



Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential Discussion at PPD

Document prepared by Becky Millard, May 2019

What is the CDA Credential?: <https://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential>

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is a key stepping stone on the path of career advancement in ECE. The CDA Credential is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children. The Council works to ensure that the nationally-transferable CDA is a credible and valid credential, recognized by the profession as a vital part of professional development.

CDAs have knowledge of how to put the CDA Competency Standards into practice and understanding of why those standards help children move with success from one developmental stage to another. Put simply, CDAs know how to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children.

Earning the CDA Credential has many advantages, including exposure to the larger community of early childhood educators. Over 420,000 educators have received their CDA to date! Becoming a CDA is a big commitment, but one that creates confident practitioners with command of today's best practices for teaching young children.

Why is the CDA Credential still relevant in Vermont?:

- The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is one of the approved credentials recognized in Vermont's early childhood professional development system (ECPDS) and explicitly listed in the Early Childhood Career Ladder.
- The CDA is the only portable and nationally recognized credential recognized in Vermont's ECPDS.
- Per requirements in the Head Start performance standards, some staff members must either attain an Infant/Toddler CDA or a state-specific Infant/Toddler Credential. Because Vermont does not have a state-specific credential, the Infant/Toddler CDA is critical for many Head Start staff in meeting staff qualifications for their roles.

Challenges:

1. On their CDA application, every candidate must identify a PD Specialist who will conduct her/his Verification Visit. There are currently only five PD Specialists listed in the state of Vermont and they are not all available to provide Verification Visits.
2. PD Specialists are not required to join the online directory so there may be more qualified PD Specialists available than providers are able to find by searching the CPR website.
3. The process to apply for a CDA Credential is complicated and has multiple steps including completion of a Professional Portfolio. Our ECPDS does not currently have designated mentors available to support professionals in attaining their CDA Credential



A Few Opportunities:

1. There are education and experience requirements to become a PD Specialist, but you need not have completed the CDA Credential process yourself. Education: Minimum B.A. or A.A. in early childhood education or related field (see below for link to more information). Applicants must also have a certain amount of experience working in child care settings with children birth to five and have experience facilitating the professional growth of at least one other adult.
2. Spread the word that Vermont has a need for PD Specialists and encourage qualified individuals to apply with the Council of Professional Recognition. Could use the Instructor Registry and Sponsor system to target individuals who might be qualified and interested. PD Specialists receive a \$100 honorarium for conducting each Verification Visit.
3. Northern Lights is exploring offering a monthly call for individuals seeking their CDA Credential that would be similar to the Let's Grow Kids monthly call regarding teacher licensure.

Next Steps:

- In an ideal world, what resources would Vermont make available to those seeking their CDA Credential?
- What opportunities for this support might already exist?
- Who should be at the table to discuss short and long term solutions to the challenge of providing needed support?

Additional Detail and Resources

Applying for the CDA Credential

<https://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda>

CDA Competency Standards

<https://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential/competency-standards>

CDA Credential Settings

[Preschool (Center-Based); Infant/Toddler (Center-Based); Family Child Care (Home-Based); Home Visitor]

<https://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential/credential-settings>

PD Specialist Eligibility

<https://www.cdacouncil.org/pd-specialists/eligibility-criteria>

Review, Observe, Reflect Model

<https://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential/review-observe-reflect>