

## California Early Childhood Mentor Program Overview

### CECMP Program Goals



### Program Description

High quality child care starts with high quality administrative Professionals. The talented and dedicated Coordinators, Directors and Teachers at child care programs are the conduit to ensuring the success of our youngest learners. Children attending quality child care programs have greater brain and social emotional development, language abilities and success in not only school, but in life.

The California Early Childhood Mentor Program (CECMP), funded by the California Department of Social Service (CDSS), supports Mentors throughout California in providing leadership and guidance to students entering the ECE field, and current child care Directors/FCC Owner-Operators and Teachers. The CECMP supports a diverse workforce of family child care programs, private child care centers, State Preschools and Head Start programs and selects experienced classroom teachers to mentor student teachers from community colleges, ROP and four-year early childhood programs.

### Mentor Teachers

In addition to a stipend for professional development, Mentor Teachers also receive stipends for their time mentoring and to use their classrooms as high-quality training environments. Stipends vary depending on the number of hours spent supervising student teachers and student teachers receive course credit for the practicum requirements of their training institutions. Due to many ECE students

working full-time in child care centers or family child care homes, they often cannot take time from work to complete the practicum course at the campus laboratory center. CECMP aims to make the practicum course more accessible by offering it through Mentors in child care programs throughout the student's community. Mentor Teachers may also receive stipends for non-course-based mentoring, including the mentoring that takes place with ECE students after their practicum course is completed and/or to those who need support in other areas, and to take on increased leadership roles in their Community Colleges and communities.

CECMP recruits teachers who have worked at least two years in an early childhood child care center or family child care home, who have completed a college ECE training program that included a supervised teaching course and who are eligible for the Master Teacher level, or above, of the California Child Development Permit. In order to apply, teachers must complete a course in adult supervision skills and classroom evaluation, offered by participating Community Colleges. Upon completion of the course, teachers may submit an application which includes information on their educational background and experience, a personal statement, and a self-evaluation of their classrooms using one of the Harms/Clifford Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, SACERS, or FCCERS-R). A Selection Committee composed of instructors from the Community College, teachers, directors and others from the child development community reviews the applications and evaluates the applicant's classroom(s) using the Environmental Rating Scales.

After Mentor Teachers are selected, the practicum instructor matches student teachers with a Mentor Teacher. Mentor Teachers concurrently participate in a variety of activities for their own ongoing professional development, including monthly Mentor Seminars, Annual Mentor Institutes, and public speaking engagements. The linkage between stipends and access to professional development and leadership opportunities is intended to create new career paths for experienced teachers, decrease teacher turnover, increase job satisfaction, and improve the quality of child care.

## Director Mentors

In 1996, the CECMP developed program activities for ECE Directors/FCC Owner-Operators currently working in the field. Program Directors, Family Child Care Owner-Operators, or site supervisors, with at least three years of administrative experience, and currently, or formerly, employed in child development programs, are eligible to apply to become a Director Mentor. Those interested must submit an application packet to the Mentor Program Selection Committee in their community. Following initial screening, two members of the Selection Committee conduct a site visit to verify program quality and interview the applicant about leadership and management skills using the Program Administration Scale (PAS, Talan and Bloom, Second Edition, 2011) for center-based applicants and the Business Administration Scale (BAS, Talan and Bloom, 2009) for Family Child Care Home Owners-Operators. Retired Directors can also apply to be Director Mentors



Applicants who are subsequently certified as Director Mentors receive a stipend to provide twenty hours of technical support to each protégé with whom a contract is signed, pending approval of the Mentor Program Coordinator. The Director Mentor collaborates with their protégé in a peer-peer mentoring relationship to support the protégé's professional growth. Director Mentors are offered support for their own professional development through regular Director Mentor Seminars which focus on supervision, leadership and advocacy strategies. The Director Mentor Seminar may be attended by any ECE Director/FCC Owner-Operators in the community. Seasoned Director Mentors receive further training in mentoring and leadership development at an Advanced Director Mentor Institute. Director Mentors also have opportunities to receive stipends for short-term mentoring, for assisting Director Mentor applicants in understanding and administering the PAS or BAS, and for giving presentations about the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

## Why Mentors?

Many California Community Colleges do not have a Lab School on Campus, leaving students without an opportunity to fulfill their learning requirements to become a qualified Early Childhood Educator. The CECMP fills those gaps by assigning students to Mentor Teachers and Director Mentors. The classroom experience helps students learn how to build a trusting relationship with children and families, an opportunity to learn new skills and view the daily responsibilities of the position, and a deeper understanding of their future role.

Director Mentors are also available to Administrative Professionals currently in the ECE field. Newly appointed Directors, Site Supervisors, Assistant Directors, or experienced Directors, are eligible to receive mentorship from our diverse and experienced Director Mentors.

