

---

# How to Compile Your CDA Professional Resource File

---

## What is the CDA Professional Resource File?

- A collection of 17 specific resource materials to help you in your work with children and families
- A way to provide experience in locating and gathering resources useful to your daily practice
- One part of the CDA assessment process and a CDA program requirement
- A way for you to demonstrate your competence
- A way for the National CDA Council to evaluate your competence
- A way for you to show the National CDA Council who you are and what you value in your work with children and families
- An opportunity to reflect on and describe your personal view on working with children and families

## What Does the CDA Professional Resource File Contain?

- **Autobiography** (300-600 words):  
Your autobiography describes who you are and why you chose to work with young children.
- **Documentation of required CDA training** (120 hours) and **work experience** (480 hours).
- **Six Competency Goal statements** (250-500 words):  
The statements describe what you do with young children, why you do it, and how you incorporate these practices into your daily routines.
- **Resource Collection** (17 items):  
The Resource Collection shows the seventeen resource items requested by the National CDA Council, arranged by competency goal areas and numbers.

## Organizing the Professional Resource File

- The CDA Professional Resource File is typically organized in a 4-5 inch 3-ring binder, with divider sections and plastic sleeve-protectors to hold your autobiography, documentation of training and work experience, your competency statements, and the seventeen resources. You will need the following materials for your Professional Resource File:
  - 4 or 5 inch 3-ring binder
  - 6 tabbed dividers (buy the kind that are already 3-hole punched)
  - 25-35 plastic sleeve protectors
  - A pack of stick-on tabs in at least 7 different colors
  - A pack of stick-on white mailing labels

An alternate way to organize your Professional Resource File is to use a sturdy hanging file box. For this, you will need the file box, hanging file folders in 7 different colors, tabs, and stick-on white mailing labels.

- Organize seven sections in your Resource File. The first section is for your Autobiography and documentation of training and work experience. Each of the following sections is for one of the six Competency Areas.
- In each of the Competency Area sections, start with your Competency Statement followed by all of the resources required for that competency area. Each item should be labeled and numbered, tabbed with the same color tabs, and placed in your Resource File in order.
- We recommend that your Professional Resource File be arranged in the following order:
  - **Cover page**
  - **Autobiography**
  - **Documentation of CDA Training:**  
For students in the ND CCR&R CDA Training Program, this is the certificates you receive as you complete each module of this course or your ND CCR&R transcript. If you took the courses for college credit, use your college transcript showing credits for the CDA courses as documentation.
  - **Documentation of Work Experience:**  
If you are a family/group child care provider, document your work experience with copies of your scheduling calendar and your previous year's tax return. If you work in a center or Head Start program, ask your director to print a copy of your work hours on letterhead, and sign it.
  - **First Section Divider\*\***
  - **Competency Goal Statement 1**

- **Resources for Goal Statement 1**
- **Second Section Divider**
- **Competency Goal Statement 2**
- **Resources for Goal Statement 2**
- **Third Section Divider...** and so on through Competency Goal 6

**\*\*NOTE that each section uses one color to tab each item included in the section.** These are just examples – you can pick any colors you want. However, it is recommended to color-code each section so that the national CDA representative can easily find the items you are required to gather and organize.

- Most people decorate their CDA Professional Resource File to display their own personality. Photographs, children’s art work, craft paper, or scrapbooking decals can all be used to make your resource file as attractive as possible. Some people use short poems or inspirational quotes to decorate their section dividers. This is entirely up to you. Just make sure that all the required materials are easy to find and clearly labeled. Don’t over-do – you want your Professional Resource File to be *professional*.
- Don’t include a lot of extra material. Add a separate “Supplemental Resources” section to the back of your Professional Resource File if you have many items that you really want to keep or showcase, but that are not required by the National CDA Council. You could also start a separate binder for this extra material.

## **Guidelines for Writing CDA Competency Statements**

Your Competency Statements are a key part of your Professional Resource File and you want to take the time to write them well. You will need to make two sets of your Competency Statements – one for your Professional Resource File and one for the CDA Council representative to take at the time of your Direct Assessment visit.

- A statement of competency should describe your understanding and knowledge in one of the CDA Competency Goals, as well as demonstrate how you are competent to care for young children by giving specific examples of the things you do in your work with children and families.
- Each of the six Competency Goals contains sub-categories called Functional Areas. There are thirteen Functional Areas, which must be address in the Competency Goal statements. The Competency Goals and Functional Areas are organized in the following way:

**Competency Goal 1:** To establish and maintain a safe, healthy, learning environment

Contains Functional Areas:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Learning Environments

**Competency Goal 2:** To advance physical and intellectual competency

Contains Functional Areas:

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Communication
- Creativity

**Competency Goal 3:**

Contains Functional Areas:

- Self
- Social
- Guidance

**Competency Goal 4:**

Contains Functional Area:

- Families

**Competency Goal 5:**

Contains Functional Area:

- Program Management

**Competency Goal 6:**

Contains Functional Area:

- Professionalism

- Each of the six Competency Goal Statements should:
  - Be written on a separate sheet of paper
  - Be typed in 12-point font, using either Arial or Times New Roman
  - Be spell-checked, written in full sentences, and grammatically correct
  - Be 250-500 words in length

- Include at the top of the page the heading: Competency Goal (and the correct number of the goal) followed by the competency goal statement. Example:

**Competency Goal 1**  
***To establish a safe, healthy, learning environment***

- Have your name written on the page
- Staple together if the competency statement is longer than one page
- Include each of the Functional Areas included in that competency goal
- Write clear goals for each Functional Area. In other words, describe **WHAT** you want to accomplish for the young children in your care. Example: *“My goal is to minimize the spread of germs in my child care setting and to keep children healthy.”*
- Write a philosophy statement for each Functional Area. In other words, describe **WHY** you do the things you do for the young children in your care. Example: *“This is an important goal because I know that young children in child care settings are more likely to be exposed to germs and to carry those germs to their families.”*
- Write 250-500 words describing how you incorporate these practices and activities into your daily work with children, in each Functional Area. In other words, describe **HOW** you carry out good practices in your child care setting. **Include at least three examples** of how you meet your goal. Example: *“To meet my goal, I practice safe handwashing by using liquid soap and paper towels, and making sure to wash my hands after changing diapers, before handling food, and after cleaning or coming in from outside. I teach the children to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds to get most germs off their hands.”*

An example of a complete Competency Goal statement is included on the following page.

## **What Do I Do with My Completed Resource File?**

Your Resource File is one of the things that will be checked by the national CDA Council representative when you have your Direct Assessment visit. **Do not send your Professional Resource File to the national CDA Council.** The representative will go through it to be sure it is complete and will then leave it with you for your own future reference.

EXAMPLE:

## **Competency Goal 1**

*To establish and maintain a safe, healthy, learning environment*

### **Functional Area 1: Safe**

One of my goals in the functional area of safe is to prevent or reduce injuries while children are in my care. This is an important goal for the age group children in my care because young children are often not aware of hazards in the environment or of behaviors that could cause injury. One of the ways I do this is by supervising children at all times. I always make sure children are where I can see and hear them, even when they are napping. Another way I do this is by checking the child care environment, both inside and outside, every morning before the children arrive to make sure that outlet plugs are in place, that child-safety latches are hooked, and that there are no broken toys or dangerous objects in the child care space. I also use a weekly safety checklist in my classroom, to be sure I have checked the room completely. Outside, I check to be sure that there are no splinters, rusting equipment, or sharp pieces. I am careful that children not have strings on their clothing that could result in them getting caught or being strangled.

### **Functional Area 2: Healthy**

One of my goals in the functional area of healthy is to prevent the spread of germs in my child care. This is an important goal for the age group children in my care because young children do not have good control over bodily functions and germs can be easily spread when children are in such close contact with each other. One of the ways I do this is by washing my hands before and after changing a diaper or helping a child use the toilet, after wiping noses or cleaning up other bodily fluids, before and after handling food or bottles, after coming in from outside, and any other time my hands are dirty. I also help the children to wash their hands at similar times. Another way I do this is by washing and sanitizing all mouthed toys immediately, and other toys daily. I also make sure each child has his/her own bedding and I wash and sanitize bedding weekly. I have attended classes on SIDS and always place infants to sleep on their backs, with no fluffy bedding or other materials that could suffocate them. I believe that children need a variety of healthy foods, so our program belongs to the USDA Food Program and we serve lots of fruits and vegetables. I always sit down to eat with the children to model good eating habits.

### **Functional Area 3: Learning Environments**

One of my goals in the functional area of Learning Environments is provide children with many and varied opportunities for learning through play. This is an important goal for the age group children in my care because young children learn by doing, by uses their senses to gather information about the world. One of the ways I do this is by regularly observing the children in my care to see what their interests, skills, and abilities are. Then I plan activities to meet their interests and needs. Another way I do this is by setting my child care environment up in interest areas---blocks, books, art, writing, puzzles and small toys, and dress-up. I change the materials in these areas frequently, to keep the children interested in what's going on. I like to show children new things: last week I put flax seeds in the sensory table and added warm water. The children enjoyed the slippery feeling and I was able to introduce lots of new words such as "smooth," "slippery," "slimy," and so on.

Competency Statement 1 by Jane Candidate

## Self/Peer Review of Competency Statement

Use this checklist to help you review your competency statement. You might find it helpful to have someone else review your competency statement, to give you objective feedback.

<b>Which statement of competence was reviewed?</b>		<b>Who wrote it?</b>	
<b>Is this a self review or a peer review?</b>		<b>Date of review:</b>	
<b>Did the statement contain:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Is the statement labeled with the correct goal number?			
Are all the functional areas included in this goal?			
Does the statement start with a heading with the goal number and description statement?			
Is the author's name on the paper?			
Is the paper neat and typed?			

Is the paper typed in 12-point font, either Arial or Times New Roman?			
Are all the words spelled correctly?			
Are complete sentences used?			
Does the statement include a clear goal for each functional area?			
Does the statement give a clear reason WHY the goal is important?			
Does the statement give a number of clear, specific examples of the practices the candidate uses with children to reach her/his goal in each functional area?			
Are the examples appropriate for the age group the candidate works with?			
Is each functional area paragraph between 250-500 words in length?			

## Writing Your Autobiography

This first page of your CDA Professional Resource File is your autobiography. The work sheet on the following page is designed to help you write your autobiography. Think carefully about what you want to say because your autobiography will be sent to the National CDA Council at the time of your national assessment. Your autobiography is the only thing the representatives of the National Council will have to tell them who you are and why you are working toward the CDA Credential. The representatives will never meet you or talk to you, so you want to make sure your autobiography gives them a good picture of YOU.

The length of your finished autobiography should be about one-page, double spaced. Be sure to type your autobiography, with the heading and your name centered at the top of the page.

Think about the following things, and then complete the worksheet on the next page:

**Personal history:** your name, where you were born, members of your family, where you went to school, and so on.

**Experience working with young children:** informal such as babysitting and church work as well as your professional experiences.

**Strengths:** the skills, abilities, talents, and knowledge that make you a good person to care for young children and work with their families.

**About you:** personal hobbies and areas of interest

**Benefits:** what you hope to learn from taking the CDA classes

**Goals:** what you want to do with the CDA Credential, your personal career goals, plans for future education or personal development

## Autobiography - Template

**Name:**

**Date:**

**My personal history includes.....**

(where you were born, members of your family, where you went to school, etc.)

**My experiences working with young children are.....**

(informal such as babysitting or church, as well as your professional experiences)

**My strengths are.....**

**My hobbies and areas of interest are.....**

**I am taking this training to learn.....**

**My goals for professional growth and development are.....**

1.

2.

3.