

What is a CDA®?

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is a national credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition. It is a key stepping stone for many early care professionals on the path of career advancement in early care and education.

The CDA Credential™ is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children.

Benefits of a CDA®

- Opens opportunities for career advancement
- Eligible to qualify for a Level 5 Oklahoma Professional Development Ladder (OPDL) certificate
- Opportunity to earn early childhood education/child development (ECE/CD) college credit
- Meet master teacher or primary caregiver qualifications for Licensing Requirements and QRIS criteria
- Reinforces commitment to early childhood education
- Increases understanding of developmentally appropriate practices
- Increases confidence as an Early Childhood Professional

What are the eligibility requirements for the CDA®?

- Individuals who are at least 18 years of age
- Individuals with a high school diploma or GED or who are enrolled as a junior or senior in a high school full time career tech program in early childhood education
- 480 hours of experience working in an approved setting with children within three years before application; work experience must be according to the CDA setting for which you're applying
CDA setting choices: **Family Child Care (birth to five), Infant-Toddler (birth to 36 months), and Preschool (3-5 years)**
- Complete 120 clock hours with a minimum of 10 clock hours in each of the 8 CDA content areas **OR** 9 college credit hours in child development/ early childhood training any time before application

Approved list of training options that meet the 8 CDA content areas include:

- College credit bearing classes in ECE/CD
- Oklahoma State Department of Career Tech Early Care and Education Programming
- Child Care Career community-based courses offered through CECPD
- CARE Courses offered through correspondence and online
- Other formal professional development provided by an agency or organization with expertise in ECE/CD
- *Before enrolling in coursework not listed above, visit www.cdacouncil.org to ensure it meets elite organization eligibility set by the Council for Professional Recognition*

What is the timeline/process for applying for the CDA®?

Within 6 months of submitting application:

- Purchase a CDA Competency Standards book in the setting of your work with children (CDA application is included or also available online)
https://yourcouncil.org/cfprssa/ecssashop.show_category?p_category_id=CDA_COMP_BOOK

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- Prepare your CDA Professional Portfolio according to the requirements in the CDA Competency Standards book
- Find a CDA Professional Development Specialist (PD Specialist). You may contact CECPD to find a PD Specialist in your area <https://www.cecpcd.org/en/provider-programs/cdaccp-advising/> Information is also located in your CDA Competency Standard book or visit www.cdacouncil.org.

To apply:

- Pay application fee to the Council for Professional Recognition or make application with Scholars for Excellence in Child Care for an Assessment Scholarship. Call 866-343-3881 or 405-225-9133 or visit www.okhighered.org/scholars for eligibility requirements.
- Submit paper or online application

After application submission:

- Once your CDA application has been reviewed and accepted you will receive a “Ready to Schedule” notification from the Council
- Once you receive your “Ready to Schedule” notification, schedule your CDA Verification Visit with your CDA PD Specialist and CDA Exam through Pearson VUE. Both steps **MUST** be completed by the deadline on the “Ready to Schedule” email
 - To find a PD specialist in your area visit https://www.yourcda.org/Find-a-PDS/pds_search.cfm?lang=en or through CECPD <https://www.cecpcd.org/en/provider-programs/cdaccp-advising/>
 - If after contacting 8-10 PD Specialists, you have not been contacted back within 48 hours, email The Council for Professional Recognition at cdafeedback@cdacouncil.org. The council can assist in locating a PD Specialist.

Decision:

- Scoring includes a composite pass/fail score of the National Exam, the Verification Visit, and the Portfolio. Scores are electronically submitted to the Council by the CDA PD Specialist and Pearson VUE testing center.
- A Council Committee reviews verification visit and exam results and renders a decision whether to award the CDA credential
- Notification of CDA Credential being awarded after verification visit and the exam has been completed. The Council will notify the CDA Candidate of the results of the National Credential by email. The National CDA Credential certificate will be mailed to the Candidate. The candidate can also call the Council’s automated system to hear the status of the CDA Credentialing Process 800-424-4310
- If the committee decides you need additional professional development, the Council will let you know the next steps to take to earn the Credential

Additional Information:

- Application and training materials are available in Spanish
- Special accommodations to complete the CDA credentialing program are available by written request prior to application submission
- Additional details are available at www.cdacouncil.org
- The PD Specialist is the professional who verifies the educational documentation, observes the candidate's application of ECE best practices and expertise in the classroom or family childcare program, as well as facilitates the candidate's self-reflection of the professional development process
- Make sure the name on the paper **or** online CDA Credential application matches the name on the photo ID to present to Pearson VUE

- Make sure to check spam/junk email folders for the “Ready to Schedule” email. The email will come from CDAready@cdacouncil.org

How do I renew my CDA®?

A CDA Credential is valid for three years.

If your CDA credential expires, you will have to reapply to obtain a new credential

- To renew, a candidate must meet the following criteria:
 - Current First Aid Certificate (Pediatric)
 - 4.5 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) OR 3 college credits in ECE/CD OR 45 clock hours of training in early childhood development
 - All coursework/training must have been completed after the issue date of your most current CDA® Credential.
 - Courses/training attended before your previous CDA will not be accepted to meet the educational requirement.
 - Do not re-take the same courses/training you studied when applying for your original credential or for previous renewals.
 - All renewal coursework/training must be specific and relevant to your CDA setting.
 - Minimum of 80 hours of work experience specific to CDA setting within the current year
 - Letter of Recommendation Form
 - Membership in a national or local early childhood professional organization
 - CDA can be renewed up to 6 months prior to the expiration date

Purchase and complete a CDA Renewal Packet from the Council and pay required fees. Renewals must be completed in the CDA setting that you currently hold. Full renewal guide can be found at: https://yourcouncil.org/cfprssa/ecssashop.show_category?p_category_id=CDA_REN_GUIDE&p_cust_id=&p_order_serno=&p_promo_cd=&p_price_cd=&p_session_serno=14139460&p_trans_ty=

