# ChildCareEd

*Providing a World of Learning*

## Child Development Associate (CDA)
## Frequently Asked Questions

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a credentialing program developed to provide opportunities for teachers and providers to demonstrate their abilities, skills, and understanding of early childhood development and instruction. Candidates are assessed through their preparation of multiple sources of evidence, which includes a professional portfolio, resources, and competency statements, as well as undergoing an observation and assessment.

This document is a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the CDA and the application process.

**Q: What do the 120 hours of course need to be?**
A: Before applying for the CDA credential, all applicants are required to complete 120 clock hours (12.0 CEUs) of coursework from a formal early childhood education setting. The coursework must have a minimum of 10 hours in each of the following eight subject areas:
- Planning a safe and healthy learning environment
- Advancing children's physical and intellectual development
- Supporting children's social and emotional development
- Building productive relationships with families
- Managing an effective program
- Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
- Observing and recording children's behavior
- Understanding the principles of child development and learning

Formal education hours are required to be earned through an agency/organization specializing in early childhood teacher preparation; training from individual/independent consultants and workshops are not accepted for the initial application.

**Q: I completed the coursework, but it looks a little different than the 120 hours. What are the exact breakdowns?**
A: The following should be used when converting hours into training hours:
- 1 clock hour = 0.1 CEUs
- 1 semester hour = 15 clock hours
- 1 unit = 1 clock hour
- 1 quarter credit = 10 clock hours

**Q: What is considered to be work experience?**
A: Any paid and/or volunteer hours in a center-based setting are considered to be acceptable work experience. Babysitting, Sunday School, Before/After-Care, and Drop-In programs are not considered to be eligible to be submitted as work experience.

**Q: What resources can I use to get through the credentialing process?**
A: The CDA Council offers the following resources on its website:
- Competency Standards Book (according to age group)
- Essentials for Working with Young Children textbook
- Essentials for Working with Young Children workbook.

These are available for purchase individually or in a bundle. These resources are intended to support the applicant through the completion of the Professional Portfolio, preparation for the exam, and to be used as an instructional aid in the classroom.

**Q: I've done my Professional Portfolio and the coursework. What's next?**
A: This is the time to find a PD Specialist and send in the application. Individuals seeking the CDA credential can apply either online on the CDA Council website or send in their application in a paper format. It is important to remember that submitting a paper application will incur a higher fee.

**Q: How do I find a PD Specialist in my area?**
A: The Find-a-PD Specialist Online Directory on the CDA Council website allows applicants to locate and request a PD Specialist to make a CDA Verification Visit. PD Specialists, much like applicants, have a specialization, so it is important to engage a PD Specialist that is specialized in the age group the applicant is applying for. Once the

PD Specialist agrees to perform the CDA Verification Visit, applicants will need to receive the Specialist's full name and PD Special ID number to write in their application.

**Q: What happens during the CDA Verification Visit?**
A: During the CDA Verification Visit, the PD Specialist will follow through with the R.O.R. Model, which stands for "Review," "Observe," and "Reflect":
- *Review*: The PD Specialist will review the applicant's Professional Professional
- *Observe*: The PD Specialist will observe the applicant using a set criterion while recording evidence as applicable.
- *Reflect*: The PD Specialist will facilitate a reflective dialogue with the applicant about their strengths, progression of growth as shown in the Professional Portfolio, and/or what was observed during the visit.

**Q: How do I take my test?**
A: The CDA Council has partnered with Pearson VUE to distribute the assessment for CDA applicants. Applications will be notified through a "Ready to Schedule" notice from the CDA Council. Applicants will need to set up a testing appointment by visiting the Pearson VUE website or by calling (866)507-5627.

**Q: What's the format of the test?**
A. Applicants are allotted one hour and 45 minutes to complete the assessment, which is made up of 60 multiple choice questions and 5 scenario questions. Applicants only need the ability to point and click a mouse in order to progress through and complete the assessment.

**Q: I've done everything, and the only thing left is the decision. How long does it take and how will I know?**
A: All decisions made by the CDA Council will be delivered through mail. Scores from the assessment and the CDA Verification Visit are usually submitted to the Council within 48 hours; it usually takes 1-3 days for the CDA Council to come to a decision, barring any problems.

**Q: I didn't do well on my test. Will my application be denied?**
A: The CDA Council will make a decision based on not only the assessment, but also the Professional Portfolio and the CDA Verification Visit. Because the assessment is only one of three factors in the applicant's cumulative score, the CDA Council may decide to grant the credential.

**Q: My application was denied. What do I do now?**
A: In their notification of your application denial, the CDA Council will also include not only information about the denial and the appeal process.

For more information, please visit the CDA Council at https://www.cdacouncil.org/en/