



CDA Professional Development Specialist™ System

About the Council *for* Professional Recognition

Mission *of the* Council

The Council for Professional Recognition promotes improved performance and recognition of professionals in the early childhood education of children ages birth to 5 years old.

Vision *of the* Council

The Council works to ensure that all professional early childhood educators and caregivers meet the developmental, emotional, and educational needs of our nation's youngest children.

In keeping with its goal to meet the growing need for qualified early child care and education staff, the Council administers the Child Development Associate® (CDA) National Credentialing Program. The CDA Program is designed to assess and credential early childhood education professionals. The Council recognizes and credentials professionals who work in all types of early care and education settings including center-based, preschool/infant-toddler, family childcare, and home visitor programs. As a nonprofit organization, the Council sets policies and procedures for assessment and credentialing. To date, over 800,000 CDA credentials have been issued around the world.

“Being able to be part of the formation of the early childhood workforce [in Puerto Rico] has given me the opportunity, not only to coach and guide them into the appropriate practices, but also to learn from them. This give and take of knowledge, has made me a better professional.”

— Maryanne Ramirez Muller, CDA PD Specialist™

About the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™

The Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential is the unique teacher credentialing program, administered by the Council for Professional Recognition, which results in the award of the CDA® credential. The program uses a specific set of time-tested, research-based tools to determine early childhood teacher competency, based on multiple sources of evidence.

Having the CDA credential from the Council for Professional Recognition verifies that teachers have the ability to put the Council's nationally recognized CDA Competency Standards into practice. Having a CDA demonstrates a commitment to a career in early childhood and an understanding of how the developmental context of the standards can help teachers support children's early care experiences.

Learn more at: www.cdacouncil.org/about-cda

The CDA® represents the crossroad where education and experience meet. This crossroad epitomizes competence and is a pathway to learning best teaching practices for many early educators, including:

A lead teacher who already holds an academic degree, but needs to gain hands-on practical skill and competency in early care and education

An assistant teacher with experience, but little formal education

A family child care provider who must improve the quality of his/her setting to meet licensing requirements

A high school student interested in pursuing a career in working with young children

CDA PD Specialist™ Role

“Love seeing different teaching styles and methods at each facility, as well as meeting such loving caring individuals. Each visit allows me to learn something, as well as share.”

— Annette Swestyn, CDA PD Specialist™

Role *and* Responsibilities

A CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialist plays a critical role in the CDA® Assessment process. A CDA PD Specialist™ is trained, contracted, and endorsed by the Council to facilitate the CDA Verification Visit®. The verification visit is a required step in the the final stages of the credentialing process for CDA® candidates.

The Council for Professional Recognition is seeking experienced early childhood professionals to serve as PD Specialist. Our PD Specialists specialize in one or multiple early childhood education settings: Center-based Infant and Toddler, Preschool, Family Child Care and/or Home Visitor. PD Specialists are essential in protecting the integrity of the CDA credential by assessing the candidate’s competency during the CDA Verification Visit.

The PD Specialist will:

- 1. **Receive Online Training** - The Council provides all necessary training and resources through convenient online modules.
- 2. **Conduct the CDA Verification Visit® using the R.O.R. Model®:**



REVIEW

The candidate’s Professional Portfolio, including training documents and family questionnaires

OBSERVE

The candidate working with children and record criterion evidence

REFLECT

With the candidate, focusing on areas of strength or growth found in the portfolio or evidence from the observation

- 3. **Submit CDA® Candidate Scores to the Council** - Within 48 hours after completing the candidate’s CDA Verification Visit®, the PD Specialist will submit scores from the results of the visit - using the Council’s unique online submission tool. The Council will use the multiple sources of evidence from the candidate’s overall assessment to make a credentialing decision.
- 4. **Receive an Honorarium for Completed CDA Verification Visits®** - The Council recognizes the PD Specialists’ contribution to the field by awarding a \$100 honorarium to the PD Specialist for each completed CDA Verification Visit.

Become a CDA PD Specialist™

“Being a PD Specialist allows me to share my expertise and genuine love of early childhood education. Being a PD Specialist is my Occupation!”

— Sherilynn Kimble, CDA PD Specialist™

Eligibility *Requirements*

Technology

- Must have a valid email address
- Must have access to the Internet

Personal

- Must be able to relate to people of various racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Must be knowledgeable about local, state, and national requirements and standards for child care programs serving children aged birth through 5 years.
- Must be able to schedule and conduct CDA Verification Visits® during normal operating hours of early childhood programs
- PD Specialists conducting bilingual CDA Verification Visits must be bilingual.
- PD Specialists conducting monolingual CDA Verification Visits must speak the language of the assessment.

Education

- MUST hold a minimum of a Baccalaureate or Associate degree from an accredited college or university in one of the following disciplines:
 - o Early Childhood Education/Child Development
 - o Elementary Education/Early Childhood Education
 - o Home Economics/Child Development
- The degree must include, at minimum, 18 semester or 24 quarter hours of coursework in Early Childhood Education/Child Development, studying children birth through 5 years.

Experience

Option 1

For those with a Baccalaureate degree, two years in a child care setting serving children from birth to 5 years of age to include:

- One year working directly with children as a caregiver, teacher, child life worker, social worker, or similar role and one year facilitating the professional growth of at least one adult.

Option 2

For those with an Associate degree, four years in a child care setting serving children from birth to 5 years of age, to include:

- Two years working directly with children as a caregiver, teacher, child life worker, social worker, or similar role and two years facilitating the professional growth of at least one adult.

Next Steps

Before you apply, review the PD Specialist eligibility requirements:

www.cdacouncil.org/pds-eligibility

If you meet all eligibility requirements, you are ready to apply:

www.cdacouncil.org/yourcouncil-for-specialists

Questions? Call (800) 424-4310 or email pds@cdacouncil.org

Video Resources - Watch & Share

Application instruction videos: www.cdacouncil.org/pds-how-to-apply-playlist

Recruitment webinar: www.cdacouncil.org/pds-recruitment

CDA® benefits: www.cdacouncil.org/benefits-of-the-cda

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I live part of the year in two states. Could I be a PD Specialist in both states?

A: Absolutely. We do have PD Specialists who do this. Just the way the CDA is portable, so is being a PD Specialist. As long as you are currently endorsed and in good standing with the Council, you can conduct CDA Verification Visits® wherever you are.

Q: When do you have to enter the information from the Pre-Verification Visit Checklist?

A: You must have the answers to the Pre-Verification Visit Checklist entered in YourCouncil no later than 48 hours BEFORE the scheduled CDA Verification Visit®. If this is not done, the system will cancel out your visit and you won't be able to enter the scores from the visit.

Q: Can we obtain the CDA Competency Standards books so that we can be familiar with how it looks and what it says?

A: Yes! We encourage all endorsed PD Specialists to have a copy of each Competency Standards book that corresponds with the settings in which you are endorsed. These can be purchased from The Council Store on our website at www.cdacouncil.org/store.

Q: Typically, how many candidates does a PD Specialist work with in a year?

A: The rule is that a PD Specialist can only conduct two visits per day and only three per week. And each visit can only be conducted with one candidate at a time. So if you do the math, 3 candidates and 52 weeks, you can work with as many as 156 candidates a year.

Q: How far in advance do you think I would know or be able to schedule a visit?

A: You can schedule a visit months in advance, as long as the candidate's application does not expire in the meantime.

Q: Is a master's degree in Early Childhood Education enough to qualify to become a PD Specialist?

A: The degree is sufficient for the education portion of the application, but we do require that you have a certain amount of work experience to go along with this. You can find this information on our website at www.cdacouncil.org/pds-eligibility or you will find it in the video series on [how to apply](#).

Q: Do you have to be recertified as a PD Specialist every so many years?

A: We don't recertify but we will soon be requiring our PD Specialist to take a refresher training every two years when their contract is being renewed.

Q: How long does it take to be approved?

A: That depends on a few things. It can take 1-2 weeks for your application to be assessed and approved and then you have 30 days once you've been given entrance into the learning management system to finish your training and exam. After that, you'll have to submit some forms and information and it could take a couple weeks for us to process them and assign your endorsement number.

Q: Do you have any sample portfolios that we can look at?

A: We don't currently have any portfolios to review, but what we will be doing is completing a training on what a good portfolio looks like compared to one that isn't so great. So you can look forward to that.



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