

regular basis and go through similar steps every few years in order to maintain accreditation. It truly is a never-ending process!

### What is NAEYC Accreditation?

Founded in 1926, NAEYC **naeyc** is the nation's largest and most influential organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. NAEYC's accreditation system was established to set professional standards for early childhood programs and to help families identify high quality programs. NAEYC accreditation continues to be the mark of quality in early childhood education.

There are only a handful of facilities in the Quad Cities area which have achieved NAEYC accreditation.

### What is ISACS Accreditation?

ISACS is a membership organization of more than 225 **ISACS** independent schools from 13 Midwestern states.

The purpose of ISACS is to promote the development of strong learning communities, characterized by high achievements, social responsibility, and independence of governance, programs, and policies. This goal is achieved through a rigorous accreditation process, professional development opportunities, and support services.

The principal function of ISACS is the accreditation of its member schools, which, as independent, not-for-profit schools, have voluntarily chosen to guide their progress toward an ideal of educational excellence by measuring against the highest possible standards.

Villa Montessori is one of only two schools in the Quad Cities area which has achieved its ISACS accreditation.



For more information on NAEYC and ISACS, please visit their websites:

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

[www.isacs.org](http://www.isacs.org)

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# The Benefits of Accreditation



# Accreditation

*It sounds like a good thing, but what does it really mean? What difference does accreditation make between Villa Montessori School and any other school which is **not** accredited?*

Accreditation by an outside organization is a proud achievement for any school. Villa Montessori School has achieved accreditation from two organizations: ISACS (Independent Schools Association of Central States) and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Children).

Achieving accreditation is no easy feat—so why would a school bother with the process? For Villa Montessori, the answer is quite simple: accreditation offers substantial benefits to the families it serves.

## What Does Accreditation Mean To Students and Families?

**Qualified Staff:** Staff members working with your child are well qualified and continue to participate in ongoing training to update their skills. All lead teachers at VMS have at least a bachelor's degree. VMS assistants have a minimum of 30 hours college credit; many are college graduates. *Your child's teachers will be knowledgeable, professional, and caring.*

**Comprehensive Curriculum:** The curriculum developed and used at VMS for each age level has been thoroughly reviewed

and meets or exceeds the state standards. The curriculum not only meets academic standards, but also fosters the development of the whole child emotionally, physically, and socially. *Your child will be experiencing a thorough and proven curriculum.*

**Outside Oversight:** Accreditation through ISACS and NAEYC includes an exhaustive examination of the school's programs, as well as its mission, policies, budgets, structure, and administration. This helps provide assurance to families that the school has proven that it is trustworthy and stable. *Your child's school is accountable to both you and the accrediting bodies.*

**Safe, Healthy Environment:** The physical environment of the school meets all health and safety standards. Policies are in place to protect children from illness and injury. Good nutrition and healthy eating practices are promoted. *Your child's health and safety are paramount.*

**Continued Improvement:** Because accreditation is an ongoing process, VMS must continually report to its accrediting organizations. The school cannot rest on its laurels! Introspective examination, participation in a

school improvement process and strategic planning are a requirement of continued accreditation. *Your child's school will continually strive for excellence.*

## The Accreditation Process: A Thorough School Examination

The process for accreditation by each accrediting organization is somewhat similar. First, the school must conduct an extensive self-study, which includes surveys of families and staff, thorough descriptions of programs offered, and an identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Next, the school is visited by a team of individuals who are responsible for verifying the self-study and witnessing, first-hand, the school in operation. The visiting team provides suggestions for school improvements and then makes its recommendation to the accrediting organization on whether accreditation should be granted. For an initial accreditation, the entire process may take several years. Once accredited, the school must file reports on a

