



CIRCLE CDA Training Program is a part of the Children's Learning Institute



CTE Teacher Guide Supplement Preschool



GENERAL INFORMATION

The CIRCLE CDA Training Program was developed by the Texas School Ready Project, part of the Children’s Learning Institute at UTHealth. The goal of the CIRCLE CDA Training Program is to provide all 120 hours of high quality, formal professional development hours to enable early childhood teachers earn the required training hours needed to apply for the Preschool Child Development Associate® (CDA) national credential. Awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition, the CDA is the most recognized credential for early childhood professionals.

All CIRCLE CDA professional development, provided through online courses developed by the Children’s Learning Institute, is free to Texas public high school students and teachers through the CLI Engage online platform. Through the CIRCLE CDA Training Program, participants have the opportunity to complete all 120 hours needed to apply for the CDA, as well as online support in preparing their CDA Professional Portfolio, a required collection of reference materials related to their work.

While the CIRCLE CDA Training Program was originally developed for early childhood teachers currently working, these resources and materials can also be used to support high school students interested in earning a CDA while still in high school.

This CTE teacher guide is a supplement to the CIRCLE CDA Competency Goal Guide for the CDA Preschool credential. Please download the Competency Goal Guide from the Online Courses section of CLI Engage.

CDA Subject Areas

Teachers participating in the CIRCLE CDA Training Program will have the opportunity to complete 120 hours of required professional development through a series of online courses in the CDA Subject 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

Getting a CDA in High School

The Council for Professional Recognition recently launched an official path for high school students to earn a CDA while still in high school. From the Council:

“The High School Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential jump-starts successful careers and channels faculty expertise. If you are a student interested in working in early

childhood education, earning a CDA can also get you a job in the field by the time you leave high school and help you earn college credit towards your AA or Bachelor's degree. The CDA credential itself is based on the knowledge of the nation's leading scholars in early childhood education and learning. It's the only portable, national and multi-language credential of its kind. A CDA opens career opportunities for thousands of graduates every year."

CDA Steps

CDA candidates earning a CDA in high school follow the same process as early childhood professionals already working. Additional detail about the first three steps (related to the CIRCLE CDA Training Program) is provided through this document.

- Step 1: Student enrolls in CDA classes in high school through a CTE program.
- Step 2: Student completes 120 hours of child development education and 480 hours of experience working directly with young children, then applies for the CDA online.
- Step 3: Student participates in a verification visit, including submitting their CDA portfolio for review, being observed working with young children, and reflecting on areas of strength or growth.
- Step 4: Student takes the CDA exam.
- Step 5: Student earns their CDA!

For more information, please visit the Council's website (cdacouncil.org) or email partnerships@cdacouncil.org.

Step 1: Participating in the CIRCLE CDA Training Program

All Texas high school teachers and students have access to the CIRCLE CDA Training Program for free on CLI Engage. This includes access to all online professional development materials and supplemental resources.

High school teachers who choose to offer this program for their students will need to complete the following steps:

- Purchase "An Essentials for Working with Young Children" textbook, the "Essentials Workbook," and the "Preschool CDA Competency Standards" book from the Council for Professional Recognition [2013 or 2017 (preferred) edition] for yourself
- Purchase a class set of "An Essentials for Working with Young Children" textbook and the "Essentials Workbook" from the Council [2013 or 2017 (preferred) edition]; can be re-used for subsequent classes and school years (using copies of some resources)
- Order the CDA Competency Standards books for each participating student from the Council [2013 or 2017 (preferred) edition]; highly recommended that all students have their own copies
- Download and print copies of the **CIRCLE CDA Competency Goal Guide**, **CTE CDA Professional Work Experience Tracking Log**, and **CTE CDA Professional Education Tracking Log** (available on CLI Engage) for students
- An active CLI Engage account for teacher and students (submit a help ticket on CLI Engage for assistance)

This CIRCLE CDA Competency Goal Guide is a road-map for you and your students and serves as your syllabus to show courses that the students will take along with other assignments that the students need to complete in order to apply for the Preschool CDA national credential. The six competency goals are covered across many courses including the eCIRCLE courses, CIRCLE CDA courses, and others, all developed by the Children’s Learning Institute and housed on CLI Engage. The purpose of the guide is to “put it all together” for the CDA Candidate so they can understand the relationships between their online training, assignments to demonstrate competence, and resource collection items. Together, these materials will prepare your students to apply for their CDA. We recommend that you review this document with your students and use it to map their progress.

The guide includes the following:

- Competency Goals and key topics for each CDA subject area
- Alignment of the CLI Engage online materials to the CDA functional areas, including:
 - o eCIRCLE online courses
 - o CIRCLE CDA online courses
 - o TECPDS Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators online courses
 - o CDA Professional Learning Sessions supplemental resources
- Essentials for Working with Young Children Textbook Reading
- Essentials Workbook questions
- Resource Collection Items
- Putting it all together
 - o CDA Functional Area Statement (big picture what they should be able to demonstrate)
 - o Competency statement prompts
 - o Quiz questions

The CIRCLE CDA Competency Goal Guide and CTE student forms, as well as additional resources, are available on CLI Engage under the Online Learning and Professional Development section. Look for the CIRCLE CDA Training Program, and a dedicated section for Program Resources.

Step 2: Completing 120 Hours of Professional Education and 480 Hours of Experience

120 Hours of Professional Education

The online professional development courses aligned to the CIRCLE CDA Training Program are components of existing professional development series on CLI Engage. All courses on CLI Engage provide certificates of completion, aligned to Child Care Licensing requirements or Texas Education Agency’s Continuing Professional Education (CPE) requirements. The CIRCLE CDA Competency Goal Guide includes descriptions of each of the course series included in the CIRCLE CDA Training Program.

CIRCLE CDA Training Program: CTE Teacher Guide

The following table is an overview alignment of the professional development courses on CLI Engage to the CDA Competency Goals. Completion of all courses provides more than 120 hours of training. The number of hours awarded for completion of each course is in the Competency Goal Guide; in addition to the courses listed here, there are professional learning sessions (at least one for each CDA Functional Area) with TEKS alignments and facilitation guides.

COMPETENCY GOALS	COURSES ON CLI ENGAGE	
Plan Your CDA Journey	CIRCLE CDA Introduction	
Goal I: To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment.	CIRCLE CDA Safe Health eCIRCLE Classroom Management	TX Core Competencies (Practitioners) Learning Environments, Planning Framework, Curriculum, and Standards Health, Safety, and Nutrition
Goal II: To advance physical and intellectual competence.	eCIRCLE Early Childhood Mathematics Discovering Early Childhood Science Letter Knowledge Read Aloud Building Vocabulary Phonological Awareness Written Expression Setting the Stage for Children’s Talk English Language Learners	CIRCLE CDA Physical Fostering Creativity in the Early Childhood Classroom TX Core Competencies (Practitioners) Child Growth and Development Supporting Skill Development Diversity and Dual Language Learners
Goal III: To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance.	eCIRCLE Social and Emotional Learning Understanding Special Needs	TX Core Competencies (Practitioners) Responsive Interactions & Guidance CIRCLE CDA Guidance
Goal IV: To establish positive and productive relationships with families.	CIRCLE CDA Families Part 1 and Part 2 TX Core Competencies (Practitioners) Family & Community Relationships	TX Core Competencies (Administrators) Instituting Family and Community-Centered Programming
Goal V: To ensure a well-run purposeful program that is responsive to participants needs.	CIRCLE CDA Program Management TX Core Competencies (Practitioners) Learning Environments, Planning Framework, Curriculum, and Standards Observation and Assessment	TX Core Competencies (Administrators) Establishing and Maintaining an Effective Organization Human Resource Leadership and Development Implementing a Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and Environment
Goal VI: To maintain a commitment to professionalism.	CIRCLE CDA Professionalism	TX Core Competencies (Practitioners) Introduction Professionalism and Ethics
Prepare Your Portfolio	CIRCLE CDA Building Your Professional Portfolio	

High School Delivery of the CIRCLE CDA Training Program Online Courses

Implementation of the CIRCLE CDA Training Program is different for high school students, and offers options to meet the specific needs of your curriculum and local requirements. In this section, we outline several options to consider as you integrate the CIRCLE CDA Training Program into your existing CTE program. Visit the CIRCLE CDA Program Resources (located in the Online Learning & Professional Development section of CLI Engage) to download a sample two-year training plan for completing all the professional development aligned to the CIRCLE CDA Training Program. Use this resource as a guide to develop a training plan for your students.

CLI conducted focus groups with teachers regarding implementation of the CIRCLE CDA Training Program in high school classrooms recently. These teachers offered several options for completing the program with students, depending on the individual needs of your students and requirements from your school district administration:

- Complete the CIRCLE CDA Training Program over one school year with students in your advanced TEKS courses, such as practicum
- Complete the CIRCLE CDA Training Program over two school years; students could use the summer semester to complete hours towards their professional experience or thorough an existing practicum program
- Complete the CIRCLE CDA Training Program over three school years; students could use the summer semester to complete hours towards their professional experience or thorough an existing practicum program

Remember to download the **CTE CDA Professional Education Tracking Log** for students. It is highly recommended to track student review and completion of online course materials for the CIRCLE CDA Training Program. As part of their professional portfolio, students must have a copy of an official letter on school letterhead and a transcript or certificate verifying 120 hours of training. You may choose to provide a certificate to students as they complete each course (available at the completion of each course).

Since the High School CDA is relatively new, it is recommended that teachers visit the Council for Professional Recognition's website for the most up-to-date information on requirements for the documentation of training hours for your students: www.cdacouncil.org

In-Class Delivery

Teachers can choose to present the information in-class over a specific period of time. Several CTE teachers have already used the CIRCLE CDA Training Program to assist their students in earning their CDAs; these teachers opted to present the information directly from CLI Engage in-class.

New materials recently added to CLI Engage, professional learning sessions, are hands-on, activity-based lessons that can be used to introduce students to each competency area before digging deeper into each area through the other online courses (see the professional development alignment for additional information). These sessions could also be used as

summaries after reviewing material with students (completing the aligned courses) on specific topics, and include alignments to the TEKS and facilitation guides.

Hybrid Delivery

Teachers can also consider opportunities for students to complete some course material in class, and other materials at home. For example, teachers could present the professional learning session for a specific CDA functional area to students in class, with homework assigned to complete the aligned online courses as homework or over the summer months.

480 Hours of Professional Work Experience

Earning 480 hours of professional learning experience equates to approximately three months of full-time work. For students still in high school, earning these professional work experience hours offers opportunities for students to begin working in the classroom very early in their careers.

It is strongly recommended that each student uses the **CTE CDA Professional Work Experience Tracking Log** (download from CLI Engage) to track their hours over time.

Important information related to professional work experience for high school students (this information is also included in the CTE CDA Professional Work Experience Tracking Log). Work experience must be with children of the correct age according to the CDA setting for which the student will be applying. (Note: at this time, the CIRCLE CDA Training Program is available for Preschool.)

Eligible professional work experience hours include:

Paid or volunteer hours and must be completed before you submit your CDA Initial Application.

Non-eligible work experience hours include:

Babysitting, Before and After School Programs, Sunday school programs, and Drop-in programs are not eligible settings where a candidate can prove his or her competence around the CDA Competency Standards and experience hours in these settings should not be counted towards the 480 hours of experience.

What is a center-based program?

A center-based program must have: (1) at least 10 children enrolled in the program (not necessarily in the Candidate's group), and (2) at least two caregivers working with the children on a regular basis.

How do I choose the correct CDA Credential setting?

Please review the CDA Credential setting below to determine which best describes your work with young children:

PRESCHOOL: A center-based preschool setting is a state-approved child development center where a Candidate can be observed working with a group of at least eight children, all of whom are ages three through five years old.

INFANT-TODDLER: A center-based infant-toddler setting is a state-approved child development center where a Candidate can be observed working with a group of at least three children, all of whom are under the age of three years old.

FAMILY CHILD CARE: A family child care setting is a family child care home where a Candidate can be observed working with at least two children 5 years old or younger who are not related to the Candidate by blood or marriage. The setting must meet at least the minimum level or applicable state and/or local regulations. Family child care settings are also eligible in localities where there is no regulation of family child care.

Selecting Early Childhood Programs

When assisting your students with locating early childhood programs to complete their professional work experience, it is highly recommended to select high-quality programs so students have an opportunity to interact with classroom teachers and administrators committed to quality improvement and child school readiness. In Texas, there are two voluntary, statewide program quality improvement programs available for early childhood programs: Texas School Ready Comprehensive and Texas Rising Star.

Your school district may have existing partnerships with early childhood programs to support student practicum or internship. If your school district offers public prekindergarten, be sure to contact your early childhood staff to consider partnership opportunities for your CTE students to possibly gain experience within pre-K classrooms. Also, consider contacting your local workforce development board for suggestions of early childhood programs and any internship opportunities that may be available in your region. Some regions also offer scholarships for early childhood professionals completing the CDA. Visit the Texas Workforce Commission website to locate your board.

Options for locating early childhood programs:

- Contact the Children’s Learning Institute to locate an early childhood program (child care or Head Start) in your area currently participating in the Texas School Ready Comprehensive program, or recent participants. Submit a help ticket on CLI Engage for assistance.
- Visit the Texas Rising Star website to locate a child care program in your area participating in the Texas Rising Star program: www.texasrisingstar.org.
- Consider programs in your area that are participating in a national accreditation, such as National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC). Visit their websites for additional information.

Step 3: Completing the Professional Portfolio and Participating in the Verification Visit

The CIRCLE CDA Training Program includes an online course dedicated to the development of the professional portfolio for all CDA candidates, including high school students. This course offers a guide for teachers and students to collect all the required information for the

professional portfolio. Review the “Child Development Associate© National Credentialing Program and CDA Competency Standards” book for specific information on the professional portfolio (this book is one of the recommended resources for all students).

All of the documents associated with the professional portfolio, except for the transcripts that do not expire, must be no older than six months when the student applies for their CDA with the Council for Professional Recognition.

Since the High School CDA is relatively new, it is recommended that teachers visit the Council for Professional Recognition’s website for the most up-to-date information on requirements for your students: www.cdacouncil.org

For many early childhood professionals and students, the cost of the CDA assessment fee, \$425, can be a burden to completing the requirements and earning the credential. In Texas, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program provides scholarship opportunities for early childhood professionals and students working towards the CDA. Managed by the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, T.E.A.C.H. offers a CDA Assessment Fee Scholarship, covering 85% of the total cost of the assessment fee. Visit Texas AEYC’s website for additional information about the CDA Assessment Fee Scholarship: www.texasaeyc.org

Your school district or other funding, such as local or regional scholarships from your local workforce development board or others, could provide additional opportunities to offset this cost for your students. Contact your local workforce development board to learn about specific opportunities that may be available in your area.

Next Steps

Earning a CDA can be the exciting first steps in your students’ careers in the early childhood field. Encourage your students to sign-up for a free account on the Texas Workforce Registry, part of the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System. The Texas Workforce Registry provides an online, secure way for early childhood professionals and students to store and access their education and employment history, as well as the professional development hours they have completed. One additional feature allows your students to begin to track their career on the Texas Early Childhood Career Lattice from the beginning. Visit TECPDS to learn more about the Texas Workforce Registry and sign-up for free: www.tecpds.org