



## **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 of Professional Recognition 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 support so participants can reach the goal of obtaining their CDA credential. The program is divided into two semesters and 10 modules. 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 participate in class sessions, but will be guided when creating a Professional Portfolio, practicing for the CDA exam and applying online for their credential. In addition to support from the CDA instructor and the EC LEARN Professional Development Coordinator; participants will receive support while working on their Professional Portfolio for up to six months after the completion of the program. Our comprehensive CDA preparation guides participants to success!

#### **Course Curriculum**

EC LEARN's CDA curriculum is divided into ten modules designed around five central 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 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 environment.

### **Delivery Method**

EC LEARN CDA Preparation Program is divided into 40 sessions – 20 each semester. Most of the sessions are virtual – using Zoom. Four of these sessions are scheduled as in-person sessions while the remaining 36 will be virtual. This virtual, live webinar format allows us to come together as a cohort and learn together. We know that we learn not only from an instructor but from each other. We have built in several in-person sessions which allow for some hands-on learning and mingling, but if you are unable to join in-person due to distance, transportation or child care, you can join virtually or complete a make-up independent study for the session.

Our virtual sessions use a hybrid model. Participants will complete and submit a pre-assignment prior to attending a 2-hour Zoom session. Participants will be awarded three-clock training hours for each session. Pre-assignments are due by Monday at midnight before each session. In-person classes will be three hours in length and will take place in EC LEARN's training room (7300 Turfway Rd. Suite 530, Florence, KY 41042)

EC LEARN has created an online course using LifterLMS as a tool for managing coursework and assignments. The course can be accessed on a computer, iPad or a mobile phone at <https://www.eclearncda.org/>. It is used by EC LEARN staff, CDA instructors and CDA participants to manage the EC LEARN CDA preparation program course. Participants will receive a login when they join an EC LEARN CDA cohort. The course is divided into modules for each focus area, and modules contain individual lessons with session information, additional resources, assignments, and CDA professional portfolio work.

### **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 support 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 (Semester 1) and \$500.00 for the CDA (Semester 2). Funds are not to exceed \$1,000.00. The scholarship funds are paid directly to EC LEARN.

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.

#### Self-Pay

If a participant is not eligible for the above funding, then 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 (\$1,000) prior to the first CDA session or divided into two payments (\$500 each) due at the beginning of each semester.

***Payments must be made on time as stated in the agreement for participants to receive credit for the coursework.***

#### Textbooks and Supplies

- You will need two textbooks which need to be purchased at the beginning of the CDA Preparation Program and will be used in both the first and second semester.
  - Essentials for Working with Young Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (You do NOT need the workbook)
  - Competency Standards Book for age focus (green preschool; yellow infant/toddler, magenta birth – 5; or blue family child care)

To order from the CDA Council Bookstore, visit [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org). EC LEARN also has copies of the necessary books and you can also purchase them directly from EC LEARN.

*\* If you receive the KY Non-college Scholarship, \$50 can be reimbursed to you by your supporting child care program.*

- 2-inch binder and 10 tabs for handouts. At the beginning of each semester, participants will receive a packet of handouts for all the modules in that semester.
- At the end of the course, you will need a 1.5 inch binder for your CDA Professional Portfolio. This professional portfolio is a collection of documents, resources, and written reflections that demonstrates an early childhood educator's professional competence. You will be creating your CDA Professional Portfolio using the E-Portfolio tool throughout the course.

#### Online CDA Council Application Fee

When participants complete the coursework, there is a cost of \$525 which is due in full when applying online at the Council for Professional Recognition. Participants may be eligible for a Kentucky grant award to cover this cost.

#### Attendance

Attendance at each session is required 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 that life happens, and participants may need to miss a class session. Please notify your instructor by phone or email if you will not be at a session. If a participant misses a class, they will need to make up the coursework (see below for details). ***Participants who miss three classes within a semester of the program will be asked to meet with their CDA instructor and the EC LEARN staff to discuss their commitment to the program and to plan for reengagement.*** 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 scheduled time**

### **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) they will need to complete a make-up independent study. Each scholar will have three free make-up independent sessions each semester. If they miss more than three sessions in a semester, the cost of each additional make-up independent study will be \$10. EC LEARN will invoice the CDA scholar for make-up fees, which can be paid online using a credit or debit card.

- Independent studies have been created for each of the 40 CDA courses. If a participant does not attend a class session, an independent study will be emailed to the scholar. **This make-up needs to be completed within two weeks of the missed class session.** When the completed make-up independent study is emailed to the instructor, three hours of credit for the make-up independent study will be awarded in COLT.
- If scholars owe any fees for make-up independent studies, they need to be paid to EC LEARN by the end of the CDA Preparation Program for the CDA scholar to receive documentation of their 120 hours of coursework.

### **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 Participants will access weekly announcements on the online course's home page.

### **Expected Professional Behavior**

Respect for yourself, classmates, and the instructor 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.

The following behaviors are unacceptable:

- Carrying on a conversation that interferes with the learning of others
- Lack of participation or sleeping
- Excessive talking or disrupting the class session
- Use of phone or text messaging during class sessions unless asked to do so for an activity
- Any sign of smoking, vaping or use of drugs/alcohol during class sessions

Expectations for virtual, live webinar (Zoom) sessions include:

- Use the chat to sign-in at the beginning of each session and sign-out at the end of each session.
- Keep your camera on throughout the entire Zoom session to verify presence and participation.

- No smoking, vaping or using alcoholic beverages or drugs during the Zoom session.

Expectations for in-person sessions include:

- Be respectful of training property and keep it clean!
- Share ideas with the entire group rather than having sidebar conversations.
- No alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, firearms or other dangerous weapons can be brought to any class sessions.

**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.**

All CDA scholars are expected to be present, attentive and participate in all class sessions. For virtual sessions, cameras must be on and CDA scholars need to attend the entire length of the class session to receive credit in COLT.

### **Weapons-free Workplace**

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 participants continue this journey in their 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 their 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 the 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 the requirements of this program. If a student has any special needs related to their participation in this program, including identified visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical impairments, communication disorder, and/or specific learning disability that may influence their performance in this program, they should discuss with the EC LEARN Professional Development Coordinator 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 using other people's words, make sure that quotation marks are used, and the sources are cited.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

The goal of this course is to not only learn, remember and recite the content knowledge, but to implement the knowledge into your work. AI is now a part of our everyday world and can be a useful

tool when processing knowledge. However, using AI to complete pre-assignments or CDA professional portfolio assignments can bypass the mental effort required to master critical thinking, problem-solving, and original analysis of presented concepts. Passing off AI-created content as your own is a form of academic misconduct. AI is not always factual or correct. While AI systems are powerful tools for processing information, they operate on probabilities and pattern matching rather than a true understanding of facts. Course content should come from the Essentials textbook and class sessions, not AI. CDA course assignments should be in your own words sharing your understanding and mental effort of the course content presented.

### **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 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 a participant decides they are unable to complete the CDA Preparation Program, they **must** inform the instructor, the EC LEARN Professional Development Coordinator or Support Staff, and their Child Care Aware Early Care and Education PD 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!**

Kentucky Scholarship recipients who drop the EC LEARN CDA course in the middle of either the first or second semester, may owe EC LEARN a fee if they reenroll in an EC LEARN CDA Preparation Program in the future. EC LEARN can only invoice the state of Kentucky for completed CDA hours. Therefore, if make-up independent studies are not completed or submitted, EC LEARN cannot invoice for the full amount of the state funding and fees may be applied to the participant. If you are leaving the EC LEARN CDA program, you will NOT have any additional fees to EC LEARN if you complete an entire semester (including submitting all make-up independent studies.)

### **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. Participants' full participation in this program will prepare them to create the best possible experiences for children and families. EC LEARN, your instructor and portfolio support staff are here to support each participant's success in this program.