

CDA Credential
Portfolio
Guidebook

The Skillful Teacher

inspiring training for early childhood professionals

www.theskillfulteacher.org

Congratulations!

You have completed your 120 hour training. Now it's time to create your portfolio in preparation for your verification visit (observation).

In this guide, you will find out how to write the pages of your portfolio and insert them into a binder.

Step One

Distribute the Family Questionnaire

In your standards guidebook, find the Family Questionnaire.

Tear it out and copy enough to give one to each family in your class. Notice that the questionnaire runs two pages – make certain to copy and distribute both pages. Ask parents to fill out the questionnaire and return it to you as soon as possible.

Make a note of how many questionnaires you distributed (for example, 14).

Set up a box or basket near the children’s cubbies, so parents can drop off their completed questionnaires. Give parents a few days to do this, but remind parents if you need to.

You need to receive back at least half of the questionnaires you distributed (so if you distributed 14, you must get at least 7 back).

Once you have back as many questionnaires as you think you will get (and at least half as many as you handed out), read through them and think about what parents like about your work and ways parents suggest you could be even better.

On the designated pages of your standards guidebook, write your thoughts about the questionnaire. Insert this page and all the questionnaires into your portfolio.

Step Two

Create your Resource Collection I

In your standards guidebook to find where the Resource Collections are described. Find the directions for RC-I and assemble exactly what is asked for. You will notice that there are several items, numbered RC-I – 1, RC-1 – 2, and RC-1 – 3, and so on. Make certain to do them all.

Copy the required materials (for example, a menu for your class), and insert these as individual pages in your portfolio.

Step Three

Write a Response to Competency Standard I

In your standards guidebook, find Competency Standard I. Read the directions, which ask you to write a paragraph about the topic of this standard, and then write additional paragraphs about specific areas covered by the standard. The directions for the first paragraph are at the top of the standard, and the directions for each of the specific area paragraphs are preceded by a lower case letter (a, b, c, etc.). Notice that the specific area paragraphs are “about” what you included in RC-1.

Be sure to respond to every portion of the directions. Read them carefully to make certain you have not skipped anything.

When you are finished with writing your paragraphs in response to Competency Standard I, read over your work carefully. Check your spelling.

When you are finished, move on to the next steps.

Step Four

Continue to create your Resource Collections II-VI

Continue to assemble Resource Collections for each of the standards, II, III, IV, V, and VI. Directions for what to include are presented in your standards guidebook.

Read the directions carefully and be certain you have collected what is asked for and that you haven't left out any parts. Notice that the directions for some Resource Collections include additional things to add, besides the first thing mentioned. Be careful to not miss anything!

Write or copy the required materials and insert these as individual pages in your portfolio, organizing your portfolio using dividers and tabs as you go. You want your Professional Development Specialist (PDS) to find your work easily and without getting confused.

It is helpful to label each piece of your resource collection with its number (RC-III-1, for example). Be sure to arrange the resources in the same order that they appear in the standards guidebook.

Step Five

Continue to write Competency Statements II-VI

As you complete each Resource Collection, write the accompanying Competency Statements. Remember that the Competency Statements are often built on the Resource Collection materials, so it's easiest to write about them when they are fresh in your mind.

Follow the directions carefully, and watch out for things you might easily miss.

As you complete each Competency Statement, insert it in your portfolio, directly after the related Resource Collection.

Continue in this way, creating the Resource Collections and writing the Competency Statements, until you have completed everything. Check your spelling. Check to be certain you have not forgotten anything. You might ask a friend to check your portfolio against the standards guidebook, since this is exactly what your PDS will do.

Step Six

Write a your Professional Philosophy Statement

The final part of your portfolio is a statement of your professional philosophy. Directions for what to include are in the standards guidebook. Read the directions carefully and write what is asked for.

Notice that this philosophy statement should be no longer than two pages, but it should be at least one page, typed. This is the last thing your PDS will read as they review your portfolio, and before they come to your classroom for the observation. Write a philosophy statement that is clear and complete, and reflects well on you as a professional person.

Remember to check your spelling. You may want a friend to read this over and help you catch any errors.

Insert this Professional Philosophy Statement in your portfolio, after the last Competency Statement. Like all the sections of your portfolio, separate this from other sections with a divider and tab.

Step Seven

Check things over

Let your portfolio “sit” for a few days then take another look at it. Page through. Are there things that are out of place? Is your writing clear? Are all the resources easy to find and are they labeled with the right RC number?

You want your portfolio to make a great first impression. It should look as good as you teach!

Step Eight

Pay the CDA people

Before you can continue with the final steps of the credential process, you must pay a fee to the Council for Professional Recognition. As of this writing (2018), this fee is \$425. Find out the exact amount and payment methods on the CDA website.

Step Nine (or maybe Ten)

Arrange for your verification visit

After you have paid the required fee, and either before or after you take the exam (see below), complete the verification visit, which is an observation of you in action. On the CDA website, search for a PDS who will come to your classroom on a prearranged day and time, and observe you at work with the children.

Usually the PDS reviews your portfolio before the observation. Following this portfolio review (you are not present for that), the PDS will come to your classroom and just watch for 2 hours. You should plan for an ordinary day – it's best if you not try to do anything intended to impress. It's safer if you do whatever is usual for you and the children. Your PDS will try not to get in the way, but he or she will accompany you and the children outdoors or wherever else you go during the two hours. After the 2-hour observation is complete, you and the PDS will meet in a quiet room in your center, to discuss your portfolio and the observation. Be sure that someone will 'cover' for your absence in the classroom.

Following the verification visit, your PDS will record a summary of the visit to a special page on the CDA website.

The Final Step

Sit for the exam

Before you can be completely finished with the CDA credentialing process, you must take the exam. You may do this either before or after the verification visit.

The exam is a multiple-choice test given on computer at selected locations in your area. Find the dates and locations of upcoming exams and reserve your place. You can find instructions for scheduling your exam on the CDA website.