

# Child Development Training

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## Problem

Many teachers who work in typical child care programs do not have a lot of formal training, especially in early childhood education or child development or the theories and practices have changed. Research has shown that high-quality early childhood experiences are very important to young children's success, both in school and later life. In child care settings the availability of well-trained teachers is key to achieving these good outcomes for preschool children. However, early childhood teachers face many barriers in furthering their education, including cost, time away from work and family, and location of the education program.

Teachers in a secondary school, often have outdated material on child development, infrequent access to children, and students who want to work with children in the future. Secondary education teachers often have difficulty finding resources on child development, thus leading to students not getting a basic knowledge on child development.

The goals of this course align with the goals of the Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program, a major national movement to improve the quality of child care. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, the program is designed to assess and credential early care and education professionals based on performance. According to the Council for Professional Recognition, the association responsible for awarding CDA credentials, "A Child Development Associate (CDA) is an individual who has successfully completed a CDA assessment and has been awarded the CDA Credential. S/he is able to meet the specific needs of children and works with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework." For more on the CDA credential, see [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org).

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## Goals and Objectives

### Goals

- To develop a quality curriculum that will allow for students to have a basic understanding of child development.
- To develop curriculum that will allow for students to practice their knowledge and gain feedback from a mentor teacher.
- To develop a CBT that is accessible to learners who do not have access to more "traditional" forms of instruction.

### Goals for Curriculum

- The student will be able to comprehend how children learn and ages and stages of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.
- The student will be able to observe children, from birth through age 8, looking for the different stages of development and produce an observation report.
- The student will be able to practice applying the knowledge gained by responding to a situational question.
- The student will be able to identify developmentally appropriate practices.
- The student will be able to apply child development practices in interaction with children.

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## Analysis

### Needs Assessment

Needed Information	Sources	Tools
<b>What is the ideal?</b>	Personal experience teaching child development to this audience Interviews with Subject Matter Experts	Intent statement
<b>What do we know about the learning task?</b>	Experience teaching this subject matter Survey with experts	Structured questions Analysis of survey
<b>Who are the learners?</b>	Surveys with child care teachers and/or directors Personal experience	Learner profile
<b>What are our resources and constraints?</b>	Experience Interviews with potential participants, child care center directors, secondary teachers who teach child development.	Context analysis

### Learner Profile

**Age:** The age of early care and education (ECE) providers varies drastically, from 16 to 65, but for the purposes of this project we will focus on the younger age group, assuming they have less experience than their older counterparts. We will target this project towards learners from age 15 to 25.

**Sex:** The majority of ECE providers are female.

**Educational level:** The instructional materials in this course will be geared towards learners with little formal education, mainly those without a high school diploma, with a G.E.D, or with a high school degree.

**Prerequisite knowledge and skills:** This course will be targeted towards people who work with children on a regular basis in a center-based early care setting or students in a child development class. Participants will need to have regular access to children so they can conduct observations as a part of their coursework. As far as technical skills are concerned, learners will need a basic understanding of how a Windows-based computer works, how to use the Internet, e-mail, and send electronic files.

**Socioeconomic background:** The ECE providers targeted in this training will primarily fall into a low- or low-to-middle-income bracket (mainly because child care jobs do not pay well, especially when you don't have a college degree), however, the content would be available for any socioeconomic background.

**Learning style and preferences:** Students who take this course need to be independent learners who have a high verbal and spatial intelligence. They prefer to work alone or with small groups.

**Motivation:** Learners who take this course will have a part of the necessary skills and knowledge to complete the CDA Assessment. Earning the CDA Credential has many advantages. For example, it can motivate caregivers toward educational pursuits, and provide leverage for professional and career opportunities. Many view the CDA Credential as an instrument for career advancement in the early care and education profession.

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## Design

Based on our Needs Assessment, we identified two main knowledge areas for this training:

- How children learn
- Stages and milestones of cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development

The following skills will be focused on so that participants can apply the above knowledge:

- Observation of children
- Implementing developmentally appropriate practices

Other features of this training include a mentoring relationship between the learner and a more experienced person who we're calling a mentor. Whether it be a director in a child care center, an Education Specialist in the center, or a teacher in a high school program, the mentor will observe the learner in his or her interactions with the children in their care, see how they are applying the information they are learning, and provide the learner with feedback. To facilitate this, we will provide mentors with tools to help them conduct assessments such as forms, sample observations reports, and checklists. We will also provide guidelines for "reflective supervision," giving tips to create an open dialog between the mentor and the learner.

We are also hoping that the mentor component can solve some of the challenges we are experiencing in developing a CBT on this topic. Many of the instructional strategies that we'd like to use, such as classroom discussion, are not possible through this instructional medium. So, hopefully the mentor component can make up for some of that, providing the learner a person to bounce ideas off of, and so forth.

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## Competencies

This project meets competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, and 11. A description of how this project meets these competencies is included below.

### ***1. Take a systems view.***

In the development of this project, we analyzed the larger child care community and how this training would be appropriate for the field and content. We surveyed practitioners in the field, subject matter experts, potential learners, and Child Care Center directors who would need to support their staff as they participate in the training.

### ***2. Use cycles of reasoning as tools for problem solving.***

We followed the ADDIE Instructional Systems Design model for this training, conducting a needs assessment, designing and developing the instruction, and conducting a brief formative evaluation.

### ***3. Promote collaboration, partnerships, and relationships for full inclusion with stakeholders, clients, subject matter experts, team members, etc.***

As mentioned above, we surveyed practitioners in the field, subject matter experts, potential learners, and Child Care Center directors who would need to support their staff as they participate in the training. Including Child Care Center directors in our needs assessment allowed us to gather their input on how the training could meet their sometimes competing needs as employers of the potential learners and directors of their programs.

#### ***4. Be a lifelong learner and professional***

This training was my first step in meeting my goal with this program – developing instruction for people who work with children. As a part of this project, I analyzed how a self-paced online training could be an effective educational tool for child care professionals.

#### ***5. Conduct a needs assessment for learning or performance interventions***

We conducted a needs assessment with SMEs, Child Care Center directors, and high school students (prespective learners).

#### ***6. Conduct a learning or performance instructional analysis***

As a part of our needs analysis, we conducted a learner analysis to identify the learner characteristics and where learners would be likely to take the course. This included a technology assessment and context analysis.

#### ***10. Develop products and resources to support learning and performance***

As a part of this training, I developed an interactive game with Flash for Module 1 focusing on the stages of child development. Module 2 includes sample worksheets, stories where learners are asked to make observations, and a movie where learners are asked to apply what they've learned as they observe children in the movie.

#### ***11. Evaluate effectiveness of programs, products, or practices***

We conducted a brief formative assessment of this training with a group of high school students. While this assessment showed that much of the design was effective, it also demonstrated that the training needed to be modified quite a bit to increase interactivity. If time and resources allowed, the training design would be adjusted to meet these needs.

#### ***15. Participate in an implementation process or change strategy.***

This training asks learners to find a "mentor" in their child care program to work with them as they participate in the training. To facilitate this, we developed a "Mentor Area" that includes tools for the mentor, including:

- *Tool 1: Objective or Subjective Worksheet.* The learner has been asked to go through a worksheet and identify if the observational comments included are objective or subjective. Use this completed worksheet to review the answers with the learner.
- *Tool 2: Ben's Checklist Observation.* The learner has been asked to watch the movie *Daddy Day Care* and fill out an observation checklist for his physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. This tool is an example of the kinds of things your learner should have observed as he or she watched the movie.
- *Tool 3: Key to the Module 2 Quiz.* Use this key to review the learners responses to the quiz. Remember, it's not graded; it's a learning activity.
- *Tool 4: Running Record Observation Evaluation Rubric.* Use this rubric to evaluate your learner based on the requirements of this course.