

**LEARN & EARN  
MICRO-BUSINESS CASE**

**Bright Horizons Family  
Solutions LLC**



# Online Education Program Helps Meet Industry Excellence Benchmark Through Credentialing Bright Horizons Family Solutions LLC

Bright Horizons provides a blended e-training program to help teachers acquire their Child Development Associate credential, professionalizing the field of early education and achieving greater center accreditation, the industry standard of excellence.

Founded in 1986, Bright Horizons Family Solution LLC (Bright Horizons) is the world's leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education and work/life solutions. Conducting business in the United States, Europe, India and Canada, Bright Horizons has created employer-sponsored child care and early education programs for more than 700 clients, including more than 90 of the Fortune 500. Consistently named as one of the "100 Best Companies to Work for in America" by FORTUNE magazine, it manages child care centers for many of the world's leading corporations, hospitals, universities and government agencies. Bright Horizons is committed to meeting the industry standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a professional organization that promotes excellence in early childhood education.

In order for a Bright Horizons' child care center to be accredited through NAEYC, 75 percent of the teachers employed there must have been awarded the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or be working toward or possess an associate or bachelor's degree. The CDA credential is a critical first step on the career pathway and the professional development of early childhood teachers. Partnering with Teaching Strategies, Inc., an educational publishing company, Bright Horizons developed its own eCDA Program, which provides a high-tech, e-learning venue for its teachers to prepare to obtain the credential. Through the development and implementation of eCDA, Bright Horizons is able to aid the child care centers in meeting the requirements of NAEYC, increase the quality of early child care services provided at its centers, meet the demands of its highly educated and savvy consumers, and help its teachers earn a

stackable entry-level postsecondary education credential and professionalize its workforce.

## Developing & Administering an Online Solution

When considering how best to incent and encourage its child care teachers to obtain the CDA credential, Bright Horizons knew that

### PERSONAL STORY

In 2007, Martha Echevarria's child care center director asked if she was interested in joining the first cohort of Bright Horizons' eCDA (Child Development Associate) training program. Martha said yes because she had enrolled in college-level classes before but found it difficult to balance the demands of work and school. She thrived in the program utilizing the flexibility of online learning and the curriculum, which encouraged her to practice what she had learned within the workplace. Martha said, "The eCDA program gave me the confidence to be able to answer questions from other staff. I became the 'go-to' staff member." In 2008, she graduated from the eCDA program, received her credential, and has since been promoted twice. Martha recently earned her associate degree from Northampton Community College and reaped the benefits of utilizing a Bright Horizons education partner that includes reduced tuition, credits earned toward her degree, and tuition assistance. Now an assistant director of a child care center in New Jersey, Martha is working towards a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Administration and wants to become a center director.

### Business Outcomes

- Meet industry excellence benchmark
- Credentialed professional workforce
- Increase quality of care provided
- Contributes to lower turnover rate
- High quality child care centers

### Employee Outcomes

- 5% increase in salary upon completion
- Professional development opportunity
- Flexible online delivery model
- Credit hours translated into associate degree at numerous postsecondary institutions

### eCDA Program

- Online program to prepare employees to gain the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential
- 1,200 completed the program
- 600-700 candidates involved currently

the solution needed to fit into the work and life demands of its working learners. Bright Horizons invested in the development of the eCDA, an online and interactive program, which allows child care teachers to learn at a flexible pace and as their schedules allow. Bright Horizons incents its employees to obtain the credential by rewarding a 5 percent increase in salary upon completion, in addition to regular annual pay increases.

To administer the eCDA, candidates are grouped into cohorts of 20 and guided through the 13 modules by a facilitator employed by Bright Horizons. Five full-time facilitators handle a case load of approximately 125 candidates each at any given time. On average, the 600 -700 candidates in the program take approximately 13 months to complete the online training. Candidates are required to participate in monthly calls as a cohort with their facilitator, in at least one individual call with their facilitator per month, and in an online blog where they are required to interact and report their progress. Bright Horizons covers all costs associated with the eCDA Program, with the small exception of the introductory materials from the CDA Council.

## ■ Building on a Stackable Credential

Once a child care teacher has received the CDA credential, Bright Horizons offers support services to encourage and to focus the employee on continuing postsecondary education. Bright Horizons provides tuition reimbursement, up to 75 percent of tuition costs per academic year, to full-time or part-time employees working more than 20 hours per week, and who have been employed for more than six months. Bright Horizons has formed a nationwide provider network of private and public universities that provide discounted tuition costs and recognize the CDA credential which translates into academic credit hours earned. Through a partnership with Northampton Community College (NCC) in Pennsylvania, Bright Horizons' employees can enroll in the college's online associate degree program,

take advantage of in-state tuition regardless of their location, and receive a discounted tuition rate. NCC also recognizes the CDA credential and honors 9 academic credit hours toward the associate degree. To date, a small percentage of students move from the CDA credential completion to further postsecondary education; however, the numbers are increasing and Bright Horizons continues to support and facilitate this progression.

“We are proud to provide our employees with the tools and knowledge they need to obtain an industry credential. Our investment in eCDA helps assure the highest quality child care for our clients.”

- David Lissy

Chief Executive Officer

Bright Horizons Family Solutions

## ■ Meeting Industry Standards

Bright Horizons upholds and builds high quality child care centers with professional teachers credentialed to provide the best care and education possible as a result, in part, of the eCDA program. More than 1,200 staff have completed the training and over 1,050 credentials have been awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition since the program's inception in 2006. Center directors report positive employee behavior changes and seek out those who have completed the eCDA program and received the credential. Although the average turnover rate across the child care industry is 50 percent, Bright Horizons' turnover rate averages between 20-25 percent. The company recognizes the eCDA professional development opportunity as one contributing factor to the reduced turnover rate. As a result of the eCDA and Bright Horizons' investment in talent development, this pioneering company receives a credentialed professional workforce that delivers high-quality care and meets the demands of savvy consumers, while aiding child care centers in their goals to meet or maintain NAEYC accreditation.

For more information on Bright Horizons, please visit [www.brighthorizons.com](http://www.brighthorizons.com)

**FOUNDED:** in 1986

**LOCATION:** United States, Europe, Canada and India

**EMPLOYEES:** 18,000

Funded, in part, by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation



## About Corporate Voices

Corporate Voices is the leading national business membership organization shaping conversations and collaborations on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, we are a unique voice, and provide leading and best-practice employers a forum to improve the lives of working families, while strengthening our nation's economy and enhancing the vitality of our communities.

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## Find Out More

Corporate Voices is committed to identifying and spotlighting businesses supporting postsecondary completion while making significant contributions to internal company goals. “Best practice” talent development models that increase access to career opportunities through education and training are being examined for characteristics that are transferable and replicable to other employers. This research is being conducted with the guidance of the Corporate Voices Learn and Earn Business Leadership Team consisting of business executives leading promising models and those interested in peer-to-peer learning. If you are interested in joining, contact Peggy Walton at [pwalton@corporatevoices.org](mailto:pwalton@corporatevoices.org). Team members include:

- Verizon Wireless
- UPS
- Convergys
- Expeditors
- CVS Caremark
- AOL