



ASSOCIATION FOR
**Early
Learning
Leaders**

**National
Accreditation
Commission**
FOR EARLY CARE AND
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2/23/2021

Jodi Garrett, Director
Child's Path
3144 Santa Barbara Blvd.
Naples, FL 34116

Dear Jodi,

On behalf of the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs of the Association for Early Learning Leaders, I congratulate you and the staff of **Child's Path** on being recognized as an Accredited Center. Accreditation is awarded for four years from **2/23/2021** to **2/23/2025**.

This achievement acknowledges that Child's Path has met exemplary standards for a program providing early care and education for young children. It is one of many steps toward excellence. The Commission Review made particular note of strengths in positive interactions.

Accredited programs are required to submit Annual Reports on the anniversary of the Award Date. Failure to submit an Annual Report may result in withdrawal of your accreditation. This Award Letter should be retained and is a required element of the first **Annual Report due 2/23/2022** (*include all pages of the award letter with the annual report*), along with the Annual Report submission form and review fee. The submission form can be downloaded from our website, www.earlylearningleaders.org.

The National Accreditation Commission must be notified immediately of any of the following: Change in director, change in ownership, program relocation, program expansion, changes in classroom group size or ratio, and addition of a new age group. Loss of license or criminal conviction of a staff member should be reported to the National Accreditation Commission by phone within 48 hours. Additional information and applicable fees can be found on our website at www.earlylearningleaders.org.

Please note that National Accreditation Commission representatives may conduct an unannounced visit at any accredited center at any time to validate ongoing compliance with Commission Standards.

A Certificate of Accreditation is enclosed. Your center will be listed as an Accredited Program on the Association for Early Learning Leaders website, unless you notify us otherwise.

We would like to see you succeed in maintaining Commission Standards of Accreditation. If we can help in providing clarification of Standards or procedures, please contact us. Congratulations again to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Erin Schmidt
Director of Accreditation

The Commission Review cited the following Standards for further improvement. Compliance in these areas should begin immediately, and the implemented changes or solutions should be reported in the first **Annual Report due 2/23/2022**.

Program Wide

- A9. Staff Qualifications.
We commend your staff's progress toward completion of formal education credits in ECE/CD. Continue to encourage and monitor their progress.
- A18. Volunteers are: Screened for criminal history background.
- C16. The playground meets CPSC safety guidelines and is maintained. Surfaces of rubber or rubber-like materials that meet ASTM F1292 Standards and are in good condition.
See validator comments for specific concerns.

Surveys

Although the validator may have seen evidence that the Standards listed below were met, they were not verified by the Staff and/or Parent Surveys and are therefore considered unmet.

- *Review program policies and procedures with staff as they pertain to Standards unmet by surveys. Identify any program policies and procedures in these survey questions that do not meet these Standards and take steps to correct.*
- *Provide clarification to parents of program policies and practices as relevant.*
- *Report details of steps taken and corrections made in your first annual report.*

Staff Surveys

- A2. The program's administration complies with non-discrimination laws covering hiring of staff, enrollment of children, and termination of staff and children.
- A4. A written orientation plan is consistently implemented with each new employee. Signed and dated documentation of orientation completion is in the employee's file.
- A12. A written annual plan for professional development is prepared for each employee. The plan includes: Topics identified in the employee's evaluation as needing improvement; Topics identified in the employee's evaluation as opportunities for growth.
- A13. The director and/or mentors are available to teaching staff on a daily basis to provide strategies and support in dealing with classroom situations and interactions with families.
- A15. The director and staff meet together as a group for team building, training, program planning, and goal setting. Staff are encouraged to problem solve as a team; Staff provide support and recognition to each other; Staff have opportunity to be involved in setting the agenda.
- A16. Staff have opportunities to influence the program. The program has an on-going process to receive and review staff suggestions and recommendations; Suggestions and evaluation results are integrated into program operations and/or goals when applicable.
- B8. The program provides parents with opportunities to better understand children's growth and development and effective strategies for learning.
- B11. Parents have opportunities to influence the program. Suggestions and evaluation results are integrated into program operations and/or goals when applicable.
- C3. The program implements security measures for protection of children and staff.
- C12. When children are transported, written policies and procedures regarding transportation are followed. Notification of parents in advance of each field trip activity.
- C23. Staff-Child Ratios
- C24. Group Sizes
- C25. Continuity of care promotes long-lasting relationships between children, staff, and families. Children are not shifted from one group to another during the day to maintain staff-child ratios.

Parent Surveys

- B1. A written orientation plan introduces children and their parents to the program.
- B2. Parents are provided with written policies and procedures.
- B4. The program has methods for communicating important information to parents on a regular basis.
- B5. Staff members maintain on-going communication with parents about their child's experiences and activities.
- B10. Family members are invited to participate in all aspects of the program. Activities are planned to meet the interests and use the skills/talents of family members.
- B11. Parents have opportunities to influence the program. The program has an on-going process to receive and review suggestions and recommendations from parents; Annual written evaluations are completed by parents.
- C4. The program has a written policy regarding illness that is given to all parents.
- C5. Parents are notified of accidents, illnesses, and detection of parasites.
- C19. The program has made preparation for emergencies. A written plan exists for moving children to another location and includes transportation, pre-approved relocation sites, and notification of parents.
- D10. Language is promoted through daily opportunities for communicating, listening, and understanding. Teachers listen, acknowledge, and verbally respond to children.
- D15. Social studies is promoted through a shared sense of community and an appreciation for diversity. Materials and/or activities reflect the lives of the children and families served.
- E4. Positive guidance techniques are used to promote the development of self-control and self-regulation. Teachers state what a child can do instead of what cannot be done.

Classroom Observations

Learning Tree

- E2. A positive sense of self is promoted through respectful teacher-child interactions. Teachers use children's names in encouraging and respectful ways.
Children should be addressed predominately by their names rather than terms of endearment.
- F5. Safety practices are followed throughout the day. Emergency procedures are posted in each room used by children.
- F7. Equipment and materials are safe and appropriately maintained. Furnishings and equipment are clean and good in repair.
Refer to validator comment for specific concerns.

Play and Learn

- D16. Creativity is promoted through daily opportunities for self-expression, symbolic representation, and development of aesthetic sensibility. Children's artwork is displayed at the children's eye level.



Child's Path ACCREDITATION COMPLIANCE DATES

Award Date: 2/23/2021

Award Expiration Date: 2/23/2025

Accredited programs are required to submit Annual Reports on the anniversary of the Award Date. Failure to submit an Annual Report may result in withdrawal of your accreditation. Annual Reports are late if not received by the National Accreditation Commission office by the due date. Annual Reports will not be accepted earlier than 60 days before the due date.

Year One of Accreditation: Prior to First Anniversary 2/23/2022

The program's Award Letter should be retained. Response to the cited Standards is a required element of the first Annual Report. Programs should immediately review the cited Standards for further improvement. If a Plan of Action is required, programs submit the Plan of Action by the due date given. Compliance in these areas should begin immediately, and the implemented changes or solutions should be reported in the first Annual Report and received by **2/23/2022**.

Year Two of Accreditation: Once First annual Report is submitted and prior to the Second Anniversary 2/23/2023

Programs should continue to take steps to ensure compliance with Standards. Classrooms should be observed using the Classroom Observation tool. The second Annual Report should address the first Annual Report response letter, program improvements, and be received by **2/23/2023**.

Year Three of Accreditation: Once Second Annual Report is submitted and prior to the Third Anniversary 2/23/2024

Programs will receive an electronic copy of the current Accreditation Manual via e-mail. Programs should complete the Self-Study process. In order to avoid a lapse in accreditation, the Request for Validation Visit, Validation Visit Fee, and required documentation must be received by the third anniversary on **2/23/2024**. A Request for Validation Visit submitted after the third anniversary may result in a lapse in accreditation.

Year Four of Accreditation: Once Request for Validation Visit is submitted and Prior to the Fourth Anniversary 2/23/2025

Programs should continue to prepare for the Validation Visit. Once the paperwork has been reviewed and determined complete, programs will be given a Validation Visit Timeframe in which the program can expect the visit. Programs will receive the new accreditation decision prior to the Award expiration date, **2/23/2025**. Once a new decision is made, the new decision is effective immediately, beginning the new term. If a program is deferred or denied accreditation, then the accreditation term ends with this decision, effective immediately.

Initial Notifications

The National Accreditation Commission must be notified immediately of any of the following: Change in director, change in ownership, program relocation, program expansion, changes in classroom group size or ratio, and addition of a new age group. Significant licensing noncompliance, suspension or loss of child care license, or criminal conviction of a staff member should be reported to the National Accreditation Commission by phone and by submitting the Initial Notification form within 48 hours. The Initial Notification form can be found on our website at www.earlylearningleaders.org on the Accreditation Forms page.

Director Change

If an awarded program has a director separation, they must submit an Initial Notification form. Once a new director is in place, the program is required to submit a Director Change form within 1 month of start date. This form is found on our website at www.earlylearningleaders.org on the Accreditation Forms page. All new directors are required to take the Director Change webinar. This webinar is pre-recorded and must be completed within 30 days of the change in order to maintain compliance. When the Director Change procedures are not followed, a citation fee will be assessed.

Fees, Suspension, and Withdrawal

It is the program's responsibility to maintain compliance at all times. Annual Reports received after the anniversary date are assessed a \$50 late fee. If the Annual Report is more than 45 days past due, programs will be assessed an additional \$250 citation fee and risk suspension of accreditation. Programs that do not submit the Annual Report with fees by the issued final due date will have their accreditation suspended and be required to pay all previous fees as well as a reinstatement fee. If programs do not submit the required documentation and fees, accreditation is withdrawn.

Programs will be assessed a citation fee when out of compliance for more than 45 days. This could be due to, but not limited to, late or incomplete payments, late submission of a Director Change, not completing the required Director Change webinar, not submitting the Initial Notification, or not submitting a required Plan of Action.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts: Jodi Garrett
Child's Path
(239) 353-4144 jodig@collierchildcare.org

Child's Path IS AWARDED ACCREDITATION THROUGH THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Naples, FL 2/23/2021 The National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs announced today that Child's Path has been awarded Accreditation.

As an Accredited center, Child's Path has been recognized as an early care and education program exemplifying excellence in the care of young children. By achieving accreditation Child's Path provides a high quality program for children, professional development opportunities for staff, and an environment for children that is conducive to their individual growth and development that exceeds state licensing requirements.

The accreditation process included a Self-Study process in which administrators, staff, and parents evaluated the program in accordance with Accreditation Standards. After the Self-Study process was complete, an onsite observation was conducted at Child's Path by an early childhood professional. Based on the information collected, Child's Path was awarded accreditation through the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education. All parents, staff members, and administrators at Child's Path are to be congratulated for achieving this level of excellence.

The National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs is sponsored by the Association for Early Learning Leaders, a national leader among associations serving child care owners, directors, and administrators. The organization's goal is to strengthen and enhance the skills and knowledge of leaders in the field of early child care and education by providing membership services and benefits. For more information, please visit www.earlylearningleaders.org.



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Dear Families,

On 2/23/2021 Child's Path was awarded accreditation by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs.

As an Accredited center, Child's Path is recognized as an early care and education program that exemplifies excellence in the care of young children. Child's Path ensures a high quality program for children that is conducive to their individual growth and development, provides professional training opportunities for staff, and demonstrates that the center exceeds minimum state licensing requirements for child care programs.

The accreditation process included a Self-Study in which administrators, staff, and parents evaluated the program in accordance with Accreditation Standards. A validation visit and a thorough commission review of all program materials concluded the process with a decision to award accreditation. All parents, staff members, and administrators at Child's Path are to be congratulated for achieving this level of excellence.



Awarded Program Notification Requirements

Once a program is awarded accreditation, it is the program's responsibility to maintain compliance and follow the timelines and procedures required by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs. To ensure overall compliance with Standards and procedures, programs must report changes or events that affect operations. Programs should immediately notify the Accreditation Office of any communication changes including: change of primary program contact, telephone number, e-mail address or mailing address to ensure that all Accreditation communications are received.

The National Accreditation Commission should be notified of the following changes or events within the allowed timeframe.

The Program must complete the *Initial Notification Form* located on our website, www.earlylearningleaders.org.

The form should be e-mailed to the Accreditation Office within the allowed timeframe.

Notification Required within 3 business days

- Licensing violation, licensing noncompliance or licensing investigation in the areas of child injury, safety, supervision, or guidance
- Loss or suspension of license or issued a provisional license
- Criminal conviction of any employee, volunteer or administrator
- Loss or suspension of QRIS, tiered reimbursement, or other state recognition status

Notification Required within 10 business days

- Director separation (Notify after a director has left even if the replacement has not been determined)
- Hiring/appointment of a New Director
- Change to child care operating license (examples: increase or decrease in licensed capacity, addition or removal of operating restrictions)
- Any significant event or change that affects program operations and/or Accreditation Compliance (Examples: damage, building construction or repairs, hazardous conditions)
- Change in classroom groupings (examples: addition of a previously unserved age group, addition of two or more classrooms, combining of classrooms, or combining of previously unserved age group with existing group)

Notification Required Prior to Implementation/Execution

- Ownership change
- Expansion of facilities (examples: additional classrooms, square footage, program services, playground additions not observed in the most recent validation visit)
- Relocation of program
- Combining of programs
- Closure of a program
- Program name change

Failure to notify the Commission of program changes will result in the following consequence:

- ***After the required initial notification period but prior to 45 days: \$50 late fee***
- ***45 days after the notification period but prior to 90 days: \$250 citation fee***
- ***90 days or more after the notification period: Accreditation Suspension***

The *Initial Notification Form* is located on our website, www.earlylearningleaders.org.



TRAINING GUIDELINES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

THE STANDARD:

A10. Annual training is required.

- Training received is conducted by a variety of sources of expertise.
- The director has a minimum of **30 clock hours** of annual training in early childhood/child development and topics related to program management, leadership, and supervision.
- The onsite supervisor(s) has a minimum of **25 clock hours** of annual training in early childhood/child development and topics related to supervision.
- Each staff member counted in the staff-child ratio has a minimum of **20 clock hours** of annual training in early childhood/child development, including topics related to the age group of children with whom the employee is working.

TRAINING CONTENT

The emphasis for staff trainings should be child development, developmental stages, teacher-child interactions, social and emotional development, curriculum implementation, classroom management, positive guidance, and responsive caregiving. Strive for a balance of training content when choosing topics outside these areas. Mentoring and follow up observations should always be conducted to ensure understanding and implementation of training content. The following topics are required in separate standards and cannot be counted toward training compliance for Standard A10: Child Abuse, CPR, Fire Extinguisher Training, First Aid, Standard Precautions. The hours a new staff member spends in Orientation training can be documented on the log.

Both lead and assistant teachers need training related specifically to the age group supervised. Staff supervising multiple ages should have training related to more than one age group. Topics identified in performance evaluations as needing improvement and topics that offer opportunities for growth should all be considered in formulating a well-designed Professional Development Plan (Standard A12). Since the specific training needs of each staff member determine a portion of the required training content, training logs should not be identical.

TRAINING BASED ON DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS

Separate age group trainings should be provided for topics that require differentiation of content based on developmental stages. With many topics, it is difficult to provide tangible substance if the training is aimed at multiple age groups. Different trainings on the same topic are allowed. While repeating training content has proven value, a different approach to the content may be necessary in order to give staff a new understanding or perspective of the information.

TRAINING FOR AN AREA OF NON-COMPLIANCE

For an area of non-compliance noted in the Award Letter or an Annual Report response letter, training focus should stem from the specifics of the letter. Content should reflect the program's unique needs and current level of staff understanding for the topic. For a program-wide area of non-compliance, training from an outside source may lead to greater compliance. Additionally, a staff member with little experience or no education in ECE/CD would be limited in the topics they can adequately present. Training conducted by the director or other staff member cannot count as training for that individual.



TRAINING GUIDELINES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION, continued

TRAINING DURING A STAFF MEETING

Typically, staff meetings have an agenda of topics to be covered. If training is conducted during a staff meeting, only the time spent on the training topic can be entered on the training log. This type of training should not make up the bulk of the recorded hours. Due to the dual purpose of most staff meetings, the time for training is limited and does not allow for questions or discussion. Trainings that can be adequately conducted in less than an hour often pertain to topics that are a part of normal program communication and procedures.

TRAINING LOG COMPLIANCE

All reports submitted to the National Accreditation Commission require training documentation for the past two years. Only college courses in Child Development (CD) or Early Childhood Education (ECE) can appear on the training log. The formal education field can include only the following: high school, CDA, or AA-BA-MA-PhD. All degrees MUST include the area of study. When a staff member has a degree in Child Development or Early Childhood Education, the number of hours in CD/ECE is not needed in that field.

Degrees in other and/or related fields, including Education, only meet compliance if they include 12 or more hours of CD/ECE. Enter zero for all staff who have no CD/ECE hours and the corresponding number of hours if they have accumulated CD/ECE hours. The total number of program staff is recorded in the accreditation database. Anytime there is a discrepancy between the number of staff originally documented and the number of training logs provided, it is important to give an explanation.

Acronyms vary greatly from state to state. Please include a cover sheet that identifies the training acronyms. Provide a brief description of content for the training.

TRAINING DOCUMENTATION

In addition to the training logs, training certificates or other proof of attendance should be retained for each employee. The documents will be reviewed during the Validation Visit as a part of the staff file review. When training is conducted by an outside agency or outside trainer, training certificates should be provided and kept on file. In house training should have an agenda, training summary, and attendance documentation. Training over 3 hours should be broken down into the topics covered and the time devoted to each. These lengthier trainings should also be divided into topics and time when recorded on the training log.



Submission Options

Programs have multiple options for submitting required reports and documentation.

1. E-mail Scanned/Electronic Paperwork to National Accreditation Commission Office

Prepare reports and documentation electronically or scan the physical paperwork, and e-mail it to us. **Electronic submission will only be accepted as 1 PDF attachment.** Multiple e-mails with 1 attachment will not be accepted; 1 e-mail with multiple attachments will not be accepted. The program will be asked to combine the attachments and resend as 1 PDF. If not able to do so, the program will be asked to mail the paperwork. If properly submitted, the time stamp on the e-mail submission is the effective submission date. If the attachment is not formatted correctly, the program has 5 business days from when they are notified to either fix the attachment or to resubmit the paperwork (received by our office by the 5th business day) before it is considered late.

Please e-mail all electronic submissions to submissions@earlylearningleaders.org.

2. Fax Paperwork to National Accreditation Commission Office

Fax reports and documentation directly to our office. **Please send reports as 1 complete fax.** If it is difficult to read the faxed paperwork, the program will be asked to resubmit the paperwork through a different medium within 5 business days (received by our office by the 5th business day) before it is considered late. If properly submitted, the time stamp on the fax is the effective submission date.

Please fax your submission to 512.301.5080.

3. Mail Physical Paperwork to National Accreditation Commission Office

Mail reports and documentation to our office. **Do not** staple your paperwork; use binder clips and paper clips instead. Paperwork must be received by the due date; plan accordingly. Acquiring a tracking number is recommended.

Please refer to our website for our current mailing address. There is a variable fee for physical submissions: \$25 for the first 375 pages, additional charge calculated for additional pages, payable online.

Mail addressed to any other address will not be forwarded to us; mailing paperwork to the incorrect address will not be grounds for an exception to the due date.

Not sure if your paperwork was received? Reach out to us at submissions@earlylearningleaders.org.



Payment Options

You have multiple options for submitting payments. Payment for reports and documentation is due within 45 days of paperwork submission. Paperwork will not be reviewed until payment is complete; delays may negatively affect your program's accreditation. Failure to make payments in a timely manner will incur a citation fee.

1. Pay Online with a Credit Card

There are multiple Pay Accreditation Fees menus on our website; choose the one for the type of fee you are wishing to pay. Select the appropriate fee for your program. Check out through our secure online store. Print a copy of the receipt for the program's records and send one with the paperwork as payment confirmation.

A list of most Accreditation Fees can be found at www.earlylearningleaders.org/accreditation/accreditation-fees/

2. Pay Online by E-Check/ACH

If you have an invoice number (from one of our official invoices only), you can type it in the Reference field, or if you are making a payment ahead of an official invoice, you can enter the name of the program, address of the program, and what the payment is for (Annual Report, Plan of Action, etc.). Returned checks will incur a \$25 fee.

Access our E-Check/ACH Payment Portal: <https://secure.affinipay.com/pages/association-for-early-learning-leaders/payments>

3. Pay Over the Phone with a Credit Card

Contact the Association for Early Learning Leaders office and make a credit card payment over the phone.

Call us at 512.551.0857.

The receipt will be e-mailed to the program for the program's records and to include with the paperwork submission as payment confirmation.

Questions regarding payments? Reach out to us at admin@earlylearningleaders.org.



Contact Us

Our goal is to be available for you throughout the Accreditation process. Please review the following communication methods and timelines as it will help us better serve you.

Hours of Operation:

9:00AM – 5:00PM Central Time, Monday through Friday

Telephone Contact

Main Line: 512-301-5557

Please leave a detailed message if your call goes unanswered. We will ensure that the person best suited returns your call within 24-48 hours. If your call is not returned during this time frame, please call again.

Mailing Address

Refer to our website for our current mailing address.

E-mail

Accreditation@earlylearningleaders.org – General questions regarding Self-Study or general program Accreditation can be sent to this e-mail address.

Validationvisits@earlylearningleaders.org – Questions regarding the Request for Validation Visit or Validation Visit process can be sent to this e-mail address.

Admin@earlylearningleaders.org – Questions regarding payments can be sent to this e-mail address.

E-mails are typically answered within 2 business days. If you do not receive a prompt response to your e-mail, please resend.

Website

www.earlylearningleaders.org

Helpful Accreditation and Membership information is available on our website. Access online fillable forms, submit payments, search for Accredited and Self-Study programs, read an Accreditation Blog, enroll in Self-Study, review *Frequently Asked Questions*, or view and register for webinars and events at Calendar of Events.

How We Contact You

- E-mail is the primary way we keep in contact with programs. Our system only allows us to record one primary program e-mail. It is important for this e-mail to be checked in the Director's absence. Please be sure we have an up-to-date e-mail on file at all times. Add the Association e-mails to your contact lists to ensure our e-mails reach the program's inbox. Accreditation decisions, report response letters, Self-Study materials, open invoices, and various notifications are sent exclusively by e-mail.
- Telephone calls are used to support e-mail. To ensure prompt and accurate information, the Association has a limited number of people who answer and return phone calls. We want to ensure that programs receive not only prompt but quality service that assists them in being successful. To assist our team, please make sure you provide the best phone number. The team will leave one detailed message at the program number. If unable to reach us by phone, please e-mail questions, program name, phone number and best time to contact to accreditation@earlylearningleaders.org to facilitate a prompt response.