

The Illinois Early Intervention Mentorship Program

The Mentorship Program offers Illinois Early Intervention providers the opportunity for a supportive professional relationship where knowledge, skills and experience are shared. The **learning partner** is someone who is seeking guidance in developing knowledge, self-awareness and competence in early intervention. The **mentor** is a person with expertise in the areas of interest, who is willing to share his or her wisdom.

The Mentorship Program offers the learning partner a nurturing and confidential environment in which to ask questions, share concerns and learn from an individual having more experience in the topic. The focus of the mentorship depends upon the needs of the learning partner. Mentorships offer an opportunity to explore practical and theoretical issues that the learning partner perceives as unfamiliar, problematic or newly challenging.

Learning partners can be any person employed in the Illinois Early Intervention System. Learning partners can be experienced practitioners who want to deepen their knowledge and expand their skills or individuals new to the field who want to focus on learning about a particular aspect of their job.

Mentors are individuals experienced in early intervention with an expertise in the area in which they will provide a mentorship opportunity.

Mentors receive a stipend of \$250 for their work with a learning partner, and up to 9 hours of credit every three years toward the maintenance of their early intervention credential.

How does it work?

Mentors and learning partners meet for 10 hours over six months, with at least 8 hours being face to face, working on goals that they create together. The goals can focus on any aspect of work in early intervention, and are directly linked to Illinois' Principles of Early Intervention.

There are two types of mentorships supported by this program:

Individual: A relationship between a mentor and a learning partner for the purpose of individual support and technical assistance, focusing on goals created together reflecting the learning partner's needs interests;

Program: A series of meetings between a mentor and the staff of an Early Intervention Program, focusing on support and technical assistance around a specific topic of interest to the whole group;

A few examples of topics which can be addressed through mentorships include assessment tools, sensory integration, parent-child relationships, service delivery in a day care setting, motor needs in newborns, and working with diverse populations.

Guidelines:

Mentorships will be awarded for a period of 10 hours over six months.

Applications for the **second** funding period will be due December 15, 2004 for mentors and January 15, 2005 for learning partners. Awards will be announced January 31, 2005. Mentorships will begin in January 2005 and end June 2005.

The focus of a mentorship must be related to the Illinois Early Intervention System's *Principals of Early Intervention*. Learning partner applicants will be matched with a mentor whose skills best match the requested areas knowledge.

Mentors will be assigned by the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program based on the mentor's area of knowledge and availability. However, mentors cannot work at the same Early Intervention Program as the learning partner. Mentors must be currently credentialed in the Illinois Early Intervention System unless you are chosen as a Higher Education Academic Mentor.

Distribution of awards

Mentorships will be awarded balancing the following factors: region, discipline experience in the field;

For further information contact:
Amy Cocorikis or Ted Burke
Illinois Early Intervention Training Program
7550 W. 183rd Street
Tinley Park, IL 60477
708-444-8460 or 866-509-3867