



Department of Teaching, Learning & Leadership
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Are you ready to grow in your role as an early childhood professional?

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a nationally recognized credential for people working with young children ages 0-5 in settings such as infant/toddler classrooms, preschool classrooms, Head Start and family child care. The early childhood education field is constantly evolving, and it is important for educators to stay current with key education practices. The CDA is your "best first step" because it demonstrates your knowledge, skills and abilities when working with young children, as well as your commitment to career advancement and professionalism.

Obtaining your CDA involves:

1. Completing 120 hours of specialized training in 8 subject areas (either online or in a classroom setting with the FRN)
 - 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
2. Putting together a Professional Portfolio (written Statements of Competence and Resource Collection Items)
3. Distributing Family Questionnaires

After completing the above three steps, you submit an application to the National CDA Council. Once your application is approved, there is a Verification Visit (review of the portfolio, observation and reflective dialogue) and a CDA Exam.

Benefits of CDA:

- In person CDA classes provide students with an opportunity to understand about developmentally appropriate practice, network with others in the field, receive innovative ideas and techniques, as well as to obtain increased confidence in their own abilities.
- Scholarships for a portion of the training is available for those who income qualify. The cost for CDA training is \$725.00 which offers a tremendous value for your money.
- Students in CDA classes have free membership to the Family Resource Network Toy Lending Library for a year and can utilize these resources for your entire program.
- Having a CDA enhances your employment opportunities; some early childhood positions require the employee to have a CDA.
- In South Dakota, several colleges allow CDA hours to count for designated college credit hours.
- Obtaining new knowledge and skills in the early childhood field benefits you and the children in your care.

The Family Resource Network is committed to supporting individuals who wish to pursue their professional goals by teaching and mentoring them through the CDA process.

In person classes in both Brookings and Agency Village.