

Understanding Satellite's Accreditation Process

Congratulations! You are about to embark on the next step of your accreditation journey—the accreditation process. You are demonstrating your commitment to creating and maintaining a family child care program of the highest quality through participation in the Satellite Family Child Care System's accreditation.

Key Elements of Accreditation

Accreditation timeline: Preparation for the first accreditation most often takes between 1-2 years. Your first accreditation occurs after your consultant is very familiar with you and your program. You have worked together to prepare for this first accreditation, and you both believe that your program is meeting the accreditation standards.

Reaccreditations occur 12-15 months after your last accreditation so long as you continue to meet accreditation standards.

During the Accreditation process, you:

1. complete an accreditation packet.
2. are observed by your accreditation consultant.
3. distribute the Family Evaluation
4. send in updates for required documentation to your consultant.

Documentation required	Frequency
Home safety checklist	4 times per year; also due at (re)accreditation
Liability Insurance	Submit annually upon reaching associate status
Car Insurance	Submit annually if transporting children
Animal vaccinations	Submit annually (if applicable)
Continuing Education Record	20 hours annually
Mandated Reporter Training	Every 2 years
CPR	Every 1 or 2 years
Program Policies	Upon (re)accreditation
Parent/Provider contract	Upon (re)accreditation

Program Policies and Procedures, Family Contracts—These documents are reviewed by your consultant during the accreditation process. You might have them separated or as one document. Either is fine. Your consultant checks:

1. that you have all of the required components, as listed in the accreditation standards.
2. that your policies, procedures, family contracts are an accurate reflection of your family child care program.

The accreditation is an opportunity to focus on policies, procedures and contract details that need to be updated. This is also a time to notice which policies are not working best for your program and need changes. Your consultant is available to help you throughout the rest of the year in making those revisions, if desired.

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Observations. Accreditation observations are different than most others you experience with Satellite. During these formal observations, the consultant is trying to not impact the environment, children or adults. They have minimal interaction with you and the children (although not ignoring a child who is trying to interact with them). They sit quietly in an out of the way location, listening and watching the family child care educator work. The consultant's primary focus is on the family child care educator and the environment. If a child's behavior is challenging to you, your consultant considers that an opportunity to observe you working in more difficult circumstances, which is often very useful. So please try not to worry about children's behavior and their impact on an observation.

Accreditation observations are unannounced. Together, your consultant and you determine a two-week period for observations. You tell your consultant any days/times when your program will be closed or off site (like on a field trip or transporting children). Other than those situations, if you're open, your consultant may come at any time during this two-week period. The minimal length of your observation is noted on the "Use of Each Accreditation Packet" page.

Your consultant will be taking a LOT of notes. They are observing if you and your staff are meeting the Satellite Accreditation Standards and the requirements of the Home-Safety Checklist. They are writing down examples of beautiful interactions and other excellent moments that they want to share with you. Your consultant knows that you might not have other adults in your program who understand how challenging this work is, and they will be highlighting your skills in their summary. They also note areas for improvement, questions and required changes. All this information is compiled into a summary document that you receive during the accreditation summary meeting.

Your consultant knows that children might behave unusually during a formal observation. They also know that you might be nervous or uncomfortable. Because they have made informal observations of your program throughout the year, they won't base their conclusions entirely on these formal observations. When the consultant writes the accreditation summary, they consider how they have seen you work previously as well as during the formal observations--providing a balanced picture of how you are meeting the accreditation standards.

Accreditation packets. There are 4 different accreditation packets. You complete one packet for your accreditation. You may—or may not—have a choice of accreditation packet. It just depends on where you are in your accreditation journey. The packets are organized so that packets I and II focus on deeply embedding the accreditation standards into your program. Packets III and IV are designed for experienced programs who desire a framework for continual quality improvement of their program beyond meeting the standards.

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USE OF EACH ACCREDITATION PACKET

Packet I

- Accreditation years 1 and 2
- Used in subsequent years if the consultant has substantial concerns regarding the provider meeting standards
- Includes full program observation of all hours the program is open/regulated.

Packet II

- Available for accreditation years 3 and beyond
- Includes program observation minimum of 6 hours.
- Used the year an established program changes location

Packets III and IV

Available if:

- There have been no significant changes (e.g. physical plant, program).
- There were no required changes from the previous reaccreditation.
- There were no significant parent complaints during the prior year.
- There were no substantiated regulatory complaints during the prior year.
- There were no enforcement actions by licensing or certification during the prior 2 years.
- The provider accepts and embraces the accreditation standards.
- The provider shows the initiative to make changes.

Packet III

- Available for accreditation years 5 and beyond
- The provider prefers to do a project-based reaccreditation process
- Includes program observation minimum of 3 hours

Packet IV

- Available for accreditation years 8 and beyond
- Required: consultant and provider have worked together through one previous reaccreditation cycle
- The provider prefers a self-reaccreditation process
- Does not require a program observation *if* the consultant has observed the program during one or more quarterly visits the previous 12 months

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After your accreditation: You will continue to receive support from Satellite, for as long as you continue to participate and meet the accreditation standards. You are beginning a cycle of support and re-accreditations:

