



**EC LEARN**  
**Child Development Associate**  
**(CDA)**  
**Preparation Program**

# What is EC LEARN?

EC LEARN (Early Childhood Learning Education Assessment Resource Network) was established in June 2020 to provide critical early childhood education resources to families, early childhood professionals, and employers in 8 Northern Kentucky counties: **Boone, Carroll, Campbell, Grant, Gallatin, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton.**

As a local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency, we understand the importance of quality early learning experiences for all children and their families as well as the critical role quality childcare plays in helping to boost the region's economy.

We train and develop early childhood professionals and educate families and employers to increase their awareness of early childhood education resources. We also help professionals earn their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

EC LEARN is proud that the work we do has a lifelong impact on the children, families, and early childhood professionals we serve as well as the future of the entire Northern Kentucky region.



## Provide

Identify and develop resources for children, family, and workforce to increase access to affordable child care.



## Partner

Partnering with early childhood professionals, school districts, community and businesses.



## Educate

Train and develop early childhood professionals. Educate families on quality early learning experiences.



[HTTPS://ECLARN.ORG](https://eclearn.org)



[@ECLARNOFFICIAL](https://www.instagram.com/eclearnofficial)

## What is a CDA?

- A competency-based credential awarded to individuals who work with children ages birth to 5 years
- The purpose of the program is to enhance the quality of child care by defining, evaluating and recognizing the competence of child care providers and home visitors



The Child Development Associate, or **CDA**, is a person who is able to meet the specific needs of children and who, with parents and other adults, works to nurture children’s physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework.

The CDA® national credentialing program is a professional development opportunity for early educators working in a variety of settings with children ages birth to 5 years old and their families to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the early childhood education field. The program is designed to assess and credential early childhood education professionals using multiple sources of evidence, including an exam, observation, and a professional portfolio. By earning a CDA credential in either of the following settings, an educator demonstrates a commitment to career advancement and professionalism.

- Center-Based Infant-Toddler
- Center-Based Preschool
- Family Child Care
- Home Visitor

## Who administers a CDA?

For more than four decades, the Council has pivoted to respond to evolving best practices in early childhood education, advances in technology, and the growing diversity of individuals who are pursuing ECE as a career for the betterment of our profession, our educators and our children.



### **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.

<http://www.cdacouncil.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/cdacouncil/>

# CDA Eligibility Requirements

All requirements must be met before starting the application process.

## EDUCATION

Any time prior to applying:

- Earn a high school diploma, GED or be enrolled as a junior or senior in a high school career and technical program in early childhood education.
- Complete 120 hours of formal early childhood education training, covering the growth and development of children ages 3 to 5 years, with no fewer than 10 training hours in each of the eight CDA® subject areas.

## EXPERIENCE

Within 3 years of submitting your application:

- Obtain 480 hours of professional work experience in a center-based setting with children ages 3 to 5 years.

## Choosing a Setting

### Center-Based Infant-Toddler

***Work with children birth to 36 months.***

The Infant-Toddler center-based setting is a state-approved child development center where a candidate can be observed working with a group of at least 3 children ages birth through 36 months, with at least one of the sub-groups. The program must have at least 10 children enrolled, not necessarily in the candidate's group, and at least two early educators working with the children on a regular basis.

**Center-Based, Infant-Toddler**  
Work with children ages birth-36 months

### Center-Based Preschool

***Work with children ages 3 to 5 years old.***

The Preschool center-based setting is a state-approved child development center where a candidate can be observed working with at least 8 children, all of whom are ages 3 to 5 years. The program must have at least 10 children enrolled, not necessarily in the candidate's group, and at least two early educators working with the children on a regular basis.

**Center-Based, Preschool**  
Work with children ages 3-5 years old

### Family Child Care

***Work with children ages birth to 5 years.***

A Family Child Care setting is a family child care home where a candidate can be observed working with at least two children 5 years old or younger who are not related to the candidate by blood or marriage. The setting must meet at least the minimum level of applicable state and/or local regulations. Family Child Care settings are also eligible in localities where there is no regulation of family child care.

**Family Child Care**  
Work with children ages birth-5 years old

## Six Steps to CDA

### Step One

- 120 hours of training in 8 Subject Areas (minimum of 10 in each area)

### Step Two

- 480 hours of Experience

### Step Three

- Complete a Professional Portfolio
- Gather Family Questionnaires

### Step Four

- Identify CDA Professional Development Specialist
- Apply Online

### Step Five

- Complete the CDA Exam
- Complete the Verification Visit

### Step Six

- Wait for Credential Decision by the Council

# The Verification Visit

The Verification Visit is a component of the CDA credentialing process, where the candidate will be observed working with children/families as a lead teacher in a specific age group.

During the visit, the Council-approved, CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialist™ will go to the candidate's place of work and review the candidate's Professional Portfolio, observe the candidate working with children/families, and conduct a reflective dialogue about the candidate's strengths and areas of growth. The PD Specialist will submit the evaluation and scores electronically to the Council.

## The R.O.R. Model

The CDA Verification Visit has three parts based on the *R.O.R. Model™*:

*Review - Observe - Reflect.* The R.O.R. Model represents the tasks undertaken by the CDA PD Specialist that contribute to the assessment of Candidate competency. During the Verification Visit, the PD Specialist will:

**Review** the contents of the Candidate's *Professional Portfolio* (formerly the Professional Resource File), training transcripts/certificates and *Family Questionnaires*.

**Observe** the Candidate working with children, recording criterion evidence where applicable.

**Reflect** with the Candidate, focusing on the Candidate's areas of strength or growth found in the Portfolio or seen during the Observation.

# The CDA Exam

The CDA Exam is a component of the credentialing process. The exam is a 65-question, computer-based exam that is taken at a local Pearson VUE testing site. It is the candidate's responsibility to schedule the exam after applying for and receiving the *Ready to Schedule Notice* from the Council.

The CDA Exam questions will test the candidate's knowledge of basic early childhood best practices based on the CDA Competency Goals and the thirteen Functional Areas. Once the exam is completed, the scores are sent to the Council electronically.



<http://www.pearsonvue.com/cdaexam/>

## Local Pearson Vue Testing Locations:

**Northern Kentucky University  
Testing Services**  
1 Nunn Drive  
University Center 101  
Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099

**Gateway Community & Technical  
College**  
500 Technology Way  
Florence, Kentucky 41042

**BraySun Learning**  
300 Dixie Hwy, Suite 40  
Edgewood, Kentucky 41017

# EC LEARN's CDA Preparation Program Curriculum



## EC LEARN's Five CDA Focus Areas

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

## Eight CDA Subject Areas

- Planning a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Advancing children's physical and intellectual development.
- Supporting children's social and emotional development.
- Building productive relationships with families.
- Managing an effective program.
- Maintaining a commitment to professionalism.
- Observing and recording children's behavior.
- Understanding principles of child development and learning.

## Six CDA Competency Standards

1. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy and responsive learning environment
2. To advance physical and intellectual competence
3. To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance
4. To establish positive and productive partnerships with families
5. To ensure a well-run purposeful program responsive to participant needs
6. To maintain a commitment to professionalism

## EC LEARN CDA Preparation Program Framework

Session Number	Date	Session Title	Related Competency Standard(s)	CDA Subject Area(s)	Core Content Subject Area(s)
<i>PROFESSIONALISM</i>					
1.1	In Person	Commitment to Professionalism	Competency Standard VI	6	3
1.2	Virtual/Zoom	Ethics of Professionalism	Competency Standard VI	6	3
1.3	In Person	Evaluation of Quality	Competency Standard V	5	7
1.4	Virtual/Zoom	Principles and Theories	Competency Standard II & III	8	1
<i>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</i>					
1.5	Virtual/Zoom	Maintaining a Safe Environment	Competency Statement I	1	1 & 7
1.6	Virtual/Zoom	Children's Nutrition	Competency Statement I	1 & 4	2
1.7	Virtual/Zoom	Keeping Children Healthy	Competency Statement I	1 & 4	2
1.8	In Person	Keeping Children Safe	Competency Statement I	1 & 4	2
<i>HOW CHILDREN LEARN AND DEVELOP</i>					
1.9	Virtual/Zoom	Overview of Child Development	Competency Standard II	8	1
1.10	Virtual/Zoom	Learning Through Play	Competency Standard II	8 & 2	1
1.11	Virtual/Zoom	Responsive Learning Environments	Competency Standards I & III	2	4
1.12	Virtual/Zoom	Positive Guidance	Competency Standard III	3	4
<i>INTENTIONAL &amp; REFLECTIVE TEACHING</i>					
1.13	Virtual/Zoom	Developmentally Appropriate Experiences	Competency Standard II	1 & 2	4
1.14	Virtual/Zoom	Evaluating Learning Environments	Competency Standard V	1 & 8	1
1.15	In Person	Observing Young Children	Competency Standard V	2 & 7	4
1.16	Virtual/Zoom	Exploring Curriculum and Planning	Competency Standard II&V	3 & 7	5 & 6
1.17	Virtual/Zoom	Individualized Planning	Competency Standard II & V	7	5 & 7
1.18	In Person	Exploring Open-Ended Art	Competency Standard II	2 & 3	4
<i>COMMUNITY AND FAMILY COLLABORATING RELATIONSHIPS</i>					
1.19	Virtual/Zoom	Family Partnerships	Competency Standard IV	4	6
1.20	Virtual/Zoom	Community Partnerships	Competency Standard IV	5	6

Session Number	Date	Session Title	Related Competency Standard(s)	CDA Subject Area(s)	Core Content Subject Area(s)
<i>PROFESSIONALISM</i>					
2.1	In Person	Setting Yourself Up for Success in the ECE Field	Competency Standard VI	6	3
<i>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</i>					
2.2	Virtual/Zoom	Promoting Health, Safety, Nutrition and Wellness	Competency Standard I	1	2
<i>HOW CHILDREN LEARN AND DEVELOP</i>					
2.3	Virtual/Zoom	Developmental Milestones in Practice	Competency Standard II & III	8	1
2.4	Virtual/Zoom	Supporting Physical Development	Competency Standard II	2	1
2.5	Virtual/Zoom	Supporting Emotional Development	Competency Standard III	3	1
2.6	Virtual/Zoom	Supporting Social Development	Competency Standard III	3	1
2.7	Virtual/Zoom	Supporting Language Development	Competency Standard II	2	1
2.8	Virtual/Zoom	Supporting Cognitive Development	Competency Standard II	2	1
2.9	In Person	Content Areas: Math, Science and Social Studies	Competency Standard II	2	4
2.10	Virtual/Zoom	Content Areas: The Arts	Competency Standard II & III	2 & 3	4
<i>INTENTIONAL &amp; REFLECTIVE TEACHING</i>					
2.11	Virtual/Zoom	Child Assessment and Portfolios	Competency Standard V	7	5
2.12	Virtual/Zoom	Supporting Positive Guidance	Competency Standard III	3 & 4	1
2.13	Virtual/Zoom	Learning Environments	Competency Standard II & III	3 & 1	4
2.14	In Person 6-9pm	Supporting Literacy Skills	Competency Standard II	2	4
2.15	Virtual/Zoom 6-8pm	Teacher-Made Resources for your Environment	Competency Standard II & III	7 & 5	4
<i>COMMUNITY AND FAMILY COLLABORATING RELATIONSHIPS</i>					
2.16	Virtual/Zoom 6-8pm	Communicating with Families	Competency Standard IV	4	6
2.17	Virtual/Zoom 6-8pm	Community Resources	Competency Standard IV	5	6
2.18	In Person 6-9pm	Advocating for Children, Families and ECE	Competency Standard VI	6	3
<i>PROFESSIONALISM</i>					
2.19	Virtual/Zoom 6-8pm	Program Management	Competency Standard V	5	7
2.20	In Person 6-9pm	Putting It All Together. . .	Competency Standard VI	6	3

# EC LEARN's Hybrid Model

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 on 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.

## Funding Opportunities

EC LEARN is working with a variety of community partners to help fund the program. If you are not eligible for the Kentucky scholarship below, we will work with you to find appropriate funding opportunities.

### Kentucky Non-College Scholarship

#### *Scholarship Eligibility Requirements*

1. Be a Kentucky Resident
2. Work at one of these facilities at least 20 hours per week: State-licensed Child Care Center (Kentucky), State-Certified or Licensed Family Child Care Home (Kentucky) or Preschool Program within a Kentucky Public School District

Contact Hallie Barth at [Hallie.barth@uky.edu](mailto:Hallie.barth@uky.edu) or (859) 442-4161



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.

### Other Funding Options:

#### **EC LEARN CDA Scholarship**

EC LEARN received a grant from the Skyline Community Fund towards our CDA program. Participants who 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.

# Why choose EC LEARN to get your CDA?



## Coursework:

- Coursework is meaningfully designed and implemented by quality instructors.
- We have built our curriculum so that topics are woven together as they are in real life.
- We integrate the 8 CDA subject areas into five major focus areas and each class builds upon previous classes.



## Extensions

- Supports are in place and the entire agency is guiding you toward success!
- Fieldtrips, guest speakers and make-it, take-its are part of our plan.
- Individualized instruction is a priority, and the instructor and coaches offer one-on-one support.



## Relationships

- We know that the best way to establish and grow relationships is through hands-on experiences.
- Your experience will be rewarding and lead to lasting networking as you continue your career journey.
- You will be encouraged to form collaborative and lasting relationships with children and families.

# • EC LEARN CDA PROGRAM •

## MEET THE TEAM

**ANDREA HEIL**

aheil@eclearn.org



My name is Andrea and I am the Professional Development Specialist who coordinates the CDA Program. I have been in the field of early childhood for over 30 years and have experience working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-agers, families, and adult learners. Along my journey, I received a bachelor of science in elementary education from the University of Dayton in 1991 and a master of arts in interdisciplinary early childhood education from Northern Kentucky University in 2006. My passion lies with inspiring early childhood professionals through training. Outside of work, I enjoy outdoor adventures traveling with my best friend and husband in our camper, spending time with family and friends, gardening and reading.

**BARB HERRON**

bherron129@gmail.com



My name is Barb and I am a CDA Instructor for EC LEARN. I have been in the field of early care and education for nearly 30 years. My career began as a preschool teacher where I taught 3 to 5-year-old children through a constructivist lens. After leaving the classroom my role has included coaching and mentoring adult learners, impacting teacher interactions and the application of pedagogy. I currently hold the Position of Executive Director at ELC, Inc @ NKU and UC. As a CDA instructor I am able to combine my experiences and knowledge while connecting with and influencing theory to practice. Working with the EC Learn staff and coaches to further develop teachers in the field is one of the most rewarding aspects of my career.

**BRIDGET JACKSON**

bjackson@eclearn.org



My name is Bridget and I am a CDA Instructor for EC LEARN. I oversee attendance, make-up work and award ECE TRIS credit for all our CDA cohorts. I have been in the field of ECE almost 24 years. I have held almost every position from aide/floater to assistant director. I earned my CDA and went on to graduate with my associates degree in interdisciplinary early childhood education from Gateway Community and Technical College in 2009. I am working on my bachelor's degree slowly but surely! I have lived in NKY all my life - I grew up in Florence, KY. I have been married to my husband, Erik, for 12 years and we live in Fort Wright, KY. We have 12 nieces and nephews who keep us busy! I enjoy baking, being with family and friends, the outdoors, and a good cup of coffee.

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## JENN MALICOAT

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## PAIGE DOWNING

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## HALLIE BARTH

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My name is Jenn and I am an Early Childhood Specialist and part of my job is to coach CDA participants. My journey in the field began when I taught first grade after graduating with a degree in early childhood education from the University of Dayton. Later, I received a master's degree in reading science and opened the first ever preschool program at a school in East Price Hill the same year. This is where my love for all things early childhood and building a solid foundation for children really flourished. I have a passion for education and believe that obtaining skills should be a hands-on, fun, and rewarding experience that fosters a lifetime love of learning. Outside of work, I enjoy iced coffee, reading, escape rooms, and spending time with my husband and two sons.

My name is Paige and I am an Early Childhood Specialist which included coaching for CDA. My passion for early childhood education began in 2006 when I started working with infants and toddlers at a local early childhood center.

Here I learned the importance of establishing relationships with children and families to create a nurturing environment where young children's growth and development can flourish. I earned my CDA in 2007 before obtaining my bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary early childhood education from Northern Kentucky University in 2011. I enjoy helping early childhood professionals improve program practices that will deliver strong outcomes for children and families. In my personal time, I enjoy exploring the outdoors with my fiancé and toddler son, editing my home, canoe trips, and spending time with my family on their farm in Pendleton County.

My name is Hallie and I am a Professional Development Coach with Child Care Aware of Kentucky. Part of my work involves connecting early childhood professionals to local CDA classes and providing information on Scholarship opportunities. My bachelor's degree in social work helped me land my first job in Northern Kentucky at a non-profit agency, where I assisted families in locating quality child care options. I've now been in the field of early care and education for nearly 22 years. My favorite part about my job is coaching teachers on the CDA application process, and furthering their professional development at the college level. When I'm not working, I enjoy traveling with my husband, cheering on my three stepsons at their sporting events, and cuddling my beagle, Sophie.

