



Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential Guidelines



**What is the Child
Development Associate
(CDA) Credential?**

Child Development Associate Credential

- The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is designed to assess and credential early childhood education professionals.
- The Child Development Associate (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.



Council for Professional Recognition, Advancing the professional development and recognition of early childhood education. (2017, February 10)
Retrieved from <http://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential>

Child Development Associate Credential

- CDAs have knowledge of how to put the CDA Competency Standards into practice and understanding of why those standards help children move with success from one developmental stage to another. Put simply, CDAs know how to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children.
- The Council recognizes and credentials professionals who work in all types of early care and education programs - Head Start, pre-k, infant-toddler, family child care, and home visitor programs.



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Alignment to Occupations

Job Alignment



- The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential aligns directly to four areas:
 - Center-Based, Preschool
 - Work with children ages three to five years old
 - Center-Based, Infant-Toddler
 - Work with children ages birth—36 months
 - Home-Based, Family Child Care
 - Work with children ages birth to five years old
 - Home Visitor
 - Work with families of children ages birth to five years old

Employment Outlook

The table below shows the estimated Employment Wage Statistics for individuals in Tennessee employed as Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education in 2015.

Rate Type / Statistical Type	Entry Level	Median	Experienced
Annual wage or salary	* \$17,115	\$23,841	\$37,080
Hourly wage	\$8.25	\$11.45	\$17.85

Source: TN Dept of Labor & Workforce Dev, Div Emp Sec, LMI

The median wage is the estimated 50th percentile; 50 percent of workers in an occupation earn less than the median wage, and 50 percent earn more than the median wage. Entry level and Experienced wage rates represent the means of the lower 1/3 and upper 2/3 of the wage distribution, respectively. Data is from an annual survey.

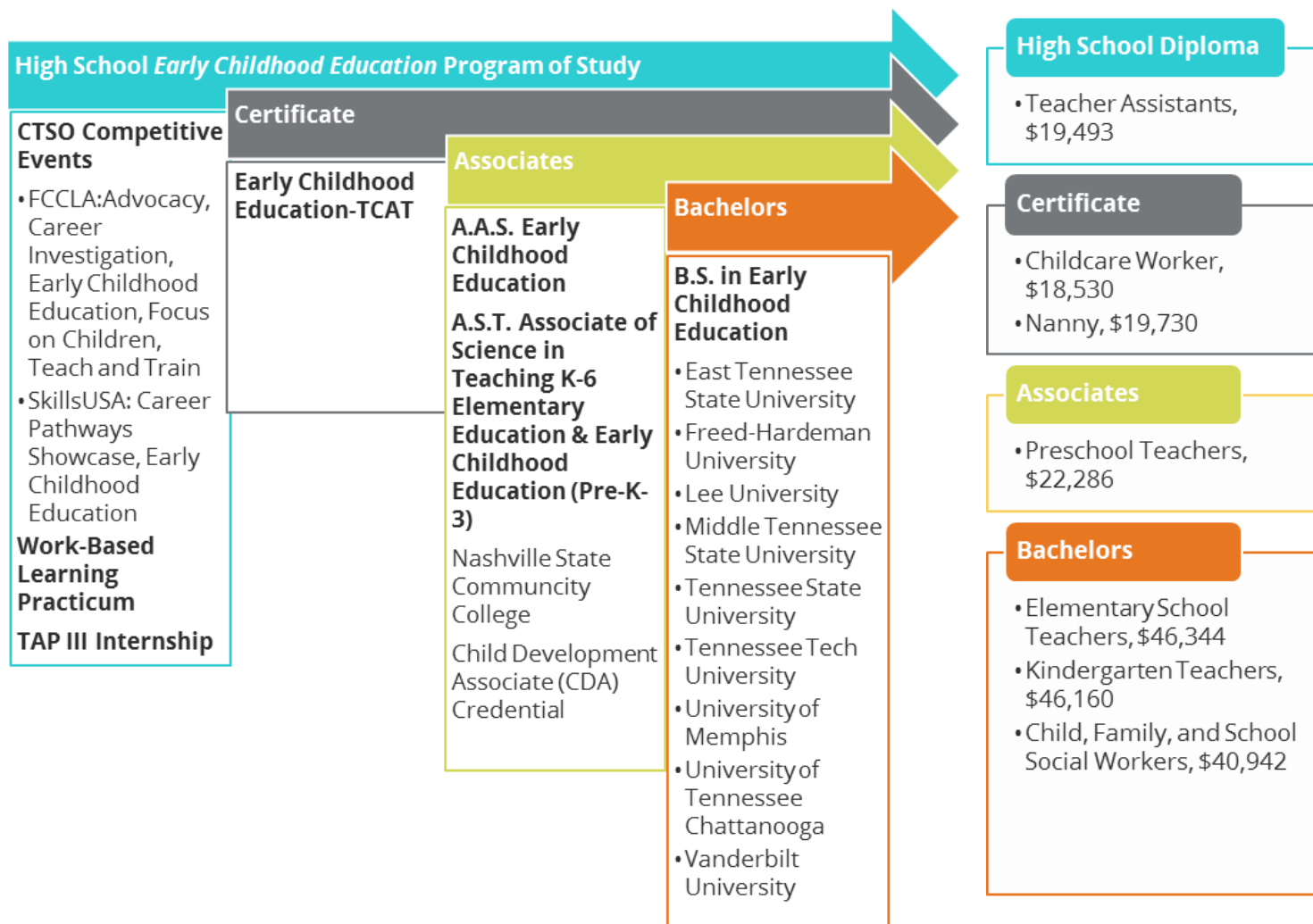
*The Childhood Development Associate Credential is industry valued and recognized that leads to high quality employability that translates into job opportunities **above entry level positions.**

Employment Outlook

Early Childhood Education Related Occupations with the Most Annual Average Openings in Tennessee (2014-2022)

Occupations	Total Percent Change	Total Annual Avg. Openings
Childcare Workers	26.50%	1,545
Elementary School Teachers	20.00%	1,270
Kindergarten Teachers	21.20%	235
Preschool Teachers	40.50%	715
Special Education Teachers, Preschool, Kindergarten, and Elementary School	17.40%	165
Teacher Assistants	15.30%	855
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	13.00%	150
Source: TN Dept of Labor & Workforce Dev, Div Emp Sec, R&S Downloaded: 02/15/2017 10:42 AM		

Early Childhood Education Seamless Pathway





Appropriate Pathways for CDA

Importance of a Pathway

- Industry certifications must be tied to a student's program of study and serve either as a complement or capstone to a student's learning experience.
- Stand-alone certifications with no ties to a student's learning experience place the student in jeopardy of being unprepared not only to sit for the certification but also to apply the content moving forward in a career path.

Education & Training

Program of Study	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Early Childhood Education Careers	Early Childhood Education Careers I (6015)	Early Childhood Education Careers II (6016)	Early Childhood Education Careers III (6017) -or- Dual Enrollment Early Childhood Education Careers (4107)	Early Childhood Education Careers IV (6135) -or- Dual Enrollment Early Childhood Education Careers (4107)
				Industry Certification: Child Development Associate (CDA)

Early Childhood Education Pathway

- CDA Credential will be delivered within the ***Early Childhood Education POS only***.
 - *Early Childhood Education POS* is appropriately aligned to the content required to pass the CDA Credential.
 - The CDA National Credentialing Program is a professional development opportunity for early educators working with children ages birth to five years old to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the early childhood education field. The CDA credentialing program assesses candidates using multiple sources evidence, including an exam, observation and professional portfolio with resources, and competency statements prepared by the candidate.



CDA Competency Standards

- The **CDA Competency Standards** are the national standards used to evaluate a caregiver's performance with children and families during the CDA assessment process. The Competency Standards are divided into six Competency Goals, which are statements of a general purpose or goal for caregiver behavior. The Competency Goals apply to all child care settings.



CDA Competency Standards

- The six goals are defined in detail in the 13 Functional Areas, which describe the major tasks or functions that a caregiver must complete in order to carry out the Competency Goal. A Developmental Context, a brief overview of relevant child development principles, explains each Functional Area.
- Although the six Competency Goals are the same for all settings (center-based, family child care, home visitor), the Functional Area definitions and sample behaviors differ for each setting and age group. The setting-specific materials available through the Council's [online bookstore](#) include detailed information appropriate for each setting.

Council for Professional Recognition, Advancing the professional development and recognition of early childhood education. (2017, February 14) Retrieved from <http://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential>



Earning a CDA Credential

CDA Credential Settings



- There are four CDA Credential Settings that best describe an individual's work with children to earn a CDA as noted in the graphic.
- Center-Based Programs and the Family Child Care Program have the same application and hour submission process. Home Visitor Programs work slightly differently.

Center-Based Programs

Preschool

- A center-based preschool setting is a state-approved child development center where a Candidate can be observed working with a group of at least eight children, all of whom are aged three through five years old. In addition, a center-based program must have
 1. at least ten children enrolled in the program (not necessarily in the Candidate's group) and
 2. at least two caregivers working with the children on a regular basis.

Infant/Toddler

- A center-based infant-toddler setting is a state-approved child development center where a Candidate can be observed working with a group of at least three children, all of whom are under age three. In addition, a center-based program must have
 1. at least ten children enrolled in the program (not necessarily in the Candidate's group) and
 2. at least two caregivers working with the children on a regular basis.

Family Child Care Programs (Home-Based)

Family Child Care Programs

- 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.



Home Visitor Programs

Home Visitor Programs

- A home visitor setting is an established program of home visits (to families with children five years old or younger) that supports parents in meeting the needs of their young children. In this setting, regular home visits are the primary method of program delivery. Candidates for a Home Visitor credential follow a slightly different assessment process.



Prepare for Application

Anytime Before Application:

- 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 birth to five years old, with no fewer than 10 training hours in each of the 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 operation
 - Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
 - Observing and recording children's behavior
 - Understanding principles of child development and learning



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After Submission of Application

Within three years of submitting application:

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

Within six months of submitting application:

- Prepare your CDA Professional Portfolio - You are required to put together a collection of reference materials related to your work. Please follow the detailed instructions in your *Competency Standards* book to prepare your CDA Professional Portfolio.
- Find a CDA Professional Development (PD) Specialist - To learn more about CDA PD Specialist's role in the CDA credentialing process [click here](#).

CDA Application Process

Apply

- Apply online for your CDA Credential using the YourCDA online application system or complete a paper application provided in the CDA Preschool CDA Competency Standards Book.
- The non-refundable / non-transferable application fee of **\$425** must be submitted with your application. Make sure to secure the funds before you submit your application.
- Once your CDA application has been reviewed and accepted you will receive a Ready to Schedule notification from the Council.

Earning a CDA

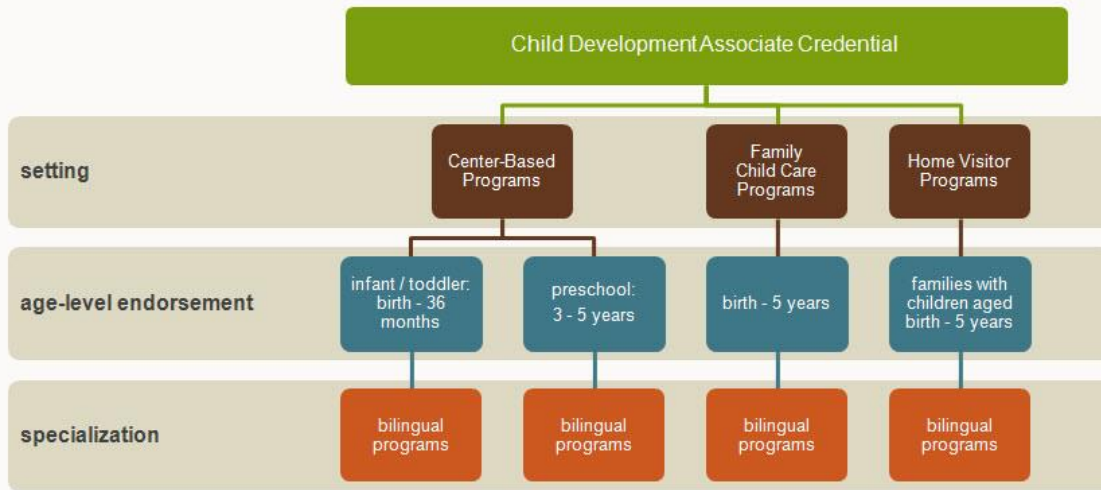
Demonstrate

- Once you receive your Ready to Schedule notification from the Council, you are ready to schedule your CDA Verification Visit and CDA Exam.

Earn

- Scores are electronically submitted to the Council by the CDA PD Specialist and Pearson Vue testing center.
- A Council committee will review the results of your assessment and render a decision whether to award you the CDA Credential. If your credential is awarded, the official Child Development Associate® credential will be mailed to you. If the committee decides you need more training, the Council will let you know the next steps to take to earn the Credential.

Bilingual Specialization



- A bilingual setting is a child development program that has specific goals for achieving bilingual development in children; where two languages are consistently used in daily activities; and where parents are helped to understand the goals and to support children's bilingual development. Candidates for bilingual specialization must
 1. work in a bilingual program that requires the Candidate to speak both languages daily and consistently and
 2. have a working knowledge of two languages.





Assessment and Registration Details

Assessment Details

Exam Codes	Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential
Website	www.cdacouncil.org http://www.pearsonvue.com/cdaexam/
Exam Description	The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is the best first step on the path of career advancement in ECE.
Number of Questions	65 questions
Type of Questions	Multiple forms of each Exam have been designed. The version given to any candidate will be chosen at random by PearsonVUE. The CDA Exam will have 65 multiple-choice questions. Five of the questions will have a photo and a short narrative, followed by a multiple-choice question about each scenario.
Length of Test	1 hour 45 minutes
Price	\$425.00

Registration Information

Schedule Your CDA Exam

- CDA candidates who have applied to the Council for Professional Recognition and have received a *Ready to Schedule Notice* may schedule the CDA exam. There are two ways a Candidate can schedule the CDA exam. Testing times and locations are available on a “first come, first serve” basis.

Schedule online

- To schedule the exam online, candidates must first create a **Pearson VUE web account**. When creating your account, you will need the candidate ID number from your *Ready to Schedule Notice* that you received from the Council.

Schedule by phone

- To schedule your CDA exam by phone, call 1-866-507-5627. You may schedule the CDA exam anytime between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. (CST), Monday through Friday. *Do not call the Council for Professional Recognition to schedule your CDA exam.*

Registration and Testing Center Information

CDA exam accommodations

- It is the council's commitment to provide a standardized and fair assessment for all eligible CDA candidates. Prior to submitting the CDA application, a CDA candidate with a documented disability should submit the **Special Accommodations Request Form** to the council.
- **Click here to learn more about accommodations provided by Pearson VUE.**

CDA exam for military personnel

- CDA candidates who are military personnel have access to additional Department of Defense (DoD) test sites. Military personnel who received the *Ready to Schedule Notice* may choose to take the CDA exam at one of the DoD sites.
- **Click here to schedule the CDA exam at a DoD site.**

Click here for a list of testing centers.



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Challenges and Solutions

Challenges



- If a district faces specific challenges (e.g., teacher endorsements or cost of the CDA Credential), CTE directors are encouraged to use different partnership strategies to successfully implement a CDA credentialing program within their school.

Solutions



Partnering with a district nearby offering the *Early Childhood Education* program of study:

- This would allow for the possibility of sending students to another district in order to receive the proper foundation and needed skill set before applying for the CDA credential and taking the exam.

Solutions

Partnering with a local TCAT or community college:

- CTE directors can offer dual enrollment courses within the *Early Childhood Education* program of study to ensure students have access to content to prepare them to be successful in passing the CDA exam.
- The students can attend *Early Childhood Education* classes at the TCAT/community college, or the district could bring in the instructor to teach at the secondary school.

This offers the opportunity to attach the CDA credential to the aligned program of study and have access to an instructor who is properly endorsed.

Scholarships in Tennessee

- Tennessee State University, CDA Scholarship Program
 - Follow this link to access information about TECTA Services and the Child Development Associate (CDA) Scholarship.





Quick Reference

Quick Reference

- Purchase the setting-specific Competency Standards book from the [online bookstore](#). Please be sure to review all contents of the book and CDA section of this website before beginning your online application.
- Before you begin the online application, make sure that you have completed all application requirements including:
 - Training (120 clock hours)
 - 480 hours of work experience
 - Professional Portfolio
 - Family Questionnaires
 - Identify your CDA Professional Development Specialist

[Click here for details on the above requirements.](#)
- Before you begin the online application, be sure to have your director's email address and your PD Specialist ID number ([Find-a-PD-Specialist](#)).
- Once you are ready, register by clicking "New User Registration" to the left.
- Complete the online application, which will include sending statement requests to your director and PD specialist.
- Pay the \$425 application fee / send to the council the payment documentation if agency is paying your fee (you will be prompted when and how to do this).
- Wait for the council to review your application and send you the *Ready to Schedule Notice*. Once you receive it, you may proceed to schedule your CDA Exam with Pearson Vue and your Verification Visit with your PD specialist. **SPECIAL NOTE:** *If you pay with a credit card, you will be able to schedule your Verification Visit immediately and your CDA exam the next day!*
- Continue to check *YourCDA* for status updates.

For More Information

- <http://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential>
- <http://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda>
- <http://www.cdacouncil.org/cda-en-espanol/preguntas-frecuentes/591-cda-credentialing-program-frequently-asked-questions>
- <http://www.pearsonvue.com/cdaexam/>





Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.

Excellence | Optimism | Judgment | Courage | Teamwork