

2022 CDA® Credential Holders Survey

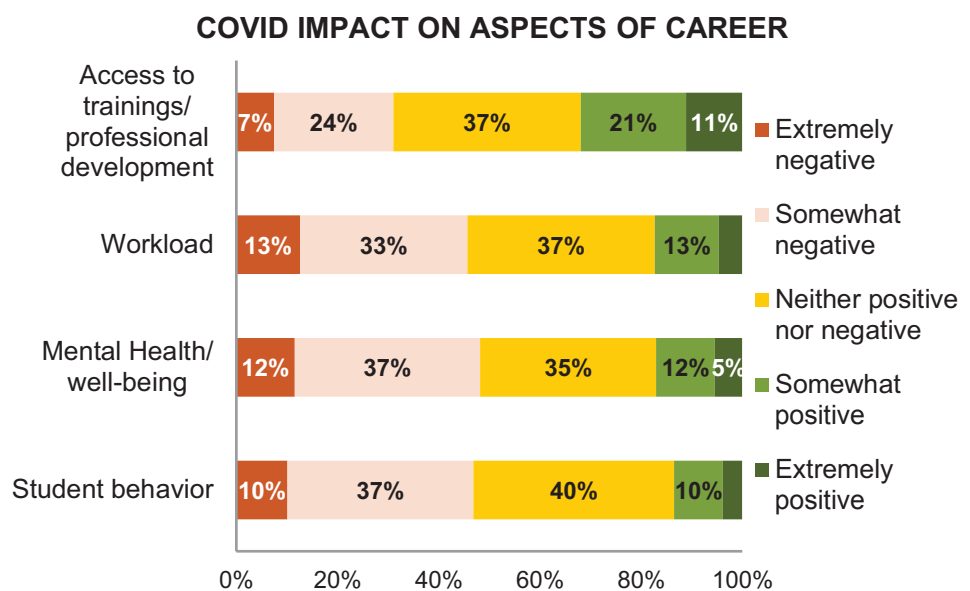


Data and Demand

What are the latest trends in career development and training? There's a focus in most fields on learning by doing that has people address the real-life issues they'll need to tackle on the job. There's a push for continued professional growth so employees keep investing in their education and updating their skills. Remote learning is on the rise, especially for working adults. There's more recognition of the value of diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace, with an emphasis on advancing communities that are underserved. Training programs are taking aim at giving young people the skills employers now are demanding. And there's more use of data to assess the impact of training and pinpoint areas for improvement—the goal of the *2022 CDA Credential Holder and Focus Groups Narrative Report* from the Council for Professional Recognition.

The Council conducted its survey in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to severe gaps in the early care and learning profession as health concerns caused many teachers to flee the field. Our findings show that nearly half of child care programs contended with a decline in staffing, and 60 percent found it hard to hire more staff. Over a third of the programs had longer waitlists than normal due to the teacher shortage, and that left many working parents in the lurch. In short, both early childhood programs and the families they serve need more qualified, committed educators like those who earn a Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™.

FIGURE 1.

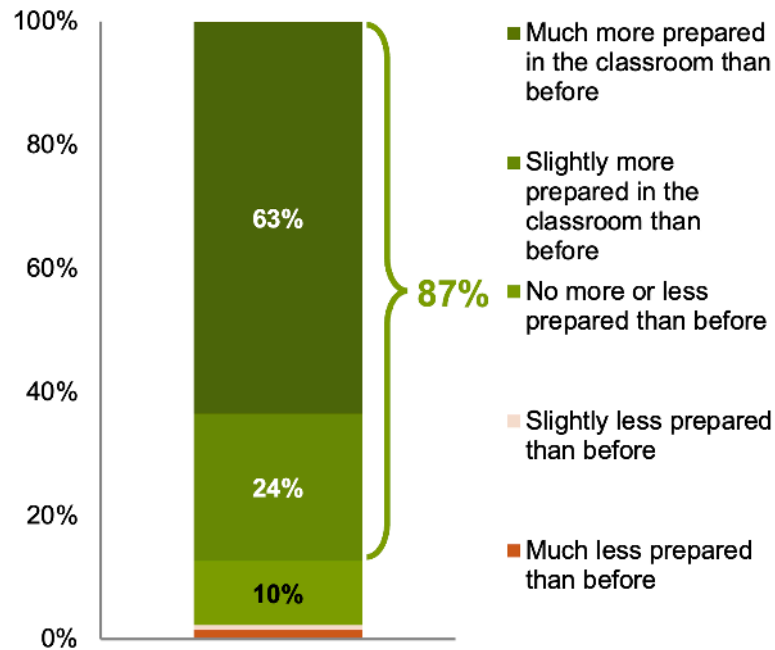


The Council has awarded the CDA® to nearly a million people around the world since our start in 1985. These early childhood professionals have gone on to provide young children with quality experiences in learning, the Council's enduring mission and one it's always striving to perform even better. So, every five years for the past 20 years, the Council has surveyed its CDA stakeholders on ways to strengthen the credential and make sure it meets their changing needs. This report on our latest survey distills responses from 5,343 CDA holders and findings from focus groups that included owners and hiring managers in early childhood settings, along with Spanish-speaking/bilingual providers. And the feedback they gave shows that CDA holders have the right skills that employers need right now in our early childhood settings.

The credential helps rising teachers get ahead by combining theory with practice. The CDA requires candidates to gain 480 hours of experience in the classroom, besides taking 120 hours of coursework, so CDA holders know the demands of a real-world classroom and increasingly have what it takes to meet them. According to the data, 87 percent of CDA holders feel more prepared for the classroom because they've gained a foundation in early learning and best practices for the profession. "The CDA was a wonderful way to get into my current position," one teacher pointed out in a focus group, "and get into the job market I wanted to be in."

FIGURE 2.

CLASSROOM PREPARATION AFTER EARNING CDA



And more young people are coming to feel this way. The number of CDA earners between 18 and 34 has been increasing, in part because high school CTE programs have ramped up their CDA instruction in recent years. This means that students can graduate career ready for a field that urgently needs staff, especially since COVID has led to a child care crisis. But the quality of teachers still counts in the hiring process since early learning programs don't want to simply put warm bodies in front of the precious children they serve. So, 80 percent of owners and directors are more likely to hire someone with a CDA than someone without it, and one program owner summed up the reasons why. "For me, it shows that the staff is very dedicated, they're knowledgeable, and they're willing to put in the effort because it's a lot of work to earn the CDA."

TABLE 1.

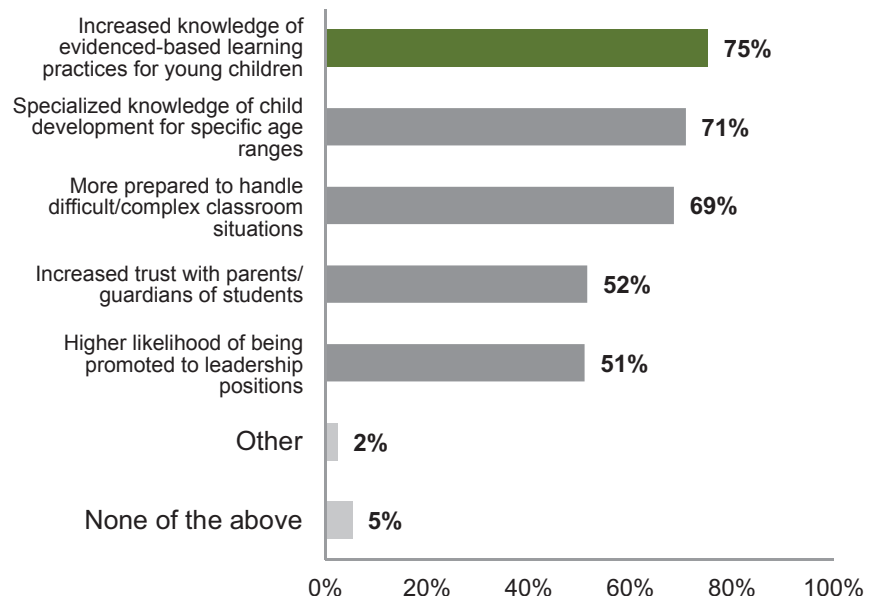
CHRONOLOGICAL CHANGE IN DEMOGRAPHICS (2022 SURVEY RESPONDENTS)

Education	Overall	2005 or earlier	2006 to 2009	2010 to 2012	2013 to 2016	2017 to 2020	2021 to 2022
Age							
Under 18	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%
18 to 24	3%	0%	1%	0%	<1%	4%	9%
25 to 34	17%	1%	2%	8%	15%	24%	29%
35 to 44	26%	10%	24%	27%	31%	30%	28%
45 to 54	26%	32%	36%	34%	29%	22%	20%
55+	27%	57%	36%	31%	25%	19%	13%

Candidates who succeed gain crucial skills and are more prepared for the classroom, as 79 percent of owners and directors agreed. The top benefits of earning a CDA are increased knowledge of evidence-based practices, specialized knowledge of child development, and readiness to handle difficult classroom situations, as owners and directors pointed out. CDA holders appear to be better at interacting with children and communicating with parents. They also stay longer on the job and seem more committed to their work due to the effort it takes to earn the credential.

That sense of commitment is needed right now since COVID isolated many young learners, leading to a rise in behavior issues that impact the classroom. The pandemic produced a “generation of children who don’t know how to socialize,” as one focus group participant pointed out. “They’re coming into the classroom without the social skills children had before the pandemic. These kids are completely different,” she said. And working with them, as teachers often admit, can be a challenge.

FIGURE 3.

BENEFITS OF HAVING CDA CREDENTIALLED EMPLOYEES

So is earning a CDA, especially for working adults. Technology, however, has made taking the CDA courses more convenient. Candidates can attend their classes either on-site, online, or in a hybrid combination. And that matters since 62 percent of CDA candidates hold full-time jobs, often in the child care field, while completing their coursework. And the programs that they work in approve of the endeavor. “We see the CDA as a steppingstone to professionalism in early childhood,” as the owner of one child care center explained. “And so even folks who we’ve identified as having degrees in early childhood, they need to get a CDA.”

FIGURE 4.

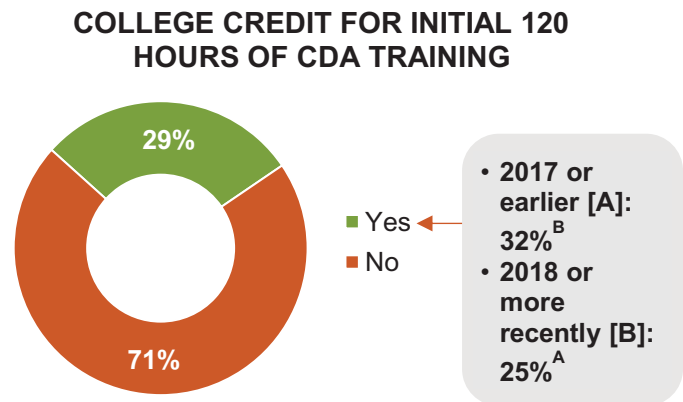
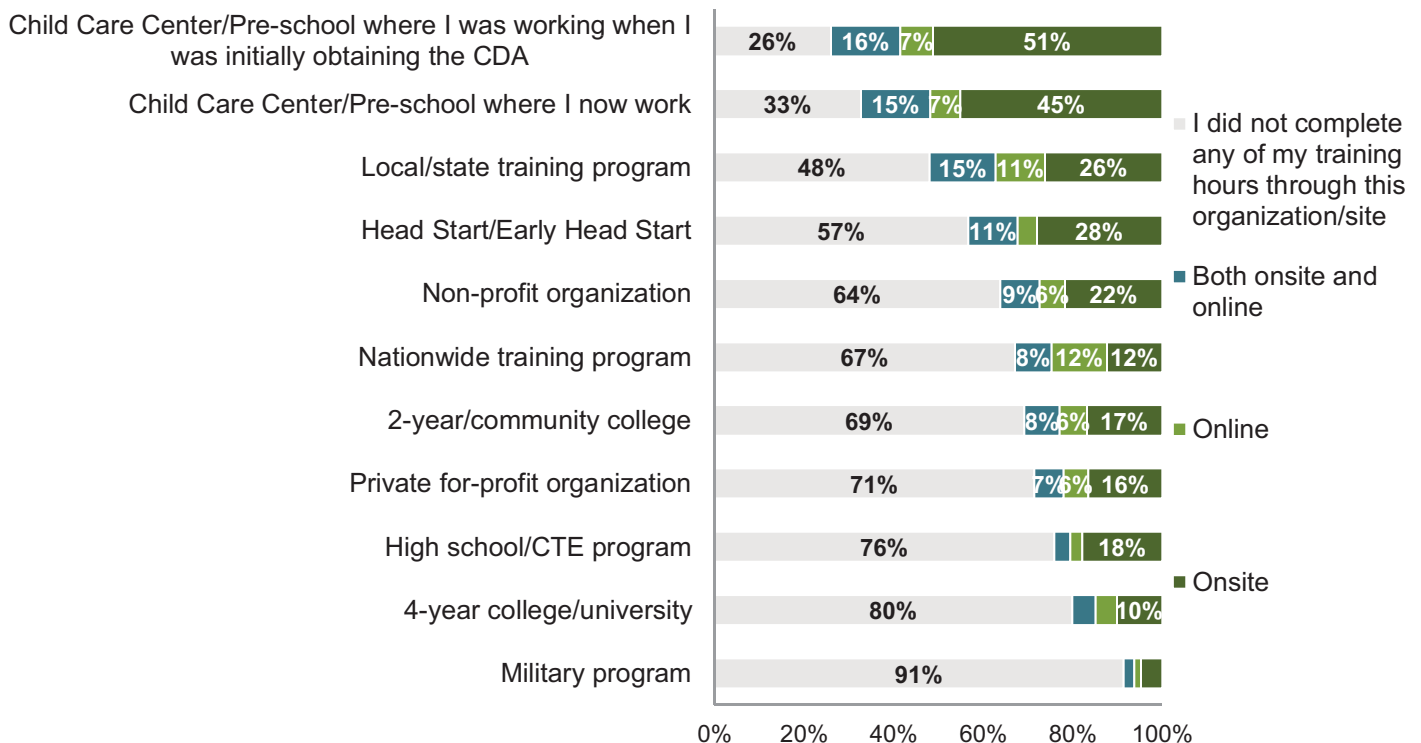


FIGURE 5.

MEANS OF COMPLETING INITIAL 120 HOURS OF REQUIRED CDA TRAINING



It pays off by helping CDA holders progress in their careers, according to 73 percent of the CDA earners we surveyed. Half of employers pay CDAs up to 10 percent more than their non-credentialed colleagues. And many get promotions, most commonly to lead teacher. Still, CDA holders realize that earning a CDA is about more than pay and promotions. Earning a CDA is a way to expand your skills and serve children better, the reason 60 percent of respondents said they pursued the credential. Some are novice teachers like one focus group participant who praised the CDA as a way of “providing you with knowledge if you have no knowledge of child care.” Others are seasoned teachers who put in the effort to keep their credentials up to date. Two-thirds of CDA holders have renewed their credentials at least once in order to refresh their existing knowledge and explore new areas of interest in their field.

FIGURE 6.

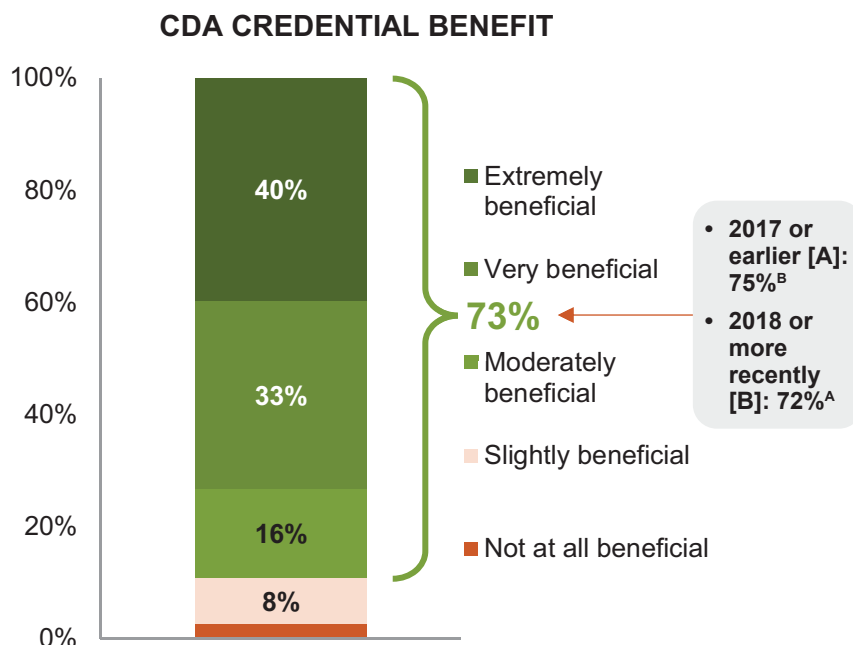


FIGURE 7.

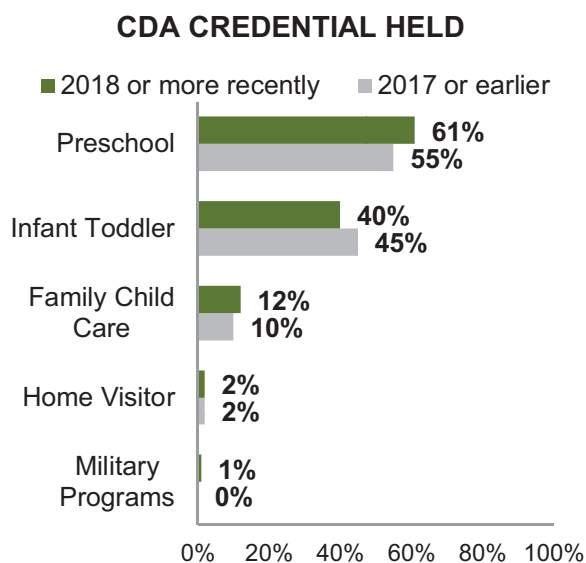


TABLE 2.

CHANGE IN PERSONAL INCOME OF CREDENTIAL HOLDERS AFTER EARNING CDA

Personal Income	First Received Credential 2017 or earlier		First Received Credential 2018 or more recently	
	Right before first earning CDA	Now, after earning CDA	Right before first earning CDA	Now, after earning CDA
\$0 to \$14,999	32%	7%	27%	11%
\$15,000 to \$29,999	42%	36%	45%	42%
\$30,000 to \$44,999	8%	27%	10%	24%
\$45,000 to \$59,999	2%	8%	2%	6%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	1%	3%	1%	2%
\$75,000 to \$89,999	0%	1%	1%	1%
\$90,000 to \$104,999	0%	1%	0%	0%
\$105,000 or more	0%	1%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	14%	16%	13%	14%

The Council encourages CDA holders to continue learning, especially those who come from underserved groups. Our enduring goal is to promote equity in education for both teachers and children, so, it's important to look at the faces behind all the figures. Over half of CDA holders are people of color, and one quarter speak Spanish. So, the credential promotes equity, diversity and inclusion by giving all education professionals more chances to build rewarding careers.

TABLE 3.

CHRONOLOGICAL CHANGE IN DEMOGRAPHICS (2022 SURVEY RESPONDENTS)

Education	Overall	2005 or earlier	2006 to 2009	2010 to 2012	2013 to 2016	2017 to 2020	2021 to 2022
Languages Spoken							
Spanish	27%	20%	27%	29%	29%	30%	26%
French	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Arabic	1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Hindi	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%
Tagalog/Filipino	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	1%
German	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Russian	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Korean	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Mandarin	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Japanese	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Other language(s) not listed	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	6%

And the Council is taking added steps to enhance the CDA in ways that encourage both novice and veteran teachers to earn the credential. So far, the data shows that the Council is on track when it comes to current trends in training: the turn to remote learning and continued professional growth, the focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. We're also working with high schools to bring students into a field that's clamoring for new talent in the wake of COVID. As the child care profession rebuilds from the pandemic, the demand for educators with CDAs should only keep trending up. They have the skills to support the children of today and those of tomorrow.