



How to Demonstrate Your Competence in the New CDA Process

After you submit the request to participate in the new CDA credentialing process, you will receive a *Ready to Schedule* notification. This will be sent via email.

Note: The email notification will come from the following email address: cdaready@cdacouncil.org. Please add this address to your email address book to ensure that your notification is delivered to your Inbox, rather than your Junk Mail/Spam Folder.

You may complete your Verification Visit and take the CDA Exam as quickly as you would like and in whichever order works best for you. However, **you must complete both within six months** from the date of your *Ready to Schedule* notice. If you do not complete your CDA Exam and Verification Visit within six months, you will forfeit your application fee and your Candidate record will be closed. If this happens, you will need to begin the CDA Credentialing process from the beginning and pay a new assessment fee.

The Verification Visit

Scheduling Your Verification Visit

When you receive your *Ready to Schedule* notification, your PD Specialist will also receive an email notifying her/him that you are ready to schedule your Verification Visit. While your PD Specialist will be required to make contact with you within five business days, the Council encourages you to take ownership of your credentialing process by reaching out to her/him first. Together you will then determine the date and time for your Verification Visit. Please be sure to confirm these arrangements with your Director.

You must bring the following items to your Verification Visit:

- Your original, complete Professional Resource File, including:
 - *Transcripts, certificates, documentation of your professional education*
 - *Valid Pediatric First Aid Certificate*
 - *Resource Collection*
 - *Six Statements of Competence*
 - *Autobiography*
- Collected Parent Questionnaires - opened

Rescheduling Your Verification Visit

Any time prior to the Verification Visit, you and/or your PD Specialist may reschedule the Verification Visit. If you cannot agree on a new date and time for the Verification Visit, you may find a different PD Specialist without penalty. You must contact the Council and give the Council the ID number of the new PD Specialist prior to the rescheduled Verification Visit.

If your PD Specialist arrives for your Verification Visit and you are not there within 15 minutes of the scheduled time, she/he will record your Verification Visit as a “no-show”. If this happens, you cannot earn a CDA Credential until you reschedule your Visit with that PD Specialist or find another PD Specialist to complete your Verification Visit within your initial six-month window. In order to do this you must first contact the Council at 800-424-4310 for authorization. At that time, you will be required to pay an additional \$125 fee (which covers the PD Specialist honorarium from the first Visit as well as Council processing costs).

Meeting All Requirements

If your PD Specialist determines that you did not meet either of the requirements of a) your professional education documentation or b) your First Aid/Pediatric CPR, she/he will inform you at the completion of your Verification Visit. Shortly thereafter, you will receive a notice from the Council notifying you of the required procedures for correcting these errors within six months of your Ready to Schedule notice. If you do not correct these requirements within this time frame, you will forfeit your assessment fee and will need to start the credentialing process over, including the payment of a new assessment fee.

Your Verification Visit

At your Verification Visit, your PD Specialist will utilize the R.O.R Model™ to verify key aspects of your professional competency. “R.O.R.” stands for Review-Observe-Reflect. During the Verification Visit, the Specialist will:

Review *the contents of your Professional Resource File.* You will need to ensure that your PD Specialist has a quiet space, with a tabletop surface, where she/he can review your materials for sixty minutes.

Observe *you working with children.* The PD Specialist will sit silently observing you leading program activities with children for two hours. You must work with your PD Specialist in advance to ensure that you schedule the observation for a two-hour window in which the children will be awake and that you will be working with them the entire time.

Reflect *with you.* After the Review and Observe sessions, you will meet with your PD Specialist for a reflective dialogue in which you will discuss your areas of strength or growth, for the purpose of setting professional goals. This reflective dialogue, though required, has no influence on whether or not you earn the CDA Credential. It is provided to support your professional growth and will follow a specific, set agenda. Any goals you may set will be yours, privately, and will not be sent to the Council. However, the Council encourages you to share your goals with a trusted peer, mentor or even your supervisor. Research shows that professionals are more likely to meet the goals they have set for themselves when they have another person to offer support and hold them accountable.

During the Visit, the Specialist will use the Comprehensive Scoring Instrument to determine Recommended Scores for each of the 51 Items in each of the thirteen Functional Areas, using a combination of evidence found in your Professional Resource File and through her/his observation of you working with children.

The PD Specialist will then submit Recommended Scores to the Council online within 48 hours of your Verification Visit. These scores, along with the CDA Exam score, will be combined by the Council into a final Cumulative Score which will determine your credentialing decision.

The CDA Exam

After you receive your *Ready to Schedule* notice (which will include your Candidate ID number), you may proceed to schedule your CDA Exam. You will take the computer-based exam at a local Pearson VUE testing center. Note: There is no additional fee to take your CDA Exam.

Scheduling Your CDA Exam

Scheduling your exam is very simple. You must contact Pearson VUE directly, via website or phone. Note: the Council is not able to schedule the CDA Exam for you.

Scheduling with Pearson VUE Online:

1. Go to www.pearsonvue.com/cdaexam
2. Click on the *Schedule an Exam* button on the right side of your screen
3. Click on the *Create a Web Account* link
4. Enter the Candidate ID number which you received with your *Ready to Schedule* notice from the Council (Note: You will not be able to proceed without providing this number therefore you cannot schedule your CDA Exam until you have received your *Ready to Schedule* notice)
5. Verify that all of your personal information is correct (Note: if any of your information is incorrect, please contact the Council immediately at 1-800-424-4310)
6. Set up your username and password, writing them down on your Candidate Checklist, found on the inside front cover of this book
7. Once you have created your Pearson VUE Web Account, you may return to www.pearsonvue.com/cdaexam at any time to find a testing center nearest to you based on your zip code, schedule, cancel or reschedule your CDA Exam.

Scheduling with Pearson VUE over the Phone:

1. Call 866-507-5627 (8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST M-F)
2. Tell the operator your Candidate ID number or your name and that you wish to schedule the CDA Exam.
3. Verify that all of your personal information is correct (Note: if any of your information is incorrect, please contact the Council immediately at 1-800-424-4310)

4. Tell the operator where and when you wish to take the CDA Exam. The operator will assist you in finding the closest exam location.

Note: Military Candidates who wish to schedule their exam at their base should do so at www.pearsonvue.com/military.

After you schedule your CDA Exam, you will receive a *Confirmation Note* from Pearson VUE with the location and date you chose for your CDA Exam. The confirmation will also include the address, phone number and directions to the test center you chose.

Rules and Procedures at Pearson VUE Testing Centers

- A valid photo ID will be required to take your Exam. The photo ID must include your signature. The photo ID you present at the test center must match the name you included on your CDA application. Note: If you got married or divorced since the time you completed your application to the Council, you must bring a marriage certificate or divorce decree with you to the test center.
- You will be asked to sign a required agreement to follow Pearson VUE's test-taking rules.
- Before entering the testing room, the Pearson VUE proctor will ask you to leave all of your personal belongings outside the testing room, in a locker or your car.
- Your friends or relatives will not be able to wait for you in the waiting area.
- You may get up to use the bathroom during the exam, but your timer will continue to run.
- Always raise your hand if you need assistance of any kind. Do not hesitate to ask for help if you are experiencing technical problems.
- There will be other test takers in the room with you. Always be respectful and try not to disrupt others.

Rescheduling Your CDA Exam

If you need to reschedule the CDA Exam, you must first cancel your current appointment before you can schedule another appointment. Pearson VUE will charge you a \$15 cancellation fee each time you cancel the scheduled CDA exam. You may only use a credit card or debit card to pay the cancellation fee. You may cancel and reschedule your exam appointment via your Pearson VUE online account or you may call Pearson VUE at 1-866-507-5627 (8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST M-F).

You will not be allowed to cancel within 24 hours of your scheduled exam. If you miss your scheduled exam, Pearson VUE will require an additional \$65 for a second exam. In order to do this you must first contact the Council at 800-424-4310 for authorization.

If severe weather or a natural disaster makes the test center inaccessible or unsafe, the examination will be delayed or canceled without penalty to you. Call Pearson VUE at 1-866-507-5627 or call the test center directly for details on delays and cancellations during severe weather.

Preparing for Your CDA Exam

The CDA Exam covers practical examples of early childhood best practices; the material found in the CDA Competency Standards and Functional Areas. Your 120 hours of professional education and 480 hours working with young children should prepare you for the Exam.

The Council has created a tutorial to help you learn how to use the various functions of the CDA Exam screens. You will find the tutorial by visiting www.cdacouncil.org/cdaexam/tutorial.

Taking Your CDA Exam

You will be able to take the CDA Exam only one time during your credentialing process.

Before the Exam Begins

The Exam will be presented to you in English or Spanish, depending on the choice you indicated on your request to participate in this new process. Before the exam begins, the computer program will give you 15 minutes to review instructions, to agree to the required Nondisclosure Agreement, and to practice clicking with your mouse by answering three practice questions.

You will then have one hour and 45 minutes to complete the exam, however most Candidates find that they are able to complete the Exam in an hour or less. Note: the computer program will remind you when you have 30 minutes and 10 minutes left.

The CDA Exam has 65 multiple choice questions including five that have a photo and a brief classroom scenario. The questions will be presented to you one at a time. You may freely move between questions, choosing and changing your answers, as long as time permits.

The CDA Exam has been designed to be easy-to-take for those new to computers. You will only need to know how to point and single click a mouse in order to complete the Exam.

Try to answer all the questions, even if you have to guess. Questions that are left unanswered will be marked as wrong. If you are not sure of the best answer, you may “flag” the question to come back to later. After you have viewed all of the 65 questions, you will be shown a “Review” screen. The Review screen is a summary of all of your answers including the questions you did not answer (incomplete) and which questions you flagged to come back to later. If time permits, you may go back and answer the questions you flagged or did not answer. When you are ready, click “End the Review”. Once you do this, you will no longer be able to go back to review or change your answers.

When you are done, you must click the “Submit Exam” button before leaving the testing room. Your exam answers will then be immediately transmitted to the Council for Professional Recognition.

Your CDA Exam scores, along with your Verification Visit Recommended Scores, submitted by your Professional Development Specialist, will be combined by the Council into a final Cumulative Score which will determine your credentialing decision.