

Suggested Relationship Between the CDA Formal Child Care Education Requirement and NAEYC Standards for Professional Preparation Programs

This document is offered as a guide to correlate the formal education requirements of the Council for Professional Recognition (the Council) as part of earning a CDA credential and the 2009 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards for Professional Preparation Programs.

The following chart is more than a checklist of topics to cover or information to transmit through presentations, activities, textbooks or handouts. It is intended as a contribution to a larger discussion about what early childhood professionals should know and be able to do - the importance and quality of professional training and education, the decisions that are made when designing and evaluating training and education programs, and exploration of related issues such as the portability of individual credentials and the desired professional continuum or pathway from entry into the early childhood field to advanced or specialized credentials earned over the course of a career.

Research and common sense indicate that the expertise needed to provide a nurturing environment for young children is acquired through specialized professional development - training, education and technical assistance that begins with entry into the field and continues throughout each individual career. Effective professional development is grounded in relationships, theory and practice, and results in meaningful connections. It transforms discrete learning experiences into an integrated body of knowledge, dispositions and skills.

Professional development takes place in many forms, but where it is most effective, there is an organized *process*, a coherent sequence of

learning experiences aligned with defined *learning outcomes*, and a system of *assessments* that ensure program completers have mastered those defined learning outcomes and can demonstrate them in practice. In training and education programs for the early childhood workforce, desired learning outcomes include the NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards and the CDA Competencies.

It is in support of this concept that the Council requires CDA Candidates to participate in 120 clock hours of “formal education” in specific areas - no fewer than 10 hours in each subject area and a total of 120 clock hours. Similarly, only full “programs of study” and not individual workshops or courses are eligible for NAEYC accreditation – though the common core NAEYC standards have differing “initial” and “advanced” expectations in associate, bachelor, master, and doctoral degree programs.

NAEYC and the Council are advocates for state and national professional development systems that help personnel make connections between the information they learn in the first hour of training and the 120th hour; between their first course and completion of a specialized degree; between what they learn in one content area and another; between theory and practice; between who they are today and who they will be in the future. NAEYC standards provide a common national framework for all early childhood professional development systems and programs. The CDA is a key stepping stone on the path of career advancement in early childhood education.

NAEYC STANDARDS	CDA SUBJECT AREAS
<p><u>1. Promoting child development and learning</u></p> <p>Students prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children’s characteristics and needs and of the multiple interacting influences on children’s development and learning to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.</p>	<p><u>Subject Area 1: Planning a safe, healthy learning environment</u> Safety, first aid, health, nutrition, space planning, materials and equipment, play</p> <p><u>Subject Area 8: Understanding principles of child development and learning</u> Typical developmental expectations for children from birth through age 5, individual variation including children with special needs, cultural influences on development</p>
<p><u>2. Building family and community relationships</u></p> <p>Students prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends on partnerships with children’s families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children’s families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families and to involve all families in their children’s development and learning.</p>	<p><u>Subject Area 4: Building productive relationships with families</u> Parent involvement, home visits, conferences, referrals, communication strategies</p>
<p><u>3. Observing, documenting, and assessing</u></p> <p>Students prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child.</p>	<p><u>Subject Area 7: Observing and recording children’s behavior</u> Tools and strategies for objective observation and assessment of children’s behavior and learning to plan curriculum and individualize teaching, developmental delays, intervention strategies, individual education plans</p>
<p><u>4. Using developmentally effective approaches to connect with children and families</u></p> <p>Students prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children’s ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation for their work with young children and families. Students know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child’s development and learning.</p>	<p><u>Subject Area 2: Advancing children’s physical and intellectual development</u> Large and small muscle, language and literacy, discovery, art, music, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, and dual language learning</p> <p><u>Subject Area 3: Supporting children’s social and emotional development</u> Adult modeling, self-esteem, self-regulation, socialization cultural identity, conflict resolution</p>
<p><u>5. Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum</u></p> <p>Students prepared in early childhood degree programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child. Students understand the importance of developmental domains and academic</p>	<p>Subject Areas 2 & 3 provide an introduction to the essential concepts, inquiry tools and structures of the academic content disciplines that are part of an early childhood curriculum. However, the Child Development Associate is not expected to design or</p>

<p>(or content) disciplines in early childhood curricula. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas, including academic subjects, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding. Students use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula that promote comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child.</p>	<p>evaluate curriculum.</p>
<p><u>6. Becoming a professional</u></p> <p>Students prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.</p>	<p><u>Subject Area 5: Managing an effective program operation</u> Planning, record keeping, reporting, community services.</p> <p><u>Subject Area 6: Maintaining a commitment to professionalism</u> Advocacy, ethical practices, work force issues, professional development, goal setting, networking.</p>

Note

While each standard and subject area is complex and can be seen as interrelated, in developing this chart we chose the single strongest correlation for each NAEYC standard and each CDA subject area.

References

- Council for Professional Recognition. 2011. *The Child Development Associate Assessment System and Competency Standards*. Washington, DC: Council
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. 2009. *NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs*. Washington, DC: NAEYC

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