Options for Students Interested in Direct Care Services With Children

While the CDFS department does not offer a degree in early childhood education, the child development option, when combined with the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, can successfully prepare students for careers in direct care services with children, such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and child care facilities. The CDA is a nationally recognized credential that is focused on the application of good practice with young children. Students who receive the CDA are grounded in the practical knowledge needed for working with children in a variety of pre-kindergarten settings.

Students in the child development option who are interested in obtaining the CDA should take the following steps:

1. Successfully complete the following courses and all class assignments by the end of fall semester, junior year:

   - **CDFS 194 CDA Module 1: Establishing the Environment** 3 cr.
     - Co-Requisite: CDFS 196, CDA Field Experience 1 cr.
   - **CDFS 194 CDA Module 2: Intro. to Child Growth & Development** 3 cr.
     - Co-Requisite: CDFS 196, CDA Field Experience 1 cr.
   - **CDFS 194 CDA Module 3: Intro. to Early Childhood Profession** 3 cr.
     - Co-Requisite: CDFS 196, CDA Field Experience 1 cr.

   These 12 credits can be applied to your major requirement electives on your curriculum guide. All other degree requirements must also be completed.

   **PLEASE NOTE:** These courses are offered through the Division of Distance and Continuing Education; if you take one or more of them during a semester when you are enrolled for more than 12 credits, there will be an extra fee for these courses.

2. Complete an approved Field Experience (CDFS 496) in an accredited childcare center during your second semester, junior year, or your senior year. You will work with Ms. Nancy Kaler to set up this experience.

   In addition to completing all regular Field Experience requirements you will also:

   (A) Complete parent surveys evaluating your performance.
   (B) Undergo a formal observation at your Field Experience site by a qualified CDA advisor. There is currently a $325 fee for this observation that must be paid directly to the national CDA Council.
Upon successful completion of coursework and field experience, you may file for National Direct Assessment. The National CDA Council will assign a representative to administer a written and oral exam. All information will be sent back to the CDA Council in Washington DC, who will determine whether or not the CDA Credential is issued. There is a $345 fee assessed by the National CDA Council for Direct Assessment.

PLEASE NOTE: NDSU does not issue the CDA and does not influence or have input into the CDA Council’s decision to award the credential.

For more information, please contact Dr. Deal, 231 – 7568 or Jim.Deal@ndsu.edu.