

Child Development Associate



the region's leading resource
in early education and care

CDA Preparation Program

After being in child care for 15 years, I decided to make early childhood education a career instead of a job. Earning my CDA is my first step.

— Jennifer Lyons
Infant/Toddler Teacher



DISCOVER:

- **What's** a CDA
- **Who** is eligible
- **Why** the CDA benefits child care providers
- **How** 4C can help

WHAT IS THE CDA?

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education and is the best first step on the path of career advancement.

The distinctive CDA credential is the only nationally recognized, portable, competency-based credential of its kind in the United States.

Child Development Associates are individuals who have successfully completed the CDA Assessment and have been awarded a CDA credential by the Council for Professional Recognition.

CDA recipients are able to better meet the specific needs of children and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth in a child development framework.



The Value of the CDA

Child care professionals who have been awarded a Child Development Associate Credential:

- Earn a nationally recognized credential.
- Gain knowledge and master skills that benefit children throughout school and life.
- Learn to work more effectively with families.

The 4C CDA Preparation Program: Join Us!

The 4C for Children CDA Preparation Program is designed to support students throughout every step towards earning a CDA. There are many advantages to participating in the 4C program, including:

- convenient class times and locations in Northern Kentucky, the Miami Valley and Southwest Ohio
- skilled instructors with years of experience in early childhood education
- assistance with documentation requirements and preparing for the CDA Exam and Verification Visit
- opportunities to learn within a community of other early childhood education professionals
- scholarship availability.



Southwest Ohio CDA participants read "Where the Wild Things Are," as their classmates act out the story.

For more information, visit www.4cforchildren.org/cda.

Earning a CDA gave me tools to use in my classroom on a daily basis. The classes gave me new ideas and resources to help me provide children with a fun, stable, developmentally appropriate learning environment.

—Shianna Medley
Preschool Teacher

CDA REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility

Candidates must:

- hold a high school diploma or equivalent, or be a junior or senior in a high school/vocational early education program.
- speak, read and write well enough to fulfill a candidate's responsibilities.
- sign a statement of ethical conduct.

Experience Level

Within the past three years, eligible candidates must have had at least 480 hours of experience (12 weeks of full-time work) working with children who are:

- birth to age 3 in a group setting; *or*
- ages 3 to 5 in a group setting; *or*
- birth to age 5 in a family child care setting.

This experience can be accumulated while candidates are earning training hours and preparing required documentation.

Assessment

Center-based candidates must be observed in a center-based, state-approved setting. Those earning preschool credentials are assessed working with children ages 3 to 5. Infant/toddler candidates are assessed working with children birth to 36 months.

Family Child Care candidates must be observed in a family child care setting that meets at least the minimum level of applicable state and local regulations. Candidates are assessed working with children birth to five.

STEPS TO EARNING A CDA

Step 1: Training, Documentation, Application

Training

CDA candidates must earn at least 120 clock hours of documented training, with no fewer than 10 hours in each of the following content areas:

- Planning a safe and healthy learning environment
- Advancing children's physical and intellectual development.
- Supporting children's social and emotional development
- Building productive relationships with families
- Managing an effective program operation
- Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
- Observing and recording children's behavior
- Understanding principles of child development and learning



CDA candidates in a recent 4C Miami Valley class.

Collection of Documents

Center-based and family child care CDA candidates must submit documents that verify their competence in early child care and education. These documents include:

- **A Professional Portfolio** containing a personal philosophy statement, resource collection and reflective statements of competence based on the CDA candidate's work with young children and their families.
- **Family Questionnaires** containing feedback from families with children in the candidate's classroom or family child care home.

Application

When training and documentation are finished, CDA candidates submit completed applications to the Council for Professional Recognition.

Step Two: CDA Exam and Verification Visit

CDA Exam

The CDA exam, which consists of 65 multiple-choice questions, is taken at a Pearson Vue testing center. The only computer skill needed to complete the exam is the ability to use a mouse to click once—no scrolling, typing, or double-clicking is required.

Verification Visit

CDA candidates each select a Professional Development Specialist (PDS) to conduct a Verification Visit. The PDS reviews the documentation and training records, observes candidates working with children, and conducts a reflective dialogue. (To find a CDA-approved PDS in your area, visit www.cdacouncil.org.)

Step Three: Credential Decision

The CDA exam score (sent to the Council for Professional Recognition by Pearson Vue) and the Verification Visit score (sent to the Council for Professional Recognition by the PDS) are combined and that score is what determines whether a CDA credential is issued. Once issued, the credential is valid for three years and may be renewed for the same setting and age level.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Upon request, the following services are provided by 4C for Children to CDA candidates not currently enrolled in a 4C preparation program and to those renewing CDA credentials or seeking additional professional development opportunities.

CDA Services

Candidates not enrolled in the 4C CDA Preparation Program may hire 4C staff to assist with the following:

- training hours review and plan for training
- a Pre-Verification Visit observation
- assistance and review of Professional Portfolio

Renewal Services

4C staff can assist those renewing CDA credentials by providing the following:

- training hours review and plan for training
- observation and letter of recommendation



4C for Children offers a variety of training opportunities for professional child care providers at each regional location, including 4C Northern Kentucky, above.

Professional Development Opportunities

Visit www.4cforchildren.org/pdo to find a complete listing of early childhood workshops and classes. This online catalog offers options to search by date, topic, location, age group/category and instructor. And the registration process takes just a couple mouse clicks!

CDA: Take the best first step today!

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Visit www.4cforchildren.org/cda
or contact a 4C for Children regional office

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4C Southwest Ohio

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