



Is the CDA credential right for you?

The *Child Development Associate (CDA)* credential is earned after completing a process and assessment by the Council (for Professional Recognition). The CDA credential, a **recognized** part of Iowa child care **regulations**, is a way to earn points on the Iowa's Quality Rating System (QRS) and is part of the process of achieving accreditation standards. The CDA program started in 1971, with over **200,000** credentials earned nationally.

Hundreds are seeking CDA credentials as **basic-level education**, to enhance skills or to meet **position/regulation requirements**. Some use the CDA credential as a **first college experience** without committing to a degree program. Others use it to raise their level of **professionalism** for registration, licensing, Iowa's QRS, the Quality Preschool Program Standards, Head Start Standards, and NAEYC accreditation.

A. Competency goals: The successful CDA candidate will:

1. Establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment
2. Advance physical and intellectual competence
3. Support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance
4. Establish positive and productive relationships with families
5. Ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs
6. Maintain a commitment to professionalism

B. Criteria: When the candidate has completed the requirements for the CDA credential, s/he must meet and verify the following:

- Be 18 years or older
- Have a high school diploma/equivalent
- Have 480 hours of **experience** working with young children within the past 5 years
- Have **120 hours** of formal ECE education within the past 5 years with at least **10 hours** in **each of 8 subject 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**
 8. Principles of **child development** and learning

The Community College Early Childhood Alliance selected four 3-credit courses for **college credit** (12 credits) as CDA courses.

ECE 103—Introduction to Early Childhood Education

ECE 133—Child Health, Safety & Nutrition

ECE 243—Early Childhood Guidance

and **one** of the following:

ECE 158—Early Childhood Curriculum I

ECE 159—Early Childhood Curriculum II

ECE 221—Infant Toddler Care/Education

Optional wrap up one-credit class (offered online to anyone): **ECE 106**—CDA Standards

Providers wishing to complete these courses for a CDA credential should contact a community college or T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA.

Some colleges have a non-credit course specific to CDA requirements. Additionally, an alternative way to earn training hours is through **community-based**, training organizations such as Child Care Resource & Referral, Area Education Agencies, or ISU Extension.

C. Document Competencies: In addition to completing the 120 education hours, the candidate must also document competence with these 5 steps:

Preparation:

1. Prepare a **professional resource file** including a 300 word autobiography, six 200-500 word statements of competence, and 17 resource collection items.
2. Distribute and collect **parent opinion questionnaires**.
3. Arrange a **formal observation** with a qualified early childhood advisor.

Verification Visit (administered by Council Representative):

4. **Written exam**
5. **Oral interview**

These combined requirements ensure that many **assessments** are completed. The candidate is assessed caring for **children**, and by the **families, instructors, an advisor, and a Council Representative**.

CDA Assessment Types: The CDA credential is earned as a center based **infant/toddler** (birth to 36 months), a center based **preschool** (3-5 years old), **family child care**, or **home visitor**. Non-English monolingual and bilingual options are available.

CDA Renewal: Initially, a CDA credential is earned for three years and five years each renewal thereafter. Some renewal requirements include completing one **3-credit course** and belonging to a **professional association**, as well as other steps.



T.E.A.C.H. can now help with renewing your CDA! Visit our website or call our office for more details!

How can T.E.A.C.H. help?

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Iowa assists providers in Iowa to earn a CDA credential by offering scholarships. This requires commitment to their current program and offers compensation (raise/bonus). There are 3 ways T.E.A.C.H. can help:

- Assist with the **college credit courses**, materials, and books.
- Provide support for the \$325 **assessment application fee**, and provide a **bonus** when the credential is earned. This scholarship is available regardless of how the coursework is completed.
- Provide support for CDA **renewal** requirements.

For more information about the CDA in Iowa or an information/application packet, please contact Iowa AEYC/T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA, 5525 Meredith Dr. Suite F, Des Moines, IA 50310, 515- 331-8000, www.iowaaec.org.

Additional information can be obtained from **The Council for Professional Recognition**, 2460 16th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-3575, 800- 424-4310, www.cdacouncil.org

You will also find support from your local Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral:

Region 1 (Northwest)

Child Care Resource & Referral, 418 S. Marion St, Remsen, IA 51050
712-786-3429, 800-859-2025, www.midsioux.org

Region 2 (Northeast)

Child Care Resource & Referral, 3675 University Ave, Waterloo, IA 50704
319-233-0804, 800-475-0804, www.newiowachildcare.org

Region 3 (Southwest)

Child Care Resource & Referral, PO Box 709, 701 10th St, Harlan, IA 51537
712-755-7381, 800-945-9778, www.swiowachildcare.org

Region 4 (Central/South)

Child Care Resource & Referral, 805 5th Ave, Des Moines, IA 50309
515-246-3591, 800-722-7619, www.orchardplace.org

Region 5 (Southeast)

Child Care Resource & Referral, 500 East 59th St, Davenport, IA 52807
563-324-3236, 866-324-3236, www.iacomunityaction.org

