



March 20, 2014

Good Afternoon,
Ms. Libby Doggett, Department of Education

Ms. Linda Smith, Department of Health and Human Services

My name is Dr. Myra Crouch and I am the Chief Program Officer for the Council for Professional Recognition. The Council for Professional Recognition administers offering the Child Development Associate Credential™ which is the Nation's Premier early care and education professional development system. The Council has issued 325,000 CDA credentials to qualified early educators since its inception several decades ago. Last year alone, we awarded more than 20,000 new credentials and renewed nearly 18,000 credentials. Given this deep impact, the Child Development Associate™ credential is distinguished for its broad and enduring appeal as an effective method to assess both knowledge and competency of the early care professional.

The Council firmly believes that young children deserve both a knowledgeable teacher with demonstrated competence – and that in the mixed delivery system across the early care and education field, partnerships are essential to achieve that vision.

Therefore, our recommendations are that this competition solidifies a direction that brings forward strong partnerships that can extend the reach of professional development to the tens of thousands who have still not had access to a comprehensive, nationally recognized professional development system that is strongly rooted in research and expert consensus about what early educators should know and be able to do.

1. Our first recommendation is that States include key objectives in their applications that promotes a **competency-based framework** that allows for a progression of credentials that engages early care professionals across all early childhood programs. Teacher preparation that includes demonstrating competence is the formulation of a systemic approach that involves high-quality assessment and licensing standards that ensure a highly effective early care workforce. The Child Development Associate is a best first step in raising standards for early childhood professionals that is competency and performance-based across the birth to age five continuum.
2. Our second recommendation is that States must include key objectives in their applications that demonstrate they have an effective and coordinated system of early childhood professional development that provides meaningful opportunities for career advancement to ensure a well-qualified and stable workforce across all preschool program entities and not just state funded preschool programs. The birth to age five continuum should serve as the cornerstone for collaboration as state education agencies and local education agencies work to bridge the achievement gap and discontinuity across early care settings.

3. Our third and final recommendation is that States include key objectives in their applications that will commit to an early care workforce and competency framework that is holistic and comprehensive that allows for career advancement to include incentives around salary, wage and compensation issues.

On behalf of the Council for Professional Recognition, we commend the Departments of Education and Health & Human Services in making this investment to push the envelope even further to raise the standards of quality to ensure that every young child enters school ready and able to learn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. G. Crouch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Myra G. Crouch, PhD
Chief Program Officer
Council for Professional Recognition