

CDA Competency Standards At-a- Glance

CDA Subject Areas (Candidates must complete 120 clock hours of professional early childhood education, with no fewer than ten hours in each subject area.)	Competency Standard (These national standards are the criteria used to evaluate a candidate’s performance with children, families, colleagues and their community.)	Functional Area (These describe the major tasks or functions that an early care and learning professional must complete in order to meet each competency standard.)	Definitions (specific to setting)		
			Infant-Toddler	Preschool	Family Child Care
<p>1. Planning a safe and healthy learning environment.</p> <p>(Examples: Safety, first aid, health, nutrition, space planning, materials and equipment, play)</p>	<p>I. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment</p>	1. Safe	Candidate provides a safe environment to prevent and reduce injuries.	Candidate provides a safe environment and teaches children safe practices to prevent and reduce injuries.	Same as Preschool
		2. Healthy	Candidate promotes good health and nutrition and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness.	Candidate provides an environment that promotes health and prevents illness and teaches children about good nutrition and practices that promote wellness.	Same as Preschool
		3. Learning Environment	Candidate uses space, relationships, materials, and routines as resources for constructing an interesting, secure, and enjoyable environment that encourages and fosters trust, play, exploration, interaction, and learning.	Candidate organizes and uses relationships, the physical space, materials, daily schedule and routines to create a secure, interesting and enjoyable environment that promotes engagement, play, exploration and learning of	Same as Preschool

				all children, including children with special needs.	
<p>2. Advancing children’s physical and intellectual development.</p> <p>(Examples: large and small muscle, language and literacy, discovery, art, music, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, and dual language learning)</p>	<p>II. To advance physical and intellectual competence</p>	4. Physical	Candidate uses a variety of developmentally appropriate equipment, learning experiences and teaching strategies to promote the physical development (fine motor and gross motor) of all children.	Same as I/T	Same as I/T
		5. Cognitive	Candidate provides activities and opportunities that encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem-solving appropriate to the developmental levels of each child.	Candidate uses a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences and teaching strategies to promote curiosity, reasoning and problem-solving and to lay the foundation for all later learning. Candidate implements curriculum that promotes children’s learning of important mathematics, science, technology, social studies and other content goals.	Same as Preschool
		6. Communication	Candidate actively communicates with children and provides opportunities and support for children to understand, acquire, and to use verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.	Candidate uses a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences and teaching strategies to promote children’s language and early literacy learning and help them communicate their thoughts and feelings verbally and nonverbally.	Same as Preschool

				Candidate helps dual-language learners make progress in understanding and speaking both English and their home language.	
		7. Creative	Candidate provides opportunities that encourage children to play with sound, rhythm, language, materials, space, and ideas in individual ways and to express their creative abilities.	Candidate uses a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences and teaching strategies for children to explore music, movement and the visual arts, and to develop and express their individual creative abilities.	Same as Preschool
3. Supporting children's social and emotional development. (Examples: adult modeling, self-esteem, self-regulation, socialization, cultural identity, conflict resolution)	III. To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance	8. Self	Candidate develops a warm, positive, supportive and responsive relationships with each child and helps each child learn about and take pride in his or her individual and cultural identities.	Same as I/T	Same as I/T
		9. Social	Candidate helps each child feel accepted in the group, helps children learn to communicate and get along with others, and encourages feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children and adults.	Candidate helps each child function effectively in the group, learn to express feelings, acquire social skills and make friends, and promotes mutual respect among children and adults.	Same as Preschool
		10. Guidance	Candidate provides a supportive environment and uses effective strategies to help all children learn and practice	Candidate provides a supportive environment and uses effective strategies to promote children's self-regulation	Same as Preschool

			appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group, and effectively provides support for children with persistent challenging behaviors.	and support acceptable behaviors, and effectively intervenes for children with persistent challenging behaviors.	
<p>4. Building productive relationships with families.</p> <p>(Examples: parent involvement, home visits, conferences, referrals, communication strategies)</p>	<p>IV. To establish positive and productive relationships with families</p>	<p>11. Families</p>	<p>Candidate establishes a positive, responsive, cooperative relationship with each child's family, engages in two-way communication with families, encourages their involvement in the program and supports the child's relationship with her or his family.</p>	<p>Same as I/T</p>	<p>Same as IT</p>
<p>5. Managing an effective program.</p> <p>(Example: planning, record keeping, reporting, community services)</p>	<p>V. To ensure a well-run, purposeful program that is responsive to participant needs</p>	<p>12. Program Management</p>	<p>Candidate is a manager who uses all available resources to ensure an effective program operation. Candidate is a competent organizer, record keeper, communicator and cooperative co-worker.</p>	<p>Candidate is a manager who uses observation, documentation, and planning to support children's development and learning and to ensure effective operation of the classroom or group. The Candidate is a competent organizer, planner, record keeper, communicator, and cooperative co-worker.</p>	<p>Candidate uses observation, documentation... (the rest is the same as Preschool).</p>

<p>6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism.</p> <p>(Examples: advocacy, ethical practices, workforce issues, professional development, goal setting, networking)</p>	<p>VI. To maintain a commitment to professionalism</p>	<p>13. Professionalism</p>	<p>Candidate makes decisions based on knowledge of research-based early childhood practices, promotes high-quality in child care services, and takes advantage of opportunities to improve knowledge and competence, both for personal and professional growth and for the benefit of children and families.</p>	<p>Same as I/T</p>	<p>Same as IT</p>
<p>7. Observing and recording children's behavior.</p> <p>(Examples: tools and strategies for objective observation and assessment of children's behavior and learning to plan curriculum and individualize teaching, developmental delays, intervention strategies,</p>					

individual education plans)	
<p>8. Understanding principles of child development and learning.</p> <p>(Examples: typical developmental expectations for children from birth through age 5, individual variation including children with special needs, cultural influences on development, an understanding of early brain development.</p>	