

Your Mini-Guide to Earning a CDA Credential

This is a step-by-step guide that details the process for earning your Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™. Official instructions, including copies of required forms, are provided in the application materials you will order from the Council for Professional Recognition.



The Center-Based infant/toddler Setting



STEP 1:

COMPLETE 120 CLOCK HOURS OF TRAINING

Name of Training Agency/CDA
instructor:
CCEI Online

Date Training was completed:

STEP 2:

ORDER THE CDA COMPETENCY STANDARDS BOOK FOR CENTER-BASED INFANT/TODDLER SETTING

As you get close to finishing your 120 clock hours of training, you will need to order your CDA Competency Standards Book for the center-based preschool setting. Contact the Council for Professional Recognition at 1-800-424-4310 or visit www.cdacouncil.org to order your CDA Competency Standards Book.



STEP 3:

PREPARE THE PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

1. RESOURCE COLLECTION

There are 10 related resources that you will gather and add to your Resource Collection. Some resources may need to be printed from the Internet, obtained from a local agency or typed or handwritten.



RC I-1

Include your valid and current certificate of completion or cards from a) any first aid course and b) an infant/child (pediatric) CPR course offered by a nationally-recognized training organization (such as American Red Cross or the American Heart Association). Online training is not acceptable.

RC I-2

Provide one feeding schedule or menu used for each age group (young infants, mobile infants, toddlers). In order to complete your related Reflective Competency Statement on this topic, the feeding schedules and/or menus would ideally be ones that you have participated in serving to and/or designing for children. If this is not possible, or if you work in a program that does not serve meals, you may want to substitute feeding schedules or menus found on the internet.

RC I-3

Provide a sample of your weekly plan that includes goals for children's learning and development, brief descriptions of planned learning experiences, and also accommodations for children with special needs (whether for children you currently serve or may serve in the future). Indicate the age group(s) for which the plan is intended.

RC II

Describe nine learning experiences (activities), written in your own words, including one from each of the following curricular areas:

- Science/Sensory
- Language and Literacy
- Creative Arts
- Fine motor (please choose an indoor activity)
- Gross motor (please choose an outdoor activity)
- Self Concept
- Emotional Skills/Regulation
- Social Skills
- Mathematics

For each activity, indicate the age group (young infants, mobile infants, or toddlers) and list the intended goals, materials and process/teaching strategies. For each activity, specify how it is developmentally appropriate for that age group. Of the nine activities, three should be appropriate for young infants, three for mobile infants and three for toddlers.

RC III

Create a bibliography that includes the titles, authors, publishers, copyright dates and short summaries of ten developmentally appropriate children's books that you have used with young children. Each book should support a different topic related to children's lives and challenges.





RC IV

Create a Family Resources Guide that you might choose to share with the families you serve. The Guide should include all of the helpful information you think they might need. At a minimum, you must include the following required items:

- The name and contact information (phone number, website, etc.) of a local agency that provides family counseling.
- The name and contact information (phone number, website, etc.) of a translation service for families whose home language is other than English as well as a service that provides American Sign Language translation.
- The name, contact information and brief descriptions of at least two agencies in the community that provide resources and services for children with disabilities (in most communities, the local school district provides these services).
- A list of three or more websites, and brief descriptions of each, that provide current information to help families understand how young children develop and learn. Include one current article for each website. Websites must contain articles that help families understand the development and learning of 3- to 5-year-olds. At least one article must relate to child early brain development.

RC V

Provide three samples of record keeping forms you use/have used. Include an accident report form, and emergency form and a completed tool/form that you have used to observe for and document a child's developmental/learning progress (do not include child's name).

RC VI-1

Provide the name and contact information of your state's agency that is responsible for the regulation of child care centers and family child care homes. (Note: These regulations are available at the website of the Child Care Technical Assistance Network: <https://licensingregulations.acf.hhs.gov/>). Make a copy of the sections that describe:

- Qualification requirements for personnel (teachers, directors and assistants)
- Group size, adult-child ratio requirements

RC VI-2

List two or three early childhood associations (national, regional, state or local), including website addresses, and describe the professional resources and membership opportunities they each offer.

RC VI-3

Provide summaries of the legal requirements in your state regarding child abuse and neglect (including contact information for the appropriate agency in your state) and Mandatory Reporting Guidelines.





2. REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS OF COMPETENCE

You will write six Reflective Statements based on the six Competency Goals listed below. For each Competency Goal, you will be given several topics and asked to describe how your teaching practices meet the goal. These topics can be found in the CDA Competency Standards Book. Many of the Statements require you to use specific Resources from the Resource Collection as the focus of what you write. Each description should be up to 500 words in length.

CDA Competency Goals



GOAL 1

To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment



GOAL 2

To advance physical and intellectual competence



GOAL 3

To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance



GOAL 4

To establish positive and productive relationships with families



GOAL 5

To ensure a well-run purposeful program responsive to participant needs



GOAL 6

To maintain a commitment to professionalism



3. PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Your task is to write a summary of your professional beliefs and values about early childhood education after you have finished collecting all of the resources and writing the Reflective Statements of Competence.

You will need to write about how you believe young children learn and what your role is as their teacher/caregiver. Beyond your role as a teacher, talk about what you believe or other important aspects of your role in the lives of children and families. The Professional Philosophy Statement should be no more than two pages long.



STEP 4:

COLLECT FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRES

How a family views your skills and knowledge are very important. As part of the assessment process, each family with a child in your care will need to complete a questionnaire. Copies of the cover letter and Family Questionnaire you are to use are in the CDA Competency Standards Book.

You will need to collect a majority of the questionnaires you give to families.

Number of Questionnaires Distributed:

Number of Questionnaires Received:

STEP 5:

SUBMIT THE APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT FEE

When you have finished your Professional Portfolio and collected all Family Questionnaires, you will be ready to complete the Application. You will need to select a Professional Development (PD) Specialist and record their Identification Number on your Application. You can use the paper form found in the CDA Competency Standards Book or you can apply online at <http://www.cdacouncil.org/yourcda>

You must also pay the Assessment Fee of \$425 to the Council.



STEP 6:

THE VERIFICATION VISIT

When your completed application and fee are received and approved by the Council, you will receive an email notification informing you that you may proceed with the Verification Visit. You will have six months to complete the rest of the assessment process.

The PD Specialist will conduct your Verification Visit. The Council maintains a directory of PD Specialists to choose from, or you can reach out to a PD Specialist in your area. It is your responsibility to contact the PD Specialist to schedule your visit. The Council will not make the appointment for you.

During the Verification Visit, the PD Specialist will:

- Review your Professional Portfolio, Family Questionnaires, and training certificate
- Complete the Direct Observation
- Conduct the Reflective Dialogue

STEP 7:

THE CDA COMPETENCY EXAM

When you are ready to take the CDA Competency Exam, you will need to schedule an appointment at a PearsonVUE testing center. You can locate the testing center closest to you by visiting www.pearsonvue.com/cdaexam. Remember, you can complete the Verification Visit and the CDA Competency Exam in any order.

Location of the Exam:

Date and Time of Exam:

STEP 8:

EARN YOUR CDA CREDENTIAL

Once the Council receives the scores from the Verification Visit and the CDA Competency Exam, the Council will make an award decision. If the CDA Credential is awarded, it will be sent to you through the mail. Congratulations! All of your hard work will be well-worth the end result!

