



NIDCAP Nursery Assessment and Certification Program (NNACP)

NNACP Certification Renewal Application Guide

Overview, Review Process, & Renewal Application Flow Charts

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**NIDCAP Nursery Assessment and Certification Program (NNACP)
NNACP Certification Renewal Application Guide**

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Introduction

Newborn Individualized Developmental Care and Assessment Program (NIDCAP)

NIDCAP¹⁻¹¹ (www.nidcap.org) lends itself to system-based, process-oriented, attuned and responsive support of individualized developmental care for each infant and family currently residing in the nursery. Over the last 20 years a number of randomized controlled trials have established NIDCAP as evidence based,¹²⁻³⁸ and a successful self-monitored and quality-assured training and education framework has been developed by senior NIDCAP professionals under the auspices of the NIDCAP Federation International (NFI). These extensive research and training efforts and activities have made it evident that NIDCAP involves much more than a specific approach to the care of the individual infant. NIDCAP requires changes in the immediate and extended environment and the culture of a nursery. In order to make NIDCAP successful, caregiving processes must change systemically from protocol-driven, crisis oriented intensive care delivery to calm, nurturing, family-centered and relationship-based care that acknowledges the infant as the guide and structurer of care, and the family as the infant's appropriate ecological niche and the infant's primary caregivers and life-long advocates.^{3,5,10,11}

NIDCAP Nursery Assessment and Certification Program (NNACP)

The NFI's NIDCAP Nursery Assessment and Certification Program (NNACP³⁹) was developed in order to guide towards and recognize the excellence of a hospital system's commitment to its nursery and to encourage the continued full integration of the principles of NIDCAP. NIDCAP pertains to all aspects of care, which means the care of the infants and families, whom the nursery serves; the care, support and education of the staff and professionals, who contribute to the nursery's daily functioning; and the care of the nursery's environment. NNACP provides a six step assessment and application process that supports the applicant towards the goal of NFI NIDCAP Nursery Certification. Specific guidance, mentoring and education is offered to all applicants in support of their next steps of growth. The hospital nursery's developmental leadership team and staff are supported from the onset in solidifying their developmental program towards successful NFI-NIDCAP Nursery Certification. For detailed information, please, refer to [NIDCAP Nursery Assessment and Certification Program \(NNACP\): A Guide to Preparation, Application and Implementation of NIDCAP Nursery Certification.](#)³⁹

The NNACP Certification Renewal Application Process

The NNACP Certification Renewal Application Process (www.nidcap.org) was developed in order to ensure that hospital nurseries, which in the past have received NFI NIDCAP Nursery Certification, continue to maintain and/or grow further in providing a high standard of their NIDCAP nursery environment and their NIDCAP care of infants and their families and of the caregivers and staff, who care for them. This progressive quality assurance practice certifies that NFI-certified NIDCAP nurseries continue to excel in the following ways: 1) They demonstrate the consistent promotion of best short and long term development of all infants and families in their care; 2) They support their professionals and staff in accordance with the principles of assuring best personal and professional development towards relationship-based care implementation; and 3) They provide a dynamic environment for the full integration of expert medical and nursing care that is securely embedded within the active pursuit of mutual respect, caring, nurturance of and collaboration with infants and families, as well as among all professionals and staff members.

The NNACP Certification Renewal Application Process is scheduled for **two, four, and six years** after the nursery's NFI certification as a NIDCAP Nursery. The renewal process varies depending on the number of years elapsed since the original certification. The NNACP Certification Renewal Application Process in Years 2, 4 and 6 is outlined below.

NNACP Certification Renewal Application: YEAR 2

Step 1: The nursery applicant submits to the NNACP Director the [NNACP Certification Renewal Application, Year 2](#). The application includes the following components:

a. The Identification of Contact and Leadership Professionals

The applicant lists pertinent contact professionals, the Administrative Leadership, Nursery NIDCAP Leaders, and the nursery interdisciplinary developmental care team members.

b. Description of Nursery and Documentation of Unit Changes

The applicant provides a current description of the nursery and documents any changes in the nursery over the course of last two years. This includes description of the hospital's accreditation and licensure; the population served; NIDCAP Training that the nursery staff currently receives and has received in the last two years; and changes within the nursery that may have affected the care of the infants, their families and/or the nursery's staff and professional caregivers, and/or the environment.

c. Assurance of Support

The applicant assures that the nursery leadership and staff across all disciplines are formally committed to the practice of the NIDCAP approach to care. Furthermore the applicant assures that financial resources are available for additional staff members to be trained in the NIDCAP approach to care as well as for continued NNACP Certification maintenance and renewal.

d. Provision of Overall Nursery Self-Reflection and Evaluation

The nursery leadership team evaluates the current developmental status of the nursery including the environment, and the care of the infants, the families and the professionals and staff, who care for them.

Step 2: The NNACP Director reviews and evaluates the applicant's submission of the *NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 2*

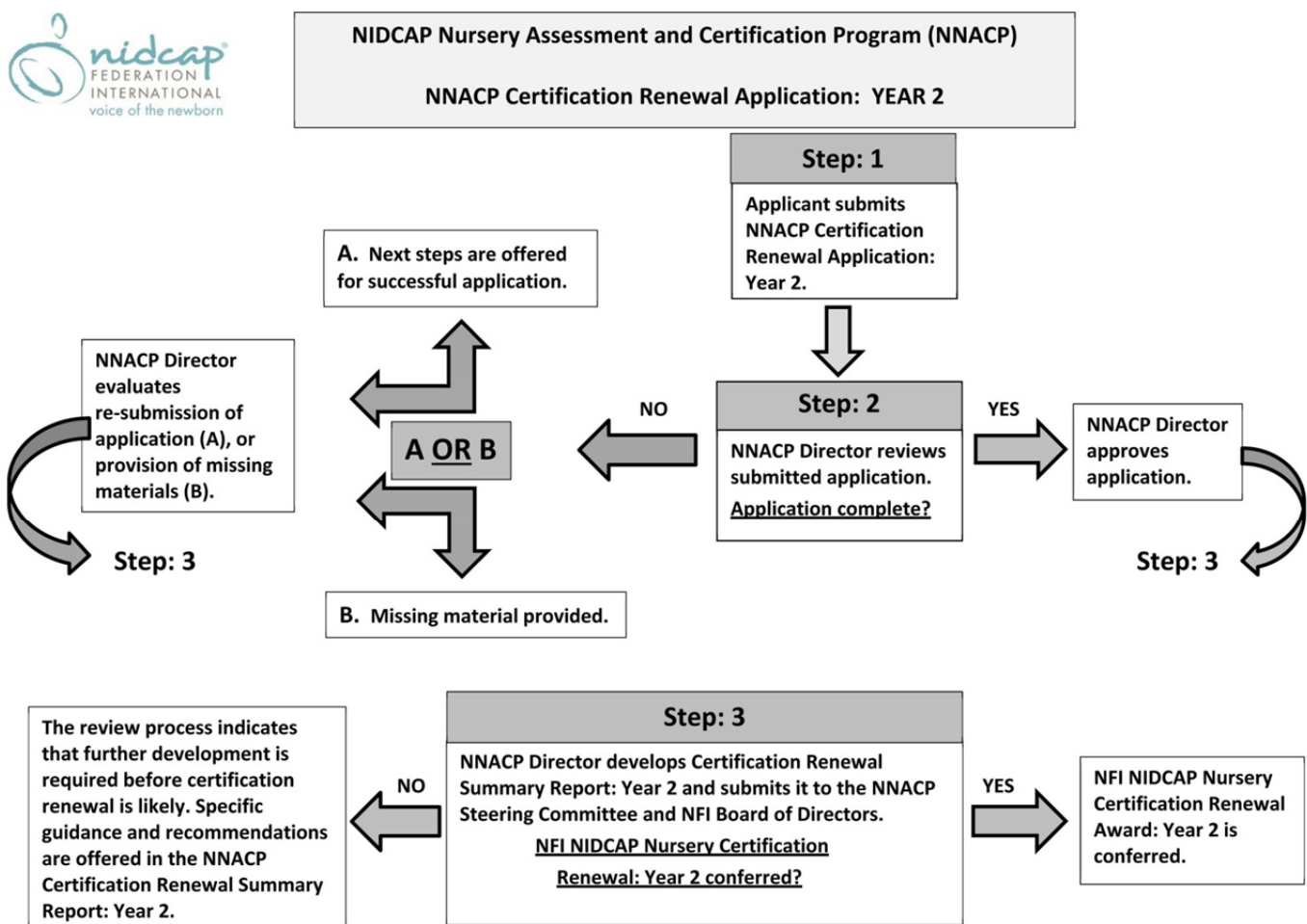
Should the applicant's submission be missing information upon review, the applicant is invited to provide further information. Once the application is complete, the NNACP Director evaluates the application and develops the *NNACP Certification Renewal Summary Report: Year 2*, and shares it with the NNACP Steering Committee and subsequently the NFI Board.

Step 3: Certification Renewal – The NFI Board decides on the ultimate status of the NNACP Certification Renewal Application, Year 2

- a. Should the application, in the Board's judgment, warrant certification renewal, the applicant nursery receives the NNACP Certification Renewal Summary Report and continued certification.

- b. Should the Board’s review of the materials submitted indicate that further development is required the NNACP Director, in collaboration with the NNACP Steering Committee will make recommendations to the applicant nursery. These may include further consultation with the site; the offer of education and preparation of the site by attending one of the NNACP workshops; further mentoring from a NIDCAP Trainer; and/or further NIDCAP Training. Specific guidance for the growth of the nursery’s developmental program will be offered. The nursery’s developmental leadership team will be supported in solidifying their developmental program towards successful NIDCAP Nursery Certification Renewal.

Please see the NNACP **Certification Renewal Application Flow Chart: Year 2**, for further clarification of the application process.



NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 4

Step 1: The applicant submits to the NNACP Director the [NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 4](#). The application includes the following components:

a. The Identification of Contact and Leadership Professionals

The applicant lists pertinent contact professionals, the Administrative Leadership, Nursery NIDCAP Leaders, and the nursery interdisciplinary developmental care team members.

b. Description of Nursery and Documentation of Unit Changes

The applicant submits detailed information regarding: hospital and nursery unit characteristics; specific leadership structures; hospital/nursery structural and organizational characteristics; developmental care support characteristics; developmental care history and goals; a description of the dynamics of the relationships that currently exist between the NICU staff (e.g., nurse-to-nurse relationships, nurse-to-doctor relationships), between staff and administration; as well as infant/family/staff relationships. The applicant documents changes that have occurred within the nursery that have had an effect upon the care of the infants, the families and/or the professional caregivers and staff who care for them, and/or the environment.

c. Assurance of Support

The applicant assures that the nursery leadership and staff across all disciplines are formally committed to the practice of the NIDCAP approach to care. Furthermore the applicant assures that financial resources are available for additional staff members to be trained in the NIDCAP approach to care as well as for continued NNACP Certification maintenance and renewal.

d. Provision of Overall Nursery Evaluation

The nursery leadership team evaluates the current developmental status of the nursery including the care of the environment, the infants, the families and the professionals and staff, who care for them.

e. Supporting Evidence

The applicant: 1) Rates the nursery in each of the scales of the four categories of the *Nursery Assessment Manual* (i.e., Environment, Infant, Family, Staff); 2) Enters the scores in the *Nursery Assessment Manual Excel Workbook Site Edition*; 3) Generates the *Summary Report of the Self-Rated Nursery Assessment*; and 4) Submits this report with the NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 4.

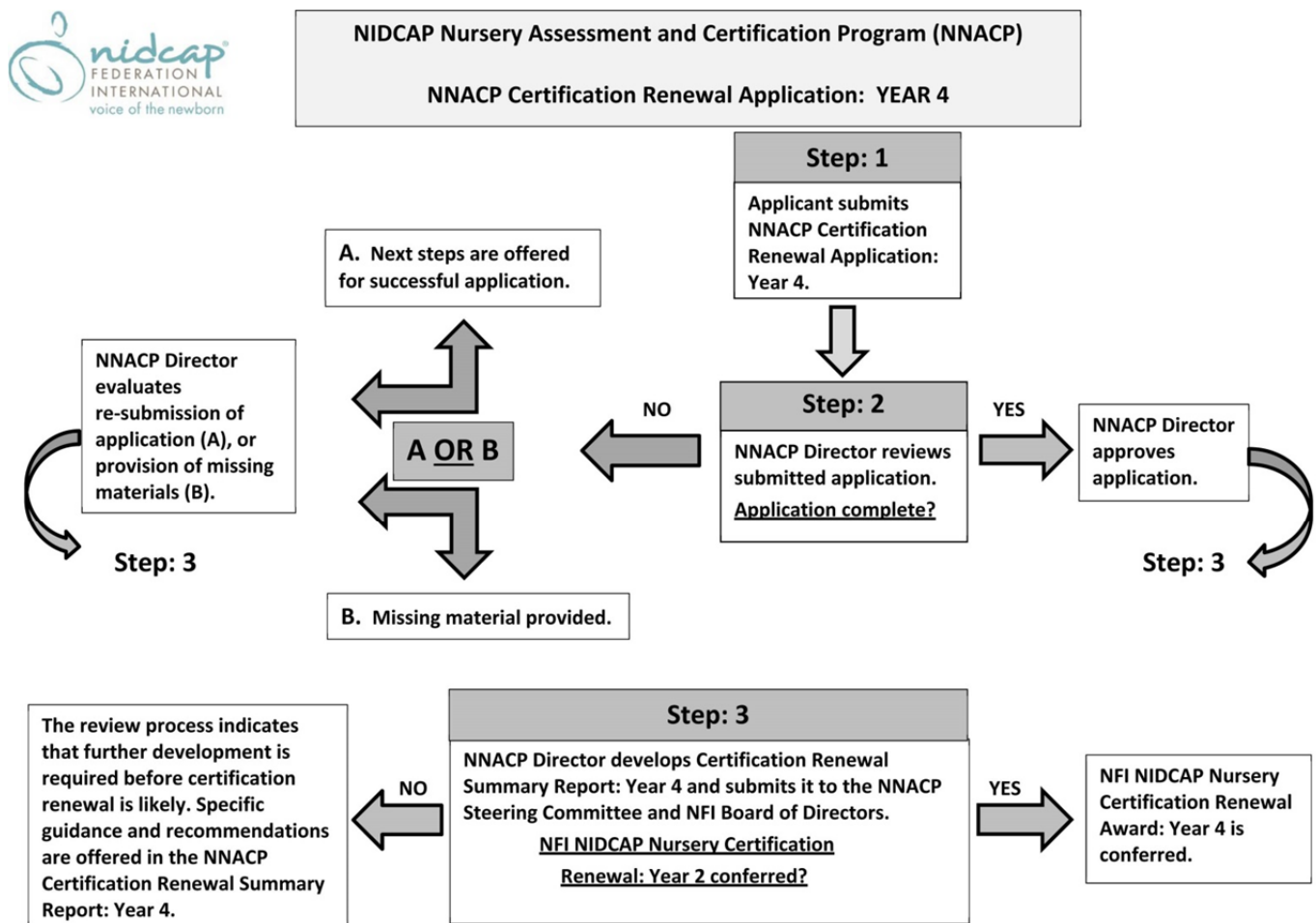
Step 2: The NNACP Director reviews and evaluates the applicant's submission of the NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 4.

Should the applicant's submission be missing information upon review, the applicant is invited to provide further information. Once the application is complete, the NNACP Director evaluates the application and develops the *NNACP Certification Renewal Summary Report: Year 4*, and shares it with the NNACP Steering Committee and subsequently the NFI Board.

Step 3: Certification Renewal — The NFI Board of Directors decides on the ultimate status of the NNACP Certification Renewal Application, Year 4.

- a. Should the application, in the Board’s judgment, warrant certification renewal, the applicant nursery receives the NNACP Certification Renewal Summary Report and continued certification.
- b. Should the Board’s review of the materials submitted indicate that further development is required, the NNACP Director, in collaboration with the NNACP Steering Committee will make recommendations to the applicant nursery. These may include further consultation with the site; the offer of education and preparation of the site by attending one of the NNACP workshops; further mentoring from a NIDCAP Trainer; and/or further NIDCAP Training. Specific guidance for the growth of the nursery’s developmental program will be offered. The nursery’s developmental leadership team will be supported in solidifying their developmental program towards successful NIDCAP Nursery Certification Renewal.

For further clarification of this application process, please see the following **NNACP Certification Renewal Application Flow Chart: Year 4:**



NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 6

Step 1: The applicant submits the [NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 6](#) to the NNACP Director. The application includes the following components:

a. The Identification of Contact and Leadership Professionals

The applicant lists pertinent contact professionals, the Administrative Leadership, Nursery NIDCAP Leaders, and the nursery interdisciplinary developmental care team members.

b. Description of Nursery and Documentation of Unit Changes

The applicant submits detailed information regarding: hospital and nursery unit characteristics; specific leadership structures; hospital/nursery structural and organizational characteristics; developmental care support characteristics; developmental care history and goals; a description of the dynamics of the relationships that currently exist between the NICU staff (e.g., nurse-to-nurse relationships, nurse-to-doctor relationships), between staff and administration; as well as infant/family/staff relationships. The applicant documents changes that have occurred within the nursery that have had an effect upon the care of the infants, the families and/or the professional caregivers and staff who care for them, and/or the environment.

c. Supporting Evidence

The applicant:

1) Submits the *Summary Report of the Self-Rated Nursery Assessment*

The applicant: 1) Rates the nursery in each of the scales of the four categories of the *Nursery Assessment Manual* (i.e., Environment, Infant, Family, Staff); 2) Enters the scores in the *Nursery Assessment Manual Excel Workbook Site Edition*; 3) Generates the *Summary Report of the Self-Rated Nursery Assessment*; and 4) Submits this report with the NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 6. This process of self-evaluation serves to identify the nursery's current status in terms of meeting NNACP Certification standards and expectations.

2) Submits the Nursery Assessment Manual: Provision of Evidence

The *Nursery Assessment Manual: Provision of Evidence* offers the applicant the opportunity to demonstrate its implementation of relationship-based, family-centered, developmental care. Should the scale score(s) attained in any of the four categories of the *Nursery Assessment Manual* (i.e., Environment, Infant, Family, and Staff) be rated as a four (4) or five (5) the applicant utilizes the *Nursery Assessment Manual: Provision of Evidence* to corroborate the higher score(s) and submits it according to the instructions found within this document.

3) Submits Institutional Evidence

The applicant submits six Letters of Support from Hospital and Nursery Leadership (i.e., Nursing Hospital Leadership, Financial Hospital Leadership, Administrative Hospital Leadership for the nursery, Medical Leadership, and Family Leader Representative[s]).

Step 2: NNACP Director reviews the applicant’s submission of the NNACP Certification Renewal Application: Year 6

- a. Should the applicant’s submission be missing information, the applicant is invited to provide such material.
- b. Once complete the NNACP Director sends the application, along with previously submitted materials (i.e., NNACP Certification Renewal Applications: Years 2 and 4; the initial NFI NIDCAP Nursery Certification Award letter; and the Site Reviewers’ Nursery Assessment Scale Scores) to the two-member NNACP Site Review Team for their review and evaluation.

Step 3: The Site Review Team reviews and evaluates NNACP Certification Application: Year 6 and the previously submitted materials.

- a. Should additional information be required, the applicant is invited to provide such.
- b. Once complete and deemed likely to be successful in achieving NIDCAP Nursery Certification Renewal for year six, the NNACP Director communicates with the applicant and the NNACP Site Reviewers to develop the NNACP Certification Renewal Site Review Schedule (see ***Preparation for NNACP Recertification Site Review***). The schedule addresses the dates and times that particular activities (e.g., observations, interviews, chart reviews, etc.) will be conducted, and specifies the logistics for the site visit).

Step 4: NNACP One-Day Site Review.

- a. ***On-Site Visit*** In the course of this visit, the Site Review Team walks the path through the hospital that families take to their infants’ bedsides; observes the nursery environment and various care interactions in progress; reviews unit policies, procedures and guidelines; meets with the hospital and nursery administrative leadership and representatives from the various disciplines active in the nursery; and observes Rounds, the NICU Follow-Up Clinic, etc.
- b. ***Integration of Submitted Applications and Observations: Nursery Assessment Rating.*** The NNACP Site Review Team reviews the information gleaned from the Site Visit and integrates this information with the information gleaned from the application materials already reviewed prior to the visit. The Site Review Team then rates the five-point NNACP Nursery Assessment Manual, based upon the Site’s submitted written materials and the on-site observations. The scores derived during this process yield ***the Scale Scores by Category; and the Overall Hospital and Nursery Summary Score*** (see ***NNACP Nursery Assessment Manual***; www.nidcap.org). In addition, the NNACP Site Review Team summarizes the information and impressions that were gleaned from the site visit, and makes a recommendation as to the success of the nursery’s certification renewal application.

Step 5: Certification Renewal – The Site Review Team prepares the NNACP Certification Renewal Summary Report: Year 6. The NFI Board decides on the ultimate status of the NNACP Certification Renewal Application, Year 6.

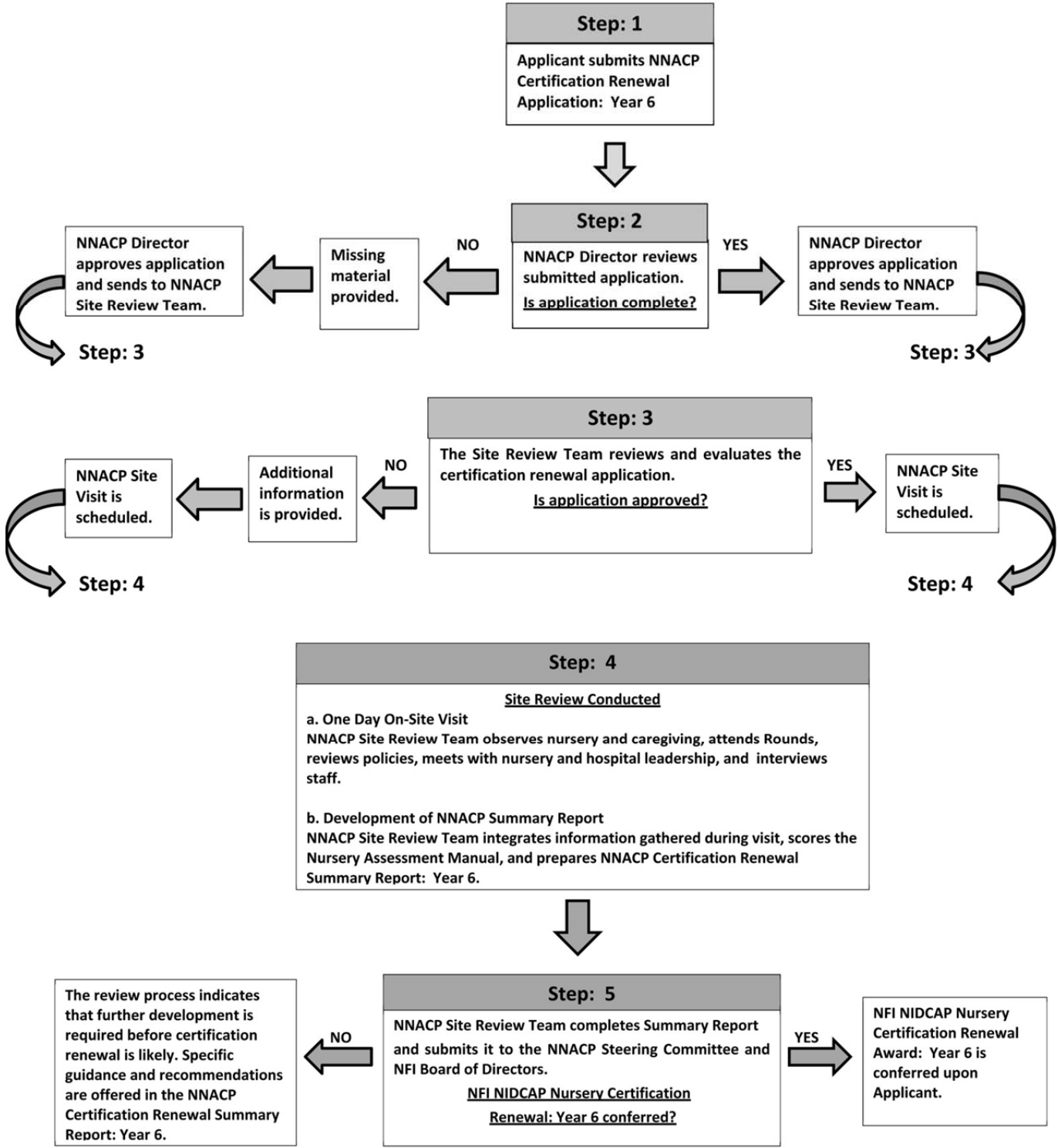
- a. Should the application, in the Board’s judgment, warrant certification renewal, the applicant nursery receives the NNACP Certification Renewal Summary Report and continued certification.

- b. Should the Board's review of the materials submitted indicate that further development is required the NNACP Director, in collaboration with the NNACP Steering Committee will make recommendations to the applicant nursery. These may include further consultation with the site; the offer of education and preparation of the site by attending one of the NNACP workshops; further mentoring from a NIDCAP Trainer; and/or further NIDCAP Training. Specific guidance for the growth of the nursery's developmental program will be offered. The nursery's developmental leadership team will be supported in solidifying their developmental program towards successful NIDCAP Nursery Certification Renewal.

For further clarification of this application process please see the ***NNACP Certification Renewal Application Flow Chart: Year 6*** on the next page.



NIDCAP Nursery Assessment and Certification Program (NNACP)
NNACP Certification Renewal Application: YEAR 6



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