



California Early Childhood Mentor Program Frequently Asked Questions 2022

Quality child care starts with 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 demonstrate healthy brain and social-emotional development, strong language abilities, and success in not only school but also in life.

The [California Early Childhood Mentor Program](#) (CECMP), funded by the [California Department of Social Services](#) (CDSS), supports mentors throughout California in providing leadership and guidance to students entering the early childhood education (ECE) field as well as current child care directors and teachers. Partnering with 88 community colleges—and growing—the mentor program supports a diverse workforce of family child care programs, private child care centers, state preschools, and Head Start programs.



The CECMP focuses on (1) providing quality placements for community college ECE students in their final practicum with certified mentor teachers, (2) providing new ECE directors who are seeking mentorship with a certified director mentor, (3) building leadership skills through professional development opportunities, communities of practice, monthly seminars, and yearly conferences on topics reflecting best practices in the ECE profession, and (4) offering leadership opportunities in mentoring, training, advocacy, and community collaboration with compensation through stipends.

In response to the CECMP's transition to the CDSS, we wish to address frequently asked questions (FAQs) raised by communities across the state.

General Questions

What's exciting now that the CECMP has transitioned to CDSS?

- In fiscal year (FY) 2021–22, CDSS restored \$1 million of funding previously cut from our program.
- The selection committee (recruitment and certification of mentors) funding has been restored.
- The CECMP welcomed the opportunity in FY 2021-22 to meet with coordinators, mentor teachers, director mentors, college faculty members, and deans to develop relationships, gather feedback, and understand the strengths and challenges associated with the CECMP process and implementation. We achieved this endeavor through both Zoom meetings and, excitedly, in-person meetings via site visits and three CECMP institutes held across California.
- The CECMP state office consists of four positions: Director, Assistant Director, Mentor Program Analyst, and Senior Administrative Assistant/Accountant Technician (to be added in 2023). We are excited to be partnering with colleagues across California.
- Stipends increased for mentor teachers.
- Director mentor component returned to the colleges/regions per coordinator requests.
- Outreach and feedback of CECMP are being collected and will be used to support the revised vision, implementation, policies, and practices.
- Modernized website: www.CECMP.org
- Monthly newsletter to our participants



- Updates to the participant handbooks, documents, and participant forms pending finalization
- CECMP leadership will continue to advocate for quality early care and education across the state.

What are the details of the CECMP contract, years funded, and funding amount?

Currently, the CECMP contract operates on a two-year contract for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. CDSS has conveyed its support to the CECMP, and, unless the state or federal grant are subject to unforeseen funding cuts, the program will continue to operate.

CDSS restored funding levels to the pre-pandemic level through an amendment process. The full contract amount is \$6,051,459.24.

Has the program’s scope of work returned to pre-pandemic levels of operation?

Yes, the CECMP supports mentors throughout California in providing leadership and guidance to students entering the ECE field as well as current child care directors and teachers. Partnering with nearly 88 community colleges—and growing—the mentor program supports a diverse workforce of family child care programs, private child care centers, state preschools, and Head Start programs, including those within the Quality Counts California (QCC) system and external to it. Selection committees, student placements, and all other mentoring supports are fully operational. It is important to note that the director mentor component of the program has returned to the community colleges, after overwhelming requests to do so.

Will the mentor approval criteria that was developed over many years remain consistent across the state?

Yes. The selection committee process for certification remains intact.

A selection committee is composed of experienced ECE professionals committed to improving quality child care in their community. The selection committee is recruited by a college or regional coordinator to assess and select applicants to the program as mentor teachers and director mentors. Individual colleges have selection committees of up to ten members, representative of their communities. Regions have larger committees, varying by the number of colleges in the region. Some colleges new to the mentor program begin their first selection process with smaller committees and grow over time.



The CECMP will follow CDSS guidelines should any tools used to measure quality be updated. CECMP continues to strive to provide high-quality methods of certification and implementation of the program.

Will there be a standardization of the number of hours needed for practicum and/or funded for mentors?

At this time, CECMP is not regulating colleges' required practicum hours.

Will new mentors be accepted?

Yes. The selection committee funding has been restored. New mentors are being accepted after passing certification. Certification is a rigorous process in which selection committee members observe and assess the expertise of the mentor applicant, based upon several criteria. Each college or region manages this process based on their funding and mentor capacity limits.

Will we be able to work in person with mentors this year?

We are following health guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as state and local authorities on in-person interaction. Placement may also vary based on college and program guidelines. However, at this time there is no restriction on in-person meetings. Most if not all programs are meeting in person with their mentees or protégés.

Is there thinking around expanding the mentor program to support baccalaureate programs?

Expansion to support baccalaureate programs may be part of forthcoming discussions with partners.

What is the relationship between the mentor program and QCC?

QCC is California's network of quality improvement supports for the early learning and care workforce and families with young children. CECMP is part of the QCC system. CECMP coordinators and other higher education representatives are building relationships by partnering with QCC local and regional consortia to ensure the mentor program and QCC system refer students to all quality investments and resources.



How do you see the coordination and collaboration of both mentors and coaches with QCC?

CDSS would like to work toward the alignment of QCC supports by reducing duplication of efforts and by collaborating with consortium members (i.e., faculty, coaches, mentors, stipend programs, and students). One example of this effort is that QCC will work with CECMP to use and potentially modify coaching supports to offer professional development for mentors when available and appropriate. Faculty who are interested in participating in a consortium should connect with their local QCC lead agencies. The CECMP is also focusing on the [California Early Childhood Educator Competencies](#) as the foundation for a series of professional development supports that are being developed for CECMP participants. CECMP participates in the QCC Higher Education Faculty Quarterly Discussion meetings to ensure we are meeting and aligning with the vision, mission, and intended outcomes of adult learning.

To learn more about CECMP and how to become involved, check out our website www.CECMP.org or contact us at: info@cecmp.org.

