

CHOOSING CDA TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Tips on How to be an Informed Consumer of Training

When you decide to pursue a CDA, you are making a professional commitment that will involve your time, your money, and in some cases, your future options. Take time to choose the training that is best for you. When you call or inquire about a training program, ask questions about the training program. You need to be satisfied with the answers and with the instructor. Remember, *The Council for Professional Recognition* is the final authority when it comes to acceptable training, so when in doubt, call the Council and ask for clarification.

The Council for Professional Recognition
(800) 424-4310, www.cdacouncil.org

When trying to decide where to go or what courses to take, consider the following:

Is the agency or organization qualified to offer CDA training?

The 120 hours of formal training required for a CDA may be met through participation in a wide variety of training, including in-service training. Some agencies and organizations that qualify to provide CDA training include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Colleges and universities
- ◆ Technical and community colleges
- ◆ Early childhood education/child care programs that sponsor training, such as Head Start, U.S. Army Child and Family Services, divisions of state or federal governments, School Districts, or all branches of the U.S. military services Resource and Referral agencies

Candidates for the CDA Credential may accumulate the hours from a single training program or a combination of programs. Each agency or organization must provide verification of the candidate's education in the form of a transcript, certificate, or letter. It is the candidate's responsibility to supplement the verification of training by citing the number of instructional contact hours completed in each required area of study on the CDA Direct Assessment Application Form.

Ask questions about the instructor.

Include questions about the instructor's educational background, years of experience as a trainer, and years of experience working with children ages birth through five. Completing a degree in child development or early care and education and obtaining advanced training and experience with children in group settings are essential for a CDA trainer. Ask for references and do not hesitate to call references before making a decision.

Does the content of the course meet the CDA requirement of at least 10 hours in each of the following 8 subject areas and 40 additional hours in any of the content areas?

Look at the course content or syllabus to verify that the content covers all eight areas.

1. Planning a safe, healthy learning environment
2. Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development

3. Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development
4. Strategies to establish positive relationships with families
5. Strategies to manage effective program operation
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
7. Observing and recording children's behavior
8. Principles of child growth and development.

Does the content allow for personal reflection and interaction with other participants?

Ask the instructor: Are students given an opportunity to contribute to discussion and content of the course? Does the instructor offer assignments, projects, etc. that allow for participation?

Can I afford it? Are there scholarships available?

Child Development Associate training is a financial commitment. You should know up front how much the course costs and the different payment options. Since there is no set fee for CDA classes, the fee varies. In most cases, you are responsible for knowing how much the course costs and for payment, so look around and make sure you are getting a fair deal.

To calculate the cost per hour, divide the cost by the number of hours. For example, if training costs \$1,500 for the full 120 hours ($\$1,500 \div 120$), then training is \$12.50 per hour. Compare with the costs of other training programs. Most technical colleges in Georgia offer the HOPE Grant Program and other forms of financial assistance. To find out more about HOPE, contact the technical college you plan to attend or:

The HOPE Grant/Scholarship Program
2082 East Exchange Place, Suite 100,
Tucker, GA 30084
Phone: (770) 414-3085 or (800) 546-4673
www.hope.gsfc.org.

Additionally, **The Georgia SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES Program** funded by *Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Education* and administered through *Care Solutions* may provide financial support for tuition and assessment fees. For more information and an application form, contact Care Solutions at 770-642-6722 and 800-227-3410 or visit the website at www.caresolutions.org. Information on professional development and training availability can be found on the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System website at www.training.decal.ga.gov or by calling *Advancing Careers* and/or your local child care resource and referral agency, both of which are listed in the CDA Training in Georgia document on the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development website.

What documentation or credit do I receive for the training?

Generally there are 4 types of credit for CDA training programs. Find out which type of credit is offered and decide which will best meet your needs. The training sponsor must be able to document the dates, hours, and topic of class session the student attended by official letter, transcript, and/or a certificate.

- 1) Academic Degree Credit Programs are offered by colleges and universities. You must meet the admissions requirements and be admitted to the institution as a student. College

credit courses should lead to an Associate's or Bachelor's degree. College or university courses taken within the past 5 years could be used to meet the CDA formal training requirement if they meet the criteria in the 8 subject areas.

- 2) Certificate and/or Diploma Programs and Associate's Degrees are offered by technical colleges. Many offer diploma courses or a Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) for completed programs. Diploma or TCC courses taken within the past 5 years can be used to meet the CDA formal training requirement if they meet the criteria in the 8 subject areas required by The Council.
- 3) Continuing Education Programs are offered by institutions approved to award continuing education unit credit (CEUs). Continuing Education departments are located in colleges and universities and some professional associations. One CEU is awarded for every 10 contact hours. Therefore, for 120 hours, 12 CEUs will be awarded.
- 4) Clock Hours are offered by various community-based training and training organizations or companies. For clock hour credit, a complete CDA training program should document 120 hours by official letter, document, or certificate.

Your training experience needs to meet your individual needs just as you strive to meet the individual needs of the children you care for each day. Good luck and best wishes as you continue your professional career.

Informational print material above developed by Dr. Karen Shetterley, The University of Georgia, Georgia Center for Continuing Education in 2001 and revised in 2008.