

MAAP Frequently Asked Questions

What is MAAP?

The Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Program (MAAP) is a state-approved accreditation program developed by the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance (MnSACA) to promote the highest level of quality programming for school-age, OST, and afterschool care. Accreditation through MAAP is a voluntary process and provides a tangible and marketable indicator of quality in school-age care programs. It also provides school-age care professionals with performance indicators to guide program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Who is MAAP Appropriate For?

MAAP accreditation is a great tool for programs serving school-age youth. Accredited sites have included before-and-after school & summer programs within a school district, school-age rooms/components within a child care center, and community-based programs. It is also adaptable for faith-based, corporate-based, family child care, and sites that have 3- or 4-year-olds as part of their school-age program.

What are the benefits of being a MAAP accredited program?

- Provides a framework for program quality improvement efforts
- Provides a context for ongoing professional development
- Measurably strengthens afterschool programs and services
- Serves as a foundation for positive youth outcomes
- Fosters a better trained workforce, thereby minimizing staff turnover
- Conveys a commitment to quality and informs families' decisions about afterschool care
- Programs serving children who qualify for child care assistance may be eligible for a higher reimbursement rate

How long does the MAAP process take?

All programs enroll in MAAP in September. The process could be completed in as few as 12 months, or as many as 24 months. If a program is deferred (i.e., is *not* granted an accreditation endorsement), the timeline will be extended while they complete a second validation visit.

How much does it cost?

Fees for going through MAAP vary based on enrollment size. *Once accredited, programs are eligible to receive a reimbursement for half of their accreditation fees through the MN Department of Human Services! Also, once accredited, programs serving youth who qualify for child care assistance may be eligible for a higher reimbursement rate.*

How can my program begin the process?

Visit www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/maap. Scroll down to the "Enroll in MAAP Today!" heading to learn more and access the MAAP Enrollment Form, which is due by September 30th of each year.

Can I learn more about MAAP without going through the process?

Yes! The *MAAP Informational Guide* and an *Overview of MAAP Accreditation PowerPoint* are both available to the public if you would like to learn more before beginning. They can be accessed at www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/maap. Scroll to the header, "MAAP Resources to Get You Started." MnSACA staff are also happy to meet with you, your staff, or your administration to help them better understand MAAP, how it works, and its value.

Your site is also welcome to choose an individual that they would like to hire as their accreditation coach. This individual can attend training provided by MnSACA in September of each year and other support groups throughout the year. These supports will provide more information and help prepare your program for when you do finally decide to begin the process.

Do I have to use an accreditation coach and what are my options for finding one?

No, using an accreditation coach is optional. However, it is encouraged, especially if it is your first time going through the MAAP accreditation process. Coaches could be internal (an individual from your program or district who is designated to oversee the process or assist multiple sites) or external (an individual from outside your program). MnSACA provides training and ongoing support to those wishing to be a coach, and will provide programs with a list of individuals who have completed a training with MnSACA. In other words, MnSACA will facilitate connections between coaches and programs, but programs seeking accreditation are responsible for hiring and providing compensation for their own coaches.

I just heard about School-Age Care Guidelines. Are those the same as MAAP? How are they different, and why should I do MAAP if I follow those guidelines?

The Minimum Standards for School-Age Care Programs handbook is an agreed-upon guide approved by MCEA to articulate just that: a minimum set of standards. It was written with currently licensed-exempt school-age care programs in schools in mind, and is not intended to be a metric for accreditation. MCEA encourages programs to articulate and strive for even higher standards, and many programs do. Going through MAAP accreditation and meeting its rigorous standards provides a way for school-age care programs to demonstrate a higher level of quality.

How many programs are currently accredited through MAAP?

Over 70 programs are currently accredited, and even more are going through the process!

How does MnSACA support MAAP coaches and Validators?

MnSACA holds a required training for all validators and optional training for individuals wishing to coach, then provides ongoing support to both groups throughout the year.

My program is overwhelmed with the new DHS certification requirements. Will going through MAAP accreditation help us to meet any of these requirements?

MAAP provides Indicators of Quality around the areas of hiring policies, background checks, and ongoing professional development. These Indicators may provide extra guidance and clarity and tangible suggestions for how to implement the certification requirements in your program. By implementing the MAAP Indicators you will be well on your way towards meeting the DHS regulations, however, MAAP accreditation cannot guarantee that your program will become certified.

Our program already uses other quality assessment tools. Why should I choose MAAP?

MAAP takes into consideration best practices in *all* areas of youth development and what it looks like to run a high-quality program. While some tools focus only on one area of programming (such as health), MAAP has been cross-walked with many other tools for an all-inclusive look at your program. Whereas some tools are to be used for self-assessment, there is a benefit to having an outside observer come into your program. Trained MAAP Validators provide feedback and a Review Panel provides suggestions for continuous quality improvement.

MAAP was developed by and is run by MnSACA, your trusted resource for quality and program improvement. Our mission of promoting quality programs and supporting the leadership and development of professionals is embedded in the MAAP tool. Being a locally-run program, MnSACA is able to provide multiple opportunities for in-person support, training and guidance to those going through the process.

The MAAP process asks you to form a Stakeholder Team made up of family members, community members, staff, youth and other program representatives (e.g., principal, custodian, etc.). The benefit of this is twofold. Not only do you, the program, receive ideas and feedback from those most intimately involved in the program, but those stakeholders are guaranteed to develop a better understanding and appreciation for what a high-quality afterschool program looks like and why it is important, which brings your community closer together in support of your work, your team, and the field.

Who should I contact for more information?

Visit www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/maap to learn more, email maap@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org, or call us at 651-789-3586 with questions.