



MENTORING NEWS

The National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force

Starting A Mentoring Program:

The Top Twelve Questions

Throughout the country there is an impressive level of interest in mentoring among the early childhood community. One of the first questions we hear at gatherings is, "How do we go about starting a mentoring program ourselves?" Developing an effective mentoring program depends on the actions and support of many individuals and organizations. Here we'll address the "top dozen questions" that any group needs to answer as it gets underway.

The spark that ignites a program design often comes from visionary activists in a community.

1. What are the goals of the mentoring program? Though they vary in structure, often because of state and local regulations, training models, and sources of funds, most programs are committed to four common goals:

- retaining experienced and skilled teachers and providers in early childhood classrooms and homes, by providing them with financial incentives and recognition;

- offering learning opportunities for skilled teachers and providers, particularly in the areas of peer coaching, reflection, leadership, adult development, and anti-bias education;

- offering learning opportunities for novice caregivers (protégés) who are committed to furthering their professional development; and

- improving the overall quality of child care programs in the community.

2. How is a mentoring program designed? The impetus to develop a program can come from several sources, such as a group of teachers, providers, directors and/or training coordinators, or one or more institutions of higher education, or other professional organizations. In some cases, private foundations or public sources have funded innovative training models. Some mentor

Legislative Update

Federal funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) have been a critical source of support for early childhood mentoring programs in a number of states — but as of press time in early November, the continuation of the CCDBG remains in doubt. While the Senate welfare reform bill passed in September preserves the CCDBG (as Senate Bill 850, carried by Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas), the House version does not. A joint conference committee will now negotiate a bill that must be passed by both the House and the Senate and signed into law by the President.

In the Senate bill, the CCDBG still includes a 15-percent set-aside of funds for program quality improvements, which many states have used to boost child care training and compensation, including mentoring, tuition assistance, quality grants and loan assumption programs. The bill, however, only *requires* states to include resource and referral services in their quality improvement plans; all other efforts, including training and compensation, are optional. But unless federal child care funds explicitly include some kind of quality set-aside provision, the continuation of mentoring programs in many states could be in serious jeopardy.

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Top Twelve Questions

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training programs are designed to complement qualification requirements or to promote new qualifications on a career ladder. The spark that ignites the design process often comes from visionary activists in a community.

National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force

The National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force (NCECW), formerly the Child Care Employee Project, is the nation's leading advocate for upgrading the compensation and training of child care teachers and providers. We are working to create a unified and powerful voice for the child care work force, advocating for fair and decent employment for caregivers and reliable, affordable, high-quality care for families.

Our landmark *National Child Care Staffing Study* (1989, updated 1993) clearly established the link between the quality of care that young children receive and the level of compensation that child care teachers are paid. NCECW is also the national coordinator of the Worthy Wage Campaign, a grassroots effort to mobilize child care workers to fight for solutions to the child care staffing crisis.

Our organization was founded in 1977 by child care teachers in the San Francisco Bay Area concerned about the low pay and status of their work. We relocated our offices to Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1994. Please call or write us for a complete publication list and for more information about our activities.

National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force

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3. Who are the key players? It is crucial to collaborate with others who are representative of the community and the child care profession, including: currently employed teachers and providers, program directors, resource and referral agency staff, faculty from local colleges or universities, and representatives from child care advocacy groups and other professional associations.

4. How do we assure diverse representation? The commitment to diversity should be built into all policies and components of the program, and careful consideration must be given to equitable and affirmative outreach activities. From the original inception to the selection process for participants and sites, the group of mentors, protégés, trainers and evaluators involved in the program should be racially, culturally and economically diverse.

5. What will our planning process and timeline be? Collaborators will need to agree on how often to meet, the location and length of meetings, and the desired start-up dates for the program. The meeting schedule should be realistic, allowing enough lead-time to attend to unexpected opportunities and challenges. Setting forth a work plan with goals and assigned tasks will help to move the process along. Some groups have pooled funds or secured planning grants to support these first-stage efforts.

6. What can we learn from other exemplary programs and from the literature on mentoring, and where can we find this information? The Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance has been formed for just this purpose, and we will be happy not only to share resources but to point you toward colleagues in the mentoring field who can offer technical assistance. Also this fall, NCECW is preparing a compendium of mentoring programs across the country, the result of an extensive survey and interview process conducted during the past year. (See

elsewhere in this newsletter for details.)

7. What funding sources will we need and how do we explore obtaining them? Generally, program developers begin their work by having possible funders in mind. Many programs have secured state funding (CCDBG or other training/education funds), while others have sought local matches and/or contributions from participating programs. By all means, contact private foundations at the national, state and/or local levels as well. (Note: Mentor programs generally agree that the training should be offered at no or very low cost to teachers and providers.)

8. What should a true cost budget contain? A draft budget should be drawn up early in the planning process. First look at the broad categories of spending: salaries for training staff and stipends for mentors, substitute coverage to offer release time to mentors and protégés, administration, benefits, purchased services (e.g. consultants), college credit fees, supplies and materials (e.g. textbooks and related documents), overhead and other miscellaneous line items. (Note: Some mentoring programs have made it an eligibility requirement that child care programs guarantee salary increases to mentors and/or protégés once their training is completed.)

9. What are the roles and responsibilities of the participants in a mentoring program? This will depend largely on the various collaborators' time, resources and availability. If possible, a paid coordinator or staff person could serve as a facilitator and leader, instead of overburdening a volunteer with these duties. Actual job descriptions and expectations for mentors and protégés should also be in writing and disseminated widely from the onset. All parties should know in advance what they are "getting into"!

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Building Support at the State Level for Mentoring Programs

Whatever happens at the federal level, it's clear that the funds that affect mentoring programs will be part of large block grants sent to the states. As a result, it will be more important than ever to build strong alliances and sources of support at the state and local levels. A session at the Mentoring Alliance charter meeting in June 1995 profiled three particularly successful examples of organizing and coalition-building. Panelists were Cecilia Alvarado Kuster, Department of Early Childhood Education, Santa Barbara City College, Santa Barbara, CA; Nancy Johnson, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, Minneapolis, MN; and Kay Hendon, Division of Community Services, Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, Madison, WI.

California

Since 1992, the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program (CECMTP) has received federal funds through the quality enhancement provisions of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. These funds have been allocated at the state level through the Child Development Division of the California Department of Education. In 1994, however, continuation of this funding was not guaranteed, as the Child Development Division (CDD) convened forums on how to use its quality set-aside funds for 1995.

Mentor teachers who had participated in the CECMTP organized to save the program. First, they held several training sessions on the advocacy process and on the various legislative proposals that were currently pending. To gather support, mentors then testified widely at city council meetings and other

community and statewide forums, and wrote articles and letters to editors.

Because of all these efforts, 80% of the testimony and comments offered at CDD's public forums were related to the Mentor Teacher Program, and continued funding was approved.

Minnesota

Advocates involved in creating a mentoring program for Minnesota had a strong interest in developing a culturally and racially diverse group of mentors, and in building a project that would

program apprentices spoke from the legislators' chairs while the legislators sat in the audience.

Wisconsin

The Child Care Quality Grants Program was begun by the state Department of Health and Social Services as a quality enhancement initiative under the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant. Grants have been awarded to centers and family child care homes to boost compensation, reduce turnover and improve training.

It will be more important than ever in the coming year to build strong alliances and sources of support for mentoring programs at the state and local levels.

provide enough time and resources to build meaningful relationships among participants.

Before starting the program, the developers spoke to many potential participants about their needs, and in response, set up a program which provided substitute time, reimbursement for transportation costs, child care for evening classes, food at meetings, and extra course time on particular issues, including four hours on advocacy.

It became clear that new alliances and sources of support would need to be developed to raise sufficient funds for the program. Developers looked to such new sources as job training funds through Minnesota welfare reform, the Honeywell Corporation's apprenticeship program, and the state Department of Labor and Industry. They also built ties with child care resource and referral agencies and community colleges.

Two events were particularly successful: a picnic at which community leaders were able to meet mentors and learn about the benefits of the program, and a reception at the state capitol where

To gather as much support as possible, administrators have sought from the beginning to define the program's goals in ways that would connect with the shared goals of a broader audience. The connection has been constantly drawn between increased child care staff training and compensation and the need to make a greater public investment in quality child care, as well as the central role of good child care in enabling parents to work.

The program now has over 300 grantees, trainers and others who are available to speak on its behalf. It has been critical to have advocates who can respond to calls for support as quickly as possible. It has also been very helpful to consolidate mentoring within the state's broader child care quality improvement effort, linking it with other training and professional development programs as a protection against being singled out for elimination or cuts.

Mentors Offer Feedback on Needs from Alliance

At the Mentoring Alliance charter meeting in June 1995, mentors held a discussion both on their overall professional needs and on what they would like to see developed within the Alliance. Overall professional needs included:

- better compensation;
- professional support;
- a place to come together;
- training in advocacy;
- professional development;
- symposia for building skills and gaining confidence;
- a mentoring journal; and
- a voice in program development.

Participants especially noted that enlisting mentors' help in program development is an important way of validating their experience. Some programs, they added, seem top-heavy with trainers who are not mentor teachers or providers, and this can lead to situations in

which mentors feel talked down to.

Mentors then discussed what they would like from the Alliance, including:

- an opportunity to build relationships;
- models for mentor training programs;
- a list of resource people, including fellow mentors, which would describe each person's area(s) of expertise;
- an Alliance logo which could be used for building recognition and connections (e.g., on stationery and business cards);
- articles and information in the Mentoring News. Suggestions included pieces on: how various programs have been able to increase compensation; sharing program models; promoting ourselves as mentors; transitions in mentor/protégé relationships; working with protégés with vary-

ing levels of competency and experience; and a "questions column" answered by other mentors.

Other ideas, related to many mentors' membership in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), included: a mentoring page in NAEYC's journal, *Young Children*; ribbons for mentors to wear at NAEYC events; and mentor meetings attached to local/regional AIEYC affiliate group meetings.

Thanks to all the mentor teachers and providers who joined this discussion — we'll do our best in this newsletter to reflect mentors' own voices and ideas.

Please contact us at NCECW if you're interested in contributing a short article to the Mentoring News, or if you have a question for the mentors' question/answer column!

Join us for three mentoring seminars at this year's NAEYC conference!

Friday, December 1, 11 am–1 pm:

"Sustaining Mentor Teachers and Providers: Funding, Evaluation and Advocacy to Strengthen and Enhance Mentoring Programs in Early Childhood Education." Panelists: Patty Hnatiuk, Wheelock College, Boston, MA; Marcy Whitebook, NCECW; Nancy Johnson, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, Minneapolis, MN; Margaret Mobley, TEACH, Chapel Hill, NC; Jean Madaus, Milwaukee Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program, Milwaukee, WI.

Saturday, December 2, 8:30–10:30 am:

Meeting of The Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance, led by Claudia Wayne and Marcy Whitebook, NCECW and Patty Hnatiuk, Wheelock College, Boston, MA.

Saturday, December 2, 1:30–3:30 pm:

"The California Mentor Program: Refining Mentoring and Linking Training with Compensation." Panelists: Peyton

Nattinger, California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program, Hayward, CA; Mary Smithberger, California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA.

Also at NAEYC:

Meet Gloria Steinem at a reception on Thursday, November 30, 5:30–7:30 pm. The noted author and feminist will discuss why society undervalues child care teachers and providers, and how we can work together to improve the lives of children and their caregivers. Admission is \$20.00, and proceeds will benefit NCECW, the national coordinator of the Worthy Wage Campaign. Contact Kendra Wright at NCECW, (202) 737-7700, for details.

The Worthy Wage Campaign will hold a pre-conference session on Wednesday, November 29, 2:00–6:00 pm and its business meeting on Thursday November 30, 10:00 am–12 noon.

Top Twelve Questions

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10. What are the criteria and procedures for selecting mentors and protégés, and for matching them up? These will vary depending on state regulatory requirements, whether you will be conducting the training for college credit, and the program's principles and priorities (e.g. assuring racial, cultural, economic and linguistic diversity). Generally, mentors are expected to have a certain level of experience and education; written references are required (including one from a director and/or co-worker); interviews, and often home or classroom observations, are conducted; and the collaborative group or selection committee makes the final decisions. Then, a designated person or team, paid by the program, conducts outreach and facilitates matches of mentors and protégés as well as selections of sites. Final decisions about matches should be by voluntary mutual agreement between the mentor and protégé.

11. What will the training component contain, and will we offer it for college credit? Core curricula, we believe, should contain information and activities on adult development, reflective practice, leadership, the process of change, culturally sensitive anti-bias education, and child care advocacy. The decision whether or not to offer college credit will be affected by program goals, funding, and participation of local colleges or universities in the process. College credit is generally favored by those who seek the training, and it also helps to define and promote the distinct role of mentor teacher/provider on the professional career ladder.

12. How will the program be evaluated? Evaluation should be built into the program model. Some programs have included outside evaluators. Internal evaluations vary; sample models are available from NCECW, and we are also developing a consistent tool for documentation and evaluation to be disseminated through the Mentoring Alliance.

While designing and implementing a mentoring program requires a great deal of time, consideration and commitment, perhaps the key ingredient to success is the will to make it happen. We welcome your input for future newsletters on how you have answered the above questions or any others—and the successes and challenges your program has met in getting started.

—Patty Hnatiuk, Director, Child Care Training Programs, Wheelock College, Boston, MA

Mentoring Publications from NCECW

Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum

Due out by summer 1996, the *Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum*, now being developed by NCECW, will provide the field with a comprehensive, flexible teaching tool for child care teachers and family child care providers that can be adapted for use in communities throughout the country.

The Curriculum will include three parts: a *Curriculum Guide* for the training of mentor teachers/providers; a *Handbook* for mentors to use with their protégés; and a *Trainer's Guide*. Areas covered include: the goals of mentoring programs; adult development; peer coaching and reflective practice; respecting diversity; the process of change; moving toward excellence as a teacher

or provider; building relationships between mentors and protégés; skills for effective mentoring; planning and implementing a learning session for adults; and mentors as leaders and advocates.

Survey of Early Childhood Mentoring Programs

In early 1996, NCECW will also release a detailed compendium/report from its *Survey of Early Childhood Mentoring Programs* conducted during the past year. The report offers detailed information on 19 programs throughout the country, covering such issues as program design, obstacles and achievements, eligibility, outreach, selection and training of mentors and protégés, compensation, funding, and evaluation.

The Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance

Throughout the country, mentoring programs have emerged as one of the most promising strategies to retain experienced teachers and providers and thereby guarantee more reliable, high quality care for young children. In taking on the role of mentoring other caregivers, teachers and providers gain new respect from co-workers and parents; renew their own commitment to working with children; and usually receive additional compensation. As dozens of mentoring programs have developed around the U.S., the need for a national communication network has grown. The Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance, coordinated by NCECW, has therefore been created as a forum for sharing ideas, information and technical assistance among programs.

The *Mentoring News* and the Alliance are supported by a consortium of funders including the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Teaching Strategies, Inc., the American Express Philanthropic Program, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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Membership Form

Beginning in January 1996, we are simplifying the NCECW membership structure. As a member, you will be assured of receiving information on the Worthy Wage Campaign and the Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance, and the latest analysis on policies affecting the early childhood work force. Membership will be based on the calendar year, January 1 through December 31. To join, please fill in the information below. Current members will be receiving renewal information in December. Please call NCECW if you have any questions. Membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

Regular Membership \$30 (\$15 for teachers and providers) \$ _____

I would like to receive the new biannual NCECW newsletter (which will combine information previously contained in the *Worthy Wage News*, the *Mentoring News* and the *Compensation Initiatives Bulletin*) plus a discount on selected NCECW publications and products.

Comprehensive Membership \$50 (\$25 for teachers and providers) \$ _____

In addition to the benefits of regular membership, I would like to receive the special mailings (including action alerts, resource materials and minutes of meetings) from:

The Worthy Wage Campaign The Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance both

Publication Fee \$50 for members, or \$75 for non-members \$ _____

Please send me all new NCECW publications (policy reports, research reports, etc.) issued during the year.

Donation I would like to make an additional donation to NCECW to support its services for the early childhood work force \$25 \$50 \$100 other \$ _____ \$ _____

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