

## What is a CDA Credential?

The Child Development Associate credential (CDA) is a national credential awarded by the **Council for Professional Recognition** to individuals who have successfully completed the CDA assessment process. Obtaining a CDA credential impacts children's learning and supports families. Earning the CDA Credential has many advantages, including motivating early caregivers toward continuing education and providing a platform for professional and career opportunities.

## Financial support

Support may be available in PA for those who qualify. Scholarship information can be found at **TEACH** [www.pacca.org/TEACH](http://www.pacca.org/TEACH), **877-51-TEACH**, and at **The PA Key**, [www.pakeys.org/profdev/FinancialSupport.aspx](http://www.pakeys.org/profdev/FinancialSupport.aspx), or call **800-284-6031**.

For more CDA scholarship information contact the **Council for Professional Recognition** by calling **800-424-4310**

## CDA renewal

CDA credentials must be renewed within three years of the date the CDA credential was awarded. CDA renewal requires 4.5 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or a three college credit course (in early education). Better Kid Care awards CEUs through Distance Education lessons. For more information of CEUs and CDA Renewal, visit Better Kid Care's CDA Credential link at [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu). Contact the council to order a CDA Renewal packet at [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org) or by calling **800-424-4310**.

## How Do I Get Started? Get CDA Support

Talk with someone who can help you get started in the CDA credential process! Call **Christine** at **Better Kid Care** today at **800-452-9108** or e-mail your CDA questions to Christine at [crb16@psu.edu](mailto:crb16@psu.edu)

Visit [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu) and click on "CDA Credential?"

*"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you"*

*~ B.B. King*



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# CDA

## Child Development Associate Credential

## Step-by-Step help from Better Kid Care

[www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu)



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# 5 Steps Toward Earning Your CDA Credential

## Step 1

### Become familiar with the CDA credential

- Visit the Better Kid Care “CDA Credential?” link at [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu)
- Visit the **Council for Professional Recognition** Web site at [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org)
- Read the *CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book* (included in the CDA Application Packet and available from the Council of Professional Recognition)

## Step 2

### Order an application packet

- Order a CDA application packet from the **Council for Professional Recognition**. (Choose a CDA Credential type: Center-Based Preschool, Center-Based Infant/Toddler, Family Child Care or Home Visitor) Call **800-424-4310** or visit [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org)
- Candidates seeking to apply for the CDA credential must meet the following eligibility requirements:
  - ✓ Must be 18 years of age or older
  - ✓ Hold high school diploma or GED
  - ✓ **Have 480 hours of experience working with young children within the last five years**
  - ✓ Fulfill all requirements stated in the CDA application packet

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”

~ W. B. Yeats

## Step 3

### Complete your formal education requirement

- CDA candidates must document successful completion of 120 clock hours of formal child care education (within five years from date of applying). The 120 clock hours of education include no fewer than 10 hours in each of the following CDA subject areas:
  - CDA 1: Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning
  - CDA 2: Steps to advance children’s physical and intellectual development
  - CDA 3: Positive ways to support children’s social and emotional development
  - CDA 4: Strategies to establish productive relationships with families
  - CDA 5: Strategies to manage an effective program operation
  - CDA 6: Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
  - CDA 7: Observing and recording children’s behavior
  - CDA 8: Principles of child development and learning

### Better Kid Care can help you complete your formal CDA education requirements.

Better Kid Care offers professional development training through one- and two-hour Distance Education lessons that meet the formal child care education training requirement needed to obtain a CDA credential. The Distance Education lessons are coded according to the CDA subject areas.

Visit the Better Kid Care Web site at [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu) and click on **Distance Education** to see the complete listing of titles. For more information call the Better Kid Care office at **800-452-9108**.

## Step 4

### Prepare documentation and professional resource file

- Prepare **Professional Resource file** as stated in the *CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book* (Autobiography, Six Statements of Competence, and Resource Collection)
- Complete the CDA Assessment Observation (done by a CDA Advisor within six months of CDA Direct Assessment)
- Distribute/collect Parent Opinion Questionnaires
- Prepare CDA Direct Assessment application and assemble Professional Resource file as stated in the *CDA Assessment and Competency Standards book*.

## Step 5

### Complete the CDA Direct Assessment Process

- Complete Direct Assessment application form (in application packet) and verify all training requirements. *See Financial Support below.*  
\*Note application deadlines for quarterly scheduling of assessments in the *CDA Assessment and Competency Standards book*.
- Review all documentation and professional resource file materials (use your *CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book*).
- Contact the Council of Professional Recognition to arrange for the CDA Direct Assessment visit.  
\*Find out about on-line assessment by visiting [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org).
- The Council will review the results and issue credentialing decisions based on competence in meeting the CDA Competency Goals and Functional Areas.