

Child Development Associates effectively care for and educate young children in homes, centers, or school settings. The credentialing process is a powerful tool to help you gain the knowledge to put competency standards into practice and understand how to help children move with success from one developmental stage to another.



Eight CDA Subject Areas

1. Planning a safe and healthy learning environment
2. Advancing children's physical and intellectual development
3. Supporting children's social and emotional development
4. Building productive relationships with families
5. Managing an effective program operation
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
7. Observing and recording children's behavior
8. Understanding principles of child development and learning.

Students who are accepted will participate in a rigorous, online, year-long curriculum. They will be eligible to apply for the CDA credential once they complete the course, the portfolio, and 480 hours of professional work experience.

The class will be presented online through DIAL Virtual School. The instruction will include guidance provided by the instructor to assist students with the class requirements.

Students will be assigned online activities, and quizzes that will require them to work independently and with their childcare site.

A local state-licensed childcare site will be needed to provide 480 hours of work experience (may include previous work).

Credentialing Process

- Successfully complete the CDA curriculum
- Complete the required portfolio (can be electronic)
- Complete 480 hours of work experience with **EITHER** Birth-3 **OR** 3-5 year olds
- Complete a paper application (\$75) or online application (discounted fee)
- Upon approval, schedule CDA exam and CDA 4-hour verification visit (\$500)

More Information:

cdacouncil.org/en/high-school-pathways/

Child Development Associate



**Online Credentialing Opportunity
For High School Juniors and Seniors**



DIAL Virtual School
PO Box 518
Platte SD 57369
(605) 337-3178
dialsd.net

Students

- 2026-2027 Juniors and Seniors (limited to 15)
- Interested in working with children
- Dedicated to online learning
- Ability to work on a team
- Professional behavior while completing 480 hours of required student work experience
- Appropriate dress at work site
- Complete the portfolio

Recommended Prerequisite Classes:

Human Development: Prenatal to Toddlers

Human Development: Preschool to School Age

Classes available at
SD Center for Virtual Education
sdcve.k12.sd.us



Parents

- Support student commitment
- Time to study
- Transportation to work site
- Costs not covered by the school – including portfolio, application, exam fee

School

- Grant 1 credit for online class – Year-long/ 120 hours
- Provide a school facilitator for the DIAL class
- Assist student to find a cooperating childcare site for work experience
- Support student with completing portfolio



Childcare Site

- Must be state licensed
 - Birth to 36 months
 - Ages 3-5
- Provide work experiences for the child development associate student
- Communicate with the instructor
- Allow for an on-site 4-hour verification visit

Class Cost

DIAL Virtual School
Educational Service Fee:
\$ 650 full year
(\$ 325 per semester)

NO COST for DIAL Member Schools.

Application Process

1. Students fill out the application form on the DIAL website dialsd.net ("Courses Offered" tab) by May 31.
2. Students will be accepted in June. Parents & administrators will be notified and asked to confirm support of the student.
3. Administrators will enroll accepted students in the class by August 15, 2026, through the SD Center for Virtual Education --
sdcve.k12.sd.us

