Community and Social Media Guidelines for Council Alumni Network Members

The Council encourages and supports the proper use of the Council Alumni Network (CAN) as a professional communications tool for Current and Past CDA (Child Development Associate®) earners, PD (Professional Development) Specialists, Credentialing Academy Alumni, and others. Community members are required to uphold the integrity of the CDA Credential and Council in all instances where they represent the Council. The social media guidelines contained in this document are made to ensure that the Council for Professional Recognition is professionally and accurately reflected in professional communications by all CAN community members as it relates to email and social media of any kind. For the purposes of these guidelines, social media refers to, but is not limited to, the following sites or any online forum where text, videos/audio/digital or other images are used and distributed:

- The Council Alumni Network Community Platform
- Popular social networks such as Twitter and Facebook
- Photo-sharing websites such as Pinterest and Instagram
- Professional social networks such as LinkedIn
- Discussion forums such as the ones found on 4chan and Reddit
- Question- and answer-based networks such as Quora and Yahoo Answers
- Review systems such as Yelp and Google Reviews
- Video-based websites such as YouTube
- Blogs, websites, apps, or electronic newsletters.

Additionally, these guidelines assist our external communities with the development and distribution of positive, accurate, informative, and helpful social media posts.

Why This Document Exists

This document provides guidance to the Council Alumni Network community members on the proper use of the CAN community as it pertains to the Council for Professional Recognition, its branding, credentialing, employees, programs, copyrights, and trademarked materials; and the Council's rules managing the CAN community, social media use, and public discussions and engagements. The Council requires that CAN community members be responsible for their own communications - whether verbal, written, digital, audio or video. If a CAN community member engages in the use of social media for professional purposes, as it relates to the professional services you perform as a PD specialist; the CDA credential; and, the Council, its' employees, services or products, the Council requires you to adhere to these guidelines in this document.

Protecting the integrity of the CDA Credential and the Council's Reputation

Given that the CDA is both a domestic (U.S.A.) and international credential, it is important to remember that online posts of any kind can have a global impact. Your post should be professional, good-spirited, and accurately reflect the mission, vision, and work of the Council.

Requirements:

• **Use of the Council's name or brand products.** The Council's brand, name, logos, and products are **copyright- and trademark-protected**. Only employees or designated entities, with the Council's written approval, may use the Council's copyrighted and trademarked products and/or names. Only the Council for Professional Recognition and designated employees tasked to perform social media duties are authorized to use the Council's products. Unless specifically authorized by the Council, you are prohibited from using the Council's copyrighted logos, trademarked products, and names in your social media communications (personal and professional). This includes the use of documents (i.e., stationary or business cards displaying any Council logo)

- **CAN community members distributing the Council's products.** It is prohibited for anyone to offer Council retail products for free or at reduced price to the public. No other entity is authorized to sell any Council products or branding materials.

Best Practices

The Council encourages the following as best practice:

- **Think before posting.** This is the golden social media rule. Ensure your posting (including but not limited to, updates, photos, statements) will not result in a negative effect. This includes creating arguments and divulging sensitive information. Given the Council's credentials are both domestic and international, remember that your comments and posts made on an online platform can have an international impact. Maintaining a "world view" will help to create and sustain an inclusive global community. When commenting on the Council, state a disclaimer that your expressed views are your own and do not necessarily represent the Council. As a CAN community member, you represent the Council, and your posts should be transparent, well-spirited and reflective of our mission and vision.

  - **Sample Disclaimer:** *My expressed views are my own and do not reflect the work or opinion of the Council for Professional Recognition.*

- **Check grammar and spelling** before sending communications.

- **Professional versus personal identity on social media.** It might prove beneficial to create professional social media accounts to promote and protect your professional brand identity.

- **Complaints.** Everyone makes mistakes. The Council values freedom of speech. CAN community members are encouraged to direct concerns to the Council by contacting our offices, rather than posting on social media outlets (Contact: alumni@cdacouncil.org).

- **Negative Social Media Posts.** If there has been a negative or disparaging social media post regarding the Council, refrain from responding. The Council prefers

that you avoid the temptation to respond and forward the post to the Council's spokesperson (alumni@cdacouncil.org). The Council has a team of subject matter experts who will engage and respond based on the Council's policies.

- **Do not escalate issues.** Responding to other social media users, especially concerning a contentious subject, can result in an intense argument. To avoid such arguments, it might be best to avoid commenting if you feel you might spark conflict.

- **Correct your own mistakes.** When you make a factual error in a post, create an update to correct it. Deleting or editing the original post should come at your own discretion, depending on the situation.

- **Beware of potential security threats.** Hackers can use social networks to distribute spam and malware. They also can launch phishing attempts. You should report suspicious activity, including questionable comments and friend requests.

- **Be careful when sharing information about yourself or others.** Hackers also can use personal information to their advantage.

Remember:

Be professional • Be responsible • Be kind • Connect • Have fun!