

# CDA Portfolio Sample

This is a sample to help you understand what to write. When you write your own portfolio, please make sure your examples and language match the age group you work with

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## CS I: Safe, Healthy Learning Environment

*(Safe routines, hygiene, supervision, learning setup)*

I create a safe, healthy learning environment by building consistent routines, actively supervising children, and arranging the classroom to support independence and learning. Safety is supported through daily checks of the classroom (floors clear, outlets covered, choking hazards removed) and clear expectations like “walking feet inside” and “toys stay low.” During transitions, I use “stop-and-check” supervision—positioning myself so I can see all children, especially at doorways, bathrooms, and high-traffic areas.

To promote health, we follow hygiene routines throughout the day. Children wash hands when arriving, before meals, after bathroom use, and after outdoor play. I teach handwashing steps with a short song and visual reminders near the sink. I also sanitize tables before and after meals and encourage children to cover coughs and use tissues. When a child shows signs of illness, I follow program procedures and communicate with leadership and families.

To support a strong learning environment, I arrange centers with clear labels and defined spaces (blocks, dramatic play, art, literacy, sensory). Materials are stored on low shelves so children can access and return items independently. I rotate materials based on children’s interests and developmental goals—for example, adding measuring cups to the sensory table or letter magnets to the writing center. These strategies help children feel secure, reduce behavior issues, and create a classroom where children can explore safely while learning.

Classroom example: During outdoor play, I position myself where I can see the climbing structure and riding path. When I notice children starting to run near the swings, I calmly restate the limit: “Swings need space. Let’s walk behind the line.” I redirect them to a safer area and praise safe choices: “Thank you for walking—your body is keeping you safe.”

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## CS II: Physical & Intellectual Competence

*(Physical, Cognitive, Communication, Creativity)*

I support children's physical and intellectual competence by planning activities that build physical development, thinking skills, language, and creativity every day. For physical development, we include gross motor movement such as obstacle courses, dancing, yoga poses, and outdoor games that build balance and coordination. For fine motor growth, children use playdough tools, tweezers for sorting, lacing cards, and scissors practice at the art table.

To support cognitive development, I provide problem-solving experiences during play, especially with blocks, puzzles, and science exploration. I ask open-ended questions like, "What do you think will happen if...?" and "How can we make this tower stronger?" These questions help children plan, test ideas, and persist. I also incorporate early math concepts through counting games, sorting, patterns, and measuring during cooking or sensory play.

I strengthen communication and language by modeling rich vocabulary and encouraging conversation. I read aloud daily, pause to ask prediction questions, and help children retell stories using story props. I also support dual language learners by using visuals, repeating key phrases, and learning important family words when possible. For creativity, children have open-ended art materials (paper, paint, collage items) and dramatic play themes that reflect the classroom community.

Classroom example: During a "grocery store" dramatic play theme, children created shopping lists (writing), sorted foods by color or category (math/cognitive), used role-play language ("How much is this?") (communication), and designed signs for the store (creativity). Outdoors, we added a "delivery route" with cones and wagons to build physical coordination while extending the theme.

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## CS III: Social & Emotional Development / Positive Guidance

*(Self, Social, Guidance)*

I promote social-emotional development by helping children understand feelings, build friendships, and learn positive ways to handle conflict. I start by creating a classroom culture where children feel seen and supported. I greet each child by name, notice their effort, and



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provide comfort when needed. I teach emotional literacy by naming feelings throughout the day (“You look frustrated because the block tower fell”) and using books and visuals to help children identify emotions.

For positive guidance, I use **clear, consistent limits** and focus on teaching replacement skills instead of punishment. I keep language simple: “I won’t let you hit. Safe hands.” Then I teach what to do instead: “You can say ‘Stop’ or ask for help.” I also prevent many behaviors by preparing children for transitions, offering choices, and ensuring there are enough materials to reduce conflict. When children struggle, I guide them through problem-solving: “What happened?” “How did you feel?” “What can we do to fix it?” and “What can you try next time?”

Classroom example: Two children argued over a truck. I calmly stepped in and stated the limit: “I won’t let you grab. That hurts.” I helped the first child hold the truck and coached the second child to use words: “Can I have a turn when you’re done?” We used a timer for turn-taking. After the timer, I praised the skill: “You waited and then used words—that was kind and patient.” This approach reduces repeated conflicts and teaches self-control and respectful communication.

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## CS IV: Relationships with Families

*(Families: communication, respect for cultures, collaboration)*

I build strong relationships with families through respectful communication, cultural responsiveness, and collaboration. I understand families are children’s first teachers, so I aim to partner with them by sharing information, listening to goals, and keeping communication consistent. I use daily updates (in-person, notes, or digital communication depending on program policy) to share highlights, meals, rest, and learning activities. When concerns arise, I communicate objectively and with care—focusing on what we observed, what support we provided, and how we can work together.

I respect family culture and values by learning about children’s home routines, preferred names, languages spoken, and traditions. I incorporate family input into classroom activities when possible, such as including books, music, or celebrations that reflect the classroom community. I also invite families to participate through conferences, family events, volunteer opportunities, or sending materials from home that connect to classroom themes.



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Classroom example: A family shared that their child was struggling with drop-off transitions. I scheduled a short conversation to learn their morning routine and the child's comfort items.

Together we created a consistent drop-off plan: a short goodbye routine, a family photo in the calm corner, and a “helper job” at arrival. I provided brief updates on progress and celebrated improvement with the family. This partnership reduced stress and helped the child feel secure.

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## CS V: Program Management

*(Organization, planning, documentation, responsiveness)*

I support program management by staying organized, planning intentionally, documenting learning and behavior patterns, and responding to children’s needs. I prepare learning centers, rotate materials, and keep an accessible system for storing lesson plans, observations, and family communication notes. I use a weekly plan to ensure activities support developmental goals while remaining flexible to children’s interests.

I document important information accurately and professionally. This includes attendance, incident reports (when needed), developmental observations, and behavior patterns that help staff plan supports. When a child shows repeated challenging behavior, I use simple tracking to identify triggers and effective strategies. I collaborate with my team to maintain consistency—especially for routines, supervision, and guidance practices.

Classroom example: If multiple children are melting down during cleanup, I review our transition routine and adjust the environment and timing. I might add a cleanup song, reduce the number of steps, provide picture labels for where items go, and assign jobs (line leader, basket helper). I document what changes worked best so the team can repeat successful strategies.

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## CS VI: Professionalism

*(Growth, ethics, collaboration, continuous learning)*

I demonstrate professionalism by maintaining ethical conduct, collaborating with colleagues, and committing to continuous improvement. I follow program policies related to confidentiality,



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safety, and respectful communication. I speak about children and families with professionalism and never use shaming language. I also seek feedback from supervisors and use training to strengthen my practice.

I collaborate with coworkers to ensure consistent routines and guidance strategies. When a child needs extra support, I contribute observations and ideas respectfully and remain open to team planning. I pursue professional development through coursework, reading, coaching, and reflection. My goal is to stay informed about best practices in early childhood education and apply them thoughtfully.

Classroom example: After noticing I was talking too much during escalated moments, I worked on using fewer words and a calmer tone for behavior guidance (“I won’t let you hit. Safe hands.”). I shared this approach with my team and we agreed on consistent scripts for common behaviors. Over time, we saw fewer conflicts because children understood expectations and staff responses were consistent.

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## Professional Philosophy Statement Sample

I believe young children learn best through **safe relationships, play, and meaningful experiences** that connect to their interests and culture. My role as an early childhood educator is to create a learning environment where children feel **secure, respected, and capable**. I support children’s development by providing predictable routines, hands-on materials, and opportunities to explore, communicate, and solve problems. I view behavior as communication, so I use positive guidance to teach skills like waiting, using words, calming down, and repairing relationships after conflict.

I partner with families by listening, sharing information respectfully, and working together toward shared goals. Families know their children best, and I value their insight and culture as a foundation for learning. I maintain professionalism by reflecting on my practice, collaborating with coworkers, and continuing to learn through training and feedback. My goal is to help every child grow in confidence and competence while building a classroom community rooted in safety, kindness, and curiosity.



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