

August 26, 2025

Dr. Wenjie Wang
Western New Mexico University
1000 W. College Ave.
Silver City, NM 88061

Dear Wenjie Wang:

Congratulations! We are pleased to inform you that the B.S. Early Childhood Education: Licensure (Age 3 through Grade 3 concentration) program at Western New Mexico University is among programs nationally to be accredited by the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs, demonstrating commitment on the part of the program and the institution to high quality and continuous improvement, benefiting students, the early childhood education profession, and young children.

In response to your program's recent accreditation process, it is our pleasure to share that the program has earned **Accreditation with Conditions** from the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs. This positive accreditation decision is based on the Commission's review of the Self-Study Report, the Peer Review Report, and Written Response. The Commission evaluates the patterns of evidence indicating ability to support positive candidate outcomes in relation to the accreditation standards and offers feedback on program strengths and areas for consideration. Special attention is given to the use of candidate assessments and performance data to increase program effectiveness, capacity and innovation. The Commission would like to emphasize the positive nature of this decision, noting that approximately 75 percent of programs receive conditions, and approximately 95 percent are able to meet those conditions successfully within the first two Response-to-Conditions reporting cycles.

Accreditation is maintained through regular submission of reports and an annual fee; your reporting date is on the first page of the Decision Report that follows. Current fees and the report templates are posted at www.naeyc.org and in the [Accreditation Resource Library](#). **To meet continuous improvement expectations, the program must address the conditions listed on the attached Decision Report, in a first (and, if needed, second) Response-to-Conditions Report.** If conditions are addressed and removed, the program will remain accredited for the remainder of a seven-year term. (In particular: the program should plan to submit Response-to-Conditions Reports by **September 30, 2026, and, if needed, by September 30, 2027**. The program would also submit Interim Reports by **September 30, 2027** and (assuming conditions are successfully addressed) by **September 30, 2029**, prior to submitting a renewal Self-Study Report by **November 30, 2031**.) If conditions are not sufficiently addressed in either the first or second Response-to-Conditions Report, accreditation will expire according to the timeline on the enclosed accreditation certificate.

We encourage you to review the enclosed guidance document in considering how to address the conditions. We also host webinars twice a year for faculty preparing reports and have developed additional resources in the Accreditation Resource Library. As always, we encourage faculty to continue to use the online community website to maintain compliance with the accreditation standards, prepare reports, and sustain a culture of evidence-based quality improvement.

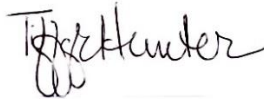
Please contact Pamela Ehrenberg, Director of Accreditation Services (pehrenberg@naeyc.org), if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance as you prepare to respond to the conditions. We are very pleased to include Western New

Mexico University in the community of institutions sponsoring programs that have earned NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs.

Sincerely,



Mary Harrill
Senior Director
Higher Education Accreditation & Program Support



Tiffany Hunter
Commission Chair

cc: Joseph Shepard, President

Accreditation Decision Report

This report presents the decision of the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs.

Institution Name: Western New Mexico University **State:** NM
Dates of Site Visit: March 2 - 5, 2025
Degree program(s): B.S. Early Childhood Education: Licensure (Age 3 through Grade 3 concentration)
Date of Decision: June 2025

Decision: **Accreditation with Conditions**

Conditions:

- Condition 1 (*Standard C6*): Ensure the program is transparent with the public about its effectiveness in preparing early childhood educators.
- Condition 2 (*Standard D2*): Ensure the program’s key assessments accurately evaluate candidate performance related to Professional Standards 1, 3, and 6.
- Condition 3 (*Standard E3*): Ensure candidate performance data from the learning opportunities and key assessments indicate that candidates are proficient in the Professional Standard 5.
- Condition 4 (*Standard F1*): Ensure the program requires candidates to complete field experiences across a variety of early learning settings and with a variety of early childhood age groups sufficient to support candidates’ proficiency in the Professional Standards and Competencies.

Note: For conditions related to key assessment alignment to the standards and/or rubric quality, the Commission has included examples of the concerns that led to the condition(s), but the program should review all relevant key assessments to consider revisions that would address the condition. When submitting its first response to conditions, the Commission encourages the program to submit revisions for all key assessments that are cited in the conditions so that the program can receive comprehensive feedback from the Commission.

The NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs finds that this program demonstrates many strengths related to the accreditation standards. Some of these strengths are noted under the applicable standards below, and others are described in the Peer Review Report that the program received following its site visit. However, the Commission has determined that revisions are needed to address the conditions cited above.

The Commission offers the following rationale for the conditions:

Condition #1 was cited because: Accountability data were not available on the website link included in the program’s Self-Study Report. The peer review team noted that the data listed were “related to the AA program only... but does not include BS program data” (Peer Review Report, pp. 23-24). The program included a link in the Written Response to the Peer Review Report (p. 2), but that link goes to “page not found” (https://coe.wnmu.edu/early-childhood-education/#early-childhood-care-__0026-education). The program indicated that “the College of Education is currently

working on adding evidence to meet those goals, objectives, and outcomes” (Written Response to Peer Review Report, p. 5). Of note, the college website lists that an IT issue in Spring 2025 resulted in “access to certain WNMU systems and services, including the university’s website [being] disrupted” (Western New Mexico University website, n.p.).

For Condition #1 to be removed by the second Response-to-Conditions Report, the program must:

- C6a: Provide evidence the program publishes its program objectives and evidence of meeting these objectives on its website, in a place that is easily accessible to current and prospective candidates and the public.
- C6b: Provide evidence the program publishes program effectiveness data on its website in a place that is easily accessible to current and prospective candidates and the public. These data include the number of program completers by academic year, the rate of completion within the programs published timeframe, and at least one other institutional designed measure that speaks to program effectiveness.

Condition #2 was cited because:

- Standards 1 and 3: In Key Assessment 1, measuring Key Competencies 1a, 1b, 1d, and 3a, the rubric used language such as “surface-level understanding” under the “met” column, which is inconsistent with fully meeting the proficiencies (Self-Study Report, pp. 170-189; Peer Review Report, pp. 25-26).
- Standard 6: In Key Assessment 4, the rubric used language such as “most evidence,” “most examples,” “some evidence,” and “can be further strengthened/improved” under the “met” column for Key Competencies 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, and 6e while the “exceeds expectation” column refers to all evidence, examples, or “strong,” indicating that the “exceeds expectation” column may actually be indicative of fully meeting the proficiencies (Self-Study Report, pp. 240-242; Peer Review Report, pp. 25-26).

This concern was found to be most pervasive with regard to Key Assessments 1 and 4; however, when revising these rubrics, the program may also consider whether in some cases the second column under “Met” (i.e., “Successfully Meets Expectations” for KA5 / “Meets Expectations” for KA6) may have opportunities for strengthening as well—both in terms of fully meeting the key competency and/or in terms of objective, qualitative language.

For Condition #2 to be removed by the second Response-to-Conditions Report, the program must revise rubrics for Standards 1, 3, and 6 (currently measured in Key Assessments X, X, and X) to provide evidence the “met” rating level on rubrics require candidates to show evidence that they fully meet the proficiencies in the key competencies rather than partially meet the proficiencies (Standard D2d).

Condition #3 was cited because: candidate performance for Standard 5 indicated that fewer than 80% of candidates demonstrated proficiency in this standard.

The Commission notes that the program has established a plan to support candidates in meeting the key competencies within the key assessments by “scaffolding and making changes to relevant courses to support learning” such as “adding virtual meetings to create a hybrid course, adding additional textbook readings” and having faculty collaborate to support alignment of Key Assessment components (Peer Review Report, pp. 57-58; Self-Study Report, pp. 296-297, 303).

For Condition #3 to be removed by the second Response-to-Conditions Report, the program must: provide evidence that candidate performance data on key assessments demonstrates that at least 80 percent of candidates have met Standard 5. *Note: the program is encouraged to review forthcoming guidance from NAEYC with regard to presenting data and calculating the 80% proficiency rate. Current policies do not dictate that the 80% needs to be calculated as an average of key competencies, but if the program has identified a different way of calculating data, this should be clearly described in the Response-to-Conditions Report.*

Condition #4 was cited because: It is unclear how the program keeps record and tracks each candidate’s observation and practice in at least two of four types of early learning settings outside of the specific practicum and student teaching courses. On the Field Experience Chart, multiple Field Experiences indicate settings and age groups as “varies; candidate

choice” (Self-Study Report, pp. 304-308). However, the peer review team did note that “ensuring that at least two age groups are met is covered through course assignment directions” (Peer Review Report, p. 73)

For Condition #4 to be removed by the second Response-to-Conditions Report, the program must provide evidence that all candidates have opportunities to observe and practice within at least two of four types of early learning settings (home-based programs, center-based programs, early elementary grade settings, and comprehensive service settings (e.g., Head Start, Educare)) (Standard F1b).

Accreditation Decision Report: The Accreditation Standards

Nationally accredited programs must substantially meet the Accreditation Standards through evidence provided in the Self-Study Report and Peer Review Team site visit. The accreditation decision is based on evidence that the program meets the Accreditation Standards through four indicators: documented learning opportunities, key assessments, data on candidate performance on key assessments, and use of that data to improve the program in relation to the accreditation standards. (NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Handbook, p. 37, 60).

Notable strengths in relation to Accreditation Standards A, B, C, and/or F:

- For Accreditation Standard B, the “faculty [are] highly educated and diverse in their cultural backgrounds, which mirrors the diversity among the candidates” (Peer Review Report, p. 3). For example, the faculty have collective experience with working with toddlers through school age, children who are bilingual, and children with disabilities (Peer Review Report, p. 14).
- For Accreditation Standard F, the program has access to the Center of Excellence, which is a lab type child care and family support center adjacent to the College of Education that has been “recognized by the state of New Mexico as an exemplary center...” giving candidates a high-quality placement to do field experience and practicum (Peer Review Report, p. 70).

Notable strengths in relation to the Professional Standards and Competencies as addressed through Accreditation Standards D and E:

- For Accreditation Standard D, the department chair and faculty work collaboratively to determine the learning opportunities embedded in individual courses; in addition, “candidates are supported as they go through those learning opportunities to ensure the program is graduating highly qualified educators” (Peer Review Report, pp. 3, 25).
- The institution uses a data collection platform in the key assessment courses that can allow the program to easily pull and review data for analysis (Peer Review Report, p. 27).
- For Accreditation Standard D, the program offers a variety of experiences and activities for candidates that align with the NAEYC Advancing Equity position statement, ensuring candidates are prepared to meet the diverse needs of young learners and include children with varying abilities, contexts, and cultures in quality early learning environments. For example, Key Assessment 1 requires candidates to develop instructional strategies and interventions for English Language Learners and modifications for children with disabilities who have Individualized Family Service Plans or Education Programs (Self-Study Report, p. 161). If practicum or observation sites are limited, the program commits to facilitating and emphasizing “critical conversations around anti-bias education, diversity, equity, and inclusion in early childhood education and care” (Self-Study Report, p. 67). In Key Assessment 6, candidates are required to describe the connections between technology, equity, and equality (Self-Study Report, pp. 262, 267).
- The Commission found strong alignment among the learning opportunities, key assessments, and key competencies. This demonstrated that candidates had multiple opportunities to be introduced to, practice, and be assessed on the depth and breadth of the key competencies. For example, in ECED 473 (Teaching and Learning Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Movement), candidates are introduced to Key Competency 5a by reading chapters such as ““Why is studying social studies important for young learners?” and “Creative Social Studies,” which is one of the content knowledge areas of early childhood curriculum (Self-Study Report, p. 134). Candidates also respond to and reflect on technology, science, engineering, arts, and math in Key Assessment 6

and are measured on their developmentally appropriate ways of implementing these content areas into the curriculum (Self-Study Report, pp. 267-268).

Suggested Areas for Consideration:

Although the learning opportunities overall represent a strength, it was noted that “many of the [identified] learning opportunities come from only one or two courses. This does not demonstrate the progression of learning and may indicate gaps in learning opportunities in other courses” (Peer Review Report, p. 21). Although the program is not required to submit an updated Learning Opportunities Chart as part of its first Response-to-Conditions Report, in future iterations of the chart the program might consider listing additional learning opportunities from courses beyond those in which key assessments are implemented to demonstrate where candidates have opportunities to be introduced to, practice with, and be assessed on the concepts of the key competencies.

Additionally, in Standard 5, Key Competency 5a, it is unclear how the learning opportunity of the Video Case Study, in which candidates list teacher characteristics, aligns with Key Competency 5a of understanding content knowledge—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure and resources for the academic disciplines in an early childhood curriculum (Self-Study Report, p. 134; Peer Review Report, pp. 25-26). This was one of two activities included in the “introduce” column of the Learning Opportunities Chart. However, the peer review team noted that “the education the candidates are getting is appropriate and complete,” and the Commission found that collectively, the learning opportunities and key assessments align with the breadth and depth of each standard.

Finally, the program should review the accuracy of Exhibit Five: Key Assessments of Candidate Proficiency to ensure the chart and corresponding sections reflect the Standards assessed in each Key Assessment. For example, Key Assessment 1 includes 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d in the candidate instructions for Task 1 (Self-Study Report, pp. 155-158) and in the candidate rubrics (Self-Study Report, pp. 171-173), but these are not marked in the charts.

Note:

The Commission recognizes the many strengths highlighted by this accreditation process beyond those specifically listed here. Additional strengths have been noted in the Peer Review Report.

Reporting Expectations:

The following conditions must be addressed in the first Response-to-Conditions Report and must be met by the second Response-to-Conditions Report in order to continue accreditation:

- Condition 1 (*Standard C6*): Ensure the program is transparent with the public about its effectiveness in preparing early childhood educators.
- Condition 2 (*Standard D2*): Ensure the program’s key assessments accurately evaluate candidate performance related to Professional Standards 1, 3, and 6.
- Condition 3 (*Standard E3*): Ensure candidate performance data from the learning opportunities and key assessments indicate that candidates are proficient in the Professional Standard 5.

- Condition 4 (*Standard F1*): Ensure the program requires candidates to complete field experiences across a variety of early learning settings and with a variety of early childhood age groups sufficient to support candidates' proficiency in the Professional Standards and Competencies.

Report Due Dates:

Report	Due Date
First Response to Conditions	September 30, 2026
Second Response to Conditions (if needed)	September 30, 2027
Year 4 Interim Report	September 30, 2029
Renewal Self-Study Report	November 30, 2031