

# FAQ – Birth to Five CDA® Credential

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## General Information

### Q: What is the Birth to Five CDA® Credential?

A: The Birth to Five CDA® Credential (launching **August 1, 2025**) is a new setting that allows educators to demonstrate competence across the **entire birth-to-five age range** (infants, toddlers, preschoolers). It was developed in response to strong demand—87% of surveyed educators supported it—and provides more career flexibility, broader job opportunities, and helps address staffing shortages in early childhood education.

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### Q: How is Birth to Five different from Infant/Toddler or Preschool CDA® Credentials?

A: Infant/Toddler and Preschool CDA® settings focus on one age group. Birth to Five candidates must show **education and work experience across all three sub-age groups**:

- Infants (birth–17 months)
  - Toddlers (18–36 months)
  - Preschoolers (3–5 years old)
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### Q: How long is the Birth to Five CDA® valid?

A: The credential is valid for **three years** from the date of issue.

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## Application FAQs

### Q: What are the requirements to apply?

A: Candidates must:

- Hold a **high school diploma/GED** or be a high school junior/senior in an ECE program.
- Complete **120 hours of formal education** in early childhood (at least 10 hours in each of the 8 CDA® subject areas).
- Accumulate **480 hours of work experience** in the past three years, including **160 hours in each sub-age group**.
- Develop a **Professional Portfolio** that addresses all three sub-age groups.
- Complete the **Birth to Five CDA® Exam** and **Verification Visit**.



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**Q: Do I need an active CDA® to apply?**

A: No. You can apply directly for Birth to Five if you meet the requirements.

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**Q: How do I prove my work experience?**

A: Your **center director must attest** that you've completed at least 480 total hours, including 160 in each sub-age group.

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**Q: What if I already started applying in another setting?**

A:

- If you haven't paid the fee, you may switch to Birth to Five after August 1, 2025.
  - If you are in the **“Ready to Schedule” phase**, contact Council Customer Support.
  - If you've completed the exam and visit, you must finish that process; then you may apply separately for Birth to Five.
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## Verification Visit & Exam FAQs

**Q: What happens during the CDA® Verification Visit?**

A:

- Conducted by a **PD Specialist™ with a Birth to Five endorsement**.
  - Takes place at a **licensed or legally exempt center-based program**.
  - You'll be observed with children you regularly work with:
    - At least **3 children** birth–36 months OR
    - At least **6 children** ages 3–5.
  - You do **not** need to be observed with all three sub-age groups.
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**Q: What is the format of the exam?**

A:

- Administered by **Pearson VUE**.
  - Multiple-choice, covering child development from birth to five.
  - Length: **1 hour 55 minutes**.
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**Q: Is there a new exam process starting in 2025?**

A: Yes. Beginning **August 1, 2025**, candidates must **take the exam first**, before scheduling the Verification Visit. This ensures only those who pass the exam move on to the observation stage.

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**Q: How long do I have to complete both exam and visit?**

A: You have **6 months** from the time your application is approved to complete both. If not completed, the application expires and fees are forfeited.

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**Q: How do I find a PD Specialist?**

A: Options include:

- Using the **Find-a-PD Specialist Tool** at *YourCouncil.org*.
  - Requesting a PD Specialist with a Birth to Five endorsement you know.
  - Encouraging a local professional to become endorsed (may delay process).
  - Contacting the Council's **ECE Observation Team** for help.
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## Portfolio & Competency Standards FAQs

**Q: What do I need in my Birth to Five Portfolio?**

A: It must include evidence covering **all three sub-age groups**. You can reuse parts of a prior portfolio, but a new one must fully address birth–five.

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**Q: Do I need a Competency Standards book?**

A: Yes. The **Birth to Five Competency Standards book (magenta color)** is required for the application, Portfolio, and Verification Visit. Available only in print starting **August 1, 2025**.

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## Renewal FAQs

**Q: How do I renew my Birth to Five CDA®?**

A: Submit a renewal application with proof of:

- **Continuing education** (CEUs, credit hours, or clock hours).
- **Work experience** in the credential setting.
- **Safety verification** (background clearance, etc.).



 **Note:** As of 2025, **First Aid/CPR certification is no longer required** at renewal.

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**Q: Can I convert other CDA® credentials to Birth to Five?**

A:

- If you hold **both active Infant/Toddler and Preschool CDA®s**, you may **renew into Birth to Five** when one comes due. This replaces the previous credentials.
  - If you hold only **one active CDA®**, you must submit a **new application** for Birth to Five.
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**Q: Can I use expired CDA® training hours for Birth to Five?**

A: Yes, if the hours meet the **120-hour total** with **10 hours in each subject area**, and cover ages birth–five.

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## Special Circumstances FAQs

**Q: Does Birth to Five support bilingual credentialing?**

A: Yes. You must:

- Be fluent in English and another language.
  - Use both languages daily with children.
  - Work in a bilingual setting.
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**Q: Can I request disability accommodations?**

A: Yes. Submit a **Special Accommodations Request Form** from the Council website before applying.

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**Q: Are scholarships available?**

A: Yes. Many states and organizations cover CDA® fees, including Birth to Five. See the Council's **CDA Scholarship page** for options or visit **ChildCareEd's Grants Page**.

