

CDA FORMAL EDUCATION

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CDA Formal Education Hours:

FIND THE RIGHT PROGRAM

Although the Council for Professional Recognition sets the CDA training guidelines and awards the CDA credential, they do not provide the formal early childhood education hours needed. You are in charge of finding the right professional development program for your CDA formal education hours.

Are all CDA programs the same?

No, in fact, they can be very different. Institutions that offer a CDA training program develop their curriculum independent of the Council. This is why it is very important to be aware of the Council for Professional Recognitions guidelines.

There are many programs that offer CDA professional development. The Council states:

- Requirement may be met through participation on the wide variety of training available in the field, including in-service
- CDA Candidates may accumulate the hours from a single training program or from a combination of programs (not an individual consultant)
- All formal education hours must be under the auspices of an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation
- The education could be for college credit or no college credit
- The organization must provide verification of the Candidate's education in the form of a transcript, certificate, or letter
- It is the CDA Candidates responsibility to record and cite the number of clock hours completed in each CDA subject area
- Training obtained at conferences or from individual consultants is not acceptable

Find a professional development organization that works best for you, your learning style, your financial needs, your professional goals, and most importantly, one that meets the Council's guidelines.

NOTES:

Most CDA professional development earns either CEU's (Continuing Education Units) or College Credits. Contact the Council for Professional Recognition if you have questions about the Council's guidelines for professional development programs.

Better Kid Care and CDA

WHO IS PENN STATE BETTER KID CARE?

Penn State Better Kid Care, through Penn State Cooperative Extension, Penn State University, is an award winning program that offers professional development, educational materials, and informative resources for the early childhood professional.

The goal of Penn State Better Kid Care is to improve the quality of child care through education. Better Kid Care provides enriching learning experiences for adults through well researched educational materials. Each year Better Kid Care delivers over 200,000 hours of professional development to Pennsylvania's Early Learning Professionals.

BETTER KID CARE DISTANCE EDUCATION AND CDA: A GOOD FIT!

A key component of any professional development system is the Core Body of Knowledge, which identifies a set of content areas that help define the knowledge expectations for all practitioners in all settings within early childhood education. The Better Kid Care curriculum (<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/cdaDistEdList.html>) follows the framework of the PA Core Body of Knowledge and offers multiple course titles to choose from.

Better Kid Care's Distance Education allows you to:

- Learn at your convenience
- Receive professional early childhood feedback
- See and hear professionals at work with children
- Earn professional development hours

NOTES:

CDA Note:

The Council provides a National Directory of Early Childhood Preparation Institutions listed by state. Go to <http://cdacouncil.org/the-resource-center/directory-of-training-institutions>

Better Kid Care Distance Education Programs qualify for the following standards:

- Child Development Associate credential (CDA) and CDA Renewal <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page15.html>
- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page06a.html#CEU>
- Pennsylvania Act 48 for certified teachers <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page06a.html#ACT48>
- Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare required hours <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page06a.html#DPW>
- Keystone STARS <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page06a.html#STARS>

CAN I EARN CEUs (CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS)?

Individual CEU records also may be used to document completion of requirements for a major phase of training or education and, thus, indicate readiness to enter into the next phase of training or career enhancement.

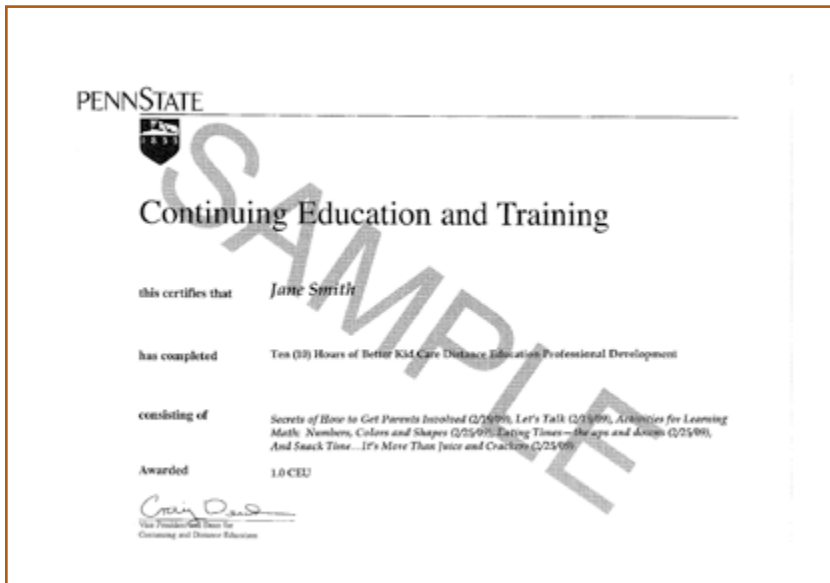
To receive one (1) CEU, ten (10) hours of Professional Development must be completed. Any combination of 2-hour or 1-hour Better Kid Care Distance Education lessons can combine to earn CEUs.

How to request CEU Certificate

If you have completed at least 10 hours of professional development through Better Kid Care and would like to receive a certification for one CEU, complete the CEU REQUEST FORM (<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/Forms/CEURequestForm.pdf>) and mail to Better Kid Care.

NOTES:

A sample CEU certificate looks like this:



NOTES:

BKC'S DISTANCE EDUCATION CURRICULA: COURSES AND INDIVIDUAL LESSONS

Better Kid Care Distance Education provides a comprehensive curricula and wide-ranging course list in early childhood development. Our Distance Education lessons provide a well-rounded approach to obtaining professional development. Better Kid Care offers two types of lessons: On Demand lessons and Lessons By Mail.

On Demand Lessons

Better Kid Care's new On Demand Distance Education system provides professional development anytime you are ready to learn! The On Demand system has the following features:

View all content free of charge.

Just Create an Account. Get started online at <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/odDE.html>.

Stop and start a lesson.

Learn at your own pace. If you are interrupted while you are taking a lesson, you can stop and return to the lesson at a later time.

Online professional development certificate available.

There is a \$5.00 fee/lesson to receive professional development hours. You will be directed to a credit card payment screen prior to taking the assessment. You must have a credit card to complete the lesson for professional development credit using the On Demand system.

Print your own completed certificate.

After you pay and successfully complete all the assessment questions for a lesson, you can choose to print your certificate of completion and/or have it sent to your email address.

View/Print a complete list of all the Better Kid Care lessons you have completed.

Included in your list are all of the lessons you have completed through Better Kid Care, even those that aren't in On Demand!

Lessons by Mail

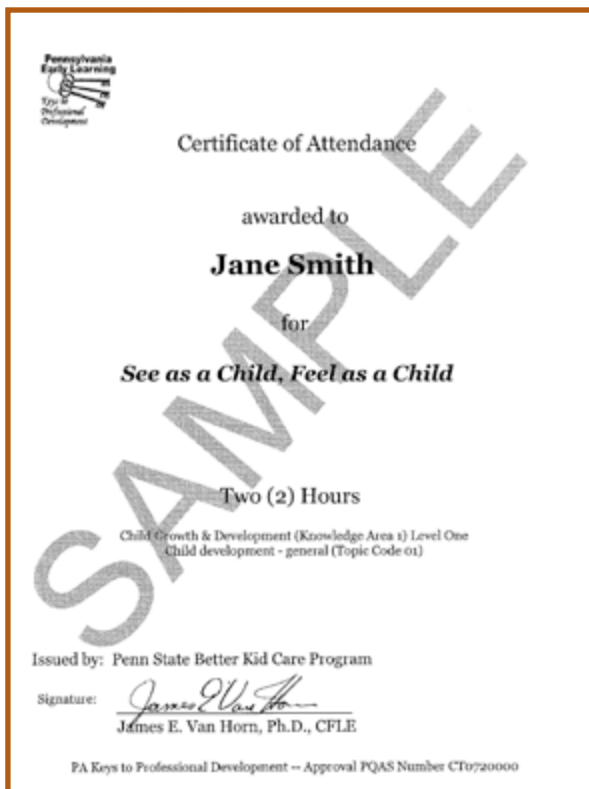
Lessons by Mail are two-hour lessons that consist of a workbook, instructional video, and assignment questions. The educational material is mailed to practitioners upon receiving order and prepayment of \$5.00 per lesson. A coupon for one review of assignments is included. Completed assignments are returned by mail to Better Kid Care for review by an early childhood instructor. Participants are sent a certificate upon successful completion of each lesson.

NOTES:**CDA Note:**

CDA candidates using the Better Kid Care curricula as the CDA formal education hours will include both OnDemand and Lessons by Mail.

Documented Proof of Training: Certificate of Completion

The CDA candidate must show proof of their education in the form of a transcript, certificate, or letter. Upon completion of each Better Kid Care lesson, you will receive a certificate of completion. This certificate will help in documenting proof of your CDA education hours. The following is a sample Better Kid Care Certificate:



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CDA Note:

Remember you can print a complete list of all the lessons you have completed with Better Kid Care – simply create an account in On-Demand <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/odDE.html>

BETTER KID CARE AND CDA FORMAL EDUCATION

The Penn State Better Kid Care Distance Education lessons can be completed to meet the formal CDA early childhood education training requirements (120 hours total, with a minimum of ten hours in each CDA Subject Area).

CDA Subject Areas

- CDA 1: Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning
- CDA 2: Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development
- CDA 3: Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development
- CDA 4: Strategies to establish productive relationships with families
- CDA 5: Strategies to manage an effective program operation
- CDA 6: Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
- CDA 7: Observation and Assessment
- CDA 8: Principles of Child Development and Learning

The Distance Education lessons are coded according to the 8 CDA subject areas to make an easy breakdown of the required hours.

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CDA Note:

BE AWARE: The CDA Council has added revisions to the CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards for both Infant/Toddler Center-Based (revised 3rd edition 2010) and Preschool Center-Based (revised 3rd edition 2011) books. Revisions reflect current knowledge of child development and best practices. Many new examples and definitions are added and also a new section on Dual-Language Learners. Get your revised CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards books from the CDA Council's on-line bookstore.

WHAT KNOWLEDGE WILL I NEED TO OBTAIN AS A CDA CANDIDATE?

The CDA Credential is awarded to those who can demonstrate their skill in working with young children and families, meeting the specific physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs of children in a child development framework. In exploring your CDA professional development, it is important to be aware of the CDA Subject areas, CDA Competency Standards, and the CDA Functional Areas. These will help in understanding what a CDA candidate is expected to know. Review the following:

CDA Subject Areas

- CDA 1: Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning
- CDA 2: Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development
- CDA 3: Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development
- CDA 4: Strategies to establish productive relationships with families
- CDA 5: Strategies to manage an effective program operation
- CDA 6: Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
- CDA 7: Observation and Assessment
- CDA 8: Principles of Child Development and Learning

WHAT ARE THE CDA COMPETENCY STANDARDS?

The CDA Competency Standards, created by the Council, are the national standards used to evaluate a caregiver's performance with children and families during the CDA assessment process. The

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Competency Standards are divided into six Competency Goals, which are statements of a general purpose or goal for caregiver behavior. The Competency Goals apply to all child care settings described for CDA. CDA Candidates will also be writing about the Competency Standards in their Collection of Documentation (discussed in Phase Four).

CDA Competency Standards

CDA 1: To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment

CDA 2: To advance physical and intellectual competence

CDA 3: To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance

CDA 4: To establish positive and productive relationships with families

CDA 5: To ensure a well-run purposeful program that is responsive to participant needs

CDA 6: To maintain a commitment to professionalism

WHAT ARE THE CDA FUNCTIONAL AREAS?

The Functional Areas help define further the Competency Goals; they describe the major tasks or functions that a caregiver must complete to carry out the Competency Goal. After becoming familiar with the six CDA Competency Goals, review the CDA Functional Areas listed in your CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book.

Each Functional Area has a developmental context which presents a brief overview of relevant child developmental principles, sample behaviors, and examples of practitioner skills. The Functional Areas for your chosen setting are listed in your CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book.

The six CDA Competency Goals are divided into 13 Functional areas. Remember, the six Competency Goals are the same for all CDA settings; however, the CDA Functional Areas differ according to particular skills needed for specific child care settings. Find and review your specific Functional Areas for your CDA setting in your CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards book. The following table lists the each Competency Goals and its Functional Areas.

NOTES:

CDA COMPETENCY GOALS	FUNCTIONAL AREAS
Goal I. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment.	1. Safe 2. Healthy 3. Learning Environment
Goal II. To advance physical and intellectual competence	4. Physical 5. Cognitive 6. Communication 7. Creative
Goal III. To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance	8. Self 9. Social 10. Guidance
Goal IV. To establish positive and productive relationships with families	11. Families
Goal V. To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs	12. Program Management
Goal VI. To maintain a commitment to professionalism	13. Professionalism

NOTES:**HOW DO I KNOW WHICH BETTER KID CARE LESSONS TO ORDER?**

After reviewing the 8 CDA subject areas, the 6 CDA Competency Standards, and the 13 Functional Areas (based on specific CDA setting), you will have an understanding of criteria and knowledge needed for your CDA formal education hours. And remember, a CDA applicant must complete 120 hours of professional early childhood education, with a minimum of 10 hours in each CDA subject area.

Use the PDF *Lessons by CDA Content* (<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/PDFs/CDA/LessonsByCDAContent.pdf>) to help you choose your lessons. Both On Demand lessons and Lessons by Mail are arranged by CDA Subject areas. An example is listed below.

The following are examples of Better Kid Care lessons to choose from for CDA Subject area 1:

CDA 1 Subject Area: To establish and maintain a safe, healthy, learning environment

Lessons by Mail Lessons: CDA 1 (two-hour)

- Active Play: Fighting Obesity and Diabetes and Keeping Children Healthy
- Changing Spaces
- Eating Times: The Ups and Downs
- Improving Transition Times
- Keystone Color Me Healthy (PA residents only)
- Obese Kids: They Are What They Eat
- Snack Time: It's More than Juice and Crackers
- The Ups and Downs of Outdoor Play
- Your #1 Priority: Keeping Children Healthy and Safe

On Demand Lessons: CDA 1

- Obese Kids: They are What They Eat 2 hr
- Space for Playing and Learning in a Family Child Care Home 1 hr
- Super Snacks 1 hr
- Supervising Children in Family Child Care 2hr.
- Your # 1 Priority: Keeping Children Healthy and Safe 2 hr.

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CDA Note:

REMEMBER:

Better Kid Care offers two types of lessons: On Demand lessons and Lessons By Mail.

Helpful Planning: Use the CDA/PDR tool

WHAT IS THE CDA/PDR TOOL?

The CDA/PDR (Professional Development Record) is a tool created by the Better Kid Care Program to help record your 120 hours of professional development needed to obtain your CDA credential.

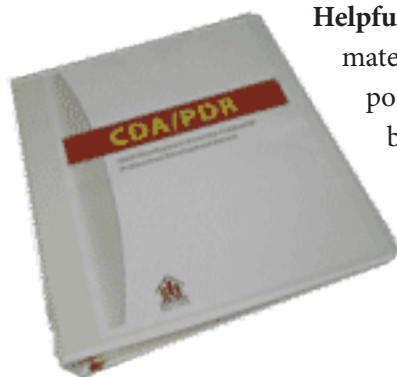
WHY USE THE CDA/PDR TOOL?

A CDA/PDR will help you plan for, organize, record, and review your 120 CDA professional development hours. The CDA/PDR provides a tool for recording that helps the applicant pace their professional development work. It provides a visual of what has been completed as well as what is needed in regards to the required 120 hours of professional development needed (in each CDA subject area).

HOW DO I USE THE CDA/PDR?

The CDA/PDR form is divided into a cover page, 8 CDA Subject Area pages, and extra pages (for additional professional development). Each page lists a description of the CDA Subject and provides space to record your scheduled or completed professional development. Each page is organized by four areas:

- Date
- Title of training/professional development lesson
- Hours
- Comments or Notes



Helpful Hint: Keep your CDA/PDR materials in a three-ring binder. Place pocket file folders (with 3-ring holes) behind each CDA/PDR page to hold the original certificates you receive after completing your professional development lessons.

NOTES:



Follow these 3 easy steps

1. Download your CDA/PDR (for free!) from the Better Kid Care website at <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page15h.html>.
2. Print the PDF *Lessons by CDA Content* (<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/PDFs/CDA/LessonsByCDACContent.pdf>) to help you choose your lessons. Both On Demand lessons and Lessons by Mail are arranged by CDA Subject areas.
3. Review *Lessons by CDA Content*, the 8 CDA Subject areas, 6 CDA Competency Areas, and 13 CDA Functional Areas for your specific CDA setting. **Remember:** review revised (2010, 2011) CDA Competency areas and definitions, including new information on Dual Language Learners, in your CDA Assessment System and Competency Standards books.

PLAN YOUR CDA LESSONS WITH THE CDA/PDR

Begin to plan your lessons. Use a pencil, your CDA/PDR and *Lessons by CDA Content*. Begin selecting lessons in each CDA subject area. For example, if choosing lessons for CDA Subject area one, “Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning”, you would look at the lessons for CDA 1 and pencil the lesson titles you wish to complete in your CDA/PDR under the same title (CDA 1: Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning). Do this for each CDA subject area. Remember to note whether the lesson is a one hour or a two hour.

When you have penciled in the 10 hours worth of lessons in each of the 8 CDA subject areas, you will have a total of 80 hours of professional development to work on (and eventually order). You will need a remaining 40 hours to total 120 hours of formal education.

Review your *Lessons by CDA Content* and identify what other lessons you would like to complete. Go back to the CDA/PDR and record an extra 40 hours worth of lessons. You can choose any CDA Subject Area you wish. Remember, the goal is to have a total of 120 hours in formal early education, with at least a minimum 10 hours worth of training in each CDA subject area. (If you chose 15 hours in each of the 8 CDA subject areas, you will have a total of 120 hours)

NOTES:

CDA Note:

Use a pencil in the planning stage to determine your lessons. That way, changes can be made if needed in the CDA/PDR.

The CDA/PDR is an optional tool and is not required for the CDA Process.

Review your CDA/PDR and be sure you have predicted lessons to complete a total of 120 hours of early childhood education, with at least a minimum of 10 hours in each CDA subject area.

Before beginning the Better Kid Care Lessons

PLAN FOR YOUR WORK

In using the Better Kid Care Distance Education Lessons for CDA, you are an independent learner. It is helpful to think of your CDA work as if you are going to a class. Set up time each week to work on lessons, review your materials, and plan for future CDA work.

After you have carefully reviewed your CDA/PDR form, the next step is to decide how many lessons you plan to do a month. You will be setting your own goals of completion. Look at the date you want to apply and review application information. Remember that it generally takes around a year to receive your CDA credential. This is a good time to pull out your calendar and begin to set goals.

HOW MANY LESSONS SHOULD I ORDER AT A TIME?

How many lessons you order at a time is up to you. It is recommended that you only order what you can comfortably complete in three months. The mail lessons will come with a coupon for free review that will last for three months. There is a three dollar additional review fee for each lesson that does not have a coupon. On Demand lessons do not expire.

WHAT LESSONS SHOULD I START WITH?

It is recommended you begin with one CDA subject area and complete the ten hours (or more) in that subject area to give you a comprehensive and focused approach to learning. For example, you may start with completing all the lessons you've outlined in your CDA/PDR for CDA subject area 1, rather than randomly choosing lessons to complete.

NOTES:

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO COMPLETE 120 HOURS OF LESSONS?

You are setting your own goals; completion of the 120 hours of education depends on how many lessons you complete each week/month, your work ethic, motivation, organization, and processing time. In general, it takes most CDA applicants around a year to complete the entire CDA process.

WHAT IF I ALREADY HAVE TAKEN OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING?

The Council of Professional Recognition accepts professional development completed within the past five years from the date you send in your CDA application. Candidates may accumulate the hours from a single training program (not an individual consultant) or from a combination of programs. All formal education hours must be under the auspices of an agency or organization with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation. Each agency must provide verification of the Candidate's education in the form of a transcript, certificate, or letter.

When designing your CDA Curriculum outline, take into consideration your professional development within the last five years. Be sure you record the training in your CDA/PDR to help assess what professional development you have completed. If uncertain as to whether or not the Council will accept the training from another organization (other than Better Kid Care), contact the Council at 800-424-4310.

NOTES:

In planning how long it will take to complete 120 hours of education using the Better Kid Care Lesson, you will need to consider:

- The amount of time you have available each week/month to complete lessons
- Material delivery: Allow up to two weeks for delivery of Mail lesson materials
- Material review: Allow at least six weeks for completed Lessons by Mail to be reviewed by Better Kid Care Early Educators
- Know when you want to send in your CDA application
- Plan for Verification Visit: Final Assessment (based on when you apply)

HOW MUCH DO THE LESSONS COSTS?

On Demand Lessons are \$5.00 each (both one and two hours).

Mail lessons are \$5.00 each. A \$3 fee is required for review when there is no coupon or when lessons are for *review only*. This might be the case if you already have access to the Better Kid Care DVD and only need the workbook. The workbook can be downloaded from the Better Kid Care web site. All completed assignments are returned to the Better Kid Care Program, including the review fee, registration form, evaluation form, and review payment form.

NOTES:

CDA Note:

Please download REQUIRED forms to use when submitting assignments, especially for any lessons ordered prior to September 2010. The most current forms are always at <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/Forms/DisEd%20Packet.pdf>.

Also check list of Discontinued Lessons that are no longer accepted for professional development (<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/Forms/Discontinued%20Lessons.pdf>).

Order your Better Kid Care lessons

Once you have completed your CDA/PDR, you have the framework for the professional development hours you need for the CDA formal education requirement. You are now ready to contact the Better Kid Care Program and order the lessons with which you wish to start.

TO ORDER ON DEMAND LESSONS

- Visit On Demand Distance Education:
<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/odDE.html>
- Follow the instructions in the link above to create your account
- You will need a credit card to complete the assessment and receive professional development credit.

Option 1: For an individual lesson. Log into the On Demand system, progress through the lesson, pay to access the assessment using a credit card that is processed through a secure on-line payment system, complete the assessment, and print your certificate of completion.

Option 2: Prepay for multiple On Demand lessons with one credit card transaction. Select “Lesson Prepayment” option under “Your Account” after signing-in. When prepayment is established, a code is provided to use for lesson payments. The code may be shared with other On Demand users; however, the purchaser of the prepayment code is responsible for the security of the code. The code purchaser can request email notification each time the code is used. The email indicates who used the code and what lessons were completed.

TO ORDER LESSONS BY MAIL

Four Easy Ways

- On-Line: <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/page02aMail.html>
(credit card orders)
- Mail: Use the correct order forms (<http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/Forms/DisEd%20Packet.pdf>) and mail with payment to:
Penn State Better Kid Care
Distance Education Program

NOTES:

CDA Note:

Want to pay for all your On Demand lessons at once? Use *option 2* to prepay for multiple lessons.

You will still need to order Lessons by Mail separately.

341 N. Science Park Road Suite 208
State College, PA 16803

- Phone: Call 800-452-9108 (credit card orders)
- FAX: 814-865-7893
24 hours a day, 7 days a week (credit card orders)

How do I pay for my Lessons by Mail?

Prepayment for any lesson is required before it is processed. Method of payments are:

- Check or Money Order – Make payable to The Pennsylvania State University. (A \$10 charge will be assessed for all returned checks.)
- Charges can be made with Visa and MasterCard.

NOTES:

Penn State **Extension**

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BETTER · KID · CARE

extension.psu.edu

www.betterkidcare.psu.edu

Claudia C. Mincemoyer, Ph.D., Better Kid Care Program Director

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PENNSTATE



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