NAFCC Accreditation “Tipsheet”

Getting Started with NAFCC Accreditation and the MRTQ Accreditation Project

Are you considering pursuing accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care with help from Maine Roads to Quality? You may be wondering if you’re ready to pursue accreditation, and also what your first steps might be. The following information will give you a quick introduction on how to get started.

What does it mean to be in an accreditation cohort? MRTQ provides the following support to family child care providers in an accreditation cohort:

- **Financial Support:** MRTQ pays $700 of the $800 in fees to NAFCC; as the provider you are responsible for $100. Support is also available for Annual Renewal Fees and Co-Provider Fees.
- **Networking and Mentoring:** Through cohort meetings you will talk with other family child care providers who are also pursuing accreditation and those who have achieved accreditation.
- **On-site Technical Assistance:** Your accreditation facilitator will visit your program and can assist you in your Self Study and as you prepare for your Observation Visit.
- **Other Funding:** Occasionally, additional mini-grant funding is available for various program purchases.

☐ **First things first: Are you ready?**

Ask yourself the following questions. You should answer “yes” to all of these questions. If you have concerns or would like clarification, please contact Sonja Howard at showard@usm.maine.edu or 615-3973.

- Are you at least 21 years of age?
- Do you have a high school diploma or GED? (waivers are allowed if you do not hold a high school diploma)
- Do you provide care for at least three children in a home environment for a minimum of 15 hours per week? (At least one of the children must live outside of the home.)
- Are you the primary caregiver, spending at least 80% of your operating hours actively involved with the children? (If you are a co-provider you must spend at least 60% of your operating hours actively involved with the children.)
- Will you have at least 18 months of experience in family child care before the observation visit or 12 months experience if home visits are conducted monthly and intensive training is received by the time you are ready to submit for your final observation with NAFCC?
- Are you in compliance with all state of Maine licensing requirements?
- Do you have at least 45 hours of training within the last three years? NAFCC requires 90 hours of child care-related training, it is best if you have at least half of this training completed before joining an accreditation cohort.
Are you a Maine Roads to Quality Registry member?
Are you a member of Quality for ME?
Are you interested in participating in an in-depth self-study of your program?

☐ If you answered “yes” to ALL of the above questions, then you are ready to take the next steps! Contact Sonja Howard at showard@usm.maine.edu or 230-0114 to get on the mailing list for future information on accreditation support in your area.

☐ To receive accreditation support from Maine Roads to Quality, you must complete the following application procedures:

1. **Become a member of NAFCC.** Visit www.nafcc.org and click on “Membership” on your left and then “Application” which is on the top of the page. You can apply online. The cost is $35.

2. **Print out the NAFCC self-study application for accreditation.** Please note that this is an application in addition to the membership application from step 1. Again, visit www.nafcc.org and click on “Accreditation” then “How Do I” and then “Application Step.” DO NOT APPLY ONLINE. DO NOT SEND THE APPLICATION TO NAFCC. Fill out the application completely and make out a check for $100 payable to “NAFCC Accreditation.” (You may also pay with a credit card. Please fill out the credit card information on page 5 of the application.)

3. **Fill out an application for Maine Roads to Quality Accreditation Support.** You can find this application at www.muskie.usm.maine.edu/maineroads/pages/accreditation.htm. Be sure to print out the Family Child Care application.

4. **Once you have completed steps 2 and 3, mail both applications and the $100 made out to “NAFCC Accreditation” (unless paying by credit card) to:**
   Sonja Howard
   MRTQ Accreditation Project
   PO Box 9300
   Portland, ME 04104

Applying for accreditation support through Maine Roads to Quality will give you access to email and phone support, on-site observations and technical assistance, and support through cohort meetings with other providers in your area who are pursuing accreditation. Once you’ve assessed your readiness and completed all of the application procedures, you’re ready for the fun to begin!