

The CDA Assessment & Credentialing System: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know

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Council for Professional Recognition

April 21, 2020

Meet Chonda & Sandy



Chonda Walden

- ❖ Started at the Council in October 2018
- ❖ External Specialists Engagement Manager
 - Manages the Council's workforce 8000+ (Recruit – Engagement-Retention)
 - Quality assurance & Research/Data collection



Sandy Kowalczyk

- ❖ Started at the Council in December 2018
- ❖ External Engagement Manager
 - Manages State/Association Partnerships
 - Leads High School/CTE Initiatives

Goals of Session

Guide you through the requirements for the CDA® assessment, credentialing process, and becoming a PD Specialist...

- ❖ What is the CDA®? What are the requirements?
- ❖ Navigating the credentialing process:
 - Application materials
 - Understand the assessment process and timeframe
 - Preparing to apply
 - Developing a professional portfolio (with examples)
 - Understanding competency requirements
- ❖ PD Specialists
 - What is a PD Specialist?
 - How to become a PD Specialist
- ❖ Tips for success in the current environment



The CDA®

The Child Development Associate® Credential or CDA® is the **most widely recognized credential** in early childhood education.

It is a **key stepping stone** on the path to career advancement in early childhood education.

To be awarded the credential, candidates must complete an **assessment process** and demonstrate that they are able to put their knowledge of the **CDA Competency Standards** into practice in their daily work with children and families.

*Being awarded the CDA means a candidate is **qualified to be a lead teacher in the classroom.***





COUNCIL
for
PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION



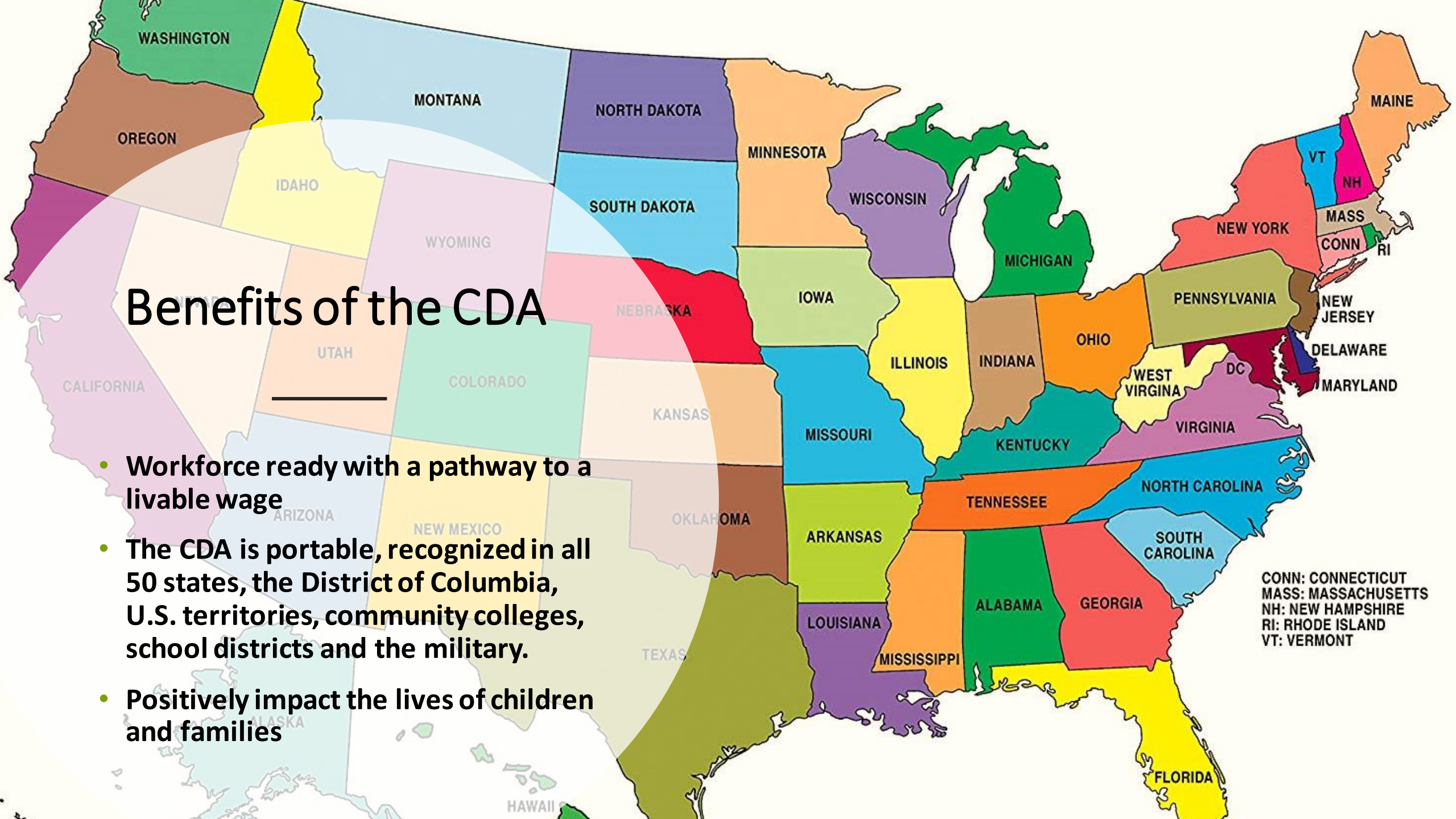
The Best 1st Step

Nationally Recognized
Transferable
Competency-Based



Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™

- ❖ Multi-Language credential designed to assess an early childhood educator's competency in the language of their daily work
- ❖ 425,000+ early care educators in the United States
- ❖ CDA is available in Puerto Rico, Panama, UAE, China, Egypt, & Ghana
- ❖ Articulates to Associates in Arts (AA) and Bachelors of the Arts (BA) degree programs

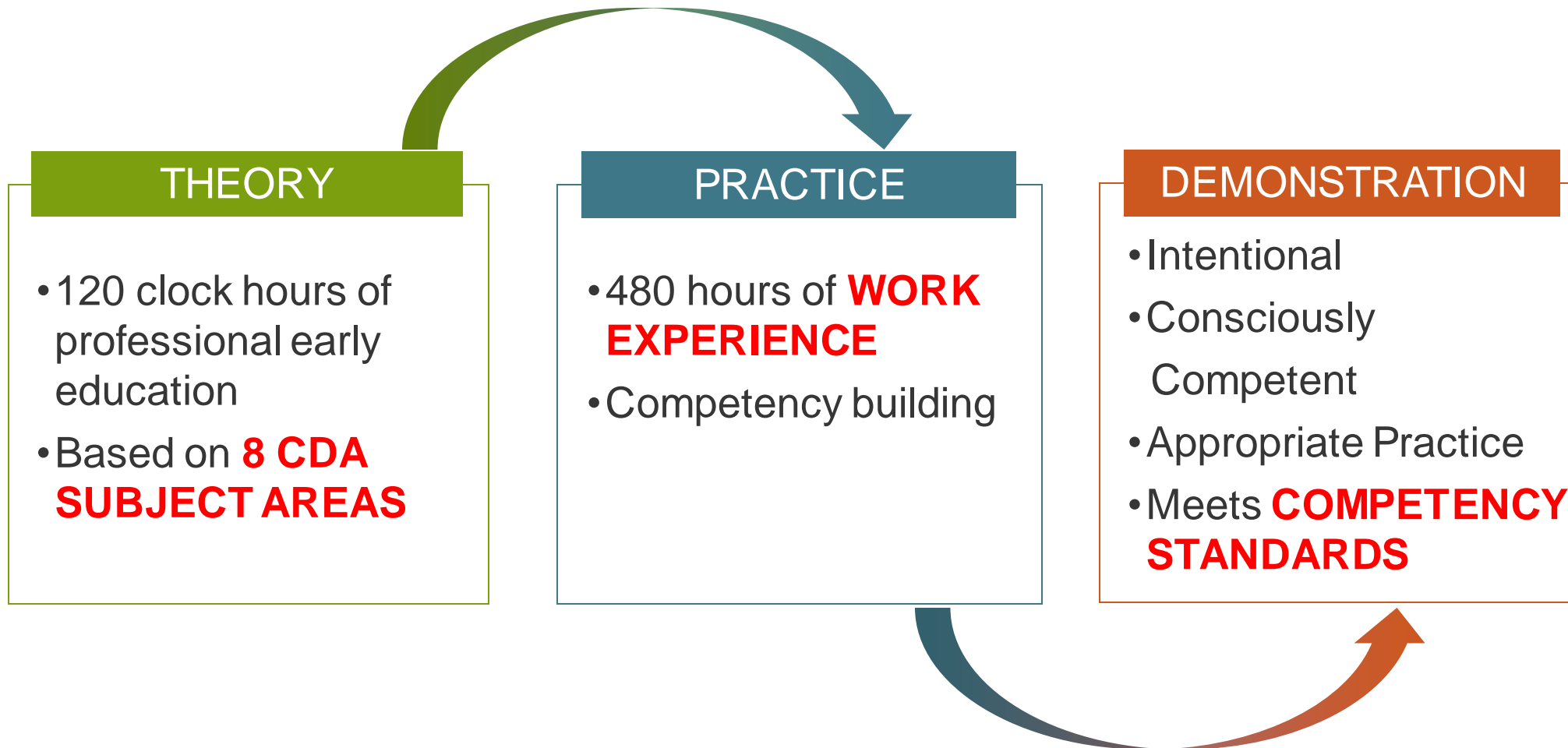


Benefits of the CDA

- Workforce ready with a pathway to a livable wage
- The CDA is portable, recognized in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, community colleges, school districts and the military.
- Positively impact the lives of children and families

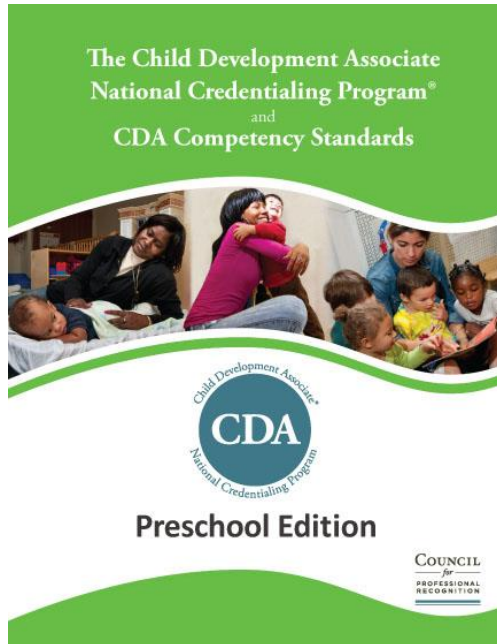
CONN: CONNECTICUT
MASS: MASSACHUSETTS
NH: NEW HAMPSHIRE
RI: RHODE ISLAND
VT: VERMONT

CDA® Credential

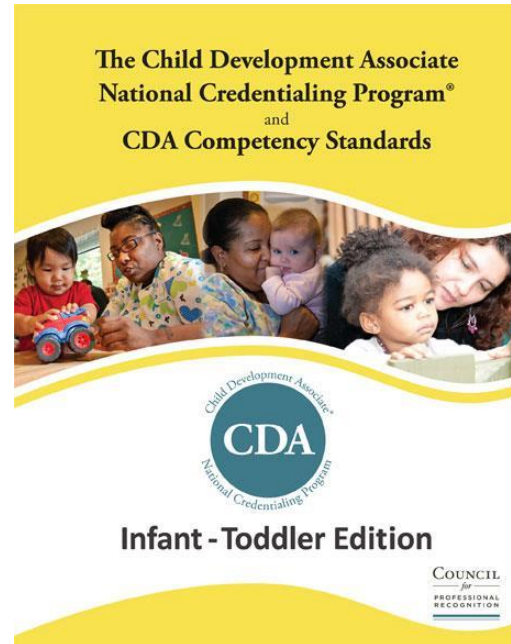


CDA® Credential Setting Types

CENTER-BASED SETTINGS

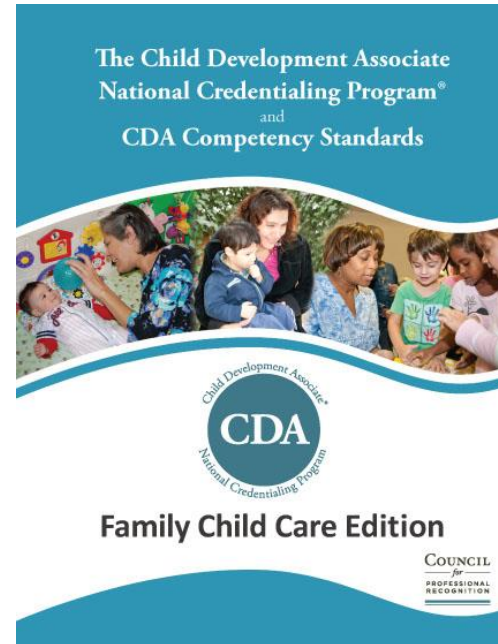


3-5 Years



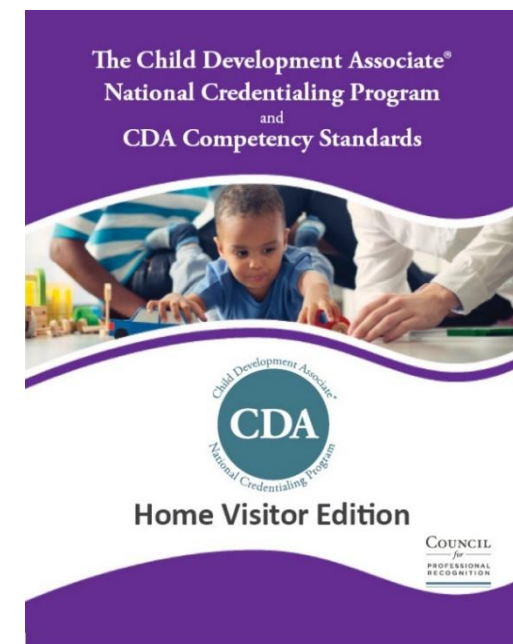
Birth - 36 Months

FAMILY CHILD CARE



Birth - 5 Years

HOME VISITOR



Birth - 5 Years

CDA® Credentialing Process



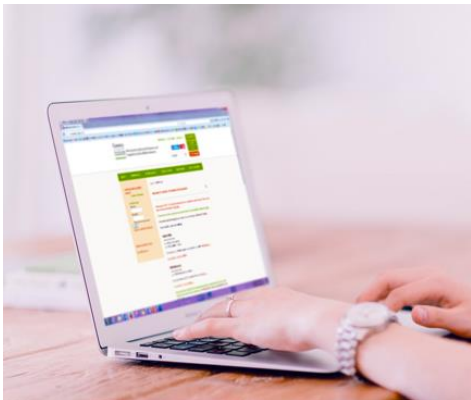
**Literacy and
Education**



Experience



Documentation



Application



**CDA Verification
Visit®**



CDA® Exam

Prepare

Apply

Demonstrate

Preparing to Apply for the CDA® Assessment

Literacy

- Be able to **speak, read, and write** in the language of the assessment well enough to fulfill the responsibilities of a CDA candidate.
- The language of the assessment is the language in which the candidate is required to conduct his or her daily work with children and families.



**Literacy and
Education**

Education

- **To apply** for a CDA credential, candidates **MUST** have:
- **High School Education** - High School diploma/GED or be a junior or senior enrolled in a high school career and technical education program (training/classes can start as a freshman or sophomore).
- and
- **Professional Education** - 120 clock hours of education (instruction) in the 8 CDA Subject Areas (at least 10 hours in each area) specific to the credential type they are applying for.

All education must be obtained under the auspices of an agency, organization or institution with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation.



**Literacy and
Education**

Education: The 8 CDA Subject Areas

CDA Subject Areas		Examples
1	Planning a safe, healthy learning environment.	Safety, first aid, health, nutrition, space planning, materials and equipment, play
2	Advancing children's physical and intellectual development.	Large and small muscle, language and literacy, discovery, art, music, math, social studies, brain development, science, technology, dual language learning
3	Supporting children's social and emotional development.	Self-esteem, independence, self-regulation, socialization, cultural identity
4	Building productive relationships with families.	Parent involvement, home visits, conferences, referrals
5	Managing an effective program.	Planning, record keeping, reporting
6	Maintaining a commitment to professionalism.	Advocacy, ethical practices, workforce issues, professional associations
7	Observing and recording children's behavior.	Tools and strategies for objective information and assessment
8	Understanding principles of child development and learning.	Child development from birth through age 5, individual variations, cultural influences

Experience

To apply for a CDA credential, high school candidates **MUST** have at least:

- ❖ **480 hours** of work experience working in the same type of program/setting as the one they are applying for assessment.
- ❖ Some training programs help candidates locate programs where candidates may volunteer to meet this requirement. Volunteer hours are accepted.

(Within 3 Years of Applying)



Experience

Documentation: Develop a Professional Portfolio

Legible, portable, professional looking, current, and must be written in your own words

Professional Portfolio

COVER SHEETS

- ❖ *My Professional Portfolio Cover Sheet*
- ❖ *Summary of Education Cover Sheet + documentation*
- ❖ *Family Questionnaire Cover Sheet + completed family questionnaires*
- ❖ *Reflective Dialogue Worksheet*

Resource Collection

Reflective Statements of Competence
Professional Philosophy Statement



Documentation

Family Questionnaires

- ❖ Candidates MUST complete a *Family Questionnaire Summary Sheet*
- ❖ The candidate must work with Center staff to distribute a *Family Questionnaire (FQ)* to each family in their group and collect the “majority” (more than half)

(Within **6 Months** of Applying.)



Resource Collection

Collect and organize early childhood resources that reflect the standards:

- ❖ First Aid and Pediatric or Infant/Child CPR
- ❖ Weekly Menu
- ❖ Weekly Plan
- ❖ 9 Learning Activities
- ❖ Bibliography of children's books
- ❖ Family Resource Guide
- ❖ Record keeping forms
- ❖ State regulations
- ❖ Early childhood associations
- ❖ Child abuse and neglect legal requirements

Competency Standards

#	Competency Goals	Functional Areas
Goal I	To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment	1. Safe 2. Healthy 3. Learning Environment
Goal II	To advance physical and intellectual competence	4. Physical 5. Cognitive 6. Communication 7. Creative
Goal III	To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance	8. Self 9. Social 10. Guidance
Goal IV	To establish positive and productive relationships with families	11. Families
Goal V	To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs	12. Program Management
Goal VI	To maintain a commitment to professionalism	13. Professionalism

Reflective Statements of Competence

The Candidate is required to write a Reflective Statement of Competence for each of the Competency Goals, a total of six (6). Each Reflective Statement of Competence should describe:

- ❖ How the Candidates' practices meet the standard (a paragraph) and;
- ❖ How an item in the Candidate's Resource Collection reflects his or her philosophy
- ❖ Follow instructions and use the same numbering pattern utilized in the CDA® Competency Standards book
- ❖ Write no more than 500 words per statement

Example: Reflective Statement

CSII Competency Statement III: To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance

- ❖ *I strongly believe that children's most important characteristics for success in life are developed in their early years. My work is dedicated to help children in my care develop curiosity and confidence. Intentionality, self-regulation, relatedness, communication capacity and cooperativeness are also essential characteristics. I work to implement the latest theories and research into my practice. This competency area is a vital part of my daily work with children.*

Professional Philosophy Statement

The candidate writes a *Professional Philosophy Statement* that summarizes the candidate's professional beliefs and values about early childhood education:

- ❖ Final reflective task
- ❖ Write no more than 2 pages
- ❖ Write no more than 500 words per statement

Before Applying for a CDA® Assessment



Select a CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialist™

As part of the assessment process, candidates must complete a CDA Verification Visit® with a Council endorsed PD Specialist™

During the Verification Visit the PD Specialist :

- ❖ Reviews the candidate's *Professional Portfolio*
- ❖ Observes the candidate working with children, serving as the lead teacher
- ❖ Facilitates a reflective dialogue with the candidate.

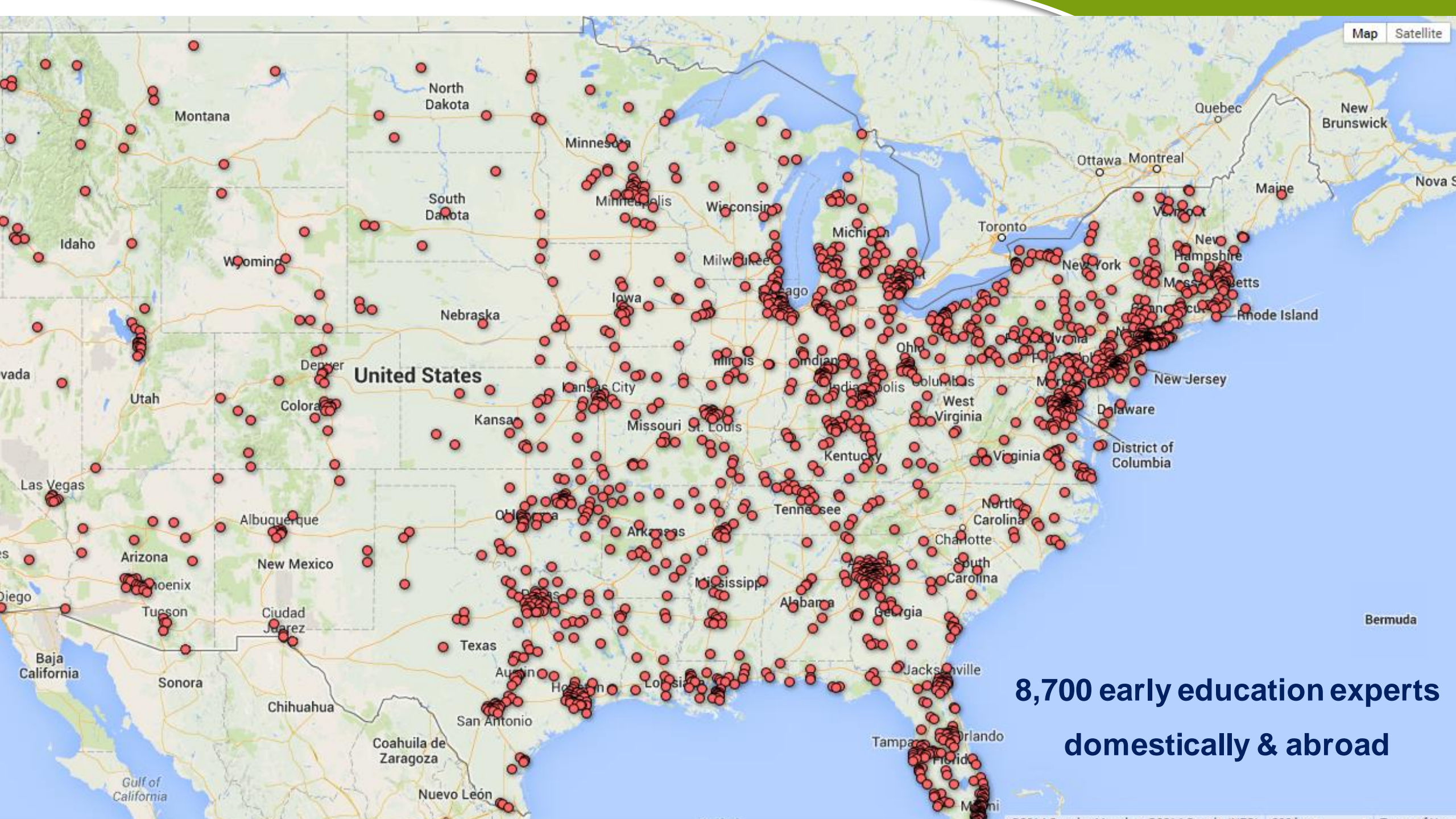
Candidates must identify a PD Specialist prior to submitting their application. Once a PD Specialist agrees to conduct their visit, they will provide the candidate with their **endorsement number**. Candidates are required to provide this endorsement number on their application.

Select a CDA PD Specialist™

When **locating** a PD Specialist, candidates may do any of the following:

- ❖ Use the Find-A-PD Specialist Directory on the Council's website.
- ❖ Ask someone they know who is already a PD Specialist.
- ❖ Ask an early childhood education professional in their community, who meets the Council's requirements, to become a PD Specialist by applying and completing the Council's online training
 - PD Specialists receive an honorarium of \$100 for each completed CDA Verification visit

NOTE: *Candidates must select a PD Specialist that holds the same endorsement and language specialization as the credential type that they are applying for.*



**8,700 early education experts
domestically & abroad**

WHO ARE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) SPECIALISTS™?

- **Early education experts**
 - Knowledge and experience to support the professional development of early care professionals through the Child Development Associate (CDA) assessment process
 - Recognized for their professional contributions to the field



The Role of the CDA PD Specialist

- Important in the CDA credentialing process
 - Mentors/coaches
 - Lends early childhood education expertise
 - Reviews/verifies candidate's competencies using the R.O.R. Model® (Review-Observe-Reflect®) on the Verification Visit™
 - Stays abreast of current policies and procedures

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Commits to maintaining the Council's policies and procedures and the integrity of the CDA® Credential
- Conducts CDA Verification Visits™ using the Council's R.O.R. Model® and adhering to all standards of practice and core principles
- Stays abreast of latest changes and modifications.

Eligibility

✓ Technology access

- Must have an active email address
- Must have access to the Internet

✓ Required knowledge and skills of

- Diverse populations
- Local & national standards & requirements of child care programs

✓ Education

- Baccalaureate or associate degree in
 - Early Childhood Education/Child Development
 - Elementary Education/Early Childhood Education
 - Home Economics/Child Development
- Coursework in ECE/Child Development (18 semester or 24 coursework hours)

✓ Experience

- Working with children birth to 5 years of age
- Facilitating the professional growth of another adult

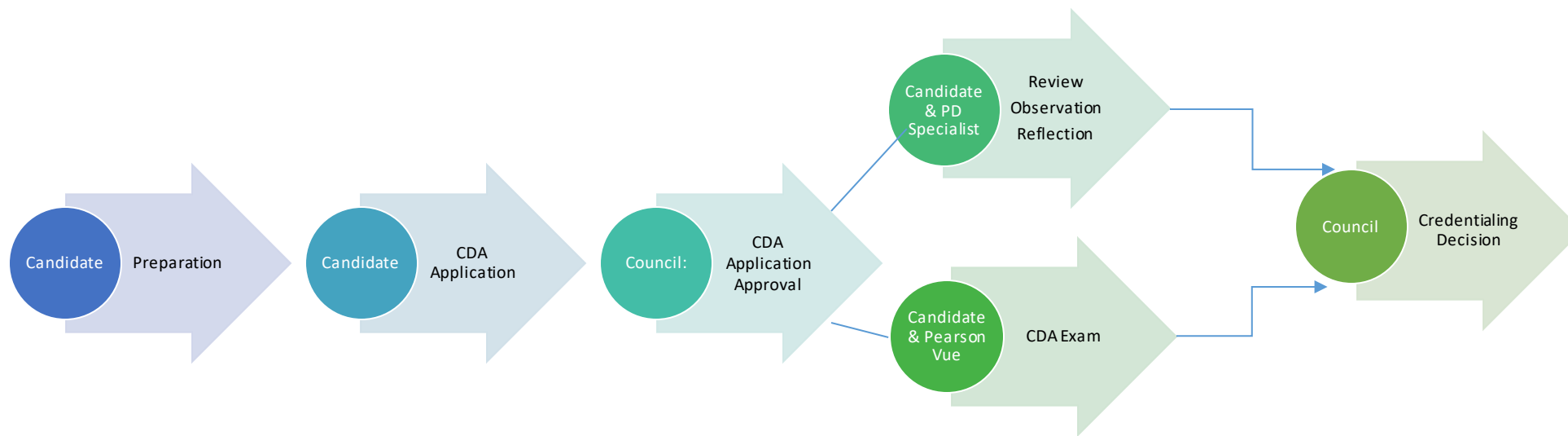
✓ Availability

- Must be available to conduct assessments during the work week

To apply to serve as a CDA PD Specialist:
(www.cdacouncil.org/yourcouncil-for-specialists)

Where the PDS fits in the credentialing process

“Candidate Driven”



Apply for the CDA® Assessment



Application

- ❖ To apply for a CDA credential, candidates **MUST** submit an application directly to the Council, along with their full application fee.
- ❖ CDA candidates can **apply** online or using a paper application. Paper applications can be found in the *CDA® Competency Standards* book.

Online application fee: \$425

Paper application fee: \$500

- ❖ **MD Resources:** For more information about Maryland funding, please visit:
<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/CDA>



Application

The Ready to Schedule Notice

- ❖ After an application is processed and approved by the Council, candidates will then receive a ***Ready to Schedule Notice***.
- ❖ Candidates who apply online will receive the notice via email, candidates that apply using a paper application will receive the notice via email if they provide an email address on their application or via postal mail if an email is not provided.

The notice informs the candidate that they are now able to:

- ☐ Schedule the CDA Verification Visit with their PD Specialist.
- ☐ Schedule the CDA Exam at a Pearson VUE testing center.

Demonstrate Competence with the CDA Verification Visit® and CDA Exam®



CDA Verification Visit®

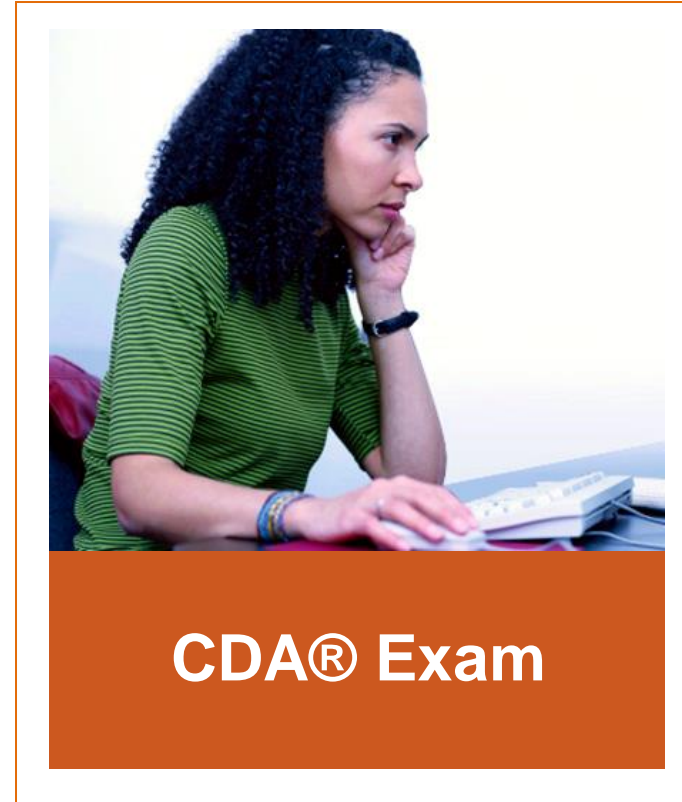
- ❖ During the CDA Verification Visit, the selected PD Specialist will:
 - **REVIEW** the *Professional Portfolio* (1 hour)
 - **OBSERVE** the Candidate working as the lead teacher directly with children (minimum of 2 hours)
 - **REFLECT** with the Candidate on areas of strength and growth for the purpose of setting professional goals (1 hour)
- ❖ The CDA Verification Visit lasts a minimum of 4 hours.
- ❖ The PD Specialist will send recommended scores to the Council through an online scoring tool.



**CDA Verification
Visit®**

CDA® Exam

- ❖ CDA candidates will complete the computer-based exam at a **Pearson VUE** testing center. Pearson VUE staff will provide approved accommodations.
- ❖ The exam consists on **65 multiple choice questions** about examples of best practices in early childhood education, including five that represent a photo and a brief situation or story in an early childhood program.
- ❖ The exam offers 15 minutes for instructions and practice and one hour and 45 minutes to complete the exam.
- ❖ Once the exam is completed, the scores are sent to the Council electronically.



Credentialing Results



Credentialing Results

Multiple Sources of
evidence from the
CDA Verification
Visit®



CDA® Exam
Score



**CREDENTIALING
DECISION**

Credentialing Determination



Upon completion of the CDA Exam, the candidate's scores in each of the 13 CDA® Functional Areas will be transmitted in 24 hours from Pearson VUE to the Council.

Based on their findings from the CDA Verification Visit, the PD Specialist will submit their *Recommended Scores* to the Council online within 48 hours of the visit. The Council, using all sources of the assessment, establishes a final *Cumulative Score* which will determine a candidate's credentialing decision.

CDA® Renewal

- ❖ Every three years
- ❖ Based on continuing education

CDA® Renewal Amnesty Program

*As of January 1, 2020, the **Council for Professional Recognition** has been celebrating 45 years of the CDA®!*

- ❖ To celebrate, the Council is offering a limited-time **CDA® Renewal Amnesty Program**.
- ❖ This program will allow anyone with a CDA® credential expiration date as far back as January 1, 2010, an opportunity to renew and make their credential active again.
- ❖ Runs from **January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020 (extended from March 31, 2020)**. All applications and payments (\$125) must be submitted online by June 30, 2020.

Tips for Success



Key Requirement Reminders

- ❖ Complete **120 clock hours of professional early childhood education**, covering the growth and development of children (setting specific), with no fewer than 10 hours in each of the eight subject areas
- ❖ Complete **480 hours of experience within the last three years working with children** (setting specific). Your experience may be as paid staff or volunteer.
- ❖ Complete a **Professional Portfolio** (including the family questionnaires).

Remember that the Credentialing Process is Candidate-Driven

- ❖ The candidate must schedule and complete the **CDA Verification Visit with PD Specialist** within **six (6) months** from the *Ready to Schedule Notice* (received from the Council).
- ❖ The candidate must schedule and complete the **CDA Exam at a Pearson VUE** facility within **six (6) months** from the *Ready to Schedule Notice* (received from the Council).

Guidance due to COVID-19

❖ What if I have submitted my application and can't complete the exam and verification visit by the 6-month deadline?

- If your application expiration is March 1, 2020 or beyond, you will receive an automatic 100-day extension to complete your exam and verification visit

❖ If schools and childcare centers are closed, and I am unable to go back to the physical site by the end of the school year (and don't have the opportunity for the verification visit), what do I do?

- At this time, the Council is not able to provide an alternative to the verification visit – as it is a critical component of students demonstrating their competencies. However, if a candidate is unable to complete it by the 100-day extension, we will be flexible. If schools are closed until the end of the school year, the Council can work with you to schedule a verification visit during the summer – and help track the visits using our system when things resume to “normal.”

Guidance due to COVID-19

❖ I am getting ready to submit my CDA application, what should I do now?

- You may continue to submit the application online. Mailed applications will experience slower processing due to the recent events.

❖ I have completed my application and ready to schedule at a Pearson Vue testing center OR have already scheduled my test, what should I do?

- Some Pearson Vue sites are temporarily closed or have reduced hours. Please go to [PearsonVUE.com](https://www.pearsonvue.com) for more information on site closures. If you have already scheduled a test, please check your email for cancellation or re-schedule notices from Pearson Vue.

❖ If I am a Professional Development Specialist, what should I do before I go on a verification visit?

- Please call ahead for all scheduled visits. It is important to ensure that the facility is open and your point of contact (including the candidate) has reported to work that day. If the visit is in progress (PD Specialist completed the Pre-Visit Checklist), the candidate must cancel the visit in the YourCouncil website.

Questions?



THANK YOU!

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