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What is a CDA?

In keeping with its goal to meet the growing need for qualified child care staff, the Council administers the Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program. The CDA Program is designed to assess and credential early childhood care and education professionals based on performance.

A Child Development Associate (CDA) is an individual who has successfully completed the National CDA assessment process and has been awarded the CDA Credential. CDAs are able to meet the specific needs of children and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework.

What does it mean to be NAFCC Accredited?

For Children: NAFCC Accreditation is an indicator that family child care homes offer safe, inviting spaces and warm, nurturing care complete with educational activities designed to meet the needs and interests of all children while promoting individual development.

For Parents: NAFCC Accreditation is an indicator that parents can use to help identify responsive, stimulating child care. Parents can expect that their children are growing and learning in an environment that is responsive to their individual needs.

For Employers: NAFCC Accreditation is an indicator that family child care homes offer a stable, high-quality child care program which research has shown directly improves employee attendance, morale, and productivity.

For Communities: NAFCC Accreditation is an indicator that quality family child care providers are available to help to make communities attractive to families, signaling that children are well cared for and educated during their early years and before and after school.

WWW.NAFCC.ORG 1-800-359-3817

What is Keystone Stars?

Keystone STARS is an initiative of the Office of Child Development to improve, supports, and recognizes the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania.

The Keystone STARS Performance Standards provide the foundation for the program. The Performance Standards are grouped into four levels: **STAR 1, STAR 2, STAR 3, and STAR 4**. Each level builds on the previous level and utilizes research-based best practices to promote quality early learning environments and positive child outcomes. The standards address staff qualifications and professional development, the early learning program, partnerships with family and community, and leadership and management.

At a Keystone STARS Facility, you can count on:

- A Department of Public Welfare Certificate of Compliance for Centers or registration for Family Day Care Homes
- A comfortable place where your child can explore and learn
- Laughing, reading, and talking to build good language skills
- Teachers learning new ways to help your child succeed
- A safe, healthy and exciting place
- Music, art, science, and play activities that increase school readiness
- Your child feeling good about his/her self
- Family involvement
- Teachers that listen to children and parents
- Children having fun together and being respectful of each other

Keystone STARS is a quality rating system. It has four STAR levels as noted in the chart below. Each STAR designation has its own research-based performance standards. These standards measure three areas of child care that make a difference in the quality of care your child receives: 1) *The staff employed* 2) *The environment your child is in every day* 3) *The way a facility runs their business.*

As a facility moves from STAR One to STAR Four, the requirements in these areas increase. The chart below gives examples of the requirements each facility must meet at each STAR level.

STAR Level One

- A full DPW Child Care Certificate of Compliance or Registration for a year
- A plan to increase early care and education professional development and training for the staff
- Increased staff communication by team meetings
- A completed self-assessment on quality items in the environment

STAR Level Two

- Director and Staff must receive at least 3 to 6 hours more annual professional development and training than DPW regulations require
- One third of the staff completed or are enrolled in credentials or degrees
- Learning materials such as books, blocks, puzzles, music and art supplies are available for some of the day
- The facility has a budget and provides at least one benefit to staff
- Some involvement of parents in the program
- A plan to address needs found in a standardized self-assessment of the program

STAR Level Three

- Even more professional development and training hours than STAR Two requires
- One half of the staff completed or are enrolled in credentials or degrees
- Learning materials available for a large part of the day
- Literacy activities including reading to children, story telling and encouraging written and verbal communication happen often during the day
- Increased parental involvement
- Written policies and procedures
- Implementation of a financial system, increased staff compensation and benefits

STAR Level Four

- Even more professional development and training hours than STAR Three require
- Two thirds of the staff completed or are enrolled in credentials or degrees
- Activities designed to encourage communication, both written and verbal, occur naturally in the day
- Parental and community resources used effectively in the delivery of quality child care
- Business, organizational and staff compensation practices are maximized
- A review of the facility by a nationally recognized environmental rating scale that indicates a high quality score

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