**Becoming a CDA in Iowa…**

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is earned after completing a process and assessment by the Council for Professional Recognition. 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.

### Simple Steps To Getting Your CDA

**STEP 1**
120 Training Hours or 12 ECE College Credits
(Use the T.E.A.C.H. Assoc. Scholarship to help pay for this)

**STEP 2**
Order Competency Standard Book (Use the T.E.A.C.H. Assoc. Scholarship to help pay for this)

**STEP 3**
Portfolio and Family Questionnaire

**STEP 4**
Complete CDA On-Line Application

**STEP 5**
Send Cover Letter and Co-Pay to T.E.A.C.H.

**STEP 6**
Exam and Visit

**STEP 7**
Receive Credential

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**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:

- Have a high school diploma/equivalent or be a junior or senior in a high school/vocational program in early education
- Have 480 hours of experience working with young children within the past 3 years
- Have 120 hours of formal ECE education 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
An alternative way to earn training hours is through community-based, training organizations such as Child Care Resource & Referral, Area Education Agencies, ISU Extension, etc. Although the opportunities are approved by the Council, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships can only support college coursework.

C. Candidate documentation: In addition to completing the 120 clock hours, the candidate must also document competence with these steps:

Prepared documentation (these items are kept for Verification Visit):
1. Professional Portfolio including 10 resource collection items, 6 reflective statements of competence (up to 500 words each), and a professional philosophy statement (up to 2 pages).
2. Family Questionnaires are distributed & collected in sealed envelopes.

To be completed after application is approved by the Council:
3. CDA Exam taken at a PearsonVUE testing center within 6 months of application approval. Consists of 65 multiple choice questions completed within one hour and 45 minutes.

Verification Visit (administered by Professional Development Specialist):
4. Review of materials including the Professional Portfolio, Family Questionnaires, and transcripts/certificates.
5. Observation of candidate working with children over approximately 2 hours.
6. Reflective Dialogue with candidate focusing on professional reflection and goal-setting.

These combined requirements ensure that many assessments are completed. The candidate is assessed caring for children, and by the families, instructors, and a Professional Development Specialist.

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 available.

CDA Renewal: Once a CDA credential is awarded, it must be renewed every three years thereafter to remain current. Some renewal requirements include completing one 3-credit course and belonging to a professional association, as well as other steps.

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

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Iowa assists providers in Iowa with earning a CDA credential by offering scholarships. This requires a 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 $425 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.iowaaeyc.org.

T.E.A.C.H. can help with renewing your CDA credential!

Additional information can be obtained from: