



Child Development Associate (CDA) Preparation Program Information and Policies

Child Development Associate Credential

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is a key stepping-stone on the path of career advancement in the ECE field. The CDA credential is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children. The Council works to ensure that the nationally transferable CDA is a credible and valid credential, recognized by the profession as a vital part of professional development.

EC LEARN's CDA Preparation Program

EC LEARN has created a Child Development Associate (CDA) preparation program that provides participants with the necessary 120 hours of training as well as enhanced supports so participants can reach the goal of obtaining a CDA. The program is divided into two semesters. Each semester consists of 60 hours of training totaling the necessary 120 hours of coursework to meet the requirements of applying for a CDA with the Council of Professional Recognition. As part of this CDA preparation program, participants will not only take part in classes, but will be guided when creating a Professional Portfolio, practicing for the CDA exam and applying online for the credential. In addition to support from your instructor and the EC LEARN Professional Development Specialist, EC LEARN Early Childhood Specialists will provide one-on-one coaching with participants. This extension will help participants apply the new knowledge and put it into practice. Our comprehensive CDA preparation guides participants to success!

Course Curriculum

EC LEARN's CDA curriculum is designed around five central themes or focus areas.



- Professionalism
- Health and Safety
- How Child Learn and Develop
- Intentional and Reflective Teaching
- Community and Family Collaborating Relationships

The Council for Professional Recognition has identified eight CDA subject areas. The 120 hours of formal early childhood training covers the growth and development of children ages birth to 5 years, with no fewer than 10 training hours in each of the following eight subject areas:

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

In the first semester, the 60 hours of the training is designed to meet the requirements of the Kentucky Division of Child Care and gain a Kentucky credential - Commonwealth Child Care Credential (CCCC). The Commonwealth Child Care Credential, awarded by the Cabinet for Families and Children and the Office of Early Childhood Development, is recognized in the state of Kentucky as an entry-level certificate.

In the second semester the 60 hours of training builds off the first semester and dives deeper into the five curriculum themes. Program participants put the knowledge they have gained into practice as they learn how to support best practice in their working environment.

Delivery Method

At EC LEARN we value the importance of relationships. One of the goals of our EC LEARN CDA preparation program is to foster relationships between participants – to develop a network of peers to support them in both their CDA journey as well as an early childhood professional. Hosting CDA virtually allows more participants to access the course. In-person sessions allow for more hands-on activities and more opportunities to build personal relationships. Therefore, EC LEARN has decided to use a hybrid model involving both in-person and virtual classes. Our CDA preparation program is divided into 40 sessions – 20 each semester. Each semester will be made up of 15 virtual sessions and five in-person sessions. Participants will be awarded three clock training hours for each session. For virtual sessions, participants will complete and turn in a pre-assignment prior to attending a 2-hour Zoom session. In-person classes will be three hours in length and will take place at a location in Northern Kentucky.

Cost of the EC LEARN CDA Preparation Program

At EC LEARN we value providing a comprehensive program involving 120 hours of coursework along with enhanced supports including personal coaching to help participants succeed in obtaining a CDA. We also realize that our program needs to be affordable for participants. Therefore, EC LEARN is continually working with a variety of community partners to help fund and subsidize the program. There are several funding options available to participants who are currently in the field of early childhood care and education or hope to be in the future.

For those currently in the field of early childhood care and education:

- **Non-College Scholarship Program**

If you meet the requirements of this scholarship from the state of Kentucky, your coursework will be paid for in full.

An applicant **MUST**:

- Be a Kentucky resident and U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident.
- Be employed at least 20 hours weekly in a participating early childhood facility
- Not be eligible to receive state or federal training funds through Head Start, a public preschool program, or First Steps.
- Agree to a service commitment based on the credential pursued (see Service Commitment on info sheet).
- Complete an application for each 60 hours of instruction and submit the application by the deadline to the Early Care and Education Coach.

The scholarship amounts awarded to an eligible applicant are \$500.00 for the CCCC (Term 1) and \$500.00 for the CDA (Term 2). Funds are not to exceed \$1,000.00. The scholarship funds are paid directly to EC LEARN. For more information about this scholarship, see Non-College Scholarship Program information form.

- **EC LEARN CDA Scholarship**
EC LEARN received a grant from the Skyline Community Fund towards our CDA program. Participants who are currently in the field of early care and education and do not have access to other funding to cover the cost of tuition for the EC LEARN CDA Preparation Program may qualify for a partial or full scholarship from these funds.
- **Self-Pay**
If a participant is not eligible for the above funding than self-pay is an option. Participants will pay \$1,000 directly to EC LEARN. EC LEARN will work with the participant to come up with a manageable payment plan and a written agreement with EC LEARN will be signed by the participant. Payments can be made in full prior to the first CDA session or in payments throughout the two semesters.
Payments must be made on time as stated in the agreement for participants to receive credit for the coursework.

For those participants who are not currently in the field of early education and care but hope to be in the future:

- EC LEARN collaborates with the Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD) Workforce Development Project and participants may qualify for funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- EC LEARN is also an approved agency on the Kentucky Eligible Trainer Provider List which may also lead to funding for participants.

Textbooks and Supplies

These books need to be purchased at the beginning of the CDA Preparation Program and will be used in both the first and second semester.

- Essentials textbook, 2nd Edition *
- CDA Competency Standard book (specific to the participants age group – Infant-Toddlers, Preschoolers or Family Child Care editions available) *
- Two, 2-inch binders (one for participants coursework and one for a Professional Portfolio which participants will create throughout the program)
- Participants will receive electronic copies of program handouts for each of the five focus areas throughout both semesters. We recommend participants print these packets to reference and add notes to throughout each session

* *You can purchase both textbooks directly from EC LEARN for a total of \$90.*

Online CDA Application Fee

When participants complete the coursework, there is a cost of \$425 which is due in full when applying online at the Council for Professional Recognition. Participants may be eligible for a Kentucky mini-grant to cover this cost.

Attendance

Attendance at each session is necessary to obtain the 120 hours of training necessary to apply for your CDA. Attendance is also important because each session builds on the content of previous sessions. However, we understand the life happens and you may need to miss a class. Please notify your instructor by phone, email, or social media if you will not be at a session. If a participant misses a class, he or she will need to make up the coursework (see below for details). ***Students who miss three classes within a semester of the program will be asked to meet with their CDA instructor and the EC LEARN Professional Development Specialist to discuss your commitment to the program and to come up with a plan for reengagement so participant can be successful in completing the program.***

Partial credit for a session will not be given. To receive the necessary 3-hours of credit for a virtual CDA session, participants must do the following:

- Complete the pre-assignment and return it to the instructor **before** the Zoom session
- Join the virtual Zoom CDA session for the **entire time** it is scheduled

Making Up Missed Sessions

If a participant misses a session completely or does not meet the requirements to get credit for a session (did not turn in pre-assignment before the beginning of class or did not attend the entire 2-hour zoom session) he or she will need to complete a make-up independent study. The cost of a make-up independent study is \$20.

- Independent studies have been created for each of the 40 CDA courses. If you do not attend a class, an independent study will be emailed to you.
- When payment is submitted and the completed work is returned to the EC LEARN support staff, the work will be graded and credit for the missed session will be entered into ECE-TRIS.
- It is important to complete make-up work in a timely manner. We suggest completing and returning your make-up work within two weeks of receiving it as content for sessions builds on prior session content.

Cancellation

If a class is cancelled, the CDA instructor and/or an EC LEARN staff member will inform participants of the cancellation. It is important to update phone numbers or emails if there are any changes. CDA classes may create groups on social media (Facebook, GroupMe, BAND or another app) so classmates can communicate with each other throughout the program and after coursework is completed.

Expected Professional Behavior

Respect for yourself, classmates, the instructor, and the space is important to your success in this program. Disruptive, disrespectful, and unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated in this program. It interferes with teaching and learning. Among such behaviors are:

- Carrying on a conversation that interferes with the learning of others.
- Lack of participation or sleeping.
- Excessive talking.
- Leaving class to answer a ringing cellular telephone or beeper.
- Use of phone or text messaging during class.
- The presence of children or other individuals not enrolled in the class.
- Any sign of use of drugs or alcohol.

Students whose behaviors are deemed disruptive and unprofessional will be asked to remove themselves for the remainder of the session and will not receive credit.

Weapons-free Workplace

In order to ensure a safe environment for employees and visitors, EC LEARN prohibits the wearing, transporting, storage, or presence of firearms or other dangerous weapons in our facilities or on our property including anywhere that company business is conducted, such as vendor or client locations, restaurants and/or meeting places, EC LEARN event venues, and so forth. This policy is strictly enforced regardless of any license or permit that an individual may have which would otherwise authorize the individual to carry firearms or weapons.

Professionalism

As you continue the journey of your professional career, it is important to begin to make the transition from being a pre-service teacher to being a professional. Professionalism is as much an attitude as it is a mode of dress and behavior. A person with a professional attitude respects the rights and opinions of others, displays a willingness to collaborate and communicate, and approaches his or her responsibilities with energy and commitment to do the best possible work. Each participant will be asked to sign a promise of professionalism at the beginning of the program. This agreement states your expectations as a participant of the program and grants EC LEARN permission to contact the Council for Professional Recognition to access data on your CDA acquisition and renewal.

Accommodation Policy

EC LEARN will ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all requirements of this program. If you have any special needs related to your participation in this program, including identified visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical impairments, communication disorder, and/or specific learning disability that may influence your performance in this program, you should discuss with the EC LEARN Professional Development Specialist and course instructor so arrangements for reasonable provisions can be made.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense and cannot be tolerated in any academic community. Dishonesty in any form, including cheating, plagiarism, deception of effort, or unauthorized assistance will not be tolerated. When you use other people's words, make sure that you use quotation marks and cite the sources.

Commitment to Your Place of Employment

If you are already in the field of early care and education, your center or program is excited to support you on your academic journey in the EC LEARN CDA Preparation Program. Keep open communication with your director/supervisor as you work toward acquiring your CDA. If you are a Kentucky scholarship recipient, your center has agreed to support you financially by agreeing to pay a book allowance for up to \$50 per semester as well as to pay 10% of the CCCC and/or CDA Milestone Achievement Awards. In return, as a scholar, you are responsible for staying in your current program for a minimum of 6 months after you receive your CDA. Leaving your program before this time may result in repayment of these costs to your program.

Dropping the Class

In the event you decide you are able to complete the CDA Preparation Program, you **must** inform your instructor, the EC LEARN Professional Development Specialist or Support Staff, and the Child Care Aware Early Care and Education Coach. Further instructions will be provided at that time. **Do not just stop attending class! Dropping from the class may result in the loss of future scholarship opportunities!**

Success in the CDA Program

Come to class ready to learn, meet new people, and take away valuable information about young learners. Tackle assignments and projects with enthusiasm and professionalism. Your full participation in this program will prepare you to create the best possible experiences for children and families. EC LEARN, your instructor and your coaches are here to support your success in this program.