

# CDA VERIFICATION, CREDENTIAL AND RENEWAL

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## CDA Verification Visit: Get Ready!

### VERIFICATION VISIT

The Verification Visit is when the CDA candidate is assigned a specially trained early childhood professional, called a Council Representative to administer a written examination, conduct an interview, and review the Collection of Documentation.

The Council assigns a professional representative to the CDA Candidate once it has received the candidate's application form, fee, and training verification. The Council Representative contacts the CDA Candidate to make arrangements for the Verification Visit. During your initial phone call with the Council Representative, you go through a checklist to be sure you have all the required materials for the Verification Visit. You next arrange the date, location, and time for the Verification Visit.

The role of the Council Representative is to act as the official agent of the Council for Professional Recognition to administer and verify the procedures and documents required for CDA Assessment. Verification Visits are to be confidential and are not to be discussed with anyone.

### GET READY

Be prepared for the Verification Visit by first checking to make sure you have completed all the necessary steps and that you have prepared all the required materials.

### Checklist for Verification

1. Completed Professional Resource File including:
  - Completed Autobiography (as outlined by the Council) including a copy of the Autobiography to give to the Council Representative
  - Six written Competency Goal Statements (as outlined by the Council) including copies of each for the Council Representative
  - Collection of 17 Resources

### NOTES:

#### CDA Note:

If you applied online with the CDA Council, they will contact you by email (after reviewing your application) to assign a Council Representative to conduct your Verification Visit. Through YourCDA, you can email the CDA Council and keep abreast of your CDA status.

2. The CDA Observation Instrument booklet completed by your CDA Advisory and Summary Sheet (must be signed by Advisor and in a sealed envelope)
3. The Parent Opinion Questionnaires (must be in a sealed envelope and have at least 75% of the distributed questionnaire; envelope should be labeled correctly)

## WHAT TO BRING TO THE VERIFICATION VISIT

- All items on the above Verification Checklist
- A copy of your Current Red Cross or First Aid Certificate
- Proof of membership in an early childhood professional organization
- Proof of Identification (Photo ID)
- A copy of your CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book
- Pencils (#2), pens, and eraser

### Optional:

- Water bottle
- Snacks (Check with establishment and Council Representative first)
- Name and contact information for your Council Representative in case of any problems

## HOW LONG WILL THE VERIFICATION VISIT TAKE?

Verification visits can take several hours. The Early Childhood Studies Review test has 60 questions and can take up to two hours to complete. The Oral Interview has ten questions and can take about one to two hours. Be sure you have all items you need and an open schedule of several hours to complete the Visit.

## NOTES:

## Early Childhood Studies Review

During the Verification Visit, the CDA Candidate is given information and directions to complete the Early Childhood Studies Review.

The Early Childhood Studies Review is a written examination designed to measure general knowledge of good practices in early childhood education programs serving children birth through age five. The content of the Review is based on the current principles of developmentally appropriate practices.

The Review takes approximately two hours to complete and contains 60 multiple choice questions. After the Council Representative shares instructions, you are given a sealed Early Childhood Studies Review. There are sample questions in your [CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards](#) book on page 28 to give you an idea of what the Review exam will look like.

The outcome of the Early Childhood Studies Review is only one part of the Council's consideration in awarding the CDA Credential and is not shared with the CDA Candidate.

### PRACTICE AND BE PREPARED

To help prepare for the Early Childhood Studies Review, be sure to read your [CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards](#) book. Look at the sample question for the review on page 28 and also read the entire sample of Competency Goal Statements in section three of your book. It is also helpful to review your notes, articles, books, or any information given during your formal CDA education experience. If you made a copy of the blank Formal CDA Observation Booklet, that also is a good item to review in preparing for the Early Childhood Studies Review.

### NOTES:

#### CDA Note:

While the CDA Candidate is taking the Review Exam, the Council Representative will review the candidate's Collection of Documentation.

## Oral Interview

After the CDA candidate completes the Early Childhood Studies Review, the Council Representative conducts an Oral Interview with the CDA Candidate. The Oral interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to show how the knowledge acquired through experience and professional development would be applied in a variety of early childhood settings (specific to the candidate's CDA setting, age-level endorsement and specialization).

The interview consists of 10 structured situations where the Council Representative shows the candidate a picture with a written description of the activity shown. The Representative then poses a question (in response to the picture) and asks the candidate to respond. The Council Rep listens to the candidate's response, makes notes and identifies the various aspects of the response. The Representative may ask additional question to help the candidate give a complete response.

The Oral Interview takes about one and a half hours to complete. When completed, the Council Representative scores your responses and includes the results to be sent to the Council along with all other collected items at the Verification Visit.

### PRACTICE FOR THE ORAL INTERVIEW

The CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book has a sample Oral Interview Question and situational picture. It is a good idea to practice this type of interview question with a group or another person before the Verification Visit. Talk with your mentors, co-workers, director, or CDA Advisor to arrange a practice session. Since the CDA book only offers one sample, you may want to ask your mentor(s) to help you think of other possible scenarios related to your specific age and CDA setting. This may even be a fun activity to practice and explore with your team at work.

When responding to the interview questions, take your time. Try to connect specific things that you know and do in relation to the situation/picture provided. Before responding, think of key points in your mind that relate to the situation. You will want to use your knowledge and experience that you have gained in your CDA training and your current work with children that show examples of solid

### NOTES:

developmental theory and developmentally appropriate practices. If you are shown something that you feel is inappropriate practice, be sure to identify how this is shown.

## COMPLETING THE VERIFICATION VISIT

When the Verification Visit is almost complete, the Council Representative will return the following documents to the candidate:

- Your Professional Resource File
- Your Current Red Cross or First Aid Certificate
- Proof of membership in an early childhood professional organization
- Proof of Identification (Photo ID)

The Council Representative will send the following to the Council for Professional Recognition for review:

1. A copy of the Autobiography
2. A copy of each Competency Goal Statement
3. The CDA Formal Assessment Observation Instrument
4. The Parent Opinion Questionnaires
5. The Early Childhood Studies Review
6. The Oral Interview results

## CDA Credential

The Council will review the CDA candidate's documentation collected at the Verification Visit. A Council committee will review the documentation and decide whether or not to award the CDA Credential. The CDA candidate will wait to receive the CDA Credential in the mail.

If you are concerned about your credential, or have not received it after a couple of months, contact the Council to find out the status of your review process at 800-424-4310.

## NOTES:

### CDA Note:

If you applied on-line with YourCDA , you have access to communicate with the CDA Council as well as receive updates as to where you are in the CDA credentialing process. After your verification visit with the Council Representative, continue to check YourCDA for status updates.

The Council also provides an on-line support link which can be found here: <http://messenger.providesupport.com/messenger/cdacouncil.html>. Messages are sent and received in private space seen only by the Council Operator and the person who originated the message.

## CREDENTIALING PROBLEMS

If the Council for Professional Recognition review committee decides the candidate needs more training, they will notify the candidate and inform him/her of the appeal procedures and other subsequent options. This is usually done in form of a letter. The Council will share which of the 13 Functional Areas showed weakness, but little other information. At this point, arrangements are made to try another attempt at the Verification Visit. The candidate would need to review all materials, documentation, and writings to make improvements where necessary. This may require that you have a mentor, CDA Advisor, CDA credential holder, or director look over your materials to help you identify the weakness.

## NOTES:

## CDA Renewal

It is very important to be aware of the CDA Renewal process as it helps you know well your professional role as a CDA candidate and what will be expected of you once you receive the CDA credential. Awareness of your professional responsibilities helps you in planning your future professional goals. Planning for CDA Renewal also helps you stay connected to the Council for Professional Recognition.

The Council for Professional Recognition states,

“The CDA renewal process gives you the opportunity to reaffirm your competence as a Child Development Associate. In renewing your Credential, you are also affirming your membership among professionals dedicated to quality care for young children.”

Renewing your CDA Credential demonstrates your willingness to maintain a current level of commitment to children and the early childhood profession.

### WHEN MUST YOUR CDA CREDENTIAL BE RENEWED?

The CDA Credential is valid for three years, after which you can renew it every five years. You must renew your credentials before it expires. To determine the expiration date of your CDA Credential, check the date that appears on your credential, then add the number of years valid (written on the bottom of the credential).

**CDA Renewal is only for the original setting, age-level endorsement, and specialization of Credential.**

### HOW DO I GET READY FOR CDA RENEWAL?

Contact the Council and order your CDA Renewal Packet. Call 800-424-4310 or visit <http://cdacouncil.org/>. Allow plenty of time for the packet to be processed and sent to you. Be sure you order your CDA Renewal application packet well before your existing CDA credential expires.

### NOTES:

#### CDA Note:

The Council encourages you to renew your CDA credential online using YourCDA.  
<http://www.cdacouncil.org/yourcda/>

## In your CDA Renewal Packet you will receive:

- CDA Renewal Procedures Booklet.
- CDA Renewal Application Form. Be aware that the bottom of this form has a section that needs to be completed by the early childhood reviewer.
- Information for the Early Childhood Reviewer Booklet.
- A letter from the Council.

## All CDA Renewal Candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Select an Early Childhood Reviewer (Early Childhood Education Professional) to complete the Letter of Recommendation Form regarding the candidate's competence with young children.
- Documented proof of recent (within past year) work experience with young children or families of young children (a minimum of 80 hours). Note: Have someone familiar with your work write a letter confirming the number of hours you have worked or volunteered with children, preferably on program letter head.
- Documented proof (make a copy) of a current Red Cross or other agency First Aid Certificate.
- Documented proof (copy of recent transcripts or CEU certificates) of at least 4.5 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or a three-credit course in early childhood education/child development, principles of adult learning, mental health counseling, etc. These hours must be in addition to the original 120 clock hours required when the candidate obtained the CDA Credential. Bilingual CDAs must meet this requirement with coursework incorporating bilingual issues.
- Documented proof (within current year) of membership in a national or local early childhood professional organization (photocopy of membership card). NOTE: Contact the Council for examples at 800-424-4310 or visit <http://cdacouncil.org/>
- Complete CDA Renewal Application form ([http://cdacouncil.org/storage/documents/Downloadable\\_Forms/Renewal\\_Application\\_Form.pdf](http://cdacouncil.org/storage/documents/Downloadable_Forms/Renewal_Application_Form.pdf)). You will keep the yellow copy of the

## NOTES:

### CDA Note:

The requirements and guides for the reviewer's qualifications are explained in detail in the "Information for the Early Childhood Reviewer" booklet which is included in the CDA Renewal Packet.

application as a copy for your records. Return all required documents (listed above) to the Council for Professional Recognition with payment of \$50.00 to:

**The Council for Professional Recognition**  
2460 16th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009-3547

## CDA Renewal Award

If you meet all requirements and your materials are in order, the council will award the CDA Renewal Credential, which is valid for five years. If materials are incomplete, the Council will notify you and you will have the opportunity to resolve the problem within a specified time period.

## WHAT ARE CEUs?

Continuing Education Units (CEU) by definition, relates only to non-credit continuing education experiences. Academic credit applies specifically to degree requirements and CEUs are not awarded for that purpose. No institutions of higher education are known to give automatic credit for CEUs. While the primary use of CEU records is for professional or occupational records, individuals also may wish to document their accomplishments in areas of technical or personal development. Individual CEU records also may be used to document completion of requirements for a major phase of training or education and, thus, indicate readiness to enter into the next phase of training or career enhancement.

## Better Kid Care Offers CEUs

To receive one (1) CEU, ten (10) hours of Professional Development must be completed. Any combination of 2-hour or 1-hour Better Kid Care Distance Education lessons can combine to earn CEUs. Visit the Better Kid Care Distance Education page to choose from the many titles offered. <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/page02a.html>

If you have completed at least 10 hours of professional development and would like to receive a certificate for one CEU, complete the CEU REQUEST FORM and mail to Better Kid Care. Please contact the Better Kid Care office with questions at: 800-452-9108 or Email: [betterkidcare@psu.edu](mailto:betterkidcare@psu.edu)

## NOTES:

### CDA Note:

#### Online CDA Renewal

Be sure to review all contents of the Renewal Packet and the Council's online Renewal information before beginning your online application.

You may submit your CDA Renewal Application no sooner than 90 days before your CDA credential expiration date. Complete the online Renewal application <http://www.cdacouncil.org/yourcda>, which will include sending your ECE Reviewer your recommendation request.

Pay the \$50 renewal fee and send the Council your verification documents that prove you have met all the requirements. If you are paying by check or scholarship, you will also send in payment documents.

Wait for the Council to review your application and award your renewal. You can log into YourCDA <http://www.cdacouncil.org/yourcda> to check for renewal status updates or to communicate with the CDA Council.

## Second Setting CDA Credential:

For CDAs who hold one credential and wish to obtain a second CDA Credential in a different setting, the Council offers the Second Setting CDA Credential. It is available to center-based and family child care CDAs who received their Credential under the revised direct assessment procedures on or after January 1, 1993. The Council maintains a toll-free hotline to answer questions and to provide assistance. Call 800-424-4310. The Council also provides an on-line support link which can be found on the Council's website <http://cdacouncil.org/> (click On-line Support)

## Council Connections and Professional Growth

Staying connected with the Council for Professional Recognition is important for professional growth. Be sure to visit the Council's web site and check the link titled CDA Resources, where you will find reports, publications, training information, and more.

It's a good idea to sign-up for the Council's newsletter titled Councilink, which shares important and interesting information for the CDA credential holder. To sign up for the Councilink newsletter, go to <http://cdacouncil.org/>

### TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Successfully completing a CDA credential is a wonderful professional accomplishment! By doing so, you have created a platform for professional growth. Now is a good time to begin reflecting on what your on-going professional goals and plans are.

“Professionalism is not an end in itself--a state of being--but an ongoing effort--a process of becoming.” ~ Rick Caulfield

It is exciting to plan for growth, share valuable ideas, and incorporate new knowledge and skills into our work with children and families. Although there are many professional development hours and topics that will be required, remember that your professional development

### NOTES:

#### CDA Note:

Subscribe to the Better Kid Care E-Newsletter for monthly inspiration and professional growth. Visit <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/page13.html>

path is your very own. Take an active role in deciding and planning your professional development experiences.

## MAP OUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL PLANS

Map out professional plans by putting your ideas into writing. Start by identifying your professional goals.

### ❑ MY CURRENT GOALS

Example: To complete 15 hours of professional development, to find a mentor, and to read at least 2 books related to early childhood education.

### ❑ MY LONG-TERM PROFESSIONAL GOALS (credential, degree, job improvement)

Example: To work on obtaining my associate degree in early education by visiting my local community college and reviewing my Professional Development Record.

### ❑ MY PERSONAL IDEAS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Example: Observation and Documentation are two topics I am interested in and plan to explore.

### ❑ MY REQUIRED TRAINING

Example: My program states I must complete 12 Department of Public Welfare training hours and also update my first aid and safety. I also am required to receive training on reporting and recognizing child abuse and neglect, and observation and assessment.

### ❑ MY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNED

Example: I plan to complete the Better Kid Care Professional Development course on The Art of Observation. I plan on attending the National Early Childhood Conference from NAEYC (the National Association for the Education of Young Children) and I am signed up for first aide and safety with the local hospital.

## NOTES:

## Congratulations!

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Congratulations on all your early childhood professional development!

Contact the Penn State Better Kid Care Program for more ideas and support on your professional development path. Visit [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu) or call 800-452-9108.

**“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you” – B.B. King**

## Penn State **Extension**

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**[extension.psu.edu](http://extension.psu.edu)**

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

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