
Frequently Asked Questions about the CDA Credential

Q: What Exactly is a CDA?

A: A Child Development **Associate** (CDA) is an individual who has successfully completed 120 hours of study in 8 subject areas within early childhood education and successfully completed the CDA assessment process. Proof of successful completion of CDA **assessment** is the award of the CDA **credential**, similar to a diploma.

Q: What is the difference between a Child Development Associate (CDA) and an Associate's degree in Child Development (AA or AAS)?

A: A *CDA credential* is awarded to an individual from the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington DC. This credential may or may not be based on college credits and is subject to renewal every 3-5 years.

An *Associate's degree* is awarded from an accredited college or university, is based entirely on college credits, and never expires or needs to be renewed.

Q: Why should a child care provider pursue a CDA credential?

A: Earning a CDA Credential has many advantages for the child care provider, such as:

- increasing education and career opportunities
- having more appropriate interactions with children and families
- increasing confidence and job satisfaction

Q: What are the ways to get a CDA?

A: CDA courses in Idaho are found at:

- community colleges
- vocational and technical schools
- early childhood programs that sponsor training, such as Head Start
- private trainers
- on-line through the College of Southern Idaho (CSI)
- home study programs, such as Care Courses

Some of these courses of study can award college credits and some cannot.

Q: How does a child care provider complete CDA assessment and actually receive the CDA credential?

A: A child care provider must: complete a CDA training program, obtain a CDA assessment packet, make a resource file, survey parents of children in care, be observed in the workplace by a CDA Advisor, submit information to the Council for Professional Recognition and be interviewed and given a written exam by a Council representative. When this process is successfully completed, the Council for Professional Recognition awards the CDA credential.