

# **Family Development Associate Credential (FDA) Fact Sheet and FAQs**

## **What is the Family Development Associate (FDA) Credential?**

The FDA is issued by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry developed by and administered through a partnership with the Administration for Children and Families (Region III Head Start), Region III Technical Assistance System through ICF International, Virginia Head Start Association, the Virginia Head Start Collaboration Project, the statewide Community College system, and the Virginia Department of Social Services that is designed to enhance the preparation, ongoing professional development, and effectiveness of Head Start and Early Head Start Family Workers.

The credential is awarded to individuals who have completed a process involving demonstrated competence in working with families of young children through on-the-job training and mentoring, related classroom instruction, and the completion of a professional portfolio, based upon the nine (9) competency goals established by the Office of Head Start.

## **What are the FDA Competency Goals?**

The FDA is a demonstrated credential. This means that its candidates must demonstrate their knowledge, skill, and competency in working with and supporting families of young children before the credential will be awarded. Candidates are required to demonstrate competency in nine (9) general areas established by the Office of Head Start (formerly known as The Head Start Bureau) that are further defined by specific performance indicators. These areas include:

1. Establishing mutually respectful partnerships with families to enhance the quality of their lives and their communities.
2. Supporting families' efforts to reach their goals.
3. Offering parents opportunities to be involved in group activities, including policy groups and educational activities based on interest and need.
4. Providing opportunities for children and families to participate in family literacy services.
5. Coordinating and integrating Head Start services in order to enhance effectiveness.
6. Supporting families in accessing other community resources.
7. Assisting families in crisis.
8. Respecting and responding competently to the culture, traditions, lifestyle, language, and values of each family and community.
9. Contributing to effective program practices and maintain a commitment to professionalism.

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### **What are the Eligibility Requirements for the Credential?**

#### Candidates:

FDA Credential candidates are individuals interested in professional growth. Typically, candidates are staff of a Head Start or Early Head Start program who are responsible for supporting families with young children age birth to five years of age.

To participate in the VA FDA Credentialing process, an individual must:

- Be employed by a Head Start or Early Head Start Program in the state of Virginia that has an approved apprenticeship program registered with the Virginia Apprenticeship Council (VAC).
- Currently hold the position of Family Service Worker, Home Visitor, or a related position.
- Must be registered as an active Apprentice with the *Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI)*.
- Must have an assigned Supervisor (who meets the requirements for “Supervisor of Apprenticeship” as outlined by the VAC).

Apprenticeship requirements include:

- Completion of a minimum of 4,000 hours\* of supervised on-the-job training covering the nine (9) FDA competency goals based on prior experience. *\*This includes the development and completion of a professional portfolio demonstrating/documenting/reflecting the candidate’s work in achieving the nine (9) competencies.*
- Completion of a minimum of 288 hours of related classroom instruction over an average of a two-year period (the program is based upon a 2-year curriculum plan). *This may include enrolling in a college program. For additional information, please refer to the “Coursework Outline” section located at the end of this document.*

### **4,000 hours of on-the- job training (OJT) sounds like a long time. How long does it take to obtain a credential?**

The FDA is based upon a 2-year curriculum and training plan. OJT hours are based upon supervised time of work currently being performed as a professional supporting families with young children. Therefore, in most cases, two years is sufficient time to meet this requirement. However, if additional time is required an extension may be granted at the discretion of the Sponsor.

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### **Can I get credit for classes I have already taken or for previous work experience?**

Yes. Candidates are able to receive credit for applicable work experience, training, and coursework for up to five (5) years prior\* to enrolling into the credentialing program. Some examples of this are included in the “Coursework Options” section of this document. *\*Certain restrictions apply and criteria must be met.*

### **What is the Value of the FDA Credential?**

The FDA Credential is awarded to an individual rather than to a program or facility. The Credential is issued by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry Registered Apprenticeship Division and the candidate will be nationally recognized as a journeyworker. In addition, through a partnership with the Virginia Community College System, candidates may have opportunities on a career pathway that leads to a certificate, Associate’s Degree, and beyond.

### **How do I get started?**

Interested parties should contact their local Field Representative through the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry Apprenticeship Program at [www.doli.virginia.gov/index.html](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/index.html). Virginia Head Start and Early Head Start grantees may attain further information by contacting the Virginia Head Start Association Executive Director to arrange an orientation in partnership with the Department of Labor and Industry.

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### **COURSEWORK OPTIONS:**

#### **Option A**

Proposed Career Studies – Family Development Associate (FDA)

#### **Option B**

Family Development Curriculum from Temple University

*Refer to Family Development Associate Credential – Related Instruction Course Map (Doc. 5)  
for further details.*