

CDA PROCESS

CDA Candidate Eligibility Requirements:

Individuals seeking a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Possess a high school diploma or GED
- Have a minimum of 480 hours of experience working with children within the past five years
- Complete 120 hours of formal child care education (a minimum of 10 hours in each of the CDA competency areas) A formal record of training is required. The record can consist of completion certificates, letter, or transcript. Training must be obtained from an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation. The 120 clock hours of education must be documented, with no fewer than 10 hours in each of the following content areas:

1. Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning;
2. Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development;
3. Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development;
4. Strategies to establish productive relationships with families;
5. Strategies to manage an effective program operation;
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism;
7. Observing and recording children's behavior; and
8. Principles of child development and learning.

Purchase Application Packet from CDA Council

Individuals who meet all the Candidate eligibility requirements and who can be observed in an eligible setting must purchase an application packet from the CDA Council, selecting the appropriate application packet for the type of credential they wish to receive.

1. The *Preschool Packet* is for Candidates working in a center-based setting with children 3-5 years old.
2. The *Infant/Toddler Packet* is for Candidates working with children from birth to 36 months of age.
3. The *Family Child Care Packet* is for Candidates working with one or all age groups in a family child care home.
4. The *Home Visitor Packet* is for Candidates working with the parents of young children.

Application Packets contain ALL of the documents Candidates will need to apply for CDA assessment. Each packet is customized for the selected child care setting and contains two copies of the *CDA Competency Standards Book*; instructions and instrument for the observation; scholarship information; parent questionnaires; and the application form. The information packet costs \$18.

Complete assessment requirement

Upon receipt of an Application Packet, a Candidate is ready to begin working on the requirements for CDA assessment. These requirements are completed in three phases: preparation of necessary materials; filing of application; and verification of competence and knowledge.

Preparation: The first set of requirements involves the Candidate documenting evidence of her or his competence from the following three sources:

1. The Professional Resource File (prepared by the Candidate)
2. The Parent Opinion Questionnaires (collected by the Candidate)
3. The CDA Assessment Observation Instrument (completed by the Advisor)

Application: When the above documentation is complete, the Candidate and Advisor sign the Application Form and send it to the Council with the assessment fee (\$325) and training documentation. This begins the CDA Assessment Process and the Council assigns a Council Representative to conduct the Verification Visit.

Verification Visit: The second set of requirements involves a Council Representative visiting the Candidate to verify competence and knowledge using two methods:

4. The Early Childhood Studies Review (administered by the Council Representative)
5. The Oral Interview (conducted by the Council Representative)

Submission of application

The *Direct Assessment Application Form* (included in the *Application Packet*) is the official Candidate application for CDA assessment. The form requires the Candidate and the Advisor to verify all eligibility and documentation requirements. A Candidate checklist, included in the *Application Packet*, should be used to check that all procedures have been followed. The *Application Form* requires consent from the Program Director for the Candidate to participate in the Verification Visit.

The Candidate submits the application with the assessment fee (\$325) and original signatures addressed to:

Council for Professional Recognition
2460 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009-3575