



COUNCIL  
— for —  
PROFESSIONAL  
RECOGNITION

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# GENERAL INFORMATION



# See What *the* CDA<sup>®</sup> Can Do

Talk of early childhood education has taken center stage in recent years. Research in brain science has shown that the early years are crucial years that make a lifelong impact. The United Nations has urged all countries to prioritize early learning in the policies they make. Business leaders have recognized the value of quality early education since employees are more productive when they know their children are safe and making progress. Working families depend on child care, and they've struggled as COVID-19 led many preschools to close their doors.

The pandemic has put a spotlight on early childhood education and shown that it's an engine of the economy. There's now new public focus on a problem that has plagued us for decades our country has long faced a crisis in child care due to the shortage of qualified teachers for young learners. And the Child Development Associate<sup>®</sup> (CDA) credential can help fill the gap by giving rising teachers effective, efficient training. CDA holders have the competence and confidence that they need from day one in the classroom.

The CDA also has something to offer the wide range of stakeholders who care about young children. Advocates for children should support a credential based on equity in early education. Training programs can boost their enrollment and reputation when they provide CDA courses. Early childhood centers can gain stars in their state's quality rating and improvement systems by hiring CDA holders. And parents who are checking out preschools can put their trust in centers where staff members have the credential. That's because teachers who've earned a CDA know how to set the stage for our youngest children to succeed in school and in life. See what the CDA can do for you!





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Advancing  
early childhood educators'  
*professional growth,  
development and recognition.*

# COUNCIL

— *for* —

## PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

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### Vision *of the Council*

The Council for Professional Recognition envisions a society where all children learn and thrive in environments led by competent, valued early childhood educators.

### Mission *of the Council*

The Council for Professional Recognition advances career pathways for early childhood educators through high-quality, competency-based credentialing.

### Role *of the Council*

The Council's key purpose has long been to assess the knowledge and skills of professionals in the early childhood care and education field. Since 1985, we have awarded the Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential to candidates who can meet the CDA® Competency Standards, a proven measure of performance in ECE.

The CDA is our hallmark product and a first step on the pathway to a rewarding career. Still, the need to grow and learn never ends. So, we have broadened the scope of our work beyond assessing candidates for the CDA. We now also offer a wide range of resources and research, seminars and events on trending topics in the ECE field. We support early childhood teachers so they can do even more to support our youngest children.

» Visit the Council website: [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org)





## History *of* the CDA<sup>®</sup> Credential

The CDA came out of the civil rights movement and search for justice in all walks of life. In 1971, a common commitment to equity in education brought a group of progressive early childhood leaders together. They wanted to raise the level of early childhood education and make sure that all our country's young learners had qualified teachers who could do more than babysit infants.

The meetings of these progressive thinkers led to the concept of a professional credential, and in 1975, Margaret E. Wright was awarded the first CDA. With federal funding, the CDA Consortium and then Bank Street College administered the CDA. Over the next decade, the demand for the CDA grew so much that the Department of Health and Human Services worked with the National Association for the Education of Young Children to set up a separate nonprofit charged with overseeing the credential.

Since then, the Council for Professional Recognition has ramped up the CDA to meet society's changing demands. We've added more coursework and adapted it to be inclusive by filling the needs of diverse cultures and new immigrant groups. To date, we've issued over 1 million credentials to educators.

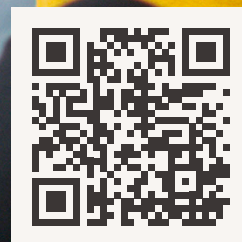
Much has changed since that group of early childhood leaders met in 1971. But one thing has stayed the same in the ongoing quest to increase the ranks of qualified early childhood teachers in every continent, country and county. The core of the CDA has remained the conviction that all young children have a basic right to equity in education.



## Why *the* CDA®

- 1. The CDA** provides a clear, direct route to competence in the early childhood profession. It gives early childhood teachers the knowledge and know-how they need whatever their setting: center-based preschool, infant & toddler, home visitor or family child care.
- 2. The CDA** is the only portable, reciprocal, competency-based, national credential recognized in all U.S. states and territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the U.S. Armed Forces.
- 3. The CDA** is based on a wide range of research from the nation's leading experts in early care and learning. This evidence-based approach helps make the CDA a unique, comprehensive system that provides early childhood teachers—whether they're seasoned or at the start of their careers—with the competencies they need.
- 4. The CDA** is the only credit-bearing, national credential that articulates to associate degrees in most community colleges across the country.
- 5. The CDA** is the only national, multi-language credential that assesses educators in the language of their daily work.

» Learn more: [www.cdacouncil.org/about](http://www.cdacouncil.org/about)

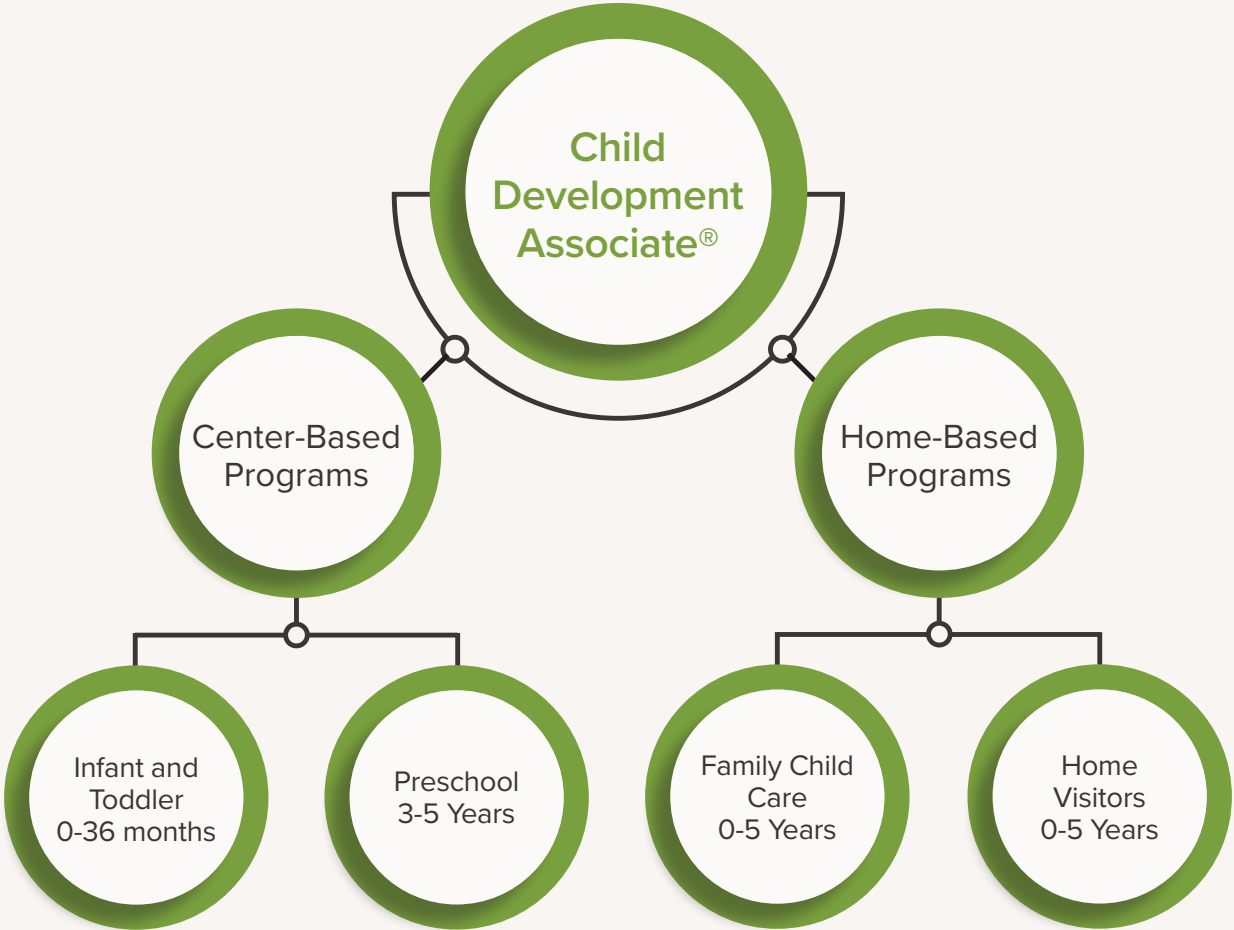


# Building *Competence and Confidence* with the CDA<sup>®</sup>

The Child Development Associate<sup>®</sup> is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education and a stepping stone on the path to career success. Our evidence-based credential builds expertise through a core set of standards for competence in ECE.

Educators who hold a CDA know how to put our Competency Standards into practice. They also grasp why the standards help children progress from one stage of development to the next. And earning a CDA helps early childhood teachers develop as professionals, too—so they feel confident on day one in the classroom. In short, the CDA is good for our teachers—and it’s good for the children they serve.

## CDA<sup>®</sup> Settings



# CDA® Specializations *and* Accommodations

## Bilingual Specialization

A bilingual child development program consistently uses two languages in the activities and experiences it provides. Educators in this setting also work to gain parents buy-in for bilingual learning. It's an important way to build communication and bridges in our multicultural nation.

## Special Education Specialization

A special education child development setting serves children with moderate-to-severe disabilities. Though the children may have disabilities, all requirements for the CDA credentialing process stay the same. So does our firm commitment to train educators who can help young learners surmount the challenges they face.

## ADA Accommodations

The Council fully supports the American with Disabilities Act and offers reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities during CDA exams. Candidates should ask for the accommodations they need before applying for the CDA credential. And we'll be glad to honor their request as part of our commitment to inclusion in the early childhood classroom.



Learn more: [www.cdacouncil.org/earn](http://www.cdacouncil.org/earn)





## Earning a CDA® *in* High School

Students who earn a CDA in high school get a head start on successful careers. They'll graduate job-ready and can even get credit toward a college degree. High schoolers with a CDA are prepared and have high hopes for the future.

### How it Works

High school CDA programs follow a series of basic steps, but schools may set their own schedules. The specific start and end times of the credentialing process might vary by school, but there's something that has to stay the same: the rigorous standards that lead to such great results.

### Benefits for Students

- Leave high school job-ready with a nationally recognized credential.
- Enter college with a core knowledge of how children develop.
- Have the knowledge, skills and confidence to work with young children.
- Get assessed in the language of their daily work.
- Gain competencies and skills that employers will crave.
- Earn college credit while still in high school.
- Enjoy faculty support throughout the process.

## Benefits for Faculty

- Empower students with precise, portable skills recognized in all U.S. states and territories, along with the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Serve as a CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialist™ to enhance your own expertise and training.
- Prepare your students for success in college and careers.
- Receive recognition for your contributions.
- Access to the *Handbook for High School: A Guide to Advocacy and Implementation*.

## CDA® Process Overview



### STEP 01

**Student enrolls in CDA classes in high school through a career and technical education (CTE) program.**



### STEP 02

**Complete experience blocks**

120 hours of child development and 480 hours of experience working directly with young children



### STEP 03

**Participate in CDA Verification Visit®**

- Presents *CDA Professional Portfolio* for review.
- Be observed working with young children.
- Reflect on areas of strength/growth.



### STEP 04

**Take CDA® Exam**

Appear on scheduled date and time at a local Pearson VUE testing.

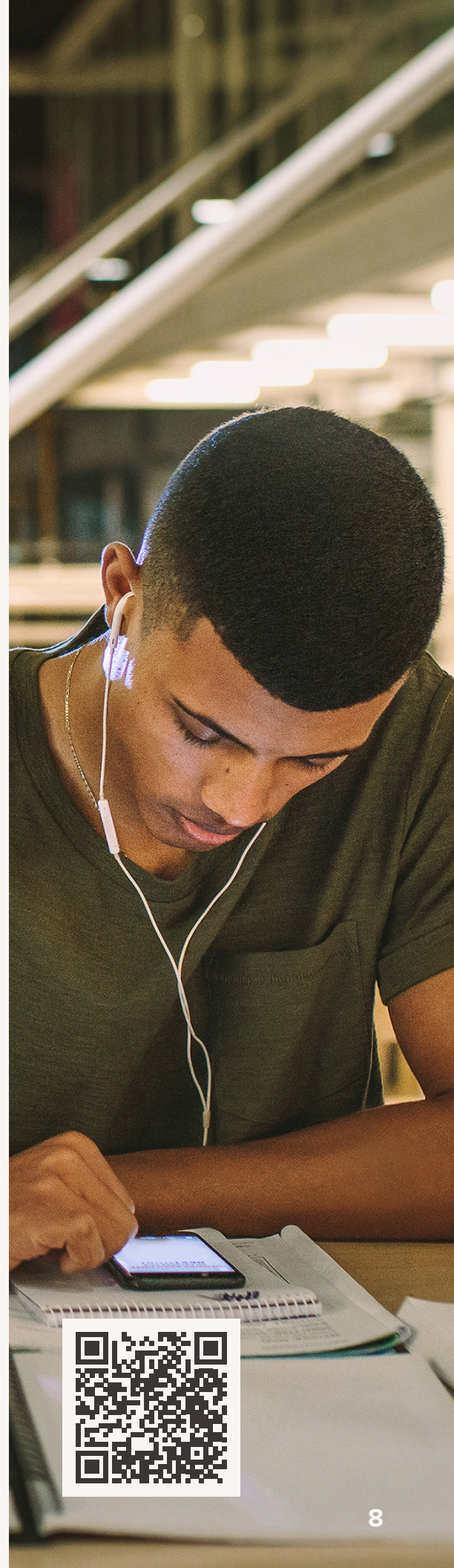


### STEP 05

**Earn your CDA® Credential**

Find a job after high school and/or turn your CDA into college credits.\*

\* Based on individual policies at select colleges and universities.



» Learn more: [www.cdacouncil.org/cte](http://www.cdacouncil.org/cte)

# Keep *Your* CDA® Active

The CDA renewal process gives you the opportunity to reaffirm your competence as Preschool, Infant-Toddler, Family Child Care or Home Visitor Child Development Associate®. A CDA credential is valid for 3 years from the award date.

Use our free, setting specific *CDA Renewal Procedures Guide* to successfully prepare and complete the renewal process.

## CDA® Renewal Process Overview

### BEFORE YOU APPLY

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Please make sure you meet the three requirements outlined below prior to applying to renew your CDA Credential. Candidates can submit their renewal application **up to 6 months before their expiration date**. Application and payment must be submitted before your credential expires.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Complete after the issue date of the credential being renewed.



Obtain 4.5 CEUs, a 3 credit hour college course, or 45 clock hours of training.

**Note: Training must be specific to credential type.**



Become a member of an ECE professional organization.

**Note: Membership must be current at time of application.**



### SELECT A VERIFIER

Select an early childhood professional to review and verify your training and membership documentation.

**Note: Training and membership documentation will no longer be submitted to or accepted by the Council.**

### CONTINUED WORK WITH CHILDREN

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Complete within one (1) year of submitting your application.



Complete 80 hours of experience working with children.

**Note: Experience must be specific to credential type.**



## SELECT AN ECE REVIEWER

Select an early childhood professional to:

- Verify your 80 hours of work experience.
- Complete a recommendation based on your work with children.

**Note: Recommendation must be based on 80 hours of work experience specific to credential type.**

## SAFETY

**Certification must be current at time of application.**



Obtain in-person or blended courses in First Aid and Infant and Child (Pediatric) CPR.

**Note: Online training and training provide by individual consultants is not accepted.**

## Apply in 4 Easy Steps

1. **Download** the free *CDA Renewal Procedures Guide* for complete details and requirements.
2. **Complete** all CDA renewal requirements.
3. **Apply online** via [YourCouncil.org](http://YourCouncil.org) and pay the \$125 renewal application fee.
4. **Receive credentialing decision** made by the Council for Professional Recognition and certificate in the mail.



**Learn more:** [www.cdacouncil.org/renew](http://www.cdacouncil.org/renew)



# CDA Professional Development Specialists™

CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialists™ play a central role in the CDA® assessment process. They're trained, contracted and endorsed by us to conduct CDA Verification Visits®, a required step in the final stages of credentialing candidates for the CDA.

## CDA PD Specialist™ Network

The Council is always looking for seasoned early childhood professionals to act as Professional Development Specialists™ who can assess candidates during CDA Verification Visits®. They can serve in one or more settings: center-based preschool, infant & toddler, home visitor or family child care. But wherever they work, PD Specialists protect the integrity of the credential and ensure it stands for competence in the ECE field.

### The PD Specialist will:

- **Receive convenient online training** and resources from the Council.
- **Conduct CDA Verification Visits** using the Review-Observe-Reflect (R.O.R.) Model®.
- **Submit CDA candidates' scores to the Council.**
- **Receive an honorarium** for completed verification visits.

CDA PD Specialists are mentors and coaches who leave their mark on the next generation in the early childhood field. Visit our website to find out more about becoming a PD Specialist for the Council and the benefits of serving in this key role.



# Review-Observe-Reflect (R.O.R.) Model<sup>®</sup> Overview



## REVIEW

The candidate's Professional Portfolio, including training documents and family questionnaires.



## OBSERVE

The candidate working with children and record criterion evidence.



## REFLECT

With the candidate, focusing on areas of strength or growth found in the portfolio or evidence from the observation.

» Learn more: [www.cdacouncil.org/pds](http://www.cdacouncil.org/pds)



# Welcome to **Council Partnerships**

Partnerships extend the reach of your organization and the Council through collaborations that ensure more early childhood educators are equipped to reach young children across the globe!

## **Why partner?**

Formal partnerships benefit both your organization and the Council. Partners receive premier support and technical assistance, recognition of their special relationship with the Council and opportunities to join us on key strategic endeavors. Working closely with our partners also helps the Council by advancing major components of our mission: elevating the early childhood profession, increasing the ranks of qualified early childhood teachers and learning from direct practitioners in our field.

You share our sense of commitment to young learners throughout the nation and the world. So, take advantage of this chance to extend the reach of your work and ensure young children get the quality education they need.

## **Who are our partners?**

The Council partners with a wide range of organizations: child care providers, workforce training organizations, high schools, colleges, associations, advocacy groups, government agencies, international organizations and more!

## **Who is eligible?**

The Council will review all applications for partnership based on an organization's experience and the soundness of its business practices. We will also consider their commitment and readiness to work with us in reaching mutual goals.

## **Is a formal partnership right for my organization?**

Formal partnerships with the Council require a substantial investment of resources and time. While you might not be prepared to make such a commitment, there are often other ways to work with us, including short-term projects that just demand a brief collaboration.

## **How can my organization apply for a formal partnership?**

The Council considers partnership applications every spring and fall. Questions? Contact the Training and Development Team at [partnerships@cdacouncil.org](mailto:partnerships@cdacouncil.org).

**» Learn more:** [www.cdacouncil.org/partnering-organizations](http://www.cdacouncil.org/partnering-organizations)

# QRIS and *the* CDA<sup>®</sup>

## QRIS and CDA: Shared Strategies

Is your child care center looking to gain more stars in the Quality Rating and Improvement System? It helps to hire CDAs since the QRIS tends to include these five components: standards, accountability measures, provider support, financial incentives and parent/consumer education efforts. While many states engage in efforts to enhance some of these components, the CDA incorporates all five in a comprehensive system that includes:

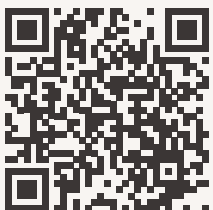
- 120 hours of coursework covering eight key areas for working with children
- 480 hours of direct experience in a child care setting
- An assessment in which parents' feedback plays an important role
- A professional portfolio and six reflective statements of competence

## QRIS and CDA: Shared Purpose

At their core, the QRIS and the CDA credential have the same aim: to advance the expertise of early childhood teachers, the programs in which they work and the ECE field as a whole. Like the QRIS, the CDA takes a systemic approach to produce early childhood teachers who parents can count on to give their children a good start. When educators earn a CDA, they set out on a path of continued quality improvement.

## An Invitation to Stronger Partnership

Many states already recognize the CDA in their QRIS. If your state isn't one of them, the Council invites you to work with us. We inspire and inform early childhood teachers and programs—so they can reach for the stars.



# Make Plans *for* the Annual Early Educators Leadership Conference in October!

The EELC brings together national and international leaders, policymakers, early childhood professionals, training authorities and academics all under one roof. Take advantage of this unique chance to explore new roads in the ECE profession. Attend sessions that will give you specialized knowledge to probe your full potential. Then join us in wellness activities that will leave you feeling refreshed and resilient.

You'll also have the chance to reconnect with colleagues and make new connections. Join a community of educators who share your passions and concerns in general sessions, panel discussions and specialized workshops that cover best practices in our field. Take a break from the daily demands of your job. You'll leave inspired and informed to do even more for the children you serve.

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**“In 27 years of attending conferences,  
this was by far the best!”**

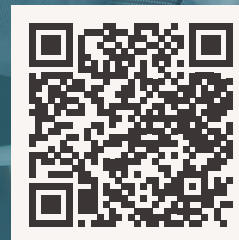
- Kathy Miller, Joplin, MO

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## JOIN US...

for a unique opportunity to explore your full potential as a professional in the early childhood field!

» Discover more: [www.cdacouncil.org/eelc](http://www.cdacouncil.org/eelc)





## COUNCIL ALUMNI NETWORK



*Join the...*

## Council Alumni Network (CAN)

The Council Alumni Network (CAN) is always expanding! You're eligible to join if you're a current or former CDA® credential holder, CDA PD Specialist, training organization or formal partner. CAN serves as a hub for personal and professional growth where you can trade best practices and gain insights on your career. You'll find colleagues who share your concerns and get other benefits, too:

- Mentorship Program
- Access to Exclusive Events
- Special Interests Groups
- Become a CAN Ambassador
- Continuous Community Engagement

**I CAN. You CAN. We all CAN Together!**

**» Join Today:** [councilcan.org](http://councilcan.org)



# The Online COUNCIL STORE

CDA® Value Packages

**SHOP NOW**

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Paquetes económicos CDA®

**COMPRAR AHORA**

## BUNDLE & SAVE

Value pack bundles with the *Essentials for Working with Young Children* textbook and workbook. Starting at **\$77.50**



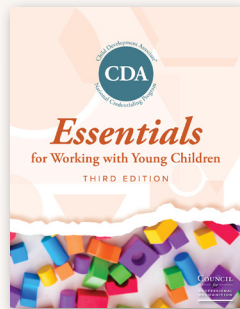
Essentials

**SHOP NOW**

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Fundamentos

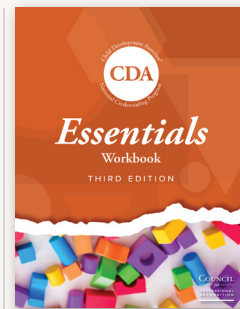
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### Essentials for Working with Young Children

*Essentials* is the key CDA training tool and study guide to successfully prepare for the CDA Verification Visit® and exam.

**\$55.00**



### Essentials Workbook

A must-have addition to the *Essentials* textbook. The workbook helps candidates in preparing their professional portfolio and passing the CDA exam.

**\$33.60**

CDA® Competency Standards books for candidates

**SHOP NOW**

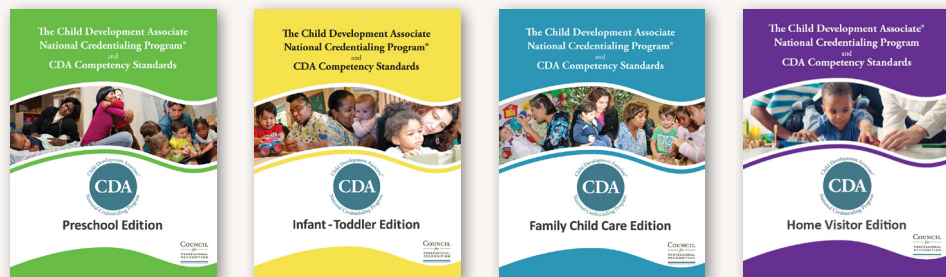
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Los libros de Normas de competencia CDA® para candidatos

**COMPRAR AHORA**

## CDA® Competency Standards Books

Everything a candidate needs to know to apply for and earn the CDA credential. **\$28.00**



CDA Renewal  
Guide

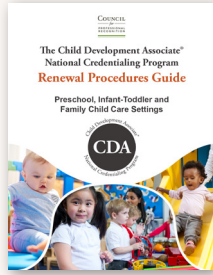
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Guía de  
renovación CDA®

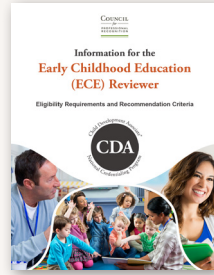
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## CDA® Renewal Procedures Guides

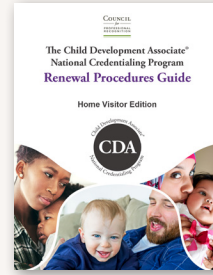
The *CDA Renewal Procedures Guide* provides all of the information needed to navigate the CDA renewal process. **Download FREE**



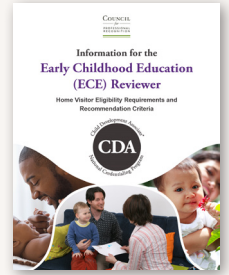
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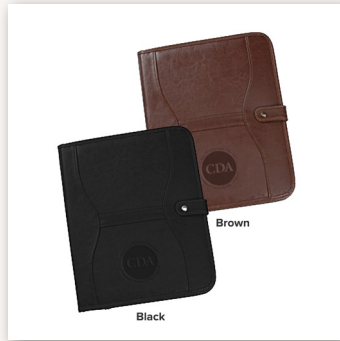
Merchandise

SHOP NOW

Mercancía

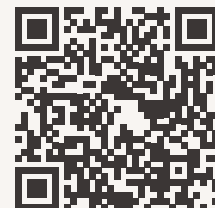
COMPRAR AHORA

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Follow us on TikTok - [www.tiktok.com/@cdacouncil](http://www.tiktok.com/@cdacouncil)

Connect with us on LinkedIn - *The Council for Professional Recognition*

Watch us on YouTube - [www.youtube.com/TheCDACredential](http://www.youtube.com/TheCDACredential)