

NEW & LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. Applying preschools must be a current member of the Preschool Association. This means you have completed the membership form and paid your dues for 2014-2015.
2. Information will be sent from the association to all preschools on the email list for the Preschool Association. A form will be included for any preschool to apply for certification, or re-certification. The application for newly certifying and Level 2 re-certifications, plus a \$25 application fee, must be mailed to the certification chairperson by November 1, 2014. The new & level 2 certification chairperson will acknowledge receipt of the application and payment via email. Checks should be made out to: N GA UMC Preschool Association. Mail the application form and check to: Margaret Waterbury, 1200 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30306. You can also contact Margaret at margaretw@druidhillspreschool.org.
3. Certification procedures, certification standards, standards checklist, and mentor job descriptions are available online at: <http://www.ngumc.org/preschoolassociation>.
4. A mentor (a director who has completed and/or maintained a school's standing as a NGUMC School of Excellence) will be assigned to the applying school. The mentor will be responsible for helping the certifying school by answering any questions or making suggestions to complete the self-study packet and completing at least one on-site visit to the preschool.
5. When the director seeking certification has completed all sections in the self-study, gathered and created all supporting documentation, a copy should be made. These combined documents, the checklist, and supporting documentation comprise the self-study notebook.
6. The "original" complete self-study packet should be sent by certified mail or hand delivered to the assigned mentor. They must be postmarked by February 20, 2015.
7. The mentor will notify the certification chairperson as to the status of certification (received or deferred) for applying schools by February 27, 2015.
8. At least one mentor and one visitor will do an on-site visit in March. Following the visit the application will be carefully reviewed.
9. The self-study packet (criteria met/not met for each topic) and a summary letter will be completed by the mentor no later than April 3, 2015. The summary letter will be mailed to the applying school's director and a copy of the school's summary letter and their self-study packet will be mailed to the certification chairperson.
10. Schools receiving certification will be recognized as "A Program of Excellence for Young Children" at the last Preschool Association meeting in April.

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Newly certified schools will be added to the ongoing list of preschools which have been certified through the Preschool Association. Certification is good for three years. To maintain your school's standing as a Program of Excellence the following recertification cycle must be completed as scheduled:

- Level 1 recertification must be completed at the 3-year and 6-year certification anniversaries.
- A Level 2 re-certification is completed at the 9-year mark.

All certified preschools will be notified by the recertification chairpersons, both Level 1 and Level 2, at the beginning of the school year when recertification is due. A school may defer for one year if they need more time to complete the certification criteria. Schools who are unable to meet the deadline after the one-year deferment will no longer be certified as a School of Excellence and will be removed from the NGUMC list of certified schools.

Tips for Applying Directors

- Familiarize yourself with the certification procedures.
- Utilize your mentor to help you with this process. It can be overwhelming at first, but your mentor can help you through the steps.
- Review the Certification Standards and Certification Checklist.
- Prioritize sections to complete in the self-study. Establish a plan to cover several sections each month.
- Utilize your staff, treasurer, and school board members to help with the different areas in this process.
- Make copies of bills, letters, meetings, photographs, etc. as proof of documentation.
- Utilize your staff to help with curriculum goals at each age level and assist in copies of lesson plans.
- Monitor your progress. Remember the deadline is February 20 to mail and February 27 to deliver.
- Directors of any certified school are available as resources...don't reinvent the wheel! There are no "perfect" answers...it is what works best for your school within your church setting.

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- Remember, certification is good for three years! When it's done, your job will be much easier (promise!) and you will have a wonderful feeling that your school is a better place to serve God's children.