

## **ND CCR&R CDA Training Program**

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **1. What is the CDA Credential?**

The CDA is a nationally recognized early childhood professional credential. It is awarded to an individual for demonstrated knowledge and competency in meeting the needs of children birth to age 5-years and their families. The CDA Credential is not a degree or a license. Rather, it is a widely accepted way to document that you have met national standards of good practice, and are competent to provide quality care to child in group care settings.

#### **2. What organization awards the CDA Credential?**

The CDA Credential is administered and awarded by the national CDA Council in Washington DC. The CDA Council sets the requirements for the CDA Credential, and they review all CDA applications and determine who will be awarded the CDA Credential. The ND CCR&R CDA Training Program is designed to help you meet the national requirements to be awarded the credential.

#### **3. Who is the CDA Credential for?**

The national CDA Credential is designed for early childhood caregivers and teachers who serve children ages 0-5 years in group care settings. School-aged children and programs are not covered by the CDA program.

#### **4. Why should I get a CDA Credential?**

We live in a “show me” world. Whether you are new to the early childhood field or have years of experience under your belt, it’s important for you to be able to document and show your skills and knowledge. The CDA Credential is nationally recognized: 47 states include the CDA as part of their early childhood professional development systems. This means that the CDA is portable if you should move to another child care program or even to another state. The CDA Credential gives you credibility and identifies you as someone who has demonstrated ability to meet the specific needs of young children and their families.

#### **5. The CDA national materials say I have to complete 120 hours of training. How do I get that?**

Currently, ND CCR&R CDA Training Program offers you two options for completing the 120 hours of required CDA training.

**Option #1** is a packaged self-paced correspondence course. This course is organized in three modules, each offered for 45-clock hours of training. To meet the national CDA education requirement of 120 hours, you must complete all three modules. The modules are divided into sections for each of the 13 CDA Functional Areas. The three modules are:

- Module 1: Establishing the Environment: This module covers CDA Competency Goal 1 in the Functional Areas of Safe, Healthy, Learning Environments
- Module 2: Child Growth and Development: This module covers CDA Competency Goals 2 and 3 in the Functional Areas of Physical, Cognitive, Communication, Creativity, Self, Social, and Guidance
- Module 3: Introduction to the Early Childhood Profession: This module covers CDA Competency Goals 4, 5, and 6 in the Functional Areas of Families, Program Management, and Professionalism

In Option #1, you can register online with CCR&R and get started at any time. You have up to 12-months to complete the modules for which you've registered. The course is available to download in a fill-able WORD document if you like to work on your computer, or you can print a paper version if you prefer to hand-write your responses. You can also order a printed copy from ND CCR&R for \$12.00.

**Option #2** is the same packaged self-paced correspondence course offered for college credit through either NDSU or MSUM for 3 semester credits per module. This option requires that students complete two additional projects to earn the credits. Students must also register as a student at the universities, pay for the tuition and other student fees, and complete coursework on the university semester class schedule

Whether you complete Option 1 or 2, you don't need to do any other training to meet the national CDA training requirement of 120 hours. By successfully completing all three modules with passing scores of 80% or higher, you will earn the 120 hours of training you need for the CDA.

## **6. Can I count the CDA training toward my license renewal requirements?**

Your county licenser has the authority to decide what hours you may count toward your license renewal requirements. The ND CCR&R CDA training courses should certainly count because they are far more intensive and complete than most short, stand-alone training. Each CDA module is offered for a total of 45 clock hours, which should satisfy your licensing requirements. However, this is up to your licenser.

**NOTE:** If you completed the module(s) with a "not passing" score of 80% or less (either for-credit or non-credit), your county licenser is unlikely to accept the training hours toward your license renewal. Please check with your licenser for more information.

## **7. Why does ND CCR&R CDA training require a score of at least 80% to earn clock hours or college credit?**

The national CDA Credential is a professional credential, awarded only to those individuals who have demonstrated their skills and knowledge. Therefore, the ND CCR&R CDA Training Program is designed to help you meet the standards set by the national CDA Council and to demonstrate your competence. Those who achieve

a passing score of 80% or higher on each of the three ND CCR&R CDA modules should have very little trouble completing the national CDA process.

## 8. What does my total score mean to me?

If you score 80% or above on either the non-credit or college-credit module(s), it means you are well prepared to successfully complete the national CDA Direct Assessment exams in the Competency Areas covered by the module(s).

As you know, before the national CDA Council will award the CDA Credential to you, you must successfully complete the national CDA Direct Assessment process. The Direct Assessment process includes both a written and oral examination on the topics covered in this class. One of the purposes for the questions, quizzes, and exam included in your module study packets is to help prepare you for Direct Assessment.

If you scored below 80%, it is an indication that you need to spend much more time studying and reviewing the course material before you attempt the national CDA Direct Assessment exams. We strongly suggest you repeat the module or take additional training in these topic areas to better prepare for the Direct Assessment process.

## 9. Will I get credit or a certificate if I didn't receive a total of 80% or above?

- **If you are taking the module(s) for college credit** through either NDSU or MSUM, a “not passing” grade will be reported to the university and will be recorded on your official university transcript. Your official university transcript is the way you document your completion of the 120 hours of training required for the CDA. Therefore, when you submit your transcript to the national CDA Council as part of the Direct Assessment Application, the Council will see that you did not pass the course and so may not accept the 45 hours of training from this course toward the 120 hour CDA training requirement.

It's also important to remember that as long as the “not passing” grade remains on your university transcript, it will lower your overall GPA and can impact your financial aid status and your ability to register for other university courses. In addition, you cannot count a “not passing” course toward a degree program at the university.

- **If you are taking the module(s) for non-credit**, you will not receive a certificate from CCR&R unless you achieve a score of 80% or higher. Because your certificate is the way you document your completion of the 120 hours of training required for the CDA, you would not be able to count the 45 hours from this course toward the 120 hour CDA training requirement.

## 10. What happens if I don't complete the CDA module(s) for which I've registered in a 12-month period?

If you do not complete the module(s) you've registered for within 12 months of the date of registration, the course closes. You will not receive credit for any incomplete module. There are no refunds and no extensions. If you wanted to complete the

course and receive either clock hours or credits, you would need to reregister and pay for the course(s) again.

### **11. Who should I talk to if I have a question about the national CDA process or about the ND CCR&R Training Program?**

Contact the course instructor: Ellen Anderson  
ND CCR&R Training and Development  
[ellen@lakesandprairies.net](mailto:ellen@lakesandprairies.net)  
218-288-7018 or 1-800-452-3646 ext 7018 (leave message and your call will be returned)

### **12. When I finish this course, do I have a CDA Credential?**

The short answer is “no” – but you’re getting closer. The CDA Credential is awarded to individuals who successfully meet all the requirements set by the national CDA Council and who have completed the Direct Assessment process. That process includes a minimum of 120 hours of training in specific topic areas related to the care of children ages birth to five years in group care settings (the ND CCR&R CDA modules fulfill this requirement); documentation of 480 hours of direct work experience in a licensed early care setting; the compilation of a Professional Resource File; survey of 75% of the parents of children in your care; and a formal observation of you as you work with children.

When you have completed those five things, you submit a Direct Assessment Application form to the national CDA Council. The Council then assigns a representative to you who will meet with you at your location and administer a written and oral exam. The representative sends your exams back to the Council where it is reviewed by a committee that decides whether to issue you the CDA Credential.

### **13. When I have my CDA, do I have a degree in Early Childhood or Child Development?**

Again, the short answer is “no.” A degree is an academic designation awarded to individuals who have completed a program of study at a college, university, or other academic institution. Most degree programs are either 2- or 4- years in length and require that students complete many credit hours (one credit hour is typically equal to 15 clock hours) in a range of subjects.

The CDA is a professional credential, which is a non-degree designation. If you complete the CDA training for college credits, you will have earned 9 credit hours and may be able to apply those credits hours toward a degree program at the discretion of the college or university where you are a student.

### **14. I’m confused! Is the national CDA process the same thing as the ND CCR&R CDA Training Program?**

The national CDA Council in Washington DC sets the requirements for the CDA Credential, reviews all your work, and awards the CDA Credential. To help you meet the national standards, ND CCR&R has created a special training program – the ND CCR&R CDA Training Program. This training program is designed to give you all the training you need to fulfill the national CDA requirements. But ND CCR&R does not award the CDA Credential. That can only be done by the national CDA Council.