

# NAFCC Accreditation Accelerator Project

Pilot Project Overview..... 1  
Who Is Eligible to Apply?..... 2  
Selection Process:..... 2  
Participation Categories..... 2  
Timeline Overview (2026 Cohort)..... 3

---

## Pilot Project Overview

Family child care educators often face barriers to accreditation, including professional isolation, limited time, and lack of access to consistent coaching and business support. Research from the Erikson Institute demonstrates that staffed networks play a critical role in reducing these barriers and supporting quality improvement.

The NAFCC Accreditation Accelerator Project is a national pilot initiative that brings together a small cohort of high-capacity family child care networks to participate in an accelerated accreditation pathway, allowing eligible educators to complete accreditation with a reduced or waived self-study period.

The Accreditation Accelerator Project is designed to:

- Test whether network-supported educators complete accreditation more quickly
- Identify the core characteristics of strong, effective FCC networks
- Inform future accreditation policies, supports, and pathways
- Build a scalable model for network-led accreditation support nationwide

The NAFCC Accreditation Accelerator Project is an opportunity for networks to:

- Strengthen their accreditation support systems
  - Reduce barriers for FCC educators
  - Participate in a national learning initiative
  - Help shape the future of family child care accreditation
- 

## Who Is Eligible to Apply?

The Accelerator is open to family child care networks and organizations that support the unique strengths and diversity of FCC programs, including:

- Accreditation Facilitation Projects
- Family child care networks and hubs

- Higher education–based FCC networks
  - CCR&Rs with dedicated FCC network models
  - State or regional FCC associations
  - Nonprofits or coalitions that provide structured FCC support
- 

## **Selection Process:**

Participants in the Accelerator complete a self-assessment, demonstrating their proficiency across key domains associated with strong FCC networks, including:

- Service delivery and integration
- Relationship-based support
- Staffing and professional development
- Caseloads and individualized support
- Business and financial support
- Cultural responsiveness
- Educator wellbeing

Networks will be asked to submit:

- Narrative responses describing their approach and systems
- Documentation and evidence supporting their self-assessment

Submissions will be reviewed and scored using a standardized rubric. Networks will also participate in brief interviews to clarify responses.

Eligible networks must demonstrate that they:

- Provide direct support to FCC educators pursuing accreditation
  - Have dedicated staff responsible for coaching, training, or technical assistance
  - Can commit to participating in project activities and data collection
  - Are willing to engage in data collection activities, technical assistance, and community of practice sessions with NAFCC
- 

## **Accelerated Pathways**

Based on assessment results, selected networks will be placed into one of the following participation pathways: NAFCC will assess the FCC Networks' competencies and support (how well are they supporting educators through the NAFCC Accreditation system from Self-Study to Observation and Decision. Once the assessment is completed, NAFCC will award Networks one of three different Accelerated Pathways. Only FCC Educators engaged with the Networks are eligible to enjoy these pathways.

- **Waived Self-Study Pathway**  
Networks demonstrating strong, consistent systems may support educators through accreditation, with the traditional 6-month self-study period waived.
- **Accelerated Self-Study Pathway**  
Networks demonstrating promising practices may support educators through a shortened self-study period (approximately three months) with guidance and support from NAFCC.

#### Accelerator Benefits:

- Accelerated Self-Study Enrollment Period
- Priority Accreditation Observations
- Individualized coaching consultations with NAFCC
- Invitation to participate in additional NAFCC FCC Network Pilots

## Timeline Overview (2026 Cohort)

### March 20, 2026 - March 31

- Network interest and intake process
- Network Kickoff

### April 2026

- Network self-assessment
- Educator interviews

### May 2026

- Network Interviews
- Review, scoring, and calibration

### By June 30, 2026

- Final network selection and notification
- MOUs finalized

### July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

- Network onboarding
- Educator identification and support
- Ongoing technical assistance, communities of practice, and data collection