



The Council for Professional Recognition Announces Forthcoming Updates to Required CDA® Education Documentation

At the Council for Professional Recognition, we are committed to ensuring the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™ continues to reflect high-quality preparation, meaningful learning, and strong alignment with career and education pathways. As part of this commitment, the Council will soon release updates to the education documentation required for CDA® training.

The CDA credential has long served as a trusted foundation for early childhood educators. As the field continues to evolve, it is our goal to improve the systems that support educator preparation, advancement, and mobility.

The forthcoming updates to training documentation will focus on:

- Reinforcing the quality and credibility of CDA education
- Clarifying the body of knowledge represented by the 120 clock hours of required formal education
- Supporting opportunities for credit for prior learning (CPL)
- Strengthening alignment with colleges and universities
- Promoting consistency and transparency across training providers and state systems

“The Council is focused on strengthening how the education component of CDA preparation is understood, validated, and recognized,” said Abena Ocran-Jackson, Vice President, Credentialing and Programs. “These updates are an important step toward expanding educational mobility, reducing unnecessary complexity for candidates and ensuring the education and preparation CDA candidates complete is both meaningful and portable.”

It is important to clarify the Council’s role with respect to CDA education and training. The Council for Professional Recognition is an ECE credentialing organization and does *not* accredit trainers, courses, or training programs. Instead, the Council’s responsibility is to verify that each CDA candidate has completed the required 120 hours of formal education covering the Eight CDA® Subject Areas as part of the credentialing process.

While the qualifications of trainers and the quality of specific training offerings are the responsibility of the organization, agency, or institution providing education, some states may require additional approval or recognition of training providers for purposes such as funding, scholarships, or workforce incentives. These state-level requirements are separate from the Council’s credentialing role.

The updated guidelines are intended to bring greater clarity and consistency to how formal education in preparation for the CDA is documented and understood, particularly by colleges, universities, and workforce systems, without shifting the Council’s role from verification to approval.

The revised guidelines are intended to:

- **Officially validate the quality and credibility** of the 120 hours of formal early childhood education and training across all Eight CDA[®] Subject Areas
- **Support credit for prior learning (CPL)** by clearly defining the learning outcomes represented by CDA education requirements
- **Facilitate stronger articulation opportunities** associated with the CDA credential and institutions of higher education
- **Increase consistency and transparency** across CDA training providers, state systems, and postsecondary education partners

By clarifying expectations, the Council aims to support educators' long-term career and education goals while maintaining the integrity of the CDA credential.

The core structure and expectations of CDA preparation remain the same, including:

- [CDA[®] Competency Standards and Eight CDA[®] Subject Areas](#)
- Quantity of formal education hours (120 clock hours)
- Components of the *CDA[®] Professional Portfolio*

To provide clarity and reassurance, here is what stakeholders can expect:

- Clear information for organizations and service providers seeking to offer accepted training
- Acceptable training documentation requirements, with examples
- Guidance to support alignment with the updated training documentation requirements

These updates are part of the Council's broader efforts to [Reimagine the CDA](#) and expand career advancement, educational equity, and workforce sustainability for early childhood educators nationwide. The guidelines for training documentation will be released in spring 2026 with requirements effective January 2027.

What's Next?

1. The Council will offer a focused Cafe Q&A via the Council Alumni Network (CAN), during which stakeholders can ask questions and offer feedback regarding updates to required training documentation. [Join CAN now](#), and then register to participate in this important conversation.
2. Following the collection of stakeholder feedback, the Council will finalize guidance on training documentation to support:
 - CDA training organizations and service providers
 - Career and technical education (CTE) programs
 - Colleges and universities
 - Pre/apprenticeship programs
 - State systems and other partners

Stay updated by subscribing to our newsletter at cdacouncil.org/subscribe. You can also send general questions to cdafeedback@cdacouncil.org or call Customer Care at 1-(800) 424-4310.