

UPDATES AND CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING EARLY CHILDHOOD CERTIFICATIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS IN VIRGINIA

The following descriptions provide an overview of the current resources and options for CDA and certificates that will meet the requirements for

- Early Head Start teachers (CDA or equivalent by October 2010 and training or coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development by September 30, 2012) and
- Head Start teacher assistants (CDA or equivalent by September 30, 2012.)

THE SUMMARY:

- **CDA:**
 - Meets Head Start Act requirements
 - Costs \$325 plus the cost of any training and materials (scholarships may be available)
 - Does not require college credit. Can be obtained with either 120 hours of non-credit training from qualified organizations or through college courses that are aligned with the 8 content areas.
 - After application, within 90 days, a verification visit takes place and within 30 days or so after that, a decision is made about the credential
 - Head Start programs can do their own training or use local or on-line sources of training.
 - Head Start Education Coordinators or Lead Teachers may become CDA Advisors for their staff if they meet the qualifications outlined below.
 - Must be renewed after 3 years and then every 5 years.
- **Virginia Early Childhood Certificate, Virginia Infant/Toddler Certificate**
 - Meets Head Start Act requirements for CDA equivalent.
 - Costs \$10.00 plus the cost of college classes (scholarships may be available)
 - Requires enrollment in specific college early childhood courses (19 credit hours)-courses listed below..
 - Takes about 1 month to receive certificate after application and documentation is received at the Virginia Head Start Collaboration Office.
 - Application MUST be signed by community college faculty.
 - CHD 167 course must be completed before application is submitted.
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- **Virginia Community College Career Studies Certificates**
 - Individual college certificates by themselves do NOT meet Head Start Act requirements for CDA equivalent but the courses apply toward the Office of Head Start-sanctioned certificates (the VA ECE and Infant/Toddler Certificates issued by DSS)
 - Issued by specific community colleges.
 - Although the course content is standardized across the state, each college has its own certificate, which may vary in number of credits and specific courses required.
 - No additional cost other than the cost of the courses at the college.
- **Virginia Early Childhood Endorsements**
 - Do NOT meet Head Start Act requirements for CDA equivalent.
 - Meet requirements for 120 hours of CDA training
 - Can be a beginning step toward EC Certificate, CDA or AAS Degree
 - Meet Head Start and child care training hours requirements.

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THE DETAILS:

Child Development Associate (CDA):

What is it?

1. This credential is obtained through the Council for Professional Recognition www.cdacouncil.org.
2. It is appropriate for anyone who is either taking college courses and needs a CDA for their job, or for those who do not want to go to college but is required to have a CDA (EHS teachers or HS teacher assistants)
 - You must have 120 hours of formal early childhood training in eight content areas:
 - 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
 - This training must have taken place within the past 5 years.
 - You must have 480 hours of professional experience.
 - Within 6 months before you apply for your CDA you must have completed formal observations of your performance in all 13 functional areas over the course of one or more consecutive visits to your classroom using an observation instrument included in the CDA application packet.
 - These observations are completed by a CDA Advisor. You do not have to pay large amounts of money to hire a CDA advisor or to get the CDA training hours. Here are some things you may not know about this part of the process:

How much does it cost?

In addition to whatever cost is incurred for the training and materials, the application fee for this credential is \$325.00 per person.

How long does it take? Once you have completed all of the requirements and sent in your application packet, you will get a verification visit within 90 days of receipt of the packet. After the verification visit, the Council Representative's documentation will be submitted to a committee that will decide whether to award the credential.

Who can be a CDA Advisor?

CDA Advisors can be anyone (including Education Coordinators or Lead Teachers) who meets the following criteria:

Option 1

I. B.A., B.S., or an advanced degree in early childhood education/child development or home economics/child development, from an accredited college or university. Must include 12 semester hours covering children aged birth through 5 years.

II. Two years of experience in a child care setting serving children aged birth through 5 years, including:

- One (1) year working directly with children in the same age range as the children in Candidate's classroom, as a caregiver, teacher, child life worker, social worker, or similar role; and*
- One (1) year of responsibility for the professional growth of another adult.*

Option 2

I. Associate level (two-year) degree in early childhood education/child development or home economics/child development, from an accredited college or university. Must include 12 semester hours covering children aged birth through 5 years.

II. Four years of experience in a child care setting in a program serving children aged birth through 5 years, including:

- Two (2) years working directly with children in the same age range as the children in Candidate's classroom, as a caregiver, teacher, child life worker, social worker, or similar role; and*
- Two (2) years of responsibility for the professional growth of another adult.*

Option 3

I. An active CDA Credential plus 12 semester hours of study in early childhood education or child development at an accredited college or university covering children aged birth through 5 years.

II. Six years of experience in a child care setting serving children aged birth through 5 years, including:

- Four (4) years working directly with children in the same age range as the children in Candidate's classroom, as a caregiver, teacher, child life worker, social worker, or similar role; and*
- Two (2) years of responsibility for the professional growth of another adult.*

Who can provide the CDA training?:

The Council website says: "While formal education hours can be for credit or non-credit, they must be earned through an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation. The agency or organization must verify your education in the form of an official transcript, certificate, or letter. You need to submit these documents with your application."

On page 12 of the manual it lists the following as agencies and organizations that are considered acceptable to provide this training:

- Four year colleges and universities
- Two year junior and community colleges
- Vocational and technical schools
- Early childhood education/child care programs that sponsor training such as Head Start, US Army Child and Youth Services or school districts.
- Divisions of state or federal governments or all branches of the US Military Services
- Resource and Referral Agencies.

Who Provides the Training in Virginia?

- **Head Start and Early Head Start programs**: You can provide this training for your own staff if you have the time and inclination. There is a great book called Essentials, which is a curriculum for the preparation of CDA. It is available for \$35.00 on the CDA website www.cdacouncil.org.
- **The Virginia Department of Social Services** offers classes, both in person and on line, that meet the requirements. You can find a list of the offerings at http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/cc/provider_training_development/intro_page/courses/training_catalog/fall_2011_classes.pdf. Although it does not specifically say "CDA" classes, any of the classes that address the content areas listed above, if they are offered by DSS, would qualify toward the 120 hours of training.
- **Resource and Referral Agencies**: Through their extensive Online Child Care Professional Education Center, CDA training courses are available for a fee at <http://www.smarthorizons.org/naccrra/vccr/>. In addition, many local R & R agencies provide training in the localities they serve. Contact your local R & R for more information.
- **Virginia Community Colleges**: For students who wish to obtain college credits for their CDA training, many community colleges in Virginia offer assistance with the CDA through their core early childhood curriculum, which is aligned with the CDA competencies. Many also offer CHD 167, a course that helps students earn college credit as they prepare for the CDA. Ask your local community college what courses they provide. If your college does not provide these courses, there are several community colleges in VA that provide them on line. Northern Virginia Community College is one example. More information will be coming from the Head Start Collaboration Office about this option soon.

What About Renewal?

CDA's must be renewed after 3 years and then every 5 years thereafter. The renewal packet costs \$13.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling and is available from the Council. The renewal fee is \$50.00. The specific requirements for renewal are available on the website.

Virginia Early Childhood Certificate and Virginia Infant Toddler Certificate (meets Office of Head Start CDA requirement)
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What is it?

These two credentials are academic credentials obtained from the Virginia Department of Social Services, after completing specific courses at Virginia Community Colleges.

How is this different from the community college career studies certificates?

- **Career Studies Certificates:** Many community colleges offer certificates called career studies certificates. They are provided by the college after completion of a certain number of college credits in courses that are specified by the college. The number of credits and specific coursework for each certificate may vary among institutions. A career studies certificate from a specific community college will NOT meet the CDA requirement for the Head Start act. It will count toward the training requirements for the CDA.
- **The Virginia Early Childhood and Infant/Toddler Certificates:** These are certificates that are provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services for students completing 19 college credits in a *specific list of classes* that have been aligned with the CDA competencies. Because this is an academic credential, and because it has been standardized across the state (same courses, same number of credits), the Office of Head Start has recognized these certificates as acceptable to meet the CDA requirement for the Head Start Act. If you obtain this certificate it is not necessary to apply for a CDA.

What are the required classes for the Virginia EC and IT Certificates?:

Early Childhood Certificate:

- CHD 205: Guiding the Behavior of Young Children (3 credits)
- EDU 235: Health, Safety and Nutrition Education (3 credits) / HLT 135
- CHD 120: Introduction to Early Childhood Education (3 credits)
- CHD 145: Teaching Art, Music and Movement (3 credits)
- CHD 165: Observation and Participation in Early Childhood Settings (3 credits)
- CHD 167: CDA Theories and Application: Portfolio (3 credits)

Infant Toddler Certificate

- CHD 120: Introduction to Early Childhood Education (3 credits)
- CHD 164: Working with Infants and Toddlers in Inclusive Settings (3 credits)
- CHD 165: Observation and Participation in Early Childhood Settings (3 credits)
- CHD 166: Infant and Toddler Programs
- EDU 235: Health, Safety and Nutrition Education (3 credits) / HLT 135
- CHD 167: CDA Theories and Application: Portfolio (3 credits)

In addition to these classes, students must complete a parent survey and document 480 hours of work experience in early childhood classrooms.

How do I apply for these certificates?

You apply through the class, CHD 167. The faculty of that class will provide you with all of the application forms, the parent surveys and the verification of work forms. This faculty member must sign off on the application form before you submit the application for this certificate.

How much does it cost?

In addition to the cost of the college coursework (which may be covered by DSS scholarships or grantee T/TA funds), the cost of this credential is \$10.00 to the Virginia Department of Social Services for processing.

How long does it take?

Upon completing of the coursework listed above, including CHD 167, the application and documentation are sent to the Head Start State Collaboration Office in Richmond (address is on the application, available from the Community College faculty). Applications are verified and certificates are issued within one month.

What about Renewal ? Because this is an academic credential, it does not need to be renewed. All of the courses in this credential are credited toward an AAS degree.

Virginia Department of Social Services Early Childhood Endorsements
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What is it? This is a program sponsored by the Virginia Department of Social Services to offer individuals, including Head Start and child care teachers and teacher assistants who work with young children:

1. Entry-level credentials for employment in the field of early childhood
2. Demonstration of basic knowledge in working with infants, toddlers, and preschool children
3. Supplements to a child-related degree or credential that does not include instruction on infants, toddlers, or preschool children
4. Supplements to a degree or credential outside the field of early childhood

There are four endorsements:

1. Infant and Toddler Endorsement
(for professionals working with infants and toddlers)
2. Preschool Endorsement
(for professionals working with preschool children)
3. Early Childhood Endorsement I (for professionals working with infants, toddlers, and preschool children)
4. Early Childhood Endorsement II (for professionals working with infants, toddlers, and preschool children)

Additionally, successful completion of courses for the Endorsements can fulfill professional development options for teaching licensure renewal requirements, annual licensing requirements, and professional development options for early childhood professionals participating in Virginia's Star Quality Initiative Program *and in Head Start programs* .

The courses can also be used to meet the training requirements for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

Participants have two options by which to achieve an Endorsement:

1. Successful completion of the required VDSS-sponsored classroom-based or online courses as outlined on page 8 of the DSS training catalogue (see below for link).

2. Successful completion of the required college credit courses offered by the Virginia Community College System outlined below:

- Infant and Toddler Endorsement –
CHD 166 Infant and Toddler Programs
- Preschool Endorsement –
CHD 120 Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- Early Childhood Endorsement I –
CHD 145 Teaching Art, Music and Movement to Children
- Early Childhood Endorsement II –
EDU 235 Health, Safety and Nutrition Education

Do these endorsements meet the Office of Head Start requirements for CDA?

No, not by themselves. Many of the college courses in Option 2 are the same courses, there are just more credit hours required for the VA EC and IT Certificates.

For More Information:

Please note that much of the wording of this description was copied or adapted directly from the DSS PDF document describing the program. Detailed information available on the website at:

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/cc/provider_training_development/intro_page/courses/training_catalog/fall_2011_endorsement.pdf