

Tips for Earning a CDA Credential

What is a CDA? The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a National Credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition (CDA Council 800-424-4310 or www.cdacouncil.org). Early childhood practitioners that hold a current CDA Credential can be recognized as a Master Teacher in Oklahoma according to OKDHS Licensing standards and Stars.

What are the benefits of a CDA?

- **Educational Stipend:** If candidate receives an assessment scholarship through the Scholars Program they are eligible for an educational stipend once CDA credential is earned. For more information visit www.okhighered.org/scholars.
- **REWARD:** Provides salary supplements to teachers, directors and family child care providers working with young children in child care settings. Salary supplements range from \$400 to \$2,000 per year. For more information contact the Center for Early Childhood and Professional Development (CECPD) at 405-799-6383 or 1-888-446-7608.
- **The Oklahoma Registry** recognizes the professional development of all individuals working in the early care and education field. Levels in **The Oklahoma Registry** reflect a measure of formal education gained through attending universities, two-year colleges, and/or technology centers. **The Oklahoma Registry** Professional Development Ladder awards levels based on either accumulated training or degrees attained and provides a certificate intended for display in the individual's place of employment. The Professional Development Ladder is good for one year. To renew your PDL, you must meet the requirements for a level and have completed 20 hours of Tier I or higher training in the past 12 months.

Who Can Apply for the CDA?

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- High School Diploma or GED.
- 480 hours of experience working with children within the past five years.
- Complete 120 clock hours with a minimum of 10 clock hours in each of the 8 CDA content areas **OR** 9 college credit hours in child development/ early childhood training within the past five years.
Training options include:
 - College credit bearing classes in CD/ECE offered through Community Colleges state wide
 - Early Education: Pathway to CDA (Pathway) offered through technology centers and online
 - Child Care Career community based courses offered at local child care centers
 - CARE Courses offered through correspondence and online
 - Other training that applies to the eight CDA content areas
- Have a formal observation by an advisor within the past six months as a lead teacher in a child care center or family child care home. (A list of CDA Advisors can be obtained at www.cecpd.org)
- Complete a Professional Resource File and the Parent Opinion Questionnaires within the past six months.
- Pay \$325.00 fee to the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington D.C **OR** make application with Scholars Program for the Assessment Scholarship. Call 866-343-3881 or 405-225-9396 or visit www.okhighered.org/scholars for eligibility requirements.

What is in a CDA packet?

- A CDA packet can be purchased from the CDA Council for \$18 plus S&H. (CDA Council 800-424-4310 or www.cdacouncil.org) **OR** it can be obtained through the Scholars Program if eligible for scholarship. For eligibility requirements contact the Scholar's Program at 866-343-3881 or 405-225-9396 or visit www.okhighered.org/scholars.
- Applicant will need to specify the type of setting they are pursuing when ordering:
 - Infant/Toddler (birth to 36 months)
 - Preschool (3-5 years)
 - Family Child Care Provider (birth to 5 years)
- The CDA packet will include the following items:

- 2 copies of the CDA Competency Standards book
- Direct Assessment Application
- Parent Questionnaires
- Observation Instrument
- NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct
- Supplemental Observation Form (*Infant and Toddler only*)

What is the timeline/process for applying for the CDA? (All information below is based on approximate time needed to earn the CDA)

15-18 months

- 12 + months Complete formal education, Professional Resource File, Parent Opinion Questionnaires, and Formal Observation (To schedule an observation, candidate should contact the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD) at 405-799-6383 or 888-446-7608 or online at www.cecpd.org for a list of approved CDA advisors. The formal observation is free of charge.)
- 1-6 months* Applicant will submit Direct Assessment application, training certificates and/or transcripts, and fee (within 6 months of the observation date) to the CDA Council **OR** if applicant receives a CDA Assessment scholarship from the Scholar's Program information should be mailed to the Scholar's Program **NOT** the CDA Council.
- (4-6) weeks Applicant will be contacted by their assigned Council Representative after required documentation has been received by the CDA Council, and set up the Verification Visit (written test, and oral interview)
- (4-12) weeks Notification of CDA Credential being awarded after Verification Visit

**CDA candidate must submit their CDA documents to the Council within 6 months of formal observation date*

What is the role of the CDA Advisor?

- ✓ The CDA Advisor will observe the candidate working as a lead teacher for 6 hours in the child care facility or family child care home.
- ✓ Complete the Observation Instrument and return to the CDA candidate in a sealed envelope.
- ✓ Complete section 8 of the Direct Assessment Application and return to the CDA candidate.
- ✓ The CDA advisor may need to ask the candidate questions about items that were not observed and will record the candidate's answers and comments.
- ✓ The CDA Advisor **DOES NOT** review the Professional Resource File.

What is the role of Council Representative?

- ✓ Contact the CDA candidate.
- ✓ Verify the documentation.
- ✓ Administer the written test and conduct the oral interview.
- ✓ Review the Professional Resource File and the 6 Competency Goals and Statements.
- ✓ Send all documentation (Observation Instrument, Parent Opinion Questionnaires, copies of Autobiography, and Competency Goals and Statements) to the CDA Council for a final decision.

How do I renew my CDA?

- A CDA Credential is valid for three years from the first award date, after which it may be renewed for five-year periods.
- To renew a candidate must meet five criteria:
 1. Current First Aid Certificate
 2. 4.5 Continuing Education Units (CEU's) OR 3 college credits in Early Childhood and/or Child Development
 3. Minimum of 80 hours of work experience with young children within the current year
 4. Letter of Recommendation Form. (Family child care providers can request a CDA Advisor to provide a second observation to verify the CDA candidate's competence. (Contact the CECPD at 405-799-6383 or 888-446-7608 or visit www.cecpd.org)
 5. Membership in a national or local early childhood professional organization

- Purchase a CDA Renewal Packet for \$13 plus S&H from the Council. To order online go to www.cdacouncil.org *Bookstore* – *Assessment Materials* or for telephone, fax, or mail orders, print the order form.
- Complete the CDA Renewal Form and pay \$50 to the Council for Professional Recognition.

