



**HIPPYUSA®**  
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

# **CDA 101**

## **Coordinator Guide**

### **Leading to Educational Advancement Pathway (LEAP)**

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# Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to share best practices used by other coordinators and give guidance when it comes to distributing and administering the CDA Home Visitor Guide.

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# Preface: How to use the CDA 101 Guides

## Which home visitors should receive the CDA 101 Guide?

- Home visitors who choose the CDA pathway on their Educational Goal Worksheet.
- Home visitors who are already pursuing a CDA.
- Home visitors who have expressed interest in pursuing a CDA.
  - It might be a good idea to have printed out copy of the CDA 101 Guide in the office for this purpose rather than printing out a new one for each home visitor.

## When do I give the CDA 101 Guide to my home visitors?

Generally speaking, you will give this guide to the home visitor right after or shortly after they complete the Educational Goal Worksheet. There will be some instances where you might present this guide to home visitors during a review/update of their goal setting sheet.

## Other Instructions

When distributing the CDA 101 Guide it is recommended to give the home visitor only what is needed. For example, a home visitor who knows they want a Preschool CDA only needs to get the preface, Part 1: Guide to the Preschool CDA and the Preschool CDA checklist, thereby receiving none of the home visitor CDA related materials. If a home visitor is undecided, then you can present them with the entire manual.

## Tips and Suggestions for Starting Out

- **Create a cohort:** Some programs have found it to be advantageous to start home visitors down the CDA pathway in groups. These groups support each other through group study and homework sections and can trouble shoot problems together. You may want to work together with sites around your state or in other parts of the country to create cohorts that communicate online.
- **Contact personnel at a local college:** It might be good to contact the CDA coordinator or the early childhood education department coordinator at a local college to present options and information about the CDA process at a staff meeting. They can discuss financial aid options, certificate planning and other options in detail.

# Introductory Information on the CDA

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

The **Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)** is a nationally recognized entry level credential in the field of Early Childhood Education. It is issued by the **Council for Professional Recognition**. The CDA is designed for those individuals who are working with young children in all settings. The purpose of this credential is to prepare individuals to meet the specific needs of children and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth in a child development framework.

## Why is the CDA useful?

Many employers in the early childhood education and care field require candidates without a degree in early education to hold a CDA certificate. If the candidate does not have a CDA, some employers require the candidate to earn one during the first few years of employment. The CDA Credential has many advantages; including providing documented continuing education for staff and providing a platform for professional and career opportunities for recipients. Many view the CDA Credential as an instrument for career advancement in the early childhood care and education profession. The Council for Professional Recognition works to ensure that the CDA is a credible and valid credential recognized by the profession as a vital part of a coordinated system of professional development.

## Is there more than one type of CDA?

Yes, there is more than one type of CDA. Each CDA certificate is developed around a certain type of childcare provider, though it seems the most universally applicable certificate is that of the preschool CDA. Each certificate has slightly different requirements and costs, all of which are outlined on the [CDA website](#) or in the CDA competency standards. The four types of CDA are: **Preschool, Infant/Toddler, Family Childcare and Home Visitor**. The CDA can also be completed in English, Spanish or with a bilingual specialization.

## What Are the General Requirements for a CDA?

- 1) The candidate must have a high school diploma or be a junior or senior in a high school career / technical program in early education.
- 2) The candidate must have 480 hours of experience working with young children. The nature of the work experience depends on the credential being pursued.
- 3) The candidate must have 120 clock hours of formal training. This can be through an approved organization, for-profit, or non-profit college. HIPPY trainings can count towards this 120 clock hours of training if properly documented with certificates.
- 4) Collect specific documentation that shows evidence of practice working with young children.

# How to Pay for the CDA

There are three parts of the CDA that may require money; the CDA manual, the 120 hours of training and the application fee.

**Paying for manuals.** You may be able to buy an office copy of the CDA manual and make copies from it or loan it out to home visitors to reduce costs.

**Paying for CDA training.** Due to the partnership HIPPY USA in-house trainings that are properly documented with lesson plans and certificates can qualify toward the 120 hours of training. In addition Pell grants, state scholarships, federal scholarship, college-based and private scholarships can be used to pay for CDA training if you apply to a college as if you are planning to receive an associate's degree. This is a very common practice. There is no penalty for applying to a college as if you are seeking a degree in order to qualify for financial aid, unless you sign a document saying otherwise. A list of scholarships can be found on the LEAP section of the HIPPY website

**Paying for the application fee.** CDA offers some internal scholarships for the CDA as do some states. Information on those scholarships can be found on the scholarship section of the LEAP website.

# Tips and Suggestions for the CDA “Prepare” Stage

## 120 Hours of Professional Training

It is really easy to get overwhelmed by all the available training options. It is highly encouraged that you direct your home visitors toward nonprofit local colleges. There are many reasons for this: they are less expensive, have online classes, tutoring centers, local professors that can be visited during office hours and can be paid for through state and federal financial aid.

Encourage your home visitors to pursue ‘for-credit’ classes: it allows them to transition to an associate’s degree program easily, is more valued by employers/funders and makes them eligible for more financial aid.

### Highlights

- Use non-profit local colleges if possible.
- Take for-credit classes if possible.

## 480 Hour of Experience

One of the biggest obstacles between home visitors and the preschool CDA can be the experience component. Just remember that the hours of experience can come from volunteer hours. It may also be beneficial for you to develop an agreement with a local state-licensed day care so that your home visitors can obtain volunteer/work hours in a more reliable manner. For the home visitor CDA, it is important to remember that the Council for Professional Recognition is looking for a very different, child care based, skill set.

### Highlights

- These can be volunteer hours for the preschool CDA.
- Find a local child care facility in which to partner.
- The home visitor CDA is based around childcare

## Create a Professional Portfolio/Professional Resource file

Having a cohort of local/statewide/national home visitors will be very helpful during this part of the ‘prepare’ stage. Home visitors will be able to collaborate and have peer review of their work. Other suggestions include having a home visitor who has already received a CDA donate their portfolio/professional resource to the office so that there is an example for other home visitors to use. Home visitors may be able to take a college course that is centered on developing the portfolio.

## Highlights

- Create or utilize web-based tools to create a cohort of home visitors who need to create a portfolio/professional resource file so that they can communicate with each other.
- Have home visitors who already have a CDA give advice to those who are creating portfolios/professional resource files.
- Create or borrow a completed portfolio/professional resource file so that home visitors have an example to work from that is permanently in the office.
- Some colleges offer courses on how to create the CDA portfolio/professional resource file that home visitors can take.

## Creation and Role of the Local Assessment Team (LAT)

Home visitors pursuing the Home visitor CDA will need to select an advisor and parent/community representative. Each of these individuals must meet standards outlined in the home visitor competency standards manual. The home visitor's advisor and parent/community representative are each required to document and attend two home visits; each must last for 1.5 hours. In addition to the observations, the home visitor must collect parent questionnaires

## Highlights

- The home visitor must choose an advisor and parent/community representative.
- The advisor and parent/community representative must each conduct two 1.5 hour home visits to observe the home visitor.

# Tips and Suggestions for the CDA “Apply” Stage

## Send Application in to the Council for Professional Recognition

It is essential that home visitors complete this document correctly. If they are missing information, the Council for Professional Recognition will give them 60 days to correct any issues before the \$425 application fee is forfeited.

It is highly encouraged for your home visitors to apply online for the Preschool CDA; this vastly speeds up the Council for Professional Recognition's response time to problems. Currently the home visitor CDA application must be mailed in.

## Highlights

- Home visitors have 60 days to correct problems with their application before their money is forfeited.

- Home visitors are strongly encouraged to apply online for the Preschool CDA.
- The home visitor CDA application must be mailed in.

### **Pay \$425 Application Fee**

The current fee for the CDA is \$425. This fee must be paid when the application is submitted. The application will not be processed if this fee is not submitted. This fee is non-refundable and is forfeited if the application process is not completed within six months of the Council for Professional Recognition sending notification of approval. There are scholarships that pay these fees. Resources can be found on the CDA [website](#).

- The application fee is non-refundable.
- There are scholarships to cover the fee for some home visitors a list can be found on the CDA [website](#).

### **Confirm availability of site or families for the verification visit**

Part of the preschool CDA application requires the site supervisor authorize the use of their facilities for the verification visit. If you have developed a partnership with a local childcare facility for the purpose of making the CDA process easier for home visitors, then it would be a good idea to confirm that this portion of the application is completed properly. If your home visitor is obtaining the home visitor CDA, be sure to have policies and procedures established for them to ask parents to allow verification visits to occur in their homes. A home visitor will need to have a verification visit take place with two families. The families need to be aware of the differences between the function of a HIPPY home visitor and the roll of a CDA home visitor when the home visitor and observation team come to their homes.

### **Highlights**

- Make sure your home visitor communicates clearly with the site or individuals involved in their verification visits.
- Have policies and procedure established for verification visits that happen with HIPPY families as the duties of a home visitor are very different from the skills demonstrated by a CDA.

## **Tips and Suggestions for the “Verification” Stage**

### **The Verification Visit**

At the preschool CDA visit, the Professional Development (PD) Specialist will use the R.O.R. Model to review, observe and reflect. The PD Specialist will review the candidate’s Professional Portfolio, training documentation and proof of work experience for one hour. She/he will then



conduct a two hour observation of the candidate working directly with children. The visit will end with a one-on-one session to reflect on the candidate's strengths, areas for improvement and goals. If any part of the portfolio is missing, the home visitor has six months to make corrections.

During home visitor CDA verification visits, the council appointed representative will observe the candidate work with the parents and children for 1.5 hours. After the observation the council representative will have an interview that will last for 1.5 hours and cover 10 questions that can be found in the Council Representative Report, which is part of the CDA Competency Standards Manual. Once the interview has been completed, the Local Action Team (LAT) will meet to review the professional resource file, parent questionnaires and each member's observation report. At the end of the LAT meeting, there will be a vote on whether to recommend the applicant to the Council for Professional Recognition for certification.

#### Highlights Preschool CDA

- The verification visit must be held within six months after receiving approval from the Council for Professional Recognition.
- The preschool CDA verification visit is three hours. One hour of portfolio review and two hours of observation.
- You can reschedule the CDA observation for free ahead of time. If you miss a scheduled visit, it will cost \$125 to reschedule.

#### Highlights Home Visitor CDA

- Ensure that participating families are comfortable and understand all aspects of the verification visit.
- The home visitor will have two verification visits each lasting 1.5 hours.
- The home visitor will have a 1.5 hour interview over 10 questions.
- There will be a LAT meeting to review paperwork and vote on whether the applicant should be recommended to the Council for certification.

#### **The CDA Exam for the Preschool CDA**

The candidate will complete a computerized exam at a Pearson VUE testing center. The exam includes 65 multiple choice questions including five that are based on scenarios. Home visitors have an hour and forty-five minutes to complete the test. Tests may be rescheduled ahead of time for a \$15 fee; if they are missed and rescheduled, the cost is \$65. Once several of your home visitors have taken the test, it might be a good idea to have them write up an informal study guide based on their experiences for future home visitors to use. Colleges may also have classes that focus on studying for this exam.

### Highlights CDA Exam

- 1 hour and 15 minutes, 65 questions.
- The test can be rescheduled ahead of time for \$15.
- A college may offer a class to prep you for this exam.

## LEAP CDA ETO TOUCHPOINT

As the coordinator, you will be responsible for remaining up-to-date with the educational accomplishments of your home visitors. To facilitate this process, we have developed a CDA Pathway TOUCHPOINT. You should be able to update this TOUCHPOINT at six month intervals when conducting goal setting review sessions with your home visitors. There are several reasons for HIPPY USA, state offices and local HIPPY sites to track this information.

- **Potential funders are data driven.** Funders want to have solid proof that home visitors are experts in their field and demonstrating how many home visitors have a CDA and how many of them are working toward a CDA is key to that statistic.
- **Attracting new funders.** The HIPPY model has a workforce development component worked into its foundation. By generating data about how we are training our workforce and giving back to communities, we make HIPPY programs eligible for different types of grants.
- **Retaining traditional funding.** States and foundations are changing what types of programs they fund. They are steadily requiring early childhood programs to hire staff with higher qualifications if they want to continue receiving support.

Coordinators will be responsible for keeping up with information on the **LEAP-CDA PATHWAY MILESTONES TOUCHPOINT** form that can be found on the CDA section of the [LEAP website](#).