

The CDA® Competency Standards and 8 CDA® Subject Areas: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?



The CDA® Competency Standards

All CDA® candidates are assessed based on their understanding of the **CDA® Competency Standards**.

These national standards are the criteria used to evaluate early childhood education professional's performance with children, families, colleagues and their community.

The *CDA Competency Standards*, developed for the CDA credential, are universally applicable.

Although their content differs, the *CDA Competency Standards* for all settings have the same structure. The *CDA Competency Standards* are divided into **six competency goals**, which are statements of a general purpose or goals for CDA candidates' behavior.

These six goals are defined in more detail in the **13 functional areas**, which describe the major tasks or functions that an early educator or home visitor must complete to carry out the competency goal.

The 8 CDA® Subject Areas

To demonstrate understanding of the *CDA® Competency Standards*, early educators aspiring to earn the CDA credential must meet specific education and experience requirements, i.e., 480 hours of professional work experience within three years of application.

The CDA credential is competency-based, therefore CDA candidates are required to learn the most relevant early childhood/child development theory and be able to demonstrate they can apply this knowledge to their daily practice with young children and their families.

To meet the education requirement, CDA candidates are required to complete 120 clock hours of formal education with no fewer than 10 hours in each of the **8 CDA® Subject Areas**. These **8 CDA Subject Areas** are based on the *CDA Competency Standards*.

The **8 CDA Subject Areas** refer to the course work and body of knowledge candidates must possess at the time of CDA application.

IMPORTANT: Candidates will not be able to demonstrate they meet the *CDA Competency Standards* without obtaining the body of knowledge needed to make the **connection between theory and their practice**.