

## **CDA—Frequently Asked Questions**

### **ARE THE COURSES I TAKE FROM TRAINING ON DEMAND ACCEPTED FOR CDA AND CDA RENEWAL?**

Yes. You earn CEUs from Bainbridge College, which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Therefore, the Council for Professional accepts our courses toward meeting the training requirements for CDA and CDA renewal.

### **WHAT IS A CDA?**

A CDA is a Child Development Associate credential. A person who earns a CDA has demonstrated the ability to meet the specific needs of children and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework. ([www.CDACouncil.org](http://www.CDACouncil.org), 2009).

### **IS A CDA A COLLEGE DEGREE?**

No. A CDA is a professional credential.

### **WHO ISSUES THE CDA?**

The CDA credential is issued by the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington, DC. Some states issue state-level CDAs, but only the Council for Professional Recognition can issue a National CDA.

### **HOW DO I GET A CDA?**

You must meet the following requirements before completing and submitting an application for the CDA:

- You must be 18 years of age or older.
- You must hold a high school diploma or GED.
- You must have 480 hours of experience working with young children within the past 5 year, and you must be able to document that experience.
- You must complete 120 hours of formal child care education within the past 5 years.

When you meet these requirements, you will request and complete an application packet. See [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org) for details on completing the application packet.

## **DO I HAVE TO ENROLL IN A COLLEGE TO GET THE CDA?**

No. You have three options for obtaining your CDA.

- You may enroll in a college-based CDA program.
- You may enroll in a CDA program sanctioned by the Council for Professional Recognition.
- You may complete the requirements and application packet on your own and without enrolling in a CDA program.

## **WHAT KIND OF TRAINING DO I NEED AND WHERE CAN I GET IT?**

You need 120 clock hours of formal child care education, including a minimum of 10 hours in each of the following subject areas:

- Planning a safe, healthy, learning environment
- Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development;
- Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development;
- Strategies to establish productive relationships with families;
- Strategies to manage an effective program operation;
- Maintaining a commitment to professionalism;
- Observing and recording children's behavior; and
- Principles of child development and learning.

The formal education hours can be for credit or noncredit, but the hours must be through an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation. The agency or organization must provide verification of the Candidate's education in the form of a transcript, certificate, or letter. These agencies or organizations include any of the following:

- Four-year colleges and universities
- Two-year junior and community colleges  
*NOTE: Students who take courses through MB&A Training on Demand receive their certificates for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from Bainbridge College. These CEUs are accepted by the Council for Professional Recognition for CDA and CDA renewal.*
- Technical and vocational schools
- Resource and referral agencies

It is important to note that training obtained at conferences, unless you receive accredited CEUs for that training, and training from individual consultants is not accepted by the Council.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET A CDA?

The timing varies depending on how you choose to apply for the credential, but the average time is about two years. Your training cannot be more than five years old, so five years is the maximum time allowable.

## WHAT DOES IT COST TO GET A CDA?

The cost of obtaining a CDA depends on how you choose to apply for the credential. The component costs include the following:

- Cost of training, which varies by program
- Cost of the CDA direct assessment system (\$325 plus the cost of the application packet (\$18 plus \$5 shipping and handling)
- Cost of additional resources like an advisor, mentor, materials needed to complete the resource file, etc.

CDA programs vary widely in costs and content. Some include all of your training and other requirements, while others provide only training. Some programs provide the application packet, but others do not.

## HOW DO I RENEW MY CDA?

**Three years** after you initially receive your CDA, you must renew the credential. Thereafter, you will need to renew it every five years. Your first step in the renewal process is to request a renewal packet by calling 800-424-4310 or by going to the Council Store at [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org). The packet contains all the information you will need to apply for renewal, but these are the basic components:

- Letter of recommendation from a reviewer
- Proof of current first-aid certification
- Proof of 4.5 continuing education units (CEUs)—45 clock hours—or a 3-credit-hour course, which equates to approximately 4.5 CEUs. These courses must be through an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation. The agency or organization must provide verification of the Candidate's education in the form of a transcript, certificate, or letter. These agencies or organizations include any of the following:
  - Four-year colleges and universities
  - Two-year junior and community colleges

*NOTE: Students who take courses through MB&A Training on Demand receive their certificates for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from Bainbridge College. These CEUs are accepted by the Council for Professional Recognition for CDA and CDA renewal.*

  - Technical and vocational schools

- Resource and referral agencies

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- Show active status as a caregiver
- Show proof of membership in a national or local early childhood professional organization. A list of such organizations is included in the CDA Renewal Procedures booklet in the renewal packet.