

How to write your CDA portfolio

What should be included in your CDA Portfolio?

Your submission should be a **PDF** and include:

- **Reflective Statements for CS I–VI**
 - ☐ CS I: Safe, Healthy Learning Environment
 - ☐ CS II: Physical & Intellectual Development
 - ☐ CS III: Social & Emotional Development / Positive Guidance
 - ☐ CS IV: Building Productive Relationships with Families
 - ☐ CS V: Program Management
 - ☐ CS VI: Professionalism
 - **Professional Philosophy Statement**
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How long should each competency statement be?

Aim for about 200–500 words per reflective statement.

What tone should I use?

Write in:

- First person (“I...” “In my classroom...”)
- A positive, professional, reflective voice (not copied text or instructions).

Also make sure it matches your CDA setting/age group (Infant/Toddler, Preschool, Family Child Care, Home Visitor).



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The “winning” structure for every CS I–VI statement

Use this same format each time:

Paragraph 1: “How I meet this Competency Standard.”

- Start with a short paragraph explaining how you meet the standard.

Paragraphs 2–3: “Functional Areas + real examples.”

- Make sure you cover all functional areas for that standard.
- Add specific examples from your work with children.
- Show you understand the *why* (the intent) and how you apply it.

Quick tip: If you’re stuck, write one clear example for each functional area.

Copy/Paste Templates (fill in the blanks)

CS I: Safe, Healthy Learning Environment

(You must mention **Safe + Healthy + Learning**.)

Paragraph 1 (overview):

“In my classroom, I create a safe, healthy learning environment by _____. I stay consistent with routines, supervise carefully, and set up the room to support children’s learning.”

Examples to include:

- **Safe:** “One way I keep children safe is _____ (supervision/routines/room setup).”
 - **Healthy:** “To support health and hygiene, I _____.”
 - **Learning environment:** “To promote learning, I arrange materials/centers by _____.”
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CS II: Physical & Intellectual Competence

(You must address **Physical + Cognitive + Communication + Creativity**.)

Paragraph 1 (overview):

"I support children's physical and intellectual growth by planning activities that build motor skills, thinking skills, language, and creativity."

Examples to include (one each):

- **Physical:** gross motor or fine motor example (what you did + what children did).
 - **Cognitive:** problem-solving, math/science, sorting, counting, exploring.
 - **Communication:** conversation, books, songs, open-ended questions.
 - **Creativity:** art, dramatic play, music, building, open-ended materials.
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CS III: Social & Emotional Development / Positive Guidance

(Include emotional support + positive guidance.)

Paragraph 1 (overview):

"I support children's social-emotional development by building trusting relationships, teaching feelings, and using positive guidance strategies."

Examples to include:

- "I help children label emotions by _____."
 - "When challenging behavior happens, I respond by _____ (calm voice, choices, redirection, teaching skills)."
 - "I build friendships and social skills by _____."
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CS IV: Relationships with Families

(Include communication, culture, collaboration, and examples.)



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Paragraph 1 (overview):

"I build strong relationships with families by communicating regularly, showing respect for each family's culture, and working as a team."

Examples to include:

- "One way I communicate is _____ (daily report, message, notes, conferences)."
 - "I respect family culture by _____."
 - "A time I collaborated with a family was _____."
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CS V: Program Management

(Mention organization, planning, documentation, and responsiveness.)

Paragraph 1 (overview):

"I support program management by staying organized, planning ahead, keeping records, and adjusting to children's needs."

Examples to include:

- Planning: "I plan activities/centers by _____."
 - Documentation: "I document children's learning by _____."
 - Responsiveness: "When I notice a child needs extra support, I _____."
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CS VI: Professionalism

(Include growth, ethics, collaboration, and ongoing learning.)

Paragraph 1 (overview):

"I demonstrate professionalism by following ethical practices, communicating respectfully, collaborating with coworkers, and continuing to learn."

Examples to include:

- Growth: "I improve my teaching by _____ (training, coaching, reflection)."



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- Ethics: “I protect confidentiality and professionalism by _____.”
 - Collaboration: “I work with my team by _____.”
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Professional Philosophy Statement

Your philosophy should:

- State what you believe about early childhood education
- Include core values (respect, equity, collaboration, lifelong learning, etc.)
- Give examples of how you apply it

Starter you can personalize:

“My teaching philosophy is based on the belief that young children learn best through warm relationships, play, and meaningful routines. I believe every child deserves respect, safety, and a learning environment that supports their strengths, culture, and development. In my daily practice, I apply this by _____ (example 1), _____ (example 2), and _____ (example 3). I work with families as partners by _____. I continue to grow as a professional by _____, because learning is a lifelong process for both children and teachers.”

Common reasons portfolios get returned

Portfolios may need revision if they are missing key parts or are too brief/not reflective.

Before submitting, double-check:

- Did you cover **every functional area** for that CS?
- Did you include **specific classroom examples**?



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- Did you stay within **200–500 words** and write in full sentences?



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