



The Best 1st Step



COUNCIL
— for —
PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION

Why the **CDA** is the “Best 1st Step”

- 1. The CDA** brings vision and unity to the field about what professionals who work with young children should know and be able to do effectively in any setting – Center-Based Preschool, Infant & Toddler, Family Child Care and Home Visitor.
- 2. The CDA** is the only portable, reciprocal, competency-based, national credential recognized in all 50 states, territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the United States military.
- 3. The CDA** credentialing system is based on the knowledge of the nation’s leading scholars in early care and learning. Utilizing multiple sources of evidence, the CDA national credentialing system is the only comprehensive system of its kind that recognizes the essential competencies needed by entry-level and all early childhood professionals.
- 4. The CDA** is the only credit-bearing national credential that articulates to Associate degrees in most community college systems across the nation.
- 5. The CDA** is the only national, multi-language credentialing system that assesses educators in the language of their daily work.
- 6. The CDA has revolutionized entry-level credentialing once again!** With the launch of CDA 2.0 the Council has streamlined and strengthened the process, making it even more valuable as a professional development experience.

Benefits from the **CDA** Community

The CDA Community celebrates and supports the CDA credential as “The Best 1st Step” for professional development in the field of early childhood education:



“The **CDA** is a great first stepping stone for the professional development of early educators.” ~ Mary Ellen Fritz, President and CEO, Family Resource Center (CDA recipient, 2002)

“I know that having my **CDA** shows employers that I am not only serious, but experienced too.” ~ Betsy Thompson, Columbus, IN (First high school student awarded a CDA, 2012)

“If people really want childcare to be their profession, they should get a **CDA**. Anybody can do it at any age and I think it’s a good professional step in your career.”

~ Renee Hillian, Lanham, MD (CDA Recipient, August 2012)

“Acquiring my **CDA** gave me the confidence to do more – which is so important early in a career.” ~ Dr. Calvin E. Moore, Jr., Deputy Director, Office of Child Care (CDA recipient, 1992)



The new **CDA 2.0** Process

1 **Prepare**

- Obtain a minimum of a high school diploma/ GED or be currently enrolled in a high school career / technical program
- Any time before application – Complete 120-hours of education within the required Eight Subject Areas
- Within 3 years of submitting application - Complete 480 hours of experience working with young children in the appropriate setting (Preschool, Infant & Toddler or Family Child Care)
- Within 6 months of submitting application - Complete a Professional Portfolio (Details on how-to create a Professional Portfolio can be found in the Competency Standards books)

2 **Apply**

- Select and confirm a Professional Development (PD) Specialist
- Obtain completed Director’s Permission Statement from center/program director
- Submit Application and Assessment Fee (Applying online is the fastest and easiest way to obtain your CDA credential!)
- Receive a “Ready to Schedule” notification from the Council, confirming that your application has been processed and you are ready to schedule your Verification Visit

3 **Demonstrate**

Schedule Verification Visit

- Candidates will be assessed by the Professional Development (PD) Specialist using the R.O.R. Model (Review-Observe-Reflect) designed by the Council. Using the new Comprehensive Scoring Instrument, the PD Specialist will observe the Candidate using a combination of Portfolio evidence and observable criteria using the thirteen Functional Areas.

Schedule CDA Exam

- Candidates will take a 65-item exam at a local PearsonVue testing center in their area. To locate a PearsonVue testing center, visit: www.pearsonvue.com/cdaexam.

4 **Earn**

After the Council receives the scores for your Verification Visit and CDA Exam, a Cumulative Score is calculated and is used to determine the credentialing decision. To learn more, review the section on “Earn Your CDA Credential” in the Competency Standards books.

5 **Renew**

The CDA credential is valid for three years from the date of award. To learn more about how to renew, visit our website www.cdacouncil.org.



The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is the best first step on the path of career advancement in ECE. The distinctive CDA Credential is the only nationally-recognized, portable, reciprocal, competency-based credential of its kind in the country.

The Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program™ is the unique teacher credentialing process, administered by the Council for Professional Recognition, which results in the award of the CDA Credential. The Program uses a specific set of time-tested, research-based tools to determine early childhood teacher competency, based on multiple sources of evidence.

Having the CDA Credential from the Council for Professional Recognition verifies that teachers have the ability to put the Council's nationally-recognized CDA Competency Standards into practice. Having a CDA demonstrates a commitment to a career in early childhood and an understanding of how the developmental context of the Standards can help teachers support children's early care experiences.

For more than forty years, over 300,000 early childhood educators have received a Preschool, Infant/Toddler, Family Child Care or Home Visiting Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™!

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