

Identifying and Supporting Students in your Mentoring Program

With all of the students you see every day, how do you decide who should be recommended to be in the program? Mentoring is not designed for students with severe behavior, social or emotional problems. Mentors are trained to be sensitive to children who need a little extra care or attention as well as those who are struggling academically, but mentors are not counselors or therapists. Mentors are caring adults who are there to offer support to students to help them be successful.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is one-on-one time with a caring older person. Mentors typically come in once a week for 30 minutes to an hour for the entire school year. Mentoring pairs work on all types of activities and projects that work to enhance the growth and development of their mentee. Mentors are not there to "fix" students rather they are there to help them reach their full potential.

What are some reasons students are identified for the program?

Every program is different, but some of the reasons students have been chosen are because they could benefit from:

- Academic support*
- Individual attention
- A positive role model
- A friend
- Someone to develop their gifts and talents

Or because they are:

- Shy
- Hyperactive
- Withdrawn

*Mentors are not "the teacher" but they can use any suggestions/concerns provided by teachers to help plan their sessions. Ideally a mentor will take teacher's general concerns about reading, math, teamwork, etc. and use them to plan activities that will interest their mentee. The session will not entirely focus on academics.

Mentors, through consistent one-on-one time and support, are there to help students as they work to become successful individuals and students. This is a tough decision, because ideally every student would benefit from having a mentor. If you have any questions please contact your building's mentor coordinator.

How can you help mentors be successful?

Although mentoring has been linked to academic improvement it can be hard to directly connect the two. That puts unnecessary tension on the mentor/mentee relationship. Instead look for an increased interest in school, better relationships at home, improved communication skills and a positive attitude. During the school year a majority of teachers whose students were mentored by a Creative Mentoring mentor said mentored children showed improved class participation, grades, respectful behaviors, and attitudes towards learning.

As a teacher, you should also expect to communicate with your student's mentor through the school's mentoring coordinator. Mentors are generally open to activities from teachers and

really want to help support the work that you are doing. If you want to develop direct communication with the mentor it is best to do so through email. If you have questions about the program, we encourage you to reach out to the school staff first. You can always call us at 302-656-2122 or visit our website: www.connecting-generations.org.

Teacher Responsibilities

Your student and the mentor need to know that you support the mentoring relationship. You can share your excitement for this new relationship by:

- Completing and returning all required forms.
- Asking your student how his or her meeting with the mentor went.
- Work with the school's mentoring coordinator to ensure that the student is not missing important class time for mentoring. Make sure to raise the issue immediately, but please be flexible occasionally if an exception needs to be made.
- Recommend how a mentor can help the child succeed.
- Recommend activities, especially ones that will support student learning, and academically tied work that the mentor and mentee can do as part of their mentoring session.
- Remember that mentoring is child centered and child driven, so while the mentor may not be working on academics every session, the mentor is focused on helping that child succeed.
- Allow the student to attend all mentoring sessions. If a session has to be cancelled please make sure the mentor is aware of the change in schedule. We understand that emergencies occur but it is disappointing for a mentor to arrive at the school only to learn the student did not come to school.
- Making an effort to meet your student's mentor at mentor events.
- Making every attempt to send your student to recognition activities that highlight the mentor and your student.
- Complete the annual surveys.