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# Mentor Program Overview

California Early Childhood Mentor Program



The California Early Childhood Mentor Program is funded by the California Department of Social Services, Child Care and Development Division

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# Mentor Program Overview

This Program Overview is intended primarily as a resource overview for those interested in participating in the California Early Childhood Mentor Program. It provides a history of the Mentor Program, its structure, and limited information on the Mentor Program components. For those participating in the Mentor Program, please refer to the handbook closest to your specific role (Coordinator, Mentor Teacher, Director Mentor, Selection Committee or Mentee) for more detailed information.

## The California Early Childhood Mentor Program History City Pilot to Statewide Program

Since 2021 the California Early Childhood Mentor Program (CECMP) is funded through the California Department of Social Services. CECMP started as a pilot project at Chabot College in 1988 with initial funding from United Way of the Bay Area and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. From 1992-2020, the Mentor Program was supported by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, with funds from the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant. The basic premise of the Mentor Program is to increase the quality of early care and education in California. We do this by providing professional growth and stipend opportunities to high caliber early childhood educators and administrators, who in turn mentor less-experienced administrators and college students, and those entering the workforce, who aspire to become early childhood educators. By doing so, seasoned teachers and administrators are recognized and rewarded for staying in the field and new teachers and administrators are provided with the support and guidance they need to become the high caliber teachers and administrators of the future. Research strongly supports the assertion that the stability and knowledge of early childhood teaching and administrative staff greatly enhance the quality of care provided to the children and families they serve.

Today, the Mentor Program holds five main goals: Outreach, Placements, Mentorship, Workforce and Leadership, as briefly illustrated below. The Mentor Program partners with community colleges throughout California and funds multiple stipend and professional growth opportunities for Mentor Teachers and Director Mentors across the state.

OUTREACH	PLACEMENTS	MENTORSHIP	WORKFORCE	LEADERSHIP
To outreach to seek a broad representation of quality child care and development Selection Committee Members, Mentors, Director Mentors, and Coordinators who are reflective of the communities they serve.	To provide quality community placements for Community College, University, Regional Occupation Program students and workforce of child care and development throughout their education and career journey with certified Mentors.	To provide any administrator in the child care and development workforce seeking mentorship placement with a certified Director Mentor.	To build workforce capacity through reflective, interactive, in-depth study of leadership and mentoring skills; providing relevant, inclusive, culturally responsive, and equity driven professional development through individual mentoring and/or Communities of Practice (CoP).	To encourage leadership opportunities in mentoring, training, facilitating, advocacy, and community collaboration.

## Program Description

Exceptional child care starts with high caliber early childhood 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 Mentor Program supports Mentors throughout California in providing leadership and guidance to students entering the ECE profession, and current child care directors/FCC owner-operators and teachers. The Mentor Program serves a diverse workforce of family child care programs, private and non-profit child care centers, State Preschools and Head Start programs, and selects experienced classroom teachers and family child care providers to mentor student teachers from community colleges, Regional Occupational Programs (ROP), four-year early childhood programs and those entering the workforce.

## 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 Mentor Program 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. It provides them with an opportunity to learn new skills and to view the daily responsibilities of the position. And, it confers 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.

## Coordinators

Mentor Program Coordinators implement the vision of the Mentor Program at the local and regional level, making them the key to the Mentor Program's success. Most often, Coordinators are Early Childhood Education/Child Development faculty members at participating community colleges. Although faculty status is not required to be a Coordinator, it is necessary for each Coordinator to be designated as such by the community college and to partner with the college's Early Childhood Education department.

The Mentor Program partners with community colleges across California and each college has a Coordinator. You will find a complete list of community colleges that we partner with on our website at [www.cecmp.org](http://www.cecmp.org), under the "Our Colleges" tab at the top of the website. Here, you will find a list of all of the Mentor Program's participating colleges and the contact information for each Coordinator.

Coordinators fill vital roles for the Mentor Program, both as leaders and managers. Every Coordinator provides leadership in promoting the Mentor Program on their college campus and in the community. Coordinators also represent the Mentor Program in presentations, communications within their college and communities, and interactions with the Mentor Teachers and Director Mentors.

Coordinators are responsible for creating and/or maintaining a local Mentor Program, authorizing payment for Mentor Teacher and Director Mentor activities, and serving as a liaison for their Mentor Program to the CECMP State Office. Responsibilities of Coordinators differ based on whether an individual is a Regional Coordinator, a College Coordinator within a Regional Program, or a Local Program Coordinator of an individual community college. In very broad terms:

- **Regional Coordinator:** Responsible for all Mentor Program activities and reporting for all colleges belonging to their Region.
- **College Coordinator within a Regional Program:** Responsible for promoting the Mentor Program at their community college and for reporting all required information as requested by the Regional Coordinator.
- **Local Program Coordinator at an Individual College:** Responsible for all Mentor Program activities and reporting for their college to their Regional Coordinator.

## Selection Committees

Selection Committee members are recruited in each community by the College Coordinator. The Mentor Program guides the structure of the Selection Committee, instructing Coordinators to assure that each Selection Committee represents the cultural and program-type diversity of the community and is not too heavily represented by community college faculty members. Selection Committee members receive training in the Harms-Clifford Scales and the Program Administration and Business Administration Scales, as well as a general introduction to the Mentor Program. The guidelines for the selection of Mentor Teachers and Director Mentors are set by the Mentor Program. Selection Committees *may* increase the stringency of requirements, but may not decrease it. If stringency is increased, the new guidelines must be fair and be applied to all candidates universally. Selection Committee members participate in training, reviewing applications, and conducting site visits. Selection Committee members receive an honorarium.

## 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 caliber adult student educator's learning 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. The Mentor Program 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.

The Mentor Program 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, or who meet "alternative pathways" State Mentor Program approved criteria. In order to apply, teachers must complete a course in adult supervision skills and classroom evaluation offered by participating Community Colleges, or meet alternative requirements set by the State Mentor Program. 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 or other State Mentor Program approved evaluation tools. 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 Mentor Program 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. Retired Directors can also apply to be Director Mentors.



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, most recent edition) for center-based applicants and the Business Administration Scale (BAS, Talan and Bloom, most recent edition) for Family Child Care Home Owners-Operators. 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-to-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 professional development 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 Mentor Program.

## **Participating Colleges**

For a list of currently participating Colleges and their Coordinators, please see our website at [www.cecmp.org](http://www.cecmp.org).

## **Interested in participating?**

If you, your college, or workplace are interested in participating in our program, please contact [info@cecmp.org](mailto:info@cecmp.org) for more information.

## **The Mentor Program CECMP State Office Staff**

For the Mentor Program's current staff and contact information, please see our website at [www.cecmp.org](http://www.cecmp.org).