Phyllis Wheatley Community Center's Mary T. Wellcome Child Development Center, located at 919 Emerson Avenue North in Minneapolis, has earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – the nation's leading organization of early childhood professionals.

"We're proud to have earned the mark of quality from NAEYC, and to be recognized for our commitment to reaching the highest professional standards," said Barbara Milon, Executive Director of Phyllis Wheatley Community Center. "NAEYC Accreditation lets families in our community know that children in our program are getting the best care and early learning experiences possible."

Established in 1929, Mary T. Wellcome Child Development Center provides literacy rich, comprehensive early childhood development programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. "We use established curriculum and offer a variety of learning experiences to foster children's physical, cognitive, social/emotional and language development in a safe, nurturing environment," added Deb Tomasino, Youth Services Manager at Phyllis Wheatley. In addition, parents of Mary T. Wellcome students are connected to individualized parenting resources as needed to promote family stability, age appropriate development and academic success for their children.

To earn NAEYC Accreditation, Mary T. Wellcome Child Development Center went through an extensive and rigorous Self-Study process, measuring the program and its services against the 10 NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and more than 400 related Accreditation Criteria. The program received NAEYC Accreditation after a site visit by NAEYC Assessors to ensure that the program meets each of the ten program standards. NAEYC-accredited programs are also subject to unannounced visits during their accreditation, which lasts for five years.

In the 23 years since NAEYC Accreditation was established, it has become a widely recognized sign of high-quality early childhood education. Almost 8,000 programs, serving one million young children, are currently accredited by NAEYC – approximately 8 percent of all preschools and other early childhood programs. "The NAEYC Accreditation system raises the bar for preschools, child care centers and other early childhood programs," said Mark Ginsberg, Ph.D., executive director of NAEYC. "Mary T. Wellcome Child Development Center's NAEYC Accreditation is a sign that they are a leader in a national effort to invest in high-quality early childhood education, and to help give all children a better start."

The NAEYC Accreditation system has set voluntary professional standards for programs for young children since 1985. In September 2006, the Association revised program standards and criteria to introduce a new level of quality, accountability, and service for parents and children in child care programs. The new standards today reflect the latest research and best practices in early childhood education and development. NAEYC is committed to utilizing the newest studies and analysis on positive child outcomes to ensure young children continue receiving the highest-quality care and education possible.

The NAEYC Accreditation system was created to set professional standards for early childhood

education, and to help families identify high-quality preschools, child care centers and other early education programs. To earn NAEYC Accreditation, a program must meet each of the 10 NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards. Programs are accredited by NAEYC for a five-year period.