



## CEC/CEC-PD Mentoring Program Guide



## CEC/CEC-PD MENTORING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the CEC/CEC Pioneers Division (PD) Mentoring Program. We're delighted that you've decided to participate as a mentor or a mentee.

Please read this brief set of guidelines and suggestions to gain an understanding of how to make the most of your mentoring experience. We believe the mentoring experience is as much an opportunity for growth for the mentor as the mentee. Perhaps Phil Collins said it best, "In learning we teach, in teaching we learn."

The mission of CEC/CEC-PD's Mentoring Program is to create supportive, caring, and engaging professional relationships, between volunteer CEC members who are experienced professionals (mentors), and CEC members who are teacher candidates or teachers who have been in the classroom for three or fewer years (mentees). As the mentees move through their preparation programs or engage in early teaching responsibilities, the mentors will share their knowledge and experiences with their mentees, as well as CEC's resources.

### Who participates in the Mentoring Program?

ALL Mentor and Mentee participants must be active members of CEC.

### Mentors must have a minimum of three years of professional experience and can be:

- Teachers
- School or district administrators
- College and university professors
- Retired professionals from all of these groups

### Mentees can be:

- Undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students preparing to become special educators
- New teachers who have been in the classroom for three or fewer years

### What is the timeframe for the Mentoring Program?

The program begins receiving registrations (see below) in mid-late summer, and continues accepting them until early December. The mentoring relationship is intended to extend from the time mentors and mentees are introduced to one another until the end of the academic year. The duration of the mentoring relationship depends on the point at which it begins, and that is typically during the fall of the academic year.

### How do I get started?

All participants must be active members of CEC. If you need to join or renew your membership, please visit [CEC's website](#). Remember, **students receive a 20% discount on CEC membership!**

All participants must register by completing an online survey where you will provide contact information and specialty areas of interest or practice. For example, you may have interest or experience working collaboratively with families, or special certification in reading assessment or administration. Carefully complete this survey because it is the basis upon which mentors and mentees are matched.

You will find the Mentor and Mentee surveys on CEC's web site [here](#).

Please note, mentors and mentees are matched on a rolling basis, depending on when you submit your surveys. We generally have more Mentor registrants earlier than we have Mentee registrants, so Mentors may need to wait for weeks or even months to be matched with a mentee. Unfortunately, there are usually more Mentors than Mentees, so please be aware that as a Mentor, you may not be matched during the year.

CEC staff will match participants and notify the Mentor and Mentee simultaneously. Priority is given to matching individuals who share common professional interests. Every attempt is made to match individuals who are in close geographic proximity to one another, however, experience tells us that matching individuals based on common professional interests results in a more productive mentoring relationship than geography alone.

### **Mentoring program responsibilities and suggestions**

All Mentoring Program participants are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Maintain an active membership in CEC.
- Maintain communication with your mentor or mentee.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner.
- Alert CEC about any problems, breakdowns in communication, or changes that require you to withdraw from the program before the end of the academic year.
- Model appropriate classroom and professional behaviors and educational practices.

### **Launching the Mentoring Partnership**

Share background information with one another. It may include your career or current education status, teaching experiences, and current involvement with education, and unique professional interests or specialties. Send it to one another as soon as possible after you are notified who your partner will be.

1. Establish a mutual understanding of the frequency and manner (i.e. phone, email, text, face-to-face) with which you expect to communicate with one another.
2. Ensure that your partner's e-mail addresses are not blocked by your servers.
3. Identify common areas of interest.
4. Agree on goals and expectations for participating in the Mentoring Program.
5. Secure a good foundation through active listening and inquiry.

### **Expectations for Mentors:**

- Support your mentee through advice and guidance while maintaining consistent communication during the academic year of the mentoring period.
- Present evidence-based practices based on your mentee's questions and requests, while also making suggestions based on your own experience.
- Suggest effective strategies for working in collaboration with families, professional colleagues, and school/district support personnel.
- Model respectful, professional behavior during all interactions.
- Encourage mentees to remain active in the Council for Exceptional Children as their professional home.

### **Expectations for Mentees:**

- Maintain regular communication with your mentors.
- Identify and share specific areas of inquiry or challenge with your mentors.
- Alert your mentor if communication may be altered due to an especially busy time, or should there be any reason to terminate the mentoring partnership.
- Bring any problems, communication break downs, or personality conflicts to CEC's attention immediately to collaboratively facilitate a resolution.

Council for Exceptional Children staff are here to assist by assigning the mentoring partnerships, helping to maintain communication, and addressing issues that may arise. Please contact CEC by calling 888.232.7733 or emailing [membership@cec.sped.org](mailto:membership@cec.sped.org) with questions, concerns, or comments.

### **Tips for Successful Communication**

- Mentors make initial contact by phone.
- Keep emails frequent, short, and to the point unless specific information has been requested by either party requires more detail.
- Be reliable in your communication and reply in a timely manner.
- Respect one another's priorities as students, early year teachers, or mentors with professional responsibilities. If you know that you or your mentoring partner has a busy time coming up, ease up on communication and reengage when things settle down.
- Contact CEC if you are not receiving communication/replies in the timeframe that you and your mentoring partner agreed upon. CEC will determine whether intervening is warranted and will keep you apprised of any updates.

### **Suggested Discussion Topics:**

1. Information about CEC membership, divisions, professional development offerings
2. Responsibilities and issues facing new teachers
3. Resources for use in the preparation of reports, research papers, etc.
4. How to collect research data
5. Websites, apps, and other resources
6. Advice about preparing lesson plans, IEP's, 504 accommodations, etc.
7. Collaborative partnerships with families as the leader of a child's educational team
8. Common Core Standards
9. Reading strategies
10. Content area modifications
11. Assessment/Evaluation
12. Classroom management, discipline, and reward strategies
13. Tips on simplifying required paperwork/time management strategies
14. Collaborative teaching: pros and cons, models, first-hand experiences with the various models, etc.
15. Current research on Response to Intervention
16. Policies/standards from CEC
17. Guidance in pursuing a post-graduate degree
18. Suggestions for preparing a résumé, and interview strategies
19. Procedures for seeking and establishing employment in states other than the one of current residence

20. New, exciting technology advances to use in the classroom and learning environment
21. Helpful hints for making the transition from student to professional educator

### **Additional Tips for Mentors**

1. Request that your mentee review an education-based website and give you feedback re: helpfulness of the site.
2. Encourage your mentee to engage with CEC members through the CECCommunity and CEC's Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and LinkedIn pages.
3. Send mentees resources you may have used with your own college students or previous mentees and/or materials you received from your supervisor/consulting teacher or through attendance at a professional development activity (electronic or hard copy). Believe it or not, many students have said they enjoy getting a packet of information in the mail!
4. Use stories about funny, inspirational, or challenging moments during personal teaching experiences.
5. Play "devil's advocate" to help mentees think through important decisions and strategies.
6. Use a variety of electronic communications (Facebook, Skype, Twitter, etc.) to keep mentees actively engaged in the mentoring process.
7. If residing in the same geographic area, try to arrange some personal meeting time (coffee, breakfast, lunch, visit to your site of employment, etc.) with the mentee.

### **Disclaimers**

#### **Mentor Disclaimer and Release**

I understand that as a mentor participating in the CEC Mentoring Program, any support I provide in the course of the mentoring relationship is solely for the purpose of guiding the mentee in the field of special education. I understand this relationship is an educational resource to discuss general issues confronted in special education. I understand that the mentee will not rely upon my statements as legal, financial or professional advice.

I understand and agree that the information I provide in the course of the mentorship will not be relied upon by the mentee as a substitute for his/her own independent judgment or professional opinions.

I hereby agree that in no event will I begin legal proceedings or otherwise attempt to hold liable for damages, Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), any mentee, member, staff or agent of CEC as a result of my participation in this program. As a mentor, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless CEC from any and all claims, suits, actions or proceedings of any kind arising out of, or in connection with, any advice or guidance I give in relation to the CEC Mentoring Program.

#### **Mentee Disclaimer and Release**

I understand that as a mentee participating in the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Mentoring Program, any support I receive in the course of the mentoring relationship is solely for the purpose of guiding me in the field of special education. I understand this relationship is an educational resource to discuss general issues confronted in the special education field. I understand that I will not rely upon the mentor's statements as legal, financial or professional advice.

I understand and agree that the information I receive in the course of the mentorship will not be relied upon as a substitute for my own independent judgment or professional opinions.

I hereby agree that in no event will I begin legal proceedings or otherwise attempt to hold liable for damages, the Council for Exceptional Children, any mentor, member, staff or agent of CEC as a result of my participation in the CEC Mentoring Program. As a mentee, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless CEC from any and all claims, suits, actions or proceedings of any kind arising out of, or in connection with, any support, advice or guidance I receive in relation my participation in the CEC Mentoring Program.

**Annual Program Event**

Most years, during CEC's Annual Convention & Expo, there is an onsite event for mentors and mentees who are attending the convention to meet and network with others involved in the Mentoring Program. You will receive an invitation from CEC to register for this event prior to the Convention. We hope to see you there!

**Thank You**

Thank you for utilizing the CEC/CEC Pioneers Division Mentoring Program as a benefit of your membership in CEC. Whether you are an experienced special education professional, or just starting your career, you are engaging in the professional development that keeps our standards high and our commitment to students strong!