



STATE OF THE

Council *for*
Professional
Recognition
2024

COUNCIL
for
PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION

REFLECTING ON ACHIEVEMENT

2024 IN REVIEW

As we close the chapter on 2024 and step into 2025, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment—a moment where the work we do feels more vital than ever. In the face of a changing landscape, we stand steadfast, ready to meet the challenges and embrace the promise of new possibilities by breaking barriers.

This past year has set us up for the path ahead. We achieved remarkable milestones, each one a testament to the passion and perseverance of our community. The **Stanford Research Project**, a landmark study that is in progress, aims to validate our mission and strengthen our resolve to ensure that every early childhood educator is equipped to unlock the potential of the children in their care.

In 2024, we continued to invest in our organization. By earning the title of a **Great Place to Work**, we demonstrated that we don't just advocate for excellence in education—we embody it in how we support our own team. This recognition reminds us that the heart of our success is the people who carry our mission forward. Building on this foundation of trust and teamwork, we are taking our commitment to equity to the next level.

In addition, our reach is growing, with more than **50,000 CDA credentials** issued or renewed last year. These numbers are not just statistics; they are stories of hardwork and dedication. Our impact at the Council reached new heights in 2024 as we expanded our **customer service team**, cutting hold times to just 30 seconds and supporting nearly **200,000 calls** and **30,000 emails**. Behind each interaction is an educator striving to make a difference—a difference we are proud to help them achieve.

Our impact and reach continued to grow at **2024 Early Educators Leadership Conference (EELC)**, where we welcomed leaders and advocates who reminded us of the power of our collective voice. From DC City Council Chairman Phil Mendelson to NAEYC CEO Michelle Kang, we heard words that inspired action. But let us not forget—advocacy is not a single event. It is a continuous call to stand up, to speak out, and to ensure that the needs of our field are met, especially as we enter a year of potential change with a new administration.

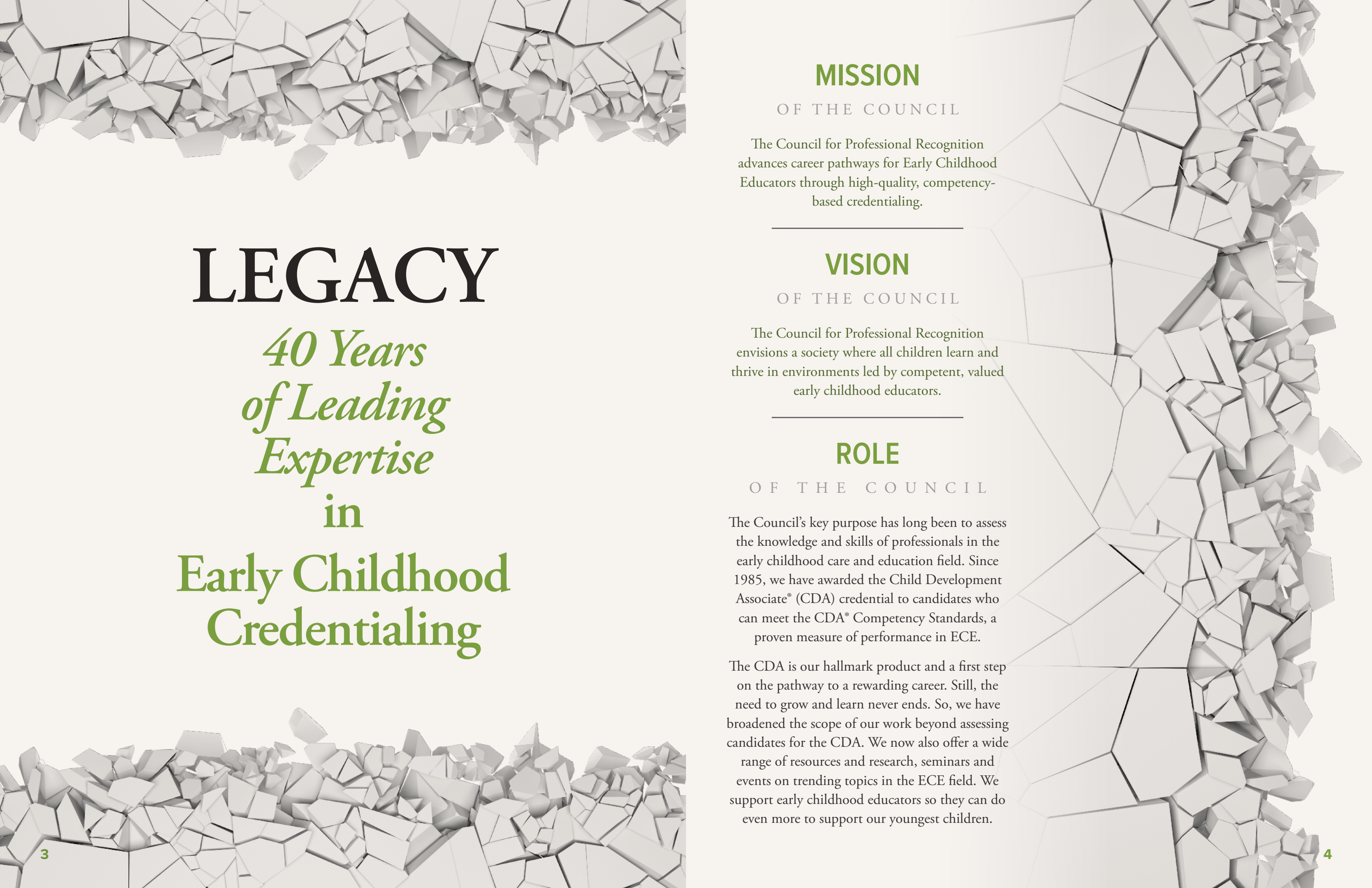
In times of transition, the need for committed advocacy becomes even more urgent. Policies may shift, priorities may realign, but we will not waver in our commitment to the educators and children who depend on us. This is our mission and our promise.

As we celebrate **50 years of the CDA credential** and **40 years of the Council**, we honor our history while keeping our eyes firmly on the future. These anniversaries remind us that while we've come far, the journey continues.

Together, we will ensure that the legacy we leave is one of hope, equity, and opportunity for all.



Dr. Calvin E. Moore, Jr.
CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition



LEGACY

*40 Years
of Leading
Expertise
in*

**Early Childhood
Credentialing**

MISSION

OF THE COUNCIL

The Council for Professional Recognition advances career pathways for Early Childhood Educators through high-quality, competency-based credentialing.

VISION

OF THE COUNCIL

The Council for Professional Recognition envisions a society where all children learn and thrive in environments led by competent, valued early childhood educators.

ROLE

OF THE COUNCIL

The Council's key purpose has long been to assess the knowledge and skills of professionals in the early childhood care and education field. Since 1985, we have awarded the Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential to candidates who can meet the CDA® Competency Standards, a proven measure of performance in ECE.

The CDA is our hallmark product and a first step on the pathway to a rewarding career. Still, the need to grow and learn never ends. So, we have broadened the scope of our work beyond assessing candidates for the CDA. We now also offer a wide range of resources and research, seminars and events on trending topics in the ECE field. We support early childhood educators so they can do even more to support our youngest children.

HISTORY OF THE CDA®

C R E D E N T I A L

In 1971, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) brought a group of early childhood education leaders together to support the expanding teacher workforce needs of the Head Start program. This effort led to a formal feasibility study of a competency-based credential that required an understanding of child development through training and practical experience.

The meetings of these progressive thinkers led to the concept of a professional credential, and in 1975, Margaret E. Wright was awarded the first CDA. With federal funding, the CDA Consortium and then Bank Street College administered the CDA. Over the next decade, the demand for the CDA grew so much that the Department of Health and Human Services worked with the National Association for the Education of Young Children to set up a separate nonprofit charged with overseeing the credential.

Since then, the Council for Professional Recognition has ramped up the CDA to meet the changing demands of the ECE field. We've added more coursework and adapted it to be inclusive by filling the needs of diverse cultures and new immigrant groups.

Much has changed since that group of early childhood leaders met in 1971. But one thing has stayed the same, the quest to increase the ranks of qualified early childhood educators where children are being served. The CDA is rooted in the core conviction that all young children have the basic right to a high-quality, equitable education. All children thrive by interacting with skilled educators, who have demonstrated their teaching competence through the attainment of the CDA a quality, competency-based credential.

CREDIBILITY

50 Years of Excellence
in

Early Childhood
Credentialing

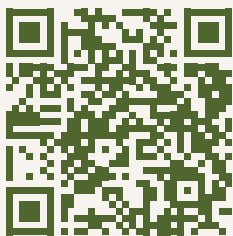
2024 ACCOMPLISHMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Build a diverse, highly-productive world-class team.

- **ECE Competence and Practice Team.** In 2024, a new team was established to enhance the implementation of CDA competency standards. The ECE Competence and Practice team is now fully staffed with three highly qualified and experienced professionals: This team is dedicated to advancing early childhood education practices and supporting the application of CDA standards across diverse populations.
- **Credentialing Team.** Eight staff members on the Credentialing team have successfully completed the Institute for Credentialing Excellence’s Credentialing Specialist course. With this achievement, the team now includes a total of 10 certified Credentialing Specialists. This accomplishment enhances the team’s expertise in credentialing standards and best practices, reinforcing their commitment to upholding high-quality standards and integrity in the CDA credentialing processes.
- **2023 Employee Engagement Survey.** The 2023 Employee Engagement Survey at the Council achieved a 95% response rate, highlighting our team’s dedication to improving the workplace. Key areas for improvement—Communication and Professional Development—were addressed through employee-driven recommendations, leading to actionable plans approved by the executive cabinet. These initiatives align with our values of transparency and growth. Our efforts earned the 2023 Employee Engagement Award – Top Performer from DecisionWise, reinforcing our reputation as a leader in employee engagement and organizational excellence.
- **Great Place to Work.** Through engagement surveys, focus groups, enhanced benefits, and an employee staff retreat, we pursued and achieved the Great Place to Work Certification. This recognition, earned through a two-step process involving an employee survey and organizational questionnaire, highlights our organization as an employer of choice. With 96% of employees rating the Council as a great workplace—well above the U.S. average of 57%—we plan to celebrate this success, address growth opportunities, and leverage our certification in a brand campaign to attract and retain top talent while advancing our mission.



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- **Relocation.** In support of our remote first workforce, we sold the Council HQ and leased a smaller space that is primarily focused on providing collaborative space for when teams need to come together. Long term, the smaller space will provide significant technical and collaborative benefits, while reducing the ongoing cost and maintenance of an entire building.
- **Technology.** As technology advances, enabling greater process automation and improved efficiency for the Council while enhancing access and features for our customers, the IT department has expanded its capabilities by incorporating IT architecture expertise into its team.



IMPACT

- ★ **10 Council staff members certified Credentialing Specialists** by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence.
- ★ **Achieved the Great Place to Work Certification**—with 96% of employees rating the Council as a great workplace.
- ★ **New location**—reduces ongoing cost and maintenance.
- ★ **Technology Advances**—greater process automation, improved efficiency for the Council while enhancing access and features for our customers.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Cultivate a culture of innovation.

- **Customer Service.** In 2024, we made significant strides in enhancing our customer service. We added 18 new agents to our Customer Support department, increasing the total number of agents to 32. This expansion has significantly decreased hold times, with the average daily hold time now at just 30 seconds. Our dedicated team handled almost 200,000 calls and 30,000 emails, ensuring that our customers receive the support they need promptly and efficiently.
- **New Credential Development.** The Council team began planning for the development of a Center-Based Birth to Five credential. An internal working group was convened to craft recommendations for prospective candidates and existing credential holders in other settings. Next, we facilitated focus groups with CDA holders, center directors, and trainers to garner feedback and insights. Simultaneously, we began creating a companion guide designed to support candidates in navigating the requirements and successfully attaining their credential. Our work will continue in 2025 with the goal of launching the credential in time for the Council's 50th anniversary.
- **New Managed Service Provider (MSP).** To enhance the quality and efficiency of IT services, a new Managed Service Provider (MSP) was selected to support internal operations, including laptop management and helpdesk support. The new provider introduced call-in support in addition to the existing email support, further improving service accessibility. The transition to the new MSP was seamless, and despite the expanded services and improved response times, costs are projected to be 30% lower than those of the previous provider.
- **Integration.** IT transitioned to a new telephony provider that offers enhanced support for our call center and improved integration with Microsoft, a critical component of the future YourCouncil system. This seamless transition was accomplished with no downtime, resulting in better Microsoft integration and a 20% reduction in overall telephony costs.
- **Online Council Store.** The Council Store, offering ECE publications and branded merchandise, generated over \$3.5M in sales in 2024, with September achieving a record \$435,495 during the Back-to-School campaign. This historic campaign also marked an \$84,000 single-day sale. The Council Store had a significant pop-up presence at national conferences. Nine new CDA-branded items were introduced, celebrating educators' accomplishments and milestones, such as CDA graduations. The store continues to meet stakeholder needs while supporting the Council's mission.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Elevate the utility of the National CDA® Competency Standards.

- **CDA® Recognition.** The ECE Competence and Practice team increased CDA recognition across state regulations, quality rating systems, and career pathway programs by presenting more than 10 sessions at professional conferences, in addition to conducting 48 webinars in English and Spanish.
- **Impact of the CDA® Study.** The Quality Assurance and Research team issued an RFP for a study on the impact of the CDA on educators and selected Stanford University's Center on Early Childhood from several competitive proposals. Initial collaboration included two Theory of Impact workshops, resulting in a logic model. The study was presented alongside Stanford colleagues at the NAEYC national conference in November and has established two advisory boards: one of ECE researchers and another of ECE educators, including two CDA holders. Each board currently has 4–5 members. The study team is also conducting a comprehensive literature review.
- **Research.** Throughout the year, the research team worked with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to develop and establish their understanding of the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS), to investigate the inter-rater reliability of SME behavioral ratings, establish test blueprints for the Birth to Five credential, and assess alignment between the CDA Competency Standards and the NAEYC Competency Standards as well as 10 other sets of professional standards in the ECE space.



IMPACT

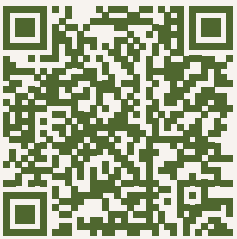
- ★ **Customer Support reduced daily hold times**—30 second average daily hold time.
- ★ **Great advances in the development of new Center-Based Birth to Five credential.**
- ★ **New telephony provider** offers enhanced support for call center, improved Microsoft integration and a 20% overall cost reduction.
- ★ **New Managed Service Provider** offers improved response times and a projected 30% cost savings.
- ★ **Over \$3.5M in sales** generated by the online Council Store.

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In addition, the research team investigated a new approach to estimating alignment between sets of standards by utilizing advanced methodology. The approach used was a technique called Latent Semantic Analysis, which estimates a cosine similarity for each pair of standards statement within two sets of standards to be aligned. The work with SME's on alignment allows us to put meaning and understanding to the alignment values we obtained using Latent Semantic Analysis and was accepted for presentation at the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) annual conference.

- **Policy and Advocacy Pathways.** The Council's public website now reflects its commitment to advocating for the CDA credential nationwide. With the introduction of a Strategic Alliances Department, the site features an interactive U.S. policy map, showcasing the evolving policy landscape and supporting stakeholders. This update reinforces the Council's leadership in promoting the CDA and driving impactful policy change.
- **CDA® Career Pathways.** The Partnerships team increased recognition and growth of CDA credentials in multiple states. Notable partnerships included, Delaware State University's Early Childhood Innovation Center (ECIC) to support over 210 CDA candidates in their first major cohort. In a landmark agreement, Delaware's community and state colleges now offer up to 12 college credits for the CDA. In Michigan, our efforts elevated the CDA through its inclusion in the LAUNCH program and recognition by the U.S. Department of Education in a 2024 Best Practice video. These collaborations have significantly strengthened CDA career pathways in both states.
- **Early Educators Leadership Conference (EELC).** The 2024 Early Educators Leadership Conference (EELC) was a resounding success, exceeding expectations and fostering strong engagement. With 337 attendees and a remarkable 98% overall favorable satisfaction rate, EELC 2024 provided a high-quality learning and networking experience. The conference effectively addressed current trends and topics of interest in the early childhood education field, as evidenced by the 76% of respondents who found the content relevant to their professional needs. The event's success was further reinforced by a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 79, indicating high satisfaction among attendees and significant potential for future growth.

- **CDA® Apprenticeship Program.** The University of Maryland's Center for Early Childhood Education and Intervention (CECEI) partnered with the Council on a successful CDA apprenticeship program. Highlights included offering paid on-the-job training with centers dedicated to serving children and families with complex needs. In July, they were awarded the Maryland Elevates grant to expand their registered apprenticeship in Anne Arundel and Montgomery Counties. We also successfully completed a MD CDA Training Initiative with the Maryland State Department of Education. Through a \$1 million grant, we collaborated with training organizations and offered funding for early childhood educators to earn or renew the CDA. As of Q3, there were a total of 2993 active CDA credentials in Maryland.
- **Council Alumni Network (CAN).** The Council Alumni Network (CAN) membership increased by 1724 members in 2024, this is a 83% increase from December 2023.



IMPACT

- * **10 in-person and 58 webinar sessions** conducted by ECE Competence and Practice team to increase CDA recognition.
- * **Established the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)**—engaged 9 SMEs in a series of workshops and received 240 survey responses.
- * **Driving impactful policy change** with updated Policy & Advocacy Pathways webpage.
- * **70 NPS score and 98% satisfaction rate** for the 2024 EELC.



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STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Leverage the Council's expertise, legacy, & resources to benefit the ECE field.

- **Record Number of CDA® Credentials.** In 2024, just shy of the 50th anniversary of the CDA, the Council awarded over 50,000 initial and renewal CDA credentials. This is the highest number in a single year in the history of the Council.
- **Thank You CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialists™.** In recognition of the incredible contributions of CDA PD Specialists, the Council introduced an appreciation payment structure for those who have completed verification visits over the past two years. This initiative is a testament to our gratitude for their dedication.
- **CDA® Training and Preparation.** The Council formed an internal working group to create guidelines for CDA Training and Preparation service providers. This initiative aims to build a network of reliable, high-quality training organizations by standardizing services, establishing an authorization pathway, and promoting continuous improvement. After drafting the initial guidelines, the Council held an open comment period, inviting feedback from CDA training organizations.
- **CounciLIVE Series.** CounciLIVE, our live streaming webinar series on Facebook, spotlighted trending topics in early childhood education (ECE), featuring key partners across the sector. Topics ranged from our Council Alumni Network to pathways for higher education, reimagining the CDA process, and our first Spanish-language episode—demonstrating our commitment to inclusivity. Garnering over 6,000 views and 110 video engagements, CounciLIVE provided valuable content while aligning with organizational goals. In 2025, we aim to grow this initiative with more multilingual offerings, ensuring broader audience engagement.
- **Policy and Advocacy Reception.** At EELC 2024, the Policy team hosted its first-ever policy and advocacy reception, where we welcomed remarks from DC City Council Chairman Phil Mendelson, NAEYC CEO Michelle Kang, and Dr. Calvin Moore. The shared remarks championed DC's advancements in increasing early educator pay through the Pay Equity Fund and the importance of a collaborative approach in advocacy. The reception enjoyed



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strong turnout with approximately 35 attendees from leading national advocacy organizations, resulting in strengthened relationships with key leaders in the ECE advocacy landscape.

- **Advocacy in Action.** The Policy team held 32 meetings with Congressional offices in 2024, more than doubling the 2023 rate of engagement. These meetings were held both independently and in coordination with leading national advocacy organizations such as the Center for American Progress, National Head Start Association, NAEYC, and others. We advocated for topics and legislation including Head Start, apprenticeships, robust appropriations funding for child care, inclusions for child care in the National Defense Authorization Act, increased funding for training, and career and technical education for early childhood.
- **Community Engagement and Impact.** In 2024, the Community Engagement and Impact team surpassed its goal by forming four key partnerships to promote the CDA credential. Collaborations with Exchange Dimensions magazine, the Latino Child Care Association, Parents and Teachers Together, and the National Association of Family Child Care expanded our reach through their communication channels, raising awareness among early childhood education audiences. Additionally, our partnership with the Early Childhood Workforce Connector supported Registered Apprenticeship programs to build a diverse, inclusive, and well-compensated ECE workforce.



IMPACT

- ★ **Over 50,000 initial and renewal CDA credentials awarded**—the highest number in a single year in the history of the Council.
- ★ **Appreciation payment** for CDA PD Specialists.
- ★ **CounciLIVE garnered over 6,000 views and 110 video engagements.** Plus, the first-ever episode in Spanish.
- ★ **35 Attendees** at the first-ever policy and advocacy reception hosted at the 2024 EELC.
- ★ **32 Meetings** held by Policy team.
- ★ **4 Key partnerships formed** to promote the CDA credential.

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

S N A P S H O T



3.1M

Total Website
Pageviews



150+

Pieces
Translated



2,375

New CDA PD
Specialists™ endorsed

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

S N A P S H O T



5,000

Monolingual and bilingual
credentials awarded in
languages other than English



56

Webinars hosted by
the Council Alumni
Network (CAN)



3,790

83% Increase in Council
Alumni Network (CAN)
community members

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

S N A P S H O T



6M+

Email Campaign
Opens



140K+

Email Campaign
Clicks



23K+

New contacts added to
Council email lists

2024 SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

S N A P S H O T



2.6K+

Total
Posts



38K+

Total
Followers



750K+

Total
Post Impressions



16K+

Total
Post Reactions



↑15.1%

Total
Followers

↑15.4%

Total
Reactions

↑36%

Total
Comments

↑140%

Total Video
Views



One Million CDA[®] *Credentials Strong* & Growing



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