

# Introduction to Maryland Accreditation

## Video Transcript

[0:00-0:25]

Title Screen: An Introduction to Program Accreditation, Maryland EXCELS, Excellence Counts in Early Learning and School Age Care, Maryland State Department of Education

Narration: Maryland EXCELS is a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that recognizes the quality and continuous improvement of early care and education programs in the state. This orientation will introduce you to the basic requirements of program accreditation which is one of the key components to assist programs with achieving a quality rating of 5 in Maryland EXCELS.

[0:26-1:00]

Objectives

Narration: By the end of this session, participants will:

- **Identify** the benefits of program accreditation and the elements of high-quality, early learning programs.
- **Understand** the definition, purpose, and process of program accreditation.
- **Familiarize** yourself with the accrediting organizations recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education.
- **Identify** the accreditation supports available from the Maryland State Department of Education.

[1:01-1:16]

The Maryland EXCELS website home page

Narration: Upon completion of this presentation, you will reflect on what you have learned about accreditation and how it relates to the goals for improving quality in your program. Finally, you will complete and submit your [Accreditation Reflection Form](#).

[1:17-2:12 ]

Benefits of Accreditation

Narration: There are many benefits to becoming an accredited program. Accredited programs have access to the following benefits:

- Public recognition for achieving and maintaining standards of high quality.
- Families access information on accredited programs to make informed decisions about quality care and education for their children.
- Children experience an environment that is developmentally appropriate and supportive of best practices.

- Eligibility to participate in the *Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) PLUS*
- Ability to achieve a Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating 5
- Eligibility for financial incentives and support through the Accreditation Support Fund

[2:13-2:53]

#### Elements of High-Quality Programs

Narration: What does high quality in early learning programs really mean?

First, they meet all licensing regulations.

They support all children through the flexible and accessible design of learning environments and activities.

They plan developmentally appropriate lessons using curriculum and respond to children's individual needs.

These programs engage families and include their cultures, traditions, and home languages.

And finally, high-quality early learning programs participate in professional development and continuing education.

[2:54-3:35]

#### Accreditation: Process and Achievement

Narration: What is the accreditation process?

The accreditation process supports early learning programs to improve the quality of services by meeting national and/or state quality standards.

The process of accreditation requires programs to select an accrediting organization, complete a self-study, submit evidence, and create a program improvement plan. The final step requires the program to undergo external review to verify that high-quality practices are in place.

Achieving accreditation notifies the public that a program meets national and/or state quality standards.

[3:36-3:55]

The Purpose of Accreditation. A circular graphic: Self-study to evaluate total operation is in the middle surrounded by four sections:

1. Feedback from families and staff
2. Accreditation Standards
3. Current Program Offerings and Business Practices
4. Improvement plan, all enclosed by quality improvements

Narration: The purpose of program accreditation is to provide an opportunity for self-study through which the program evaluates its total operation. The program seeks feedback from

families and staff to develop a plan to meet accreditation standards and improve the quality of its practices.

[3:55-4:59]

Selecting an Accrediting Organization. The Accredited Programs and Organizations page on the Maryland EXCELS website.

Narration: The process of accreditation begins when you select a national, regional or state accreditation organization that is recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education.

How should you go about selecting an accrediting organization? First, research the accrediting organizations that are recognized by MSDE listed on the accredited programs and organizations page on the Maryland EXCELS website. Then, select an accrediting organization that supports the type of programming that you provide. This can be based on the ages of children served, theory of instruction, such as Montessori, and program type. Finally, determine and plan for the overall cost of accreditation, including accreditation materials, fees and renewal fees, if any. Now you're ready to begin the accreditation process, which may include attending orientations and/or purchasing materials.

[5:00-5:43]

MSDE's Accreditation Support fund.

Screen: The National Accreditation Support Fund is available for licensed Child Care Centers and Registered Family Child Care Providers.

The fund pays the accrediting organization directly on a program's behalf and covers the following fees:

- Initial application
- Renewal application
- Annual Update

The Maryland Accreditation Support Fund is available for licensed Child Care Centers. Support funds reimburse child care programs for the purchase of non-consumable learning materials such as:

- Curricula
- Classroom technology
- Outdoor play equipment
- Science and sensory materials
- Books and more

Narration: MSDE's Accreditation Support Fund is available to help with the costs associated with becoming an accredited program. The National Accreditation Support Fund is available for both licensed Child Care Centers and Registered Family Child Care Providers and can be used to assist with fees charged by an approved national accreditation organization. The Maryland Accreditation Support Fund is available for licensed Child Care Centers and can be used to offset

costs incurred in purchasing learning materials for program improvements to meet Maryland's accreditation standards.

Find more information about the Accreditation Support Fund by visiting the Maryland EXCELS website.

[5:44-6:17]

#### Process of Accreditation: Self-Study Improvement Plan

Narration: After selecting an accrediting organization and considering expenses, programs begin a process of self-study to determine the extent to which they meet accreditation standards. This self-study process includes a review of the staffing, leadership, curriculum and instruction, family participation and community resources. The program gathers supporting evidence to document the accreditation standards that are met. Based on the findings of the self-study, the program develops a Program Improvement Plan to meet the accreditation standards.

[6:18-7:13]

#### Process of Accreditation: Site visit/validation/maintenance

Narration: When the program has made the improvements to meet the accreditation standards, a site visit is requested by contacting the accrediting organization. An external reviewer, who has been trained and authorized by the accrediting organization, visits the program to validate that the program has met accreditation standards through observation, review of documentation, and interviews. Based on the program or provider's ability to demonstrate that they meet accreditation standards, a program can be awarded accreditation or will be provided with information on necessary program improvements. When accreditation has been awarded, a program maintains that status by updating documentation required by the accrediting organization. This information is submitted annually and/or at the time of renewal based on the requirements of the accrediting organization.

[7:14-7:35]

#### The Accreditation Reflection Form

Narration: Based on your thoughts about the information presented, please complete the Accreditation Reflection Form available on the Maryland EXCELS website. Completing the Accreditation Reflection Form and uploading the form to the Maryland EXCELS online system will provide the documentation required to meet Maryland EXCELS standard ACR 1 at Level 2.

[7:36-8:03]

Maryland EXCELS, [marylandexcels.org](http://marylandexcels.org), [info@marylandexcels.org](mailto:info@marylandexcels.org)

For additional information on Maryland EXCELS and the accreditation process, visit the website at [www.marylandexcels.org](http://www.marylandexcels.org). For email, contact [info@marylandexcels.org](mailto:info@marylandexcels.org), or you can contact your regional Quality Assurance Specialist.

Thank you for your participation in this Introduction to Program Accreditation.