



*How to Prepare for  
NCASES Accreditation:  
Accreditation Says It All*

# *NCASES*



The National Commission for the  
Accreditation of Special  
Education Services

*The accreditation arm of NAPSEC*

# *NCASES Was Created by NAPSEC because...*

growth in the number of special education agencies has resulted in

- need to maintain quality control within private special education schools
- need to maintain and improve quality in the industry

# *NCASES Was Created Out of...*



increased national concern for accountability and for rights of persons with disabilities.

## Accreditation-

- assists students & families in selecting a quality agency.
- identifies agencies worthy of financial support.

# *Mission Statement*



- To insure that a set of standards exists that allows special education agencies to voluntarily validate their purpose by being measured against national standards relative to the best current practices available in special education.

# *NCASES Leadership*



- Commission – minimum of nine members
- who are experts in the field of private special education
- with demonstrated leadership and advanced training

# *NCASES Commission Duties*



- **Oversee all processes of NCASES**
- **Review and revise standards**
- **Review survey reports**
- **Make all accreditation decisions**

# *Features of NCASES Accreditation*



- Published objective guidelines & materials
- Self-study
- Review by practicing, experienced, trained educators with oversight by Commission
- Option of integrated survey with Council on Accreditation (COA)
- Validated relevant & challenging standards



# *Accreditation Standards*



- Standards Manual
  - Consists of nine sections of standards
  - First eight sections apply to all agencies

# *Accreditation Standards*



- Specific Program/Service Standards
  - Day Programs
  - Residential Programs

# *Accreditation Standards*

- Core versus Non-Core Standards
  - CORE - deemed important for a quality program – in bold type in manual – must fully comply with all

## Non CORE

- Standards applicable to all programs
- Appear in standard type
- Program must be in compliance with 90%

# *Why Seek NCASES Accreditation*



- Promotion of culture of excellence and validation of desirable practices
- Comparison by experts in the field against best-practice standards
- Opportunity for self-assessment
- Recognition and fundraising enhancement
- Potential savings of time and money in doing integrated COA survey

# *Accreditation Eligibility*

- Has been in operation at least two years
- Provide special education services
- Provide services eligible for accreditation
- Provide services in defined, identifiable programs
- Directly employ staff to provide services
- Have appropriate state licensure/approval

# *Accreditation Steps*

- Letter requesting application packet
- Application completed and submitted
- Self-study submitted a minimum of four weeks before Site Review Team Visit
- Visit by Site Review Team
- Site Review Team written report received
- Response to written report (if required)
- Accreditation decision by Commission

# *Accreditation Process*

## *Self-study Phase*



- Organization confirms strong leadership commitment
- Accreditation preparation committee formed
- Sub-committees established to focus on specific sections of standards
- Self-study form completed and submitted

# *Accreditation Process*

## *On-site Review*



- Visits last two and one-half days – Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
- Reviewers provide verification of organization's compliance with standards



# *Preparation*



- Time
- Staff Involvement
- Role of Leadership
- Attitude
- Survey Timing
- Organization

# *Site Review Team Visit*



- Staff Involvement
- Schedule
- Hospitality
- Process
- Daily Staff Debriefing

# *Accreditation Process*

## *Follow-up to On-site Review*



- Review NCASES Team's written report and submit written response in agreement to the report or comments/questions on specific areas
- Once report is accepted, report is reviewed by Commission for accreditation decision

# *Scoring of Standards*

- **Full Compliance:** compliance is unequivocal & readily documented “to the letter of the law”
- **Substantial Compliance:** compliance is demonstrated with some deviation from standard or documentation of full compliance is not available or appropriate “to the letter of the law”
- **Non-compliance:** compliance cannot be demonstrated

# *Accreditation Outcomes*



## Accreditation Outcomes

- Accreditation
- Deferral – deficiencies sited - 90 day corrective action report submitted
- Denial