



# MY CDA Professional Portfolio

Candidate Name \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Use the following checklist to organize your Professional Portfolio in the order listed below. You may check off each item in the last column as it is completed. Use this "My CDA Professional Portfolio" sheet as the cover sheet inside your Portfolio. Please see pp. 12-20 for a detailed explanation.

TAB	REQUIRED PORTFOLIO ITEM		✓
	<b>"My CDA Professional Portfolio" cover sheet (this document)</b>		
<b>A</b>	<b>"Summary of My CDA Education" cover sheet followed by all relevant training transcripts, certificates and official documentation</b>		
<b>B</b>	<b>"Family Questionnaires" cover sheet followed by all completed, returned Family Questionnaires</b>		
<b>C</b>	<b>Reflective Competency Statement I</b>	CS I, including paragraphs CS I a, CS I b, CS I c	
	<b>CS I Resource Collection Items</b>	RC I-1, RC I-2, RC I-3	
<b>D</b>	<b>Reflective Competency Statement II</b>	CS II, including paragraphs CS II a, CS II b, CS II c, CS II d	
	<b>CS II Resource Collection</b>	RC II-1 through RC II-9	
<b>E</b>	<b>Reflective Competency Statement III</b>	CS III, including paragraphs CS III a, CS III b	
	<b>CS III Resource Collection</b>	RC III	
<b>F</b>	<b>Reflective Competency Statement IV</b>	CS IV, including paragraphs CS IV a, CS IV b, CS IV c	
	<b>CS IV Resource Collection Items</b>	RC IV-1 through RC IV-4	
<b>G</b>	<b>Reflective Competency Statement V</b>	CS V, including paragraph CS V a	
	<b>CS V Resource Collection Items</b>	RC V	
<b>H</b>	<b>Reflective Competency Statement VI</b>	CS VI, including paragraphs CS VI a, CS VI b	
	<b>CS VI Resource Collection Items</b>	RC VI-1, RC VI-2, RC VI-3	
<b>I</b>	<b>Professional Philosophy Statement</b>		

I attest that the following Professional Portfolio includes Resource Collection items that I gathered, myself, as well as original Statements written by me that reflect my work with the children and families in my care.

Candidate Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





# Summary of My CDA Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate Name

**Note to Candidate:** Please use this summary document as the cover sheet to your “education documentation”; the collection of transcripts, letters, certificates, etc. that you will place in your Professional Portfolio to document how you met the educational requirements for the CDA Credential. At your CDA Verification Visit™, your CDA Professional Development Specialist will review this sheet to ensure that it accurately reflects your education documentation that follows. Please see p. 11 for a detailed explanation of acceptable professional education.

## Statements of CDA Education Completion:

*I attest to completing the required 10 hours of education in each of the following CDA Subject Areas.*

CDA Subject Areas	Please initial below
1. Planning a safe, healthy learning environment	
2. Advancing children's physical and intellectual development	
3. Supporting children's social and emotional development	
4. Building productive relationships with families	
5. Managing an effective program	
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism	
7. Observing and recording children's behavior	
8. Understanding principles of child development and learning	

I attest to the accuracy of the above Statements of Completion: that I completed at least 10 clock hours of professional education in each of the 8 CDA Subject Areas. I also attest that I have met or exceeded 120 total clock hours of CDA-related professional education.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Earning the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™

In order to earn and maintain the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™, Candidates must follow the following sequence of steps:

- 1 Prepare →
- 2 Apply →
- 3 Demonstrate →
- 4 Earn →
- 5 Renew →

On the following pages, each of the steps is discussed in detail. You are encouraged to read through the process in its entirety in order to gain a sense of the full credentialing process and its requirements. Once you choose to begin your credentialing process, you may use the Candidate Checklist, found on the inside cover of this book, to track each of your accomplishments as you make your way toward earning the CDA.





# Prepare for the CDA Credentialing Process: Candidate Eligibility Requirements

## Any Time Before You Apply

### High School Education

You must have a valid high school diploma to apply for the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™. A GED or enrollment as a junior or senior in a high school career/technical program in early childhood education are also acceptable.

### Literacy Skills

Be able to speak, read and write well enough, in the language required at work, to fulfill the responsibilities of a CDA.

### Setting

You must identify a state-approved child development center where you, the Candidate, can be observed working as **lead teacher** with a group of **at least three children**, of any ages between birth to 36 months (a Candidate may work/be observed with all sub-groups or with one or two sub-groups). In addition, a center-based program must have: (1) at least 10 children enrolled in the program (not necessarily in the Candidate's group); and (2) at least two caregivers working with the children on a regular basis.

### Professional Education

You must complete 120 clock hours of professional early childhood education, covering the growth and development of children ages birth to 36 months, with no fewer than 10 hours in each of the eight CDA Subject Areas:

### The 8 CDA Subject Areas

#### CDA Subject Area 1. Planning a safe and healthy learning environment

Examples: Safety, first aid, health, nutrition, space planning, materials and equipment, play

#### CDA Subject Area 2. Advancing children's physical and intellectual development

Examples: Large and small muscle, language and literacy, discovery, art, music, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, and dual language learning

## 1 Prepare

### Any Time Before You Apply

- High School Education
- Professional Education -- 120 clock hours, including 10 hours in each of the 8 CDA Subject Areas

### Within Three Years of Submitting Application

- Work Experience -- 480 hours of experience working with children ages birth - 36 months

### Within Six Months of Submitting Application

- Family Questionnaires
- Professional Portfolio



### **CDA Subject Area 3: Supporting children's social and emotional development**

Examples: Adult modeling, self-esteem, self-regulation, socialization, cultural identity, conflict resolution

### **CDA Subject Area 4. Building productive relationships with families**

Examples: Parent involvement, home visits, conferences, referrals, communication strategies

### **CDA Subject Area 5. Managing an effective program**

Examples: Planning, record keeping, reporting, community services

### **CDA Subject Area 6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism**

Examples: Advocacy, ethical practices, workforce issues, professional development, goal setting, networking

### **CDA Subject Area 7. Observing and recording children's behavior**

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, individual education plans

### **CDA Subject Area 8. Understanding principles of child development and learning**

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

In order to show proof of your professional education, you must provide transcripts, certificates or letters (originals or copies) in your *Professional Portfolio* (p. 13). This documentation should be preceded by the *Summary of My CDA Education* cover sheet, found at the end of this book on p. 135. At your CDA Verification Visit™, the CDA Professional Development Specialist will review the *Summary* cover sheet and attached documentation.

### **Acceptable Professional Education**

Education may be completed through a wide variety of training organizations, including two and four year colleges, private training organizations, vocational or technical schools, resource and referral agencies and early childhood education programs that sponsor training (such as Head Start or the U.S. Military).

You may accumulate the hours from a single training program or from a combination of programs. Each agency or organization must provide verification of your education in the form of a transcript, certificate or letter on official letterhead. The Council accepts in-service training, but does not accept training obtained at conferences or from individual consultants.

All professional education hours must be awarded by an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation. These hours can be for college credit or for no credit.



## Within Three Years Before You Apply

### Work Experience

You must have at least 480 hours of experience, within the past three years, working with children ages birth to 36 months in an infant/toddler group setting to apply for the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™. Your experience may be as a paid staff or volunteer.

## Within Six Months Before You Apply

### Family Questionnaires

Your reflections on family perceptions about your strengths and areas for professional growth are very important in the CDA credentialing process. Each family with a child in your care should be invited to complete a questionnaire.

A *Family Questionnaire* that is reproducible is provided for you at the end of this book on p. 137. Please tear it out and make the appropriate number of copies for distribution among your families. There is also a Spanish *Family Questionnaire* for any Spanish speaking families in your program on p. 139. Note: The *Family Questionnaire* is two-sided – both sides must be copied and distributed to families.

Before copying, fill in the blank spaces in the introduction (your name and the date by which you will need the questionnaires returned to you). Copy and distribute one to each family.

Once you have collected all of the completed questionnaires, please read the responses and reflect on the feedback you have received. Do you notice any patterns or trends among the families' responses about their perceptions of your strengths or areas for professional growth? Remember that there are no "right" or "wrong" conclusions to draw, you must decide for yourself how to best interpret the feedback you have been given. For example, you might notice that 17 out of 20 questionnaires rate you as "very capable" when it comes to promoting health and nutrition (#2). You might conclude that the families, generally, see this as one of your strengths. Similarly, you might notice that 12 out of 20 rate you as "needs improvement" in the area of helping children express themselves creatively through music, art and movement (#7). You might conclude that the families, generally, see this as an area for your continued professional growth.

Conclude the *Family Questionnaire* process by writing any Areas of Strength and/or Areas for Professional Growth you've chosen on the *Family Questionnaire Summary Sheet* found at the end of this book on p. 141. Additionally, write this information in Boxes A and B of the *CDA Verification Visit™ Reflective Dialogue Worksheet*, also found at the end of the book on p. 143. This step is important because your CDA Verification Visit™ will conclude with a reflective dialogue/discussion with a CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialist in which you will consider this feedback from your families as you set professional goals for yourself.



In addition to the Areas of Strength and/or Areas for Professional Growth you've written on the *Family Questionnaire Summary Sheet*, you must also list the total number of questionnaires distributed and collected. You are required to collect the "majority" (more than half) of the questionnaires you distribute.

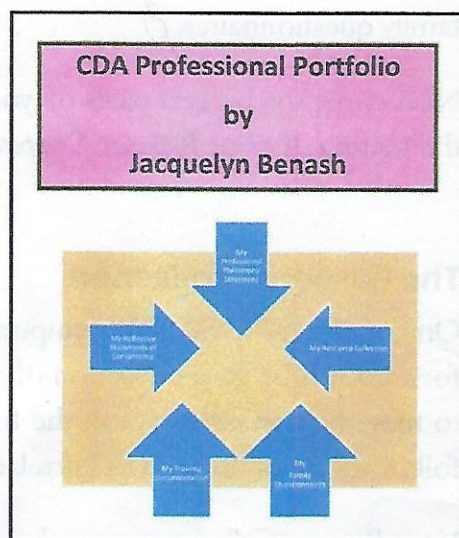
Place the *Family Questionnaire Summary Sheet* and completed questionnaires behind Tab B in your Professional Portfolio. Please know that no one but you will read the feedback your families have provided. The PD Specialist will only look at the Summary sheet to verify that you have successfully completed this task.

## Professional Portfolio

The *Professional Portfolio* is intended to be a reflective professional development experience for you. You are encouraged to use and add to your Portfolio as you grow throughout your career.

Your Professional Portfolio must include:

- a) The *My CDA Professional Portfolio* cover sheet found at the back of this book on p. 133 (this cover sheet provides greater details on the specific order of portfolio components – use it as a checklist as you build your Portfolio to ensure that your completed Portfolio contains all of the required contents)
- b) The *Summary of My CDA Education* cover sheet followed by your transcripts, certificates, letters, etc.
- c) The *Family Questionnaires* cover sheet followed by your completed family questionnaires
- d) Six Reflective Statements of Competence, followed by the related Resource Collection items, as outlined on the *My CDA Professional Portfolio* cover sheet
- e) Your Professional Philosophy Statement, which summarizes your professional viewpoint and may take into account new ideas you learned during the building of your Portfolio.





## Preparing Your Professional Portfolio

The first step is creating the shell of your Portfolio, into which you will add many items. Your Portfolio may be arranged in any creative way you choose (for example, organized in a three-ring binder, contained inside folders in a file box or even created online). While there are no specific requirements about how it should look, it should be legible, look professional and be manageable in size and portability.

The second step will be to add your *My CDA Professional Portfolio* cover sheet. This portfolio cover sheet will guide you in organizing the contents of your Portfolio using tabbed sections.

You will then add your *Summary of My CDA Education* cover sheet followed by your transcripts, certificates, letters, etc. and your *Family Questionnaires* cover sheet followed by your completed family questionnaires.

Next come the biggest parts of your Portfolio preparation work – the collection of Resources and the writing of your *Reflective Competency Statements*.

### The Resource Collection

One of the most valuable components of your Portfolio that you might use in your work moving forward will be your collection of early childhood resources. You may find yourself referring back to these helpful resources in the future as you continue your career. (Note: The numbering of the following list of Resources correlates to each of the Competency Standards.)

Your *Resource Collection* must include the following items:

- RC I-1** Your valid and current certificates of completion or cards from a) any **first aid course** and b) an **infant/child (pediatric) CPR course** offered by a nationally-recognized training organization (such as American Red Cross or the American Heart Association). Online training is not acceptable.
- RC I-2** Provide one feeding schedule or menu used for each age group (young infants, mobile infants, toddlers). In order to complete your related Reflective Competency Statement on this topic, the feeding schedules and/or menus would ideally be ones that you have participated in serving to and/or designing for children. If this is not possible, or if you work in a program that does not serve meals, you may substitute feeding schedules or menus found on the internet. (More important than the source of the menu will be *Reflective Competency Statement I*, in which you will discuss your opinions about the feeding schedules/menus – what you think are their strengths and/or what you might serve that you think is more appropriate and why.)



**RC I-3** A sample of your **weekly plan** that includes goals for children's learning and development, brief descriptions of planned learning experiences, and also accommodations for children with special needs (whether for children you currently serve or may serve in the future). Indicate the age group(s) for which the plan is intended.

**RC II** Nine **learning experiences** (activities), written in your own words, including one from each of the following curricular areas:

RC II-1 Science/Sensory

RC II-2 Language and Literacy

RC II-3 Creative Arts

RC II-4 Fine motor (please choose an indoor activity)

RC II-5 Gross motor (please choose an outdoor activity)

RC II-6 Self Concept

RC II-7 Emotional Skills/Regulation

RC II-8 Social Skills

RC II-9 Mathematics

For example, for RC II-1, Science/Sensory, you might write about an experience entitled "Smell Jars" and for RC II-6, Self Concept, you might write about an experience entitled "Self Portraits".

For each activity, indicate the age group (young infants, mobile infants or toddlers) and list the intended goals, materials and process/teaching strategies. For each activity, specify how it is developmentally appropriate for that age group. Of the nine activities, three should be appropriate for young infants, three for mobile infants and three for toddlers.

**RC III** A **bibliography** that includes the titles, authors, publishers, copyright dates and short summaries of ten developmentally appropriate children's books *that you have used with young children*. Each book should support a different topic related to children's lives and challenges. Subjects you might consider addressing include:

- Cultural or linguistic group identity
- Gender Identity
- Children with Special Needs
- Separation/Divorce/Remarriage/Family Structures
- Phases of the cycle of life from human reproduction to death
- Other topics that reflect the children and families with whom you work



**RC IV** A *Family Resources Guide* that you might choose to share with the families you serve. The Guide should include all of the helpful information you think they might need. At a minimum, you must include the following required items:

- RC IV-1 The name and contact information (phone number, web site, etc.) of a local agency that provides family counseling.
- RC IV-2 The name and contact information (phone number, web site, etc.) of a translation service for families whose home language is other than English as well as a service that provides American Sign Language translation.
- RC IV-3 The name, contact information and brief descriptions of at least two agencies in the community that provide resources and services for children with disabilities (in most communities, the local school district provides these services).
- RC IV-4 A list of three or more websites, and brief descriptions of each, that provide current information to help families understand how young children develop and learn. Include one current article for each website. Web sites must contain articles that help families understand the development and learning of infants and toddlers. At least one article must relate to child guidance.

**RC V** Three samples of **record keeping forms** you use/have used. Include an accident report form, an emergency form and a completed tool/form that you have used to observe for and document a child's developmental/learning progress (*Do not include the child's name*).

**RC VI-1** The name and contact information of your state's agency that is responsible for **the regulation of child care centers and family child care homes**. (Note: These regulations are available at the website of the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>). Make a copy of the sections that describe the qualification requirements for personnel (teachers, directors and assistants) and group size, adult-child ratio requirements.

**RC VI-2** A list of two or three **early childhood associations** (national, regional, state or local), including website addresses, describing the professional resources and membership opportunities they each offer.

**RC VI-3** Summaries of the **legal requirements** in your state regarding child abuse and neglect (including contact information for the appropriate agency in your state) and Mandatory Reporting Guidelines.



## The Reflective Statements of Competence

Prepare six written reflections on your own teaching practices. You must write one Reflective Statement for each of the six CDA Competency Standards (see below for specific requirements). Many of the Statements require the use of specific Resources from your *Resource Collection*, above, as the focus of that written reflection. Each Statement should be no more than 500 words in length.

### CSI Competency Statement I (*To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment*):

Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard (Note: alternatively, you may also choose to write one paragraph for each Functional Area, if this makes it easier to express your thoughts more clearly).

Then write at least one paragraph on each of the following:

CS I a Reflect on the sample menu in the *Resource Collection* (RC I-2): If you designed the menu, how does it reflect your commitment to children's nutritional needs? If you did not design it, what are its strengths and/or what would you change?

CS I b Reflect on the room environment in which your CDA Verification Visit™ Observation will occur: How does the room design reflect the way you believe young children learn best? If the room was not designed by you, what do you see as its strengths and/or what would you change?

Additionally, reflect on and describe the similarities and differences between room environments designed for infants as compared to toddlers.

CS I c Reflect on the weekly plan you included in your *Resource Collection* (RC I-3). How does this plan reflect your philosophy of what young children need on a weekly basis? If the plan was not designed by you, what do you see as its strengths and/or what would you change?

Additionally, describe how you would adapt this weekly plan for use with each of the three age groups (young infants, mobile infants and toddlers).



## **CSII Competency Statement II** *(To advance physical and intellectual competence):*

Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard (Note: alternatively, you may also choose to write one paragraph for each Functional Area, if this makes it easier to express your thoughts more clearly). Then prepare at least one paragraph on each of the following:

Then prepare at least one paragraph on each of the following:

- CS II a Pick one of the nine learning experiences you chose for your *Resource Collection* (RC II). How does this experience reflect your philosophy of how to support young children's *physical* development?
- CS II b Pick another of the nine learning experiences you chose for your *Resource Collection* (RC II). How does this experience reflect your philosophy of how to support young children's *cognitive* development?
- CS II c Pick a third learning experience you chose for your *Resource Collection* (RC II). How does this experience reflect your philosophy of how to support young children's *creative* development?
- CS II d In an additional paragraph, describe ways to promote the communication/ language development among all children, including dual language learners.

## **CSIII Competency Statement III** *(To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance):*

Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard (Note: alternatively, you may also choose to write one paragraph for each Functional Area, if this makes it easier to express your thoughts more clearly).

Then prepare at least one paragraph on each of the following:

- CS III a Describe some of the ways you support the development of children's positive self-concepts and growing social/emotional skills.
- CS III b Reflect on your philosophy of guiding young children's *positive* behaviors. How is your professional philosophy similar or different from how you were guided as a child? How do you constructively deal with young children's *challenging* behaviors?



**CSIV Competency Statement IV** (*To establish positive and productive relationships with families*):

Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard.

Then prepare at least one paragraph on each of the following:

CS IV a How do you ensure that families are kept aware of what's happening in their child's daily/weekly life in your program?

CS IV b How do you ensure that you are aware of what's happening in each child's home life? How does that awareness direct your teaching practices?

CS IV c Reflect on the feedback you received in the *Family Questionnaires* you collected (please see pp. 12-13). Explain how the responses surprised you, confirmed your own reflections about yourself and/or gave you a new goal for professional growth.

**CSV Competency Statement V** (*To ensure a well-run, purposeful program that is responsive to participant needs*):

Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard.

CS V a Then write at least one paragraph that describes how you used the observation tool/form you included in the *Resource Collection* (RC V). Why are observation and documentation important parts of program management? How do you ensure that you are accurately/objectively observing and tracking each child's developmental and learning progress?

**CSVI Competency Statement VI** (*To maintain a commitment to professionalism*):

Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your professional practices meet this Standard. Then:

CS VI a Reflect on why you chose to become an early childhood professional.

CS VI b Reflect on what you believe are the most important indicators of professionalism that you possess.



## The Professional Philosophy Statement

The *Professional Philosophy Statement* is the final reflective task in the creation of your *Professional Portfolio*. Here you will summarize your professional beliefs and values about early childhood education after you have completed the professional development experience of designing your Portfolio by collecting resources and writing all six *Reflective Statements of Competence*. The *Professional Philosophy Statement* should be no more than two pages in length.

Identify your personal values and beliefs around teaching and learning: How do you believe young children learn? Based on this, what do you believe your role is? Beyond teaching and learning, reflect and write about what you believe are the other important aspects of your role in the lives of children and families.

### Bring Your Professional Portfolio to your CDA Verification Visit™!

Once you have completed the preparation of your *Professional Portfolio*, please hold on to it until your CDA Verification Visit™, at which time your PD Specialist will review it.

Note: You are required to present your Portfolio to your PD Specialist at the time of your CDA Verification Visit™. Please do not send your Professional Portfolio to the Council at any time. The Council will not return any portfolios.