appears to be missing", "The links for staff professional development are saying I don't have permission", "There is a number of items missing evidence across the standards."

This is NOT an opportunity for the program to create new evidence. **It is intended only for the program administrator(s) to rectify the issue if it is something that can quickly be addressed.** If the program is unable to quickly provide missing documentation or has confirmed that the missing documentation is not available, the assessor will continue with their review. Assessors must make notes on the tool about what specifically was requested and what remains missing if anything. This should also be documented in the assessor evaluation of the site visit.

Portfolio Review Times

Under each type of portfolio review, there is a recommended scheduled timeframe assessors typically take to review portfolios. Review times may vary to be less than the time allotted and schedules will be updated to reflect the actual review time. At the discretion of the assessor, an additional 15 minutes for each Class Portfolio and 30 minutes for a Program Portfolio can be added if more time is needed to complete the review(s). If there is additional time needed beyond this, the assessor may reach out to a member of the ELP Accreditation leadership team for approval. Variance in time may happen for many reasons and is not indicative of the scoring outcome.

Program Portfolio (PP)

(Scheduled for two hours for most; 1 hour for programs using a system-wide PP)

The program portfolio review time may be split into two sections of time totaling up to the full scheduled amount of 2- hours for full program portfolios. The assessment items rated in the program portfolio tool are restricted to only the evidence provided in the program portfolio and are independent of what is observed throughout the course of the visit.

System-Wide PP Tools. If the program is part of a larger system that has had parts of its Program Portfolio pre-rated, there will be a PP tool specific for that system for use on the site visit.

Assessing Item 5A.15 (staff first aid and CPR training) and Required Item 10B.16 (License to Operate). To rate these items in the Program Portfolio, the assessor first completes the *First Aid and CPR Worksheet* and the *License to Operate Worksheet* -- both are found in the *Worksheets* document.

Class Portfolios (CP)

(Scheduled for 30 - 45 minutes each)

Class portfolios are rated for only the classes randomly selected for observation. These may be scheduled for review before or after the time of the corresponding class observation. In either case, a class's CP evidence must be rated independently of what was directly observed in the classroom.

Shared CPs. Programs are permitted to submit a single class portfolio to represent more than one class within the same age category. Shared CPs are rated based on the program's description of which classes share portfolios. Concerns about whether the CP provides adequate evidence for all the classes it was said to represent should be documented on the CP Notes Page.

Assessors note ALL the classes to which the ratings apply on the cover page of the tool. Documents should also be named to reflect all the classes that are represented in the shared CP. The visit schedule should correctly reflect that multiple classes were rated on a single CP review.

If the program has prepared a shared class portfolio that contains evidence for 2 or more age categories, but the classes are single-age classes, assessors complete an all-age CP tool to rate the evidence. Assessors must then copy the ratings to single-age tools for each specific age category and adjust the appropriate NOT AGE item ratings.

> *Example: Program 123456 presents a shared CP for the Baby Bears class and the Honeybees class. However, Baby Bears has only children in the Infant age category, while Honeybees has only children in the Toddler/Two age category. The CP contains both infant and toddler/two evidence. Assessors rate the evidence using an all-ages tool. Then transfer the ratings to an Infant CP for the Baby Bears and a Toddler CP for the Honeybees. Both tools are submitted for scoring.*

Program Observation (PO)

(Schedule 15 minutes; more for large programs)

The *Program Observation (PO)* tool contains a brief set of items that require overall review of the program facility, both inside and outside. All items related to the physical characteristics of outdoor learning environments are included on the PO tool. The PO also assesses the adult spaces of the program. If assessing a program with satellite locations, only one PO assessment is conducted at the site with the largest number of classrooms.

Note that the program observation made while completing the PO tool is not the same as the facility orientation done as part of the Orientation Meeting. Assessors must complete the PO tool unaccompanied by program staff. Like Class Observation ratings, PO tool ratings must be made while the observation is in progress -- not before or afterward.

Cover Page: The cover page for this tool asks assessors to note the specific program areas assessed and additional information out outdoor learning environments and indoor gross moto spaces used by the program.

Notes Page: There are rating scales on the PO Notes Page that should be completed as the end of the Program Observation. Narrative notes are optional for this tool but should be completed when the assessor is unable to adequately assess one or more outdoor environments due to weather conditions or other constraints.

Class Observation (CO)

(Scheduled for EXACTLY one hour for direct observation of children and program staff.)

Guidelines for Conducting Class Observations. The following guidelines help ensure that the class observation process is conducted as unobtrusively as possible.

- All talk is kept to a minimum. Assessors do no initiate conversation with program staff or children. Assessors will respond to program staff questions, remarks, or attempts to point them to specific evidence by stating the observation protocol does not allow for interaction or interference and that if they do need anything (e.g., to confirm staff names, child names, birthdates, or to alert them of an imminent hazard to child safety) they will ask.
- Assessors do not interfere with the class activities in any way and will move if they are in the way of teachers or children.
- Assessors station themselves around the perimeter of the classroom as discreetly as possible. They may walk around to get a better vantage point during the observation.
- Assessors may sit in a chair or on the floor. They should not sit on other furniture such as shelves, tables, the children's chairs near an activity table, or on play equipment.
- Demeanor: Assessors are expected to be cordial and pleasant when interacting with staff and children. Staff may be nervous about the visit, and assessors will do their best to put them at ease. Assessors may acknowledge and respond to children if they are approached, but do not initiate conversations or otherwise take part in classroom activities. Assessors are encouraged to tell children that they are watching the class play or that they must finish their work. If a child is interested in what is on the assessor's tablet, assessors may show them that it is nothing interesting to them!
- Assessor should bring outdoor wear into the classroom if there is a chance, they will be following a class outside during the hour.
- Class observations may begin if the class includes at least one awake child and one teaching staff member. Assessors do not begin an observation if no children have arrived, if all children have departed for the day, or if there are children present but they are all asleep.
- While conducting the observation, assessors stay with children and staff for one hour, wherever they are. If the class moves outside, the assessor must follow along. If a class breaks into subgroups, it is the assessor's discretion to choose one or the other subgroup to stay with. The time the class observation starts is noted on the CO cover page along with the time the assessor leaves the class.
- Upon starting each observation, assessors confirm the names of the teaching staff present and the status of other adults present (parents, volunteers, administrators). It may be that this can be determined by reading staff name tags, seeing their photos posted, or listening to their conversations. If none of these means is available, assessors will briefly ask staff to confirm their names, and then begin the observation. Assessors do not ask staff about children with special needs or ask them about looking through closets and cabinets.
- Small objects choke testers are brought into infant/toddler/two observations.
- Assessors must follow the program policy regarding shoes in infant rooms.
- Assessors must silence their cell phone and/or tablet and do not receive or make phone calls or text messages during observations.
- When conducting the class observation, assessors are considering the full experience of the children in the identified class. Therefore, in instances where two or more classes are combined (for example, in an outdoor space) or there are other adults in the room, all teacher/adult – child interactions are considered when completing ratings.

- <u>End Notes</u>: Assessors are required to make notes within the CO Notes Page, and to complete the rating scales. Notes generally address what went on in the observation period. Notes are written as objectively as possible. Assessors will state the facts and describe what they are seeing. Assessors should not give general information regarding the program, the weather, or situations unless they have affected the observation.
- <u>Item-specific notes:</u> It is required for assessors to make item-specific notes throughout the tool where items are rated as unmet.
- <u>Notes about unmet required items</u>: If assessors witness the potential failure of a required assessment item during an observation, they must write detailed notes describing what child and/or adult was involved, the time or duration of the incident (if applicable) and the setting. The assessor should make a note on the CO Notes page stating that a detailed description of a potentially failed required item can be found on the Required Item Report Form. The *Required Item Diagram Form* can be used when a sketch or drawing of the program space may provide important context regarding the observed incident.
- If an infant is observed being placed to sleep in a position other than his/her back (required item 5A.10), at the end of the observation the assessor will confirm the name and age of the child (and document how this was confirmed). If the assessor was not told in the Opening Meeting that the program has a doctor's note for that child permitting them to place the baby to sleep in a different position, or on a sleep positioner, then the item is rated NO for 5A.10 and the assessor complete a Required Item Report Form.
- If the class goes outside during the observation, the assessor's task is to continue to observe and evaluate curriculum, teaching, and relationship practices. The rating of physical characteristics of the outdoor learning environment is made on the Program Observation tool.

<u>Time Exceptions to the 1-hour norm for class observations</u>. Sometimes the length of an observation may be extended to complete all ratings. Assessors note the start/end times of the time exception on the cover page of the tool and review these exceptions with the administrator at the Closing Meeting. Time exceptions to the 1-hour observation protocol may be taken for one of these 2 reasons:

1. To complete ratings of physical environment elements in the primary classroom environment. The assessor will take extra time if most or all of the one-hour observation occurs when the class is outside or in a secondary inside learning space (such as indoor gross motor room or library). Children do not have to be present during the time exception.
2. For infant classes, if no children are awake for at least 20 minutes of the standard 1-hour observation period. The minutes of "awake" time do not need to be consecutive. If 20 minutes of awake time has not been observed by the end of the 60-minute observation, the assessor will observe the class for additional time until a total of 20 minutes of awake time is observed:

   - If at least one child is awake at the end of the regular period, the observation can continue.
   - If no child is awake at the end of the regular 1-hour period, the assessor will speak with the staff to arrange an appropriate time to return to the class when the children will most likely be awake.
   - Assessors will make a notation of the total awake time and any time frames in which all infants are asleep on the CO Notes page.
   - If either type of 10-minute exception is taken, it will be noted on page 1 of the Class Observation tool.

Required Items

Required items are those that are considered essential to program quality. Failure to meet any one of these items during the site visit will trigger a specific write-up by the assessor and will result in the program receiving an adverse accreditation decision.

These are the required items, in brief:

Required item	Source of Evidence	Item Description
1B.4	Class Observation	Guidance/discipline practices observed
3C.3	Class Observation	Infant/toddler/two supervision practices observed
3C.2	Class Observation	Infant/toddler/two supervision practices observed
3C.7	Class Observation	Preschool supervision practices observed
3C.6	Class Observation	Preschool supervision practices observed
3C.8	Class Observation	Kindergarten/ school age supervision practices observed
5A.10	Class Observation	Infants placed on backs to sleep -- observed
1B.10	Program Portfolio	Guidance/discipline policy
10B.16	Program Portfolio	Program is licensed or regulated, and in good standing

If at any time during a visit the assessor reviews documentary evidence or directly observes evidence of a potential failure to comply with any of the listed items, this protocol is followed by the assessor:

1. Complete the Required Item Report Form (RIRF).
2. Document on the Notes Page of tool: Indicate on the CO or PP Notes Page that there was a failure of a required item and that details are found on the Required Item Report Form.
3. If a child is in *immediate risk for harm or abuse* the assessor must halt the observation and **follow the Mandated Reporter Policy below.**
4. Send an email with the Required Item Report Form to qualityassurance@naeyc.org. Quality Assurance will contact the program within 3 business days to let them know of the failure if the administrative review process determines the required item has not been met.

Mandated Reporter Policy

A mandated reporter is required to report any situation where they suspect or have reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected. The The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct requires NAEYC assessors conducting work on behalf of Early Learning Program Accreditation to take steps to protect children from practices and situations that endanger their health, safety, or well-being. Under these circumstances, NAEYC Assessors are required to stop a site visit and make a report to local authorities (licensing/regulatory bodies, police department, child protection agencies, etc.). If the assessor is unsure where or when to report, please contact NAEYC General Counsel to help advise.

If an assessor observed such a situation, they should take the following steps:

- **Ensure the health and safety of any children impacted which, in certain situations, may mean intervention by the assessor (e.g., removing the child from an unsafe situation preventing abuse, or requesting assistance from other program staff or administrators) which may include calling emergency services or local authorities if an immediate threat or unsafe situation is happening.**
- **After it is determined that children are safe, the assessor contacts their direct supervisor to discuss the situation that was witnessed.**
    - **If the supervisor is unavailable, the team member should contact the Manager or Accreditation or the Director, Quality Assessment and Assurance**
    - **If local authorities or emergency services have not been called, the assessor should call the appropriate authority to report the situation**
- **Informs the program administrator of the situation that was observed, NAEYC's requirement to report to whichever local authority we determine to be appropriate, and that the visit has been halted.**
- **The assessor completes an incident form then provides the program administrator with time to add their response in the correct section on the incident form. The assessor and program administrator sign the form.**
- **The assessor stays onsite until the local authorities have the information needed.**
- **The assessor submits the completed incident form and any other necessary information to Quality Assurance by the end of the business day on the date of the incident.**
- **The assessor informs Quality Assurance of any further requests for information or documentation from the program, licensing/regulatory authorities, local policy, child protection agencies when requests are received.**
- **The assessor is not authorized to make a statement to news or media outlets. Such requests should be forwarded to the Managing Director, Early Learning.**
- **Quality Assurance team members ensure that appropriate ELP Directors and NAEYC General Counsel are informed of the situation and apprised of any new developments as they occur.**

After and accreditation visit is halted due to suspected child abuse, neglect, failure to provide a safe environment, or failure to protect children from imminent harm, Quality Assurance calls the program the same day the visit is halted to inform the program of (a) next steps and (b) information that will need to be provided.

- **There will be no accreditation decision issued based on the data collected during the visit prior to it being halted.**
- **The program must submit a 72-Hour report to Quality Assurance and respond to all requests for additional information, including but not limited to policy reports, licensing/regulatory reports, and investigation results.**

- **If the program is currently accredited, the Scope and Severity review may result in revocation of the remainder of the Accreditation term.**
- **The program, whether currently accredited or not, will not be permitted to re-engage with the accreditation process until the program is able to demonstrate full and valid compliance with the applicable licensing or regulatory authority. This information will be provided to NAEYC's Quality Assurance Department.**
- **The program will not be able to re-engage in the accreditation process for at least 6 months from the date of the incident to ensure proper time for any investigations or inspections to take place with resolution. When the program can demonstrate full and valid compliance with the applicable licensing or regulatory authority, a new application may be submitted. However, an accreditation site visit will not be scheduled if the program is unable to meet Required Item 10B. 16.**

Assessor Worksheets

Assessor worksheets have been created to aid the completion of some tasks and ratings. The worksheets are bundled together as a single document (filename= <ID#> Worksheets). These worksheets are also available as stand-alone documents to be used when co-assessors are working together. There are worksheets to be completed prior to, during, and after the site visit:

- Before the visit (see "Pre-Visit Protocol and Procedures" section for details):
  - Pre-Visit Worksheet
  - Randomization Worksheets
    - Class Selection and Randomizer Worksheet
    - First Aid and CPR Randomization Worksheet
- During the visit:
  - First Aid and CPR Worksheet
  - License to Operate Worksheet
- After the visit (see "Post-Visit Protocol and Procedures" section for details):
  - Document Transmission Checklist

First Aid and CPR Worksheet

This is used to assist in the rating of item 5A.15, to determine if each class is routinely staffed with at least one staff member who has current pediatric first aid and pediatric CPR certifications. Item 5A.15 is assessed in the Program Portfolio. Assessors complete the worksheet by matching staffing pattern documents with evidence of teaching staff first aid and CPR training certifications for <u>every</u> class in the program (not just those observed). Rate 5A.15 in the PP tool as "yes" or "no" based on completion of the *First Aid and CPR Worksheet*. 5A.15 is not a required item, so there is no need to report it on the Required Item Report Form.

License to Operate Worksheet

The License to Operate Worksheet is completed *before* rating required item 10B.16 in the Program Portfolio. 10B.16 can be met with several kinds of evidence (license, regulatory document, or the License-Exempt Acknowledgement Form). If the program has submitted a License-Exempt Acknowledgement Form as evidence, the assessor must make a digital scan of the document and submit it with the visit materials at the end of the visit.

To preserve the integrity of the assessment process and ensure that all programs receive a similar assessment experience assessors must rate item 10B.16 based only on the evidence the program has provided in the Program Portfolio. <u>This item is not rated based on evidence observed throughout the course of the visit, even if it meets and the evidence in the Program Portfolio does not.</u> Programs are reminded several times leading up the visit that adequate documentation of their licensing status must be provided in the Program Portfolio.

If 10B.16 is rated NO, the assessor also completes the Required Item Report Form. Required Item write-ups for this assessment item will be reviewed by Quality Assurance to determine a final rating prior to scoring.

Visit Process Forms

Visit process forms create structure for certain tasks during the site visit process. They serve to document that the site visit process was completely and accurately conducted, providing crucial evidence that may be called upon if a program appeals its accreditation decision.

All forms are in a digitized format and are completed on a tablet. For ease of access during the visit, many of the digitized forms are combined into a single writable PDF document called the *Forms Document*. Assessors may choose to print the Visit Schedule and Required Item Diagram Form for ease of use but do so at their own expense. If completed on paper, these forms must be digitized at the conclusion of the visit.

Some of the visit forms are completed and reviewed with the program during the Orientation Meeting and the Closing Meeting. These forms, along with additional information about these forms, are provided in the Administrator Information Packet (AIP) shared with programs during the pre-visit communications.

Process Verification Form

This form is included in the Administrator Information Packet and the Forms Document. The Process Verification Form is a checklist that guides the tasks that must occur during meetings with the program administrator at the beginning and end of the visit. It ensures the reliability and validity of the visit assessment by providing a framework for execution of many details of the visit protocol.

The Orientation Meeting Checklist is completed during the Orientation Meeting. It serves as a reminder for all necessary information-giving and information-gathering steps to be completed during the meeting. At the end of the Orientation Meeting, the checklist is reviewed with the program administrator, confirming that all tasks have been addressed. The Orientation Meeting Checklist is divided into sub-parts that include meeting tasks that apply to all kinds of site visits (accreditation visit, random visit, etc.) and tasks that apply only to some kinds of visit. The assessor will complete all sections that apply to the visit type being conducted.

The Closing Meeting Checklist is completed during the Closing Meeting, the last task of the visit. This checklist reminds the assessor to review or report the information on various completed visit forms. The assessor(s) and the program administrator verify on the Visit Signature Form that the Process Verification Form was completed properly.

Safety Concerns Report Form

The Safety Concerns Report Form communicates to the program about any observed safety concerns related to physical environment factors (building, grounds, equipment) both indoors and outdoors. This includes categories of safety issues that create a risk of harm to children's health or safety, and that may be corrected by the program within a short time frame. The kinds of safety concerns included on this form do not directly refer to NAEYC required items, which are reported on the Required Item Report Form (see below). Safety concerns caused by the actions of staff, children, or other present adults are also not reported on this form.

Assessors may notice safety concerns at any time during the visit, whether they are conducting a formal class or program observation at the time. Safety concerns may be noted on the form as they occur, upon completing a class observation or near the end of the visit in preparation for the Closing Meeting. If safety concerns are noted during an observation, they may also be used to rate items as "not met" on the Observation tools.

At the Closing Meeting, the contents of the report are shared with the administrator. Once the form is presented, no further documentation or follow-up by the program will be accepted as further evidence related to formal visit ratings. The ratings are done; this form is advisory only.

On the *Visit Signature Form* the assessor verifies that the *Safety Concerns Report Form* was presented and reviewed. By signing, the program administrator agrees to take immediate corrective action to address the safety concerns noted, or to communicate the safety concerns to others who have the authority to act.

Incident Report Form

This form is used to report incidents that affect the site visit such as personal injury or illness, car accident, major disruptions that occur in the program, or any other unusual issues. If more than one Incident Report Form is completed on a visit, each form should be clearly labeled as follows:

- <Program ID> IncidentReportForm1of2
- <Program ID> IncidentReportForm 2of2

Required Item Report Form

Each potential failure of a required item is documented on the Required Item Report Form. Each one-page form is used for a single failed required item; if there are multiple required items failed each form should be clearly labeled as follows:

- <Program ID> RIRF1of3
- <Program ID> RIRF2of3
- <Program ID> RIRF3of3

When one or more required items have failed, there are important changes to the post-visit protocol and procedures.

For all required item failures, the assessor provides a detailed description of the observed incident and/or the Program Portfolio documentary evidence that does not meet. This form will be received by Quality Assurance staff, who will later share the information with programs following the site visit. It is important that information about the failure(s) be as complete as possible.

Observed incidents should be described as completely and legibly as possible. It is important to convey the details requested about the scope and severity of the incident—*where* it happened, *how long* it lasted, *which* and *how many* children or staff were involved, *how* the incident ended (e.g., staff solved it or assessor called their attention to a problem), etc. Some other tips to keep in mind when writing up an incident:

- Use proper nouns to describe teachers and children. This allows the program to provide detailed follow-up with the staff regarding any possible failures of observable required items.
- Use full sentences, not bullet points or short phrases that can confuse the narrative.
- State observed details. Avoid judgmental language.
- Avoid extraneous information.
- If a diagram was included on the CO Notes page, it needs to be transferred to the *Required Item Diagram Form*.

Immediately following the visit, completed Required Item Report Forms must be e-mailed to qualityassurance@naeyc.org, no later than 24 hours after the site visit.

Required Item Diagram Form

This form may be completed digitally or on paper. It is used optionally only when:

- There is a failed required item, and
- the item failure was *observed*, not document-related, and
- description of the item failure would be assisted by providing a diagram of the relevant space (classroom, playground, outdoor learning environment, infant sleep room).

The Required Item Diagram Form is used during or immediately following an observation to draw space layouts, including positioning of children and staff if relevant. The Required Item Diagram Form is not required; but if used, this form must be e-mailed to qualityassurance@naeyc.org immediately following the visit along with the relevant Required Item Report Form(s).

License-Exempt Acknowledgment Form

The *License-Exempt Acknowledgment Form* is an optional form completed by the Program Administrator before the visit (not completed by the assessor), that provides evidence addressing required item 10B.16, which relates to a program's licensing status. This form is included in the *Administrator Information Packet* along with the License Exempt Acknowledgement Form Cover Page. The program is assessed on the documentary evidence for 10B.16 by completing the *License to Operate Worksheet*. If a program is license-exempt, this form may be submitted in the Program Portfolio instead of a current valid license to operate or evidence of other regulatory status. If the program has provided the License-Exempt Acknowledgment Form as evidence for 10B.16, the assessor will make a digital copy of the form and submit it with other visit materials at the end of the visit.

Visit Signature Form

The Visit Signature Form is included in the Forms Document. This form allows both the assessor(s) and the program administrator to affirm that crucial elements of the visit protocol were conducted properly. A program administrator and all assessors present must sign this form. Signatures are executed digitally. Each element being endorsed has its own checkbox. If any signer does not agree that a specific element of protocol was followed, the checkbox should be left unchecked. If a box is unchecked, a comment note must be added to the form describing the nature of the disagreement.

Closing Meeting with the Program Administrator

(Schedule for about 15 to 20 minutes)

The Closing Meeting is an opportunity for the assessor and the program administrator to verify that the assessment was conducted as outlined in this protocol and on the Process Verification Form. Together they review the completed forms in the Closing Meeting, then execute the *Visit Signature Form* acknowledging the review and affirming that procedures were followed. Assessors are not able to discuss any of the results of the assessment at the Closing Meeting.

Forms to Review in the Closing Meeting

Digital forms are reviewed by showing the completed digital versions on the tablet to the program administrator. Assessors should ensure that their device settings (brightness, page size) are optimized to allow the administrator to see the forms being reviewed. These forms are reviewed:

- The Visit Schedule
    - Assessors review the schedule, noting that sufficient time was taken for each assessment task, noting when additional time was needed for tasks (for example, additional time for observations), and noting where the original schedule was altered, and why. It is very important that the program administrator be able to understand and confirm that protocol was followed with respect to how much time was allotted to tasks.
- The Safety Concerns Report Form,
- The Incident Report Form, only if you needed.
- The Process Verification Form
- The Visit Signature Form.
    - The assessor(s) and program administrator sign the *Visit Signature Form* to indicate that the schedule was reviewed. The administrator is NOT agreeing by signing that everything in the schedule is correct. He or she may decide upon later review that something is not right. However, the administrator is acknowledging they have reviewed the schedule, with amendments to reflect its actual execution.

Other Tasks

Assessors record the Closing Meeting completion time on the *Visit Schedule*.

Copies of all completed forms and the final visit schedule will be available within 2 business days of visit completion in the Visit Completion Packet E-mail send to the program administrator.

Upon completion of the visit no further alterations to the scoring tools will be made. All direct communication between the assessor and the program will end at the assessor's departure. The only exception is if the program becomes aware of a COVID-positive test result in anyone they assessor may have encountered while conducting the site visit. In this case the program is asked to contact the assessor immediately so that appropriate medical precautions can be taken.

Post-Visit Protocol and Procedures

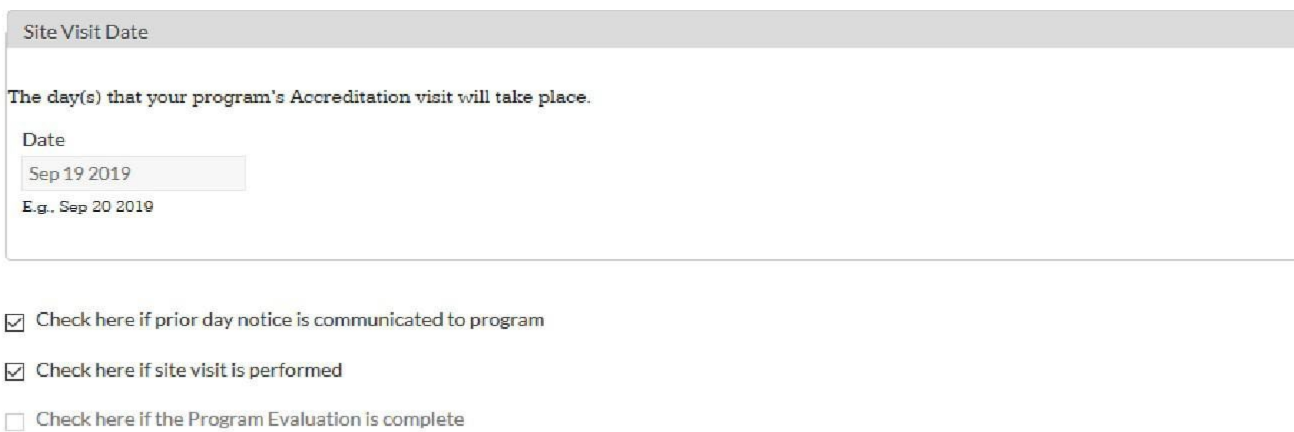
Assessor Tasks after the Visit

All Assessors have these tasks:

- Check all tools, forms, and worksheets for completeness. Review all tools to assure every relevant item has been rated (no blanks).
- Do financial accounting & other record keeping.
- Convert any paper documents (Visit Schedule, Required Item Diagram Form) to digital format.

Lead Assessor has these additional tasks:

- Immediately notify NAEYC of any failed required assessment items (details below).
- Complete an *Assessor Evaluation* of the program visit. This is included in the visit receiving form.
- Update the program's Site Visit and Schedule page in the portal.


Site Visit Date

The day(s) that your program's Accreditation visit will take place.

Date

Sep 19 2019

E.g., Sep 20 2019

☑ Check here if prior day notice is communicated to program

☑ Check here if site visit is performed

☐ Check here if the Program Evaluation is complete

  - Enter date of site visit (if not entered previously).
  - Check box "Check here if site visit is performed"
  - The final box, "Check here if the Program Evaluation is complete" cannot be completed at this time.
  - Click "Save"
- Send *Visit Completion Packet* e-mail to program within 2 business days of the visit (details below).
- Complete and upload all visit materials through the Visit Submission Form (including the assessor evaluation of the visit) and complete the Staff Qualifications Entry form.

Co-Assessor has these additional tasks:

- Upload/share your visit documents to the lead assessor. Ensure that the review dates and times of the tools and related worksheets (first aid/CPR and licensing) are accurate are received by the lead assessor by the end of the on-site visit date. This allows the lead assessor sufficient time to prepare and send the *Visit Completion Packet Email* within 48 hours of the on-site visit.
- Back up visit data.

Failed Required Assessment Items

Day of visit if possible; within 24 hours of visit completion. If one or more required assessment items were rated unmet during the visit, the assessor must immediately notify Quality Assurance by emailing qualityassurance@naeyc.org.

- *Within 24 hours of site visit completion,* email the following information to qualityassurance@naeyc.org:
  - Your name and assessor ID
  - Program ID number
  - Visit date(s)
  - Item number(s) for the failed required assessment item(s)
  - Attach the *Required Item Report Form*(s)
  - Attach any *Required Item Diagram Form*(s)
  - Attach relevant tools, forms, or worksheets related to the required item failure.
- *ALSO, within 24 hours of site visit completion*:
  - Send the *Visit Completion Packet* (VCP) to the program administrator
  - submit all visit materials for receiving and scoring.

Send Visit Completion Packet (VCP) e-mail

Time to Complete this Task: If all required assessment items were met, the VCP is sent to the program administrator within 2 business days of the visit.

Forms related to a failed required item (*Required Item Report Form, Required Item Diagram Form*) are not included in the VCP email and attachments. They are relayed to the program administrator by NAEYC Quality Assurance staff after the visit.

The program administrator is entitled to receive digital copies of the completed Visit Schedule and all digital forms reviewed in the Closing Meeting.

A VCP email template has been created for this communication, to ensure consistency and reliability amongst the assessor corps. It can be found in the Assessor Teams Site.

The VCP e-mail template contains detailed instructions and requires that the assessor edit the template to reflect only those instructions that are applicable to the program. A complete list of documents that might need to be attached to the VCP e-mail is incorporated in the email template.

Prepare Visit Documents for Upload/Share with NAEYC

Convert Paper Documents to Digital Form. Assessors may choose to print the visit schedule and the Required Item Diagram Form. If completed on paper, the assessor must convert these paper documents into a digital format by using a digital scanning app.

Scanned documents must be correctly oriented, legible, and titled. These scanned documents must be included with the other digital visit documents shared to NAEYC.

"Flatten" the Forms Doc. All *forms* (not *tools* or *worksheets*, just forms!) completed during the visit must be secured to ensure that no party (assessor, program, or NAEYC) is able to edit/alter the form (including signatures) after the visit. Therefore, assessors are required to 'flatten' (i.e., digitally lock) all forms used before sending them to the program or NAEYC. If you send flattened *tools* (PP, CP etc.), they cannot be scored. Assessors will be asked to recreate and resubmit un-flattened versions of tools.

Receive co-assessor documents. On co-assessor visits, the lead assessor is responsible for transmitting all the visit documents, including those completed by the co-assessor. Co-assessors must transfer their documents to the lead assessor immediately after completion of the visit.

Final check that the visit documents are correct and complete. Assessors must check that all identifying information (program ID, class numbers, assessor ID, times, etc.) on every assessment tool, worksheet and form is complete and correct. If a tool was part of a reliability assessment on a site visit, the "Reliability Check?" data field on the cover page should be marked "Yes". It is very important that class numbers and names on CO and CP tools are correct, and consistent with names listed on the visit schedule, worksheets, and in the portal. The class number listed on the CO or CP cover page must match the class number on the schedule and in the file name.

Clean up document names! All document names must be edited to reflect the required naming conventions. It greatly speeds up the time it takes NAEYC staff to receive the documents and assures all needed documents are present.

Upload/Share Visit Documents with NAEYC

Time to complete this task: If all required assessment items were met, all visit materials must be submitted within 5 business days of the completion of the visit. If there were any failures of required assessment items, all visit materials must be submitted to NAEYC within 24 hours of the completion of the visit.

To submit visit materials, complete the Visit Submission Form. This form is available here or in the "Visit Materials Received" team in Microsoft Teams.

To complete the form, fill out the required fields and attach all visit documents directly to the form. There is no need to separately save your files anywhere on SharePoint or Teams – uploading them on the form and submitting the form is all you need to do.

One you submit the form; your documents will be reviewed to ensure that:

- the number of files that you indicated you would attach matches the number of documents attached
- the documents have all been filled out upon review, one of two things will happen:

1. If the materials are complete, they will be passed to the scoring team. In this case, you will not receive any notification— nothing else is needed from you regarding this visit at this time
2. The materials are incomplete, and you need to reupload some visit documents. In this case, you will receive an email and a Teams message that indicates the issue with the documents and provides a link to the folder in which they are stored. You must navigate to the folder and upload/replace the documents as directed by the reviewer.
    a. Once you update the files in the folder, click on the “Folder Updated” button in the email or Teams message.
    b. If you can’t upload/replace the documents as requested, click the “Can’t Update Folder” button in the email or Teams message. The issue will then be sent to the Director of Operations and Director of QAA for review.

Data Retention: **All completed visit materials must be retained within the assessor’s NAEYC OneDrive for a minimum of three years following the visit. All visit materials must be deleted or destroyed after 3 years following the visit date.**

Assessor Evaluation of the Visit

Assessor Evaluations must be completed by all lead assessors who take part in a visit within 5 business days of the completion of the visit. This evaluation is completed as part of the visit submission process. It is important that NAEYC receive this feedback to inform assessor reliability and quality assurance. Assessor evaluations are always reviewed by the NAEYC’s Quality Assurance team. They may be consulted again later if a program appeals an adverse accreditation decision and cites procedural irregularities as a basis for an appeal. It is very important that any unusual or difficult circumstances that occurred on the visit are accurately reported.

Financial Accounting & Other Record Keeping

Following all site visits, assessors are responsible for ensuring that all visit records accurately reflect the site visit as it took place. Additionally, financial accounting and expense reports should be completed and submitted to the NAEYC Finance department in a timely manner.

Visit Records. In AIS, ensure that the program information is complete and accurate.

Protocol Variations for Other Visit Types

Reliability Visits

Variations to the Pre-Visit Protocol and Procedures

When you are scheduling your annual reliability visit, you should select a visit for which you are the Lead Assessor. The assessor conducting the reliability visit with you is added to the visit record as a co-assessor if conducting an 8-10 observation visit. Reliability visits with fewer observations will not have a space in the visit record to record a co-assessor. In this circumstance add the co-assessor's name to the Visit Notes section on the Site Visit Scheduling page in the portal. Reliability Assessors are responsible for preparing and rating the necessary reliability tools, conducting the reliability process during the visit, and completing the *Reliability Visit Report.* They should also be scheduled to complete additional site visit tasks outside of the collection of inter-rater reliability data, just like any other kind of co-assessor if the visit requires it.

All reliability visits must include a joint Class Observation, a Class Portfolio, the Program Portfolio and Program Observation. **These may be completed in 1 visit or broken up into 2 separate visits, as long as all tools are complete.** Additional reliability tasks (CO or CP) may be scheduled as time allows or if additional reliability work is deemed necessary. Please contact the Manager of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation with any questions about reliability visits. Since Reliability Visits include additional tasks, some visits are not suitable for reliability work. Programs with a system-wide PP may not be used for annual Program Portfolio reliability purposes but may be used for reliability tasks triggered by assessor performance or program complaints related to CO, CP, PO assessment and/or visit process issues. Programs for which a bi-lingual assessor is necessary should not be used for reliability purposes unless both assessors are fluent in the language used. Use the chart below for scheduling Reliability Visits.

Length of Visit Guidelines[1] for Reliability Visits (conducted during Accreditation Site Visits)		
Number of Class Observations	Number of Visit Days	Notes:
1-3	2 Assessors for 1 Day	Suitable for reliability as all regular and reliability components can be completed by two assessors in one day.
4-7	2 Assessors for 2 Days	May be used for reliability if they are in geographical locations that minimize travel costs for one or both assessors.
8-10	2 Assessors for 2 Days	Ideal for reliability as two assessors for two days is already required, and the reliability work can be comfortably managed.
[1] These are guidelines; there may be exceptions made by NAEYC on a case-by-case basis. Contact NAEYC for approval.		

<u>Creating the Schedule</u>. Ensure that adequate time has been provided in the visit schedule to complete the necessary reliability discussions.

Variations to the Site Visit Protocol and Procedures

The site visit protocol and procedures for reliability visits remains very much the same as for other accreditation site visits. Follow the visit schedule and complete all necessary rating tasks as usual. Assessors should take care throughout the course of the reliability visit to ensure that all reliability discussions are held discreetly and not in the presence of any program staff.

Variations to the Post-Visit Protocol and Procedures

The *Reliability Visit Report* should be completed by the reliability assessor in collaboration the lead assessor, before the end of the visit if time allows. The *Reliability Visit Report* may be completed shortly after the visit to allow the reliability assessor additional time to complete the report and finalize inter-rater reliability calculations.

Reliability assessors who are conducting reliability visits as co-assessors send their completed tools, including the reliability tools and the *Reliability Visit Report,* to the lead assessor. This ensures that all reliability materials are shared with NAEYC with all other visit materials and tools. Additionally, reliability assessors must send copies of the completed reliability tools and the reliability report directly to the Manager of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation within five business days of the reliability visit.

Random Visits

All NAEYC-accredited programs are eligible to receive Random Visits; this is a condition of accepting accreditation. Programs are randomly selected for a visit and are assigned throughout the year. You may conduct the visit any time during the following 12 months.   Programs receiving a random visit do not receive any pre-visit notification that the visit will take place.

Variations to the Pre-Visit Protocol and Procedures

For Random Visits, the following pre-visit steps should be followed:

- Receive and accept the assignment.
- Review program information received from NAEYC and begin scheduling.
- Create a visit schedule with the anticipated number of Class Observations, based on information in the program's profile in the accreditation portal.

Make no initial contact with the program. Do not enter any 15-day window dates or visit dates into AIS until AFTER the completion of the visit.

Because only class observations are rated, the length of visit guidelines are different for RVs:

Length of Visit Guidelines[1] for Random Visits and Verification Visits		
This many observation(s) in the visit…	… will require …	
1, 2, 3, or 4 observations	1 Assessor for	1 Visit Day
5, 6, 7, or 8 (max) observations	1 Assessor for OR 2 Assessors for	2 Visit Days 1 Visit Days
[1] *These are guidelines; there may be exceptions made by the NAEYC on a case-by-case basis. Contact NAEYC for approval.*		

Randomization

Randomization of classes can be completed as for any other visit during the pre-visit scheduling process. Use the program's class profile information in the portal to select classrooms for observation and create the visit schedule.

Variations to the Site Visit Protocol and Procedures

Class Observations, up to a maximum of eight, the Program Observation and the rating of relevant evidence for required items 1B.10 and 10B.16 on the *Required Item Tool* are the only Sources of Evidence assessed on these visits. Program and Class Portfolio reviews are not conducted during Random Visits.

<u>Orientation Meeting.</u> Use the *Process Verification Form* to conduct the Orientation Meeting but note there is a section of the form that applies specifically to Random Visits, Verification Visits, and School-age Visits.

The *Process Verification Form* prompts you to ask the Program Administrator for their Guidance/Discipline Policy and Licensing documentation related to Required Items 1B.10 and 10B.16. Note that programs with a System-Wide Program Portfolio do not need to provide evidence for item 1B.10 as this has already been pre-rated on their system specific tools. The Program Administrator may provide this documentation anytime throughout the course of the visit, up to 30 minutes prior to the scheduled Closing Meeting. Record your ratings of these required assessment items on the *Required Item Tool*.

Variations to the Post Visit Protocol and Procedures

There are no variations to the post visit protocol and procedures for Random Visits.

Verification Visits (VV)

Programs are identified by the Quality Assurance team for a Verification Visit based on factors such as:

- a complaint received about the program; and/or
- concerns about the program's compliance with required items.

Variations to the Pre Visit Protocol and Procedures

Before their visit is assigned to you a program receiving a VV will be provided a six-month window during which the visit will occur. You will begin your communication with the program when you conduct the Initial Call. Programs receiving a VV also receive business day prior notification. Pay attention to the applicable prompts in the pre-visit worksheet as you conduct these calls.

Variations to the Site Visit Protocol and Procedures

Class Observations, up to a maximum of eight, the Program Observation, and the rating of relevant evidence for required items 1B.10 and 10B.16 on the Required Item Tool are the only Sources of Evidence assessed on these visits. Program and Class Portfolio reviews are not conducted during VVs and PV2s.

Assessors may conduct up to five class observations per day on these visit types provided that adequate breaks of 15- minutes are scheduled between sets of two back-to-back observations. Refer to the Visit Schedule Templates.

Orientation Meeting. Use the *Process Verification Form* to conduct the Orientation Meeting but note there is a section of the form that applies to Verification Visits.

The *Process Verification Form* also prompts you to ask the Program Administrator for their Guidance/Discipline Policy and Licensing documentation related to Required Items 1B.10 and 10B.16. Note that programs with a System-Wide Program Portfolio do not need to provide evidence for item 1B.10 as this has already been pre-rated on their system specific tools. The Program Administrator may provide this documentation anytime throughout the course of the visit, up to 30 minutes prior to the scheduled Closing Meeting. Record your ratings of these required assessment items on the *Required Item Tool*.

Variations to the Post Visit Protocol and Procedures

There are no variations to the post visit protocol and procedures for Verification Visits.

School-Age Accreditation

NAEYC accreditation always applies to classes including infants through kindergarten-aged children. Accreditation of School-age classes is optional. Some programs serving younger age groups also serve school-age children and wish to have their accreditation extended to their school age component. NAEYC assesses school-age classes upon request. Programs may add school-age classes to their accreditation portal at any time. The school-age classes will then be included in the assessment at the time of the next accreditation site visit.

Any class that meets less than 2 continuous hours is not eligible for assessment, including school-age classrooms. If school-age classes meet 2 continuous hours or more and include more than 50% kindergarten age children, the class is eligible for assessment and must be assessed.

There are no variations to the Pre-Visit, Site Visit, and Post-Visit Protocols and Procedures for these visit types. School- age classrooms must prepare appropriate Class Portfolios and will be randomized and assessed along with the other eligible age categories in compliance with the randomization procedures described in this protocol. All scoring and accreditation decision, and appeal processes remain the same.

COVID-Related Protocol Exceptions

If at any time during the pre-visit process a program becomes subject to COVID-19-related restrictions that may impact the site visit including state or local health orders, positive COVID-19 occurrence within the program environment, and/or a decline in the classes or age categories served you must contact your assigned supervisor or the Assessment Manager to discuss next steps and develop a plan to conduct the visit.

The following options may be implemented to allow the visit process to proceed when possible:

- Changes to class configurations and/or the age categories served by the program should be discussed between you and the program to ensure that all visit eligibility requirements are still satisfied.
    - No more than 1 entire age category is missing
    - Appropriate sampling can still take place (50% of total, at least one in each age group)
    - At least one class at each site, if multi-site program
- With program approval, portfolios may be assessed off-site to limit the amount of time you are physically in the program facility. In this case, arrive no earlier than 8 AM to conduct the observations.
- Additional health screenings and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required of you. This may include the use of masks, face shields, gloves, booties, gowns, heightened hand-washing procedures, social-distancing procedures, temperature checks, or other requirements required by local public health authorities or by the program.
- Visits requiring eight to 10 observations may be scheduled over three days to allow you to complete all aspects of the site visit without the use of a co-assessor, thereby limiting the number of visitors the program is receiving.
- You may be authorized to remain in the area through a weekend to accommodate a three-day visit.
- You may be authorized to complete the assessment of portfolios on weekends if your travel schedule allows it to make the most efficient use of your time in the area.

<u>Postponing or halting the visit:</u> Assessors must continuously monitor their own health. If symptoms of viral infection develop, the assessor must notify their assigned supervisor immediately to discuss testing requirements, applicable public health guidelines, and the potential for postponing the visit.
There can be a variety of scenarios prompting a visit halt (building issues, medical emergencies, observed child abuse, etc.); some may be harder to resolve than others. In resolving the reason for a halt, supervisory assessment staff will endeavor to ensure a safe working environment for you while also achieving a completion of the site visit. The halt could be temporary or could lead to a visit cancellation.

If the visit has been halted and then cancelled by NAEYC, the program will receive a modified Visit Completion Packet via e-mail within 48 hours of your departure which will include a copy of the completed Incident Report form.

Appendix 1: Assessor Specific Procedures

Files used in NAEYC Site Visits

The assessment visit materials (tools, forms, worksheets, and other resources) are found in the NAEYC Assessor Teams Channel. Assessors are notified updates and must download revised version of the documents when instructed.
Assessors should keep current copies of these folders and documents on their tablets and/or computers used for assessment. These are used to create a customized set of tools, forms, worksheets, and other documents for each program visit.

Accepting Assigned Visits

Log into the portal at least weekly to check for new assignments. When you receive your visit assignments, you may log in to the portal and begin accepting the assignments. Select the Home button to view your NAEYC Assessor Dashboard, which shows New Assignments and Accepted Assignments.

If you have a new assignment, view program information by clicking on the program's Organization ID in the new assignments queue (see figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Select the program(s) you wish to accept or decline.

New Assignments

Showing 1 - 18 of 18

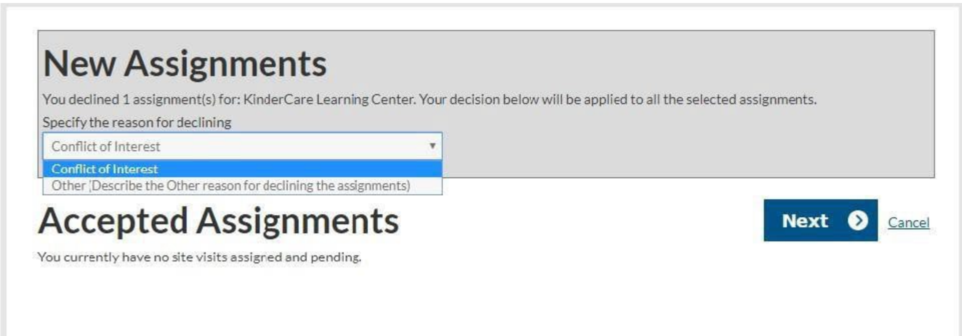
☐	Organization ID	Legacy Program ID	Program	City	State	Visit Type	Visit Status	Site Visit Date	Assessor Assigned
☑	Orgid_1039206	orgid_1039206 (276508)	KinderCare Learning Center	Vernon Hills	Illinois	Renewal Site Visit	Pending		Amanda Batts
☐	Orgid_1034100	orgid_1034100 (729931)	The Malvern School of Horsham	Amber	Pennsylvania	Site Visit	Pending		Amanda Batts
☐	Orgid_1033303	orgid_1033303 (729707)	The Children's Center at Milton Academy	Millton	Massachusetts	Site Visit	Pending		Amanda Batts

This will take you to the Program Dashboard page, from which you can navigate to its Program Profile, Class Profiles, Staff Profiles and other information. Pay close attention to the program's six-month window. View the program information and decide whether you can and will accept the assignment. Return to you Assessor

Dashboard by clicking your browser's back arrow or selecting "My Account" at the top right side of the page.

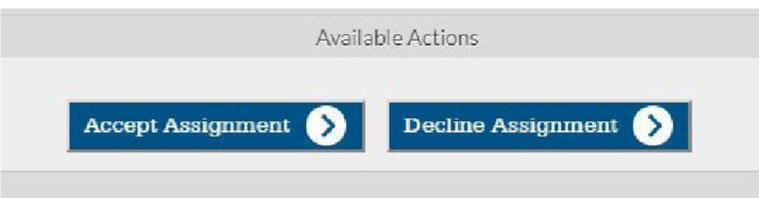
Decline any programs that you may have a COI with or that you are unable to do for any reason. Remember, if you identify the program as a Conflict of Interest, it can never be assigned to you again so be careful! To decline, select the program's Organization ID, then click the big blue "Decline Assignment" button below the queue.
Then specify the reason you are declining the assignment (see figure 2.2)

Figure 2.2: When declining an assignment select either "Conflict of Interest" or "Other".



To accept an assignment, select the checkbox next to the program's Organization ID, then click the big blue "Accept Assignment" button below the queue (see figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Select either "Accept Assignment" or "Decline Assignment" to accept or decline the selected programs.



When the screen updates, click the big blue "Next" button (see figure 2.4). You will wait through an update screen, then the program should appear in the "Accepted Assignments" queue (see figure 2.5).

Figure 2.4: Selecting "Accept Assignment" asks you to confirm the selection by clicking Next to continue.

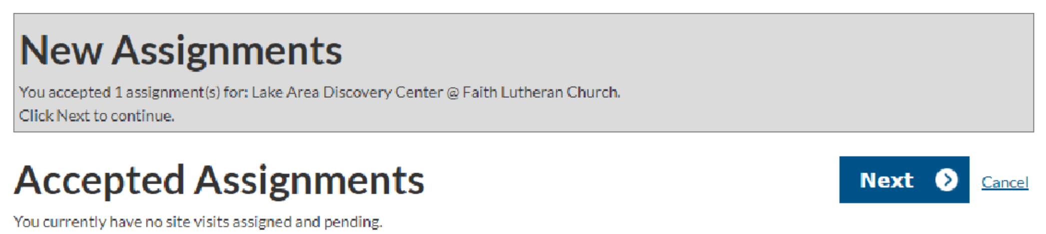
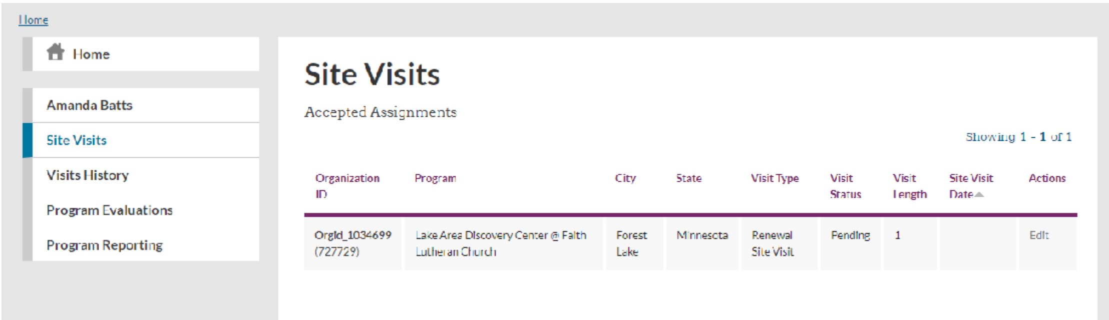


Figure 2.5: Accepted assignments appear in your Site Visits list.



Next, click on "edit" to the far-right side of the screen info for the program. It will bring you to a page titled “Site Visit and Schedule”, where you can view the six-month window, number of observation, visit days, and add the 15-day window dates and exact visit dates.

Be sure to click "save" at the bottom of the page!

Declining and Returning Assigned Visits

There may be reasons other than an ongoing conflict of interest that prevent an assessor from being able to accept a visit. If this is the case, when reviewing assigned visits in the portal, choose “other” in the drop-down menu and add the reason you are declining the assignment. If at any time during the pre-visit scheduling process, you are unable to complete the assignment you must contact Visit Assignment Operations staff to have the visit reassigned.

Be sure to include the following information:

- The program ID and location of the returned program(s)
- The visit completion deadline for the program(s)
- Any special circumstances (e.g., bilingual, early closures, abroad)
- The number of observations
- Whether you have found another assessor to accept the visit already and their name
- The reason you are returning the visit
- Attach any relevant completed visit materials (e.g., pre-visit worksheet)

Visit Length Adjustments

When a visit is assigned, AIS will provide an initial estimate of how many visit days and assessors are needed. Follow the guidelines provided in the protocol, regardless of what AIS initially tells you. Use the Visit Notes field in the program’s Site Visit and Schedule window in the portal to accurately describe the number of days, number of assessors and dates of visit if they are calculated incorrectly.

If visit dates need to be changed to accommodate the program's schedule outside of the guidelines in the protocol (such as short hours of operation, not all classes on all days), you must obtain approval from your assigned supervisor or the Assessment Manager.

A single assessor should not conduct more than 4 observations in a single day. In some instances (e.g., remoteness of the site), it may make more sense for a single assessor to conduct an extremely large program (9-10 observation) over 3 days rather than bring a co-assessor. Approval from your supervisor or the Accreditation Manager must be obtained ahead of time.

There may also be times when it makes sense to change an accreditation visit from a two-day to a one-day visit mid-way through the visit. This may occur for a variety of reasons, such as shared Class Portfolios, a well-organized Program Portfolio, or an unexpected decrease in the number of observations. If it seems logical and fits with the travel schedule, assessors may change the number of visit days after receiving appropriate approval. If this is the case, consider how you will communicate the proposed schedule change to the program. State the facts that led to the potential schedule change, taking care not to provide unintentional feedback or give the impression you are rushing the visit. Document the change in your site visit evaluation and site visit schedule.

Overseas Visits

If you receive an overseas assignment, confirm with your supervisor that NAEYC has confirmed the accessibility of the country and the military base. These visits are likely to require additional planning and consideration with relation to travel restrictions, housing options, and the amount of COVID community spread in the specific location. Special considerations may apply when assessors conduct visits overseas. If you are traveling alone (no co-assessor) and are completing a visit that requires 8, 9, or 10 observations overseas, contact your assigned supervisor or the Manager of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation for further instructions.

Appendix 2: Class Selection and Randomization

This appendix does not apply to Random Visits.

The number of classes to be observed on a visit is based upon the number and distribution of all the program's classes, including all ages served. Accreditation site visits include observations of all eligible age categories served at the program including Infant, Toddler/Twos, Preschool and Kindergarten. When desired, accreditation site visits may also include School-Age classes.

Selection of classes is determined using the following guidelines:

- Observe at least 50% of the total number of classes in the program, except in programs with more than 20 eligible classes. In such programs conduct no more than 10 observations;
  - For assessment purposes, part-day (AM/PM) and part-week (MWF/TTH) classes that function in the same physical classroom space with the same teaching staff are a single class. This ensures that we do not over-sample.
- Observe at least one class from each eligible age category (infant, toddler/two, preschool, kindergarten, school- age (if applicable)).
- In programs with satellite locations, observe at least one class from each location; and
- Within each age category, use random selection to pick specific classes to observe.

There are special considerations for mixed-age classes, developmental age versus chronological age, and for programs with satellite locations. These are detailed below.

Random selection of classes for observation is necessary to maintaining the validity of the NAEYC Accreditation system. Random selection is a research-based practice that allows for confidence in the assessment system by assuring that no human bias factors potentially contribute to the decision as to which classes are observed.

Step 1: Determining How Many Classes to Observe

Use the appropriate *Classroom Selection and Randomizer Worksheet* to complete the following steps.

Prior to developing the schedule for the visit, you need to consider the number of classes in the program and the classes' distribution across age categories. After consulting the program's class profile in the portal and confirming the information provided by the program in the Visit Scheduling Form, describe the class structure in Table 1 of the Classroom Selection and Randomizer Worksheet. Adjust the total number of classes to account for any part-day or part-week classes that for assessment purposes should be considered a single class. For example, if Ms. Smith has an AM and PM preschool class that meets M-F, for assessment purposes, this is just one class.

Once you have the "number of classes for assessment/randomization" (column 3), figure out the "number of classes to be observed" using these steps:

1. First determine the total number of classes to be observed and enter it at the bottom of Column 4. For programs with 20 or fewer classes, since this number should equal at least 50% of the total classes in the program, it will be half or "half + 1" of the number of classes. *For example*, if there are 8 classes, you will observe 4 classes (half). If there are 13 classes, you will observe 7 classes (half + 1). However, if the TOTAL number of classes is greater than 20, enter "10" in the TOTAL row. The maximum number of classes observed in any program is 10.

2. Next, assure that each age category is being observed at least once. This may increase the projected total number of classes to be observed! *For example*, if a program has 5 classes altogether, you would have projected that you need to observe 3 classes. However, if the program's 5 classes are spread over 5 age categories, you will have to observe 5 classes. Increase the total if necessary to assure that classes in all age categories are observed.
3. Now add observations within age categories to bring the number of classes observed within an age category nearer to 50%. Start adding observations within the age categories to distribute the observations as proportionally as possible, until you have reached the total number of classes to be observed.
4. Don't go above your overall projected total of observations just to bring any age category up to 50% observed. Just assign observations proportional to the number of classes in each age category, favoring younger classes when it's a toss-up.

Here are some examples:

Example 1: 26 classes, 10 observations			**Summary**
Age Category	**Number of Classes in each Age Category**	**Number of Classes to be Observed**	This is a large program with more than 20 classes, so it will get a maximum of 10 observations. Assign observations to age categories in proportion to the number of classes in each age category. Kindergarten and School-Age categories each have only 2 classes; do one observation for each. The remaining 8 observations are assigned proportionally.
Infant	7	3	
Toddler/Two	8	3	
Preschool	7	2	
Kindergarten	2	1	
School-age	2	1	
TOTALS:	**26**	**10**	

Example 2: 12 classes, 6 observations			**Summary**
Age Category	**Number of Classes in each Age Category**	**Number of Classes to be Observed**	After you have assured that each age category has at least one class observed, you have accounted for 5 observations. But you need to observe 6 classes in all to get above 50% of the total number of classes in the program. Add one observation in the youngest age category that is not already at 50% within the category – Preschool. You are not observing at least 50% of the Preschool classes but stop adding observations now because you have reached 50% of all classes.
Infant	2	1	
Toddler/Two	1	1	
Preschool	5	2	
Kindergarten	1	1	
School-age	3	1	
TOTALS:	**12**	**6**	

<u>Counting Mixed Age Classes</u>**:** If a program includes mixed-age classes as part of their program, include each mixed-age class among one of the regular class categories by using the following decision rules:

1. If the mixed-age class includes an age that is not represented in other classes, it must be assigned to the unrepresented category and observed. For example, a program has a mixed-age class of Toddler/Twos and Preschoolers. The program also has a separate Toddler/Two class, but no Preschool class. Count the class as “Preschool” for the purpose of randomization/class selection and observe it.
2. If the mixed-age class is made up of ages that are all represented in other classes, count the mixed- age class among the age category for the youngest children in the class. For example, a program has separate Toddler/Two and Preschool classes in addition to a mixed Toddler/Two-Preschool class. The youngest age in the mixed age class is the Toddler/Twos, so the room would be counted as a Toddler/Two class for randomization/class selection purposes.
3. If by seeing the mixed age class you are seeing all age categories and you've already met the 50% selection guideline, you don't need to see an additional class. For example, if a program has 3 classes -- a Toddler/Two class, a Preschool class, and a Toddler/Two-Preschool mixed-age class, and the Preschool class and mixed-age class were randomly selected, you would be able to just see those two classes. The Toddler/Two class would not need to be observed as well, because Toddler/Twos are represented in the mixed age class.

A mixed-age class is <u>assessed</u> using the assessment items applicable to *all* the age categories included in the class, regardless of how the class was classified for the purpose of randomization/class selection. For example, if a mixed Toddler/Two-Preschool class was randomized as a Toddler/Two class and randomly selected, the assessor will rate the class on both Toddler/Two and Preschool assessment items.

A Note on Developmental Age versus Chronological Age:

Some classes include children with special needs, who may be functioning at a developmental age that is different than their chronological age. This could alter the predominant age category of the class from “School-age” to “kindergarten”, “preschool” or some other age category that is accredited in the context of the visit. Be prepared to adjust the visit schedule and planned observations based on your conversations with the administrator during the Orientation Meeting.

A Note on Satellite Locations:

In programs with a primary location and one or two satellite locations, at least one class at each location must be observed as part of the 50% of the total classes observed during on the Accreditation site visit. You *don’t need* one class in *each* age category in each location – just at least one class in *any* age category. When determining the classes for observation in such programs, create one set of random numbers for each age class in the usual way (as instructed above), determining the classes for observation based on the random set of numbers. Then check to see if at least one class from each location is captured as part of the 50% that will receive an observation. If classes from each location are not represented in the first half (50%) of the random set of numbers, remove the last class selected from one of your age categories and keep moving down the random set of numbers until at least one class from each location is included in the sample.

Step 2: Generate a Set of Random Numbers

Once the classes have been sorted into age categories, you must generate a set of random numbers that will let you randomly select which classes to observe. Go to a randomization web site which allows for easy selection of a random set of numbers; generate one set of numbers for the age categories that are relevant to the type of visit you are conducting. Then match the generated set of random numbers to the list of classes to determine which classes to observe.

This web site provides an electronic calculation of the Random Table of Numbers found in the back of

statistics books. Go to http://www.randomizer.org

Scroll down the website page and fill out the form like this:

Question:	**Answer:**
"How many sets of number do you want to generate?"	Always enter the number 1.
"How many numbers per set?"	Enter the total number of classrooms in the age category set, *not* the number you plan to observe. It is important to have a randomized order for each classroom in the category.
"Number Range"	Enter the first and last number for the entire set of numbers. So if you have 6 classes, enter "From: 1", "To: 6".
"Do you wish each number in a set to remain unique?"	Select "Yes" from the drop-down menu.
"Do you wish to sort the numbers that are generated?"	Select "No" from the drop-down menu.
"How do you wish to view your random numbers?"	Select "Place Markers Off" from the drop-down menu.
Click the "Randomize Now!" button. Print the resulting page. Label which age category it is for.	

Your output will look something like this:

Research Randomizer Results

1 Set of 9 Unique Numbers Per
Set Range: From 1 to 9 --
Unsorted

Set #1:

3, 1, 6, 2, 4, 9, 8, 5, 7

List the random number set generated for the age category in the corresponding row in Table 3 of the Classroom Selection and Randomizer Worksheet. Using this example if you need to observe three preschool classes, you will see the third, first, and sixth listed classes.

Lastly update Table 2 by selecting the check boxes next to the name for each class randomly selected for observation. Add these classes to the visit schedule. Adjust as necessary, including on the day of the visit, if circumstances dictate.

Appendix 3: Federal Holiday Schedule

	Date	Holiday
2024	Monday, January 1	New Year's Day
	Monday, January 15	Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
	Monday, February 19	Washington's Birthday (President's Day)
	Monday, May 27	Memorial Day
	Wednesday, June 19	Juneteenth
	Thursday, July 4	Independence Day
	Monday, September 2	Labor Day
	Monday, October 14	Columbus Day
	Monday, November 11	Veterans Day
	Thursday, November 28	Thanksgiving Day
	Wednesday, December 25	Christmas Day

Appendix 4: Visit Document Master List

Document Location: **NAEYC Staff Assessors > Files> Documents > Site Visit Materials > 2022 Assessment Version**		
1. Visit Schedule Resources		**Format**
RV-VV Schedule Required Components		[PDF]
Visit Schedule Building Blocks		[PDF]
Visit Schedule Required Components		[PDF]
Visit Schedule Template – 10 Observations		[WORD]
Visit Schedule Template – 3 Observations		[WORD]
Visit Schedule Template – 4 Observation VV, RV		[WORD]
Visit Schedule Template – 5 Observation VV, RV		[WORD]
2. Scheduling and Email Templates		**Format**
For Standard Accreditation Visits		
Standard Visit 15-Day Window Confirmation Email Template		[WORD]
For Verification Visits Visits		
Initial Contact Email Template for VV and PV2		[WORD]
VV 15-Day Window Confirmation Email Template		[WORD]
Visit Scheduling Form 6-Month Blank		[PDF-W&E]
For all Visits		
Visit Completion Packet Email Template		[WORD]
Refused or Halted Visit Completion Packet Email Template		[WORD]
Next Steps Flyer		[PDF]
3. Tools	**Naming Convention**	**Format**
CO SV ITPKS	ID# CO#	[PDF-W&E]
CO SV I	ID# CO#	[PDF-W&E]
CO SV T	ID# CO#	[PDF-W&E]
CO SV P	ID# CO#	[PDF-W&E]
CO SV K	ID# CO#	[PDF-W&E]
CO SV S	ID# CO#	[PDF-W&E]
CP SV ITPKS	ID# CP#	[PDF-W&E]
CP SV I	ID# CP#	[PDF-W&E]
CP SV T	ID# CP#	[PDF-W&E]
CP SV P	ID# CP#	[PDF-W&E]
CP SV K	ID# CP#	[PDF-W&E]
CP SV S	ID# CP#	[PDF-W&E]

PO SV	ID# PO	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV	ID# PP	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV – Bright Horizons	ID# PP-BH	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV – Kiddie Academy	ID# PP-Kiddie	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV – KinderCare	ID# PP-KCE	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV – Learning Care Group	ID# PP-LCG	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV – Leaf Spring	ID# PP-LS	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV – New Horizon	ID# PP-NH	[PDF-W&E]
PP SV – Spring Education Group	ID# PP-SEG	[PDF-W&E]
Required Item Assessment Tool	ID# RI Tool	[PDF-W&E]
4. Worksheets	**Naming Convention**	**Format**
Standard Visit Worksheets Doc	ID# Worksheets Doc	[PDF-W&E]
Verification Worksheets Doc	ID# Worksheets Doc	[PDF-W&E]
Random Visit Worksheets Doc	ID# Worksheets Doc	[PDF-W&E]
First Aid and CPR Worksheet (Co-Assessor)	ID# 5A.10 Co-Assessor Worksheet	[PDF-W&E]
License to Operate Worksheet (Co-Assessor)	ID# 10B.16 Co-Assessor Worksheet	[PDF-W&E]
5. Forms	**Naming Convention**	**Format**
Forms Doc	ID# Forms	[PDF-W&E]
Incident Report Form	ID# Incident Report Form	[PDF-W&E]
License Exempt Acknowledgement Form	ID# License Exempt Form	[PDF-W&E]
Random Visit Class Selection Form	ID# Random Visit Class Selector Form	[PDF-W&E]
Refusal of Visit Form	ID# Refusal of Visit Form	[PDF-W&E]
Required Item Diagram Form	ID# RIDF	[PDF-W&E]
Required Item Report Form	ID# RIRF	[PDF-W&E]
6. Reliability	**Naming Convention**	**Format**
Reliability Calculation Form - CO	ID# Reliability Calculation CO	[PDF-W&E]
Reliability Calculation Form - CP	ID# Reliability Calculation CP	[PDF-W&E]
Reliability Calculation Form - PO	ID# Reliability Calculation PO	[PDF-W&E]
Reliability Calculation Form - PP	ID# Reliability Calculation PP	[PDF-W&E]
Reliability Visit Report Form	ID# Reliability Report	[PDF-W&E]
7. Protocols and Other Resources		**Format**
Visit Document Master List		[PDF]
2022 ELP Standards and Assessment Items		[PDF]
2022 ELP Standards and Assessment Items – Compressed (easier to email, if needed)		[PDF]
2022 Site Visit Protocol (for assessors and for programs)		[PDF]
Administrator Information Packet		[PDF]