



CREDIBILITY • INTEGRITY • ACHIEVEMENT

COA AND CARF: A COMPARISON

	COA	CARF
Child and Family Services Accreditation Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost three decades of accrediting private and public organizations for an array of child welfare and family services. • There are currently four state-administered public child welfare systems accredited by COA, with an additional seven in process. • In British Columbia, there are four accredited organizations funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. • There are also twenty-seven accredited U.S. counties providing child welfare services, and fourteen accredited county/area agencies providing mental health programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until 1995, CARF published one accreditation manual for rehabilitation facilities. CARF’s primary areas of accreditation are: aging services, behavioral health, employment and community services, and medical rehabilitation. • Accreditation of child and family services is a relatively new venture. New service areas include: child protection services, adoption services, child/youth day care, and early intervention services.
Sponsoring Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 organizations, all not-for-profit serving children and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of 28 organizations, 24 are from the rehabilitation field, including trade associations and professional organizations.
Current Accreditation Recognition <i>(As Stated Online)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of COA accreditation is recognized for a variety of service areas in over one hundred instances in forty-four states and the District of Columbia, as well as British Columbia, Canada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive information on recognition of CARF accreditation for child and family services is unavailable. • Child and Family Services Sponsoring Organizations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ American Network of Community Options and Resources ▪ Goodwill Industries, Inc.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child day care standards are recognized by 11 states and the District of Columbia in the US. • Child welfare standards are recognized by 10 states in the US and 1 Canadian province. • Child and Family Services Sponsoring Organizations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alliance for Children and Families ▪ Association of Jewish Family and Children’s Agencies ▪ Catholic Charities USA ▪ Children’s Home Society of America ▪ Child Welfare League of America ▪ Foster Family-based Treatment Association ▪ Joint Council on International Children’s Services ▪ Lutheran Services in America ▪ National Council For Adoption ▪ National Network for Youth ▪ Prevent Child Abuse America ▪ Volunteers of America • Child and Family Services Supporting Organizations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ American Association of Children’s Residential Centers ▪ American Network of Community Options and Resources ▪ Child Welfare League of Canada ▪ National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health ▪ National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare ▪ National Association of Social Workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Association of Social Workers ▪ National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare • Child and Family Services Association Organizations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Arc of the United States ▪ National Association of Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions |
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<p>Standards Development Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision and streamlining of current standards. • Revision of standards to reflect new changes in service provision. • Extensive review of evidence base and available literature for all services. • Identification of possible outcomes associated with each service for multiple populations. • Review by a series of standards advisory panels comprised of service providers, association representatives, and university-based researchers. • Targeted outreach for review of draft standards by consumers and service providers. • Field comment period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of current standards. • Review by committees of stakeholders. • Review by Canadian National Advisory Committee comprised of consumers, association representatives, and service providers. • Field comment period.
<p>Guiding Principles in Standards Development</p>	<p>COA <i>standards development emphasizes</i> services that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessible ▪ Appropriate ▪ Community-based ▪ Coordinated ▪ Culturally competent ▪ Evidence-based ▪ Individualized ▪ Outcomes-oriented ▪ Provided by a skilled and supported workforce ▪ Respectful of individual rights ▪ Strengths-based ▪ Supportive of partnership 	<p>CARF <i>describes</i> services that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are child and family focused. ▪ treat all people with dignity. ▪ are based in the community. ▪ involve family and provider collaboration. ▪ address child outcomes.
<p>Standards Scope and Implementation</p>	<p>COA Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflect, do not restate, guiding principles. ▪ Comprehensively review each service type. ▪ Address the intent or aim of the service, and allow for flexibility in implementation. ▪ Aim to impart specific knowledge without being prescriptive or regulatory in nature. 	<p>CARF Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sometimes state principles as standards. ▪ Provide a cursory review of some programs. ▪ Concentrate on programmatic and administrative processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are evidence-based and outcomes-oriented, to the extent possible, and apply to clearly defined service types. ▪ Organizations are required to show evidence of implementation with both the Administration and Management and the Service Delivery Administration standards because they encompass those aspects of operations that apply to all organizations regardless of the services provided. In addition, organizations must demonstrate implementation of applicable service standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluctuate in scope from very broad to overly detailed or prescriptive. ▪ Relate to program descriptions that assume an evidence base and outcomes orientation not found in the accreditation standards. ▪ Organizations are required to show evidence of "conformance" with standards.
<p>Preparation Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COA accreditation process takes approximately 12-14 months to complete, depending on the readiness of the organization, its size and the number of services being delivered. <p>There are seven steps in the accreditation process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application <p>COA’s Client Relations Division provides an overview of the accreditation process, details the cost of accreditation and describes the organization’s rights and responsibilities as a COA “partner in excellence.” The organization then completes an application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Establishing the Context <p>Based on the completion of an in-depth Organizational Profile and Assessment of Organizational Capacity, both designed to capture key information about an organization, COA creates a customized road map – a timeline for the completion of accreditation – and identifies areas where an organization would benefit from technical assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The steps to accreditation involve a year or more of preparation prior to the site survey and ongoing quality improvement following the survey. • Organizations consult with a designated CARF resource specialist to provide guidance and technical assistance regarding the accreditation process. • Organizations then conduct a self-evaluation. The organization must implement and use the standards for at least six months before the survey. • Organizations must also submit an Intent to Survey. The Intent includes detailed information about leadership, programs, and services that the organization is seeking to accredit and the service delivery location(s). • Intent to Survey and required supporting documents are required at least three full calendar months before the two-month time frame in which the survey is being requested. • CARF selects the survey team. Surveyors are selected by matching their program or administrative expertise and relevant field experience with the organization’s unique requirements. • Emphasis of work is on site survey.

	<p>The organization is then matched with a specially trained Accreditation Coordinator who serves as its consultant, coach, cheerleader, and ombudsman throughout the process. The Accreditation Coordinator is charged with ensuring that the organization derives the greatest value from the accreditation process.</p> <p>3. Self-Study</p> <p>With the guidance of the Accreditation Coordinator, the organization will complete a Self-Study that serves as a self-assessment tool to evaluate its strengths and opportunities based on appropriate governance, management and service delivery standards.</p> <p>4. Site Visit 5. The Pre-Commission Review Report 6. The Accreditation Commission 7. The Final Accreditation Report</p>	
<p>Accessibility and User – Friendliness of Accreditation Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA’s standards are available to the public at no cost online at www.coastandards.org. • This website provides immediate access to all of the 8th Edition Standards, “real-time” updates, the capacity to easily print out PDF versions of each set of standards, and easy access to glossary terms, related standards, and research notes referenced within the standards. • When an organization begins pursuing accreditation under the 8th Edition Standards, it will be registered for a customized and password-protected My COA e-notebook that includes only those standards that are applicable to it; allows staff to interact and share a common set of applicable standards with colleagues, ensuring consistent application of the standards; includes a comment space for each set of standards, facilitating and tracking communication within the organization and with COA; and makes it easy to communicate with the COA Coordinator from within the site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased individually, not linked to Self-Study process or commitment to following through with site survey. • Need to purchase Standards Manual and Survey Guide (which functions as a Self-Study manual); other publications to assist also available. • CARF focuses on services with limited standards on organizational capacity. • Organizations can attend training and ask standard-specific questions. • Technical assistance is provided.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, the My COA feature provides organizations with all the materials you will need during the process, such as questionnaires and instructions for assembling your self-study, and enables you to upload your self-study for online review. • COA accreditation focuses on strengthening organizational capacity and service delivery. • Organizations participate in readiness assessment at intake to establish baseline for (voluntary) benchmarking against other high performing organizations. • Organizations are matched with a COA Accreditation Coordinator with relevant direct-service experience to complete the Self-Study. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical assistance and training are available at all milestones throughout the accreditation process. 	
Self-Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations are matched with a COA Accreditation Coordinator with relevant direct-service experience to complete the Self-Study. • Provides ongoing technical assistance, training and consultation at all milestones throughout the accreditation process. • Self-Study materials may be submitted in electronic or hard copy formats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for a written Self-Study.
Site Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site visit is the second part of a three-part opportunity for an agency to demonstrate implementation of COA standards. • The site visit team is selected from a pool of more than 1,000 experienced volunteer professionals from organizations. • Having already reviewed the Self-Study and discussed the context of the organization with the designated individual(s) from the organization and the Accreditation Coordinator, the Peer Reviewers visit the organization's main administrative site as well as a random number of service sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations are matched with Surveyors who have relevant experience and expertise to meet their needs. • Stakeholder questionnaires are not incorporated into the Survey process. • Survey team conducts the survey and determines the organization's conformance to all applicable standards on site through the observation of services, interviews with persons served and other stakeholders, and review of documentation. Surveyors also provide consultation to organization personnel. • The site survey is the pivot point of the CARF process. • If possible, every site that is owned, leased, or rented is visited; Surveyors interview as many clients and other stakeholders as

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the site visit, the Peer Reviewers review documents, including case records, and meet with staff, clients and governance leaders to verify and clarify the level of implementation for all of the applicable standards as reflected in the Self-Study. • All residential facilities are visited by COA. • At a minimum there are two (2) Peer Reviewers assigned for two (2) days. The number of individuals on the team is determined by the number of service sites. Organizations that perform exceptionally well are placed on an expedited accreditation track. 	<p>possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will survey specific programs only; does not require whole organization to be included in the accreditation process.
Surveyors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 day training • Peer Reviewers must have at least five (5) years of experience, a graduate degree and certification from COA. • The role of the Peer Reviewer is to determine the organization's implementation with the applicable COA standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 day training • Are paid \$50/day while doing site survey; senior/administrative surveyor who writes report receives an additional \$75. • Role is to assess conformance to the standards; they may consult if time permits, and are considered peers, not "experts."
Consumer/Other Pre-Survey Stakeholder Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written questionnaires with key stakeholders provide 360-degree (consumer, governance, community, workforce, supervisor/manager) stakeholder input with reliable sufficiency (sample per volume of persons served, organizational size). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written feedback pre-survey from regulator/funder/government is requested. • No other pre-survey written consumer/stakeholder surveys are required (but Surveyors interview consumers, governance, regulator/funder/licensing or stakeholders who request to meet with the survey team during the site visit).
Survey Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the site visit, the organization receives a Pre-Commission Review Report, which summarizes the most important findings from the site visit. The Pre-Commission Review Report identifies specific areas where the organization successfully implemented the standards and offers detailed recommendations on how the organization can provide additional evidence of implementation for standards that were rated out of compliance and how to correct inaccurate ratings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Report provided approximately six to eight weeks after the survey. • Written Survey Report provides descriptions about the organization's strengths, recommendations regarding standards that were not met, and suggestions about what could be done to conform to standards.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Final Accreditation Report (FAR) details the organization’s strengths and areas for improvement. This report is sent to the organization within 45 days of formal notification of accreditation. It does not affect accredited status and is intended to serve as a guide in strengthening non-critical areas. 	
Accreditation Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Accreditation Commission is COA’s decision-making body. These are our most experienced and knowledgeable volunteer professionals. Based on their review of the organization’s redacted response to the Pre-Commission Review Report and the Peer Reviewers’ findings, they make a decision to accredit the organization, request additional information or deny accreditation. • COA accreditation is effective for 4 years from the time the organization achieves accreditation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An organization can receive: Accreditation, which is effective for 1 or 3 years (it can receive a 1-year accreditation only once); Provisional Accreditation; or Non-accreditation. • Submit a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) within 90 days after notification of the accreditation award. QIP outlines the actions that have been or will be taken in response to the recommendations made in the survey report.
Maintenance of Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization submits an annual Maintenance of Accreditation (MOA) report to COA on the “anniversary date” of the accreditation in each of the first three years following (re)accreditation. • The MOA is a self-reporting tool that appries COA of critical events and significant occurrences, including changes in services, structure, personnel, and /or funding, and attests that the organization is continuing to implement COA’s standards and is using accreditation as a catalyst for continuous quality improvement. • An accredited organization that receives recommendations in its Final Accreditation Report (FAR) may be asked to provide progress reports to COA at required timeframes as demonstration of its continuing implementation or strengthening of performance with specific standards. • Based on reviews of reliable information received from third parties (licensing, the public, investigative authorities) during an organization’s accreditation cycle, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit an Annual Conformance to Quality Report (ACQR) to CARF on the accreditation anniversary date in each of the two years following a three year (re)accreditation. • CARF sends the organization the form for this report approximately ten weeks before it is due. • The ACQR reaffirms the organization's ongoing conformance to the CARF standards. • CARF maintains contact with the organization during the tenure of accreditation. Organizations are also encouraged to contact CARF as needed to help maintain conformance to the CARF standards.

	<p>COA may identify that an organization may be at risk of non-implementation/continuing performance with specific standards. An agency may be requested by COA to provide documentation and/or demonstration of corrective or improvement action(s) within a time period set by COA.</p>	
<p>Cost</p>	<p>Fees associated with a <i>four-year</i> accreditation for the entire organization, regardless of the number of services, currently include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An application fee (one-time only) • An accreditation fee (<i>based on a sliding fee scale</i>) • Site visit costs • An annual maintenance of accreditation fee 	<p>Fees associated with a <i>three-year single program</i> accreditation currently include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An application fee • Site visit costs • A fee for the accreditation manual